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COLLECTION

OF

THEOLOGICAL TRACTS,

IN SIX VOLUMES.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D. F.R.S.

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AND

REGIUS PROFESSOR *of* DIVINITY *in the* UNIVERSITY *of*
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VOL. IV.

L O N D O N:

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M.DCC.XCI.



C O N T E N T S.

The Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scripture. By JOHN LOCKE, Esq. Lond. 1727. p. 1.

This Treatise was first published in 1695, without Mr. Locke's name; he concealed his being the author of it from his most intimate friends, and in one of his letters to Mr. Molyneux, at Dublin, he desired to know what people thought of it there; for here, says he, "at its first coming out, it was received with no indifferency, some speaking of it with great commendation, and most censuring it as a very bad book." His friend, in reply, informed him, that a very learned and ingenious Prelate said he liked it very well, and that, if Mr. Locke writ it, it was the best book he ever laboured at; "but," says he, "if I should be known to think so, I should have my lawns torn from my shoulders." Abroad it was greatly esteemed by two of the best divines which were then living—*Le Clerc*, and *Limborch*. *Le Clerc*, in his *Bibliotheque Choisee*, said, that it was "un des plus excellens ouvrages qui ait été fait depuis long-tems sur cette matiere et dans cette vue:" and *Limborch* preferred it to all the Systems of Divinity that he had ever read. Dr. Edwards wrote against it; and his objections produced from Mr. Locke two vindications of it; these merit the reader's attention as much as the work itself, which has long been very generally approved.

A Discourse concerning the unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation. Being eight Sermons preached, in the year 1705, at the Lecture founded by the Hon. ROBERT BOYLE. By SAMUEL CLARKE, D.D.
p. 109.

Whatever opinion the reader may entertain of the principles advanced in this book relative to the foundation of Morality, he will admire the strength and perspicuity with which the whole of it is written;
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written; and derive singular benefit from that part of it which treats of the Evidences of revealed Religion. In composing this part, Dr. Clarke is said to have availed himself of the second part of Mr. *Boxter's* Reasons of the Christian Religion, published in 1667; and it would certainly be of use to the reader to peruse that excellent discourse, and to compare it with this of Dr. Clarke.

A Discourse on Prophecy.

p. 297.

✓ This discourse is taken from a Volume of Discourses by *John Smith*, formerly fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge. The discourses were published after his death in 1656, and are all of them very valuable, but this is particularly so: it was translated into Latin by *Le Clerc*, and prefixed to his Commentary on *Isaiah*, &c. The reader will find something on this subject in *Vitringa's* Observationes Sacrae; in different parts of the *Thesaurus Theologico-philologicus*; in *Du Pin's* Prolegomenes sur la Bible; in *Jenkin's* Reasonableness of Christianity; in *Prideaux's* Old and New Testament connected; in Bishop *Williams's* Sermons at Boyle's Lecture; and especially in the first Chapter of *Carpzovius* Introductio ad libros propheticos; the xxviiith Section of which contains a catalogue of such of the Fathers, Rabbins, Lutheran, Catholic, and Reformed writers, as have treated de Prophetiæ et Prophetarum natura, causis, differentia, et affectionibus.

An Essay on the Teaching and Witness of the Holy Spirit.

p. 363.

✓ The late *Lord Barrington* rendered great service to Christianity by his *Miscellanea Sacra*. In the Essay which is here printed from the first volume of that work, he has explained the Gifts of the Holy Spirit which prevailed in the primitive Church with more precision, and set the Argument in favour of Christianity, which is derived from the Witness of the Spirit, in a stronger light, than any other Author has done. The Subject has been handled by *Whitby* in his book intitled *The Certainty of the Christian Faith*, and in his General Preface concerning the divine Authority of the Epistles; by *Benson*, in his Reasonableness of Christianity, and in other parts of his Works; by *Warburton*, in his Doctrine of Grace; by *Secker*, *Tillotson*, *Chandler*, and other Divines, in their Sermons: and indeed it is a subject which deserves all attention; for whatever contrariety of opinion may take place concerning the Agency of the Holy Spirit on the Minds of the faithful in the present state of the Christian

Christian Church, the extraordinary Gifts which were bestowed on the primitive Christians are matters of fact which cannot well be controverted; and which, if admitted, prove to a demonstration the Truth of the Christian Religion.

An Essay concerning Inspiration, taken from Doctor BENSON's Paraphrase and Notes on St. Paul's Epistles. p. 469.

What Dr. *Powel* has said in his discourse intitled *The Nature and Extent of Inspiration* illustrated from the writings of St. Paul, is very similar to what Dr. *Benson* has advanced in this short Essay. Both the Authors suppose the Inspiration of the Apostles to have consisted in their having had the Scheme of the Gospel communicated to them from Heaven; in their having retained, to the end of their lives, the memory of what had been thus communicated to them; and in their having committed to writing, by the use of their natural faculties, what they remembered. This subject of Inspiration has been discussed by *Tillotson*, *Secker*, *Warburton*, and other English Divines in their Sermons; by *Le Clerc*, in his Letters concerning Inspiration; by *Lowth*, in his Answer to Le Clerc; by *Wakefield*, in his Essay on Inspiration; by *Castalio*, in a fragment printed at the End of *Wetstein's* Greek Testament; by Archbishop *Potter*, in his *Prælectiones Theologicæ*; by Dr. *Middleton*, in the second Volume of his *Miscellaneous Works*; by *Jenkins*, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*; by *Du Pin*, in his *Prolegomenes sur la Bible*; by *Calmet*, in his Dissertation sur l'Inspiration, printed in the eighth Volume of his Commentary on the Bible: in this Dissertation *Calmet* enumerates the Sentiments of a great variety of Authors on the Manner of Inspiration; and to those Authors I would refer the Reader who is desirous of full information on this Subject.

An Essay concerning the Unity of Sense: to shew that no Text of Scripture has more than one single Sense. p. 481.

This is prefixed to Dr. *Benson's* Paraphrase on St. Paul's Epistles. St. *Augustine*, in the first Chapter of his twelfth Book *contra Faustum* *Munichæum*, says—*Faustus* asserted that, after the most attentive and curious Search, he could not find that the Hebrew Prophets had prophesied concerning Christ; and *Gelsus*, as it is related by Origen, introduced a Jew affirming, that the Prophecies which were generally

rally applied to Christ, might more fitly be applied to other Matters: other Enemies of the Christian name, in the first ages of the Church, strongly objected to the pertinency of adducing the Old Testament Prophecies, as proofs that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah.

On the other hand, some of the ancient Fathers (not content with shewing that a great many prophecies respected the Messiah, and received a direct and full accomplishment in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth) maintained that almost all the predictions and historical Events mentioned in the Old Testament, had an indirect and typical relation to his advent, character, or kingdom.

Grotius is said (though the fact may be questioned) to have been the first Interpreter of Scripture who distinctly shewed that the greatest part of the Prophecies of the Old Testament had a double sense, and have received a double accomplishment. He maintained that the Predictions, even of the Evangelical Prophet *Isaiah*, related, in their primary and literal sense, to the times and circumstances of the Jewish People, but that they respected the Messiah in a secondary and allegorical sense. *Limborch*, in his Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, accedes to the Opinion of *Grotius* in these words—*Rectè à doctissimis interpretibus observatum est, paucissima esse apud Prophetas vaticinia, quæ directè et sensu primo de Domino Jesu loquuntur; sed plerisque duplicem inesse sensum, literalem unum, olim in typo imperfectè, alterum mysticum, in Domino Jesu plenè et perfectè impletum.*

Father *Baltus*, a Jesuit, in the Year 1737, published his *Defense des Prophetes de la Religion Chretienne*: in this work he purposely examines and refutes the Opinion of *Grotius* at great length; and shews that the most ancient Fathers of the Church, as *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, &c. never thought of interpreting the Prophecies of the Old Testament in a double Sense; but applied them in their literal meaning to the Messiah. *Whiston*, in his Sermons preached at Boyle's Lecture in 1707, had supported the same sentiment before *Baltus*: he strongly contended that “the Prophecies of the Old Testament at all appertaining to the Messiah, particularly those which are quoted as Testimonies and Arguments in the New Testament, do properly and solely belong to the Messiah, and did not at all concern any other person.” In 1710, Archdeacon *Clagget* animadverted on this notion of *Whiston*, and undertook the Vindication of those Christian Commentators who had explained some prophecies concerning the Messiah as not solely relating to him, in a Treatise intituled *Truth defended and Boldness in Error rebuked*.

In 1724, *Collins* published a Discourse on the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion, in which he revived the Objections of *Faustus*, *Origen*, *Celsus*, and such other early writers against Christianity, as had endeavoured to prove that the Prophecies of the Old Testament had no direct relation to Jesus Christ. ‘I refer the Reader to *Leland's* View of the Deistical Writers, and to *Fabricius' Lux Evangelica*, for an Account of the several Answers which were pub-

lished to this, and to another work of the same Author, intituled, *The Scheme of literal Prophecy considered*. Bishop *Warburton* also, in the sixth Book of the *Divine Legation of Moses*, has answered what *Collins* had objected against a second Sense of Prophecy. Lastly, Doctor *Fortin*, not to mention some learned Authors who are still alive, and who have written very ably on Prophecy, has given us some very judicious Observations, both concerning Prophecy in general, and concerning a double Sense of some Prophecies, in the first Volume of his *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*.



THE
REASONABLENESS
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY
CHRISTIANITY,
AS DELIVERED IN THE
SCRIPTURES.

P R E F A C E.

THE little satisfaction and consistency that is to be found in most of the systems of divinity I have met with, made me betake myself to the sole reading of the scripture (to which they all appeal) for the understanding the Christian religion.

What from thence, by an attentive and unbiassed search I have received, Reader, I here deliver to thee.

If by this my labour thou receivest any light or confirmation in the truth, join with me in thanks to the Father of lights for his condescension to our understandings.

If, upon a fair and unprejudiced examination, thou findest I have mistaken the sense and tenor of the gospel, I beseech thee, as a true Christian, in the spirit of the gospel (which is that of charity) and in the words of sobriety, set me right in the doctrine of salvation.

IT is obvious to any one who reads the New Testament, that the doctrine of redemption, and consequently of the gospel, is founded upon the supposition of Adam's fall. To understand therefore what we are restored to by Jesus Christ, we must consider what the scripture shews we lost by Adam. This I thought worthy of a diligent and unbiassed search: since I found the two extremes, that men run into on this point, either on the one hand shook the foundations of all religion, or on the other made Christianity almost nothing. For whilst some men would have all Adam's posterity doomed to eternal infinite punishment, for the transgression of Adam, whom millions had never heard of, and no one had autho-

rized to transact for him, or be his representative; this seemed to others so little consistent with the justice or goodness of the great and infinite God, that they thought there was no redemption necessary, and consequently that there was none, rather than admit of it upon a supposition so derogatory to the honour and attributes of that Infinite Being; and so made Jesus Christ nothing but the restorer and preacher of pure natural religion; thereby doing violence to the whole tenor of the New Testament. And, indeed, both sides will be suspected to have trespassed this way, against the written word of God, by any one, who does but take it to be a collection of writings designed by God for the instruction of the illiterate bulk of mankind in the way to salvation; and therefore generally and in necessary points to be understood in the plain direct meaning of the words and phrases, such as they may be supposed to have had in the mouths of the speakers, who used them according to the language of that time and country wherein they lived, without such learned, artificial, and forced senses of them, as are sought out, and put upon them in most of the systems of divinity, according to the notions that each one has been bred up in.

To one that thus unbiassed reads the scriptures, what Adam fell from, is visible, was the state of perfect obedience, which is called "justice" in the New Testament, though the word which in the original signifies "justice" be translated "righteousness:" and by this fall he lost paradise, wherein was tranquillity and the tree of life, i. e. he lost bliss and immortality. The penalty annexed to the breach of the law, with the sentence pronounced by God upon it, shews this. The penalty stands thus, Gen. ii. 17. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." How was this executed? He did eat, but in the day he did eat, he did not actually die, but was turned out of paradise from the tree of life, and shut out for ever from it, lest he should take thereof and live for ever. This shews that the state of paradise was a state of immortality, of life without end, which he lost that very day that he eat: his life began from thence to shorten and waste, and to have an end; and from thence to his actual death, was but like the time of a prisoner between the sentence past and the execution, which was in view and certain. Death then entered and shewed his face, which before was shut out, and not known. So St. Paul, Rom. v. 12. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;" i. e. a state of death and mortality: and 1 Cor. xv. 22. "In Adam all die;" i. e. by reason of transgression all men are mortal, and come to die.

This is so clear in these cited places, and so much the current of the New Testament, that nobody can deny but that the doctrine of the gospel is, that death came on all men by Adam's sin; only they differ about the signification of the word "death." For some will have it to be a state of guilt, wherein not only he, but all his posterity was so involved, that every one descended of him deserved endless torment, in hell-fire. I shall say nothing more here, how far, in the apprehensions of men, this consists with the justice and goodness

goodness of God, having mentioned it above : but it seems a strange way of understanding a law, which requires the plainest and directest words, that by " death " should be meant eternal life in misery. Could any one be supposed by a law, that says, " for felony thou shalt die," not that he should lose his life, but be kept alive in perpetual exquisite torments ? And would any one think himself fairly dealt with ; that was so used ?

To this they would have it be also a state of necessary sinning and provoking God in every action that men do : a yet harder sense of the word " death " than the other. God says, " That in the day " that thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt die ; " i. e. thou and thy posterity shall be ever after incapable of doing any thing, but what shall be sinful and provoking to me, and shall justly deserve my wrath and indignation. Could a worthy man be supposed to put such terms upon the obedience of his subjects ? much less can the righteous God be supposed, as a punishment of one sin wherewith he is displeased, to put a man under a necessity of sinning continually, and so multiplying the provocation ? The reason of this strange interpretation we shall perhaps find in some mistaken places of the New Testament. I must confess, by death here, I can understand nothing but a ceasing to be, the losing of all actions of life and sense. Such a death came on Adam and all his posterity by his first disobedience in paradise, under which death they would have lain for ever, had it not been for the redemption by Jesus Christ. If by death threatened to Adam, were meant the corruption of human nature in his posterity, it is strange that the New Testament should not any where take notice of it, and tell us, that corruption seized on all because of Adam's transgression, as well as it tells us so of death. But, as I remember, every one's sin is charged upon himself only.

Another part of the sentence was, " Cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life, in " the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto " the ground : for out of it wast thou taken ; dust thou art, and to " dust shalt thou return." Gen. iii. 17, 19. This shews that paradise was a place of bliss as well as immortality, without toil and without sorrow. But when man was turned out, he was exposed to the toil, anxiety, and frailties of this mortal life, which should end in the dust, out of which he was made, and to which he should return ; and then have no more life or sense than the dust had, out of which he was made.

As Adam was turned out of paradise, so all his posterity was born out of it, out of the reach of the tree of life. All like their father Adam in a state of mortality, void of the tranquillity and bliss of paradise. Rom. v. 12. " By one man sin entered into the world, " and death by sin." But here will occur the common objection, that so many stumble at : how doth it consist with the justice and goodness of God, that the posterity of Adam should suffer for his sin ; the innocent be punished for the guilty ? Very well, if keep-

ing one from what he has no right to, be called a punishment. The state of immortality in paradise is not due to the posterity of Adam more than to any other creature. Nay, if God afford them a temporary mortal life, it is his gift, they owe it to his bounty, they could not claim it as their right, nor does he injure them when he takes it from them. Had he taken from mankind any thing that was their right; or did he put men in a state of misery worse than not being, without any fault or demerit of their own; this, indeed, would be hard to reconcile with the notion we have of justice; and much more with the goodness and other attributes of the Supreme Being, which he has declared of himself, and reason as well as revelation must acknowledge to be in him; unless we will confound good and evil, God and Satan. That such a state of extreme irremediable torment is worse than no being at all, if every one's sense did not determine against the vain philosophy, and foolish metaphysics of some men; yet our Saviour's peremptory decision, Matt. xxvi. 24. has put it past doubt, that one may be in such an estate, that it had been "better for him not to have been born." But that such a temporary life as we now have, with all its frailties and ordinary miseries, is better than no being, is evident, by the high value we put upon it ourselves. And therefore, though all die in Adam, yet none are truly punished but for their own deeds. Rom. ii. 6. "God will render to every one, *how?* according to his deeds. To those that obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil," ver. 9. 2 Cor. v. 10. "We must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad." And Christ himself, who knew for what he should condemn men at the last day, assures us in the two places where he describes his proceeding at the great judgement, that the sentence of condemnation passes only on the workers of iniquity, such as neglected to fulfill the law in acts of charity, Matt. vii. 23. Luke xiii. 27. Matt. xxv. 42. And again, John v. 29. our Saviour tells the Jews, "that all shall come forth of their graves, they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." But here is no condemnation of any one, for what his fore-father Adam had done, which it is not likely should have been omitted, if that should have been a cause why any one was adjudged to the fire with the devil and his angels. And he tells his disciples, that when he comes again with his angels in the glory of his father, "that then he will render to every one according to his works." Matt. xvi. 27.

Adam being thus turned out of paradise, and all his posterity born out of it, the consequence of it was, that all men should die, and remain under death for ever, and so be utterly lost.

From this estate of death Jesus Christ restores all mankind to life; 1 Cor. 22. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." How this shall be, the same apostle tells us in the fore-
going

going ver. 21. "By man death came, by man also came the resurrection from the dead." Whereby it appears, that the life, which Jesus Christ restores to all men, is that life, which they receive again at the resurrection. Then they recovered from death, which otherwise all mankind should have continued under, lost for ever, as appears by St. Paul's arguing, 1 Cor. xv. concerning the resurrection.

And thus men are by the second Adam restored to life again : that so by Adam's sin they may none of them lose any thing, which by their own righteousness they might have a title to. For righteousness, or an exact obedience to the law, seems by the scripture to have a claim of right to eternal life, Rom. iv. 4. "To him that worketh," i. e. does the works of the law, "is the reward not reckoned of grace, but OF DEBT:" and Rev. xxii. 14. "Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may HAVE RIGHT to the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." If any of the posterity of Adam were just, they shall not lose the reward of it, eternal life and bliss, by being his mortal issue : Christ will bring them all to life again ; and then they shall be put every one upon his own trial, and receive judgment, as he is found to be righteous or not : and "the righteous," as our Saviour says, Matt. xxv. 46. "shall go into eternal life." Nor shall any one miss it, who has done what our Saviour directed the lawyer, who asked, Luke x. 25. "What he should do to inherit eternal life ? do this," i. e. what is required by the law ; "and thou shalt live."

On the other side, it seems the unalterable purpose of the divine justice, that no unrighteous person, no one that is guilty of any breach of the law, should be in paradise ; but that the wages of sin should be to every man, as it was to Adam, an exclusion of him out of that happy state of immortality, and bring death upon him. And this is so conformable to the eternal and established law of right and wrong, that it is spoke of too as if it could not be otherwise. St. James says, chap. 1. 15. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," as it were by a natural and necessary production. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin," says St. Paul, Rom. v. 12, and vi. 23. "The wages of sin is death." Death is the purchase of any, of every sin. Gal. iii. 10. "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And of this St. James gives a reason, chap. ii. 10, 11. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all : for he that said, 'Do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill :' i. e. He that offends in any one point, sins against the authority which established the law.

Here then we have the standing and fixed measures of life and death. Immortality and bliss belong to the righteous : those who have lived in an exact conformity to the law of God, are out of the reach of death : but an exclusion from paradise, and loss of immortality, is the portion of sinners, of all those who have any way

broke that law, and failed of a compleat obedience to it by the guilt of any one transgression. And thus mankind by the law are put upon the issues of life or death ; as they are righteous or unrighteous, just or unjust ; i. e. exact performers, or transgressors of the law.

But yet “ all having sinned,” Rom. iii. 23. “ and come short of “ the glory of God,” i. e. the kingdom of God in heaven, which is often called his glory, “ both Jews and Gentiles,” ver. 22. so that “ by the deeds of the law no one could be justified,” ver. 20. ; it follows, that no one could then have eternal life and bliss.

Perhaps it will be demanded, why did God give so hard a law to mankind, that to the Apostles time no one of Adam’s issue had kept it ? as appears by Rom. iii. and Gal. iii. 21, 22.

Ans. It was such a law as the purity of God’s nature required, and must be the law of such a creature as man, unless God would have made him a rational creature, and not required him to have lived by the law of reason, but would have countenanced in him irregularity and disobedience to that light which he had, and that rule which was suitable to his nature ; which would have been to have authorized disorder, confusion, and wickedness in his creatures. For that this law was the law of reason, or, as it is called, of nature, we shall see by-and-by : and if rational creatures will not live up to the rule of their reason, who shall excuse them ? If you will admit them to forsake reason in one point, why not in another ? Where will you stop ? To disobey God in any part of his commands (and it is he that commands what reason does) is direct rebellion ; which if dispensed with in any point, government and order are at an end, and there can be no bounds set to the lawless exorbitancy of unconfined men. “ The law therefore was,” as St. Paul tells us, Rom. vii. 21. “ holy, just, and good,” and such as it ought, and could not otherwise be.

This then being the case, that whoever is guilty of any sin should certainly die, and cease to be, the benefit of life restored by Christ at the resurrection would have been no great advantage, (forasmuch as here again death must have seized upon all mankind, because all had sinned ; for the wages of sin is every where death, as well after, as before the resurrection), if God had not found out a way to justify some, i. e. so many as obeyed another law, which God gave, which in the New Testament is called “ the law of faith,” Rom. iii. 27. and is opposed to “ the law of works.” And therefore the punishment of those who would not follow him was to lose their souls, i. e. their lives, Mark viii. 35, 38. as is plain, considering the occasion it was spoke on.

The better to understand “ the law of faith,” it will be convenient in the first place to consider “ the law of works.” The law of works then, in short, is that law which requires perfect obedience, without any remission or abatement ; so that by that law a man cannot be just, or justified, without an exact performance of every tittle. Such a perfect obedience in the New Testament is termed δικαιοσύνη, which we translate “ righteousness.”

The language of this law is, do this and live, transgress and die. Lev. xviii. 5. "Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgements, which if a man do, he shall live in them." Ezek. xx: 11. "I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgements; which if a man do, he shall even live in them." Moses, says St. Paul, Rom. x. 5. "describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things shall live in them." Gal. iii. 12. "The law is not of faith, but that man that doth them shall live in them." On the other side, transgress and die; no dispensation, no atonement, Ver. 10. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

Where this law of works was to be found, the New Testament tells us, (viz.,) in the law delivered by Moses. John i. 17. "The law was given by Moses, but faith and truth came by Jesus Christ." Chap. vii. 19. "Did not Moses give you the law," says our Saviour, "and yet none of you keep the law?" And this is the law which he speaks of, where he asks the lawyer, Luke x. 26, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" ver. 28. "This do, and thou shalt live." This is that which St. Paul so often styles the law, without any other distinction, Rom. ii. 13. "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law are justified." It is needless to quote any more places: his epistles are all full of it, especially this to the Romans,

But the law given by Moses being not given to all mankind, how are all men sinners, since without a law there is no transgression? To this the Apostle, ver. 14. answers, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do (i. e. find it reasonable to do), by nature the things contained in the law; these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and amongst one another their thoughts accusing or excusing." By which, and other places in the following chapter, it is plain, that under the law of works is comprehended also the law of nature, knowable by reason, as well as the law given by Moses. "For," says St. Paul, Rom. iii. 9, 23. "we have proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" which they could not do without a law.

Nay, whatever God requires any where to be done without making any allowance for faith, that is a part of the law of works. So the forbidding Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge, was part of the law of works. Only we must take notice here, that some of God's positive commands being for peculiar ends, and suited to particular circumstances of times, places, and persons, having a limited and only temporary obligation by virtue of God's positive injunction; such as was that part of Moses's law which concerned the outward worship or political constitution of the Jews, and is called the Ceremonial and Judaical Law, in contradistinction to the moral

§ THE REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY,

part of it ; which being conformable to the eternal law of right, is of eternal obligation, and therefore remains in force still under the gospel ; nor is abrogated by the law of faith, as St. Paul found some ready to infer, Rom. iii. 31. “ Do we then make void the law through faith ? God forbid ; yea, we establish the law.”

Nor can it be otherwise : for were there no “ law of works,” there could be no “ law of faith.” For there could be no need of faith, which should be counted to men for righteousness, if there were no law to be the rule and measure of righteousness, which men failed in their obedience to. Where there is no law, there is no sin ; all are righteous equally with or without faith.

