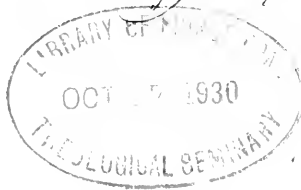


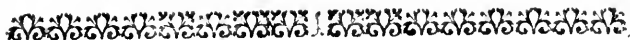
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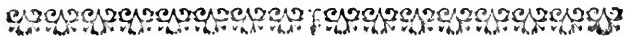
ARGUMENT

In DEFENCE of

CHRISTIANITY,

TAKEN FROM

The CONCESSIONS of the most antient
Adverfaries.



OCT 17 1850
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A N
A R G U M E N T
I N D E F E N C E o f
C H R I S T I A N I T Y,

T A K E N F R O M

The C O N C E S S I O N S of the most antient
A d v e r s a r i e s, J E W S and P A G A N S, P H I -
L O S O P H E R S and H I S T O R I A N S.

In which is shewn,
The different State of I N F I D E L I T Y in those early
T i m e s, from what it now is.

To which is added,
A n A P O L O G Y for some of the First
C H R I S T I A N F A T H E R S;

W I T H
S o m e R E M A R K S upon the Genuineness of the
F O U R G O S P E L S.

By G R E G O R Y S H A R P E, L.L.D.
Fellow of the R O Y A L S O C I E T Y, and of the S O C I E T Y
o f A N T I Q U A R I A N S.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J O H N M I L L A N, opposite the *Ad-*
miralty-Office, Whitehall.

M.DCC.LV.

Μάρτυρας δε ἢ τὰς οἰκοὶ παραληψομαι, βοηθοὺς
δε μάλλον Ἑλλησι χρῆσομαι.

Tatiani Oratio, p. 105. edit. Oxon. 1700.

‘ *I shall not take my evidences from our own
‘ authors, but make use of your Greek au-
‘ thorities.*’

Ἀποδεδεικται μὲν ἤδη, ὦ ἄνδρες, τοῖς ὠτα ἐχούσι,
ἢ ἐκ τῶν ὁμολογῶμενων ὑφ’ ὑμῶν.

Justini dial. 1.

‘ *It is now proved, O men, to those who have
‘ ears, and that from your own Confessions.*’

T O

*The Right Rev. Father in God JOSEPH,
Lord Bishop of Rochester, Dean of
Westminster, and Chancellor of the
Order of the Bath;*

*The Rev. E. LEWEN, L.L.D. Chan-
cellor of the Diocese of Rochester;*

*The Rev. J. DENNE, D.D. Archdeacon
of the Diocese of Rochester, and Pro-
locutor of the present Convocation;*

*The Rev. FR. HOOPER, D.D. Proctor
in Convocation for the Diocese of
Rochester;*

*The Rev. the Clergy of the Archdeaconry
of Town-Malling.*

Reverend Father and Brethren,

IT is with the greatest respect I pre-
sent the following discourse to you,
and intreat your acceptance of it, in
this

this form, with the same candor and goodness you were pleased to receive the author and his sermon, when he had the honour to deliver it before you, at our last visitation.

I will not plead the request of some of my brethren, though I shall always esteem their requests as commands, in excuse for the publication of this discourse. The prevalence of Infidelity, and too general disregard of religion, the many open attempts from men of all ranks against it, as if it were an enemy to human society, and the few religious examples set by those who would do well to consider the extent and influence of their example, call for every aid, and every motive, to subdue the wicked designs of some, as well as the lethargy of others, and render

der every other excuse, at least, unnecessary.

Not that the Christian religion is in danger: No. It is not possible that the gates of hell should ever prevail against it. It must subsist for ever, and the author of it is certainly most able to protect it against the malice and utmost efforts of all its enemies, and will for ever prove THE DELIVERER of all who believe in him. But they, who disown his power and influence, have no right, no claim to be protected by him. And if, instead of obeying the precepts enjoined by the Christian religion, the people should unhappily proceed, at last, to disown all religious obligation, it is most certain the society could not long survive so fatal an injury.

Who-

Whoever examines the characters of men, and the moral state of the world at present, under all the advantages it has certainly received from the profession and practice of Christianity in it, will have no reason to think there are too many motives for men to be good ; but, on the contrary, find it necessary, instead of taking any of them away, to inforce them with all the authority of reason and example.

He must therefore be a most wretched politician indeed, who should oppose, I do not say the errors of Christian men, but Christianity itself, especially in a protestant country, where such an attack will give equal strength to the different extremes of Infidelity and Superstition ; and those of the Romish persuasion have never failed to avail themselves of these writings.

No Politician would pretend to govern a people without the aid of religion ; and no religion has ever been offered to the world, that could be compared to the religion of Jesus. Politicians are seldom inclined to admit of any alteration in established religions ; and when they professedly oppose the public faith, it is to be feared it may proceed from other motives than the public good.

The philosopher has as little reason as the politician, to object to the religion of Jesus, whose character and doctrines are incomparably more perfect, more popular, and more useful, than those of any of the antient heathens. And of modern philosophers, not of those, who have arrogantly taken the name to themselves, but those whom all the world have agreed

to call by that name, and who have surpassed all that went before them in the greatness of their discoveries; there has scarcely been one who has not distinguished himself as much by his faith in Christ, as by his knowledge in nature.

I would not have lost the present opportunity of offering you the sermon I delivered, on a like occasion, some years past; and which, I flatter myself, was not less favourably heard than the present, if I did not hope for some future opportunity of making it public, when I may extend and improve it, by shewing the evidences and connexion of natural and revealed religion. But that was a different argument from this, in the discourse I now have the honour to address to you; and which, together with the

Notes,

Notes, the Apology for some of the first Christian Writers, and Evidence for the Four Gospels, contains one entire and distinct argument for the truth of the Christian Religion ; and such an argument as will remove the controversy out of the hands of ignorant and unlearned Infidels, and confine it to those only, who are capable of inquiring into what was done in Palestine and Rome more than seventeen hundred years ago. And as it states the difference between the Infidelity of the antients and the moderns, and shews that the latter have, without any authority, denied what the former, from the great notoriety of the facts, were forced to admit, it affords a sufficient answer to the moderns, by opposing to them the concessions of their predecessors in Infidelity, who were

rather better judges of what was fact in or near their own times.

Notwithstanding all that has been said of late, in some voluminous and indigested heaps of writing against theology, it is most certain, from the different schemes of religion in every age, as well as every nation in the world, from the various attempts of atheistical and irreligious men, as well as of sectaries (I speak not of modern dissenters and fellow-protestants) from the birth of Christ, to this day, and from the controversies that must for ever subsist, whilst the civil establishment of religion in one country is different from that of another, theology must be reckoned among the learned and useful studies, and they only who cannot, or will not, distinguish between opinions that preserve the liberties

erties of a people, and those that necessarily serve to inflame them, will object to this study, as inconsistent with their own wicked views.

I am sure I have no occasion to make any excuse to my learned brethren for the Hebrew, Greek, and other citations in the following notes. I was inquiring into facts, and thought it might be more satisfactory, even to an unlearned reader, to bring my evidences along with me, and let them speak for themselves, in their own language, than to have them at too great a distance from their interpreter.

There are other evidences, which I have purposely omitted, such as the eclipse mentioned by Phlegon, and Apollophanes, about the time of our Saviour's crucifixion; the appearance of the sign Virgo, as described
by

by *Abu-maasbar*, commonly called *Albumasar*, and others; all the Sibylline oracles, and the famous passage in Josephus, where he doubts whether it is lawful to speak of Christ as a man, and owns his miracles, &c. though I am very far from thinking the last is not genuine: But they have all been disputed by Christian men, and I was desirous of using such authorities only as I think cannot be denied*.

I

* If there is any thing of moment yet left in the Talmud, it will not be very difficult for a man, tolerably well skilled in rabbinical letters, to collect from those writings all that relates to Jesus, his disciples, and the Christian religion, by means of a copy of the Talmud, printed at Venice, which formerly belonged to the most learned Mr. Selden, and is now preserved amongst his books, in the Bodleian library at Oxford. In this copy, whatever relates to Christianity or Christians, is carefully blotted out with ink: And these passages, which are not many, may easily be discovered
by

I believe I have not misrepresented any one of those antient testimonies cited by me, or forced them to say more in our language than they have long since said in their own: But of this you are the best judges, and to your candour and protection the author humbly dedicates both his labours and himself, being,

Reverend Father and Brethren,

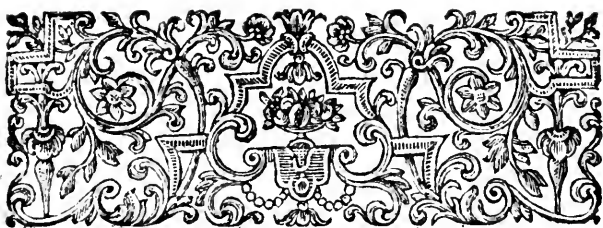
Your most dutiful,

faithful, affectionate,

humble Servant,

GREGORY SHARPE.

by turning over the leaves, and be transcribed from the same pages, in any other fair copy of the same, or other editions where the pages answer. When I inspected this copy, I found the word *עלמה* (virgin) blotted out, though it had, in that place, no reference to the blessed mother of our Lord; but it shews the care that has been taken, to mark every word that could relate to Christians.



ACTS ii. 22.

*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
yourselves also know.*



WE have here an assertion of the fullest and strongest kind, that the mission of Jesus of Nazareth was warranted by miracles ; and not only so, but that these miracles were performed in such a manner, as moreover warranted an appeal to the senses of the people themselves, for the truth of them. They were

B

not

not done in secret, but in public, before multitudes, in the temple, and even in courts of judicature: And though the Gospel was preached to the poor, it was offered to the rich, and men of all conditions, all the world *, were invited, and had the same evidence of indisputable miracles to engage their assent.

St. Paul, in answer to Festus, and to prove his words to be the “ words of truth and soberness,” says, “ the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely; for

* *Christi regnum ubique porrigitur, ubique creditur, ab omnibus gentibus supra-enumeratis colitur, ubique regnat, ubique adoratur, omnibus ubique tribuitur æqualiter. Tertul. 1. adversus Judæos.*

‘ The kingdom of Christ is universal: He is believed every-where, and worshiped in all the nations above-named. He reigns over all, is every-where the object of adoration, and is equally made known to all in every place.’

“ I

“ I am persuaded that none of these
 “ things are hidden from him ; for this
 “ thing was not done in a corner.”

And so far is the king from condemn-
 ing Paul, that, if he had not appealed
 unto Cæsar, he declares he might have
 been set at liberty ; and instead of
 charging him, as did Festus, with mad-
 ness, or with false reports, as deceiv-
 ing others, or deceived himself, he
 owns unto Paul, “ almost thou per-
 “ suadest me to be a Christian.”

Nor was Agrippa the only prince,
 the only man of power and eminence,
 who knew of these things, and who
 was almost persuaded to be a Christian.
 Sergius Paulus, the governor of Cyprus,
 before whom Elymas, the Sorcerer, was
 struck blind, “ when he saw what was
 “ done, believed, being astonished at
 “ the doctrine of the Lord.” Acts xiii.
 Dionysius also, the Areopagite, a judge
 and Senator of the Areopagus, one of

the most respected courts of Judicature in Greece “believed with Damaris and
 “others,” Acts xvii. 34. The “noble-
 “man too, whose son was sick at Ca-
 “pernaum, himself believed, and his
 “whole house.” John iv. Nay, even
 “Among the chief rulers, many be-
 “lieved on Jesus, but, because of the
 “Pharisees, they did not confess him.”
 John xii. 42. And even of this rigid
 sect we find believers mentioned in the
 Acts xv. 5.

Saul, the persecutor, had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and in the full fury of his zeal was, by a special miracle, converted to the faith. And, lastly, Simon Magus, or the magician, also believed: He who had “bewitched the people of Sama-
 “ria, giving out that himself was some
 “great one, and to whom,” proceeds the text, “they all gave heed, from
 “the least to the greatest, saying, This
 “man

“ man is the great power of God, be-
 “ lieved Philip, preaching the kingdom
 “ of God, and the name of Jesus
 “ Christ; and when he was baptized,
 “ he continued with Philip and won-
 “ dered, beholding the miracles and
 “ signs which were done.” Nor is it
 any reproach to the faith he had pro-
 fessed, that he offered the apostles
 money for the power of giving the
 Holy Ghost; for that very offer was a
 proof of his belief in the reality of that
 power: And, as the noble answer of
 Peter shews how superior to all mean
 or mercenary considerations the apostles
 were, “ Thy money perish with thee,
 “ because thou hast thought the gift of
 “ God may be purchased with money,”
 &c. So the submission of Simon to
 the sentence denounced against him,
 in these words, “ Pray ye to the Lord
 “ for me, that none of these things,
 “ which ye have spoken, come upon
 “ me

“ me,” argues a full persuasion in him, that nothing but his immediate repentance could procure him an absolution. Acts viii.

It is not true therefore, that the first converts to the gospel were all of them men of low rank, or mean fortunes. The works, that our Saviour did, were not confined to the cells and cottages of the poor; they were public, they were manifest to all, and they testified of him, that his Father had sent him, the expected Messiah, the deliverer, and the prince *.

But

* That the word *Shilob* שִׁלֹּה Gen. xlix. 10. signifies *the deliverer*, may be proved from the idea Jews and Christians have of the Messiah, and from the use of that word in one of the oriental dialects. *شالآ* Shalâ, signifies *delivered*, and the being *called to deliver from danger*, Golius's Arabic Lexicon, col. 1308. and for this sense the authorities of *Gieubaris* and *Ibn maruph* are cited. But as the learned Schultens, in his *Origines*, had
derived

But as he was a prince without a temporal power, a deliverer who appeared unable to deliver himself, “ a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs,” the Jews, who had

derived *Shiloh* from شال *Salâ*, ‘ to liquidate ‘ or restore things, that had been greatly disturbed, to tranquility, peace, and opulence,’ p. 75. Origin. Hebr. I wrote to my most learned friend Dr. Hunt, professor of Hebr. and Arab. at Oxford, who was pleased to prefer the former derivation, and to confirm it by the authority of the great Arabic Lexicon *Kamus*, which expounds شال by شال *to deliver*, and that شال *from distress or destruction*, from whence the noun شال *virtus, robur, &c.*

And since this I have met with the same derivation in the *Horæ Talmudicæ* of *Schoetgenius*, Tom. i. p. 1270. who thinks the idea of prince and dominion, may likewise be deduced from the use of the Hebrew verb שלה in Lament. i. 5. and Dan. iv. 1. But of this prophecy, Gen. xlix. 10. the insertion of the letter (‘), &c. I have much more to communicate than can be contained in a short note.

formed

formed very different conceptions of him, and who were a gross, sordid, selfish people, chose to deny his mission, though they could not deny the miracles that proved it.

Indeed it never was disputed, till of late, whether Jesus and his disciples performed the miracles recorded of them in the Scriptures of the New Testament : And surely it is as absurd to begin to deny them now, at the distance of more than seventeen hundred years, as it would be to begin to prove them, if they had never before been acknowledged. Remote facts must be left to as remote records, and if they establish them, it is in vain, when it is too late, to contest them.

The Gospels have every internal mark of genuine and authentic records; and it is impossible to read them, and not see they contain a history that could not be invented after
the

the destruction of Jerusalem. There are too many facts, and too many circumstances of persons, places, and times, to be forged without a discovery; and it is absolutely unimaginable, that the disciples and their followers should undergo the labours, and tortures, and miseries, and cruel deaths they were exposed to, in support of what they pretended to have seen or heard, concerning a meek and humble man, whose kingdom was not of this world, and who had been put to death for the opinions they promoted, if all was invention, and they themselves were impostors.

The disciples, who lived with Jesus, could not possibly be imposed upon, for whatever delusion the sight may be liable to, they certainly knew whether they themselves had a power of working miracles, and of talking languages they had never learned. And Cle-

ment and Polycarp, who lived with them, who died for the same opinions, and who were men of good understanding, could be no more deceived than they themselves were. Irenæus lived to converse with Polycarp, and Justin the Martyr was older than Irenæus; and from these we have a regular succession of historians, in number and authority sufficient to establish the credibility of ecclesiastical history.

No period of antient times is delivered down to us with so much certainty, or is so well attested by such variety of evidence, as is that of the gospel. What other facts have ever been sealed with the blood of so many martyrs? Or what other opinions have ever spread and prevailed with such rapidity, and force of conviction, as those of the Christian Faith? Paganism, however general it may have been, was not one religion, but one

name for many very different systems of religion; and Mohammedism, which possesses so much of the globe, is also a mixed persuasion that allows both of a divine dispensation to the Jews, and of the gospel of Jesus.

But the different methods of propagating these religions in the world, are sufficient to distinguish the true from the pretended revelation. He, who lays down his own life in support of his doctrine, gives us a much better opinion of himself and his sincerity, than he who plays the apostle and the murderer together. Patience in sufferings, even unto death, is a fairer proof of innocence than persecution and massacres. And as nothing ever honoured Christians more, than the suffering of their martyrs under the persecution of others, so nothing ever disgraced them so much as their persecuting one another.

But no force, no artifice, no human policy, no vain ambition, no proud science, had any share in the first advancement of the Christian Faith. No; it derived its success from its own intrinsic merit, from the divine authority manifested in it; from the awful truths it contained, from the exalted morality it recommended, and the universal charity it breathed. It had not its foundation laid in enticing words, it had not the specious gloss, of human wisdom, but “demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” (1 Corin. ii. 45). or in other words, of prophecy and miracle, which rendered all such feeble aids unnecessary.

Alas! what is man’s wisdom, that we should lay so much stress upon it? How short is the space of time allowed us to improve it? How few are the premises we are able to comprehend?

How

How short is the chain of reasoning we are able to form? How frail, how feeble, how transitory are all the hypotheses we are able to build? How much are we the dupes of our own passions? How selfish in all our ways? Ignorance misleads us, pride and rashness make us slight or overlook the plainest truths; and little more than anxiety and uncertainty have been the only genuine fruits of all our boasted philosophy. What, therefore, a race of beings raised one degree above ourselves might justly regard with derision, we may suppose the greatest Being of Beings regarded with compassion. However, thus much is gained by the efforts we had made to trace out a first cause, and unravel the inextricable web of Providence, as to shew, notwithstanding our inability to remove many doubts, that we are religious as well as rational Beings.

Pri-

Private happiness, and public prosperity, it had been discovered, required a religious basis: This the very idolatries of the world had demonstrated. But then these idolatries had closed up the door of truth, instead of opening it; and darkened and bewildered the world, instead of directing and enlightening it. In the fulness of time, therefore, for his own glory, and for the restoring light and life to the benighted sons of Adam, God himself interposed, and caused a Sun of Righteousness to shine upon them.

And one would have thought the glad tidings of peace on earth, and good-will towards men, offered freely to all, would have been as gladly accepted by all.

To be told by a voice from heaven what was our duty, and to see heaven opened to all, in consequence of our discharge of it, one would have
 thought,

thought, should have filled every heart with gratitude, and every mouth with praise.

But what was a stumbling-block to the Jews, proved also foolishness to the Greeks; and not only to the vain, pretending, self-conceited, sophists of former times, but to their representatives still to be met with even in ours.

To doubt modestly, ought to be tolerated, to inquire carefully is meritorious, but to cavil petulantly, and pronounce dogmatically in matters of the utmost consequence to the repose of government, the welfare of society, and the general peace of mankind, is not only to act a very disingenuous and unbecoming, but, give me leave to say, an anti-christian part.

It seems to argue, that the men who act in this manner, love darkness rather than light, because their deeds
are

are evil. In order therefore, that there may be fewer of these in the next generation, for there have been too many of them in this, it is to be wished, that greater care were to be taken of the education of our youth : If they were all early instructed in the principles of religion, and religion were placed upon its true basis, it would be better for them and their country ; and if to read the Bible, a privilege so dearly purchased for us by the blood of so many of our fathers, was a little more in fashion than it is, vice, and its offspring infidelity, would be less popular than they are.

It has been hinted, that men are religious as well as rational beings, ever influenced either by true religion, or the abuse of it, which is superstition ; for no man is entirely free from the dominion of one or the other. His history, as well as his nature,
 prove

prove this to be true; as also, that he is not to be governed but by religion; that society cannot subsist without religion; and that laws derive their usefulness and efficacy from it: For where there is no religion, there can be no conscience; where there is no conscience, there can be no sense of obligation; and where there is no sense of obligation, laws will be of little use.

Since, therefore, man must be of some religion or other; since it is notorious the worst men are the most superstitious *, and he who pretends to

* Many instances may be produced out of history to prove this assertion, but I shall content myself with only that of Lucius Cornelius Sylla, who was one of the most profligate and most superstitious men in the world. He was guilty of every vice, and every species of barbarity: His own house was a scene of dreadful execution. He was a slave to dreams and omens, and yet so impious, as to cut

D down

to believe the least, is the most preposterous and paradoxical, if not more credulous than others; the honest and the sensible will enquire after true religion, and having found it, follow it as their best director.

In the search after this faithful guide, in the sacred writings, they will hear of revelations that lay claim to the confirmation of miracle and prophecy; and, since the extinction of paganism, they will find no religion raised up on so firm foundation. In short, if they believe the times for the coming of Messiah are past, and that the peculiar additions of

down the sacred groves at Athens. He sacrilegiously seized upon the treasures of the temples, particularly those of Epidaurus, Olympia, and Delphi; and yet was superstitious enough to ascribe his safety in battle, to a little image he wore in his bosom of Apollo, the very deity he had robbed. Read his whole life as it is in Plutarch.

Mo-

Mohammed to the Jewish and Christian revelations, are his own, they will find the Christian the only religion in the world *. And when they
ex-

* The following passages taken from La Bibliotheque Orientale d'Herbelot, are sufficient to prove what is here said of the Mohammedans.

L' Alcoran donne ce titre (Seddik) au patriarche Joseph, à Jesus-Christ, et à la sainte vierge Marie sa mere. Ce mot Seddik signifie Temoin fidele et autentique. Article *Abúbecre*.

Remarquez encore que les Musulmans pendant qu'ils doutent des miracles de leur prétendu prophete, croient sans exception ceux de Moysé, et avoient non seulement ceux de Jesus-Christ, mais qu'ils lui en font faire beaucoup d'autres dans les années de son enfance, desquels l'évangile ne fait aucun mention. Article *Aiát*.

Bad Messih signifie le vent ou le souffle du Messie. Les Persans appellent ainsi la puissance que Jesus-Christ avoit de faire des miracles, parce qu'ils disent que, par son seul souffle, non seulement il ressuscitoit les morts, mais il donnoit aussi la vie aux choses inanimées.

examine it, they will discover in it all the marks of a divine original.

This

Ceux, qui font mieux instruits parmi eux des choses qui regard le Christianisme, avouent que l'évangile qui est aujourd'hui entre les mains des Chrêtiens, aussi-bien que celui qui y étoit au tems que le faux prophete Mahomet parut, est le veritable evangile de Jesus-Christ, et qu'il n'y en a point d'autre.

Engil.

On trouve parmi les traditions authentiques des Musulmans, celle qui porte que Jesus-Christ, qu'ils appellent Iffâ, doit, a son second avènement, reunir toutes les religions et toutes les sectes differentes au Musulmanisme. *Eflam.*

Mahadi directeur et pontife dans la religion Musulmane, le surnom du dernier Imam de la race d'Ali. Les Persans croyant que cet Imam doit se joindre à Jesus-Christ pour combattre l'Antichrist et ne faire de deux lois Chretienne et Musulmane qu'une seule.

Tous conviennent unanimement qu'il (Mohammed Aboulcassém, i. e. Mahadi) doit paroître à la fin du monde, immédiatement avant le second avènement du Messie, pour reunir toutes les sectes des Musulmans en une seule, et toutes les religions differentes au Musulmanisme, p. 604.

Voyez le passage de l'Alcoran où il est
parlé

This I have touch'd upon already ;
 but my subject requiring me to en-
 large upon it, I must take leave to
 add,

parlé de ces fossés ou puits de feu au Chapi-
 tre 85. est en ces termes les gens qui ont
 préparé les fossés pleins, &c. on fait souffrir
 aux fidèles. Et l'on peut remarquer que Ma-
 homet reconnoît en cet endroit que les Chrê-
 tiens de ce tems là étoient fidèles, c'est-à-dire,
 qu'ils faisoient profession de la véritable foy.

Il est parlé de la sainte Vierge tres honor-
 ablement en plusieurs endroits de l'Alcoran, ou
 l'on trouve même un chapitre entier qui porte
 son nom.

To these passages in Herbelot may be add-
 ed the sentiments of Achmet Benabdalla, the
 African physician, in a letter to Maurice, prince
 of Orange, and Emanuel of Portugal, in an-
 swer to this question, ' What think the Moors
 ' of our Lord Jesus Christ?' Dico eum haberi
 apud nos prophetam, et nuntium Dei (ut Au-
 riacus princeps Mauritius tunc etiam dixit) et
 benedictam Dei sanctam, Mariam ejus matrem
 et dominam nostram virginem, quæ peperit et
 concepit miraculo ex Deo omnipotenti. ' I
 ' answer, says the African, that he is held by
 ' us to be a prophet, and the messenger of God
 ' (as Maurice, prince of Orange, then said) and
 ' our

add, That it is an institution, in itself, worthy of God to command, and of man to obey; a reasonable service, well adapted to the different natures of God and man; a covenant between them of grace and mercy, with the conditions to be performed by us, that we may be partakers of them; delivered to the world by the Mediator, Jesus Christ, the Advocate for frail, degenerate man, his Saviour, Redeemer, King, and at the resurrection of the dead his Judge. Awful and most interesting truths, promulgated with authority from on high, attested by the powers of heaven, and the providence of God,

‘ our lady the virgin Mary his mother, to
 ‘ be blessed of God, holy, who brought him
 ‘ forth, and conceived him miraculously by the
 ‘ Almighty power of God.’ This letter of Achmet’s was given to Wagenfeil, author of the *Tela ignea Satanæ*, and after his death, a very few copies of it (*paucissima exemplaria*) were printed by his son at Altdorf.

by

by miracles and prophecies. Instances of the latter we may behold with our own eyes, in the accomplishment of the New Testament predictions, declaring, long before, what would be the fate, what the peculiar corruptions of the church of Christ in after-ages; and as we cannot but see this, if we look into the western world, we can have no reason to deny the former, since prophecy fulfilled is itself an undeniable instance of miracle*.

A religion from heaven seem'd to demand this proof of its origin: and

* Ὡς και εκ τουτων ἡμεις, ὡς εφην, τον Ιησουν και των μετ' αυτον γενησομενων προγνωσθην επισταμεθα, και εξ αλλων δε πολλων ὧν προειπε γενησεδαι τοις πιστευουσι και ὁμολογουσιν αυτον Χριστον.

' So from these, as I said, we know that
' Jesus had foreknowledge of what should
' come to pass after him, and from many
' other things, which he foretold should hap-
' pen to those who believed and confessed him
' the Christ.' Justini. Dialog. 1.

surely

surely the restoration of man may as well deserve the public attestation of heaven, as the creation of him; and it may be equally difficult to account for either, without miracle or revelation.

To create is an extraordinary exertion of divine power, at least it must appear so to us; and whenever man was newly made, as he could not be left at once to himself, destitute of all knowledge, and uninformed of the consequences of all his actions, so any such information or revelation, must have been equal to prophecy: it is in vain therefore, to object against the Christian Religion, on account of its being supported by miracle and prophecy, since there can be no religion without them.

If then we are forced to acknowledge not only that miracles may be, but that they actually have been perform'd,

form'd, it will be very unreasonable to refuse our assent to those of the gospel.

Notwithstanding the great growth of Infidelity of late, and the many writings in its favour, which serve to increase the number of unbelieving, superficial men ; notwithstanding the yet greater number of unbelievers, who are not readers, and who have never examined the merits of the Christian cause ; it is very certain, nothing, now said or done, can invalidate the evidence for facts accomplished more than seventeen hundred years ago. Infidelity would have begun with contesting the facts, if they had not been too conspicuous, and too well attested, to admit of any dispute : But as it did not in those early days dispute those facts, it is certainly now too late to dispute them. Whence then arises

later times ? Have any of our sophists discovered any antient records that contradict the history of the New Testament ? No, they do not pretend to any thing like it. Have they any new evidence, any other materials to work with, than what the old Infidels had furnished long ago ? Why no ; the evidence remains as it did, but Infidelity itself is changed.

The first or old infidels lived too near the times of Jesus and the apostles, to deny or dispute the miracles performed by them ; and the modern think themselves at liberty to do both, only because the glaring notoriety of the several facts upon record has, in the course of so many ages, been necessarily worn off. And I must ask again, if neither Christians nor Heathens, neither Jews nor Mussulmans ever denied the facts recorded by the evangelists ; if nor Celsus, nor Porphyry,

phyry, nor * Julian, nor long after them the Mohammedans, ever denied the

* In the sixth book of Cyril against Julian, are the following passages, by which it appears that Julian, though he would have diminished the glory of our Lord's miracles, could not deny them.

Ὁ δε Ἰησους...ουδεν ακοης αξιον, ει μη τις οietai τους κυλλους και τυφλους ιασαδαι, και δαιμοιων τας εφορχιζειν εν Βηθσαιδα και εν Βε-
θανια ταις κωμαις τ̄ μεγαισων εργαων εναι. p. 191.
edid. Spanhem.

‘ Jesus did nothing worthy report, unless
‘ any one think to heal the lame, and the
‘ blind, and to cure demoniacs, in the towns
‘ of Bethsaida and Bethany, are some of the
‘ greatest works.’

Ἰησους δε ὁ τοις πνευμασιν επιτατων, και Βα-
διζων επι της θαλασσης, και τα δαιμονια εξελαυ-
των, ὡς δε ὑμεις θελετε, τον ουρανον και την γην
απεργασαμενος. ου γαρ δη ταυτα τετολμηκε τις
ειπαιν περι αυτου των μαθητων, ει μη μοιτος Ἰωαν-
νης. Cyril. contra Julian, lib. vi.

‘ Jesus commanded spirits, walking on the
‘ sea, and driving out demons, and, as you
‘ will have it, made the heaven and the earth:

the miracles of Jesus, for what other reason, or on what new grounds, are they denied now?

But

‘ But no one of the disciples hath dared to say this of him, except John only.’ p. 313.

Julian was instructed in grammar by Mar-donius the eunuch, an heathen; in rhetoric, by Eubolius, who was far from being steady in the faith; and the good designs of the emperor, and of Eusebius the bishop, were frustrated by Maximus the philosopher. He does not appear to have ever been a Christian. He conformed for his own ends, and declared himself a heathen as soon as he could do it with safety to his person and dignities. Too much has been complaisantly said of his parts and learning; for he is far from being a writer of the first class. He was exceedingly superstitious, thinking it more reasonable to worship the sun than what is not an object of sight. There is more of malice and envy than true wit in his Cæsars, and his reproachful treatment of the Christians, was as cruel as it was unjust; to take away their fortunes, and tell them he thereby made them partakers of a gospel-gleffing, for blessed are the poor.

Ἐπειδὴ αὐτοῖς ὑπὸ τοῦ θαυμασιωτάτου ἱεροῦ
πρωτοεργάτου, ἰν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν εὐ-
δωτέρον

But if we had no other information than the New Testament itself gives, it

δωτερον πορευθωσι, προς τουτο συναγωνιζομενοι τοις ανθρωποις, αυτων τα χρηματα της Εδεσηων εκκλησιας, απαντα εκελευσαμεν αναληφθηναι, δοθησομενα τοις στρατιωταις, και τα κλημαία τοις ημετεροις προσεθηναι ωριζατοις. ινα πενωμενοι σωφρονωσι, και μη φερηθωσιν ης ετι ελπιζουσιν, ουρανιου Βασιλειας· τοις οικουσι δε την Εδεσαν προαγορευομεν απεχεσθαι πασης φασεως και φιλονεικίας, ινα μη την ημετεραν φιλανθρωπιαν κινησαντες, καθ' υμων αυτων υπερ της των κοινων αταξίας δικην τισητε, ξιφει και φυγη και πυρι ζημιωθειτες.

‘ Since it is provided by a most astonishing
 ‘ law, that they may with less trouble enter
 ‘ into the kingdom of heaven; to assist these
 ‘ men in this affair, we have commanded all
 ‘ the effects of the church of the Edeffeni to
 ‘ be taken away, and distributed to the sol-
 ‘ diers, and their possessions to be added to
 ‘ our own private ones: That by being poor
 ‘ they may become wise, and not be deprived
 ‘ of that heavenly kingdom they now hope
 ‘ for. We command the inhabitants of Edeffia
 ‘ to avoid all sedition and strife, lest they
 ‘ provoke our humanity, and you be made to
 ‘ suffer for the common disturbance, and be
 ‘ punish-

it should seem sufficient ; for I believe very few, if any, have ever critically considered the style and composition of these writings, the wisdom and oeconomy of the divine dispensation ; the truth and harmony of the relations they contain ; the strict uniformity of character preserved by the persons whose histories are related ; but have been thoroughly convinced

‘ punished with fire, sword, and banishment.’

He could do more than this, if the letter to the Jews, ascribed to him, be genuine, where he says, speaking of some who were desirous of oppressing the Jews, and who had been admitted to the table of Constantius.

Οὐς μὲν ἐγὼ ἐν χερσίν ἐμαῖς λαβόμενος, εἰς βόθρον ὤσασα ὤλεσα, ὡς μήτις μνημὴν ἐτι φερεῖσθαι ἢ εἶναι παρ’ ἡμῖν τῆς αὐτῶν ἀπώλειαις.

‘ Whom I seized with my own hands, and destroyed, by thrusting them into a pit, that there might be no report amongst us left of their destruction.’ See the note, p. 113, 114. of an introduction to Universal History, translated from the Latin of Baron Holberg.

and

and satisfied of their authenticity and truth.

To this we may add the historical accounts handed down to us from the apostolic days, by Christian writers, to whom nothing can be objected, but that they were Christians; that is, well informed of what they relate. And then, if we consider the amazing success it met with, spreading itself, in a few years, over all the known world; it is not possible to add any thing more to such clear manifestation of the truth, as it was in Jesus; unless we can shew, that the adversaries themselves have acknowledged many of the facts: And even this I shall soon do from their own writings; after which, what will remain for the unbeliever, if he will continue an unbeliever, but to shift his ground once again, and by attacking the religion, instead of the history of Jesus, deny
Christianity

Christianity to be as old as the Creation.

So public, conspicuous, and uncontestable therefore were the miracles of our Lord, that his enemies chose rather to blaspheme the power, than deny the fact : instead of acknowledging these miraculous instances of goodness and mercy, as well as of divine power, to proceed from the one and only God, they maliciously reported them to be the works of Belzebub, the prince of demons. But afterwards, when the power of demons, or Idolatry, was discovered to be vain, they ascribed the great actions of our Lord to his skill in magic ; and other later Jews, to his having stole from a stone in the sanctuary *, which never
was

* The story of the foundation-stone, called שתייה is in Toledoth Jeshu, near the beginning, told in these words,

was there, the true reading of the name of God : but neither Jew nor Gen-

ובעת ההיא היה שם מפורש הקוק בבית המקדש
 על אבן שתייה שכשכרה דור מלך את היסוד מצא
 שם אבן אהר על פי התהום ועליו היה הקוק השם
 והעלה אותו והניחהו בקדשי הקדשים.. ועשו שני אריות
 של נחשת בשמות ותלו אותם על פתח קדשי הקדשים
 אהר בימין ואהר בשמאל וכל מי שנבנס ולמד את
 השם מיד כשיצא היו נובחים בו האריות ומרוב פחד
 ובהלה היו השמות פורחים מלבו ושכח אותם... ונכנס
 להיכל ולמד שם האותיות הקדושים וכתב השם על
 הנייר והזכיר השם שלא יכאב לו והתך את בשרו
 וההביאנו את הנייר עם השם :

‘ And in that time there was Sheim-mapho-
 ‘ resch (the distinguished name of God) en-
 ‘ graved in the holy house (temple) upon the
 ‘ foundation-stone. For as king David dug
 ‘ the foundation, he found there a stone over
 ‘ the mouth of the abyfs, and upon it was
 ‘ engraved the name; and he took it up and
 ‘ deposited it in the holy of holies.—And they
 ‘ made two lions of brafs by the *names* (by
 ‘ enchantment) and placed them over the door
 ‘ of the holy of holies, one on the right, the
 ‘ other on the left. And every one who en-
 ‘ tered and learned the name as he went out
 ‘ (hearing) the lions bark, and from fear and
 ‘ per-

Gentile ever thought of denying the miracles. The dispute of old, between

‘ perturbation, the names escape him and are
 ‘ forgot (frightened by the roaring of the lions
 ‘ he forgets the name he had just before learn’d)
 ‘ And he (Jesus) entered the temple, and
 ‘ learned the name of the holy letters, and
 ‘ writ the name upon paper, and pronounced
 ‘ the name that it should not hurt him, and
 ‘ he cut open his flesh, and hid the paper
 ‘ with the name.’

The temple was not built by David, but by Solomon, how then could David deposite this stone in the holy of holies? If we believe the Mishna, this stone was known long before the days of David.

Joma. c. 5. §. 2.

משניטלהארון אבן היתה שם מימות נביאים
 ראשונים ושתייה היתה נקראת גבוהה מן הארץ
 שלש אצבעות :

‘ From the time the arc failed, there was
 ‘ a stone, within the memory of the first pro-
 ‘ phets, called the foundation-stone, three
 ‘ fingers high from the ground.’ 2. But Jo-
 ‘ sephus, speaking of the holy of holies, says
 ‘ expressly, ‘ There was nothing at all laid in it,
καὶ οὐδὲν ἐτίθει ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ἁγίων.

them

them and Christians, was not concerning the facts, but the cause.

We read of many thousands, Acts xxi. 20. who believed in Jesus, but who, nevertheless, circumcised their children, and walked after their own customs; and who were so offended with the great apostle of the Gentiles, as to lay hands on him, and bring him to a trial before Festus and Agrippa. These had no motives for conviction, but what arose from the evidence of facts, and were converts to them only, and not to the apostles.

From such sort of believers proceeded many strange sects, and certain spurious editions of the gospel. But of these there are many more names than books * ; all of them are founded upon
on

* The gospel of the Nazarenes, the Ebionites, the twelve apostles, according to the Hebrews, of Bartholomew, Cerinthus, was the

on the true gospels, but charged with such absurd additions, as serve to proclaim their forgery, and to promote, rather than lessen, the credibility of the true gospels; which come to our hands from the last and most beloved disciple of Jesus: And from that time to this, the church never admitted any other, nor, in all its controversies, suffered any alterations wilfully to be made, in favour of any prevailing opinions; but orthodox and heretic constantly appealed to the same decisive authority, the same book. And from the commentaries and controversies of Christian men, and the citations they have severally made of Scripture, at different times, and in very distant places, we have the surest evidence that the copy of the Scriptures we possess is genuine.

same, in all probability, with the Hebrew gospel of St. Matthew, interpolated.

And

And that there may be no doubt of miracles having been performed by Jesus and his disciples, we will now call upon the antient Jews and Pagans, to declare what they knew of these matters.

The first and most inveterate enemies of Christ and Christians were the Jews, who expected a conqueror, not over death, but kingdoms; not one to save, but to destroy; they wanted a redeemer, not to deliver them from the power of sin, but the yoke of their enemies; they desired not so much the salvation of the world, as the destruction of Rome; and instead of a pious resignation to the good designs of providence, they thirsted for revenge, dominion, and the sword. Disappointed in all these expectations, they crucify their only Messiah, the Lord of life; and having rejected him, they were so far rejected by him, as to be
be

be drove into a state of dispersion; in which they now are, and will continue to be, “until the fulness of the “Gentiles be come in *.” This dispersion,

* וזה גרם לאכזר ישראל בהרב ולפזר שאריתם
 ולהשפילם ולהחליף התורה ולהטעות רוב העולם:
 Maimonides de Christo, §. 4.

‘ And he (Jesus) was the cause (or it was
 ‘ on his account) that Israel perished by the
 ‘ sword, that their remains were dispersed and
 ‘ oppressed, the law changed, and the greater
 ‘ part of the world perverted.’