The rule therefore of right is the same that ever it was, the obligation to observe it is also the same : the difference between the “ law of works” and the “ law of faith” is only this ; that the “ law of works” makes no allowance for failing on any occasion. Those that obey, are righteous : those that in any part disobey, are unrighteous, and must not expect life, the reward of righteousness. But by the “ law of faith,” faith is allowed to supply the defect of full obedience ; and so the believers are admitted to life and immortality, as if they were righteous. Only here we must take notice, that when St. Paul says, that the Gospel establishes the law, he means the moral part of the law of Moses : for that he could not mean the ceremonial or political part of it, is evident by what I quoted out of him just now, where he says, “ The Gentiles that do by nature the things contained in the law, their consciences bearing witness.” For the Gentiles neither did nor thought of the judaical or ceremonial institutions of Moses ; it was only the moral part their consciences were concerned in. As for the rest, St. Paul tells the Galatians, chap. iv. they are not under that part of the law, which ver. 3. he calls “ elements of the world ;” and ver. 9. “ weak and beggarly elements.” And our Saviour himself, in his gospel-sermon on the mount, tells them, Matt. v. ver. 17. that whatever they might think, he was not come “ to dissolve the law,” but to make it more full and strict ; for that that is meant by *πληρῶσαι*, is evident from the following part of that chapter, where he gives the precepts in a stricter sense than they were received in before. But they are all precepts of the moral law which he reinforces : what should become of the ritual law he tells the woman of Samaria in these words, John iv. 21, 23. “ The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him.”

Thus then as to the law in short : the civil and ritual part of the law delivered by Moses obliges not Christians, though to the Jews it were a part of the law of works ; it being a part of the law of nature, that man ought to obey every positive law of God, whenever he shall please to make any such addition to the law of his nature. But the moral part of Moses’s law, or the moral law, (which is every where the same, the eternal rule of right) obliges Christians and

and all men every where, and is to all men the standing law of works. But Christian believers have the privilege to be under the "law of faith" too; which is that law whereby God justifies a man for believing, though by his works he be not just or righteous, i. e. though he came short of perfect obedience to the law of works. God alone does, or can justify or make just those who by their works are not so; which he doth by counting their faith for righteousness, i. e. for a compleat performance of the law. Rom. iv. 3. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Ver. 5. "To him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Ver. 6. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works;" i. e. without a full measure of works, which is exact obedience. Ver. 7. Saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered," Ver. 8. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

This faith for which God justified Abraham, what was it? It was the believing God when he engaged his promise in the covenant he made with him. This will be plain to any one who considers these places together, Gen. xv. 6. "He believed in the Lord, or believed the Lord:" for that the Hebrew phrase "believing in," signifies no more but "believing," is plain from St. Paul's citation of this place, Rom. iv. 3. where he repeats it thus: "Abraham believed God;" which he thus explains, ver. 18, 22. "Who against hope, believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was also able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." By which it is clear, that the faith which God counted to Abraham for righteousness, was nothing but a firm belief of what God declared to him, and a steadfast relying on him for the accomplishment of what he had promised.

"Now this," says St. Paul, ver. 23, 24. "was not writ for his [Abraham's] sake alone, but for us also;" teaching us, that as Abraham was justified for his faith, so also ours shall be accounted to us for righteousness, if we believe God as Abraham believed him. Whereby it is plain is meant the firmness of our faith without staggering, and not the believing the same propositions that Abraham believed, viz. that though he and Sarah were old, and past the time and hopes of children, yet he should have a son by her, and by him become the father of a great people, which should possess the land of Canaan. This was what Abraham believed, and was counted to him for righteousness; but nobody I think will say, that any one's believing this now, shall be imputed to him
for

for righteousness. The law of faith then, in short, is for every one to believe what God requires him to believe, as a condition of the covenant he makes with him, and not to doubt of the performance of his promises. This the Apostle intimates in the close here, ver. 24. "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." We must therefore examine and see what God requires us to believe now under the revelation of the Gospel: for the belief of one invisible, eternal, omnipotent God, maker of heaven and earth, &c. was required before, as well as now.

What we are now required to believe to obtain eternal life, is plainly set down in the Gospel. St. John tells us, John iii. 36, "He that believeth on the son, hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the son, shall not see life." What this "believing on him" is, we are also told in the next chapter. "The woman saith unto him, I know that the Messiah cometh; when he is come, he will tell us all things, Jesus said unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. The woman then went into the city, and saith to the men, come see a man that hath told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Messiah? And many of the Samaritans believed on him; for the saying of the woman, who testified, he told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, many more believed because of his words, and said to the woman, We believe not any longer because of thy saying, for we have heard ourselves, and we know that this man is truly the Saviour of the world, the Messiah." John iv. 25, 26, 29, 39, 40, 41, 42.

By which place it is plain, "that believing on the son," is the "believing that Jesus was the Messiah;" giving credit to the miracles he did, and the profession he made of himself. For those who were said to BELIEVE ON HIM for the saying of the woman, ver. 39. tell the woman, that they now believed not any longer because of her saying; but that having heard him themselves, they knew, i. e. BELIEVED past doubt, THAT HE WAS THE MESSIAH.

This was the great proposition that was then controverted concerning Jesus of Nazareth, whether he was the Messiah or no; and the assent to that, was that which distinguished believers from unbelievers. When many of his disciples had forsaken him, upon his declaring that he was the bread of life which came down from heaven, "he said to the apostles, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him; Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life: and we believe, and are sure thou art the Messiah, the son of the living God," John vi. 69. This was the faith which distinguished them from apostates and unbelievers, and was sufficient to continue them in the rank of apostles: and it was upon the same proposition, "That Jesus was the Messiah, the son of the living God," owned by St. Peter, that our Saviour said he would build his church, Matt. xvi. 16, 18.

To convince men of this, he did his miracles; and their assent to, or not assenting to this, made them to be, or not to be of his church; believers, or not believers. "The Jews came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us doubt? If thou be the Messiah, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them; I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." John x. 24. 26. Conformable hereunto St. John tells us, "That many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus, the Messiah, is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver, and an antichrist, whosoever abideth not in the doctrine of the Messiah, has not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of the Messiah," i. e. that Jesus is he, "hath both the father and the son." 2 John vii. 9, 10. That this is the meaning of the place, is plain from what he says in his foregoing epistle, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Messiah, is born of God," 1 John v. 1. And therefore, drawing to a close of his gospel, and shewing the end for which he writ it, he has these words: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name," John xx. 30, 31. Whereby it is plain, that the gospel was writ to induce men into a belief of this proposition, "that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah; which if they believed, they should have life."

Accordingly the great question amongst the Jews was, whether he were the Messiah or no: and the great point insisted on and promulgated in the gospel was, that he was the Messiah. The first glad tidings of his birth, brought to the shepherds by an angel, was in these words: "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord." Luke ii. 11. Our Saviour discoursing with Martha about the means of attaining eternal life, saith to her, John xi. 27, "Whosoever believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Messiah, the son of God, which should come into the world." This answer of hers sheweth what it is to believe in Jesus Christ, so as to have eternal life, viz. to believe that he is the Messiah the son of God, whose coming was foretold by the prophets. And thus Andrew and Philip expresses it: "Andrew says to his brother Simon, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. Philip saith to Nathaniel, we have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph," John i. 41, 45. According to what the Evangelist says in this place, I have, for the clearer understanding of the scripture, all along put Messiah for Christ: Christ being but the Greek name for the Hebrew Messiah, and both signifying "The Anointed."

And

And that he was the Messiah, was the great truth he took pains to convince his disciples and apostles of; appearing to them after his resurrection: as may be seen, Luke xxiv. which we shall more particularly consider in another place. There we read what gospel our Saviour preached to his disciples and apostles; and that, as soon as he was risen from the dead, twice the very day of his resurrection.

And if we may gather what was to be believed by all nations, from what was preached unto them; we may certainly know what they were commanded, Matt. c. ult. To teach all nations, by what they actually did teach all nations; we may observe, that the preaching of the apostles every where in the Acts tended to this one point, to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. Indeed, now after his death, his resurrection was also commonly required to be believed as a necessary article, and sometimes solely insisted on; it being a mark and undoubted evidence of his being the Messiah, and necessary now to be believed by those who would receive him as the Messiah. For since the Messiah was to be a Saviour and a King, and to give life and a kingdom to those who received him, as we shall see by-and-by, there could have been no pretence to have given him out for the Messiah, and to require men to believe him to be so, who thought him under the power of death, and corruption of the grave. And therefore those who believed him to be the Messiah, must believe that he was risen from the dead: and those who believed him to be risen from the dead, could not doubt of his being the Messiah. But of this more in another place.

Let us see therefore how the apostles preached Christ, and what they proposed to their hearers to believe. St. Peter at Jerusalem, Acts ii. by his first sermon, converted three thousand souls. What "was his word," which as we are told, ver. 41. "they gladly received, and thereupon were baptized?" That may be seen from ver. 22. to ver. 36. In short, this, which is the conclusion drawn from all that he had said, and which he presses on them as the thing they were to believe, viz. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, Lord and Messiah," ver. 36.

To the same purpose was his discourse to the Jews in the temple, Acts iii. the design whereof you have, ver. 18, "But those things that God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that the Messiah should suffer, he hath so fulfilled."

In the next chapter, Acts iv. Peter and John being examined about the miracle on the lame man, profess it to have been done in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who was the Messiah, in whom alone there was salvation, ver. 10, 12. The same thing they confirm to them again, Acts v. 29. 32. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus the Messiah." ver. 42.

What was Stephen's speech to the council, Acts vii. but a reprehension to them, that they were the betrayers and murderers of the "Just One?" Which is the title by which he plainly designs the Messiah,

Messiah, whose coming was fore-shewn by the Prophets, ver. 51, 52. And that the Messiah was to be without sin (which is the import of the word "Just") was the opinion of the Jews appears from John ix. ver. 22. compared with 24.

Acts viii. Philip carries the gospel to Samaria. "Then Philip went down to Samaria, and preached to them." What was it he preached? You have an account of it in this one word, "The Messiah," ver. 5. This being that alone which was required of them, to believe that Jesus was the Messiah; which when they believed, they were baptized. "And when they believed Philip's preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus the Messiah, they were baptized both men and women." ver. 12.

Philip being sent from thence, by a special call of the spirit, to make an eminent convert, out of Isaiah preaches to him Jesus, ver. 35. And what it was he preached concerning Jesus, we may know by the profession of faith the eunuch made, upon which he was admitted to baptism, ver 37. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God:" which is as much as to say, I believe that he, whom you call Jesus Christ, is really and truly the Messiah that was promised. For that believing him to be the "Son of God," and to be the Messiah, was the same thing, may appear by comparing John i. 45. with ver. 49. where Nathaniel owns Jesus to be the Messiah in these terms: "Thou art the son of God, thou art the King of Israel." So the Jews, Luke xxii. 70. asking Christ, whether he were the "son of God;" plainly demanded of him, whether he were the Messiah? Which is evident by comparing that with the three preceding verses. They ask him, ver. 67. whether he were the Messiah? He answers, "If I tell you, you will not believe;" but withal tells them, that from henceforth he should be in possession of the kingdom of the Messiah, expressed in these words, ver. 69. "Hereafter shall the son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God: which made them all cry out, "Art thou then the son of God?" i. e. Dost thou then own thyself to be the Messiah? To which he replies, "Ye say that I am." That the "Son of God" was the known title of the Messiah at that time amongst the Jews, we may see also from what the Jews say to Pilate, John xix. 7. "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the SON OF GOD;" i. e. by making himself the Messiah, the Prophet which was to come, but falsely; and therefore he deserves to die by the law. Deut. xviii. 20. That this was the common signification of "the son of God," is farther evident from what the chief priests, mocking him, said, when he was on the cross, Matt. xxvii. 42. "He saved others, himself he cannot save: if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the son of God;" i. e. he said, he was the Messiah: but it is plainly false; for if he were, God would deliver him: for the Messiah is to be

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be king of Israel, the saviour of others; but this man cannot save himself. The chief priests mention here the two titles then in use, whereby the Jews commonly designed the Messiah, viz. "son of God," and "king of Israel." That of "son of God" was so familiar a compellation of the Messiah, who was then so much expected and talked of, that the Romans, it seems, who lived amongst them, had learned it; as appears from ver. 54: "Now when the Centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, truly this was the son of God;" this was that extraordinary person that was looked for.

Acts ix. St. Paul exercising the commission to preach the gospel, which he had received in a miraculous way, ver. 20. "Straitway" preached Christ in the Synagogues, that he is the son of God;" i. e. that Jesus was the Messiah: for Christ in this place is evidently a proper name. And that this was it which Paul preached, appears from ver. 22. "Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ," i. e. the Messiah.

Peter, when he came to Cornelius at Cæsarea; who by a vision was ordered to send for him, as Peter, on the other side, was by a vision commanded to go to him; what does he teach him? His whole discourse, Acts x. tends to shew what he says God commanded the apostles "to preach unto the people, and to testify; That it is he [Jesus] which was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead." And that it was "to him that all the Prophets give witness, that through his name whosoever believed in him shall have remission of sins." ver. 42, 43. This is the word which God sent to the children of Israel; that word which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached," ver. 36, 37. And these are the "words" which had been promised to Cornelius, Acts xi. 14. "Whereby he and all his house should be saved:" which "words amount only to thus much, that Jesus was the Messiah," the Saviour that was promised. Upon their receiving of this (for this was all was taught them) the Holy Ghost fell on them, and they were baptized. It is observable here, that the Holy Ghost fell on them before they were baptized; which in other places converts received not till after baptism. The reason whereof seems to be this; that God, by bestowing on them the Holy Ghost, did thus declare from heaven, that the Gentiles, upon believing Jesus to be the Messiah, ought to be admitted into the church by baptism as well as the Jews. Whoever reads St. Peter's defence, Acts xi. when he was accused by those of the circumcision, that he had not kept that distance which he ought with the uncircumcised, will be of this opinion; and see by what he says, ver. 15, 16, 17, that this was the ground, and an irresistible authority to him for doing so strange a thing, as it appeared to the Jews (who alone yet were members of the Christian church) to admit Gentiles into their communion,

munion, upon their believing. And therefore St. Peter, in the foregoing chapter, Acts x. before he would baptize them, proposes this question "to those of the circumcision, which came with him, "and were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was poured "out the gift of the Holy Ghost: can any one forbid water, that "these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as "well as we?" ver. 47. And when some of the sect of the Pharisees, who believed, thought "it needful that the converted "Gentiles should be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses," Acts xv. "Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, "you know that a good while ago God made choice amongst us, "that the Gentiles," viz. Cornelius, and those here converted with him, "by my mouth should hear the Gospel, and believe. And "God, who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them "the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no difference "between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith," ver. 7. 9. So that both Jews and Gentiles, who believed Jesus to be the Messiah, received thereupon the seal of baptism: whereby they are owned to be his, and distinguished from unbelievers. From what is above said, we may observe, that this preaching Jesus to be the Messiah, is called "the word," and "the word of God;" and believing it, "receiving the word of God." See Acts x. 36, 37, and xi. 1. 19, 20. And "the word of the Gospel," Acts xv. 7. And so likewise in the History of the Gospel, what Mark, chap. iv. 14, 15. calls simply "the word," St. Luke calls "the word of God." Luke viii. 11. And St. Matthew, chap. xiii. 19. "the word of the kingdom;" which were, it seems, in the gospel-writers synonymous terms, and are so to be understood by us.

But to go on: Acts xiii. Paul preaches in the Synagogue at Antioch, where he makes it his business to convince the Jews, that "God, according to his promise, had of the seed of David raised "to Israel a Saviour, Jesus," ver. 24. That he was He of whom the prophets writ, ver. 25—29. i. e. the Messiah: and that, as a demonstration of his being so, God had raised him from the dead, ver. 30. From whence he argues thus, ver. 32, 33. "We evangelize to you," or bring you this gospel, "how that the promise "which was made to our fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto "us, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in "the second Psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten "thee." And having gone on to prove him to be the Messiah, by his resurrection from the dead, he makes this conclusion; ver. 38, 39. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that "through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins; and "by him all who believe, are justified from all things from which "they could not be justified by the law of Moses." This is in this chapter called "the word of God" over and over again: compare ver. 42, with 44, 46, 48, 49. And chap. xii. ver. 24.

Acts xvii. 2. 4. At Thessalonica, Paul, "as his manner was, "went into the Synagogue, and three Sabbath-days reasoned with
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“ the Jews out of the scriptures ; opening and alledging, that the
 “ Messiah must needs have suffered; and risen again from the dead :
 “ and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is the Messiah.
 “ And some of them believed; and consorted with Paul and Silas :
 “ but the Jews which believed not, set the city in an uproar.” Can
 there be any thing plainer; than that the assenting to this propo-
 sition, that Jesus was the Messiah; was that which distinguished the
 believers from the unbelievers? For this was that alone which,
 three Sabbaths, Paul endeavoured to convince them of, as the text
 tells us in direct words.

From thence he went to Berea; and preached the same thing :
 and the Bereans are commended, ver. 11. for searching the scrip-
 tures, whether those things; i. e. which he had said, ver. 2, 3, con-
 cerning Jesus his being the Messiah, were true or no.

The same doctrine we find him preaching at Corinth; Acts xviii.
 4, 6. “ And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and per-
 “ suaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timo-
 “ theus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in spirit;
 “ and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was the Messiah. And when
 “ they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his rayment;
 “ and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads, I am
 “ clean ; from henceforth I will go unto the Greeks.”

Upon the like occasion he tells the Jews at Antioch; Acts xiii.
 46. “ It was necessary that the word of God should first have been
 “ spoken to you : but seeing you put it off from you, we turn to
 “ the Gentiles.” It is plain here, St. Paul’s charging their blood
 on their own heads, is for opposing this single truth, that Jesus
 was the Messiah ; that salvation or perdition depends upon believ-
 ing or rejecting this one proposition. I mean, this is all is required
 to be believed by those who acknowledge but one eternal and in-
 visible God, the maker of heaven and earth, as the Jews did. For
 that there is something more required to salvation, besides believ-
 ing, we shall see hereafter. In the mean time, it is fit here on this
 occasion to take notice, that though the apostles in their preaching
 to Jews, and the “ Devout” (as we translate the word *Εὐσεβεῖς*,
 who were proselytes of the gate, and the worshippers of one eternal
 and invisible God), said nothing of the believing in this one true
 God, the maker of heaven and earth ; because it was needless to
 press this to those who believed and professed it already (for to such
 it is plain, were most of their discourses hitherto) ; yet when they
 had to do with idolatrous Heathens, who were not yet come to the
 knowledge of the one only true God ; they began with that, as ne-
 cessary to be believed ; it being the foundation on which the other
 was built, and without which it could signify nothing.

Thus Paul speaking to the idolatrous Lystrians, who would have
 sacrificed to him and Barnabas, says, Acts xiv. 15. “ We preach
 “ unto you, that you should turn from these vanities unto the living
 “ God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that
 “ are therein. Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their
 “ own

“ own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness in
 “ that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful
 “ seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”

Thus also he proceeded with the idolatrous Athenians, Acts xvii. telling them, upon occasion of the altar dedicated to the unknown God, “ Whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto
 “ you ; God who made the world, and all things therein : seeing
 “ that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples
 “ made with hands. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of
 “ God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold,
 “ or silver, or stone, graven by art, and man’s device. And the
 “ times of this ignorance God winked at ; but now commandeth
 “ all men every where to repent : because he hath appointed a day
 “ in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man
 “ whom he hath ordained : whereof he hath given assurance unto
 “ all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” So that we
 see, where any thing more was necessary to be proposed to be believed, as there was to the Heathen idolaters, there the apostles were careful not to omit it.

Acts xviii. 4. “ Paul at Corinth reasoned in the synagogue every
 “ Sabbath-day, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was the Messiah.”
 Ver. 11. “ And he continued there a year and six months, teach-
 “ ing the word of God amongst them ;” i. e. The good news, that
 Jesus was the Messiah ; as we have already shewn is meant by
 “ the word of God.”

Apollos, another preacher of the gospel, when he was instructed in the way of God more perfectly, what did he teach but this same doctrine ? As we may see in this account of him, Acts xviii. 27. That “ when he was come into Achaia, he helped the brethren
 “ much who had believed through grace. For he mightily con-
 “ vinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures
 “ that Jesus was the Messiah.”

St. Paul, in the account he gives of himself before Festus and Agrippa, professes this alone to be the doctrine he taught after his conversion : for, says he, Acts xxvi. 22. “ Having obtained help of
 “ God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great,
 “ saying none other things than those which the prophets and
 “ Moses did say should come : that the Messiah should suffer, and
 “ that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and
 “ should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” Which
 was no more than to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. This is
 that, which, as we have above observed, is called “ the word of
 “ God ;” Acts xi. 1. compared with the foregoing chapter, from
 ver. 34, to the end. And xiii. 42. compared with 44, 46, 48, 49.
 And xvii. 13. compared with ver. 11. 3. It is also called “ the
 “ word of the gospel,” Acts xv. 7. And this is that, “ word of
 “ God,” and that “ gospel,” which, where-ever their discourses
 are set down, we find the apostles preached ; and was that faith,
 which made both Jews and Gentiles believers and members of the
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church of Christ ; purifying their hearts, Acts xv. 9. And carrying with it remission of sins, Acts x. 43. So that all that was to be believed for justification, was no more but this single proposition : that " Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, or the Messiah." All, I say, that was to be believed for justification : for that it was not all that was required to be done for justification, we shall see hereafter.

Though we have seen above from what our Saviour has pronounced himself, John iii. 36. " That he that believeth on the son, " hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the son, shall not " see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him : " and are taught from John iv. 39. compared with ver. 42. " That believing on " him, is believing that he is the Messiah, the Saviour of the world ; " and the confession made by St. Peter, Matt. xvi. 16. That he is " the Messiah, the son of the living God, " being the rock, on which our Saviour has promised to build his church ; though this, I say, and what else we have already taken notice of, be enough to convince us what it is we are in the gospel required to believe to eternal life, without adding what we have observed from the preaching of the apostles ; yet it may not be amiss, for the farther clearing this matter, to observe what the evangelists deliver concerning the same thing, though in different words ; which therefore perhaps are not so generally taken notice of to this purpose.

We have above observed, from the words of Andrew and Philip compared, that the Messiah, and " him of whom Moses in the " law and the prophets did write, " signify the same thing. We shall now consider that place, John i. a little further. Ver. 41. Andrew says to Simon, " We have found the Messiah." Philip, on the same occasion, ver. 45. says to Nathanael, " We have " found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did " write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael, who disbelieved this, when upon Christ's speaking to him he was convinced of it, declares his assent to it in these words ; " Rabbi, " thou art the son of God, thou art the king of Israel." From which it is evident, that to believe him to be " him of whom " Moses and the prophets did write, " or to be the " son of God, " or to be the " king of Israel, " was in effect the same as to believe him to be the Messiah : and an assent to that, was what our Saviour received for believing. For upon Nathanael's making a confession in these words, " Thou art the son of God, thou " art the king of Israel ; Jesus answered and said to him, Because " I said to thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, dost thou BELIEVE ? " Thou shalt see greater things than these, " ver. 51. I desire any one to read the latter part of the first of John, from ver. 25. with attention, and tell me, whether it be not plain, that this phrase, " the son of God, " is an expression used for the Messiah. To which let him add Martha's declaration of her faith, John xi. 27. in these words ; " I believe that thou art the Messiah, THE " SON OF GOD, who should come into the world ; " and that passage of St. John, chap. xx. 31. " That ye might believe that " Jesus

“ Jesus is the Messiah, THE SON OF GOD ; and that believing, ye might have life through his name ;” and then tell me whether he can doubt that Messiah and “ son of God ” were synonymous terms, at that time, amongst the Jews.

The prophecy of Daniel, chap. ix. where he is called “ Messiah the Prince ;” and the mention of his government and kingdom, and the deliverance by him, in Isaiah, Daniel, and other prophecies, understood of the Messiah, were so well known to the Jews, and had so raised their hopes of him about this time, which, by their account, was to be the time of his coming to restore the kingdom to Israel, that Herod no sooner heard of the Magi’s enquiry after “ him that was born king of the Jews,” Matt. ii. but he forthwith “ demanded of the chief priests and Scribes, where “ the Messiah should be born,” ver. 4. Not doubting, but if there were any king born to the Jews, it was the Messiah, whose coming was now the general expectation, as appears, Luke iii. 15. “ The people being in expectation, and all men musing in their hearts of John, whether he were the Messiah or not.” And when the priests and Levites sent to ask him who he was, he, understanding their meaning, answers, John i. 20. that he was “ not the Messiah ;” but he bears witness that Jesus “ is the son of God,” i. e. the Messiah, ver. 34.

This looking for the Messiah at this time we see also in Simeon, who is said to be “ waiting for the consolation of Israel,” Luke ii. 21. And having the child Jesus in his arms, he says he had “ seen the salvation of the Lord,” ver. 30. And Anna “ coming at the same instant into the Temple, she gave thanks also unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Israel,” ver. 38. And of Joseph of Arimathea it is said, Mark xv. 43. that “ he also expected the kingdom of God :” by all which was meant the coming of the Messiah. And Luke xix. 11. it is said, “ They thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.”