It is evident from Josephus, the Jewish historian, that James was put to death not long before the destruction of Jerusalem; and Origen cites Josephus (though it be an error) for saying, that the death of James was the destruction of that city. I think the cause of Origen’s mistake was no other than his own reasoning upon the passage, as it now stands in Josephus; by which it is plain, that the putting James to death was almost universally resented by the people, as a wicked abuse of power: and that commotions should arise from thence, and be followed by the ruin of the state, does not seem to be a strange conclusion.

perſion, as well as the deſtruction of the city of Jeruſalem, they own to have been the conſequence of his death, or to have been cauſed by him: And in the antient writings of their Rabbi's, often ſpeak of him as * lifted up or crucified. They call him † Jeſus of Nazareth; the ‡ ſon of Mary ||, the

cluſion. Maimonides, we know, aſcribes the deſtruction of Jeruſalem to our Lord. And when we conſider how difficult it muſt have been to cite paſſages from ſuch volumes, as the antients uſed, and without indexes, it muſt not be thought partial in us, if we pardon Origen, not only for this miſtake, but for his omiſſion alſo of the famous paſſage concerning Jeſus (ſee the remarks of the learned Dr. Foſter upon this place) which may have been in the original Joſephus, even though it were wanting in Origen's copy.

* התלוי paſſim.

† יֵשׁוּ הַנּוֹצְרִי Sanhedrin. † paſſim.

‡ מרים בת עלי Sanhedrin. ||

But this is an error, for it was Joſeph her husband who was the ſon of Eli. See the annotations

the daughter of Eli, whose son he was without the knowlege of her husband.

After

notations of Wagenfeil upon Toledoth Jeshu. Schoetgenius's horæ Talmudicæ, vol. II. p. 702. And Ezardus upon the Avoda Sara; who, however, is mistaken, p. 304. vol. I. in saying that Jesus was, out of contempt, called נגר בר נגר 'a carpenter, the son of a 'carpenter', in *Gemara*, fol. 50. 2. for there is no mention of Jesus in that place.

In the Toldoth Jeshu, published by J. J. Huldric, 1705. and which is very different from that published by Wagenfeil, there is mention made of the murder of the innocents, p. 12.

ודבר המלך יצא להרג כל טף הנמצא בבית לחם
וילכו הרצים ויהרגו כל טף כדבר המלך :

' And the king gave orders for the putting
' to death every infant to be found in Beth-
' lehem, and the king's messengers kill every
' infant, according to the royal order.

There is another testimony for this slaughter in Macrobian Saturn. l. 2. c. 4. Cum audivisset Augustus, inter pueros, quos in Syriâ Herodes rex Judæorum infra bimatum jussit interfici, filium quoque ejus occisum, ait, melius est Herodis porcum esse quam filium.

' When

After this, they say, he fled into * Egypt, and there learned those magic arts, by which he was enabled to perform all his

‘ When Augustus heard that Herod’s own son was killed amongst the infants, under two years of age, put to death, in Syria, by his father’s order, he said it was better to be Herod’s hog, than his son.’

Sixtus Senensis, in his Bibliotheca, pretends to have read the same answer in Dion Cassius, but it is not in any of our copies, all of which want that part of his history. Cedrenus too, says, that Herod was distinguished by the name of Παιδοκτονος, or slayer of children, but he does not mention his author.

* כד קטלינהו ינאי מלכא לרבנן אזל רבי יהושע
בן פרחיה וישן לאלכסנדריא של מצרים הנצריא :
Sanhedrin, fol. 107. 2.

‘ When Jannæus the king put the Rabbi’s to death, R. Joshua, the son of Perichia, and Jesus, fled to Alexandria in Egypt.’

בן סטדא כשפים ממצרים בסריטה שעל בשרו :
Shabbat. fol. 104. b.

‘ The son of Satda brought with him magic arts, from Egypt, inserting them in his flesh.’

his miracles. Again, they own two
 || witnesses were suborned to swear
 against him, and declare that he
 was † crucified on the evening of the
 Pas-

The comment upon this is,

שלא היה יכול להוציאן כתובים שהיו החרטומין
 בודקין כל היוצאין שלא יוציאו כשפים ללמד לבני
 מדינה אחרת:

‘ He could not bring away the writings,
 ‘ for the magicians searched every one on his
 ‘ departure, that he might not carry away
 ‘ the incantations to (the sons of) other coun-
 ‘ tries.’

|| כל חיבי מיתות שבתורה אין מבמינין עליהן
 חוץ מזו... ביצר עושין לו מרליקין לו אתהנר בבית
 הפנימי ומושיבין לו עירים בבית החיצון כדי שיתו
 רואין אותו ושומעין את קולו והוא אינו רואה הותן:
 † וכן עשו לבן סטרא כלור ותלאוהו בערב הפסח:

‘ To none of those guilty of death, by the
 ‘ law, are snares laid, except him (who has
 ‘ endeavoured to pervert another to idolatry
 ‘ and strange worship) how do they perform
 ‘ it to him? They light a candle in an inner
 ‘ room, and place the evidences in one with-
 ‘ out, so that they may see him and hear his
 ‘ voice, without his seeing them.’

‘ And

Passover. Mention is also made in these writings, of several of his † disciples, of Matthew, Thaddæus, and Bauni, the name of him who was after-

‘ And so they did to the son of Satda (placed
‘ men privately in the next room, to be evi-
‘ dence against him) in Lud, and suspended
‘ him on the cross, on the evening of the
‘ Passover.’

† תנו רבנן המשה תלמידים היו לו לישו מתאי
נקאי נצר ובוני ותורה:
Sanhedrin, c. vi. fol. 43. 1. fin.

‘ The Rabbins say that Jesus had five dis-
‘ ciples, Mathai, Nakai, Nezer, Boni and
‘ Toda.’

See Buxtorf's Talmud. Lexicon. col. 1458.
under סטר. Wagenfeil upon Toledoth Jeshu,
p. 17, 18, 19. Schoetgenius, Horæ Talmud.
vol. ii. p. 699. 703. The passages marked ||
and ‡, are cited by Buxtorf, in his Talmudic
Lexicon, col. 1458. Schoetgenius reading in
the next page of the Lexicon, Duo falsi testes
contra ipsum pronunciarunt [producti] ‘ Two
‘ false witnesses pronounced [produced] against
‘ him,’ but not reading what is said in the

terwards called Nicodemus, and of whom, as a very great, and good, and pious ruler, much is related in these books. In one of them * Eliezer tells his

preceding page, denies that Buxtorf has cited any authority for this; loco non simul indicato. non tamen est quod fidem ejus in dubium vocemus, p. 706. vol. ii. Hor. Talmud.

* מהלך בשוק העליון של ציפורי ומצאתי אחר מתלמידי ישו הנוצרי ויעקב איש כפר סכניא שמו אמר לו כתוב בתורתכם לא תביא אתנן זונה... ולא אמרתי לוכלו אמר ליכך לימדני ישו הנוצרי מאתנן זונה קובצה עד אתנן זונה ישוב ממקום הטנופת באו למקום הטנופת ילכו והנאני הדבר :

Avoda Sara, c. i. p. 130. Ezardus.

‘ Walking in the high street of Zippor,
 ‘ and I found one of the disciples of Jesu of
 ‘ Nazareth, James, a man of the town of
 ‘ Secania, who said to me, it is written in
 ‘ your law, Deuter. xxiii. 18. *Thou shalt not*
 ‘ *bring the hire of an barlot.* And I did not
 ‘ answer him, and he, adding, said to me, Je-
 ‘ sus of Nazareth taught me the meaning of
 ‘ Micha. i. 7. *For she gathered it of the hire*
 of

his friend Akiba, that he met with James, a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, in Zippor, a town in Galilee; who gave him the interpretation of a passage in the Old Testament, which he had received from Jesus, and with which Eliezer was, at that time, pleased. That the disciples of Jesus had the power of working miracles, and the gift of healing, in the name of their master, is confess'd by these Jews; who give an instance of it in the grandson of Rabbi Joshua, the son of Levi, who being in great danger, one of the disciples came, and would have cured him, in the name of Jesus*.

This

*' of an harlot, and they shall return to the
' hire of an harlot. From an impure place
' they came, to an impure place they shall
' go. And this interpretation (says R. Eliezer)
' pleased me.'*

* בר בריה של ריב"ל הוה ליה בלע אתמא הר בר
נש ולחש ליה מן שמויה דישוע פנדרה ואנשם מה נפך
אמר

This power is again acknowledged, in

אמר לו מה לחשתה ליה אמר ליה מלתא פלונית אמר
ניה היא ליה אלו מירת ולא שמע כן והותה ליה כן וגו' :

Sabbat. Hierosol. Shemona Sheratz.

‘ The grandson of R. Jose, son of Levi,
‘ swallowed (something) and there came one
‘ of the sons of men, and whispered (some-
‘ thing) in the name of Jesus, the son of Pan-
‘ dira, and he was about to (or did) recover :
‘ On his departure he (R. Jose) says to him,
‘ what did you whisper? he (James) says to
‘ him, such a word. He said, better were it
‘ for him to die, and not have heard it. And
‘ so it happened unto him.’

Thus it is in the *Pugio fidei*, published with annotations, by de Voisin, p. 290. But in the notes to the second chapter of the *Avoda sara*, by Ezardus, p. 311. it is cited differently, **ואינשם. היא. היה. מהפיף. כר נפיק** for **ואנשם. מיית. ומית.** and **ולא כן** without **שמע**. Which reading is confirm'd by a copy of the Talmud consulted, on this occasion, by Dr. Hunt, who observes that the same passage occurs again in the following chapter of the same Talmud, ain Momedîn; where it is **לא הרה שמע. מיל** ‘ and not to have heard *this word*,’ which is fuller and plainer than either **ולא כן** or **ולא שמע כן**.

the

* the case of the son of Dama, grandson of Ishmael, who was dying of the bite of a serpent, when James, the same who had the conference with Eliezer, came and offered to cure the

* מעשה בבן דמא בן אחותו של ר' ישמעאל שהכישו נחש ובה יעקב איש כפר סכניא לרפאות ולא הניחו לו ר' ישמעאל ואמר לו ר' ישמעאל אחי הנה לו וארפא מכנו ואני אביא מקרא מן התורה שהוא מותר ולא הספיק לגמור את הדבר עד שיצאתה נשמתו ומת קרא עליו ר' ישמעאל אשריך בן דמא שגופך טהור ויצתה נשמתך בטהרה:

Avoda Sara, 2 cap. p. 48. by Ezardus.

‘ There was an instance of this in the son
 ‘ of Dama, the sister’s son of R. Ishmael, who
 ‘ was bit by a serpent : And there came James,
 ‘ a man of the town of Secania, to heal him,
 ‘ but R. Ishmael would not suffer him. And
 ‘ he (the young man) said to R. Ishmael, my
 ‘ uncle, suffer that I be healed by him, and
 ‘ I will produce a passage from the law, to
 ‘ prove it lawful ; ... he scarcely uttered these
 ‘ words, when the spirit fail’d him, and he
 ‘ died. R. Ishmael spoke over him aloud,
 ‘ saying, Blessed art thou, O son of Dama,
 ‘ that thy body is pure, and thy soul hath de-
 ‘ parted pure out of it.’

young

young man, but the grandfather forbade it, and he died. In a much later work of the Jews, and that the most virulent of all the invectives against Jesus, his power of raising from the dead, and healing leprous persons, is acknowledged over and over again*.

To

* ויאמר הביאו לי מרת אחד ואחיה אותנו וירוצו
 ויחפרו קבר אחד ולו מצאו בו רק עצמות יבשות
 ויגידו לו לאמר לא מצאנו רק עצמות וימר הביאום
 ויביאום לו ויצרף העצמות עצם אל עצם וקם
 עליהם עור וכשר ויגידין ויקם ויעמוד אל רגליו ויהי
 ויראו האנשים את הדבר ויתמהו ויאמר להם
 הזאת לכם תימה הביאו לי מצורע אחד וארפא אותו
 ויביאו לו מצורע וירפא אותו גם כן בשם המפורש:
 ויהובראותם כן ויפלו וישתחוולו ויאמרו לו בודאי בן
 אלהים אתה:

‘ And he said, Bring hither to me a dead
 ‘ man, and I will restore him to life. And
 ‘ they ran and broke open a sepulchre, and
 ‘ found in it nothing but dry bones, and they
 ‘ hasten to him to tell him, that they found
 ‘ nothing but bones. And he said bring them.
 ‘ And they brought them, and he joined the
 ‘ bones, bone to bone, and brought over
 ‘ them

To these concessions we may add, what Josephus has said of the time when the Jews, according to their prophets, ex-

‘ them, skin and flesh, and sinews, and he
 ‘ arose and stood upon his feet and lived.
 ‘ And the men, who beheld, wondered at
 ‘ the thing. And he said to them, do you
 ‘ wonder at this? Bring me one that is a
 ‘ leper, and I will cure him. And they
 ‘ brought to him a leper, and he cured him
 ‘ also, by the name Hammaphorash. And
 ‘ when they beheld these things, they fell
 ‘ down and worshiped him, and said unto
 ‘ him, of a truth thou art the Son of God.’

ויאמר ישו הביאו לי מצורע אחד וארפאנו ויביאו לו
 מצורע וישם ידו עליו ויזכור שם הגדול ויטהר את
 האיש וישב כבשר הנער: ויאמר עוד ישו הביאו לי מרת
 ויביאו לו מרת אחד וישם ידו עליו ויזכור את השם
 ויהי ויעמוד על רגליו:

Toledoth Jesbu, by Wagenfeil, under the
 title of *Ignea tela Satanæ*.

‘ And Jesus said, Bring hither to me a
 ‘ leper, and I will heal him. And they
 ‘ brought him a leper, and he put his hand
 ‘ upon him, and pronounced the great name,
 H and

expected Messiah, the Prince and the Deliverer; and what he has said of John the Baptist, and his death, and
of

‘ and the man was cured, and he became
‘ again like the flesh of a child; moreover,
‘ Jesus said, Bring hither to me a dead body,
‘ and they brought him one that was dead:
‘ he laid his hand upon him, and pronounced
‘ the name, and he came to life, and stood
‘ upon his feet.’

It is necessary to observe here, that in the abstract of the Talmud, which is in common use with the Jews, and also in the printed copies of Medrash Kohelet, the name of Jesus is omitted; but in the Tosaphoth, or marginal additions to the Avoda Sara, it is expressed thus;

יעקב איש כפר שבני 'מתלמידי ישו:

‘ James, a man of the town of Secania,
‘ one of the disciples of Jesus.’ And in the Gloss of Jarchius;

יבא יעקב איש כפר שבניא שמו לרפואותו בשם רבו ישו.

‘ And there came James, a man of the
‘ town of Secania, to him, to cure him in
‘ the name of his master Jesus.’

of the murder of James, the brother of Jesus.

And now we may surely be permitted to infer, that so many gospel facts would never have been admitted by these early Jews, if the gospel-history had not been true; for they, of all adversaries, would not have borne their testimony also to the miraculous powers of Christ, and his apostles, if they could have been denied. And whatever they may have said on the other side * against our Sa-

Compare the annotations of de Voisin to the *Pugio fidei*, p. 298. with those of Ezardus to the second chapter of Avoda Sara, p. 313.

The reason why the old Rabbins refused to have their grand-children cured בִּשְׁם יֵשׁוּ in the name of Jesus, was, because Christians are esteemed *minim*, or heretics, by them, and the name of Jesus is, to them, an Avoda Sara, or idolatry.

* See Sepher Toledoth, published by Wagenfeil. This book applies all that is said of Mary, the dresser of women's hair, in the

Saviour or his mother, by mistaking Mary Magdalene, for the mother of Jesus,

Talmud, to the mother of Jesus. The circumstances being so many, and so exactly the same, it is hardly possible to suppose that the Jews could mean any other by Jeshu, the son of Satda, than our Lord Jesus Christ: nor is there any pretence against this, but what arises from a mistake in the Jewish chronology. But the Jews are well known to be very bad chronologers at best, and in this case are most remarkably inconsistent. So that they are of no authority in determining the age of Jesus, as will appear from the following collections.

The son of Satda (Mary) and Pappus, son of Jehuda, by Pandeira, the disciple of Joshua ben Perachija, lived in the reign of Alexander Jannæus, an. m. 3670. See Zemach David. Pappus was living before Akiba died, anno mund. 3880. And Mary, the mother of Jesus, is said to have lived in the times of Akiba. Here then is an anachronism of about two hundred years.

Another proof of the confusion and uncertainty of their chronology is, according to them, Mary lived under the second temple, in the time of Alexander Jannæus; but the angel
of

Jefus, and by charging her fon with the exercife of magic, and with other calum-

of death is faid to be with R. Bibi ben Abai, and to order Mary (the fame Mary diftinguifhed by them, in this and feveral other places, as one who drefs'd women's heads) to be brought to him, that is, according to Jar-chius, to be kill'd. But Bibi lived long after the fecond temple, and is reckoned one of the Gemarifts.

See all this proved by Ezardus, in his notes to the firft chapter of *Avoda Sara*, p. 300, 301. and by Voifin, in his annotations upon the *Pugio fidei*, p. 299.

Again; the fon of Satda, as it is in Wagenfeil's *Toledoth Jefhu*, lived under Alexander Jannæus, and performed fome of his miracles in the prefence of queen Helena. Now Alexander lived before the Cæfars reigned in Rome, a. urbis c. 675. And Helena, when Claudius reigned, a. u. c. 794. Alexander reigned twenty-fix years. So that here is, by this account, an anachronifm of about a hundred years.

הילני מלכת האדיאבני ושני בניה מונבז
ואיזאטי התגירו בימי הקיסר קלודיא:

‘ Helena, queen of the Adiabeni, and her
‘ two fons Monbaz and Ifates, became pro-
‘ felytes

calumnies, is easily removed, by considering the moral and religious character of our Lord, which is far greater than ever was represented in any other person in the world. He, of all philosophers or legislators, was the only one who confirmed every law, and every precept of his own making, by his own example: He was King, Priest and Prophet, and yet the Servant of his own disciples, the subject of his own laws; meek, humble, and obedient, even unto the death of the cross, the end he had foretold of himself. He, of all men, alone was free from sin, * “who did no violence, “neither was any deceit in his mouth;” and it is impossible to read his story, and not reject the calumnies and blas-

‘selytes in the Days of Claudius Cæsar.’
Zemach David. See Buxtorf’s Talmud Lexicon, under מנב.

* Ifaiah liii.

phemous

phemous aspersions of Jews and Gentiles.

Again, there is nothing in the gospels, nor in Josephus, that intimates the least reflection on the character of the blessed Mary * : On the contrary, the great regard and tenderness expressed by Jesus for his mother, and the excellent character of James, the brother of Jesus, as it is reported by the Jewish historian, seem sufficient to declare her innocent †. If

* There is a passage in Massecheth Kallah, fol. 18. 2. in which Akiba, the great Akiba of the Jews, promises her eternal happiness, if she will confess the truth concerning her son. She is then said to have owned, that he was spurious. But on requiring Akiba to confirm his promise by an oath, it is said,

ר"ע נשבע בשפתיו ומכטל בלבו.

‘ R. Akiba swore with his lips, but denied ‘ it in his heart.’ What credit can be given to such a witness as this? Schoetgenius, vol. ii. p. 696.

† Ταυτα παντα ανεπλασαν επι καθαιρεσαι της παραδοξου απο αγια πνευμαλιου συλληψεως·
εδυνατισο

If we now inquire of the Greeks
and Romans, after what was done in
Pale-

εδυνατό γαρ αλλως ψευδοποιησαι δια το σφοδρα
παραδοξον την ιστοριαν, κ̅ μη ωσπερι ακριστως
συγκαταθεσθαι, ὅτι εκ απο συνηθων ανθρωποις
γαμων ὁ Ιησους εγεννηθη· κ̅ ακολουθον γε ην τες μη
συγκαταθεμεντες τη παραδοξω γεννησει τς Ιησϋ
πλασαι τι ψευδ̅· το δε μη πιθανως αυτες τ̅το
ποιησαι, αλλα μετα τς τηρησαι, ὅτι εκ απο
τς Ιωσηφ παρθεν̅ συνελαβε τον Ιησϋν, τοις
ακθειν κ̅ ελεγχειν αναπλασμαλια δυναμενοις, εναρ-
γες ην ψευδος· αρα γαρ ευλογον, ἡ̅ τοσαυτα ὑπερ
τς γενες των ανθρωπων τολμησαν̅ια, ινα το ὅσον
επ' αυτω, παντες Ἑλληνες κ̅ βαρβαροι κρισιν θειαν
προσδοκησαντες, αποσ̅ωσι μετα της κακίας, παντα
δε πρατίωσιν αρεσκοῖως τω των ὄλων δημεργω,
παραδοξον μεν μη εχηκειναι γεννησιν, πασων δε
γενεσεων παρανομωτατην κ̅ αιχιστην; &c.

Origen. contra Celsum, p. 25, 26.

‘ All these things they feigned, in order
‘ to set aside the miraculous conception by the
‘ Holy Ghost. For they might, otherwise,
‘ misrepresent the history, as fabulous, because
‘ exceedingly miraculous, and deny, though
‘ inwardly convinced, that Jesus was not born
‘ in the common way of the married state of
‘ men; and consequently invent a false story,
‘ not acknowledging the miraculous birth of
‘ Christ.

Palestine, we shall find much in favour of our religion, related by the Christian fathers *. According to their

‘ Christ. But they did not render it plausible ;
 ‘ for, having admitted that the Virgin was not
 ‘ with child of Jesus by Joseph, it must ap-
 ‘ pear to all, who can discern and confute
 ‘ fictions, to be a manifest forgery. For is it
 ‘ at all probable, that one who has dared so
 ‘ much for human kind, that, as much as in
 ‘ him lay, all (men) Greeks and Barbarians,
 ‘ from the expectance of divine Judgment,
 ‘ might abstain from evil, and do every thing
 ‘ pleasing to the Founder of the Universe ;
 ‘ should himself not be distinguished by an
 ‘ extraordinary birth, but be the offspring of
 ‘ a most infamous, and most wicked prostitu-
 ‘ tion,’ &c.

* *Vetus erat decretum ne qui Deus ab imperatore consecratur nisi à senatu probatus. Scit M. Æmilius de deo suo Alburno : [in primo contra Marcionem idem meminit sed à Metello non Æmilio] Facit et hoc ad causam nostram, quod apud vos de humano arbitratu divinitas pensatur, nisi homini Deus placuerit, Deus non erit, homo jam deo propitius esse debbit. Tiberius ergo, cujus tempore nomen Christianum in seculum intravit, annunciata*

their reports, Tiberius, informed by Pilate of the resurrection of our Lord,
 moves

fibi ex Syriâ Palestinâ quæ illic veritatem istius divinitatis revelarant, detulit ad senatum cum prærogativa suffragii sui. Senatus, quia non ipse probaverat, respicit: Cæsar in sententia mansit, comminatus periculum accusatoribus Christianorum. Consulite commentarios vestros, illic reperietis primum Neronem in hanc sectam tum maximè Romæ orientem, Cæsariano gladio ferocissè. Sed tali dedicatore damnationis nostræ etiam gloriamur. Qui enim scit illum, intelligere potest non nisi grande aliquod bonum à Nerone damnatum.

Tertulliani Apologet. p. 6. Rigalt.

Tertullian, who lived at the end of the second century, and published his book de Pallio about the fifteenth of Severus, a. c. 207. says, ‘ By an ancient decree, not any God
 ‘ was to be consecrated by the emperor, unless approved of by the senate, as M. Æmilius knows was the case of his *Deus Alburnus*: (See the same cited in the first against
 ‘ Marcion, where is Metellus instead of Æmilius) and this makes for our purpose, as it
 ‘ proves you subject the divinity to human arbitration; unless the God pleases man, he
 ‘ shall not be a God, and men now must be
 ‘ pro-

moves the senate for his reception into their pantheon, or inrollment amongst their

‘ propitious to the Deity ! Tiberius therefore, in whose reign the Christian name entered the world, being informed, from Palestine in Syria, of those things done there to manifest the truth of this divinity, notified it to the senate, with the prerogative of his own suffrage ; the senate, because he had not laid before them the proofs, rejected it. Cæsar continued in the same mind, threatening those who informed against the Christians. Consult your own records, you will there find that Nero (who did not even spare his own mother) was the first who furiously employed the royal sword against this sect, which then increased greatly at Rome. But in such an author of our condemnation we even glory, for whoever is acquainted with his character, may know that nothing was condemned by Nero, but what was greatly good.’

However, the apotheosis of our Lord did not depend upon an order of the senate. The truth of his ascension is of more divine authority, than political debates, or interest of parties. And whether Tiberius acted the part given him by Tertullian, is matter of dispute.

their Gods: Vespasian and Titus dread
his

He who would satisfy himself, may read Faber, Bafnage, Vandale, against it; Pearson, Huetius, and Steph. Le Moyne, for it.

That Tiberius was informed by Pilate, is mentioned in this manner by Tertullian; *Ea omnia super Christo Pilatus, et ipse jam profuâ conscientiâ Christianus, Cæsari tum Tiberio nunciavit.* ‘ Pilate, who was in his conscience now a Christian, made known to Tiberius Cæsar all things concerning Christ.’ And again, *Eum mundi casum relatum, in archivis vestris habetis.* ‘ You have this event, in which the world is concerned, recorded in your archives.’ This has also been disputed. But as it was usual for the governors of provinces to transmit to the emperors an account of daily occurrences, it is not possible to suppose Pilate would have been permitted to have been silent, concerning the commotions that had arisen in his province, on account of the man Jesus. And it is most probable, that these acts, so often referred to by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others, were destroyed by the heathens, before the time of the Christian emperors, and are therefore lost to the world. For as to the gospel of Nicodemus, called also the Acts of Pilate, it seems to have been forged towards the end of the
3 third

his power and influence : * Adrian
 purposes divine honours to him, and
 forbids

third century. See *Caufabon's exercitat.* *Spanheim's eccles. hist.* *Fabricius's codex Apocryphus*; and the very learned *Mr. Jones's Canon of the New Testament.*

* *Christianos esse passus est.*

Matutinis horis in larario suo (in quo & divos principes, sed optimos electos & animas sanctiores, in quibus & Apollonium & quantum *SCRIPTOR TEMPORUM SUORUM DICIT, CHRISTUM, Abraham, & Orpheum, & hujuscemodi Deos habebat, & majorum effigies*) rem divinam faciebat.....Christo templum facere voluit, eumque inter Deos recipere, quod & Adrianus cogitasse fertur, qui templa in omnibus civitatibus sine simulacris jusserat fieri: quæ hodie, idcirco quia non habent numina, dicuntur *Adriani*: quæ ille ad hoc parasse dicebatur: sed prohibitus est ab iis, qui, consulentes sacra, repererant omnes *Christianos futuros, si id optatò evenisset, et templa reliqua deferenda.*

‘ He tolerated Christians.

‘ He performed his devotions in the morn-
 ‘ ing in his oratory, in which were the em-
 ‘ perors, the best, the chosen and more divine
 ‘ spirits, among whom was Apollonius, and as

forbids the worshipping of idols. Severus and Antoninus pius, erected statues to him, and worshiped him. If

‘ A WRITER OF HIS OWN TIMES DECLARES,
 ‘ CHRIST, Abraham and Orpheus, and Gods
 ‘ of this sort, and the effigies of his ancestors.

‘ He would have erected a temple to Christ,
 ‘ and have admitted him among the Gods,
 ‘ which Adrian is reported also to have had in
 ‘ view, when he commanded the temples in all
 ‘ the cities to be made without images in them;
 ‘ and which are now called Adrian’s, because
 ‘ they have no Gods; which he was reported to
 ‘ have prepared for this purpose, but was for-
 ‘ bid by those, who, consulting their oracles,
 ‘ found, that all men would be Christians, if
 ‘ that should fortunately happen, and that all
 ‘ other temples would be deserted.’

From the life of Alexander Severus, by Ælius Lampridius, according to the first printed edition. Some say it was wrote by Julius Capitolinus. But there was a MSS. copy of it in the Palatine Library, which gives it to Ælius Spartianus, who lived in the reign of Dioclesian, towards the end of the third, and beginning of the fourth century.

Note, If the reader chuses to refer *optato* to Adrian, he will then read ‘ according to his wishes’ instead of the word ‘ fortunately.’

these

these facts are objected to, as coming from Christians, let me ask, what is to be expected from other writers, who had not knowledge of these affairs sufficient for their own conviction? What from the Roman historians, and classic authors, as they are called, of affairs in Judea, or the Christian faith? The histories by Dionysius, Livy, Justin, conclude before the times of Christ. Eutropius, Paterculus, Florus, Sextus, published only short, very short abridgments of the Roman history, with little regard to the fate of other nations. Suetonius and Tacitus confine themselves almost entirely to the lives and characters of their own emperors; but yet they * both of them mention Christ, and the latter expressly speaks

* Suetonius in Claudio, c. 25. Tacitus, lib. xv. Autor nominis ejus Christus, qui, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pilatum supplicio affectus erat.

of him as “ the Author of the Christian
 “ name, who, in the reign of Tiberius,
 “ was put to death by Pilate, the Ro-
 “ man deputy.” Besides these there
 is not another author extant of this
 fort, from whom any evidence of
 these matters could reasonably be ex-
 pected, unless it be from Dio Cassius,
 and that part of his history, which in-
 cluded a period of five years before,
 and as many after our Saviour’s time,
 is lost*.

Pliny

* The Christians are charged with having
 destroyed the writings of their adversaries, and
 if the charge be true, it must be allowed they
 have diminished the evidence arising from facts,
 for the truth of the Christian religion, by de-
 stroying the concessions, together with the ca-
 lumnies of their adversaries. Theodosius the
 younger, indeed, ordered the writings of Por-
 phyry, and others, *contra religiosum Christiano-
 rum cultum*, against the religious worship of
 the Christians, to be burnt. But was Theo-
 dosius, or Christian men, the first who de-
 stroyed irreligious books? Was it not ‘ an
 ‘ antient

ancient practice of the Romans, to destroy every thing that might seduce the inhabitants of their city from the worship of their gods.' See Valerius Maximus, l. i. c. 1. *No-luerunt prisca viri quidquam in civitate Romanâ asservari quo animi hominum à deorum cultu avocarentur.* Are the Christians then alone to be blamed for taking this method of silencing the impiety of their adversaries? Did not Julian urge it as one reason why he desired to have the books of George, bishop of Alexandria, sent to him after that bishop's death? *πολλα δε ην και της των Γαλιλαιων διδασκαλιας α̅ βελοισμην μεν ηφανισθαι.* Epist. 9. 'For there are many (books concerning) the doctrines of the Galileans, which indeed I would have to be destroyed.' But after all, we are obliged to Cyril, for some remains of Julian, such as they are, and to Origen for all that remains of Celsus; unless it be true, as I have heard, that Celsus against the Christians is still extant in the Arabic language, and thence translated into French, but not published. Chrysostom was so far from thinking that the Christians destroyed the writings of the Pagans against them, that he seems to think, there would not have been any left, if the Christians had not been pleased to honour them with their notice. *Τοσσητος εστι των υπ̅ αυτων γεγραμμενων ο γελωσ, ω̅τε αφανισθηναι και τα βιβλια παλαι, και α̅μα τω̅ δειχθηναι και απολεσθαι τα πολλα.*

Pliny * and Julian speak of the manners of the Christians, as most devout

ει δε πε τι και ευρεθει διασωθεν, παρα χριστιανοις τωτο σωζομενον ευροι τις αν. edit. Savil. p. 444. vol. v. He says, ‘ There was this ridiculous circumstance attended their writings, that they were of no duration, for that many were lost as soon as known: But if any were preserved, they must be looked for amongst the Christians.’ Such was the regard shewn them by men of their own party. And if they were despised then, we have no reason to lament their loss now. What Ambrose says, in the preface to his commentary upon the gospel of St. Luke, was equally true of these writings, as of those spurious productions, of which he speaks thus; *Legimus ne ignoremus; legimus non ut teneamus, sed ut repudiemus, & ut sciamus qualia sint in quibus magnifici isti cor exaltant suum.* ‘ We read for information; not to receive, but to reject, and that we may know with what these boasters lift up their heart.’

* Pliny, in one of his letters to Trajan, says, *Essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire; carmenque Christo, quasi deo, dicere secum invicem, seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent,*

ne depositum appellati abnegarent; quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque coëundi ad capiendum cibum promiscuum, tamen & innoxium. Plinii Epist. 97. lib. x.

‘ The Christians were wont to assemble on
 ‘ a certain day, before it was light, and recite
 ‘ a hymn to Christ, as a Deity, in alternate
 ‘ strains, and to bind themselves by an oath,
 ‘ not to any thing bad, but, on the contrary,
 ‘ not to commit thefts, nor robberies, nor
 ‘ adulteries, not to falsify their faith, nor dis-
 ‘ own a pledge or deposite, when called upon.
 ‘ Which over, it was usual for them to de-
 ‘ part, and to meet again to eat together, in
 ‘ a harmless way.’

So Julian, in a letter addressed to Arsakios, chief of the Pagan priests in Galatia, advises them to take example from the good practices of the Christians. ‘ There is not, says the emperor, one of the Jews who begs, and the Galileans not only support their own (poor) but ours, *οἱ τῶν μὲν Ἰσραηλιτῶν εἰς μετὰ τῶν ἡμετέρων, καὶ τὰς ἡμετέρας. But it is strange, that he should, on this occasion, call such Galileans *δουλοειδῆς ἰσραηλιτῶν*. In the former part of the same letter, alluding to the virtues of the Galileans, he asks;*

Οὐδε ἀποβλεπομένῳ ὁ μαλιζα τὴν ἀδελφότητα
 συνηξήσεν ἢ περὶ τῶν ξένων φιλανθρωπία ἢ περὶ τὰς
 Κ 2 ταφάς

ταφας των νεκρων προμηθεια, ἢ ἡ πεπλασμενη
 σεμνότης κατὰ τον βιον· ὧν ἕκαστον οιομαι χρῆναι
 παρ' ἡμῶν αληθῶς επιτηδευεσθαι· και εκ αποχρη το
 σεμνον ειναι τοιούτον· αλλα παντας ἀπαξάπλως
 οἱ περι την Γαλατιαν εισιν ἱερεῖς, ἕς ἡ δυσωπησον,
 ἡ πεισον ειναι στωδαιεῖς, ἡ της ἱερατικης λειτερ-
 γιας αποστησον, εἰ μη προσεχοινηο μέλα γυναικων
 και παιδων και θεραποντων τοις θεοις, αλλα
 ανεχοινηο των οικετων ἡ υἱων ἡ των Γαλιλαιων
 γαμειων ασεβωντων μεν εις τῆς θεας, αθεοτήτα δε
 θεοσεβειας προτιμωνῶν· επειτα παραινεσον ἱερεα
 μήτε θεατρῶ παραβαλλειν, μήτε εν καπηλειῳ
 πινειν, &c.

‘ Why do we not see how much humanity
 ‘ to strangers, concern for the burial of the
 ‘ dead, and feigned chastity of life, have in-
 ‘ creased the religion opposed to Paganism,
 ‘ Every one of which, I think, ought fin-
 ‘ cerely and carefully, and habitually, to be
 ‘ practised by us. Not that this chaste (or so-
 ‘ lemn) appearance is sufficient. But, in ge-
 ‘ neral, oblige all the priests, by threats or
 ‘ persuasion, to be diligent, or dismiss them
 ‘ from the priestly function, if, with their
 ‘ wives and children, and servants, they do
 ‘ not attend upon the gods, and suffer the ser-
 ‘ vants, sons, or married Galileans, to be-
 ‘ have irreligiously towards the Gods, pre-
 ‘ ferring impiety to godliness. Moreover, ex-
 ‘ hort the priest not to approach the theatre,
 ‘ not to drink in taverns, &c.

devout and exemplary. Porphyry applied several of the oracles to Christ *, and

* Τίς δ' αν γενοίλο σοι τῶτων ἀξιοπιστος ὁμολογια μαλλον της τε καθ' ἡμῶν πολεμικῆ γραφῆς, ἢ εν οἷς επεγπαψε περι της εκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας εν τριτωι συγγραμματα τεθειλαι, ὡς δε πως ἱστορων κατα λέξιν.

Ὡς απο της ενεργείας αὐτῆς συνοραται τοις φιλαληθεσιν ἢ της περι αὐτον ενδεε ἀρεῆς δύναμις.

Χρησμοι περι το Χριστο.

Παραδοξον ἰσως δοξειεν αν τισιν ειναι το μελλον λεγεσθαι ὑφ ἡμῶν· τον γαρ Χριστον οἱ Θεοι ευσεβεσατον απεφηνανλο, και αδαναλον γεγονοια ευφημῶς τε αυτε μνημονευσι.

Και ὑποβας επιλεγει, περι γυν το Χριστο ερωτησαντων ει εστι Θεος, φησιν.

Οτι μεν αθανατη ψυχη μελα σωμα προβαινει,
Γιγνωσκει σοφιη τελιμημεν[⊙]· αλλα γε ψυχη
Ανερ[⊙] ευσεβειη προφερεσατη εστιν εκεινθ.

Ευσεβεσαλον αρα εφη αυτον, χη την ψυχην αυτε, καθαπερ χη των αλλων, μετα θανατον απαθανατιωθηται, ἢν σεβειν ανοοντας της Χριστιανθ· επερωτησαντων δε δια τι εκολαθη, εχρησεν.

Σωμα μεν αδρανεσιν βασανοις αιει προβεβληται.
Ψυχη δ' ευσεβεων εις θρανιον πεδον ἰζει.

Και επιλεγει μετα τον χρησμον ἕξης, αυτος ἦν ευσεβης, χη εις θρανθ ὡσπερ οἱ ευσεβεις χωρησας· ὡς ε τῆτον μεν θ βλασφημησεις, ελεησεις δε των ανθρωπων την ανοιαν. Ταυτα χη τιν ὁ
Πορ-

Πορφυριος· ἀρ' ἐν ἀπατεων ὠέτος; κ' ἂν τα φίλα
 σε δυσώπειτω των οικειων ρημάτων· εχεις τοι γαρ
 ἐν τον ἡμετερον Σωτηρα Ἰησεν τον Χριστον τε
 Θεο, κ' παρα τοις ἑαυτίσ ὠμολογημενον ε γοήτα
 εδε φαρμακεία, ἀλλ' ευσεβη κ' δικαιοτατον κ'
 σοφον κ' θραυτων ἀψιδων οικητορα.

Eusebii Demonstrat. Evangelii, lib. iii.

‘ Is there any evidence you would more
 ‘ readily embrace, than the confession of one
 ‘ who was our professed enemy? Which he
 ‘ (Porphyry) has delivered in the third volume
 ‘ of the treatise intituled, Philosophy from
 ‘ Oracles; where he expresses himself in
 ‘ these very words.

‘ That the efficacy of the divine virtue, re-
 ‘ lating to him, must be visible by its own
 ‘ energy to the lovers of truth.’

‘ Oracles concerning Christ.

‘ What we are going to say may, to some,
 ‘ perhaps, seem a paradox. For the gods
 ‘ openly declared Christ to be a most pious
 ‘ and an immortal Being, and honourably re-
 ‘ ported his memory.

‘ And after this he says, That, being con-
 ‘ sulted concerning Christ, whether he was a
 ‘ God, the answer was,

‘ That the immortal soul continues after the
 ‘ body,

‘ He who is renowned for wisdom knows.

‘ But the soul

‘ Of that man is most excelling in wisdom,...

‘ He

‘ He acknowleges him, therefore, to be most
 ‘ pious, and his soul, like others, after death,
 ‘ to be immortalized, which the senseless
 ‘ Christians adore. But being asked, why he
 ‘ was punished, the oracle replied,

‘ The body indeed is ever liable to little
 ‘ torments:

‘ But the mind of the pious rests in the
 ‘ plains of heaven.

‘ And, immediately after this oracle, he adds,
 ‘ he was pious, and went to heaven, as other
 ‘ pious persons do. You ought not there-
 ‘ fore to blaspheme him, but to pity the folly
 ‘ of men. This now is what Porphyry has
 ‘ said. And was he a deceiver too? Be ra-
 ‘ ther kindly affected by the favourable words
 ‘ of one of your own party. It is therefore
 ‘ confessed by your own writers, that Jesus
 ‘ our Saviour, the anointed of God, was no
 ‘ juggler, no Sorcerer, but pious, and most
 ‘ righteous and wise, and an inhabitant of the
 ‘ arched heavens.’

I will only make this one observation upon
 this long citation from Eusebius, That it con-
 tains not only the opinion of Porphyry, but
 the testimony of their gods, or, if you please,
 of their priests, who did not dare to deny the
 excellence of the character of Jesus. These
 oracles cannot be called the forgeries of the
 Christians: And whatever may be justly said
 against those of the Sibyls, these must have their

and represented him as “ pious and
 “ immortal, as one who had descend-
 “ ed into heaven, and superseded *
 “ the necessity of other gods, who
 “ were become useless to the public,
 “ since his appearance in the world.”
 Celsus too † acknowledged the extraor-
 dinary

weight with all who regard the authority of Por-
 phyry, or the testimony of our adversaries.