This being premised, let us see what it was that John the Baptist preached, when he first entered upon his ministry. That St. Matthew tells us, chap. iii. 1. 2. “ In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” This was a declaration of the coming of the Messiah ; the “ kingdom of heaven ” and the “ kingdom of God ” being the same, as is clear out of several places of the evangelists ; and both signifying the kingdom of the Messiah. The profession which John the Baptist made, when sent to the Jews, John i. 19. was, that “ he was not the Messiah,” but that Jesus was. This will appear to any one, who will compare ver. 26. 34. with John iii. 27. 30. The Jews being very inquisitive to know whether John were the Messiah, he positively denies it, but tells them, he was only his forerunner ; and that there stood one amongst them, who would follow him, whose shoe-latchet he was not worthy to untie. The next day seeing Jesus, he says, he

was the man ; and that his own baptizing in water, was only that Jesus might be manifested to the world ; and that he knew him not, till he saw the Holy Ghost descend upon him. He that sent him to baptize having told him, that he on whom he should see the Spirit descend, and rest upon, he it was that should baptize with the Holy Ghost ; and that therefore he witnessed, that “ this was the son of God,” ver. 34. i. e. the Messiah. And chap. iii. 26, &c. they came to John the Baptist, and tell him, that Jesus baptized, and that all men went to him. John answers, He has his authority from heaven ; you know I never said, I was the Messiah, but that I was sent before him : he must increase, but I must decrease ; for God hath sent him, and he speaks the words of God ; and God hath given all things into the hands of his son, “ And he that believes on the son hath eternal life.” The same doctrine, and nothing else, but what was preached by the apostles afterwards ; as we have seen all through the Acts, v. g. that Jesus was the Messiah. And that it was that John bears witness of our Saviour, as Jesus himself says, John v. 33.

This also was the declaration that was given of him at his baptism, by a voice from heaven ; “ This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased,” Matt. iii. 17. which was a declaration of him to be Messiah ; “ the son of God” being (as we have shewed) understood to signify the Messiah. To which we may add the first mention of him after his conception, in the words of the angel to Joseph ; Matt. i. 21. “ Thou shalt call his name Jesus,” or Saviour ; “ for he shall save his people from their sins.” It was a received doctrine in the Jewish nation, that at the coming of the Messiah all their sins should be forgiven them. These words therefore of the angel we may look on as a declaration, that Jesus was the Messiah ; whereof these words, “ his people,” are a farther mark ; which suppose him to have a people, and consequently to be a king.

After his baptism, Jesus himself enters upon his ministry. But before we examine what it was he proposed to be believed, we must observe that there is a threefold declaration of the Messiah :

1. By miracles. The spirit of prophecy had now for many ages forsaken the Jews ; and though their commonwealth were not quite dissolved, but that they lived under their own laws, yet they were under a foreign dominion, subject to the Romans. In this state, their account of the time being up, they were in expectation of the Messiah, and of deliverance by him in a kingdom he was to set up, according to their ancient prophecies of him : which gave them hopes of an extraordinary man yet to come from God, who with an extraordinary and divine power, and miracles, should evidence his mission, and work their deliverance. And of any such extraordinary person, who should have the power of doing miracles, they had no other expectation but only of their Messiah. One great prophet and worker of miracles, and only one more, they expected, who was to be Messiah. And therefore we see the people justified
their

their "believing in him," i. e. their believing him to be the Messiah, because of the miracles he did; John vii. 31. "And many of the people believed in him, and said, When the Messiah cometh, will he do more miracles than this man hath done?" And when the Jews, at the feast of dedication, John x. 24, 25. coming about him, said unto him, "How long dost thou make us doubt? If thou be the Messiah, tell us plainly; Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my father's name, bear witness of me." And John v. 36. he says, "I have a greater witness than that of John; for the works which the father hath given me to do, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the father hath sent me." Where, by the way, we may observe, that his being "sent by the father," is but another way of expressing the Messiah; which is evident from this place here, John v. compared with that of John x. last quoted. For there he says, that his works bear witness of him: and what was that witness? viz. that he was the Messiah. Here again he says, that his works bear witness of him: and what is that witness? viz. "That the father sent him." By which we are taught, that to be sent by the father, and to be the Messiah, was the same thing in his way of declaring himself. And accordingly we find, John iv. 53. and xi. 45. and elsewhere, many hearkened and assented to his testimony, and believed on him, seeing the things that he did.

2. Another way of declaring the coming of the Messiah, was by phrases and circumlocutions, that did signify or intimate his coming, though not in direct words pointing out the person. The most usual of these were, "the kingdom of God, and of heaven;" because it was that which was ofteneft spoken of the Messiah, in the Old Testament, in very plain words; and a kingdom was that which the Jews most looked after, and wished for. In that known place, Isai. ix. "The GOVERNMENT shall be upon his shoulders; he shall be called the PRINCE of peace: of the increase of his GOVERNMENT and peace there shall be no end: upon the THRONE of David, and upon his KINGDOM, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice, from henceforth even for ever." Micah v. 2. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me, that is to be the RULER in Israel." And Daniel, besides that he calls him "Messiah the PRINCE," chap. ix. 25. in the account of his vision "of the son of man," chap. vii. 13, 14, says, "There was given him dominion, glory, and a KINGDOM, that all people, nations, and languages should serve: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his KINGDOM that which shall not be destroyed." So that the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven, were common phrases amongst the Jews, to signify the times of the Messiah. Luke xiv. 15. "One of the Jews that sat at meat with him, said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," chap. xvii. 20. The Pharisees demanded, "When the kingdom of God

“ should come ?” And St. John Baptist came, “ saying, Repent, “ for the kingdom of heaven is at hand :” a phrase he would not have used in preaching, had it not been understood.

There are other expressions that signified the Messiah, and his coming, which we shall take notice of as they come in our way.

3. By plain and direct words, declaring the doctrine of the Messiah; speaking out that Jesus was He : as we see the apostles did, when they went about preaching the Gospel, after our Saviour’s resurrection. This was the open clear way, and that which one would think the Messiah himself, when he came, should have taken ; especially if it were of that moment, that upon mens believing him to be the Messiah, depended the forgiveness of their sins. And yet we see that our Saviour did not ; but, on the contrary, for the most part, made no other discovery of himself, at least in Judea, and at the beginning of his ministry, but in the two former ways, which were more obscure ; not declaring himself to be the Messiah, any otherwise than as it might be gathered from the miracles he did, and the conformity of his life and actions with the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning him ; and from some general discourses of the kingdom of the Messiah being come, under the name of the “ kingdom of God,” and “ of heaven.” Nay, so far was he from publicly owning himself to be the Messiah, that he forbade the doing of it : Mark viii. 27. 30. “ He asked his disciples, Whom do “ men say that I am ? And they answered, John the Baptist ; but “ some say, Elias, and others one of the prophets.” (So that it is evident, that even those who believed him an extraordinary person, knew not yet who he was, or that he gave himself out for the Messiah ; though this was in the third year of his ministry, and not a year before his death.) “ And he saith unto them, But “ whom say ye that I am ? And Peter answered, and said unto him, “ Thou art the Messiah. And he charged them that they should “ tell no man of him.” Luke iv. 41. “ And devils came out of “ many, crying, Thou art the Messiah, the son of God : And he “ rebuking them, suffered them not to speak, that they knew him “ to be Messiah.” Mark iii. 11, 12. “ Unclean spirits, when they “ saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the “ son of God : And he straitly charged them that they should not “ make him known.” Here again we may observe from the comparing of the two texts, that “ Thou art the son of God,” or “ Thou art the Messiah,” were indifferently used for the same thing. But to return to the matter in hand.

This concealment of himself will seem strange, in one who was come to bring light into the world, and was to suffer death for the testimony of the truth. This reservedness will be thought to look as if he had a mind to conceal himself, and not to be known to the world for the Messiah, nor to be believed on as such. But we shall be of another mind, and conclude this proceeding of his according to divine wisdom, and suited to a fuller manifestation and evidence of his being the Messiah, when we consider, that he was

to fill out the time foretold of his ministry; and, after a life illustrious in miracles and good works, attended with humility, meekness, patience, and sufferings, and every way conformable to the prophecies of him, should be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and with all quiet and submission be brought to the cross, though there were no guilt nor fault in him. This could not have been, if, as soon as he appeared in public, and began to preach, he had presently professed himself to have been the Messiah, the king that owned that kingdom he published to be at hand. For the Sanhedrim would then have laid hold on it, to have got him in their power, and thereby have taken away his life; at least, they would have disturbed his ministry, and hindered the work he was about. That this made him cautious, and avoid, as much as he could, the occasions of provoking them, and falling into their hands, is plain from John vii. 1. "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee;" out of the way of the chief priests and rulers; "for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." Thus, making good what he foretold them at Jerusalem, when at the first Passover, at his beginning to preach the gospel, upon his curing the man at the Pool of Bethesda, they sought to kill him, John v. 16. "Ye have not," says he, ver. 38, "his word abiding amongst you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not." This was spoken more particularly to the Jews of Jerusalem, who were the forward men, zealous to take away his life: and it imports, that because of their unbelief and opposition to him, the "Word of God," i. e. the preaching of the kingdom of the Messiah, which is often called the Word of God, did not stay amongst them: he could not stay amongst them, preach, and explain to them the kingdom of the Messiah.

That the word of God, here, signifies "the word of God" that should make Jesus known to them to be the Messiah, is evident from the context: and this meaning of this place is made good by the event. For after this, we hear no more of Jesus at Jerusalem, till the Pentecost come twelvemonth; though it is not to be doubted but that he was there the next passover, and other feasts between, but privately. And now at Jerusalem, at the feast of Pentecost, near fifteen months after, he says very little of any thing, and not a word of the kingdom of heaven being come, or at hand; nor did he any miracle there. And returning to Jerusalem at the feast of Tabernacles, it is plain, that from this time till then, which was a year and a half, he had not taught them at Jerusalem.

For, 1. it is said, John vii. 2. 15, that he teaching in the Temple at the feast of Tabernacles, "The Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" A sign they had not been used to his preaching; for if they had, they would not now have marvelled.

2. Ver. 19. He says thus to them; "Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keep the law? Why go you about to kill me? One work," or miracle, "I did" here amongst you,

“ and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, “ and ye on the Sabbath-day circumcise a man: if a man on the Sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry with me, because I have made a man every way whole on the Sabbath-day?” Which is a direct defence of what he did at Jerusalem a year and a half before. The work he here speaks of we find reported John v. 1—16. He had not preached to them there from that time till this, but had made good what he then told them, ver. 38. “ Ye have not the word of God remaining among you, because whom he hath sent, ye believe not.” Whereby, I think, he signifies his not staying and being frequent amongst them at Jerusalem, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, because their great unbelief, opposition, and malice to him, would not permit it.

This was manifestly so in fact. For the first miracle he did at Jerusalem, which was at the second passover after his baptism, brought him in danger of his life. Hereupon we find he forbore preaching again there till the feast of Tabernacles immediately preceding his last passover: so that till half-a year before his passion, he did but one miracle, and preached but once publicly at Jerusalem. These trials he made there; but found their unbelief such, that if he had staid and persisted to preach the good tidings of the kingdom, and to shew himself by miracles among them, he could not have had time and freedom to do those works which his father had given him to finish, as he says, ver. 36, of this 5th of St. John. They all imaginable ways attacked him, and he as readily eluded all their attempts by the wonderful quickness and conduct of an unparalleled wisdom. Here at this feast of Tabernacles, “ The Scribes “ and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; “ they say unto him, Master, Moses in the law commanded us that “ such should be stoned, but what sayest thou? This they said “ tempting him, that they might accuse him.” John viii. 3—6. It is plain they hoped that this criminal cause of a woman just taken in the fact, brought before him in the sight of the people, would draw him, if he would preserve the opinion of being the Messiah their king, to give judgment in it, and by the exercise of such an authority expose him to the Roman deputy. Some such accusation they watched for; but they could never get any such advantage against him: he marvellously defeated their design, and, without lessening himself, sent them away covered with shame and silence.

When, upon the curing of the withered hand on the Sabbath-day, “ The Pharisees took counsel with the Herodians how they “ might destroy him; Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to “ the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and “ from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from “ beyond Jordan, and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude; when they had heard what great things he did, came unto “ him, and he healed them all, and CHARGED THEM THAT “ THEY SHOULD NOT MAKE HIM KNOWN: that it might be ful- “ filled

“ filled which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying, Behold
 “ my servant whom I have chosen ; my beloved, in whom my soul
 “ is well pleased : I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew
 “ judgement to the Gentiles : he shall not strive, nor cry, neither
 “ shall any man hear his voice in the streets.” Mat. xii. and
 Mark iii.

And John xi. 47. Upon the news of our Saviour’s raising Lazarus from the dead, “ the chief priests and Pharisees convened
 “ the Sanhedrim, and said, What do we ? for this man does many
 “ miracles.” Ver. 53. “ Then from that day forth they took
 “ counsel together for to put him to death.” Ver. 54. “ Jesus
 “ therefore walked no more openly among the Jews.” His miracles had now so much declared him to be the Messiah, that the Jews could no longer bear him, nor he trust himself amongst them ; “ but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into
 “ a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.” This was but a little before his last passover, as appears by the following words, ver. 55. “ And the Jews passover was nigh at hand :” and he could not, now his miracles had made him so well known, have been secure the little time that remained till his hour was fully come, if he had not with his wonted and necessary caution withdrawn, “ and walked no more openly among the Jews,” till his time (at the next passover) was fully come ; and then again he appeared amongst them openly.

Nor would the Romans have suffered him, if he had gone about preaching that he was the king whom the Jews expected. Such an accusation would have been forwardly brought against him by the Jews, if they could have heard it out of his own mouth ; and that had been his public doctrine to his followers, which was openly preached by his apostles after his death, when he appeared no more. And of this they were accused, Acts xvii. 5. 9. “ But the Jews
 “ which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain
 “ lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set
 “ all the city in an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and
 “ sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found
 “ them [Paul and Silas] not, they drew Jason and certain brethren
 “ unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the
 “ world upside down, are come hither also, whom Jason hath received :
 “ and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying, That there is another king, one Jesus. And they troubled
 “ the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these
 “ things : and when they had taken security of Jason and the
 “ other, they let them go.”

Though the magistrates of the world had no great regard to the talk of a king, who had suffered death, and appeared no longer any where ; yet if our Saviour had openly declared this of himself in his life-time, with a train of disciples and followers every where owning and crying him up for their king ; the Roman governor of Judea could not have forbore to have taken notice of it, and have made

use of their force against him. This the Jews were not mistaken in; and therefore made use of it as the strongest accusation, and likeliest to prevail with Pilate against him for the taking away his life; it being treason and an unpardonable offence, which could not escape death from a Roman deputy, without the forfeiture of his own life. Thus then they accuse him to Pilate, Luke xxiii. 2. "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is a king;" or rather, the Messiah the king.

Our Saviour indeed, now that his time was come (and he in custody, and forsaken of all the world, and so out of all danger of raising any sedition or disturbance,) owns himself to Pilate to be a king; after having first told Pilate, John xviii. 36. "That his kingdom was not of this world;" and for a kingdom in another world, Pilate knew that his master at Rome concerned not himself. But had there been any the least appearance of truth in the allegations of the Jews, that he had perverted the nation, forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar, or drawing the people after him as their king, Pilate would not so readily have pronounced him innocent. But we see what he said to his accusers, Luke xxiii. 13, 14, "Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers of the people, said unto them, You have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people; and behold, I have examined him before you, have found no fault in this man, touching those things whereof you accuse him; no, nor yet Herod, for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done by him." And therefore, finding a man of that mean condition and innocent life (no mover of seditions, or disturber of the public peace) without a friend or a follower, he would have dismissed him, as a king of no consequence; as an innocent man, falsely and maliciously accused by the Jews.

How necessary this caution was in our Saviour, to say or do nothing that might justly offend, or render him suspected to the Roman governor, and how glad the Jews would have been to have any such thing against him, we may see Luke xx. 20. The chief priests and the scribes "watched him, and sent forth spies, who should feign themselves just men, that might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor." And the very thing wherein they hoped to entrap him in this place, was paying tribute to Cæsar, which they afterwards falsely accused him of. And what would they have done, if he had before them professed himself to have been the Messiah, their king and deliverer?

And here we may observe the wonderful providence of God, who had so ordered the state of the Jews at the time when his son was to come into the world; that though neither their civil constitution nor religious worship were dissolved, yet the power of life and death was taken from them; whereby he had an opportunity to publish the kingdom of the Messiah; that is, his own royalty, under

der the name of the "kingdom of God," and of "Heaven;" which the Jews well enough understood, and would certainly have put him to death for, had the power been in their own hands. But this being no matter of accusation to the Romans, hindered him not from speaking of "the kingdom of Heaven," as he did: sometimes in reference to his appearing in the world, and being believed on by particular persons; sometimes in reference to the power that should be given him by the Father at the resurrection; and sometimes in reference to his coming to judge the world at the last day, in the full glory and completion of his kingdom. These were ways of declaring himself, which the Jews could lay no hold on, to bring him in danger with Pontius Pilate, and get him seized and put to death.

Another reason there was, that hindered him as much as the former from professing himself in express words to be the Messiah, and that was, that the whole nation of the Jews expecting at this time their Messiah, and deliverance by him from the subjection they were in to a foreign yoke, the body of the people would certainly, upon his declaring himself to be the Messiah their king, have risen up in rebellion, and set him at the head of them. And, indeed, the miracles that he did so much disposed them to think him to be the Messiah, that though shrouded under the obscurity of a mean condition, and a very private simple life; though he passed for a Galilean (his birth at Bethlehem being then concealed), and assumed not to himself any power or authority, or so much as the name of the Messiah, yet he could hardly avoid being set up by a tumult, and proclaimed their king. So John tells us, chap. vi. 14, 15. "Then those men, when they had seen the miracles that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When, therefore, Jesus perceived that they would come to take him by force to make him king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." This was upon his feeding of five thousand with five barley loaves and two fishes. So hard was it for him, doing those miracles which were necessary to testify his mission, and which often drew great multitudes after him, Matt. iv. 25. to keep the heady and hasty multitude from such disorder as would have involved him in it, and have disturbed the course, and cut short the time of his ministry, and drawn on him the reputation and death of a turbulent seditious malefactor; contrary to the design of his coming, which was to be offered up a lamb blameless, and void of offence; his innocence appearing to all the world, even to him that delivered him up to be crucified. This it would have been impossible to have avoided, if, in his preaching every where, he had openly assumed to himself the title of their Messiah; which was all was wanting to set the people in a flame; who, drawn by his miracles, and the hopes of finding a deliverer in so extraordinary a man, followed him in great numbers. We read every where of multitudes; and in Luke xii. 1. of myriads that were gathered about him. This conflux of people, thus disposed, would

not have failed, upon his declaring himself to be the Messiah, to have made a commotion, and with force set him up for their king. It is plain therefore from these two reasons, why (though he came to preach the gospel, and convert the world to a belief of his being the Messiah, and though he says so much of his kingdom, under the title of the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of Heaven) he yet makes it not his business to persuade them that he himself is the Messiah, nor does in his public preaching declare himself to be him. He inculcates to the people, on all occasions, that the kingdom of God is come. He shews the way of admittance into this kingdom, viz. repentance and baptism; and teaches the laws of it, viz. good life, according to the strictest rules of virtue and morality. But who the king was of this kingdom, he leaves to his miracles to point out to those who would consider what he did, and make the right use of it now; or to witness to those who should hearken to the Apostles hereafter, when they preached it in plain words, and called upon them to believe it, after his resurrection; when there should be no longer room to fear that it should cause any disturbance in civil societies and the governments of the world. But he could not declare himself to be the Messiah, without manifest danger of tumult and sedition: and the miracles he did declared it so much, that he was fain often to hide himself, and withdraw from the concourse of the people. The leper that he cured, Mark i. though forbid to say any thing, yet "blazed it so abroad, that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places," being in retirement, as appears from Luke v. 16. and there "they came to him from every quarter." And thus he did more than once.

This being premised, let us take a view of the promulgation of the gospel by our Saviour himself, and see what it was he taught the world, and required men to believe.

The first beginning of his ministry, whereby he shewed himself, seems to be at Cana in Galilee, soon after his baptism; where he turned water into wine: of which St. John, chap. ii. 11. says thus, "This beginning of miracles Jesus made, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him." His disciples here believed in him, but we hear not of any other preaching to them, but by this miracle, whereby he "manifested his glory;" i. e. of being the Messiah the prince. So Nathanael, without any other preaching, but only our Saviour's discovering to him that he knew him after an extraordinary manner, presently acknowledges him to be the Messiah; crying, "Rabbi, Thou art the son of God, Thou art the king of Israel."

From hence, staying a few days at Capernaum, he goes to Jerusalem to the passover, and there he drives the traders out of the temple, John ii. 12—15. saying, "Make not my father's house a house of merchandize." Where we see, he uses a phrase, which, by interpretation signifies that he was the "Son of God," though at that time unregarded. Ver. 16. Hereupon the Jews demand,
 "What

“What sign dost thou shew us, since thou doest these things?”
 “Jesus answered, Destroy ye this temple, and in three days I will
 “raise it again.” This is an instance of what way Jesus took to
 declare himself: for it is plain by their reply the Jews understood
 him not, nor his disciples neither; for it is said, ver. 22. “When
 “therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered
 “that he said this to them: and they believed the scripture, and
 “the saying of Jesus to them.”

This therefore we may look on, in the beginning, as a pattern
 of Christ's preaching, and shewing himself to the Jews; which he
 generally followed afterwards, viz. such a manifestation of himself,
 as every one at present could not understand; but yet carried such
 an evidence with it to those who were well-disposed now, or would
 reflect on it when the whole course of his ministry was over, as
 was sufficient clearly to convince them that he was the Messiah.

The reason of this method used by our Saviour, the scripture
 gives us here, at this his first appearing in public, after his entrance
 upon his ministry, to be a rule and light to us in the whole course
 of it: for the next verse takes notice that many believed on him
 “because of his miracles” (which was all the preaching they had).
 It is said, ver. 24. “But Jesus did not commit himself unto them,
 “because he knew all men;” i. e. he declared not himself so openly
 to be the Messiah, their king, as to put himself into the power of
 the Jews, by laying himself open to their malice, whom he knew
 would be so ready to lay hold on it to accuse him; for, as the next
 verse 25. shews, he knew well enough what was in them. We
 may here farther observe, that “believing in his name,” signifies
 believing him to be the Messiah. Ver. 22. tells us, That “many
 “at the passover believed in his name, when they saw the miracles
 “that he did.” What other faith could these miracles produce in
 them who saw them, but that this was He of whom the scripture
 spoke, who was to be their deliverer?

Whilst he was now at Jerusalem, Nicodemus, a ruler of the
 Jews, comes to him, John iii. 1—21. to whom he preaches eternal
 life by faith in the Messiah, ver. 15. and 17. but in general terms,
 without naming himself to be that Messiah, though his whole dis-
 course tends to it. This is all we hear of our Saviour the first
 year of his ministry, but only his baptism, fasting, and temptation
 in the beginning of it, and spending the rest of it after the passover
 in Judea with his disciples, baptizing there. But “when he knew
 “that the Pharisees reported that he made and baptized more dis-
 “ciples than John, he left Judea,” and got out of their way again
 into Galilee, John iv. 1, 3.

In his way back, by the well of Sichar, he discourses with the
 Samaritan woman; and after having opened to her the true and
 spiritual worship which was at hand, which the woman presently
 understands of the times of the Messiah, who was then looked for;
 thus she answers, ver. 25. “I know that the Messiah cometh: when
 “he is come, he will tell us all things.” Whereupon our Saviour,
 though

though we hear no such thing from him in Jerufalem or Judea, or to Nicodemus, yet here to this Samaritan woman, he in plain and direct words owns and declares, that he himself, who talked with her, was the Messiah, ver. 26.

This would seem very strange, that he should be more free and open to a Samaritan than he was to the Jews, were not the reason plain from what we have observed above. He was now out of Judea, with a people with whom the Jews had no commerce, ver. 9; who were not disposed out of envy, as the Jews were, to seek his life, or to accuse him to the Roman governor, or to make an insurrection to set a Jew up for their king. What the consequence was of his discourse with this Samaritan woman, we have an account, ver. 28, 39—42. “She left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Messiah? and many of the Samaritans of that city BELIEVED ON HIM for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves; and we know” (i. e. are fully persuaded) “that it is indeed the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.” By comparing ver. 39, with 41 and 42, it is plain, that “believing on him,” signifies no more than believing him to be the Messiah.

From Sichar Jesus goes to Nazareth, the place he was bred up in, and there reading in the Synagogue a prophecy concerning the Messiah out of the 1st of Isaiah, he tells them, Luke iv. 21. “This day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

But, being in danger of his life at Nazareth, he leaves it for Capernaum: and then, as St. Matthew informs us, chap. iv. 17. “He began to preach, and say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Or, as St. Mark has it, chap. i. 14, 15. “Preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye, and believe in the gospel;” i. e. believe this good news. This removing to Capernaum, and seating himself there in the borders of Zabulon and Napthali, was, as St. Matthew observes, chap. iv. 13—16. that a prophecy of Isaiah might be fulfilled. Thus the actions and circumstances of his life answered the prophecies, and declared him to be the Messiah. And by what St. Mark says in this place, it is manifest, that the gospel which he preached, and required them to believe, was no other but the good tidings of the coming of the Messiah, and of his kingdom, the time being now fulfilled.

In his way to Capernaum, being come to Cana, a nobleman of Capernaum came to him, ver. 47. “and besought him that he would come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.”

“death.” Ver. 48. “Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see “signs and wonders, ye will not believe.” Then he returning homewards, and finding that his son began to “mend at the same “hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth; he himself “believed and his whole house.” Ver. 53.