* *Ἰησοῦ τιμωμένῃ εὐδαιμονίας τις δυνάμις δημοσίας
 ὠφελείας ἠδεδείκτο.* Euseb. præpar. l. v. c. i.

† *Ἀνεπλάσθη δὲ τι ἕτερον συγκατατιθεμένη
 μὲν ὡς ταῖς παραδόξοις δυνάμεσιν, ἃς Ἰησοῦς
 ἐποίησεν, ἐν αἷσι τῆς πολλῆς ἐπεισεν ἀκολουθεῖν
 αὐτῷ ὡς Χριστῷ· διαβαλλεῖν δ' αὐτὰς βεβηλωμένους
 ὡς ἀπὸ μαγείας καὶ ἑτέρας δυνάμεις γεγεννημένους·
 φησὶ γὰρ “ αὐτὸν σκοπιὸν τραφέντα μιδαρνησαν-
 “ τὰ, εἰς Αἴγυπτον, δυνάμεων τινῶν πειραθέντα,
 “ ἐκεῖθεν ἐπαρῆλθεν, Θεὸν δ' ἐκείνας τὰς δυνάμεις
 “ ἑαυτὸν ἀναγορευούτα.”*

*Ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ἂν μαγὸς ἠγωνισάλο διδά-
 ξαι λόγον, πειθούτα [πάντα] πράττειν, ὡς Θεὸν
 κρινόντα ἕκαστον ἐπὶ πᾶσι τοῖς πεπραγμέ-
 νοις· Καὶ ἔτι διατιθέντα τῆς ἑαυτοῦ μαθητῶν, οἱς
 ἠμελλε χρῆσασθαι διακονοῖς τῆς ἑαυτοῦ διδασκα-
 λίας. Ἀρὰ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι ἔτι διδασκόμενοι ποιεῖν
 δυνάμεις, ἤρην τῆς ἀκρότητας, ἢ εἶδε δυνάμεις
 ἐποιεῖν;*

dinary powers which Jesus exerted,
and by which he prevailed upon many
to

εποιουν; το μεν εν λεγειν οτι θδραμωσ δυναμεισ
εποιουν, αλλα πιςτευσαντεσ θδεμια λογων ικα-
νοτηι, παραπλησιωσ τη εν διαλεκτικη Ελληνων
σοφια, επεδωκαν εαυθισ τω καινω διδασκειν λογον
οισ αν επιδημησωσι πανυ εστιν αλογον· τινη γαρ
θαρρηντεσ εδιδασκον τον λογον κ̄ εκαινοτομην;
ει δε δυναμεισ ετελεθην κ̄ εκενοι· τινα εχει πιθανο-
τηια το μαγικωσ τωσθτοισ κινδυνοισ εαυτεσ παρα-
βεληκεναι [εισαγοντασ] διδασκαλιαν μαγικιασ
απαγορευθσαν· θ δοκει μοι αγωνισαθαι προς λο-
γον, θ μετα σθηθησ αλλα μελα χλευησ ειρημενον.

Origen. contra Celsum, p. 30.

‘ But he [Celsus] feigned something else :
‘ he acknowledged the miracles Jesus perform-
‘ ed, by which he prevailed on many to fol-
‘ low him as Christ : but was desirous of ca-
‘ lumniating them as the effects of magic, not
‘ of divine power. For he says, he was
‘ brought up obscurely, and was a hired ser-
‘ vant in Egypt, where he learned certain
‘ powers, and returning thence, by means of
‘ his miracles, openly declared himself a God.
‘ But I do not understand how a magician
‘ could consistently and earnestly promote a
‘ doctrine that persuades every one to act,
‘ as if he was to give an account of all his
‘ actions to God in judgment; and so to pre-
L pare

to follow him, as the Messiah: But, willing to calumniate them, he feigned they were not the effects of divine power, but of magic, which he had learned in Egypt. His objections are the same with those of the Jews, from whom he borrowed them.

‘ pare and instruct his disciples, who were to
 ‘ be employed in the promulgation of his
 ‘ doctrine. Did they work miracles, and by
 ‘ them prevail with their hearers, or did they
 ‘ work no miracles? To say they did not per-
 ‘ form any miracles, but relying on no suffi-
 ‘ ciency of reason, after the manner of the
 ‘ Greeks in their logic, set themselves to teach a
 ‘ new doctrine where-ever they came, is very
 ‘ absurd. What encouragement had they to
 ‘ teach this doctrine, and cut out this new
 ‘ work? But if they wrought miracles, what
 ‘ probability is there, that magicians would
 ‘ expose themselves to such dangers, to intro-
 ‘ duce a doctrine that forbids magic? But it
 ‘ is not worth while seriously to contend against
 ‘ a discourse that abounds more with ridicu-
 ‘ lous cavil than reason.’

In the edition in 1677. for *Χρισταδαι inungi*,
 read *χρησταδαι uti*, as in Field's edition,
 in 1658.

Such

Such was the state of Infidelity in the first ages of the Christian profession, when the history of our Lord and his disciples could not, if a forgery, have been imposed upon both Jews and Gentiles, who then had opportunities of discovering a fraud, if there had been any, and who would not have acknowledged so many facts as they did, could they, with any pretence, or any degree of probability, have denied them.

The judicious Mr. Locke seems to have laid great stress upon the concessions of our adversaries, and to have been of opinion, that it was directed by Providence that the miracles should not be denied. “ The evidence of
 “ our Saviour’s mission from heaven
 “ is so great, says this eminent phi-
 “ losopher, in the multitude of mi-
 “ racles he did, before all sorts of peo-
 “ ple ; (which the Divine Providence

“ and Wisdom has so ordered, that
 “ they never were, nor could be, de-
 “ nied by any of the enemies and op-
 “ posers of Christianity) that what he
 “ delivered cannot but be received as
 “ the oracles of God, and unquestion-
 “ able verity *.” p. 256. of the rea-
 sonable-

* Even Lucian calls the Christian doctrine *θαυμαση σοφια των Χριστιανων*, the miraculous or wonderful wisdom of the Christians. See his death of Peregrinus. Where he speaks of *τον μεγαν εκεινον επι σεβασιν ανθρωπον, τον εν Παλαιστινη ανασκολισπιδεντα, οτι καινην ταυτην τελετην εισηγαγεν ες τον βιον.*—‘ that great
 ‘ man they now revere, who was crucified
 ‘ in Palestine, because he introduced this
 ‘ new religion into life.’—And, soon after, he gives the following account of the Christians;

Πεπεικασι γαρ αυτες, οι κακοδαιμονες, το μεν ολον, αθαιατοι εσεσθαι και βιωσεσθαι τον αι χρονον· παρ ο και καταφρονουσι τε θανατου, και εκουτες αυτες απιδιδουσιν οι πολλοι· επειτα δε ο νομοθετης ο πρωτος επεισεν αυτες, ως αδελφοι παντες ειν αλληλων· επειδαν απαξ παραβαντες, θεος μεν τες ελληνικες απαρησωνται, τον δε

fonableness of Christianity. See also
p. 263.

We

*δε ανεσκολοπισμενον εκεινον σοφιτην αυτων, προσ-
κυνωσι, και κατα τας εκεινε νομους βιωσι· κατα-
φρονθσιν εν απαντων εξισης, και κοινα ηγνυται,
ανευ τινος ακριβους πιτρωος τα τοιαυτα παραδε-
ξαμενοι. Lucian. περι της Περεγρινθ τελευτης.*

‘ These unhappy men persuade themselves,
‘ that they are altogether (here Lucian seems
‘ to allude to the resurrection of the body, as
‘ well as the immortality of the soul) im-
‘ mortal, and shall live for ever. And there-
‘ fore it is they despise death, and many
‘ willingly give themselves up unto it. More-
‘ over, this lawgiver was the first who per-
‘ suaded them, that they should be as brethren
‘ to one another. As soon as they left us,
‘ that they should deny the Grecian deities,
‘ and adore their master, him who was cru-
‘ cified, and live in conformity to his laws.
‘ They therefore were contemners of all alike,
‘ and held all things common, receiving such
‘ without any certain proof.’

Monf. le Fevre has published this part of
Lucian by itself, and is so angry with those
who would, on account of some expressions
against the Christians, not publish it, as to
shew that he, on the contrary, published it
only

We have therefore all the evidence from facts, that can reasonably be expected; for we have the testimony of some of the earliest and most inveterate enemies to the Christian cause, for the miraculous powers of its author, and his immediate followers; and the acknowledgement at least, of other ad-

only for the sake of those expressions. This angry critic neglecting, as the Latin translators have done, the article δ prefixed both to νομοθέτος and πρῶτος, *hic vel ille legislator qui primus*, &c. most absurdly supposes this first law-giver not to be Christ, but Paul, because the latter speaks of the brethren; as if it had not been the doctrine of Jesus that his disciples should love one another! Again, he changes κοινὰ *COMMON*, into κενὰ *vain, empty*, for no good reason that can be given: for the sense does not require any such alteration, nor is the real difficulty removed by it. The mistake is not in the original Greek, but in the Latin translation, where πίστις is rendered, by *Fides*, faith, instead of *evidence*. And that this is no forced sense, may be proved from the best Greek authors, who have used πίστις ἀκριβής, for *certain evidence*.

verfa-

versaries, which is most unexceptionable evidence; and, when added to the other authorities from history, of prophecy fulfilled, and the harmony, and many internal excellencies, of the Scriptures of the New Testament, will render it much more easy to account for the success of Christianity at first, than for the oppositions that have since been made to it.

Whilst the political, as well as religious use of sacrifices and oracles, prevailed in the world; whilst the superb and magnificent parade of Pagan ceremonies subsisted; so long as the multitudes of the hosts of heaven, instead of the God of hosts, were worshiped; all the opposition that a vain, superstitious and idolatrous world could raise against the gospel, and the professors of it, was to be expected: But now, since Christianity has, every-
where,

where, diffused its light and influence, and Paganism is no more, there can be no reason to oppose it.

The peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of Christianity cannot, surely, whatever is pretended, give offence to any man. That we are to forgive and be forgiven; that anger, and every rude and tumultuous passion, is to be subdued; that men are to respect God as their Father, and one another as brethren, and to bring forth the fruits of that love, which is the end of the commandment, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned: And that their defective, but sincere and diligent obedience, will be accepted of by him, according to the act of grace our Saviour, the Messiah, hath published in behalf of poor degenerate man: These, with a discovery of the character and offices of Christ, and
all

all the illustrations of the future world, can never be reasons, to men of sense and goodness, against the Christian religion ; but, on the contrary, must ever stand, as so many undeniable confirmations of its divinity.

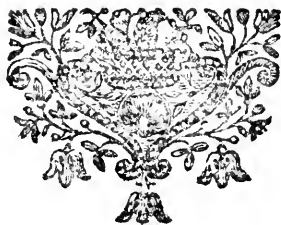
As, therefore, both the doctrines and the miracles reciprocally authorise and illustrate each other, we may safely defy both the wit and the malice of its most determined adversaries to destroy or undermine it.

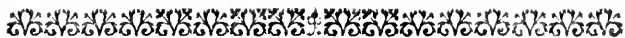
Being of God, it must stand, and the gates of hell can never prevail against it.

But then, let us never forget, that our faith is to be approved by our works : That a holy religion calls for a holy life ; and that we can never confute gainfayers so effectually, as by discharging the duties we recommend : That is, by letting our light

fo shine before men, as that they, fee-
ing our good works, may glorify our
Father which is in heaven.

To whom, with the Son and Holy
Ghoft, be afcribed all fupreme
power, dominion, honour, glory,
now and for evermore. *Amen.*





A N

A P O L O G Y

For Some of the

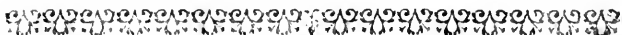
First CHRISTIAN Writers.

· W I T H

Some REMARKS upon the Ge-
ninenefs of the FOUR GOSPELS.

*Plusieurs personnes, n' aiant pas pour les pères de
l'eglise tout le respect qu'il faudroit, se plaisent à
les taxer d'une aveugle credulité.*

Monf. BAYLE.



A N
A P O L O G Y

For Some of the
First Christian Writers, &c.

THAT the argument, contained in the preceding discourse, may be complete, I have thought proper to subjoin some few observations upon the many false Gospels that have, by Toland, and another late writer, been considered as objections to the determining which are true, and upon the characters of some of the fathers who lived in, or immediately after, the days of the apostles, and from whom their successors received the copies of those Gospels, and other sacred writings, which have been delivered down
to

to us, and are received by us as genuine.

It will not admit of dispute, whether the Gospels we now have (and no other were ever received by the Christian church) are the same that Justin the martyr and Irenæus made use of: for the former of these good men largely cites many passages that prove them to be the same; and the latter writ expressly against Marcion, Valentinus, Basilides, and others, by whom the genuine Gospels, as well as the genuine religion of Jesus, were very grossly corrupted.

Nor would it admit of dispute, whether Clemens of Rome, Polycarp, and Justin, and other pious men, who, having lived either with the apostles, or with those who had been conversant, and even intimate, with them, may be justly called apostolical, were men of that stamp as to forge, and
impose

impose their forgeries upon mankind, if the lives and characters of these men were better known than they are. It is often a sufficient reason for abuse, that the person to be abused is not known; for many there are of such unhappy temper, as to indulge in calumny and scandal, though unprovoked, if they only think themselves secure from an immediate detection.

The greater the object, the more spirited and great it is held by such to calumniate it; and they would pass for brave, because they are impious; when the utmost bravery of this sort is neither more nor less than the most consummate impudence. But the characters of those, who pretend to draw the characters of other men, should first be considered; and, if they are found to be passionate, and prejudiced, and abusive, they will generally be thought to give their own characters,

whilst they misrepresent and malign others. If a man should charge the late Dr. Clarke with *impiety*, and yet himself blaspheme the God of Moses and of Paul, it must appear as ridiculous as it is base; and if the same person should speak of the author of the *Religion of Nature delineated*, as a lunatic, and a patient of Dr. Monroe's, there will arise some suspicion that this language, and this treatment, must proceed from less honourable motives, than a zeal for truth, or, than the calm spirit of philosophy will admit. And in this case, the greater the man, the more inexcusable his offence against decency and good manners*. But if the living are not
free

* Page 94. of the *Idea of a Patriot King*, Dr. Clarke is charged, by the author, as one who "*impiouſly aſſerts*" (things he never did aſſert) as being "*a preſumptuous dogmatist*;" and then the author taking the *Religionist* upon

free from calumny, how shall the dead escape it; and if our neighbour is abused, who

upon him, falls into this pious ejaculation... " *God forbid!*" p. 5. vol. v. 8vo. of Philosoph. works, Dr. Clarke is called an " *audacious, vain sophist.*" And p. 54. vol. v. it is said, " nothing but the *extremest stupidity of mind, or perverseness of spirit, and disregard to truth,* can make any man affirm like him (Dr. Clarke) that moral fitnesses are, &c. as manifest as mathematical truths.

Mr. Woollaston is treated in the same rude manner, by this peerless philosopher, who, p. 393. vol. iv. calls him the " whining philosopher." And p. 376. vol. iv. when Mr. Woollaston argues for the immortality of the soul, it is " *madness, nonsense, a mistake in the delirium of metaphysics.*" And again, after a very partial and defective account of Mr. Woollaston's arguments for the immateriality and immortality of the soul, the author of Works called philosophical, says, " I will detain you no longer about such discourse, as would convince you, if you heard it at Monroe's, that the philosopher who held it, was a patient of the doctor, not yet perfectly restored to his senses," p. 219. vol. i. Is this philosophy; this reasoning? and could Dr. Clarke and Mr. Woollaston, when dead,

who may soon hear, and as soon resent it, how easy will it be to abuse men who have been dead ages past, and who have, of late, been seldom mentioned, but for the sake of abuse and ridicule.

Some men had lifted up the authority of the fathers higher than could be justified: They were not content to make faints of them, but their opinions must be decisive in all matters of faith, and religious controversy.

From one extreme are the fathers fallen to the other, from having been

provoke this, or any man, to rail against them in this unworthy and indecent manner, who, when living, were as remarkable for the excellency of their dispositions, and moral virtues, as for the powers of their minds, and the extent of their knowledge and reading; in all which they were ornaments, and an honour to their country, and were distinguished as such; which was enough to provoke this *foul-mouth'd, very trifling critic*, and *dogmatical pedant* (these are his own words, p. 332. vol. iii. 8vo.) to snarl at and abuse them in this outrageous manner.

almost

almost Gods, they are become lower than the children of men. The great reverence the Christian world once had for them, may have proceeded from the excellence of their characters, and a frequent reading their productions; for it is hard to read them, and not to be prejudiced in their favour: And that this esteem is now gone, may be owing to a neglect of their writings: and perhaps they who have been most free in their censures of them, have been least conversant in their works. Men who knew nothing more of them, than that they were Christians, strangers to their very names *, as well as to their

* *Quibus si laboriosam aliquam defensionem parare velim, omnium sim vanissimus; cum sciam hæc, non ex judicio, sed ex nequitia, & insita quâdam improbitate animi, aut saltem ex impotentiâ, summâque levitate, provenire. Quomodo enim ex judicio hæc decernant? nisi forte tam acre & stupendum judicium habeant, ut de istis, quæ non intelli-*

N 2

gunt,

their real characters and writings, are most ready to pursue and join the cry against them, as if they had been the very worst, or the very weakest of men. But for the sake of justice and honour, let us not condemn men without knowing what can be said for them; nor, for the sake of common sense, as well as common honesty, condemn them without knowing what it is they have done. From such voluminous writings, many strange things may and have been produced, but this is not peculiar to the Christian fathers; and if men or books are to be judged of only by their faults, who shall be saved? It would be thought very partial, and very unjust, to glean from Diodorus, Herodotus, Livy, Pliny, Plutarch, and other good and antient

gunt, rectè sentire & judicare valeant. In præfat. ad Joman, cod. Talmud. per Robert. Sheringham.

pagan writers, the rubbish of all sorts that may be found in their writings, by a man who has the dirty disposition to look after such filth, and impose his medley of faults upon the world for a specimen of the veracity and approved abilities of those authors. But this has been done over and over again with the fathers; so that their latest enemies are not intitled so much as to the merit of discoverers; nor have they added much to the old heap, though they have much to clamour and-abuse.

When Herodotus, the father of the Greek historians, was censured by ecclesiastics for the fictions in his writings, Harry Stephens undertook the defence of him, by recriminating upon his adversaries, and published an amazing collection of forgeries, and fictions, and rogueries, in his famous apology. And when the christian fathers, and even

4 some

some of the latest and the worst of them, were cried up above their value, and they were made to serve the purposes of intolerant opinions, it was time to shew they were no Gods. From hence others took the opportunity to treat them, as if they had been worse than the worst of men, and Christianity has been wounded through their sides. But is there no medium between the two extremes? and are they fallen so low, as not only to be censured, but to be despised? Are they all to be condemned by the lump, and thrown aside, at last, as useless to the world? Yes, when religion and learning are upon the departure, these must pack up and go along with them. They have mutually supported each other, and when they fall, they must fall together.

Religion is necessary to a state; no people ever have been governed without it,

it, and the decline of the one, has been the ruin of the other. It may be so mixed with other things, as to become foul and mischievous, and then it should be reformed; but it is very impolitic and weak, as well as wicked, to be always pulling down without having any thing to put up in the room of a pillar, so necessary to the structure and existence of all society and laws.

To the fathers we appealed, in defence of the reformation, and it is for the honour of Protestants, to have their opinions and practice conformable to those of the apostolic age. And I see no reason any politician can have for running down the fathers of that age, and the protestant religion of this, unless it be to introduce the superstition of the last age, which was popery. For every attempt to drive out the one, is an inlet for the admission of the other; and as men cannot do without a religion,
if

if what they have now is decried so as to become useless, they will immediately have recourse to the old one; which must, in the end, be as fatal to the protestant succession, as to the protestant religion.

It is of great consequence to every Christian, to know the rise and progress of his religion, which have always been considered as one good argument, at least, in support of it. Nor is it less necessary to be acquainted with the history of theological opinions, that we may distinguish between antient and modern theology; between the doctrines of the first ages, and those which are said to have been always received in the Christian church, though they are nowhere to be found, for some centuries at least, after the apostolic times. Not that the opinions of the earliest writers after the Christian's bible, which is the only religion of protestants, was completed,
are

are infallibly to be received as of equal authority with Scripture; or of any authority without the concurrence of revelation or reason, or the evidence of facts; for some of them, particularly Tertullian and Origen, are supposed to have fallen into great errors, and none of them, who had been brought up in the pagan schools before, laid aside the opinions any more than the dress of philosophers.