Here this nobleman is by the apostle pronounced to be a “Believer.” And what does he “believe?” even that which Jesus complains, ver. 48. “They would not BELIEVE, except they saw signs and wonders; which could be nothing but what those of Samaria, in the same chapter, believed, viz. that he was the Messiah. For we no where in the gospel hear of any thing else that had been proposed to be believed by them.

Having done miracles, and cured all their sick at Capernaum, he says, “Let us go to the adjoining towns, that I may preach there also; “for therefore came I forth.” Mark i. 38. Or, as St. Luke has it, chap. iv. 43. he tells the multitude, who would have kept him, that he might not go from them, “I must evangelize,” or tell the good tidings of the “kingdom of God,” to other cities also, for therefore am I sent. And St. Matthew, chap. iv. 23. tells us how he executed this commission he was sent on. “And Jesus went “about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching “the gospel of the kingdom, and curing all diseases.” This then was what he was sent to preach every where, viz. the gospel of the kingdom of the Messiah; and, by the miracles and good he did, let them know who was the Messiah.

Hence he goes up to Jerusalem, to the second passover since the beginning of his ministry. And here discoursing to the Jews, who sought to kill him, upon occasion of the man whom he had cured, carrying his bed on the Sabbath-day, and for making God his father, he tells them, that he wrought these things by the power of God, and that he shall do greater things; for that the dead shall, at his summons, be raised; and that he, by a power committed to him from his father, shall judge them; and that he is sent by his father; and that whoever shall hear his word, and believe in him that sent him, has eternal life. This, though a clear description of the Messiah, yet we may observe, that here to the angry Jews, who sought to kill him, he says not a word of his kingdom, nor so much as names the Messiah; but yet that he is the son of God, and sent from God, he refers them to the testimony of John the Baptist, to the testimony of his own miracles, and of God himself in the voice from Heaven, and of the scriptures, and of Moses. He leaves them to learn from these the truth they were to believe, viz. that he was the Messiah sent from God. This you may read more at large, John v. 1—47.

The next place where we find him preaching was on the mount, Matt. v. and Luke vi. This is by much the longest sermon we have of his any where; and, in all likelihood, to the greatest auditory: for it appears to have been to the people gathered to him from Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem, and from beyond Jordan; and that came

out of Idumea, and from Tyre and Sidon, mentioned Mark iii. 7, 8. and Luke vi. 17. But in this whole sermon of his we do not find one word of believing, and therefore no mention of the Messiah, or any intimation to the people who himself was. The reason whereof we may gather from Matt. xii. 16. where "Christ forbids" them to make him known; which supposes them to know already who he was. For that this 12th chapter of Matthew ought to precede the sermon in the mount, is plain, by comparing it with Mark ii. beginning at ver. 13. to Mark iii. 8. and comparing those chapters of St Mark with Luke vi. And I desire my reader, once for all, here to take notice, that I have all along observed the order of time in our Saviour's preaching, and have not, as I think, passed by any of his discourses. In this sermon our Saviour only teaches them what were the laws of his kingdom, and what they must do who were admitted into it, of which I shall have occasion to speak more at large in another place, being at present only enquiring what our Saviour proposed as matter of faith to be believed.

After this, John the Baptist sends to him this message, Luke vii. 19. asking, "Art thou he that should come, or do we expect another?" that is, in short, art thou the Messiah? and if thou art, why dost thou let me, thy forerunner, languish in prison? must I expect deliverance from any other? To which Jesus returns this answer, ver. 22, 23. "Tell John what you have seen and heard; the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached; and blessed is he who is not offended in me." What it is to be "offended" or "scandalized in him," we may see by comparing Matt. xiii. 28. and Mark iv. 17. with Luke viii. 13. For what the two first call "scandalized" the last calls "standing off from," or "forsaking," i. e. not receiving him as the Messiah (see Mark vi. 1—6.) or revolting from him. Here Jesus refers John, as he did the Jews before, to the testimony of his miracles, to know who he was; and this was generally his preaching, whereby he declared himself to be the Messiah; who was the only prophet to come, whom the Jews had any expectation of; nor did they look for any other person to be sent to them with the power of miracles, but only the Messiah. His miracles we see by his answer to John the Baptist, he thought a sufficient declaration amongst them, that he was the Messiah. And therefore, upon his curing the possessed of the devil, the dumb, and blind, Matt. xii. the people, who saw the miracle, said, ver. 23. "Is not this the son of David?" as much as to say, Is not this the Messiah? whereat the Pharisees being offended, said, He cast out devils by Beelzebub. Jesus, shewing the falshood and vanity of their blasphemy, justifies the conclusion the people made from this miracle, saying, ver. 28. That his casting out devils by the spirit of God, was an evidence that the kingdom of the Messiah was come.

One thing more there was in the miracles done by his disciples, which shewed him to be the Messiah; that they were done in his name.

name. "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk," says St. Peter to the lame man whom he cured in the Temple, Acts iii. 6. And how far the power of that name reached, they themselves seem to wonder, Luke x. 17. "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject to us in thy name."

From this message from John the Baptist, he takes occasion to tell the people that John was the forerunner of the Messiah; that from the time of John the Baptist the kingdom of the Messiah began; to which time all the prophets and the law pointed, Luke vii. and Matt. xi.

Luke viii. 1. "Afterwards he went through every city and village, preaching and shewing the good tidings of the kingdom of God." Here we see, as every where, what his preaching was, and consequently what was to be believed.

Soon after, he preaches from a boat to the people on the shore. His sermon at large we may read Matt. xiii. Mark iv. and Luke viii. But this is very observable, that this second sermon of his here is quite different from his former in the mount: for that was all so plain and intelligible, that nothing could be more so; whereas this is all so involved in parables, that even the apostles themselves did not understand it. If we enquire into the reason of this, we shall possibly have some light from the different subjects of these two sermons. There he preached to the people only morality; clearing the precepts of the law from the false glosses which were received in those days, and setting forth the duties of a good life in their full obligation and extent, beyond what the judiciary laws of the Israelites did, or the civil laws of any country could prescribe or take notice of. But here, in this sermon by the sea-side, he speaks of nothing but the kingdom of the Messiah, which he does all in parables. One reason whereof St. Matthew gives us, chap. xiii. 35. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things that have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Another reason our Saviour himself gives of it, ver. 11, 12. "Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly; but whosoever hath not," i. e. improves not the talents that he hath, "from him shall be taken away even that he hath."

One thing it may not be amiss to observe, that our Saviour here, in the explication of the first of these parables to his apostles, calls the preaching of the kingdom of the Messiah, simply, "the word;" and Luke viii. 21. "the word of God:" from whence St. Luke, in the Acts, often mentions it under the name of "the word," and the "word of God," as we have elsewhere observed. To which I shall here add that of Acts viii. 4. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word;" which word, as we have found by examining what they preached

all through their history, was nothing but this, that "Jesus was the Messiah:" I mean, this was all the doctrine they proposed to be believed: for what they taught, as well as our Saviour, contained a great deal more; but that concerned practice, and not belief. And therefore our Saviour says, in the place before quoted, Luke viii. 21. "They are my mother and my brethren who hear the word of God, and do it:" obeying the law of the Messiah their king, being no less required than their believing that Jesus was the Messiah, the king and deliverer that was promised them.

Mat. ix. 13. We have an account again of his preaching; what it was, and how. "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease amongst the people." He acquainted them that the kingdom of the Messiah was come, and left it to his miracles to instruct and convince them that he was the Messiah.

Matt. x. When he sent his apostles abroad, their commission to preach we have, ver. 7, 8. in these words: "As ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand; heal the sick," &c. All that they had to preach, was, that the kingdom of the Messiah was come. Whosoever should not receive them, the messengers of these good tidings, nor hearken to their message, incurred a heavier doom than Sodom and Gomorrah at the day of judgment, ver. 14, 15. But ver. 32. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, I will confess him before my father who is in heaven." What this confessing of Christ is, we may see by comparing John xii. 4. with ix. 22. "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not CONFESS HIM, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." And chap. ix. 22. "These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did CONFESS THAT HE WAS THE MESSIAH, he should be put out of the synagogue." By which places it is evident, that to confess him, was to confess that he was the Messiah. From which give me leave to observe also (what I have cleared from other places, but cannot be too often remarked, because of the different sense has been put upon that phrase) viz. that "believing on" or "in him" (for *ἐν αὐτῷ* is rendered either way by the English translation) signifies believing that he was the Messiah. For many of the rulers (the text says) "believed on him;" but they durst not confess what they believed, "for fear they should be put out of the synagogue." Now the offence for which it was agreed that any one should be put out of the synagogue, was, if he "did confess that Jesus was the Messiah." Hence we may have a clear understanding of that passage of St. Paul to the Romans, where he tells them positively what is the faith he preaches, Rom. x. 8, 9. "That is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved:" and

and that also of 1 John iv. 14, 15. "We have seen, and do testify, " that the father sent the son to be the Saviour of the world: " whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Where confessing Jesus to be the son of God, is the same with confessing him to be the Messiah; those two expressions being understood amongst the Jews to signify the same thing, as we have shewn already.

How calling him the son of God came to signify that he was the Messiah, would not be hard to shew: but it is enough that it appears plainly that it was so used, and had that import amongst the Jews at that time; which if any one desires to have farther evidenced to him, he may add Matt. xxvi. 63. John vi. 69. and xi. 27. and xx. 31. to those places before occasionally taken notice of.

As was the apostles commission, such was their performance, as we read Luke ix. 6. "They departed, and went through the towns, " preaching the Gospel, and healing every where." Jesus bid them preach, "saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." And St. Luke tells us, they went through the towns, preaching the gospel; a word which in Saxon answers well the Greek *εὐαγγέλιον*, and signifies, as that does, "good news." So that what the inspired writers call the "gospel," is nothing but the good tidings that the Messiah and his kingdom was come; and so it is to be understood in the New Testament; and so the angel calls it "good tidings of " great joy," Luke ii. 10. bringing the first news of our Saviour's birth. And this seems to be all that his disciples were at that time sent to preach.

So Luke ix. 59, 60. To him that would have excused his present attendance, because of burying his father, "Jesus said unto " him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the " kingdom of God." When I say this was all they were to preach, I must be understood, that this was the faith they preached; but with it they joined obedience to the Messiah, whom they received for their king. So likewise when he sent out the seventy, Luke x. their commission was in these words, ver. 9. "Heal the " sick, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh " unto you."

After the return of his apostles to him, he sits down with them on a mountain, and a great multitude being gathered about them, St. Luke tells us, chap. ix. 11. "The people followed him, and he " received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God; " and healed them that had need of healing." This was his preaching to this assembly, which consisted of five thousand men, besides women and children; all which great multitude he fed with five loaves and two fishes, Matt. xiv. 21. And what this miracle wrought upon them, St. John tells us, chap. vi. 14, 15. "Then " these men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, " This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world," i. e. the Messiah: for the Messiah was the only person that they expected from God, and this the time they looked for him. And

hence John the Baptist, Matt. xi. 3. styles him, "He that should come;" as in other places, "Come from God," or "sent from God," are phrases used for the Messiah.

Here we see our Saviour keeps to his usual method of preaching: he speaks to them of the kingdom of God, and does miracles, by which they might understand him to be the Messiah, whose kingdom he spake of. And here we have the reason also, why he so much concealed himself, and forbore to own his being the Messiah. For what the consequence was of the multitude's but thinking him so, when they were got together, St. John tells us in the very next words; "When Jesus then perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." If they were so ready to set him up for their king, only because they gathered from his miracles that he was the Messiah, whilst he himself said nothing of it, what would not the people have done, and what would not the Scribes and Pharisees have had an opportunity to accuse him of, if he had openly professed himself to have been the Messiah, that king they looked for? But this we have taken notice of already.

From hence going to Capernaum, whither he was followed by a great part of the people, whom he had the day before so miraculously fed, he, upon the occasion of their following him for the loaves, bids them seek for the meat that endureth to eternal life; and thereupon, John vi. 22—69. declares to them his being sent from the Father, and that those who believed in him should be raised to eternal life; but all this very much involved in a mixture of allegorical terms of eating, and of bread, bread of life, which came down from heaven, &c. which is all comprehended and expounded in these short and plain words, ver. 47 and 54. "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." The sum of all which discourse is, that he was the Messiah sent from God; and that those who believed him to be so, should be raised from the dead at the last day to eternal life. These whom he spoke to, were of those who the day before would by force have made him king; and therefore it is no wonder he should speak to them of himself, and his kingdom and subjects, in obscure and mystical terms, and such as should offend those who looked for nothing but the grandeur of a temporal kingdom in this world, and the protection and prosperity they had promised themselves under it. The hopes of such a kingdom, now that they had found a man that did miracles, and therefore concluded to be the deliverer they expected, had the day before almost drawn them into an open insurrection, and involved our Saviour in it. This he thought fit to put a stop to, they still following him, it is like, with the same design; and therefore, though he here speaks to them of his kingdom, it was in a way that so plainly baulked their expectation, and shocked them, that, when they found themselves disappointed of those vain hopes, and that he talked of their eating his flesh, and drinking his blood,

that

that they might have life, the Jews said, ver. 52. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat? And many, even of his disciples, said, It was an hard saying, who can bear it?" And so were scandalized in him, and forsook him, ver. 60, 66. But what the true meaning of this discourse of our Saviour was, the confession of St. Peter, who understood it better, and answered for the rest of the apostles, shews: when Jesus asked him, ver. 67. "Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," i. e. thou teachest us the way to attain eternal life; and accordingly "we believe, and are sure, that thou art the Messiah, the son of the living God." This was the eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, whereby those who did so had eternal life.

Some time after this, he enquires of his disciples, Mark viii. 27. who the people took him for? They telling him, for John the Baptist, or one of the old prophets risen from the dead; he asked, what they themselves thought? And here again Peter answers in these words, Mark viii. 29. "Thou art the Messiah." Luke ix. 20. "The Messiah of God." And Matt. xvi. 16. "Thou art the Messiah, the son of the living God." Which expressions, we may hence gather, amount to the same thing. Whereupon our Saviour tells Peter, Matt. xvi. 17, 18. "That this was such a truth as flesh and blood could not reveal to him, but only his father who was in heaven;" and that this was the foundation on which he was "to build his church." By all the parts of which passage it is more than probable, that he had never yet told his apostles in direct words that he was the Messiah, but that they had gathered it from his life and miracles. For which we may imagine to ourselves this probable reason; because that if he had familiarly, and in direct terms, talked to his apostles in private that he was the Messiah, the prince of whose kingdom he preached so much in public every where, Judas, whom he knew false and treacherous, would have been readily made use of to testify against him in a matter that would have been really criminal to the Roman governor. This perhaps may help to clear to us that seemingly abrupt reply of our Saviour to his apostles, John vi. 70. when they confessed him to be the Messiah. I will, for the better explaining of it, set down the passage at large. Peter having said, "We believe, and are sure, that thou art the Messiah, the son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is *διδόσκων*?" This is a reply seeming at first sight nothing to the purpose; when yet it is sure all our Saviour's discourses were wise and pertinent. It seems therefore to me to carry this sense, to be understood afterwards by the eleven (as that of destroying the temple, and raising it again in three days was) when they should reflect on it after his being betrayed by Judas: You have confessed, and believe the truth concerning me: I am the Messiah your king: but do not wonder at it, that I have never openly declared it to you; for amongst you twelve, whom I have chosen to be with

me, there is one who is an informer, or false accuser; for so the Greek word signifies, and may possibly here be so translated, rather than *Devil*, who if I had owned myself in plain words to have been the Messiah, "the king of Israel," would have betrayed me, and informed against me.

That he was yet cautious of owning himself to his apostles positively to be the Messiah, appears farther from the manner wherein he tells Peter, ver. 18. that he will build his church upon that confession of his, that he was the Messiah. I say unto thee, "Thou art Cephas," or a rock, "and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it:" words too doubtful to be laid hold on against him, as a testimony that he professed himself to be the Messiah; especially if we join with them the following words, ver. 19. "And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and what thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and what thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Which being said personally to Peter, render the foregoing words of our Saviour (wherein he declares the fundamental article of his church to be the believing him to be the Messiah) the more obscure and doubtful, and less liable to be made use of against him; but yet such as might afterwards be understood. And for the same reason he yet here again forbids the apostles to say that he was the Messiah, ver. 20.

The probability of this, viz. that he had not yet told the apostles themselves plainly that he was the Messiah, is confirmed by what our Saviour says to them, John xv. 15. "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends," viz. in the foregoing verse, "for all things that I have heard of my father, I have made known unto you." This was in his last discourse with them after Judas was gone out; wherein he committed to them the great secret by speaking of the kingdom as his, as appears from Luke xxii. 30. and telling them several other particulars about it, whence he had it, what kingdom it was, how to be administered, and what share they were to have in it, &c. From whence it is plain, that till just before he was laid hold on, the very moment he was parting with his apostles, he had kept them as servants in ignorance; but now had discovered himself openly as to his friends.

"From this time," say the evangelists, "Jesus began to shew to his disciples (i. e. his apostles, who are often called disciples) that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and Scribes; and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Matt. xvi. 21. These, though all marks of the Messiah, yet how little understood by the apostles, or suited to their expectation of the Messiah, appears from Peter's rebuking him for it in the following words, Matt. xvi. 22. Peter had twice before owned him to be the Messiah, and yet he cannot here bear that he should suffer, and be put to death, and be raised again; whereby we may perceive, how little yet Jesus had explained to the apostles

apostles what personally concerned himself. They had been a good while witnesses of his life and miracles, and thereby being grown into a belief that he was the Messiah, were in some degree prepared to receive the particulars that were to fill up the character, and answer the prophecies concerning him. This from henceforth he began to open to them (though in a way which the Jews could not form an accusation out of) the time of the accomplishment of all, in his sufferings, death, and resurrection, now drawing on: for this was in the last year of his life, he being to meet the Jews at Jerusalem but once more at the passover, and then they should have their will upon him, and therefore he might now begin to be a little more open concerning himself; though yet so, as to keep himself out of the reach of any accusation, that might appear just or weighty to the Roman deputy.

After his reprimand to Peter, telling him, that he "favoured not the things of God, but of man," Mark viii. 34. he calls the people to him, and prepares those, who would be his disciples, for suffering; telling them, ver. 38. "Whoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his father with the holy angels:" and then subjoins, Matt. xvi. 27, 28, two great and solemn acts, wherein he should shew himself to be the Messiah the King; "for the son of man shall come in the glory of his father, with his angels; and then he shall render every man according to his works." This is evidently meant of the glorious appearance of his kingdom, when he shall come to judge the world at the last day; described more at large, Matt. xxv. "When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the THRONE of his glory. Then shall the KING say to them on his right-hand, &c." But what follows in the place above quoted, Matt. xvi. 28. "Verily, verily, there be some standing here, who shall not taste of death, till they see the son of man coming in his kingdom;" importing that dominion, which some there should see him exercise over the nation of the Jews, was so covered, by being annexed to the preceding, ver. 27. (where he spoke of the manifestation and glory of his kingdom at the day of judgement), that though his plain meaning here in ver. 28, be, that the appearance and visible exercise of his kingly power in his kingdom was so near, that some there should live to see it; yet if the foregoing words had not cast a shadow over these latter, but they had been left plainly to be understood, as they plainly signified, that he should be a king, and that it was so near, that some there should see him in his kingdom; this might have been laid hold on, and made the matter of a plausible and seemingly just accusation against him by the Jews, before Pilate. This seems to be reason of our Saviour's inverting here the order of the two solemn manifestations to the world of his rule and power; thereby perplexing at present his meaning, and securing himself, as was necessary, from the malice

of the Jews, which always lay at catch to intrap him, and accuse him to the Roman governor; and would, no doubt, have been ready to have alledged these words, "Some here shall not taste of death, till they see the son of man coming in his kingdom," against him as criminal, had not their meaning been, by the former verse, perplexed, and the sense at that time rendered unintelligible, and not applicable by any of his auditors to a sense that might have been prejudicial to him before Pontius Pilate. For how well the chief of the Jews were disposed towards him, St. Luke tells us, chap. xi. 54. "Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him:" which may be a reason to satisfy us of the seemingly doubtful and obscure way of speaking used by our Saviour in other places; his circumstances being such, that, without such a prudent carriage and reservedness, he could not have gone through the work which he came to do, nor have performed all the parts of it, in a way correspondent to the descriptions given of the Messiah, and which would be afterwards fully understood to belong to him, when he had left the world.

After this, Matt. xvii. 10, &c. he, without saying it in direct words, begins, as it were, to own himself to his apostles to be the Messiah, by assuring them, that as the Scribes, according to the prophecy of Malachy, chap. iv. 5. rightly said, that Elias was to usher in the Messiah; so indeed Elias was already come, though the Jews knew him not, and treated him ill: whereby "they understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist," ver. 13. And a little after he somewhat more plainly intimates that he is the Messiah, Mark ix. 41. in these words: "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to the Messiah." This, as I remember, is the first place where our Saviour ever mentioned the name of Messiah; and the first time that he went so far towards the owning, to any of the Jewish nation, himself to be him.

In his way to Jerusalem, bidding one follow him, Luke ix. 59. who would first bury his father, ver. 60. "Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." And, Luke x. 1. sending out the seventy disciples, he says to them, ver. 9. "Heal the sick, and say, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." He had nothing else for these, or for his apostles, or any one, it seems, to preach, but the good news of the coming of the kingdom of the Messiah. And if any city would not receive them, he bids them, ver. 10. "Go into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, do we wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." This they were to take notice of, as that which they should dearly answer for, viz. that they had not with faith received the good tidings of the kingdom of the Messiah.

After

After this, his brethren say unto him, John vii. 2, 3, 4. (the feast of Tabernacles being near) "Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples may see the works that thou doest; for there is no man that does any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world." Here his brethren, which the next verse tells us, "did not believe him," seem to upbraid him with the inconsistency of his carriage; as if he designed to be received for the Messiah, and yet was afraid to shew himself: to whom he justified his conduct (mentioned, ver. 1.), in the following verses, by telling them, "That the world" (meaning the Jews especially) "hated him, because he testified of it, that the works thereof are evil; and that his time was not yet fully come," wherein to quit his reserve, and abandon himself freely to their malice and fury. Therefore, though he "went up unto the feast," it was "not openly, but as it were in secret," ver. 10. And here coming into the Temple about the middle of the feast, he justifies his being sent from God; and that he had not done any thing against the law, in curing the man at the pool of Bethesda, John v. 1—16. on the Sabbath-day; which, though done above a year and a half before, they made use of as a pretence to destroy him. But what was the true reason of seeking his life, appears from what we have in this viith chapter, ver. 25—34. "Then said some of them at Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill? But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Messiah? Howbeit, we know this man whence he is; but when the Messiah cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. Then cried Jesus in the Temple, as he taught, ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me. Then they sought [an occasion] to take him, but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When the Messiah cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and chief priests sent officers to take him. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go to him that sent me: ye shall seek me, and not find me; and where I am, there you cannot come. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him?" Here we find, that the great fault in our Saviour, and the great provocation to the Jews, was, his being taken for the Messiah; and doing such things as made the people "believe in him:" i. e. believe that he was the Messiah. Here also our Saviour declares, in words very easy to be understood, at least after his resurrection, that he was the Messiah: for if he were "sent from God," and did his miracles by the spirit of God, there could be no doubt but he was the Messiah. But yet this declaration was in a way that

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the Pharisees and priests could not lay hold on to make an accusation of to the disturbance of his ministry, or the seizure of his person, how much soever they desired it: for his time was not yet come. The officers they had sent to apprehend him, charmed with his discourse, returned without laying hands on him, ver. 45, 46. And when the chief priests asked them, "Why they brought him not?" They answered, "Never man spake like this man." Whereupon the Pharisees reply, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people, who know not the law, are cursed." This shews what was meant by "believing on him," viz. believing that he was the Messiah. For, say they, have any of the rulers who are skilled in the law, or of the devout and learned Pharisees, acknowledged him to be the Messiah? For as for those who, in the division among the people concerning him, say, "That he is the Messiah," they are ignorant and vile wretches, knowing nothing of the scripture, and, being accursed, are given by God to be deceived by this impostor, and to take him for the Messiah. Therefore, notwithstanding their desire to lay hold on him, he goes on: and ver. 37, 38. "In the last and great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And thus he here again declares himself to be the Messiah; but in the prophetic style, as we see by the next verse of this chapter, and those places in the Old Testament that these words of our Saviour refer to.

In the next chapter, John viii. all that he says concerning himself, and what they were to believe, tends to this, viz. That he was sent from God his father, and that if they did not believe that he was the Messiah, they should die in their sins: but this in a way, as St. John observes, ver. 27. that they did not well understand. But our Saviour himself tells them, ver. 28. "When ye have lift up the son of man, then shall ye know that I am he."

Going from them, he cures the man born blind, whom meeting with again, after the Jews had questioned him, and cast him out, John ix. 35—38. "Jesus said unto him, Dost thou believe on the son of God? He answered, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe." Here we see this man is pronounced a believer, when all that was proposed to him to believe, was, that Jesus was "the son of God;" which was, as we have already shewn, to believe that he was the Messiah.

In the next chapter, John x. 1—21. he declares the laying down of his life for both Jews and Gentiles; but in a parable which they understood not, ver. 6—20.