Not only as Christians, but as scholars, as curious in antiquities, or delighted with history, we should shew some regard to these antient writings, which contain many things relating, not only to the histories of men, but the knowledge of antient rites and laws, and customs, demonology and philosophy. And when we consider the excellence, and elegance, and usefulness of the Greck language, we must own, that it is greatly beholden to the labours of

O

such

such Christian men as Suidas, Photius, Clemens Alexandrinus, and others, who have preserved many fine passages from antient authors, and much of antient history, which, but for them, had been entirely lost. And, perhaps, the knowledge and use of that language would not have been so extensive as it has been among the moderns, if the Christian fathers had never been in higher repute than at present. Whenever it shall be thought necessary to read the Greek fathers, the Greek language must be cultivated; and if the learned Madam Dacier was not mistaken in her assertion, that true taste is inspired by the Iliad, our manners will improve with our learning; and therefore both decline, if, instead of being obliged to read Greek, men shall be reproached for reading Chrysofom or Clemens. But if the Greek fathers are neglected, they who have written in the Roman tongue

tongue may be better received, as that language is more generally understood; and it cannot be denied that there is a noble spirit and force in Tertullian, much learning in Jerom and Austin, and great elegance in Lactantius.

At this time, however, I shall confine myself to a few of the first Christian fathers; for they are very far from being all of equal use, or equal authority and goodness.

It is not of much consequence to inquire what may have been the characters of some of the later writers, if the first are not worth your regard and confidence. And it is absurd and ridiculous, as the late Mr. Pope's learned friend very justly observed, (let the man who pretended to be affronted by it, have been as angry as he pleased) to admit the Gospels, and at the same time attempt to destroy the credit of those from whom we receive them; especially when the same in-

consistent writer tells us, in another place, that there are forty other different Gospels. But he is willing to admit them upon the authority of the council of Laodicea, which was not held till after the middle of the fourth century, anno Christi 364. * and is appealed to by the Papists, as giving

* See the postscript to the principles of the reformation, concerning church communion, p. 212. of a collection of tracts, published 1709. under the title of, An Account of the growth of Deism in England.

“ That these four narratives, which we call
 “ Gospels, are genuine and original writings,
 “ and not romances, forged in the apostles
 “ names, we learn from the authority of the
 “ clergy assembled at Laodicea; in which
 “ council it was agreed, that the books of the
 “ New Testament were genuine and authentic
 “ records, a. d. 164.”

Perhaps the author of works called Philosophical, took his information from the above book, and supposed the council of Laodicea to have been held two centuries earlier than the truth.

autho-

authority to some of those doctrines that distinguish them from other Christians. So that this egregious politician does not chuse to admit Christianity, till it became popery.

“ En quelques-uns (canons) on voit
 “ des preuves évidentes du sacrifice de
 “ la Messe, du jeûne du carême, de la
 “ distinction de l'évêque et du prêtre,
 “ et de l'ordre de la pénitence pub-
 “ lique.” *Moreri.*

Those who lived with the disciples of Jesus, and were admitted, not only to their friendship, but to a care and charge of the churches, as Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, and Polycarp, could not but know their history and opinions; and if they were good and honest, and sensible, as well as pious men, and communicated what they knew, to such as were like themselves, there can be no better evidence, no safer conveyance of the Gospels than this.

Hence it becomes necessary to inquire into the real characters of these men ; to shew the opportunities they had of knowing what they relate, and from their characters the credit that is due to their relations. To answer the first purpose, it will be sufficient to shew when and where they lived ; for the second, how they died, that they were martyrs, and sacrificed their lives in attestation of the truth of what they professed to have received from the disciples of Jesus.

It is but of late that the characters of these sincere and honest men have been called in question, and therefore it must not be expected, that any antient evidence should be produced against them. The primitive Christians were, indeed, very grossly and very falsely calumniated by the heathens ; but then they were fully justified by the apologists, and even by
Julian

Julian and Pliny. But as nothing can be objected, that is of any credit or antiquity, against the first fathers of the Christian Church, or against the testimony of their friends; so neither is it necessary to produce any other witnesses, in support of their characters, than what their own words and actions afford. Let them speak for themselves, and let us determine their characters from their conduct.

To begin with Clemens the Roman, a fellow-labourer with St. Paul, and one whose name is written in the book of life. He was educated at Athens, and being solicitous about the immortality of the soul, and a future state, he has recourse, but in vain, to the schools of the philosophers, and to Ægyptian priests; but hearing of the Son of God, in Judæa, and meeting with Barnabas at Rome, and afterwards with St. Peter at Cæsarea, he is instructed, converted,

verted, and baptized, and becomes the companion, as well as the disciple, of Peter, for a great part of his life. He is said to have brought over some of the first families in Rome to the Christian faith, which rendered him extremely odious to Torcutianus, a man of great power. At last he is condemned, if he will not sacrifice to false Gods, to be banished to Gheron, there to work in mines and quarries, the worst and most disgraceful of all punishments, or miseries, that could be inflicted on the human species. In this wretched state he finds some Christians, and converts many more, so that paganism was almost extinguished there, when Trajan sent Aufidius, with orders to take Clemens on board a ship, and throw him into the sea, so as that the Christians might never be able to find him again. Thus died this faithful companion and follower of the
dis-

disciples of our Lord, more than two years after his banishment, and about ten from his having been sole bishop of Rome; in the third year of Trajan, and 98th of Christ.

And that he was of an excellent disposition, and most worthy the protection of society, as a friend to virtue and mankind, and a devout, sincere, and honest man, is evident from the following passages in his genuine epistle.

“ * Let us therefore be of a humble mind, my brethren, throwing
“ off

* Ταπεινοφρονησωμεν εν, αδελφοι, αποθεμενοι πασαν αλαζονειαν, κη τυφον κη αφροσυνην και οργας... ταπεινοφρονητων γαρ εστιν ο Χριστος, εκ επιαιρομενων επι το ποιμνιον αυτου..... τον Κυριον Ιησuhn Χριστον ο το αιμα υπερ ημων εδοθη εντραπωμεν τες προηγμενες ημων αιδεωμεν τες πρεσβυτερες ημων (τι) μισημεν, τες νεες παιδευσωμεν την παιδειαν τε φοβει τε θεου τας γυναικας ημων επι το αγαθον διορθωσωμεθα· το αξιαγαπηλον της αγνειας ηθος ενδειξαδωσαν, το ακεραιον της πραυτητης αυτων βεβλημα αποδειξα-
P τωσαν,

“ off all vain-glory, and arrogance,
 “ and folly, and wrath.... For Christ
 “ is with those who are of an humble
 “ mind, not with those who tyrannize
 “ over his fold... Let us revere our Lord
 “ Jesus Christ, whose blood was given
 “ for us: Let us honour those who
 “ are set over us; respect the aged;
 “ teach youth the fear of God: Let

τωσαν, το επιεικες της γλωσσης αυτων δια της
 φωνης [σιγης] φατερον ποιησατωσαν, την αγαπην
 αυτων μη καλκω προσκλισεις αλλα πασι τοις
 φοβεμενοις τον Θεον οσιως, ισην παρεχετωσαν. Τα
 τεκνα ημων της εν Χριστω παιδειας μεταλαμβαν-
 νετωσαν μαθετωσαν τι ταπεινοφροσυνη παρα
 Θεω ιχθει, η αγαπη αγνη παρα τω Θεω δυνα-
 ται πως ο φοβος αυτε καλος και μεγας, και
 σωζων παντας τες εν αυτω οσιως ανατρεφομενους εν
 καθαρα διανοια. Ερευνητης γαρ εστιν εννοιων και
 ενθυμησεων· ε η πνευ αυτε εν ημιν εστιν, και οταν
 θελη ανελοι αυτην Τις εν εν υμιν γενναιος;
 τις ευσπλαχνος; τις υπεπληροφορημενος αγαπης;
 επιατω, Ει δι' εμε τ' ασις και ερις και χισμαλα,
 εκχωρω, απειμι, ε εαν ββληθε και ποιω τα
 προστασομενα υπο τω πληθους, μονον ποιμνιον
 τω Χριστω ερηνευετω μελα των καθεταμενων πρεσ-
 βυτερων πιξιμ, φοβον, ειρηνην, υπομονην, μα-
 κροθυμιαν, εγκρατεια, αγνεια και σωφροσυνην.

“ us direct our wives to that which is
 “ good ; that they may shew to all
 “ chastity of manners, worthy of love ;
 “ a sincere desire of meekness, that
 “ they may manifest their moderation
 “ of speech, by silence, exercising their
 “ charity, not partially, but to all alike
 “ that fear God in holiness. Let our
 “ children partake of Christian insti-
 “ tutes ; let them learn of what force
 “ humility of mind is with God, how
 “ prevalent is chaste love with him.
 “ How good and great is his fear, fav-
 “ ing all who turn unto him in holi-
 “ ness, with a pure mind. For he is
 “ the searcher of our thoughts and
 “ desires ; whose breath is in us, and
 “ when he pleases he takes it from us...
 “ Who amongst you is generous, who
 “ compassionate, who filled full of
 “ love ? let him speak ; and if disturb-
 “ ance, contention and divisions have
 “ arisen on my account, I am ready

“ to depart, and go wherever you
 “ please, and to do whatever the ge-
 “ nerality may require of me; only
 “ let the fold of Christ be preserved
 “ in peace, with the elders appointed
 “ over it.... And in the end, the good
 “ man prays for faith, fear, peace,
 “ constancy, purity, and sobriety.”

Can any thing be objected to the
 testimony of so good a man? or shall
 we disregard his authority, and blame
 his weakness, for having illustrated the
 resurrection from the dead, by the fa-
 ble of the Arabian Phœnix, believed
 in his time; and by such images as the
 mutual succession of the setting and
 the rising sun, of night and day, of
 seeds and fruits?

If he believed the Phœnix to rise up
 out of its own ashes, he was not the
 only one that believed it at that time;
 and many great and learned men have
 believ-

believed as absurd fictions. Errors of this sort were then more excusable, when the production of animals, from no other parent than the earth, impregnated by no other principle than heat and moisture, was asserted by philosophers as well as historians *. We must not censure those authors for not knowing more of philosophy, than had been discovered in their days. But allowing that he was deceived in what he had read of this extraordinary bird, it will never follow that his evidence is not to be taken for what he himself saw, or knew, or did.

The next Christian father I shall mention, is Ignatius, who was intimate with the apostles, and, together with

* *Cæterum aspici aliquando in Ægypto eam volucrem non ambigitur. De avi Phœnice. Annal. l. vi. Taciti.*

‘ But that the bird itself is sometimes seen in Egypt, is not doubted.’

Euodius, chosen bishop of the great city of Antioch, by St. Peter and St. Paul, who planted Christianity there. Upon the death of Euodius, Ignatius presided over that church alone, and lived there forty years. He was constant in the performance of all the duties of a Christian, and indefatigable in his care of believers, protecting and encouraging them under persecution; but did not think his own character or services complete, unless he suffered martyrdom. And when Trajan came to Antioch, the good bishop was, on account of his religion, committed to prison and torture, and then sent to Rome, to be devoured by wild beasts.

Thus died Ignatius, when he was upwards of eighty years old, in the 9th year of Trajan, and about the 107th of Christ. There is an account of his last journey to Rome,
and

and martyrdom there, much esteemed by Scaliger, written by Philo and Agathopus, who attended upon him : It was published by Usher, and is rendered into English in Cave's life of this father.

As some good men have doubted the genuineness of the epistles of Ignatius, and it is very certain, that, if they were written by him, they have been very much interpolated since ; I shall not produce more than one short passage from the epistle to the Ephesians, and in this leave out those words which are printed in red letters in Usher's edition, the mark he used to distinguish what was spurious.

* “ See that the weed of the devil
 “ be not found in you...be watchful and
 “ sober

* Βλεπέτε μη τὸ διαβολικὸν βόταν ἐυρεθῆ ἐν ὑμῖν. νηψατε, σωφρονισατε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ἐργατοὶ καιροὶ λοιπὸν εἰσὶν αἰχμηθῶμεν, φοβηθῶμεν τὴν μακροθυμίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ. μαλλον γαρ τὴν μελ-

“ sober in Christ Jesus. These that
 “ remain are the last times. Let us
 “ reverence and fear the long-suffering
 “ of God let us dread the wrath to
 “ come, rather than be in love with
 “ the joy that is present in this life.
 “ But let present and true joy be to be
 “ found in Christ, which is true life.”

Polycarp, bishop, or rather angel of
 the church of Smyrna, [Revelat. i.]
 where he was educated, if not born,
 and where he suffered martyrdom,
 presided seventy-four years over that
 church, from the end of Domitian's
 reign, to the persecution under M. Au-
 relius, when he suffered, being about
 a hundred years old.

Of this divine old man's writing,
 there is only one epistle left, which,

*λησαν οργην φοβηθημεν, η την ενερωσαν χαραν
 αγαπησωμεν εν τω νυν βιω· εγω δε η ενερωσα
 χαρα και η αληθινη, το μονον εν Χριστω Ιησο
 ευρεθησαι, εις το αληθινως ζην.*

how-

however, serves to shew the excellence of his disposition and manners, as well as his piety. He exhorts Christians to * “ Stand fast in the practice of
 “ these things, and follow the example
 “ of our Lord : be ye firm in the faith
 “ and unchangeable, lovers of the bro-
 “ therhood, loving one another, united
 “ in truth, shewing mildness of dis-
 “ position to each other, despising no
 “ man. When you can do good, do
 “ not defer it. I exhort you there-
 “ fore, that ye abstain from covetous-
 “ nefs, and be chaste, and followers
 “ of the truth. Abstain from all man-
 “ ner of evil.”

* In his ergo state, & domini exemplar sequimini, firmi in fide et immutabiles, fraternitatis amatores, diligentes invicem, in veritate sociati, mansuetudinem alterutri præstantes, nullum despicientes. Cum potestis benefacere, nolite differre. Moneo itaque vos ut abstinatis ab avaritiâ, & sitis casti & veraces. Abstinetes vos ab omni malo.

Polycarpi Epist. ad Philippens.

If such doctrine will intitle him to any credit, Irenæus assures us, that “* Polycarp always taught those things which he had learned from the apostles, and which he delivered to the church, and which alone are true. All the churches throughout Asia bear witness to this, as do the Successors of Polycarp, in his seat, to this day; who was a far more worthy, faithful, steady witness of the truth than Valentinus and Marcion, and other false teachers.”

Irenæus knew well what he said; for he had himself been the disciple of Polycarp, and succeeded the good

* Ταυτα (Πολυκαρπος) διδάξας αει ἄ και παρα των Αποστολων εμαθεν, ἄ και τη εκκλησια παρεδωκε ἄ και μονα εστιν αληθη μαρτυρεια αι κατα την Ασιαν εκκλησιαι πασαι, και οι μεχρι νυν διαδεγμενοι τον τω Πολυκαρπω θρονον, πολλω αξιοπιστοτερον και βεβαιωτερον αληθειας μαρτυρα οντα Πολυκαρπον, Ουαλεντινω και Μαρκιωνος και των λοιπων κακογνωμονων.

old Pothinus, as bishop of Lyons, in 179. a time of dreadful persecution. Under Commodus, and part of the reign of Severus, the Christians enjoyed some rest ; but, at last, this excellent bishop, with almost all the inhabitants of that vast and populous city, were put to death, about the 202d or 208th of Christ, and the 10th or 16th of Severus. He was the author of a very learned and good book against heresies, in which is shewn the absurdity of appealing to Marcion, Valentinus, and other corruptors of Christian doctrines for gospel truths. In this work Irenæus forbids his readers to expect from him * “ the art of composition, “ which he had not studied, nor the

* Λογιων τεχνην, ην εκ εμαθομεν, ετε δυναμιν συγγραφεως, ην εκ ησκησαμεν, ετε καλλωπισμον λεξεων, ετε πιστανοτητα, ην εκ οιδαμεν· αλλα απλως, κ̅ αληθως, κ̅ ιδιατικως, &c.

Irenæi præfat.

“ powers of an author, which he did
 “ not affect, nor fine language, nor
 “ persuasive turns, to which he was a
 “ stranger ; but with simplicity, truth,
 “ and plainness, &c.”

To shew what doctrines the church received from this plain honest man, it will be necessary to recite part of a letter he wrote to Florinus, upon his defection from the truth, inclining to the errors of Valentinus.

As this letter shews the opinions of Polycarp, as well as of Irenæus, to have been truly apostolical, and as they were master and disciple, I have joined their lives together, though Justin the martyr lived before Irenæus.

* “ The presbyters who lived before
 “ us, and who were taught by the
 “ apostles

* Ταυτα τα δογματα οι προ ημων πρεσβυτεροι, οι κη τοις αποστολοις συμφοιτησαντες, ε παρεδωκεν σοι. Ειδον γαρ σε, παις ων ετι, εν τη κατω Ασια, παρα τη Πολυκαρπω λαμπρωσ πραττοντα

“ member those things better than such
 “ as are more recent : What we learn
 “ in our youth, grows up with the
 “ mind, and intimately unites with it.
 “ So that I can tell the place where
 “ the blessed Polycarp did sit when he
 “ discoursed, his going and returning,
 “ the manner of his life, and the form
 “ of his body, and the discourses he
 “ made to the multitude, and how
 “ he would declare the conversation
 “ and intimacy he had with John and
 “ others, who had seen the Lord, and
 “ how he remembered their sayings,
 “ and what he heard from them con-
 “ cerning the Lord, of his miracles
 “ and his doctrine, as he received them
 “ from those, who, with their own
 “ eyes, beheld the Lord of life ; Po-
 “ lycarp declared these things conso-
 “ nant with the Scriptures. These, by
 “ the mercy of God assisting me, I
 “ then diligently heard, committing
 “ them

“ them not to paper, but writing them
 “ on my heart ; and, by the grace of
 “ God, I will ever continue to employ
 “ my mind in the sincere and genuine
 “ recollection of them.”

There appears, in this extract, such
 simplicity, and goodness, and warmth
 of heart, as, one would think, should
 affect every reader, capable of being
 moved by such excellent qualities, and
 render it impossible for him to think
 that these are the men who have im-
 posed upon the world false facts, and
 spurious gospels, and carried on their
 hypocrisy to death ; being not only
 ready to dye for their opinions, but as
 one of their worst adversaries chuses
 to express it of one of them *, even
aspired unto martyrdom.

Before I proceed to Justin Martyr,
 I would observe, that if some false cir-

* Origen. See philosophical works, as
 they are called.

cumstances have been added to the true account of the death of Polycarp, he is not to be censured for them: Whatever form the flames might have assumed; whether there was a pigeon seen to fly at that time, as it were out of the flame, or out of his side; and whether the fire was extinguished, by the saint's blood gushing from a wound he received in the flames: Whether there were any extraordinary appearances, or no, that gave occasion for these reports, the credit and character of the man who suffered cannot be impeached by them, no more than the life or death of Julius Cæsar can be disputed, because of the omens and prodigies that are reported to have foretold and attended his death. A very little knowledge of human nature will readily account for such reports, on such melancholy occasions: And whilst some insist upon the credibility of such relations,

tions,

tions, others make a contrary use of them; for if the first believe too much, the others believe nothing at all. But to proceed,

Justin the martyr was born at Neapolis in Samaria, and so well informed of the doctrines of the apostles, that, in his epistle to Diognetus, he styles himself their disciple. He was one of the most early, and most learned, writers of the eastern church. He was a very able, diligent, and impartial searcher after truth. With this view, like other antient sages, he travelled into Ægypt, and having examined all the various systems of philosophy, preferred that of Plato to the rest. About the year of Christ 132. and the 16th of Trajan, he was converted to the Christian faith. He gives a very particular account of the manner and motives of his conversion, in his own writings. As he was walking by the

ſea ſide, he meets a grave man, who diſcourſes with him about philoſophy and religion, and being induced, by his means, to conſider the religion of the Chriſtians, he declares it to be the only true philoſophy. About the beginning of the reign of Antoninus Pius, he came to Rome, and dwelt upon the Collis Viminalis near the Timothine baths. Here he is ſaid to have written his firſt apology for the Chriſtians, and to have oppoſed the rank errors of Marcion and others. After this he reviſits the Eaſt, was at Ephelus, and returns once more to Rome again. In his ſecond apology for the Chriſtians, he particularly exclaims againſt the injuſtice and barbarity of putting men to death, merely for being called Chriſtians, without ſo much as accuſing them of any crimes. He had a famous diſpute with Trypho the Jew, in which he ſhewed himſelf

self to be well versed in the prophetic writings, though, perhaps, no great critic in the Hebrew; for he is charged with having given a false etymology of the word Satanás. One of his worst enemies was Crescens, the philosopher, a very bad man, but who had influence enough over a superstitious emperor to procure the imprisonment and death of Justin, about the 165th year of Christ.