As he was going to the feast of the dedication, the Pharisees ask him, Luke xvii. 20. "When the kingdom of God," i. e. of the Messiah, "should come?" He answers, that it shall not come with pomp

pomp and obſervation, and great concourſe ; but that it was already begun amongſt them. If he had ſtopt here, the ſenſe had been ſo plain, that they could hardly have miſtaken him ; or have doubted, but that he meant, that the Meſſiah was already come, and amongſt them ; and ſo might have been prone to infer, that Jeſus took upon him to be him. But here, as in the place before taken notice of, ſubjoining to this future revelation of himſelf, both in his coming to execute vengeance on the Jews, and in his coming to judgement mixed together, he ſo involved his ſenſe, that it was not eaſy to underſtand him. And therefore the Jews came to him again in the temple, John x. 23. and ſaid, “ How long doſt thou make us “ doubt ? If thou be Chriſt, tell us plainly. Jeſus answered, I told “ you, and ye BELIEVED not : the works that I do in my father’s “ name, they bear witneſs of me. But ye BELIEVED not, becauſe “ ye are not of my ſheep, as I told you.” The BELIEVING here, which he accuses them of not doing, is plainly their not BELIEVING him to be the Meſſiah, as the foregoing words evince, and in the ſame ſenſe it is evidently meant in the following verſes of this chapter.

From hence, Jeſus going to Barbara, and thence returning into Bethany, upon Lazarus’s death, John xi. 25—27. Jeſus ſaid to Martha, “ I am the reſurrection and the life ; he that believeth in “ me, though he were dead, yet he ſhall live ; and whoſoever liveth “ and believeth in me, ſhall never die for ever.” So I underſtand ἀποθάνει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, answerable to ζήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, of the Septuagint, Gen. iii. 22. or John vi. 51. which we read right in our Engliſh tranſlation, “ live for ever ;” but whether this ſaying of our Saviour here can with truth be tranſlated, “ He that liveth and believeth “ in me, ſhall never die,” will be apt to be queſtioned. But to go on, “ Believeſt thou this ? She ſaid unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Meſſiah, the ſon of God, which ſhould “ come into the world.” This ſhe gives as a full answer to our Saviour’s demands ; this being that faith, which whoever had, wanted no more to make them believers.

We may obſerve farther, in this ſame ſtory of the raiſing of Lazarus, what faith it was our Saviour expected, by what he ſays, ver. 41, 42. “ Father, I thank thee that thou haſt heard me ; and I “ know that thou heareſt me always. But becauſe of the people “ who ſtand by, I ſaid it, that they may believe that thou haſt ſent “ me.” And what the conſequence of it was, we may ſee, ver. 45. “ Then many of the Jews who came to Mary, and had ſeen the “ things which Jeſus did, believed on him :” which belief was, that he was “ ſent from the Father ;” which, in other words, was, that he was the Meſſiah. That this is the meaning, in the Evangelists, of the phraſe of “ believing on him,” we have a demonſtration in the following words, ver. 47, 48. “ Then gathered the chief “ prieſts and Pharifees a council, and ſaid, What do we ? For this “ man does many miracles : and if we let him alone, all men will “ BELIEVE ON HIM.” Thoſe who here ſay, all men would BE-

LIEVE ON HIM, were the chief priests and Pharisees, his enemies, who sought his life; and therefore could have no other sense nor thought of this faith in him, which they spake of, but only the believing him to be the Messiah: and that that was their meaning, the adjoining words shew; "If we let him alone, all the world will believe on him," i. e. believe him to be the Messiah. "And the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." Which reasoning of theirs was thus grounded: if we stand still, and let the people "believe on him," i. e. receive him for the Messiah, they will thereby take him and set him up for their king, and expect deliverance by him; which will draw the Roman arms upon us, to the destruction of us and our country. The Romans could not be thought to be at all concerned in any other belief whatsoever that the people might have on him. It is therefore plain, that "believing on him," was by the writers of the gospel understood to mean, the "believing him to be the Messiah." "The Sanhedrim therefore," ver. 53, 54. "from that day forth consulted to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked not yet" (for so the word *ἔτι* signifies, and so I think it ought here to be translated) "boldly," or openfaced "among the Jews," i. e. of Jerusalem. *ἔτι* cannot well here be translated "no more," because within a very short time after, he appeared openly at the passover, and by his miracles and speech declared himself more freely than ever he had done; and all the week before his passion taught daily in the temple, Matt. xx. 17. Mark x. 32. Luke xviii. 31, &c. The meaning of this place seems therefore to be this: that his time being not yet come, he durst not shew himself openly, and confidently, before the Scribes and Pharisees, and those of the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, who were full of malice against him, and resolved his death: "but went thence into a country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples," to keep himself out of the way till the passover, "which was nigh at hand," ver. 55. In his return thither, he takes the twelve aside, and tells them before-hand what should happen to him at Jerusalem, whether they were now going; and that all things that are written by the prophets concerning the son of man should be accomplished; that he should be betrayed to the chief priests and Scribes; and that they should condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; that he should be mocked, and spit on, and scourged, and put to death; and the third day he should rise again. But St. Luke tells us, chap. xviii. 34. That the Apostles "understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things which were spoken." They believed him to be the son of God, the Messiah sent from the father; but their notion of the Messiah was the same with the rest of the Jews; that he should be a temporal prince and deliverer: accordingly we see, Mark x. 35. that even in this their last journey with him to Jerusalem, two of them, James and John, coming to him, and falling at his feet, said, "Grant unto us, that we may sit, one on thy

“thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory;” or, as St. Matthew has it, chap. xx. 21. “in thy kingdom.” That which distinguished them from the unbelieving Jews, was, that they believed Jesus to be the very Messiah, and so received him as their king and lord.

And now the hour being come that the son of man should be glorified, he, without his usual reserve, makes his public entry into Jerusalem, “riding on a young ass: as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh, sitting on an ass’s colt.” But “these things,” says St. John, chap. xii. 16. “his disciples understood not at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.” Though the apostles believed him to be the Messiah, yet there were many occurrences of his life which they understood not (at the time when they happened) to be foretold of the Messiah; which after his ascension they found exactly to quadrate. Thus, according to what was foretold of him, he rode into the city, “all the people crying Hosanna, Blessed is the king of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord.” This was so open a declaration of his being the Messiah, that Luke xix. 39. “Some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, master, rebuke thy disciples.” But he was so far now from stopping them, or disowning this their acknowledgement of his being the Messiah, that he “said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” And again, upon the like occasion of their crying, “Hosanna to the son of David,” in the temple, Matt. xxi. 15, 16. When “the chief priests and Scribes were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what they say? Jesus said unto them, yea; Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?” And now, ver. 14, 15. “He cures the blind and the lame openly in the temple. And when the chief priests and Scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple Hosanna, they were enraged.” One would not think, that, after the multitude of miracles that our Saviour had now been doing for above three years together, the curing the lame and blind should so much move them. But we must remember, that though his ministry had abounded with miracles, yet the most of them had been done about Galilee, and in parts remote from Jerusalem. There is but one left upon record hitherto done in that city; and that had so ill a reception, that they sought his life for it; as we may read John v. 16. And therefore we hear not of his being at the next passover, because he was there only privately, as an ordinary Jew: the reason whereof we may read, John vii. 1. “After these things, Jesus walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.”

Hence we may guess the reason why St. John omitted the mention of his being at Jerusalem at the third passover after his baptism;

tain; probably because he did nothing memorable there. Indeed, when he was at the feast of Tabernacles, immediately preceding this last passover, he cured the man born blind: but it appears not to have been done in Jerusalem itself, but in the way as he retired to the mount of Olives; for there seems to have been nobody by, when he did it, but his apostles. Compare ver. 2. with ver. 8. 10. of St. John ix. This, at least, is remarkable; that neither the cure of this blind man, nor that of the other infirm man, at the passover above a twelvemonth before at Jerusalem, was done in the sight of the Scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, or rulers. Nor was it without reason, that in the former part of his ministry he was cautious of shewing himself to them to be the Messiah. But now, that he was come to the last scene of his life, and that the passover was come, the appointed time wherein he was to compleat the work he came for, in his death and resurrection, he does many things in Jerusalem itself, before the face of the Scribes, Pharisees, and whole body of the Jewish nation, to manifest himself to be the Messiah. And, as St. Luke says, chap. xix. 47, 48. "He taught daily in the temple: but the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the chief of the people, sought to destroy him; and could not find what they might do, for all the people were very attentive to hear him." What he taught we are not left to guess, by what we have found him constantly preaching elsewhere: but St. Luke tells us, chap. xx. 1. "He taught in the temple, and evangelized;" or, as we translate it, preached the gospel:" which, as we have shewed, was the making known to them the good news of the kingdom of the Messiah. And this we shall find he did, in what now remains of his history.

In the first discourse of his, which we find upon record after this, John xii. 20. &c. he foretells his crucifixion, and the belief of all sorts, both Jews and Gentiles, on him after that. Whereupon the people say to him, ver. 34. "We have heard out of the law, that the Messiah abideth for ever; and how sayest thou, That the son of man must be lifted up? Who is this son of man?" In his answer he plainly designs himself, under the name of "light," which was what he had declared himself to them to be, the last time that they had seen him in Jerusalem. For then at the feast of Tabernacles, but six months before, he tells them in the very place where he now is, viz. in the temple, "I am the light of the world; who-soever follows me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life:" as we may read John viii. 12. and ix. 5. he says, "As long as I am in the world, I am the LIGHT of the world." But neither here, nor any where else, does he, even in these four or five last days of his life (though he knew his hour was come, and was prepared for his death, ver. 27. and scrupled not to manifest himself to the rulers of the Jews to be the Messiah, by doing miracles before them in the Temple), ever once in direct words own himself to the Jews to be the Messiah; though by miracles, and other ways, he did every where make it known to them; so that it
might

might be understood. This could not be without some reason; and the preservation of his life, which he came now to Jerusalem on purpose to lay down, could not be it. What other reason could it then be, but the same which had made him use caution in the former part of his ministry; so to conduct himself, that he might do the work which he came for, and in all parts answer the character given of the Messiah in the law and the prophets? He had fulfilled the time of his ministry, and now taught and did miracles openly in the temple, before the rulers and the people, not fearing to be seized: but he would not be seized for any thing that might make him a criminal to the government; and therefore he avoided giving those, who in the division that was about him inclined towards him, occasion of tumult for his sake; or to the Jews, his enemies, matter of just accusation against him out of his own mouth, by professing himself to be the Messiah, the king of Israel, in direct words. It was enough, that by words and deeds he declared it so to them, that they could not but understand him; which it is plain they did, Luke xx. 16, 19. Matt. xxi. 45. But yet neither his actions, which were only doing of good; nor words, which were mystical and parabolical (as we may see Matt. xxi. and xxii. and the parallel places of Matthew and Luke); nor any of his ways of making himself known to be the Messiah, could be brought in testimony, or urged against him, as opposite or dangerous to the government. This preserved him from being condemned as a malefactor, and procured him a testimony from the Roman governor, his judge, that he was an innocent man, sacrificed to the envy of the Jewish nation. So that he avoided saying that he was the Messiah, that to those who could call to mind his life and death after his resurrection, he might the more clearly appear to be so. It is farther to be remarked, that though he often appeals to the testimony of his miracles who he is, yet he never tells the Jews that he was born at Bethlehem, to remove the prejudice that lay against him, whilst he passed for a Galilean, and which was urged as a proof that he was not the Messiah, John vii. 41, 42. The healing of the sick, and doing of good miraculously, could be no crime in him, nor accusation against him; but the naming of Bethlehem for his birth-place, might have wrought as much upon the mind of Pilate, as it did on Herod's; and have raised a suspicion in Pilate as prejudicial to our Saviour's innocence, as Herod's was to the children born there. His pretending to be born at Bethlehem, as it was liable to be explained by the Jews, could not have failed to have met with a sinister interpretation in the Roman governor, and have rendered Jesus suspected of some criminal design against the government. And hence we see, that when Pilate asked him, John xix. 9. "Whence art thou? Jesus gave him no answer."

Whether our Saviour had not an eye to this straitness, this narrow room that was left to his conduct, between the new converts and the captious Jews, when he says, Luke xii. 50. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and *ὡς συνίχομαι*, how am I
" straitened

“ straitened till it be accomplished,” I leave to be considered. “ I am come to send fire on the earth,” says our Saviour, “ and what if it be already kindled?” i. e. there begin already to be divisions about me, see John vii. 12. 43. and ix. 16. and x. 19. and I have not the freedom, the latitude, to declare myself openly to be the Messiah; though I am he, that must not be spoken out till after my death. My way to my throne is closely hedged in on every side, and much straitened, within which I must keep, till it bring me to my cross, in its due time and manner, so that it do not cut short the time, nor cross the end of my ministry.

And therefore, to keep up this inoffensive character, and not to let it come within the reach of accident or calumny, he withdrew with his apostles out of the town every evening, and kept himself retired out of the way, Luke xxi. 37. “ And in the day-time he was teaching in the Temple, and every night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives;” that he might avoid all concourse to him in the night, and give no occasion of disturbance or suspicion of himself in that great conflux of the whole nation of the Jews, now assembled in Jerusalem at the passover.

But to return to his preaching in the Temple: he bids them, John xii. 36. “ To believe in the light whilst they have it:” and he tells them, ver. 46. “ I am the light come into the world, that every one who believes in me should not remain in darkness.” Which believing in him, was the believing him to be the Messiah, I have elsewhere shewed.

The next day, Matt. xxi. he rebukes them for not having believed John the Baptist, who had testified that he was the Messiah: and then, in a parable, declares himself to be the “ son of God,” whom they should destroy; and that for it God would take away the kingdom of the Messiah from them, and give it to the Gentiles. That they understood him thus, is plain from Luke xx. 16. “ And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.” And ver. 19. “ For they knew that he had spoken this parable against them.”

Much to the same purpose was his next parable concerning “ the kingdom of heaven,” Matt. xxii. 1—10. that the Jews not accepting of the kingdom of the Messiah, to whom it was first offered, others should be brought in.

The Scribes and Pharisees and chief priests, not able to bear the declaration he made of himself to be the Messiah (by his discourses and miracles *before* them, *ἐμπροσθεν αὐτῶν*, John xii. 37. which he had never done before), impatient of his preaching and miracles, and being not able otherwise to stop the increase of his followers (for, said the Pharisees among themselves, perceive ye how ye prevail “ nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.” John xii. 19. So that “ the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the chief of the people) sought to destroy him,” the first day of his entrance into Jerusalem, Luke xix. 47. The next day again they were intent upon the same thing, Mark xi. 17, 18. “ And he taught in the

Temple; "and the Scribes and the chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him; for they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine."

The next day but one, upon his telling them the kingdom of the Messiah should be taken from them, "the chief priests and Scribes sought to lay hands on him the same hour; and they feared the people." Luke xx. 19. If they had so great a desire to lay hold on him, why did they not? They were the chief priests and the rulers, the men of power. The reason St. Luke plainly tells us in the next verse, "And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him into the power and authority of the governor." They wanted matter of accusation against him to the power they were under: that they watched for, and that they would have been glad of, if they could have "entangled him in his talk," as St. Matthew expresses it, chap. xxii. 15. If they could have laid hold on any word that had dropt from him, that might have rendered him guilty or suspected to the Roman governor; that would have served their turn, to have laid hold upon him, with hopes to destroy him: for, their power not answering their malice, they could not put him to death by their own authority, without the permission and assistance of the governor, as they confess, John xviii. 31. "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." This made them so earnest for a declaration in direct words from his own mouth, that he was the Messiah. It was not that they would more have believed in him, for such a declaration of himself, than they did for his miracles, or other ways of making himself known, which it appears they understood well enough; but they wanted plain direct words, such as might support an accusation, and be of weight before an heathen judge. This was the reason why they pressed him to speak out, John x. 24. "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in suspense? if thou be the Messiah, tell us PLAINLY," *παρρησία*, i. e. in direct words: for that St. John uses it in that sense, we may see chap. xi. 11—14. Jesus saith to them, "Lazarus sleepeth." His disciples said, "If he sleeps, he shall do well. Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death; but they thought he had spoken of taking rest in sleep. Then said Jesus to them plainly, *παρρησία*, Lazarus is dead." Here we see what is meant by *παρρησία*, PLAIN direct words, such as express the thing without a figure; and so they would have Jesus pronounce himself to be the Messiah. And the same thing they press again, Matt. xvi. 63. the high priest adjuring him by the living God, to tell them whether he were the Messiah, the son of God, as we shall have occasion to take notice by-and-by.

This we may observe in the whole management of their design against his life. It turned upon this; that they wanted and wished for a declaration from him, in direct words, that he was the Mes-

Messiah; something from his own mouth, that might offend the Roman power, and render him criminal to Pilate. In the 21st verse of this 20th of St. Luke, "They asked him, saying, Master, we know " that thou sayest and teachest rightly; neither acceptest thou the " person of any, but teachest the way of God truly. Is it lawful " for us to give tribute to Cæsar, or no?" By this captious question they hoped to catch him, which way soever he answered; for if he had said, they ought to pay tribute to Cæsar, it would be plain he allowed their subjection to the Romans, and so in effect disowned himself to be their king and deliverer; whereby he would have contradicted, what his carriage and doctrine seemed to aim at, the opinion that was spread amongst the people, that he was the Messiah. This would have quashed the hopes, and destroyed the faith, of those who believed on him, and have turned the ears and hearts of the people from him. If, on the other side, he answered "No," it is not lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, they had had out of his own mouth wherewithal to condemn him before Pontius Pilate. But St. Luke tells us, ver. 23. "He perceived their craftiness, and " said unto them, Why tempt ye me?" i. e. why do ye lay snares for me? "Ye hypocrites, shew me the tribute-money:" so it is, Matt. xxii. 19. "Whose image and inscription has it? They said, " Cæsar's. He said unto them, Render therefore to Cæsar the " things that are Cæsar's; and to God the things that are God's." By the wisdom and caution of which unexpected answer, he defeated their whole design. "And they could not take hold of his " words before the people; and they marvelled at his answer, and " held their peace," Luke xx. 26. "and leaving him, they departed," Matt. xxii. 22.

He having by this reply (and what he answered to the Sadducees concerning the resurrection, and to the lawyer about the first commandment, Mark xii.) answered so little to their satisfaction or advantage, they durst ask him no more questions any of them. And now their mouths being stopped, he himself begins to question them about the Messiah, asking the Pharisees, Matt. xxii. 41. "What " think ye of the Messiah, whose son is he? They say unto him, " The son of David:" wherein though they answered right, yet he shews them, in the following words, that however they pretended to be studiers and teachers of the law, yet they understood not clearly the scriptures concerning the Messiah; and thereupon he sharply rebukes their hypocrisy, vanity, pride, malice, covetousness, and ignorance; and particularly tells them, ver. 43. "Ye shut " up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in " yourselves, nor suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Whereby he plainly declares to them, that the Messiah was come, and his kingdom begun; but that they refused to believe in him themselves, and did all they could to hinder others from believing in him, as is manifest throughout the New Testament; the history whereof sufficiently explains what is meant here by "the kingdom " of heaven," which the Scribes and Pharisees would neither go

into themselves, nor suffer others to enter into. And they could not chuse but understand him, though he named not himself in the case.

Provoked anew by his rebukes, they get presently to council, Matt. xxvi. "Then assembled together the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high-priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people. For they feared the people," says St. Luke, chap. xxii. 2.

Having in the night got Jesus into their hands, by the treachery of Judas, they presently led him away bound to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high-priest, who probably having examined him, and getting nothing out of him for his purpose, sends him away to Caiaphas, John xviii. 24. where the chief priests, the Scribes, and the elders, were assembled, Matt. xxvi. 57. John xviii. 19, 20. "The high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the Synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing." A proof that he had not in private to his disciples declared himself in express words to be the Messiah, the prince. But he goes on. "Why askest thou me? Ask Judas, who has been always with me. Ask them who heard me what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said." Our Saviour, we see here, warily declines, for the reasons abovementioned, all discourse of his doctrine. The Sanhedrim, Matt. xxvi. 59. "sought false witness against him;" but when they found none that were sufficient, or came up to the point they desired, which was to have something against him to take away his life; (for so I think the words *ἵστα* and *ἵστη* mean, Mark xiv. 56, 59.) they try again what they can get out of him himself, concerning his being the Messiah; which if he owned in express words, they thought they should have enough against him at the tribunal of the Roman governor, to make him "Læfæ mæjæstatis reum," and so to take away his life. They therefore say to him, Luke xxii. 67. "If thou be the Messiah, tell us:" nay, as St. Matthew hath it, the high-priest adjures him by the living God to tell them whether he were the Messiah. To which our Saviour replies, "If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go." If I tell you, and prove to you, by the testimony given of me from heaven, and by works that I have done among you, you will not believe in me, that I am the Messiah: or if I should ask you where the Messiah is to be born, and what state he should come in, how he should appear, and other things that you think in me not reconcilable with the Messiah; you will not answer me, and let me go, as one that has no pretence to be the Messiah, and you are not afraid should be received for such. But yet I tell you, "Hereafter shall the son of man sit on the right-hand of the power of God," ver. 70. "Then said they

“ they all, Art thou then the son of God? And he said unto them, “ Ye say that I am.” By which discourse with them, related at large here by St. Luke, it is plain, that the answer of our Saviour, set down by St. Matthew, chap. xxvi. 64. in these words, “ Thou hast said;” and by St. Mark, chap. xvi. 62. in these, “ I am;” is an answer only to this question, “ Art thou then the son of God?” and not to that other, “ Art thou the Messiah?” which preceded, and he had answered to before; though Matthew and Mark, contracting the story, set them down together, as if making but one question, omitting all the intervening discourse; whereas it is plain out of St. Luke, that they were two distinct questions, to which Jesus gave two distinct answers. In the first whereof, he, according to his usual caution, declined saying in plain express words that he was the Messiah; though in the latter he owned himself to be “ the son of God:” which though they, being Jews, understood to signify the Messiah, yet he knew could be no legal or weighty accusation against him before a heathen; and so it proved: for, upon his answering to their question, “ Art thou then the son of God? “ Ye say that I am;” they cry out, Luke xxii. 71. “ What need we “ any farther witnesses? For we ourselves have heard out of his “ own mouth?” and so thinking they had enough against him, they hurry him away to Pilate. Pilate asking them, John xviii. 29—32. “ What accusation bring you against this man? They answered, and said, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have “ delivered him up unto thee.” Then said Pilate unto them, “ Take ye him, and judge him according to your law.” But this would not serve their turn, who aimed at his life, and would be satisfied with nothing else. “ The Jews therefore said unto him, “ It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.” And this was also, “ That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which he spake, “ signifying what death he should die.” Pursuing therefore their design, of making him appear to Pontius Pilate guilty of treason against Cæsar, Luke xxiii. 2. “ They began to accuse him, saying, “ We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to “ give tribute to Cæsar; saying, That he himself is the Messiah, “ the king:” all which were inferences of theirs from his saying, he was “ the son of God;” which Pontius Pilate finding (for it is consonant that he examined them to the precise words he had said), their accusation had no weight with him. However, the name of King being suggested against Jesus, he thought himself concerned to search it to the bottom. John xviii. 33—37. “ Then Pilate entered again into the judgement-hall, and called Jesus, and said “ unto him, Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him, “ Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate “ answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests “ have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were “ of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be “ delivered to the Jews? but my kingdom is not from hence. “ Pilate

“ Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth: every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” In this dialogue between our Saviour and Pilate we may observe, 1. That being asked, whether he were “ the king of the Jews?” he answers so, that though he deny it not, yet he avoided giving the least umbrage, that he had any design upon the government: for though he allows himself to be a king, yet, to obviate any suspicion, he tells Pilate, “ his kingdom is not of this world;” and evidences it by this, that if he had pretended to any title to that country, his followers, which were not a few, and were forward enough to believe him their king, would have fought for him, if he had a mind to set himself up by force, or his kingdom were so to be erected. “ But my kingdom,” says he, “ is not from hence;” is not of this fashion, or of this place.

2. Pilate, being by his words and circumstances satisfied that he laid no claim to his province, or meant any disturbance of the government, was yet a little surpris’d to hear a man, in that poor garb, without retinue, or so much as a servant or a friend, own himself to be a king; and therefore asks him, with some kind of wonder, “ Art thou a king then?”

3. That our Saviour declares, that his great business into the world was, to testify and make good this great truth, that he was a king, i. e. in other words, that he was the Messiah.

4. That whoever were followers of the truth, and got into the way of truth and happiness, received this doctrine concerning him, viz. that he was Messiah their king.

Pilate being thus satisfied that he neither meant, nor could there arise any harm from his pretence, whatever it was, to be a king, tells the Jews, ver. 38. “ I find no fault in this man;” but the Jews were the more fierce, Luke xxiii. 5. saying, “ He stirreth up the people to sedition, by his preaching through all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.” And then Pilate, learning that he was of Galilee, Herod’s jurisdiction, sent him to Herod; to whom also the chief priests and Scribes, ver. 10. “ vehemently accused him.” Herod finding all their accusations either false or frivolous, thought our Saviour a bare object of contempt; and so turning him only into ridicule, sent him back to Pilate; who calling unto him the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people, ver. 14. “ said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people; and behold, I have examined him before you, have found no fault in this man, touching these things whereof ye accuse him; no, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him; and so nothing worthy of death is done by him:” and therefore he would have released him; “ for he knew the chief priests had delivered him through envy,” Mark xv. 10. And when they demanded Barabbas to be released, but as for Jesus, cried, “ Crucify him,” Luke xxiii. 22. “ Pilate said unto them the

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“ third time? Why? What evil hath he done? I have found no
“ cause of death in him; I will therefore chastise him, and let
“ him go.”

We may observe in all this whole prosecution of the Jews, that they would fain have got it out of Jesus's own mouth, in express words, that he was the Messiah; which not being able to do with all their art and endeavour, all the rest that they could alledge against him not amounting to a proof before Pilate, that he claimed to be king of the Jews, or that he had caused or done any thing towards a mutiny or insurrection upon the people (for upon these two, as we see, their whole charge turned), Pilate again and again pronounced him innocent; for so he did a fourth and a fifth time, bringing him out to them after he had whipped him, John xix. 4, 6. And after all, “ When Pilate saw that he could prevail
“ nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and
“ washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of
“ the blood of this just man, see you to it.” Matt. xxvii. 24. Which gives us a clear reason of the cautious and wary conduct of our Saviour, in not declaring himself, in the whole course of his ministry, so much as to his disciples, much less to the multitude or the rulers of the Jews, in express words to be the Messiah, the king; and why he kept himself always in prophetic or parabolical terms (he and his disciples preaching only the kingdom of God, i. e. of the Messiah, to be come) and left to his miracles to declare who he was; though this was the truth which he came into the world, as he says himself, John xviii. 37. to testify, and which his disciples were to believe.

When Pilate, satisfied of his innocence, would have released him, and the Jews persisted to cry out, “ Crucify him, crucify him,” John xix. 6. “ Pilate says to them, Take ye him yourselves, and
“ crucify him; for I do not find any fault in him.” The Jews then, since they could not make him a state-criminal, by alledging his saying that he was “ the son of God;” say, by their law, it was a capital crime, ver. 7. “ The Jews answered to Pilate, We have
“ a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself
“ the son of God,” i. e. because, by saying he is the “ son of God,” he has made himself the Messiah, the prophet which was to come: for we find no other law but that against false prophets, Deut. xviii. 20. whereby “ making himself the son of God” deserved death.

After this, Pilate was the more desirous to release him, ver. 12, 13. “ But the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou
“ art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh
“ against Cæsar.” Here we see the stress of their charge against Jesus, whereby they hoped to take away his life, viz. that he
“ made himself king:” we see also upon what they grounded this accusation, viz. because he had owned himself to be “ the son of
“ God:” for he had, in their hearing, never made or professed himself to be a king. We see here likewise the reason why they
were

were so desirous to draw from his own mouth a confession, in express words, that he was the Messiah, viz. that they might have what might be a clear proof that he did so. And, last of all, we see the reason why, though in expressions which they understood he owned himself to them to be the Messiah, yet he avoided declaring it to them in such words as might look criminal at Pilate's tribunal. He owned himself to be the Messiah plainly to the understanding of the Jews, but in ways that could not, to the understanding of Pilate, make it appear that he had laid claim to the kingdom of Judea, or went about to make himself king of that country. But whether his saying that he was "the son of God," was criminal by their law, that Pilate troubled not himself about.

He that considers what Tacitus, Suetonius, Seneca de Benef. l. iii. c. 26. say of Tiberius and his reign, will find how necessary it was for our Saviour, if he would not die as a criminal and a traitor, to take great heed to his words and actions, that he did or said not any thing that might be offensive, or give the least umbrage to the Roman government. It behoved an innocent man, who was taken notice of for something extraordinary in him, to be very wary, under a jealous and cruel prince, who encouraged informations, and filled his reign with executions for treason; under whom words spoken innocently, or in jest, if they could be misconstrued, were made treason, and prosecuted with a rigour, that made it always the same thing to be accused and condemned. And therefore we see, that when the Jews told Pilate, John xix. 12. that he should not be a friend to Cæsar if he let Jesus go (for that whoever made himself king, was a rebel against Cæsar), he asks them no more whether they would take Barabbas, and spare Jesus, but (though against his conscience) gives him up to death, to secure his own head.

One thing more there is, that gives us light into this wise and necessarily cautious management of himself, which manifestly agrees with it, and makes a part of it; and that is, the choice of his apostles, exactly suited to the design and fore-sight of the necessity of keeping the declaration of the kingdom of the Messiah, which was now expected, within certain general terms during his ministry: it was not fit to open himself too plainly or forwardly to the heady Jews, that he himself was the Messiah; that was to be left to be found out by the observation of those who would attend to the purity of his life, the testimony of his miracles, and the conformity of all with the predictions concerning him; by these marks, those he lived amongst were to find it out, without an express promulgation that he was the Messiah, till after his death: his kingdom was to be opened to them by degrees, as well to prepare them to receive it, as to enable him to be long enough amongst them, to perform what was the work of the Messiah to be done, and fulfil all those several parts of what was foretold of him in the Old Testament, and we see applied to him in the New.

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The Jews had no other thoughts of their Messiah, but of a mighty temporal prince, that should raise their nation into an higher degree of power, dominion, and prosperity, than ever it had enjoyed. They were filled with the expectation of a glorious earthly kingdom. It was not therefore for a poor man, the son of a carpenter, and (as they thought) born in Galilee, to pretend to it. None of the Jews, no not his disciples, could have borne this, if he had expressly avowed this at first, and began his preaching, and the opening of his kingdom this way; especially if he had added to it, that in a year or two he should die an ignominious death upon the cross. They are therefore prepared for the truth by degrees. First, John the Baptist tells them, "The kingdom of God" (a name by which the Jews called the kingdom of the Messiah) "is at hand." Then our Saviour comes, and he tells them "of the kingdom of God," sometimes that it is at hand, and upon some occasions, that it is come; but says in his public preaching little or nothing of himself. Then come the apostles and evangelists after his death, and they in express words teach what his birth, life, and doctrine, had done before, and had prepared the well-disposed to receive, viz. that "Jesus is the Messiah."

To this design and method of publishing the gospel, was the choice of the apostles exactly adjusted; a company of poor, ignorant, illiterate men, who, as Christ himself tells us, Matt. xi. 25. and Luke x. 21. were not of the "wise and prudent" men of the world; they were, in that respect, but meer children. These, convinced by the miracles they saw him daily do, and the unblameable life he led, might be disposed to believe him to be the Messiah; and though they with others expected a temporal kingdom on earth, might yet rest satisfied in the truth of their master (who had honoured them with being near his person), that it would come, without being too inquisitive after the time, manner, or seat of his kingdom; as men of letters, more studied in their rabbins, or men of business, more versed in the world, would have been forward to have been. Men great or wise in knowledge or ways of the world would hardly have been kept from prying more narrowly into his design and conduct, or from questioning him about the ways and measures he would take for ascending the throne; and what means were to be used towards it, and when they should in earnest set about it. Abler men, of higher births or thoughts, would hardly have been hindered from whispering, at least to their friends and relations, that their master was the Messiah; and that though he concealed himself to a fit opportunity, and till things were ripe for it, yet they should ere long see him break out of his obscurity, cast off the cloud, and declare himself, as he was, king of Israel. But the ignorance and lowness of these good poor men made them of another temper. They went along in an implicit trust on him, punctually keeping to his commands, and not exceeding his commission. When he sent them to preach the gospel, he bid them preach "the kingdom of God" to be at hand; and that they did, without

without being more particular than he had ordered, or mixing their own prudence with his commands, to promote the kingdom of the Messiah. They preached it without giving, or so much as intimating, that their master was he; which men of another condition, and an higher education, would scarce have forborn to have done. When he asked them who they thought him to be, and Peter answered, "The Messiah, the son of God," Matt. xvi. 16. he plainly shews, by the following words, that he himself had not told them so; and at the same time, ver. 20. forbids them to tell this their opinion of him to any body. How obedient they were to him in this, we may not only conclude from the silence of the evangelists concerning any such thing published by them any where before his death, but from the exact obedience three of them paid to a like command of his. He takes Peter, James, and John, into a mountain, and there Moses and Elias coming to him, he is transfigured before them: Matt. xvii. 9. he charges them, saying, "see that ye tell no man what ye have seen, till the son of man shall be risen from the dead." And St. Luke tells us, what punctual observers they were of his orders in this case, chap. ix. 36. "They kept it close, and told no man, in those days, any of those things which they had seen."

Whether twelve other men, of quicker parts, and of a station or breeding which might have given them any opinion of themselves, or their own abilities, would have been so easily kept from meddling beyond just what was prescribed them, in a matter they had so much interest in; and have said nothing of what they might in human prudence have thought would have contributed to their master's reputation, and made way for his advancement to his kingdom, I leave to be considered. And it may suggest matter of meditation, whether St. Paul was not, for this reason, by his learning, parts, and warmer temper, better fitted for an apostle after, than during our Saviour's ministry; and therefore, though a chosen vessel, was not by the divine wisdom called till after Christ's resurrection.

I offer this only as a subject of magnifying the admirable contrivance of the divine wisdom, in the whole work of our redemption, as far as we are able to trace it by the footsteps which God hath made visible to human reason. For though it be as easy to omnipotent power to do all things by an immediate over-ruling will, and so to make any instruments work, even contrary to their natures, in subserviency to his ends; yet his wisdom is not usually at the expence of miracles (if I may so say), but only in cases that require them, for the evidencing of some revelation or mission to be from him. He does constantly (unless where the confirmation of some truth requires it otherwise) bring about his purposes by means operating according to their natures. If it were not so, the course and evidence of things would be confounded; miracles would lose their name and force; and there could be no distinction between natural and supernatural.

There

There had been no room left to see and admire the wisdom, as well as innocence, of our Saviour, if he had rashly every where exposed himself to the fury of the Jews, and had always been preserved by a miraculous suspension of their malice, or a miraculous rescuing him out of their hands. It was enough for him once to escape from the men of Nazareth, who were going to throw him down a precipice, for him never to preach to them again. Our Saviour had multitudes that followed him for the loaves, who, barely seeing the miracles that he did, would have made him king. If to the miracles he did, he had openly added, in express words, that he was the Messiah, and the king they expected to deliver them, he would have had more followers, and warmer in the cause, and readier to set him up at the head of a tumult. These indeed God, by a miraculous influence, might have hindered from any such attempt; but then posterity could not have believed that the nation of the Jews did at that time expect the Messiah, their king and deliverer; or that Jesus, who declared himself to be that king and deliverer, shewed any miracles amongst them, to convince them of it; or did any thing worthy to make him be credited or received. If he had gone about preaching to the multitude which he drew after him, that he was "the Messiah, the king of Israel," and this had been evidenced to Pilate, God could indeed, by a supernatural influence upon his mind, have made Pilate pronounce him innocent, and not condemn him as a malefactor, who had openly, for three years together, preached sedition to the people, and endeavoured to persuade them that he was the Messiah "their king," of the blood-royal of David, come to deliver them. But then I ask, whether posterity would not either have suspected the story, or that some art had been used to gain that testimony from Pilate? because he could not (for nothing) have been so favourable to Jesus, as to be willing to release so turbulent and seditious a man, to declare him innocent, and to cast the blame and guilt of his death, as unjust, upon the envy of the Jews.

But now the malice of the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees; the headiness of the mob, animated with hopes, and raised with miracles; Judas's treachery, and Pilate's care of his government, and of the peace of his province, all working naturally as they should; Jesus, by the admirable wariness of his carriage, and an extraordinary wisdom visible in his whole conduct, weathers all these difficulties, does the work he comes for, uninterruptedly goes about preaching his full appointed time, sufficiently manifests himself to be the Messiah in all the particulars the scriptures had foretold of him; and, when his hour is come, suffers death; but is acknowledged both by Judas that betrayed, and Pilate that condemned him, to die innocent. For, to use his own words, Luke xxiv. 46. "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Messiah to suffer." And of his whole conduct, we have a reason and clear resolution in those words to St. Peter, Matt. xxvi. 53. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my father, and he shall presently give me
"more

“ more than twelve legions of angels ? but how then shall the “ scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be ? ”

Having this clue to guide us, let us now observe how our Saviour’s preaching and conduct comported with it in the last scene of his life. How cautious he had been in the former part of his ministry, we have already observed. We never find him to use the name of the Messiah but once, till he now came to Jerusalem this last passover. Before this, his preaching and miracles were less at Jerusalem (where he used to make but very short stays) than any where else ; but now he comes six days before the feast, and is every day in the Temple teaching ; and there publicly heals the blind and the lame, in the presence of the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests. The time of his ministry drawing to an end, and his hour coming, he cared not how much the chief priests, elders, rulers, and the Sanhedrim, were provoked against him by his doctrine and miracles ; he was as open and bold in his preaching, and doing the works of the Messiah now at Jerusalem, and in the sight of the rulers, and of all the people, as he had been before cautious and reserved there, and careful to be little taken notice of in that place, and not to come in their way more than needs. All that he now took care of was, not what they should think of him, or design against him (for he knew they would seize him), but to say or do nothing that might be a just matter of accusation against him, or render him criminal to the governor. But as for the grandes of the Jewish nation, he spares them not, but sharply now reprehends their miscarriages publicly in the Temple, where he calls them, more than once, hypocrites, as is to be seen Matt. xxiii. and concludes all with no softer a compellation, than “ serpents ” and “ generation of vipers. ”

After this severe reproof of the Scribes and Pharisees, being retired with his disciples into the Mount of Olives, over-against the Temple, and there foretelling the destruction of it, his disciples ask him, Matt. xxiv. 3. &c. “ When it should be, and what should “ be the signs of his coming ? ” He says to them, “ Take heed that “ no man deceive you : for many shall come in my name ; ” i. e. taking on them the name and dignity of the Messiah, which is only mine ; saying, “ I am the Messiah, and shall deceive many. ” But be not you by them misled, nor by persecution driven away from this fundamental truth, that I am the Messiah ; “ for many shall “ be scandalized, ” and apostatize, “ but he that endures to the “ end, the same shall be saved : and this gospel of the kingdom shall “ be preached in all the world : ” i. e. the good news of me, the Messiah, and my kingdom, shall be spread through the world. This was the great and only point of belief they were warned to stick to ; and this is inculcated again, ver. 23—26. and Mark xiii. 21—23. with this emphatical application to them in both these evangelists, “ Behold, I have told you before-hand ; ” remember ye are forewarned.

This was his answer to the apostles enquiry concerning his “ coming, and the end of the world, ” ver. 3. For so we translate

τῆς συνελείας τῷ αἰῶνι; we must understand the disciples here to put their question, according to the notion and way of speaking of the Jews. For they had two "worlds," as we translate it, ὁ νῦν αἰὼν καὶ ὁ μέλλων αἰὼν; the "present world," and the "world to come." The kingdom of God, as they called it, or the time of the Messiah, they called ὁ μέλλων αἰὼν, "the world to come," which they believed was to put an end to "this world:" and that then the just should be raised from the dead; to enjoy, in that "new world," a happy eternity, with those of the Jewish nation who should be then living.

These two things, viz. the visible and powerful appearance of his kingdom, and the end of the world, being confounded in the apostles question, our Saviour does not separate them, nor distinctly reply to them apart; but, leaving the enquirers in the common opinion, answers at once concerning his coming to take vengeance of the Jewish nation, and put an end to their church, worship, and commonwealth; which was their ὁ νῦν αἰὼν, present world, which they counted should last till the Messiah came: and so it did, and then had an end put to it. And to this he joins his last coming to judgement, in the glory of his father, to put a final end to this world, and all the dispensation belonging to the posterity of Adam upon earth. This joining them together made his answer obscure, and hard to be understood by them then; nor was it safe for him to speak plainer of his kingdom, and the destruction of Jerusalem, unless he had a mind to be accused for having designs against the government. For Judas was amongst them: and whether no other but his apostles were comprehended under the name of "his disciples," who were with him at this time, one cannot determine. Our Saviour therefore speaks of his kingdom in no other style but that which he had all along hitherto used, viz. "The kingdom of God;" Luke xxi. 31. "When you see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." And continuing on his discourse with them, he has the same expression, Matt. xxv. 1. "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be like unto ten virgins." At the end of the following parable of the talents, he adds, ver. 31. "When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all the nations. And he shall set the sheep on his right-hand, and the goats on his left. Then shall the KING say, &c." Here he describes to his disciples the appearance of his kingdom, wherein he will shew himself "a king" in glory upon his throne: but this in such a way, and so remote, and so unintelligible to a heathen magistrate, that, if it had been alledged against him, it would have seemed rather the dream of a crazy brain, than the contrivance of an ambitious or dangerous man designing against the government: the way of expressing what he meant being in the prophetic style; which is seldom so plain as to be understood till accomplished. It is plain, that his disciples themselves comprehended not what kingdom he here spoke of, from their question to him after his resurrection;

urrection, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to "Israel?"

Having finished these discourses, he takes order for the passover, and eats it with his disciples; and at supper tells them, that one of them should betray him: and adds, John xiii. 19. "I tell it you now, before it come, that when it is come to pass, you may know that I am." He does not say out the Messiah; Judas should not have that to say against him if he would; though that be the sense in which he uses this expression, ἐγώ εἰμι, more than once. And that this is the meaning of it, is clear from Mark xii. 6. Luke xxi. 8. In both which evangelists the words are, "For many shall come in my name, saying, ἐγώ εἰμι, I am:" the meaning whereof we shall find explained in the parallel place of St. Matthew, chap. xxiv. 5. "For many shall come in my name, saying, ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ Χριστός, I am the Messiah." Here in this place of John xiii. Jesus foretells what should happen to him, viz. that he should be betrayed by Judas; adding this prediction to the many other particulars of his death and suffering, which he had at other times foretold to them. And here he tells them the reason of these his predictions, viz. that afterwards they might be a confirmation to their faith. And what was it that he would have them believe, and be confirmed in the belief of? Nothing but this, ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, that he was the Messiah. The same reason he gives, John xiii. 28. "You have heard, how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you: and now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe."

When Judas had left them, and was gone out, he talks a little freer to them of his glory, and of his kingdom, than ever he had done before. For now he speaks plainly of himself, and of his kingdom, John xiii. 31. "Therefore when he [Judas] was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the son of man glorified, and God is also glorified in him. And if God be glorified in him; God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." And Luke xxii. 29. "And I will appoint unto you a kingdom, as my father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink with me at my table in my kingdom." Though he has every where all along through his ministry preached "the Gospel of the kingdom," and nothing else but that and repentance, and the duties of a good life; yet it has been always "the kingdom of God," and "the kingdom of heaven:" and I do not remember, that any where, till now, he uses any such expression as "my kingdom." But here now he speaks in the first person, "I will appoint you a kingdom;" and "in my kingdom:" and this we see is only to the eleven, now Judas was gone from them.

With these eleven, whom he was now just leaving, he has a long discourse to comfort them for their loss of him, and to prepare them for the persecution of the world, and to exhort them to keep his commandments, and to love one another. And here one may expect all the articles of faith should be laid down plainly, if any thing

thing else were required of them to believe, but what he had taught them, and they believed already; viz. "That he was the Messiah;" John xiv. 1. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me," ver. 29. "I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe." It is believing on him, without any thing else, John xvi. 31. "Jesus answered them, Do you now believe?" This was in answer to their professing, ver. 30. "Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou comest forth from God."

John xvii. 20. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." All that is spoke of "Believing," in this his last sermon to them, is only "Believing on him," or believing that "he came from God;" which was no other than believing him to be the Messiah.

Indeed, John xiv. 9. our Saviour tells Philip, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the father;" and adds, ver. 10. "Believest thou not that I am in the father, and the father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works." Which being in answer to Philip's words, ver. 9. "Shew us the father," seem to import thus much: "No man hath seen God at any time," he is known only by his works. And that he is my father, and I the son of God, i. e. the Messiah, you may know by the works I have done; which it is impossible I could do of myself, but by the union I have with God my father. For that by being "in God," and "God in him," he signifies such an union with God, that God operates in and by him, appears not only by the words above-cited out of ver. 10. (which can scarce otherwise be made coherent sense), but also from the same phrase used again by our Saviour presently after, ver. 20. "At that day," viz. after his resurrection, when they should see him again, "ye shall know that I am in my father, and you in me, and I in you;" i. e. by the works I shall enable you to do through a power I have received from the father: which whoever sees me do, must acknowledge the father to be in me; and whoever sees you do, must acknowledge me to be in you. And therefore he says, ver. 12. "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he also do, because I go unto my father." Though I go away, yet I shall be in you, who believe in me; and ye shall be enabled to do miracles also for the carrying on of my kingdom, as I have done: that it may be manifested to others, that you are sent by me, as I have evidenced to you that I am sent by the father. And hence it is that he says, in the immediate preceding ver. 11. "Believe me that I am in the father, and the father in me; if not, believe me for the sake of the works themselves." Let the works that I have done convince you that I am sent by the father; that he is with me, and that I do nothing but by his will, and by virtue of the union I have with him; and that, consequently, I am the Messiah, who

am anointed, sanctified, and separated by the father to the work for which he hath sent me.

To confirm them in this faith, and to enable them to do such works as he had done, he promises them the Holy Ghost, John xiv. 25, 26. "These things I have said unto you, being yet present with you:" but when I am gone, "the Holy Ghost, the paraclet" (which may signify monitor, as well as comforter, or advocate), "which the father shall send you in my name, he shall shew you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things which I have said." So that, considering all that I have said, and laying it together, and comparing it with what you shall see come to pass, you may be more abundantly assured that I am the Messiah, and fully comprehend that I have done and suffered all things foretold of the Messiah; and that were to be accomplished and fulfilled by him, according to the scriptures. But be not filled with grief that I leave you; John xvi. 7. "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the paraclet will not come unto you." One reason why, if he went not away, the Holy Ghost could not come, we may gather from what has been observed concerning the prudent and wary carriage of our Saviour all through his ministry, that he might not incur death with the least suspicion of a malefactor: and therefore though his disciples believed him to be the Messiah, yet they neither understood it so well, nor were so well confirmed in the belief of it, as after that, he being crucified and risen again, they had received the Holy Ghost; and with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, a fuller and clearer evidence and knowledge that he was the Messiah. They then were enlightened, to see how his kingdom was such as the scriptures foretold; though not such as they, till then, had expected. And now this knowledge and assurance received from the Holy Ghost was of use to them after his resurrection; when they could now boldly go about, and openly preach, as they did, that Jesus was the Messiah, confirming that doctrine by the miracles which the Holy Ghost impowered them to do. But till he was dead and gone, they could not do this. Their going about openly preaching, as they did after his resurrection, that Jesus was the Messiah, and doing miracles every where to make it good, would not have consisted with that character of humility, peace, and innocence, which the Messiah was to sustain, if they had done it before his crucifixion: for this would have drawn upon him the condemnation of a malefactor, either as a stirrer or sedition against the public peace, or as a pretender to the kingdom of Israel. And hence we see, that they who before his death preached only "the gospel of the kingdom," that "the kingdom of God was at hand;" as soon as they had received the Holy Ghost after his resurrection, changed their style, and every where, in express words, declare, that Jesus is the Messiah, that "king" which was to come. This, the following words here in St. John xvi. 8—14. confirm; where he goes on to tell them; "And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, because they believed not on me."

“me.” Your preaching then, accompanied with miracles, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, shall be a conviction to the world that the Jews sinned in not believing me to be the Messiah. “Of righteousness,” or justice: “because I go to my father, and ye see me no more.” By the same preaching and miracles you shall confirm the doctrine of my ascension; and thereby convince the world that I was that “just one,” who am therefore ascended to the father into heaven, where no unjust person shall enter. “Of judgment: because the prince of this world is judged.” And by the same assistance of the Holy Ghost ye shall convince the world that the devil is judged or condemned, by your casting of him out, and destroying his kingdom, and his worship, wherever you preach. Our Saviour adds, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.” They were yet so full of a temporal kingdom, that they could not bear the discovery of what kind of kingdom his was, nor what a king he was to be; and therefore he leaves them to the coming of the Holy Ghost, for a farther and fuller discovery of himself, and the kingdom of the Messiah, for fear they should be scandalized in him, and give up the hopes they had now in him, and forsake him. This he tells them, ver. 1, of this xvth chapter: “These things I have said unto you, that you may not be scandalized.” The last thing he had told them before his saying this to them, we find in the last verses of the precedent chapter: “When the paraclet is come, the spirit of truth, he shall witness concerning me.” He shall shew you who I am, and witness it to the world; and then, “Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.” He shall call to your mind what I have said and done, that ye may understand it, and know, and bear witness concerning me. And again here, John xvi. after he had told them, they could not bear what he had more to say, he adds, ver. 13. “Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; and he will shew you things to come: he shall glorify me.” By the Spirit, when he comes, ye shall be fully instructed concerning me; and though you cannot yet, from what I have said to you, clearly comprehend my kingdom and glory, yet he shall make it known to you wherein it consists: and though I am now in a mean state, and ready to be given up to contempt, torment, and death, so that ye know not what to think of it, yet the Spirit, when he comes, “shall glorify me,” and fully satisfy you of my power and kingdom; and that I sit on the right-hand of God, to order all things for the good and increase of it, till I come again at the last day in the fulness of glory.