That he was a most sincere, honest, and impartial man, a friend to reason, and a lover of truth, is evident from this passage in his first apology.

“ * Reason advises those who are true
 “ philo-

* Της κατα αληθειαν ευσεβεις και φιλοσοφος
 μονον τ' αληθες τιμαν και φεργειν ο λογος υπαγο-
 ρευει, παραιτημενος δοξαις παλαιων εξακολουθειν,
 αν φανλαι ωσιν. Ου γαρ μονον μη επεσθαι τοις
 αδικως τι πραξασιν η δογματισασιν ο σωφρων
 λογος υπαγορευει· αλλ' εκ παντος τροπε και προ-
 της εαυτε ψυχης τον φιλαληθη, κ' αν θανατος
 απειληται, τα δικαια λεγων τε και πραττειν

“ philosophers, and truly religious to
 “ love and honour truth alone, refusing
 “ to follow the doctrines of the an-
 “ tients, if they are wrong. For right
 “ reason not only counfels us not to
 “ follow what is wrong, in doctrine
 “ or practice, but that by all means
 “ it becomes a lover of truth, though
 “ death threaten him, to make it his
 “ choice to say and to do what is just.
 “ ...there are who take the name, and
 “ put on the appearance of philoso-
 “ phers, but who do nothing worthy
 “ such a character.”

Of the morals and behaviour of Christians, in his time, he speaks thus.

“ * As our hopes are not confined
 “ to the present state of things, we are
 “ not

*ἀίρεισθαι δεῖ. p. 4. ... και γαρ τοι φιλοσοφιας ονομα
 και γρημα επιγραφουσαι τιτες οι εδεν αξιον της υπο-
 γρησεως πρατθσαι. p. 9. edid. Sty. Thirlbius.*

* Αλλ' επει ου εις το νυν τας ελπιδας εχομεν,
 αναιρωντων υ πεφρονηκαμεν τε και παντως απο-
 θαρειν

“ not much disturbed about those who
 “ put us to death, for we know we
 “ must die. But of all men we assist
 “ you most, and contend most for
 “ peace, who teach, that it is impos-
 “ sible for the wicked, the covetous,
 “ the insidious, or the virtuous, to be
 “ hid from God ; and that every one
 “ shall depart to everlasting punish-
 “ ment, or salvation, according to the
 “ merit of his actions. If all men

θαπειν οφειλομενσ· αρωγοι δ' υμιν και συμμαχοι
 προς ειρηνην εσμεν παντων μαλλον ανθρωπων, οι
 ταυτα δοξαζομεν, ως λαθειν Θεον, κακοεργον, η
 πλεουεκλην, η επιβρομον, η εναρετον, αδυνατον ειναι,
 και εκαστον επ' αιωνιαν κολασιν η σωτηριαν κατ'
 αξιαν των πραξεων πορευεσθαι· ει γαρ παντες αν-
 θρωποι ταυτα εγνωσκον, ει αν τις την κακιαν προς
 ολιγον ηρειτο, γινωσκων πορευεσθαι επ' αιωνιαν δια
 πυρος καταδικην, αλλ' εκ παντος τροπω εαυτον
 συριχε και εκοσμι αρετη, οπως των παρα Θεο
 τυχη αγαθων, και των κολασηριων απηλλαξμενος
 ειη. p. 16.

Here instead of *εναρείον*, who has fallen in-
 to very bad company, I would chuse to
 read *εναρόν* accursed. See Hesychius.

“ knew

“ knew these things, not one would
 “ chuse the alternative, to be bad for
 “ a little season, when he knows that
 “ he must undergo the sentence of fire
 “ in an everlasting state ; but, on the
 “ contrary, by all means, restrain him-
 “ self, and put on the ornaments of
 “ virtue, that he may obtain good
 “ things from God, and be delivered
 “ from places of torment.”

And in another place.

“ * Many men and women of sixty
 “ and seventy years of age, who have
 “ learned Christ from their youth, re-
 “ main incorrupt and pure : And it is
 “ our boast, that we can shew such of

* Και πολλοὶ τινὲς καὶ πολλαὶ, ἐξηκοντῆται
 καὶ ἑβδομηκοντῆται, οἱ ἐκ παιδῶν ἐμαθητεύθησαν
 τῷ Χριστῷ, ἀφθόροι διακειμένοι· καὶ εὐχομαί κατα
 πάντων γένους ἀνθρώπων ταῦτας δεῖξαι. τί γὰρ καὶ
 λέγομεν τὸ ἀριθμηθῆναι πλῆθος τῶν ἐξ ἀκολασίας
 μεταβάλλοντων καὶ τὰντα μαθόντων ; ἢ γὰρ τῆς
 δηκαιοῦς, ἢ τῆς σωφροῦς, εἰς μετάνοιαν ἐκαλε-
 σεν ὁ Χριστός, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἀσεβείας, καὶ ἀκολατίας,
 καὶ ἀδικίας. p. 22.

every

“ every rank and age ; not to mention
 “ the innumerable multitude of those,
 “ who are taught these things, leaving
 “ off intemperance. For Christ did
 “ not call the just and chaste to repent,
 “ but the ungodly, the incontinent and
 “ unjust.”

“ * And because we refuse to sacri-
 “ fice to those, to whom we had for-
 “ merly done, we are made to suffer
 “ extremest tortures ; and being ex-
 “ posed to death, we rejoice, trusting
 “ that God will raise us up through
 “ his Christ, and render us incorrupt-
 “ ible, impassible, and immortal.”

That any good statesman, or skilful
 politician, or true philosopher, should
 oppose such men, or their principles,

* Ημεῖς δὲ ὑπὲρ μὴ θυσιάσειν οἷς παλαι ἐθνο-
 μέν, ὑπομενομένην τὰς ἐσχάτας τιμωρίας καὶ θανα-
 τεμένοι χαίρομεν, πιστεύοντες ὅτι ἀναστήσει ἡμᾶς
 ὁ Θεὸς διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀφθάρτους, καὶ
 ἀπαθείς καὶ ἀθάνατους ποιήσει. p. 239.

is impossible ; but the abettors of superstition and tyranny, not being the friends of society, truth, or virtue, cannot be supposed capable of protecting and promoting that which is necessary to their support, and certainly destructive of their own wicked schemes. Hence it was that the enemies of these apostolic men met with a very different treatment from the pagan governors ; for Simon, Menander, their followers, and “ at this time,” says Justin, “ * Marcion of Pontus, who “ teaches that there is another God

* Μαρκιωνα δε τινα Ποντικον, ος και νυν επι επι διδασκων τες πειθομενες αλλον τινα νομιζειν μειζονα τε δημιουργε θεον. παντες οι απο τωτων ορμωμενοι Χριστιανοι καλονται, ον τροπον και οι ε κοινωνωντες των αυτων δογματων τοις φιλοσοφοις, το επικατηγορημενον ονομα της φιλοσοφιας κοινον εχουσιν· ει δε και τα δυσφημα εκεινα μυθολογημενα εργα πραττωσι, λυχνιας μεν ανατροπην, και τας ανεδην μιξεις, και ανθρωπειων σαρκων βορας, ε γνωσκομεν· αλλ’ οτι μη διωκονται, μη δε φορευονται υφ’ υμων, κ’ αν δια τα δογματα, επισταμεθα. p. 43. Apolog. i.

“ greater

“ greater than the Creator ... all these
 “ spawns are called Christians, in like
 “ manner as men professing different
 “ systems are nevertheless called by one
 “ common name philosophers. But
 “ whether they are guilty of such in-
 “ famous practices, as are fabulouſly
 “ reported, as putting out the lights,
 “ promiſcuous embraces, feeding on
 “ human fleſh, we do not know; but
 “ we do know they are not perſecut-
 “ ed, nor put to death by you, what-
 “ ever opinions they maintain.”

Nothing could be more falſe than
 theſe accusations were againſt real
 Chriſtians, as is evident from the testi-
 mony of Pliny; and ſo far were they
 from feeding upon human fleſh, that,
 as Tertullian obſerves, “ * they did not

* Ne animalium quidem ſanguinem in
 æpulis eſculentis habemus.

Tertul. Apologetico.

S

“ ſo

“ so much as suffer the blood of ani-
 “ mals to be brought upon their
 “ tables.”

After all that may have been said in favour of the honesty, and diligence, and learning of Justin, it has not been sufficient to protect him against the severe censures of hypercritical men, for having inserted some things in his writings, which they mightily disapprove of. Not to repeat the false derivation of *Satanas* *, he is found to bear testi-
 mony

* Justin Martyr's derivation of *Satanas* from *Sata* and *Nas*, is not so unaccountable as some have imagined it to be. For both these words (or, to speak more properly, parts of the same word) may easily be derived from the Oriental Languages, agreeably to the notion of ἀποστάνης, here assigned them, as will appear from what follows :

Sata.

Heb. שטה, *declinavit, deflexit, divertit.*

Syr. ܣܬܐ, ܨܬܐ, the same; from whence

ܣܬܐ ܨܬܐ; Ἀποστάνης *Avertere se post Sa-*
tanam. Gr.

mony to the cells in the island of Pharos, where dwelt the translators of the

Gr. ἐξετραπησαν οπισω τε Σατανα. 1 Tim. v. 15.

The Arab. *بص* likewise seems to favour the notion of *αποστατης*. It signifies, *Distitit, longius remotus fuit, limites excessit*; but the Heb. and Syr. are sufficient, as particularly mentioned by the father, — τη Ιερδαων, και Συρων φωνη.

Nas.

Heb. נסה, *Tentavit, probavit*. נשנ, *Decepit, seduxit*.

Syr. ܢܫܐ, *Tentavit, exploravit*; often apply'd to the *Devil*, or *Satan*, in the N. T.

Arab. نسا, *Retrocessit, recessit, &c.*

The Greek, after *Nas*, immediately adds, ἐξ ἢ ἡ ἐρμηνεια οφισ εκληθη, alluding perhaps to Gen. iii. 13. אִשׁתֵּי הַנָּחִישׁ, *The serpent beguiled me*; (אִשׁתֵּי הַנָּחִישׁ, from the above-mentioned נשנ;) and hence our author, Apolog. I. p. 46. edit. Thirlb. makes οφισ, σατανας, and διαβολος, synonymous terms. — Αρχηγέτης των κακων δαιμονων οφισ καλεται, και σατανας, και διαβολος.

Irenæus (lib. v. cap. 21. p. 433. edit. Grabe) gives the same interpretation of *Satan*, as Justin Martyr does here; — *Satana enim verbum Hebraicè apostatam significat*; though he does

the Jewish bible, called the Septuagint, or Seventy, from the supposed number of persons employed in translating it. If Justin had advanced any thing here upon his own authority, or had, like modern antiquarians, built up a palace for these holy interpreters, out of some undistinguishable ruins, let him have answered for his own ingenuity, or have been left to the mercy of a modern critic; but it happens, that, in this place, he refers his readers to the information of others; and expressly declares he received the knowledge of these things from the inhabitants; who told him that the vestigia

not mention the Hebrew verb; but this his editor, Dr. Grabe, supplies; *Si sequamur interpretationem Irenæi, deducendum erit a שמה, quod divertere significat seu deficere,*

The reader is obliged to Dr. Hunt, the learned professor of Heb. and Arab. at Oxford, for this note.

or remains of certain little houses he saw in Pharos of Alexandria, were the places where the interpreters did live.

In his first apology he charges the Romans with having erected a statue to Simon Magus; and appeals to the statue standing on the banks of the Tiber, with this inscription, *Simoni sancto deo*. I shall not undertake to defend Justin, in the manner his late editor has done; who, having said all that could be said, in favour of his author, against those who asserted this statue to have been erected to the Etrurian Hercules, says, “ * if his opinion is “ asked, he must own that he had “ acted the part of an advocate, rather

* Siquis autem quærat quid de hac re ipse sentiam, patroni me potius quam judicis partes egisse negare non possum, quæque dixi non tam veritatis gratiâ quam Justinî dixisse, &c.
D. 42.

“ than

“ than a judge, and had not regarded
 “ truth so much as the defence of his
 “ author.” But if he had cast his eye
 upon this passage in the second apo-
 logy, “ * no man is to be preferred
 “ to the truth,” he must have seen
 that Justin would not have submitted
 to such defence.

Justin, being no more a critic in La-
 tin than in Hebrew, might easily be
 deceived in reading *Semoni* for *Simoni* ;
 or receive it from some other Christian,
 without knowing more of the matter
 than what was reported by others. If
 he had been a Roman, the mistake
 had been less pardonable ; but if taken
 up in the severest manner, it is evident
 he did not intend to deceive any one ;
 for he addresses himself to the Senate,
 who could not but know what gods
 they had admitted into their general

* Αλλ' εστι γε προ της αληθειας τιμητεος
 ανηρ. p. 122. l. 20.

pantheon. And no one argument he makes use of, in defence of Christianity or Christians, at all depends upon the existence of this statue. It would have been a reproach to the Romans to have deified the forcerer, and that is the most that can be made of it.

But, as if this was not sufficient for abuse, as indeed it is little enough, a French critic has been very liberal of his censures against all preachers, modern as well as antient, because Justin and Gregory Nazianzen had offended him, by being supposed to have said what they never did say, or, at least, what cannot be found in any of their writings. It was the more unfortunate for Justin, who was himself a philosopher, that he should be charged with such a crime, which was no less than the making Aristotle to have drowned himself in the Euripus, when it was well known he died on the shore. But

neither Justin nor Gregory report any such thing. The mistake was Faber's, and therefore he should have treated it, as being his own, with more gentleness. “ * In Greece, as at present, “ the *holy* orators, if it be right to “ distinguish these pulpit-cracks and “ cymbals of the mob, by such a “ name, *commonly* reported that Ari- “ stotle, because he could not discover “ the cause of the tides that rise and “ fall seven times a day, in the Eu- “ ripus, threw himself, miserable as

* In Græciâ, quemadmodum hodieque fit, oratores sacri, si tamen tanto nomine illa pulpitorum crepitacula, & plebiculæ cymbala, cohonestari oporteat, *vulgo* dictitabant Aristotelem, cum illius septenæ in dies singulos reciprocationis causam non potuisset cognoscere, ibi tum miserum sese in Euripum dedisse præcipitem, & in maximam malam crucem abiisse. Justinus cognomento Martyr, & Gregorius Nazianzenus, qui primi, aut inter primos, hanc fabulam olim in scripta sua retulerunt.

Jan. Fabri Epist. p 1.

“ he

“ he was, headlong into it, and pe-
 “ rished. Justin, called the Martyr,
 “ and Gregory Nazianzen, were the
 “ first, or among the first, who men-
 “ tion this in their writings.” But
 the truth is, the supercilious noisy
 critic, and not the pulpit-crack, is
 here guilty of a very gross mistake,
 the more unpardonable, as it is most
 abusive, and without foundation. For
 all that Justin says, in his cohortation
 to the Greeks, is that “ when * (Ari-
 “ stotle) could not discover the nature
 “ of the Euripus in Chalcis [the me-
 “ tropolis of Eubœa] greatly dejected
 “ with disgrace and shame, he depart-
 “ ed this life.” Gregory Nazianzen
 says no more ; and there is not a word
 in either of these authors to support
 the calumny of Le Fevre. On which
 account Mons. Bayle, no great patron

* Ουδε την τε Ευριπε φυσιν τε οντος εν Χαλ-
 κιδι γνωσαι δυναθεις δια πολλην αδοξιαν η αιχμη-
 ρην λυπηθεις μετετη τε βιε.

of the fathers of the church, makes this very pertinent reflection, in his notes upon the life of Aristotle, that
 “ * some men, not having the regard
 “ they ought to have for the fathers,
 “ have charged them with too much
 “ credulity.”

This it is to condemn without reading, and this should teach us not to depend absolutely upon the authority of other men, who, because they have acquired the character of critics, imperiously demand universal assent to their vain conjectures, and often groundless assertions.

And here I would observe, once for all ; that if right notions of the Deity, and every moral relation and duty ; if an uniform conduct, built upon that foundation ; if sincerity, even unto

* Plusieurs personnes, n' aiant pas pour les peres de l'eglise tout le respect qu'il faudroit, se plaisent à les taxer d'une aveugle credulité.

death,

death; if free enquiry, right choice, goodness, firmness, are proofs of sense and wisdom, the citations already produced from Justin, and other Christian writers, must shew them to have been as wise and sensible, as good and pious. The philosopher Justin preferred the Christian religion, because it appeared to him to be the true philosophy; and Clemens, for the information it gave of the future state of the soul of man. And so far were they from being superstitious, that they judged with freedom, and condemned, and were condemned by, the superstition of their days.

But Justin, Irenæus, Papias, and others, were Chiliafts, and believed in the Millennium. They pretended to have received this notion from the apostles themselves; and in some late works, called philosophical, it is said, we should either receive this, or give up other

apostolical traditions: If we do not believe they received this doctrine from their masters, it will not be easy to determine what they received from them; or there can be no dependence upon these primitive men. And how they will answer this, who are unwilling to admit of any Millennium, I can no more conceive, than I can account for the admitting the revelations of St. John to be divine, and yet deny what they so manifestly contain. The Scriptures expressly declare, that men are to rise again at two periods; the first is the resurrection of the just, “ the
 “ souls of them that were beheaded
 “ for the witness of Jesus, and for the
 “ word of God; and which had not
 “ worshiped the beast, neither his image,
 “ neither had received his mark upon
 “ their foreheads, or in their hands:
 “ and they lived and reigned with
 “ Christ a thousand years. But the
 “ rest.

“ rest of the dead lived not again un-
 “ til the thousand years were finished.
 “ This is the first resurrection. Blessed
 “ and holy is he, that hath part in
 “ the first resurrection! on such the
 “ second death hath no power; but
 “ they shall be priests of God and of
 “ Christ, and shall reign with him a
 “ thousand years.” Revel. xx.

However, in receiving this as an apo-
 stolic doctrine, it is not necessary to ad-
 mit the sensual pleasures of Cerinthus,
 nor the many strange notions that the
 Chiliafts have added to this account of
 a first and second resurrection. It was
 not the doctrine of the Millennium, or
 the belief that the just were to reign
 with Christ a thousand years before
 the second resurrection, that disgraced
 the Millennaries, but the delights and
 enjoyments they connected with it;
 which, according to some, were so sen-
 sual,

sual, that there could be no good authority for them.

To this short apology for these early fathers, it may not be improper to add some account of the manners of the first Christians, as contained in the old apologists; that it may be seen whether they deserved the cruelties inflicted on them; whether they disgraced or honoured the Christian profession; and whether they were not the best subjects, as well as the best of good men, and consequently their calumniators and tormentors, the very worst of men: and yet the piety and goodness of the one has been ridiculed, when the tragic monsters have been admired and applauded.

Athenagoras, who lived about the middle of the second century, and wrote his apology for the Christians, between 165. and 170. answers for the doctrines and practices of Christians,
in

in such a manner, as to shew they deserved the protection, not the punishment, of magistrates.