Accordingly, the apostles had a full and clear sight and persuasion of this, after they had received the Holy Ghost; and they preached it every where boldly and openly, without the least remainder of doubt or uncertainty. But that even so late as this, they understood not his death and resurrection, is evident from ver. 17, 18. “Then said some of the disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us; A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again,
“a little

“ a little while, and ye shall see me ; and because I go to the father ? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, a little while ? we know not what he saith.” Upon which, he goes on to discourse to them of his death and resurrection, and of the power they should have of doing miracles. But all this he declares to them in a mystical and involved way of speaking : as he tells them himself, ver. 25. “ These things have I spoken to you in proverbs,” i. e. in general, obscure, ænigmatical, or figurative terms. (All which, as well as allusive apologues, the Jews called proverbs or parables.) Hitherto my declaring of myself to you hath been obscure, and with reserve ; and I have not spoken of myself to you in plain and direct words, because ye “ could not bear it.” A Messiah, and not a king, you could not understand ; and a king living in poverty and persecution, and dying the death of a slave and malefactor upon a cross, you could not put together. And had I told you in plain words, that I was the Messiah, and given you a direct commission to preach to others, that I professedly owned myself to be the Messiah, you and they would have made a commotion, to have set me upon the throne of my father David, and to fight for me, that your Messiah, your king, in whom are your hopes of a kingdom, should not be delivered up into the hands of his enemies, to be put to death ; and of this, Peter will instantly give you a proof. But “ the time cometh when I shall no more “ speak unto you in parables ; but I shall shew unto you plainly of “ the father.” My death and resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, will speedily enlighten you, and then I shall make you know the will and design of the father ; what a kingdom I am to have, and by what means, and to what end, ver. 27. And this the father himself will shew unto you ; “ For he loveth you, because “ ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from the “ father.” Because ye have believed that I am “ the son of God, “ the Messiah ;” that he hath anointed and sent me ; though it hath not been yet fully discovered to you what kind of kingdom it shall be, nor by what means brought about. And then our Saviour, without being asked, explaining to them what he had said, and making them understand better what before they stuck at, and complained secretly among themselves, that they understood not ; they thereupon declare, ver. 30. “ Now are we sure that thou knowest all “ things, and needest not that any man should ask thee.” It is plain thou knowest mens thoughts and doubts before they ask. “ By this we believe that thou comest forth from God. Jesus answered, Do ye now believe ?” Notwithstanding that you now believe that I came from God, and am the Messiah, sent by him ; “ Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered ;” and as it is Matt. xxvi. 31. and “ shall all be scandalized “ in me.” What it is to be scandalized in him, we may see by what followed hereupon, if that which he says to St. Peter, Mark xiv. did not sufficiently explain it.

66. THE REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY,

This I have been the more particular in, that it may be seen, that in his last discourse to his disciples (where he opened himself more than he had hitherto done; and where, if any thing more was required to make them believers, than what they already believed, we might have expected they should have heard of it), there were no new articles proposed to them, but what they believed before, viz. That he was the Messiah, the son of God, sent from the father: though of his manner of proceeding, and his sudden leaving the world, and some few particulars, he made them understand something more than they did before. But as to the main design of the gospel, viz. that he had a kingdom, that he should be put to death, and rise again, and ascend into heaven to his father, and come again in glory to judge the world; this he had told them: and so had acquainted them with the great council of God, in sending him the Messiah, and omitted nothing that was necessary to be known or believed in it. And so he tells them himself, John xv. 15. "Henceforth I call ye not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his Lord does: but I have called ye friends; for ALL THINGS I have heard of my father, I have made known unto you;" though perhaps ye do not so fully comprehend them, as you will shortly, when I am risen and ascended.

To conclude all, in his prayer, which shuts up this discourse, he tells the father what he had made known to his apostles; the result whereof we have John xvii. 8. "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and THEY HAVE BELIEVED THAT THOU DIDST SEND ME." Which is in effect, that he was the Messiah promised and sent by God. And then he prays for them, and adds, ver. 20, 21. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who believe on me through their word." What that word was through which others should believe in him, we have seen in the preaching of the apostles all through the history of the Acts, viz. This one great point, that Jesus was the Messiah. The apostles, he says, ver. 25. "know that thou hast sent me," i. e. are assured that I am the Messiah. And in ver. 21 and 23, he prays, "That the world may believe" (which ver. 23. is called knowing) "that thou hast sent me:" so that what Christ would have believed by his disciples, we may see by this his last prayer for them when he was leaving the world, as well as by what he preached whilst he was in it.

And as a testimony of this, one of his last actions, even when he was upon the cross, was to confirm this doctrine, by giving salvation to one of the thieves that was crucified with him, upon his declaration that he believed him to be the Messiah; for so much the words of his request imported, when he said, "Remember me, Lord, when thou comest into thy kingdom," Luke xxiii. 42. To which Jesus replied, ver. 43. "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." An expression very remarkable; for as Adam, by sin, lost paradise, i. e. a state of happy immortality, here the believing thief, through his faith in Jesus the Messiah,

Messiah, is promised to be put in paradise, and so re-instated in an happy immortality.

Thus our Saviour ended his life. And what he did after his resurrection, St. Luke tells us, Acts i. 3. That he shewed himself to the apostles "forty days, speaking things concerning the kingdom of God." This was what our Saviour preached in the whole course of his ministry, before his passion: and no other mysteries of faith does he now discover to them after his resurrection. All he says, is concerning the kingdom of God; and what it was he said concerning that, we shall see presently out of the other evangelists; having first only taken notice, that when they now asked him, ver. 6. "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He said unto them, ver. 7. "It is not for you to know the times, and the seasons, which the Father hath put into his own power: but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me unto the utmost parts of the earth." Their great business was to be witnesses to Jesus, of his life, death, resurrection, and ascension; which, put together, were undeniable proofs of his being the Messiah. This was what they were to preach, and what he said to them concerning the kingdom of God, as will appear by what is recorded of it in the other evangelists.

When, on the day of his resurrection, he appeared to the two going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. they declare, ver. 21. what his disciples faith in him was: "But we trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel;" i. e. we believed that he was the Messiah, come to deliver the nation of the Jews. Upon this Jesus tells them, that they ought to believe him to be the Messiah, notwithstanding what had happened; nay, they ought by his suffering and death to be confirmed in that faith, that he was the Messiah. And ver. 26, 27. "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself;" how, "that the Messiah ought to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory." Now he applies the prophecies of the Messiah to himself, which we read not that he did ever do before his passion. And afterwards appearing to the eleven, Luke xxiv. 36. he said unto them, ver. 44—47. "The words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the scripture, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Messiah to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Here we see what it was he had preached to them, though not in so plain open words before his crucifixion; and what it is he now makes them understand; and what it was that was to be preached to all nations, viz. that he was the Messiah, that had suffered, and rose

from the dead the third day, and fulfilled all things that were written in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah; and that those who believed this, and repented, should receive remission of their sins through this faith in him. Or, as St. Mark has it, chap. xvi. 15. "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned," ver. 20. What the "gospel" or "good news" was, we have shewed already, viz. the happy tidings of the Messiah being come, ver. 20. And "they went forth" and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." What the "word" was which they preached, and the Lord confirmed with miracles, we have seen already out of the history of their Acts: I have already given an account of their preaching every where, as it is recorded in the Acts, except some few places, where the kingdom of the Messiah is mentioned under the name of "the kingdom of God," which I forbore to set down, till I had made it plain out of the evangelists, that that was no other but the kingdom of the Messiah.

It may be seasonable therefore now, to add to those sermons we have formerly seen of St. Paul (wherein he preached no other article of faith, but that "Jesus was the Messiah," the king, who being risen from the dead, now reigneth, and shall more publicly manifest his kingdom, in judging the world at the last day) what farther is left upon record of his preaching. Acts xix. 8. At Ephesus, "Paul went into the synagogues, and spake boldly for the space of three months; disputing and persuading concerning the kingdom of God." And Acts xx. 25. At Miletus he thus takes leave of the elders of Ephesus: "And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more." What this preaching the kingdom of God was, he tells you, ver. 20, 21. "I have kept nothing back from you, which was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house; testifying both to the Jews, and to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." And so again, Acts xxviii. 23, 24. "When they [the Jews at Rome] had appointed him [Paul] a day, there came many to him into his lodgings; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God; persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning to evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not." And the history of the Acts is concluded with this account of St. Paul's preaching: "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus the Messiah." We may therefore here apply the same conclusion to the history of our Saviour writ by the evangelists, and to the history of the apostles writ in the Acts, which St. John does to his own gospel, chap. xx. 30, 31. "Many other signs did
" Jesus

“Jesus before his disciples:” and in many other places the apostles preached the same doctrine, “which are not written” in these books; “But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God; and that believing you may have life in his name.”

What St. John thought necessary and sufficient to be “believed,” for the attaining eternal life, he here tells us. And this, not in the first dawning of the gospel, when, perhaps, some will be apt to think less was required to be believed, than after the doctrine of faith and mystery of salvation was more fully explained in the epistles writ by the apostles. For it is to be remembered, that St. John says this not as soon as Christ was ascended; for these words, with the rest of St. John’s gospel, were not written till many years after, not only the other gospels, and St. Luke’s history of the Acts, but, in all appearance, after all the epistles writ by the other apostles. So that above threescore years after our Saviour’s passion (for so long after, both Epiphanius and St. Jerome assure us this gospel was written), St. John knew nothing else required to be believed for the attaining of life, but that “Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God.”

To this, it is likely, it will be objected by some, that to believe only that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, is but an Historical and not a Justifying or Saving Faith.

To which I answer, that I allow to the makers of systems, and their followers, to invent and use what distinctions they please; and to call things by what names they think fit. But I cannot allow to them, or to any man, an authority to make a religion for me, or to alter that which God hath revealed. And if they please to call the believing that which our Saviour and his apostles preached and proposed alone to be believed, an Historical Faith, they have their liberty, but they must have a care how they deny it to be a Justifying or Saving Faith, when our Saviour and his apostles have declared it so to be, and taught no other which men should receive, and whereby they should be made believers unto eternal life; unless they can so far make bold with our Saviour, for the sake of their beloved systems, as to say, that he forgot what he came into the world for; and that he and his apostles did not instruct people right in the way and mysteries of salvation: for that this is the sole doctrine pressed and required to be believed in the whole tenor of our Saviour’s and his apostles preaching, we have shewed through the whole history of the evangelists and the Acts. And I challenge them to shew, that there was any other doctrine, upon their assent to which, or disbelief of it, men were pronounced believers or unbelievers; and accordingly received into the church of Christ, as members of his body, as far as mere believing could make them so, or else kept out of it: this was the only gospel-article of faith which was preached to them. And if nothing else was preached every where; the apostle’s argument will hold against any other articles of faith to be believed under the gospel, Rom. x. 14. “How shall they believe that whereof they have not heard?” For to

preach any other doctrines necessary to-be believed, we do not find that any body was sent.

Perhaps, it will be further argued, that this is not a saving faith, because such a faith as this the devils may have, and it was plain they had; for they believed and declared Jesus to be the Messiah. And St. James, chap. ii. 19. tell us, "The devils believe, and tremble;" and yet they shall not be saved. To which I answer, 1. That they could not be saved by any faith, to whom it was not proposed as a means of salvation, nor ever promised to be counted for righteousness. This was an act of grace, shewn only to mankind. God dealt so favourably with the posterity of Adam, that if they would believe Jesus to be the Messiah, the promised king and Saviour, and perform what other conditions were required of them by the covenant of grace, God would justify them because of this belief; he would account this faith to them for righteousness, and look on it as making up the defects of their obedience; which being thus supplied by what was taken instead of it, they were looked on as just or righteous, and so inherited eternal life. But this favour shewn to mankind was never offered to the fallen angels. They had no such proposals made to them; and therefore whatever of this kind was proposed to men, it availed not devils whatever they performed of it. This covenant of grace was never offered to them.

2. I answer; that though the devils believed, yet they could not be saved by the covenant of grace; because they performed not the other condition required in it, altogether as necessary to be performed as this believing; and that is repentance. Repentance is as absolute a condition of the covenant of grace, as faith; and as necessary to be performed, as that. John the Baptist, who was to prepare the way for the Messiah, "preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Mark i. 4.

As John began his preaching with "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," Matt. iii. 2. so did our Saviour begin his, Matt. iv. 17. "From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Or, as St. Mark has it in the parallel place, Mark i. 14, 15, "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying; The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel." This was not only the beginning of his preaching, but the sum of all that he did preach; viz. that men should repent, and believe the good tidings which he brought them, that the time was fulfilled for the coming of the Messiah. And this was what his apostles preached, when he sent them out, Mark vi. 12. "And they going out, preached that men should repent." Believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and repenting, were so necessary and fundamental parts of the covenant of grace, that one of them alone is often put for both. For here St. Mark mentions nothing but their preaching repentance; as St. Luke, in the parallel place, chap. ix. 6. mentions nothing but their evangelizing, or preaching the good

news of the kingdom of the Messiah. And St. Paul often in his epistles puts faith for the whole duty of a Christian. But yet the tenor of the gospel is what Christ declares, Luke xii. 3. 5. "Unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And in the parable of the rich man in hell, delivered by our Saviour, Luke xvi. repentance alone is the means proposed of avoiding that place of torment, ver. 30, 31. And what the tenor of the doctrine, which should be preached to the world, should be, he tells his apostles after his resurrection, Luke xxiv. 27. viz. "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name," who was the Messiah. And accordingly believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and repenting, was what the apostles preached. So Peter began, Acts ii. 38. "Repent, and be baptized." These two things were required for the remission of sins, viz. entering themselves in the kingdom of God, and owning and professing themselves the subjects of Jesus, whom they believed to be the Messiah, and received for their Lord and king; for that was to be baptized in his name: baptism being an initiating ceremony known to the Jews, whereby those, who leaving heathenism, and professing a submission to the law of Moses, were received into the commonwealth of Israel. And so it was made use of by our Saviour, to be that solemn visible act, whereby those who believed him to be the Messiah, received him as their king, and professed obedience to him, were admitted as subjects into his kingdom: which in the gospels is called "The kingdom of God;" and in the Acts and Epistles often by another name, viz. "The church."

The same St. Peter preaches again to the Jews, Acts iii. 19. "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."

What this repentance was, which the new covenant required as one of the conditions to be performed by all those who should receive the benefits of that covenant, is plain in the scripture, to be not only a sorrow for sins past, but (what is a natural consequence of such sorrow, if it be real) a turning from them, into a new and contrary life. And so they are joined together, Acts iii. 19. "Repent, and turn about;" or, as we render it, Be converted. And Acts xxvi. "Repent and turn to God."

And sometimes turning about is put alone to signify repentance, Matt. xiii. 15. Luke xxii. 32. Which in other words is well expressed by newness of life. For it being certain, that he who is really sorry for his sins, and abhors them, will turn from them, and forsake them; either of these acts, which have so natural a connexion one with the other, may be, and is often, put for both together. Repentance is a hearty sorrow for our past misdeeds, and a sincere resolution and endeavour, to the utmost of our power, to conform all our actions to the law of God. So that repentance does not consist in one single act of sorrow (though that, being the first and leading act, gives denomination to the whole), but in doing works of repentance, in a sincere obedience to the law of Christ, the remainder of our lives. This was called for by John the Baptist,

the preacher of repentance, Matt. iii. 8. "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance." And by St. Paul here, Acts xxvi. 20. "Repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." There are works to follow belonging to repentance, as well as sorrow for what is past.

These two, faith and repentance, i. e. believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and a good life, are the indispensable conditions of the new covenant to be performed by all those who would obtain eternal life. The reasonableness, or rather necessity of which, that we may the better comprehend, we must a little look back to what was said in the beginning.

Adam being the son of God, and so St. Luke calls him, chap. iii. 38. had this part also of the "likeness" and "image" of his father, viz. that he was immortal. But Adam transgressing the command given him by his heavenly father, incurred the penalty, forfeited that state of immortality, and became mortal. After this, Adam begot children, but they were "in his own likeness, after his own image;" mortal like their father.

God nevertheless, out of his infinite mercy, willing to bestow eternal life on mortal men, sends Jesus Christ into the world; who being conceived in the womb of a virgin (that had not known man) by the immediate power of God, was properly the son of God; according to what the angel declared to his mother, Luke i. 30—35. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called THE SON OF GOD." So that, being the son of God, he was, like his father, "immortal," as he tells us, John v. 26. "As the father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the son to have life in himself."

And that immortality is a part of that "image," wherein these (who were the immediate sons of God, so as to have no other father) were made like their father, appears probable, not only from the places in Genesis concerning Adam, above taken notice of, but seems to me also to be intimated in some expressions concerning Jesus the son of God. In the New Testament, Col. i. 15, he is called "the image of the invisible God." "Invisible" seems put in, to obviate any gross imagination, that he (as images used to do) represented God in any corporeal or visible resemblance. And there is farther subjoined, to lead us into the meaning of it, "The first-born of every creature;" which is farther explained, ver. 18. where he is termed, "The first-born from the dead:" thereby making out, and shewing himself to be the "image" of the invisible God; that death hath no power over him: but being the son of God, and not having forfeited that sonship by any transgression, was the heir of eternal life; as Adam should have been, had he continued in his filial duty. In the same sense the apostle seems to use the word "image" in other places, viz. Rom. viii. 29. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren."

“brethren.” This “image,” to which they were conformed, seems to be, “immortality” and eternal life. For it is remarkable, that in both these places St. Paul speaks of the resurrection, and that Christ was “the first-born among many brethren;” he being by birth the son of God, and the others only by adoption, as we see in this same chapter, ver. 15—17. “Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, father; the spirit itself bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together.” And hence we see, that our Saviour vouchsafes to call those, who at the day of judgement are through him entering into eternal life, his “brethren;” Matt. xxv. 40. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren.” May we not in this find a reason why God so frequently in the New Testament, and so seldom, if at all, in the Old, is mentioned under the single title of THE FATHER? and therefore our Saviour says, Matt. xi. “No man knoweth the father save the son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him.” God has now a son again in the world, the first-born of many brethren, who all now, by the spirit of adoption, can say, “Abba,” father; and we by adoption, being for his sake made his brethren, and the sons of God, come to share in that inheritance which was his natural right, he being by birth the son of God: which inheritance is eternal life. And again, ver. 23. “We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;” whereby is plainly meant the change of these frail mortal bodies, into the spiritual immortal bodies at the resurrection; “When this mortal shall have put on immortality,” 1 Cor. xv. 54. which in that chapter, ver. 42—44, he farther expresses thus: “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body, &c.” To which he subjoins, ver. 49. “As we have borne the image of the earthy” (i. e. As we have been mortal, like earthy Adam our father, from whom we are descended, when he was turned out of paradise), “we shall also bear the image of the heavenly;” into whose sonship and inheritance being adopted, we shall, at the resurrection, receive that “adoption” we expect, “Even the redemption of our bodies;” and after his “image,” which is the “image” of the father, become immortal. Hear what he himself says, Luke xx. 35, 36. “They who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection.” And he that shall read St. Paul’s argument, Acts xiii. 32, 33, will find, that the great evidence that Jesus was the “son of God,” was his resurrection. Then the image of his father appeared in him, when he visibly entered into the state of immortality.

mortality. For thus the apostle reasons; "We preach to you, how that the promise which was made to our fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee."

This may serve a little to explain the "immortality" of the sons of God, who are in this, like their father, made after his "image" and likeness. But that our Saviour was so, he himself farther declares, John x. 18. where, speaking of his life, he says, "No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." Which he could not have had if he had been a mortal man, the son of a man, of the seed of Adam; or else had by any transgression forfeited his life: for "the wages of sin is death." And he that hath incurred death for his own transgression, cannot lay down his life for another, as our Saviour professes he did. For he was the just one, Acts vii. 57. and xii. 14. "who knew no sin." 2 Cor. v. 21. "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." And thus, "As by man came death, so by man came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

For this laying down his life for others, our Saviour tells us, John x. 17. "Therefore does my father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." And this his obedience and suffering was rewarded with a kingdom, which he tells us, Luke xxii. "His father had appointed unto him;" and which, it is evident out of the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xii. 2. he had a regard to in his sufferings: "who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Which kingdom given him upon this account of his obedience, suffering, and death, he himself takes notice of in these words, John xvii. 1--4. "Jesus lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus the Messiah, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." And St. Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, chap. ii. 8--11. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

Thus God, we see, designed his son Christ Jesus a kingdom, an everlasting kingdom in heaven. But "though as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;" and all men shall return to

life

life again at the last day; yet all men having sinned, and thereby “come short of the glory of God,” as St. Paul assures us, Rom. iii. 23. (i. e. not attaining to the heavenly kingdom of the Messiah, which is often called the glory of God; as may be seen, Rom. v. 2. and xv. 7. and ii. 7. Matt. xvi. 27. Mark viii. 38. For no one who is unrighteous, i. e. comes short of perfect righteousness, shall be admitted into the eternal life of that kingdom; as is declared, 1 Cor. vi. 9. “The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God”). And death, the wages of sin, being the portion of all those who had transgressed the righteous law of God, the son of God would in vain have come into the world, to lay the foundations of a kingdom, and gather together a select people out of the world, if (they being found guilty at their appearance before the judgement-seat of the righteous judge of all men at the last day) instead of entrance into eternal life in the kingdom he had prepared for them, they should receive death, the just reward of sin, which every one of them was guilty of. This second death would have left him no subjects; and instead of those ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, there would not have been one left him to sing praises unto his name, saying, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever.” God, therefore, out of his mercy to mankind, and for the erecting of the kingdom of his son, and furnishing it with subjects out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, proposed to the children of men, that as many of them as would believe Jesus his son (whom he sent into the world) to be the Messiah, the promised deliverer, and would receive him for their king and ruler, should have all their past sins, disobedience, and rebellion forgiven them; and if for the future they lived in a sincere obedience to his law, to the utmost of their power, the sins of human frailty for the time to come, as well as all those of their past lives, should, for his son’s sake, because they gave themselves up to him to be his subjects, be forgiven them: and so their faith, which made them be baptized into his name (i. e. enrol themselves in the kingdom of Jesus the Messiah, and profess themselves his subjects, and consequently live by the laws of his kingdom), should be accounted to them for righteousness; i. e. should supply the defects of a scanty obedience in the sight of God; who, counting this faith to them for righteousness, or complete obedience, did thus justify, or make them just, and thereby capable of eternal life.

Now, that this is the faith for which God of his free grace justifies sinful man (for “it is God alone that justifieth,” Rom. viii. 33. Rom. iii. 26.), we have already shewed, by observing through all the history of our Saviour and the apostles, recorded in the evangelists, and in the Acts, what he and his apostles preached and proposed to be believed. We shall shew now, that, besides believing him to be the Messiah their king, it was farther required, that those who would have the privilege, advantage, and deliverance of his kingdom,

kingdom, should enter themselves into it; and by baptism being made denizens, and solemnly incorporated into that kingdom, live as became subjects obedient to the laws of it. For if they believed him to be the Messiah their king, but would not obey his laws, and would not have him to reign over them, they were but the greater rebels; and God would not justify them for a faith that did but increase their guilt, and oppose diametrically the kingdom and design of the Messiah; "who gave himself for us, that he might
 "redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar
 "people, zealous of good works," Titus ii. 14. And therefore St. Paul tells the Galatians, That that which availeth is faith; but
 "faith working by love." And that "faith" without "works," i. e. the works of sincere obedience to the law and will of Christ, is not sufficient for our justification, St. James shews at large, chap. ii.

Neither indeed could it be otherwise; for life, eternal life, being the reward of justice or righteousness only, appointed by the righteous God (who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity) to those only who had no taint or infection of sin upon them, it is impossible that he should justify those who had no regard to justice at all, whatever they believed. This would have been to encourage iniquity, contrary to the purity of his nature, and to have condemned that eternal law of right, which is holy, just, and good: of which no one precept or rule is abrogated or repealed; nor indeed can be, whilst God is an holy, just, and righteous God, and man a rational creature. The duties of that law arising from the constitution of his very nature, are of eternal obligation; nor can it be taken away, or dispensed with, without changing the nature of things, or overturning the measure of right and wrong, and thereby introducing and authorising irregularity, confusion, and disorder in the world. Christ's coming into the world was not for such an end as that; but, on the contrary, to reform the corrupt state of degenerate man, and out of those who would mend their lives, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, erect a new kingdom.

This is the law of that kingdom, as well as of all mankind; and that law by which all men shall be judged at the last day. Only those who have believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and have taken him to be their king, with a sincere endeavour after righteousness, in obeying his law, shall have their past sins not imputed to them; and shall have that faith taken instead of obedience, where frailty and weakness made them transgress, and sin prevailed after conversion in those who hunger and thirst after righteousness (or perfect obedience), and do not allow themselves in acts of disobedience and rebellion, against the laws of that kingdom they are entered into.

He did not expect, it is true, a perfect obedience, void of all slips and falls; he knew our make, and the weakness of our constitutions too well, and was sent with a supply for that defect. Besides, perfect obedience was the righteousness of the law of works; and then the reward would be of debt, and not of grace: and to
 such

such there was no need of faith to be imputed to them for righteousness. They stood upon their own legs, were just already, and needed no allowance to be made them for believing Jesus to be the Messiah, taking him for their king, and becoming his subjects. But that Christ does require obedience, sincere obedience, is evident from the laws he himself delivers (unless he can be supposed to give and inculcate laws only to have them disobeyed), and from the sentence he will pass when he comes to judge.