“ * If you ask what are the doctrines
 “ in which we are brought up? I an-
 “ swer. Love your enemies; bless them
 “ that curse (you); pray for them that
 “ persecute you; that you may be the
 “ children of your father which is in
 “ heaven. If we were persuaded that

* *Τινες εν ἡμῶν οἱ λόγοι οἷς ἐνίρρομεθα; λε-
 γω ὑμῖν ἀγαπάτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν, εὐλογεῖτε
 τοὺς καταρώμενους, προσευχεσθε ὑπὲρ τῶν διωκον-
 τῶν ὑμᾶς, ὅπως γενήσθε ὡς οἱ πατὴρ ὑμῶν τῶ
 ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. Athenag. Leg. pro Christian.
 p. 42. edit. Oxon. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἕνα τὸν ἐνταυ-
 θεν βίον βιωσέσθαι πεπεισμέθα, καὶ εὐποπτεῖν
 ἐννῆν, δαλευόντας σὰρκα καὶ αἷματι, ἢ κέρδις ἢ
 ἐπιθυμίας ἐλατῆς (lege ἐλατῆς) γειομένους, ἀμαρ-
 τῆν· ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐφεσηκεναι μὲν οἷς ἐννοθμεν, οἷς λαλῶ-
 μεν, καὶ νυκτῶρ καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν τὸν θεὸν οἰδαμεν,
 πάντα δὲ φῶς αὐτὸν ὄντα, καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ
 ἡμῶν ὄραν, πεπεισμέθα, τῶ ἐνταυθεν ἀπαλλα-
 γέντος βίῳ, βίον ἕτερον βιωσέσθαι, ἀμεινονα ἢ κατὰ
 τὸν ἐνθάδε καὶ ἐπερανιον, ἔκ ἐπιγείων.*

Athenag. Apolog. p. 146.

“ we should live in this life only, it
 “ might be suspected, that we should
 “ be the servants of flesh and blood,
 “ or be led by lucre, or concupiscence,
 “ to sin. But since we know that
 “ God is present with us, whenever we
 “ think or speak, by night or day ;
 “ that he is all light, and sees what-
 “ ever passes in our heart ; we are
 “ convinced, that departing out of this
 “ life, we shall live in a better state
 “ than this, in heaven, not on earth.”

Theophilus, who was made bishop of Antioch in 169. speaking of the immoralities of heathens, the adulteries of their gods, their cruel murders, and tragical feasts, as that of Thyestes, says “ * Far be it from Christians to
 “ act

* Μακρὰν δὲ ἀπειὴν Χριστιανοὶς ἐνθυμηθῆναι τι τοιοῦτο πράξαι, παρ' οἷς σωφροσύνη παρέσθιν, εὐκρατεία ἀσκεῖται, μονογαμία τηρεῖται, ἀγνεία φυλάσσεται, ἀδικία ἐκπορεύεται, ἁμαρτία ἐκρίζουται, δικαιοσύνη μελετᾶται, νόμος πολιτεύεται,
 θεοσεβεία

“ act, or even think, in this manner,
 “ with whom is modesty and the
 “ exercise of temperance. They allow
 “ but of one wife; they preserve them-
 “ selves chaste : (with them) unrighte-
 “ ousness is destroyed, sin extirpated,
 “ law administered, religion practised,
 “ God worshiped ; truth decides, grace
 “ protects, peace surrounds them :
 “ The divine word is their guide, wis-
 “ dom instructs them. The life (Christ)
 “ determines their reward, God reigns
 “ over them.”

Such was the religion, such the be-
 haviour, of the first Christians. That
 they too soon degenerated ; that error
 and superstition, in time, mingled with

θεοσεβεια πραοσειαι, Θεος ομολογεται, αληθεια
 βραβευει, χαρις συντηρει, ειρηνη † περισκεπλει,
 λογος αγιος οδηγει, σοφια διδασκει. ζων βρα-
 βευει, Θεος βασιλευει.

Lib. 3. Theophil. ad Autolyicum.

† Lege περισκεπει.

U

the

the truth, and debased the pure simplicity of the gospel-age; and that many weak passages may be produced from Christian writers, who, in other respects, may be very valuable and useful, is true: but then it must appear, from what has been said in favour of the first followers of the disciples of them, whose lives and characters have been here examined, that, however they may have been mistaken in the use and application of any passage in the Scriptures, they were, by no means, the corruptors of them; nor did they *fraudulently* deliver to the church for apostolic what they had never received from the apostles.

If, therefore, the author of works called philosophical meant to include these men in the following charge against the fathers, and, under the word tradition, all that was delivered by them, even the Gospels, and other writ-

writings of the New Testament, he deserved the censure he has unworthily cast upon others, and must have been “very ignorant, or very impudent*.”

If Toland had not published his *Amyntor*, and the late author of certain works called philosophical had not unworthily trod in his steps, without considering what had been so unanswerably written against him, it would not have been necessary to have said more of the spurious Gospels than this, that they were never admitted into the Christian Church from

* “ He who pretends to clear the reverend fathers, by whom tradition was principally conveyed down, from age to age, and to deny this charge (that ecclesiastical tradition has been, from the first and purest ages, founded, for the most part, in ignorance, superstition, enthusiasm, and *fraud*) must be very *ignorant* himself, or very *impudent*.” p. 39. vol. iii.

the days of Polycarp, to the present time.

But there are forty of them! Yes, and more too. And if there had been forty times forty Gospels, I cannot see how they could lessen the credit that is certainly due to the four Genuine Gospels. The more Gospels there are, the more evidence there will be, if they are antient Gospels, of the common facts related by all. And it will be very hard to account for so many counterfeits, without allowing some to have been original. And if they were contrived by the Ebionites, and some early sectaries, who did not admit the doctrines and authority of the immediate disciples of Jesus; we, who are the followers of those disciples, and of them only, who pretend to have their writings, and their account of things, can have nothing to do with any other; no more than he, who declares himself

an

an enemy to the God of Moses and of Paul can, whatever he may pretend, have any real concern for any revelation at all.

But let what remains of these Gospels be read, as they are collected by Fabricius in his *Codex Apocryphus*, or by Mr. Jones in his *Canon of the New Testament*; let them speak for themselves, and let any man prefer them to the four Genuine Gospels if he can: for I do not think it is disputed, at present, whether the adversary should be obliged to believe all that the church thought proper to reject. The contest with these men is not about believing too much, but too little. And therefore it will be time enough to dispute about the Apocrypha, when they have admitted any thing to be canonical.

What credit is due to Polycarp and Irenæus, has been already shewn; and
if

if they admitted the four Gospels, it is the strongest evidence that can be given in their favour. The latter says expressly, that there neither was, nor could be, more than four Gospels. *Neque plura nec minùs quam quatuor* * *possunt esse evangelia*, lib. iii. c. 11. And Polycarp, in that excellent fragment

* Irenæus has been ridiculed for this assertion, by the author of works called philosophical. He compares the four Gospels to the four pillars of a house, the quarters of the world, and to the cherubim. And if this was a fault in Irenæus, it was not peculiar to him, it was rather the vice of the age. There was a Pythagoric *quaternary*, τετραχίλος πυθαγορικὴ, ogdoads, and many other numerical fancies. Philo wrote a book about the virtue of numbers, *περὶ ἀριθμῶν*, now lost. Philosophers, and Jews, and Heretics, and orthodox Christians, all played with numbers; and one or two men should not be condemn'd singly for what was almost universal. But as he uses *εἰκότως*, a word of similitude, what he says of the parallel circumstances of other things having four parts, should be considered rather as a comparison than a demonstration.

preserved by Victor Capuanus, and cited by Feuardentius, in his notes on the third book of Irenæus, gives a rational account of the design each of the evangelists had in writing his Gospel.

“ * Matthew, writing to the Hebrews, has inserted the genealogy of Christ, that he might shew Christ to be descended of that race, from

* Matthæus, ut Hebræis scribens, genealogiæ Christi ordinem texuit, ut ostenderet ab eâ Christum descendisse progenie, de quâ eum nasciturum universi prophetæ cecinerant. Johannes autem, ad Ephesum constitutus, qui legem tanquam ex gentibus ignorabant, à causâ nostræ redemptionis evangelii sumpsit exordium, quæ causâ ex eo apparet, quòd filium suum Deus pro nostrâ salute voluit incarnari. Lucas verò à Zachariæ sacerdotio incipit, ut ejus filii miraculo nativitatis, & tanti prædicatoris officio divinitatem Christi gentibus declararet. Unde & Marcus antiqui prophetici mysterii competentia adventui Christi declarat, ut non nova sed antiquitùs prolata ejus prædicatio probaretur.

“ whence all the prophets had foretold
 “ he was to be born. But John, who
 “ was fixed at Ephesus, where the Law
 “ was not known by the Gentiles, be-
 “ gan his Gospel with the cause of our
 “ redemption; which cause was ma-
 “ nifest from this, that God will’d his
 “ son to be incarnate for our salvation.
 “ But Luke begins with the priesthood
 “ of Zacharias, that, by the miracle
 “ of his son’s nativity, and the office
 “ of so great a preacher, he might
 “ make known the divinity of Christ.
 “ And Mark, therefore, sets forth
 “ some antient passages of prophetic
 “ mystery, agreeing to the coming of
 “ Christ, that his preaching might not
 “ seem a novelty, but be comfortable
 “ to what had been antiently deli-
 “ vered.”

Then Tertullian, who lived at the
 end of the first, and beginning of the
 second

second century, in his fourth book against Marcion, says expressly, that
 “ we have our faith from the apostles
 “ John and Matthew, and the apo-
 “ stolic Luke and Mark.” *Nobis fidem
 ex apostolis Johannes & Matthæus in-
 finuant, ex apostolicis Lucas & Marcus
 instaurant.*

After him Clemens of Alexandria objects * to any other than the four Gospels.

Origen says, over and over again, that
 “ there are no more than four Gos-
 “ pels received by the church.” And
 after him every Christian writer says
 the same thing.

These are the only Gospels that are
 cited as Scripture, by the most antient
 Christian writers, as may be seen in
 Mr. Jones's Canon, and the learned

* *Εν τοις παραδεδομένοις ἡμῖν τεταρσιν Ευαγ-
 γελίοις οὐκ ἐσχόμεν το ρήλον.* Strom. l. iii.

‘ That is not said in the four Gospels we
 ‘ have delivered to us.’

and laborious collections of Dr. Lardner: the contrary has been asserted by Toland; “but such unfair practice,” says Mr. Jones, p. 87. vol. ii. “was very common with this trifling writer.” It is very remarkable, that in the dialogue of Justin the Martyr with Trypho the Jew, great part of the Gospel facts are recited, and never once denied by Trypho. They are so largely and so often cited by Christian men, in different times and places, and were so often read in the churches, that it is scarce possible to doubt the genuineness of the four Gospels; or to believe them to have undergone any considerable change, or alteration, since they were first written by the men whose names they bear*.

Another

‘ * The Gospel was indeed corrupted by Marcion, Valentinus, and perhaps Lucan, but Origen, at least, did not know that it was corrupted by any other.’

Μεταχαραξάντας
I εε

Another famous proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures of the New Testament, is taken from the old Syriac version, which was made in or near the apostles times. The constant belief of the Eastern churches, and the consent of almost all learned men, greatly favour this argument ; as does also the agreement of this version with the most antient copies of the Scripture in other languages, and the omission of some passages not found in them ; together with the use of the old name Akē, for Ptolemais (see Pliny's Nat. Hist. l. v. c. 19. and Stephanus *περι πολεων*). And although the churches of Syria received the epistle of Jude, the second epistle of Peter, and the second and third epistle of John as canonical, in the second century, they are not

*δε το ευαγγελιον αλλως εκ οιδα, η τες απο Μαρ-
κων, και τες απο Ουαλεντιν, οιμαι δε κ̄
τες απο Λεκανθ. contra Celsum, p. 77.*

inserted in this old version, which must therefore have been made before they were known to have been written.

Hence it is manifest, that the authenticity of the four Gospels does not absolutely depend on the canon of Scripture, annexed to the council of Laodicea, which is wanting in some very antient manuscripts, and is not found in Joseph the Ægyptian's Arabic Codex conciliorum *. Much less can it depend upon that idle and ridiculous story, related in the Synodicum of Pappus, that the bishops assembled at the council of Nice, to determine what books were canonical †, “laid
“ them under the holy table, in the

* See the preface to the works of the learned Mr. John Gregory of Oxford.

† *Ἐν γὰρ τῷ οἴκῳ τῆς Θεοῦ κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν δεξιὰν τραπεζῆν αὐτὰς παραθεμελιωμένην προσευξάτο ὡς εὐρεθῆναι τὰς δεσπνεύσας ἐπὶ αὐτῶν, τὸν Κύριον ἐξαίτησαμεν, καὶ τὰς κίβδηλας, οὐ καὶ γεγορον, ὑποκατάθετο. Syn. 34.*

“ house

“ house of God, and prayed that such
 “ as were divinely inspired, might be
 “ found upon the table, and the impure
 “ or apocryphal underneath; which
 “ was done accordingly.”

To read these spurious productions, is sufficient evidence against them; which were contrived to account for things of which the true Gospels were silent, as of the nativity of Mary, and the infant actions of our Lord; or to support some absurd opinions that could not be maintained upon the principles of divine revelation.

The Gospel of the nativity of Mary, was the same with the Protevangelium of St. James, which are not to be found in Origen's, nor any other ancient catalogue of sacred books. They are not cited by any of the ancient fathers; were always rejected by them, and contain many idle and ridiculous.

diculous stories, and some things absolutely false.

The Gospel of the infancy is full of the most absurd stories imaginable; contradicts the true Gospel, which asserts, that the first miracle performed by Jesus was at the marriage-feast at Cana in Galilee; is inconsistent with the silence of the four Gospels, and of all the primitive Christians, concerning any miracles performed in his infancy, or prior to that at Cana: And, from some internal marks, is known to have been written some centuries later than to be of that antiquity it boasts.

The Gospel of Nicodemus abounds with as idle and absurd fictions as any of them. Pere Simon therefore asks, *Y-a-t-il rien de plus ridicule que l'évangile attribué à Nicodème?* it contains many contradictions, and false facts, and is much later than it pretends to be.

As

As for the Gospel of St. Andrew, if there ever was such a book in the world, it is now no where to be heard of, but in some copies of the decree of pope Gelafius, which condemns it as apocryphal.

The Gospel of Thaddæus also is nowhere to be found but in this decree.

The Gospel of St. Bartholomew is mentioned only by Jerome and Gelafius, who condemn it.

The Gospel of Barnabas, notwithstanding all that has been said by Toland, (who was capable of saying or doing any thing that he thought would discredit revelation) and others, was not known to any writer in the four first centuries, but was manifestly forged to serve the purposes of the Alcoran; never speaks of Christ, but as a prophet only; and expressly mentions Mahomet as the paraclete by name.

The

The Gospel of Matthias was not received nor cited by any good writer, but rejected for its impiety and absurdities.

The Gospel of the Nazarenes, of the Ebionites, of the twelve apostles, of Bartholomew, of Cerinthus, and Merinthus (the same man) and the Gospel according to the Hebrews, are all corruptions of the Hebrew copy of St. Matthew's Gospel; are not in any catalogue of the sacred writings; are not cited as Scripture, but rejected as apocryphal, by the first Christian writers; were never read in the Churches, and contain many things that are false.

The Gospel of Marcion was an interpolated copy of St. Luke's Gospel.

The Gospel of Apelles, spurious; he was a disciple of Marcion.

The Gospels of Hefychius and Lu-
cianus,

cianus, were only corrupted copies of those received by the Church.

The Gospel of Tatian was an harmony of the four Gospels.

The Gospel of Philip, and the Gospel of Perfection, were forgeries of the Gnostics.

As was the Gospel of Truth a forgery of the Valentinians.

And the eternal Gospel, as it is called, is a forgery of the thirteenth century.

Basilides had a Gospel, but he was the disciple of Menander, and a gnostic; and probably the spurious Gospel of Peter was the same with that of Basilides, forged by such of the gnostics as were called *docetæ*, heretics of the second century, who held the sufferings of Christ not to have been real, but apparent only, from *δοξεῖν* to seem. It contained many things that

Y

were

were known to be false, and was never received into the canon.

Scythianus too had a Gospel which is not extant; he was the author of the Manichean sect. For Manes (whence the word Manichees) was the slave Curbicus, adopted by his mistress, who had the possession of the wealth and papers of Terebinthus, the disciple of Scythianus.

The Gospel according to the Ægyptians is not to be found in any catalogue of the sacred writings; is not cited as Scripture, but rejected as apocryphal, and contains things that are false.

The Gospel of Eve was a monster of the gnostics, full of ridiculous visions, and founded upon the supposition of Eve's having acquired some extraordinary knowledge of spiritual matters, by her conversation with the serpent.

pent. It is mentioned by Epiphanius only, and was not known to Gelafius.

Even Judas had his Gospel, fays a late writer of works called philosophical; which he might have borrowed from Toland, who had made the fame remark; for which he was juftly cenfured by Mr. Jones, in the following manner; “ Artfully faid indeed! A
 “ fet of impious, beaftly, prophane
 “ wretches, (the Caianites) abandoned
 “ to all the exceffes of vice and im-
 “ morality, forged a piece, under the
 “ name of Judas; and this is to be
 “ ranked in the fame clafs with thofe
 “ which contain the fublime doctri-
 “ nes, and holy precepts of Chriftianity.”

Dr. Grabe, in a note upon the 17th chapter of the firft book of Irenæus, mentions the Gospel of Leucius, which he fays is in the library of the college of Corpus Chrifti in Oxford. And from him it is mentioned by Lamius, in his book

De eruditione Apostolorum; and by Fabricius, in his Codex Apocryphus; but it is not in the catalogue of the manuscripts of that college; nor could I find it, though assisted in the search by a learned gentleman of that house.

Whoever is desirous of knowing more of these false Gospels, may read the prolegomena to Dr. Mills' edition of the Greek Testament, the answers to Toland's Amyntor, Itigius, Fabritius, Lamius, Beaufobre, and particularly a new and full method of settling the canonical authority of the New Testament, by Mr. Jeremiah Jones, 1726. In whose words, p. 269. p. 11. I conclude, " Did Mr. Toland, and his friends, in " these their vile attacks upon so excellent and divine a constitution, not " quibble and juggle, and prevaricate, " as they upon all occasions do, in their " citations out of the old records of " Christianity (a crime which they are " ever

“ ever forward to charge upon others,
 “ who are much more clear of it) I
 “ should excuse myself, and the reader
 “ from the trouble of any remarks
 “ upon them, leaving them to their
 “ slavish Infidelity: But when I ob-
 “ serve a person ransacking and muster-
 “ ing together all the silly trumpery of
 “ the antient heretics, grossly misrep-
 “ resenting the books he cites, only with
 “ design to satisfy a bigotted humour,
 “ against the Christian Religion, I am
 “ obliged, by my regards to the profes-
 “ sion I make of the name of Jesus, to
 “ lay open such vile imposture.....One
 “ can scarce tell whether his intention
 “ of vilifying St. Paul, or the method
 “ he useth to do so, be the more de-
 “ testable * : This sorry, unbelieving
 “ critic

* Much abuse has been thrown upon the
 character of St. Paul, by the late writer so
 often mentioned in the foregoing papers; but
 he is guilty of great unfairness, in not taking
 2 notice

“ critic governs his skill by his wicked
 “ principles; and has no other way
 “ to judge of spurious and genuine
 “ books, than their opposition to Chris-
 “ tianity.”

notice of what Mr. Locke had said, in answer to his calumnies; which he could not be ignorant of, for he owns he had him in his hand, and has been ready enough to quote him when it has seemed to serve his own purpose. But the rational and learned commentary upon the epistle to the Hebrews, by Dr. Sykes, is a sufficient answer to all that Toland and his FOLLOWER have said against this apostle.

F I N I S.



ERRATA.

Page 28, line 26, read gospel-blessing — 30, l. 5. *dele* co — 33, l. 9, of Heb. r. שט ; l. 11, r. עם — 34. *separate* משניפיל from הארון — 38, *join* ע' to the preceding letters — 41, *dele* הנצריא — 42, l. 1. of the second quotation, r. מכמינין ; l. 2, *separate* את from הגר ; l. 3, r. ימושיבין ; for כדו r. בדו ; l. 4, r. אותן — 44, l. 4, of Heb. *separate* לו from כלו ; and for ליכך r. לי כר — 45, l. 1, r. יזר ; l. 2, r. מהנפק — 46, l. 19, r. מהפיק, and l. 25, r. יהרו after שמע — 47, l. 5, of Heb. r. הרבו — 48, l. 3, of Heb. r. ויאמר ; l. 4, r. ויקי ; l. 9, *separate* יהו from the following letters ; and וישתחווי from לו — 50, l. 22, r. שכינה — 51, r. ושני — 57, l. 20, r. consecraretur — 58, l. 6, *re-*sput — 69, l. 5, r. επεγερασε — 72, l. 2, r. ascended — 73, l. 13, r. ηουδισαοι — 76, l. 23, επιδιδασκαλ — 112, l. 21, r. αγαπησωμεν — 115, last line, r. ιδιωτικως — 125, l. 15, r. επιβουλα — 135, last line, *dele* the.