The faith required was, to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, the anointed, who had been promised by God to the world. Amongst the Jews (to whom the promises and prophecies of the Messiah were more immediately delivered) anointing was used to three sorts of persons at their inauguration, whereby they were set apart to three great offices, viz. of priests, prophets, and kings. Though these three offices be in holy writ attributed to our Saviour, yet I do not remember that he any where assumes to himself the title of a priest, or mentions any thing relating to his priesthood; nor does he speak of his being a prophet but very sparingly, and once or twice, as it were, by the bye: but the gospel, or the good news of the kingdom of the Messiah, is what he preaches every where, and makes it his great business to publish to the world. This he did, not only as most agreeable to the expectation of the Jews, who looked for their Messiah, chiefly as coming in power to be their king and deliverer, but as it best answered the chief end of his coming, which was to be a king, and as such to be received by those who would be his subjects in the kingdom which he came to erect. And though he took not directly on himself the title of king till he was in custody, and in the hands of Pilate; yet it is plain "king," and "king of Israel," were the familiar and received titles of the Messiah. See John i. 50. Luke xix. 38. compared with Matt. xxi. 9. and Mark xi. 9. John xii. 13. Matt. xxi. 5. Luke xxiii. 2. compared with Matt. xxvii. 11. and John xviii. 33—37. Mark xv. 12. compared with Matt. xxvii. 22. Matt. xxvii. 42.

What those were to do, who believed him to be the Messiah, and received him for their king, that they might be admitted to be partakers with him of his kingdom in glory, we shall best know by the laws he gives them, and requires them to obey; and by the sentence which he himself will give, when, sitting on his throne, they shall all appear at his tribunal, to receive every one his doom from the mouth of this righteous judge of all men.

What he proposes to his followers to be believed, we have already seen; by examining his, and his apostles preaching, step by step, all through the history of the four evangelists, and the "Acts of the apostles." The same method will best and plainest shew us, whether he required of those who believed him to be the Messiah, any thing besides that faith, and what it was. For he being a king, we shall see by his commands what he expects from his subjects: for if he did not expect obedience to them, his commands would be but meer mockery; and if there were no punishment for the trans-

transgressors of them, his laws would not be the laws of a king, that had authority to command, and power to chastise the disobedient; but empty talk, without force, and without influence.

We shall therefore from his injunctions (if any such there be) see what he has made necessary to be performed, by all those who shall be received into eternal life in his kingdom prepared in the heavens. And in this we cannot be deceived. What we have from his own mouth, especially if repeated over and over again, in different places and expressions, will be past doubt and controversy. I shall pass by all that is said by St. John Baptist, or any other, before our Saviour's entry upon his ministry and public promulgation of the laws of his kingdom.

He began his preaching with a command to repent; as St. Matt. tells us, iv. 17. "From that time Jesus began to preach; saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" And Luke v. 32. he tells the Scribes and Pharisees, "I come not to call the 'righteous;'" those who were truly so needed no help, they had a right to the tree of life, "but sinners to repentance."

In his sermon, as it is called in the Mount, Luke vi. and Matt. v. &c. he commands they should be exemplary in good works. "Let your light so shine amongst men, that they may see your 'good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven,'" Matt. v. 15. And that they might know what he came for, and what he expected of them, he tells them, ver. 17—20. "Think not that I 'am come to dissolve' or loosen 'the law, or the prophets: I am 'not come to dissolve' or loosen, but to 'make it full,' or compleat: by giving it you in its true and strict sense. Here we see he confirms, and at once reinforces all the moral precepts in the Old Testament. "For verily I say to you, Till heaven and earth pass, 'one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all 'be done. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least 'commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the 'least' (i. e. as it is interpreted, shall not be at all) 'in the 'kingdom of heaven.'" Ver. 21. "I say unto you, 'That except 'your righteousness," i. e. your performance of the eternal law of right, "shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, 'ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven:" and then he goes on to make good what he said, ver. 17. viz. "That he 'was come to compleat the law," viz. by giving its full and clear sense, free from the corrupt and loosening glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, ver. 22—26. He tells them, That not only murder, but causeless anger, and so much as words of contempt, were forbidden. He commands them to be reconciled and kind towards their adversaries; and that upon pain of condemnation. In the following part of his sermon, which is to be read Luke vi. and more at large Matt. v, vi, vii. he not only forbids actual uncleanness, but all irregular desires, upon pain of hell-fire; causeless divorces, swearing in conversation, as well as forswearing in judgement, revenge, retaliation, ostentation of charity, of devotion, and of fasting, repetitions

titions in prayer ; covetousness, worldly care, censoriousness : and, on the other side, commands loving our friends, doing good to those that hate us, blessing those that curse us, praying for those that despitefully use us ; patience, and meekness under injuries ; forgiveness, liberality, compassion : and closes all his particular injunctions, with this general golden rule, Matt. vii. 12. " All things whatsoever ye would have that men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets." And to shew how much he is in earnest, and expects obedience to these laws ; he tells them, Luke vi. 35. " That if they obey, great shall be their REWARD ;" they " shall be called, The sons of the highest." And to all this, in the conclusion, he adds this solemn sanction : " Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" It is in vain for you to take me for the Messiah your king, unless you obey me. " Not every one who calls me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," or be the sons of God ; " but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven." To such disobedient subjects, though they have prophesied and done miracles in my name, I shall say at the day of judgement, " Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not."

When Matt. xii. he was told, that his mother and brethren sought to speak with him, ver. 49 ; " stretching out his hands to his disciples, he said, Behold my mother and my brethren ; for whosoever shall do the will of my father, who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." They could not be children of the adoption, and fellow-heirs with him of eternal life, who did not do the will of his heavenly father.

Matt. xv. and Mark vii. the Pharisees finding fault, that his disciples eat with unclean hands, he makes this declaration to his apostles : " Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever from without entereth into a man, cannot defile him ; because it enters not into his heart, but his belly. That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man : for from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, false witnesses, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these ill things come from within, and defile a man."

He commands self-denial, and the exposing ourselves to suffering and danger, rather than to deny or disown him : and this upon pain of losing our souls, which are of more worth than all the world. This we may read Matt. xvi. 24—27. and the parallel places, Matt. viii. and Luke ix.

The apostles disputing amongst them who should be greatest in the kingdom of the Messiah, Matt. xviii. 1. he thus determines the controversy, Mark. ix. 35. " If any one will be first, let him be last of all, and servant of all : " and setting a child before them, adds, Matt. xviii. 3. " Verily I say unto you, Unless ye turn, and become as children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

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Matt. xviii. 15. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen and Publican." Ver. 21. "Peter said, Lord, How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee till seven times, but until seventy times seven." And then ends the parable of the servant, who, being himself forgiven, was rigorous to his fellow-servant, with these words, ver. 34. "And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly father do also unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Luke x. 25. To the lawyer, asking him, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said, What is written in the law? how readest thou?" He answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Jesus said, "This do, and thou shalt live." And when the lawyer, upon our Saviour's parable of the good Samaritan, was forced to confess, that he that shewed mercy was his neighbour; Jesus dismissed him with this charge, ver. 37. "Go, and do thou likewise."

Luke xi. 41. "Give alms of such things as ye have: behold, all things are clean unto you."

Luke xii. 15. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." Ver. 22. "Be not solicitous what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor what ye shall put on;" be not fearful or apprehensive of want, for it is your father's pleasure to give you a kingdom. Sell that you have, and give alms: and provide yourselves bags that wax not old, and treasure in the heavens that faileth not; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for the Lord, when he will return. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Blessed is that servant, whom the Lord having made ruler of his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season, the Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing: of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him a ruler over all that he hath. But if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat the men-servants, and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken: the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with unbelievers. And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did ac-

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“ cording to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes: for he
 “ that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be
 “ beaten with few stripes; for unto whomsoever much is given, of
 “ him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed
 “ much, of him they will ask the more.”

Luke xiv. 11. “ Whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased;
 “ and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

Ver. 12. “ When thou makest a dinner or supper, call not thy
 “ friends or thy brethren, neither thy kinsman, nor thy neigh-
 “ bours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made
 “ thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor and maimed,
 “ the lame and the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot
 “ recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrec-
 “ tion of the just.”

Ver. 33. “ So likewise, whosoever he be of you that is not ready
 “ to forego all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

Luke xvi. 9. “ I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the
 “ mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive
 “ you into everlasting habitations. If ye have not been faithful in
 “ the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true
 “ riches? and if ye have not been faithful in that which is another
 “ man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?”

Luke xvii. 3. “ If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him;
 “ and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven
 “ times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying,
 “ I repent, thou shalt forgive him.”

Luke xviii. 1. “ He spoke a parable to them, to this end, that
 “ men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”

Ver. 18. “ One comes to him, and asks him, saying, Master, what
 “ shall I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said to him, If thou wilt
 “ enter into life, keep the commandments. He says, Which?
 “ Jesus said, Thou knowest the commandments: Thou shalt not
 “ kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal;
 “ Thou shalt not bear false witness; Defraud not; Honour thy
 “ father and thy mother; And thou shalt love thy neighbour as
 “ thyself. He said, All these have I observed from my youth;
 “ Jesus hearing this, loved him; and said unto him, Yet lackest
 “ thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and
 “ thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” To
 understand this right we must take notice, that this young man asks
 our Saviour, what he must do to be admitted effectually into the
 kingdom of the Messiah? The Jews believed, that when the Messiah
 came, those of their nation that received him should not die; but
 that they, with those who being dead should then be raised again
 by him, should enjoy eternal life with him. Our Saviour, in answer
 to this demand, tells the young man, that to obtain the eternal life
 of the kingdom of the Messiah, he must keep the commandments.
 And then enumerating several of the precepts of the law, the young
 man says, he had observed these from his childhood: for which,

the text tells us, Jesus loved him. But our Saviour, to try whether in earnest he believed him to be the Messiah, and resolved to take him to be his king, and to obey him as such, bids him give all he has to the poor, and come, and follow him, and he should have treasure in heaven. This I look on to be the meaning of the place: this of selling all he had, and giving it to the poor, not being a standing law of his kingdom, but a probationary command to this young man, to try whether he truly believed him to be the Messiah, and was ready to obey his commands, and relinquish all to follow him, when he his prince required it.

And therefore we see, Luke xix. 14. where our Saviour takes notice of the Jews not receiving him as the Messiah, he expresses it thus, "We will not have this man to reign over us." It is not enough to believe him to be the Messiah, unless we also obey his laws, and take him to be our king, to reign over us.

Matt. xxii. 11—13. He that had not on the wedding-garment, though he accepted of the invitation, and came to the wedding, was cast into utter darkness. By the "wedding-garment," it is evident, good works are meant here. That wedding-garment of fine linen, clean and white, which we are told, Rev. xix. 8, is the *δικαιώματα*, "righteous acts of the Saints:" or, as St. Paul calls it, Ephes. iv. 1. "the walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called." This appears from the parable itself; "The kingdom of heaven," says our Saviour, ver. 2. "is like unto a king who made a marriage for his son." And here he distinguishes those who were invited into three sorts; 1. Those who were invited, and came not, i. e. those who had the gospel, the good news of the kingdom of God, proposed to them, but believed not. 2. Those who came, but had not on a wedding-garment, i. e. believed Jesus to be the Messiah, but were not new-clad (as I may so say) with a true repentance and amendment of life, nor adorned with those virtues which the apostle, Col. iii. requires to be put on. 3. Those who were invited, did come, and had on the wedding-garment, i. e. heard the gospel, believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and sincerely obeyed his laws. These three sorts are plainly designed here; whereof the last only were the blessed; who were to enjoy the kingdom prepared for them.

Matt. xxiii. "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even the Messiah, and ye all are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, even the Messiah. But he that is greatest amongst you, shall be your servant; and whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted."

Luke xxi. 34. "Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be at any time over-charged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life."

Luke xxii. 25. "He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them, are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that

" is

“ is greatest amongst you, let him be as the younger ; and he that
 “ is chief, as he that doth serve.”

John xiii. 34. “ A new commandment I give unto you, That ye
 “ love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one
 “ another : by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if
 “ ye love one another.” This command of loving one another is
 repeated again, chap. xv. 12. and 17.

John xiv. 15. “ If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Ver.
 21. “ He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is
 “ that loveth me ; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my
 “ father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.” Ver.
 23. “ If a man loveth me, he will keep my words.” Ver. 24. “ He
 “ that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.”

John xv. 8. “ In this is my father glorified, that ye bear much
 “ fruit ; so shall ye be my disciples.” Ver. 14. “ Ye are my
 “ friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

Thus we see our Saviour not only confirmed the moral law, and,
 clearing it from the corrupt glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees,
 shewed the strictness as well as obligation of its injunctions ; but
 moreover, upon occasion, requires the obedience of his disciples to
 several of the commands he afresh lays upon them, with the en-
 forcement of unspeakable rewards and punishments in another
 world, according to their obedience or disobedience. There is not,
 I think, any of the duties of morality, which he has not, some-
 where or other, by himself and his apostles, inculcated over and over
 again to his followers in express terms. And is it for nothing that
 he is so instant with them to bring forth fruit ? does he their king
 command, and is it an indifferent thing ? or will their happiness or
 misery not at all depend upon it, whether they obey or no ? They
 were required to believe him to be the Messiah ; which faith is of
 grace promised to be reckoned to them for the completing of their
 righteousness, wherein it was defective : but righteousness, or obe-
 dience to the law of God, was their great business, which if they
 could have attained by their own performances, there would have
 been no need of this gracious allowance in reward of their faith ;
 but eternal life, after the resurrection, had been their due by a former
 covenant, even that of works, the rule whereof was never abolished,
 though the rigour was abated. The duties enjoined in it were du-
 ties still : their obligations had never ceased, nor a wilful neglect of
 them was ever dispensed with ; but their past transgressions were
 pardoned, to those who received Jesus, the promised Messiah, for
 their king ; and their future slips covered, if renouncing their former
 iniquities, they entered into his kingdom, and continued his sub-
 jects, with a steady resolution and endeavour to obey his laws. This
 righteousness therefore, a complete obedience and freedom from sin,
 are still sincerely to be endeavoured after ; and it is no where pro-
 mised, that those who persist in a wilful disobedience to his laws
 shall be received into the eternal bliss of his kingdom, how much
 soever they believe in him,

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A sincere obedience, how can any one doubt to be, or scruple to call, a condition of the new covenant, as well as faith, who ever read our Saviour's sermon on the mount, to omit all the rest? Can any thing be more express than these words of our Lord? Matt. vi. 14. "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses." And John xiii. 17. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." This is so indispensable a condition of the new covenant, that believing without it will not do, nor be accepted, if our Saviour knew the terms on which he would admit men into life. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord," says he, Luke vi. 46. "and do not the things which I say?" It is not enough to believe him to be the Messiah, the "Lord," without obeying him: for that these he speaks to here were believers, is evident from the parallel place, Matt. vii. 21—23. where it is thus recorded; "Not every one who says Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my father, which is in heaven." No rebels, or refractory disobedient, shall be admitted there, though they have so far believed in Jesus as to be able to do miracles in his name; as is plain out of the following words, "Many will say to me in that day, Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity."

This part of the new covenant, the apostles also, in their preaching the gospel of the Messiah, ordinarily joined with the doctrine of faith.

St. Peter in his first sermon, Acts ii. when they were pricked in heart, and asked, "What shall we do?" says, ver. 38. "REPENT, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." The same he says to them again in his next speech, Acts iv. 26. "Unto you first, God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you." How was this done? "IN TURNING AWAY EVERY ONE FROM YOUR INIQUITIES."

The same doctrine they preach to the high-priest and rulers, Acts v. 30. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right-hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give REPENTANCE to Israel, and forgiveness of sins; and we are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

Acts xvii. 30. St. Paul tells the Athenians, that now under the gospel "God commandeth all men every where to REPENT."

Acts xx. 21. St. Paul, in his last conference with the elders of Ephesus, professes to have taught them the whole doctrine necessary to salvation. "I have," says he, "kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews
" and

“and to the Greeks;” and then gives an account what his preaching had been, viz. “REPENTANCE towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus the Messiah.” This was the sum and substance of the gospel which St. Paul preached, and was all that he knew necessary to salvation, viz. “Repentance, and believing Jesus to be the Messiah;” and so takes his last farewell of them, whom he should never see again, ver. 32. in these words: “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace; which is able to build up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.” There is an inheritance conveyed by the word and covenant of grace, but it is only to those who are “sanctified.”

Acts xxiv. 24. “When Felix sent for Paul,” that he and his wife Drusilla might hear him “concerning the faith in Christ,” Paul reasoned of “righteousness,” or justice, and “temperance;” the duties we owe to others, and to ourselves, and of the judgement to come: till he made Felix to tremble. Whereby it appears, that “temperance and justice” were fundamental parts of the religion that Paul professed, and were contained in the faith which he preached. And if we find the duties of the moral law not pressed by him every where, we must remember, that most of his sermons left upon record were preached in their synagogues to the Jews, who acknowledged their obedience due to all the precepts of the law, and would have taken it amiss to have been suspected not to have been more zealous for the law than he: and therefore it was with reason that his discourses were directed chiefly to what they yet wanted, and were averse to, the knowledge and embracing of Jesus their promised Messiah. But what his preaching generally was, if we will believe him himself, we may see Acts xxvi. where giving an account to king Agrippa of his life and doctrine, he tells him, ver. 20. “I shewed unto them at Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.”

Thus we see, by the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, that he required of those who believed him to be the Messiah, and received him for their Lord and deliverer, that they should live by his laws; and that (though in consideration of their becoming his subjects, by faith in him, whereby they believed and took him to be the Messiah, their former sins should be forgiven, yet) he would own none to be his, nor receive them as true denizens of the New Jerusalem, into the inheritance of eternal life, but leave them to the condemnation of the unrighteous, who renounced not their former miscarriages, and lived in a sincere obedience to his commands. What he expects from his followers, he has sufficiently declared as a legislator. And that they may not be deceived, by mistaking the doctrine of faith, grace, free-grace, and the pardon and forgiveness of sins and salvation by him (which was the great end of his coming), he more than once declares to them for what omissions

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and miscarriages he shall judge and condemn to death even those who have owned him, and done miracles in his name, when he comes at last to render to every one according to what he had DONE in the flesh, sitting upon his great and glorious tribunal, at the end of the world.

The first place where we find our Saviour to have mentioned the day of Judgment, is John v. 28, 29, in these words: "The hour
" is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his
" [i. e. the son of God's] voice, and shall come forth; they that
" have DONE GOOD, unto the resurrection of life; and they that
" have DONE EVIL, unto the resurrection of damnation." That which puts the distinction, if we will believe our Saviour, is the having "done good or evil." And he gives a reason of the necessity of his judging or condemning those "who have done evil" in the following words, ver. 30, "I can of my own self do nothing. As I hear I judge, and my judgement is just; because I
" seek not my own will, but the will of my father who hath sent
" me." He could not judge of himself; he had but a delegated power of judging from the father, whose will he obeyed in it, and who was of purer eyes than to admit any unjust person into the kingdom of heaven.

Matt. vii. 22, 23. Speaking again of that day, he tells what his sentence will be, "Depart from me, ye WORKERS of iniquity." Faith, in the penitent and sincerely obedient, supplies the defect of their performances, and so by grace they are made just. But we may observe, none are sentenced or punished for unbelief, but only for their misdeeds. "They are workers of iniquity" on whom the sentence is pronounced.

Matt. xiii. 41. "At the end of the world, the son of man shall
" send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all
" scandals, and them which DO INIQUITY, and cast them into a
" furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." And again, ver. 49. "The angels shall sever the WICKED from
" among the JUST, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire."

Matt. xvi. 27. "For the son of man shall come in the glory of his
" father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his WORKS."

Luke xiii. 26. "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and
" drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But
" he shall say, I tell you, I know you not: depart from me, ye
" WORKERS of iniquity."

Matt. xxv. 24—26. "When the son of man shall come in his
" glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, he shall set
" the sheep on his right-hand, and the goats on his left: then shall
" the king say to them on his right-hand, Come, ye blessed of my
" father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation
" of the world; for I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was
" thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me
" in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me;
" I was

“ I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous
 “ answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and
 “ fed thee? &c. And the king shall answer, and say unto them,
 “ Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of
 “ the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then
 “ shall he say unto them on the left-hand, Depart from me, ye
 “ cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:
 “ for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty,
 “ and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not
 “ in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye
 “ visited me not. Inasmuch that ye did it not to one of these, ye
 “ did it not to me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment;
 “ but the righteous into life eternal.”

These, I think, are all the places where our Saviour mentions the last judgement, or describes his way of proceeding in that great day; wherein, as we have observed, it is remarkable, that every where the sentence follows doing or not doing, without any mention of believing, or not believing. Not that any to whom the gospel hath been preached shall be saved, without believing Jesus to be the Messiah; for all being sinners, and transgressors of the law, and so unjust, are all liable to condemnation, unless they believe, and so through grace are justified by God for this faith, which shall be accounted to them for righteousness: but the rest, wanting this cover, this allowance for their transgressions, must answer for all their actions; and, being found transgressors of the law, shall, by the letter and sanction of that law, be condemned, for not having paid a full obedience to that law, and not for want of faith; that is not the guilt on which the punishment is laid, though it be the want of faith which lays open their guilt uncovered, and exposes them to the sentence of the law against all that are unrighteous.

The common objection here, is, If all sinners shall be condemned, but such as have a gracious allowance made them, and so are justified by God for believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and so taking him for their king, whom they are resolved to obey to the utmost of their power, what shall become of all mankind who lived before our Saviour's time, who never heard of his name, and consequently could not believe in him? To this the answer is so obvious and natural, that one would wonder how any reasonable man should think it worth the urging. Nobody was, or can be, required to believe what was never proposed to him to believe. Before the fullness of time, which God from the council of his own wisdom had appointed to send his son in, he had at several times, and in different manners, promised to the people of Israel an extraordinary person to come, who, raised from amongst themselves, should be their ruler and deliverer. The time, and other circumstances of his birth, life, and person, he had in sundry prophecies so particularly described, and so plainly foretold, that he was well known and expected by the Jews under the name of the Messiah, or Anointed, given him in some of these prophecies. All then that was required

before his appearing in the world, was, To believe what God had revealed, and to rely with a full assurance on God for the performance of his promise; and to believe, that in due time he would send them the Messiah, this anointed king, this promised Saviour and deliverer, according to his word. This faith in the promises of God, this relying and acquiescing in his word and faithfulness, the Almighty takes well at our hands, as a great mark of homage, paid by us frail creatures, to his "goodness" and "truth," as well as to his "power" and "wisdom;" and accepts it as an acknowledgment of his peculiar providence and benignity to us. And therefore our Saviour tells us, John xii. 44. "He that believes on me, believes not on me, but on him that sent me." The works of nature shew his wisdom and power; but it is his peculiar care of mankind, most eminently discovered in his promises to them, that shews his bounty and goodness; and consequently engages their hearts in love and affection to him. This oblation of an heart fixed with dependance on, and affection to him, is the most acceptable tribute we can pay him; the foundation of true devotion, and life of all religion. What a value he puts on this depending on his word, and resting satisfied in his promises, we have an example in Abraham, whose faith "was counted to him for righteousness," as we have before remarked out of Rom. iv. And his relying firmly on the promise of God, without any doubt of its performance, gave him the name of the Father of the Faithful, and gained him so much favour with the Almighty, that he was called "the Friend of God;" the highest and most glorious title can be bestowed on a creature. The thing promised was no more but a son by his wife Sarah, and a numerous posterity by him, which should possess the land of Canaan. These were but temporal blessings, and (except the birth of a son) very remote, such as he should never live to see, nor, in his own person, have the benefit of; but because he questioned not the performance of it, but rested fully satisfied in the goodness, truth, and faithfulness of God who had promised, it was counted to him for righteousness. Let us see how St. Paul expresses it, Rom. iv. 18—22 "Who, against hope, believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be: and being not weak in his faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was above an hundred years old; neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able to perform; and THEREFORE it was imputed to him for righteousness." St. Paul, having here emphatically described the strength and firmness of Abraham's faith, informs us, that he thereby "gave glory to God;" and therefore it was "accounted to him for righteousness." This is the way that God deals with poor frail mortals. He is graciously pleased to take it well of them, and give it the place of righteousness, and a kind of merit in his sight, if they believe his promises, and have

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a stedfast relying on his veracity and goodness. St. Paul, Heb. xi. 6. tells us, "Without faith it is impossible to please God:" but at the same time tells us what faith that is. "For," says he, "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." He must be persuaded of God's mercy and good-will to those who seek to obey him, and rest assured of his rewarding those who rely on him for whatever, either by the light of nature, or particular promises, he has revealed to them of his tender mercies, and taught them to expect from his bounty. This description of "faith" (that we might not mistake what he means by that "faith," without which we cannot please God, and which recommended the saints of old) St. Paul places in the middle of the list of those who were eminent for their "faith," and whom he sets as patterns to the converted Hebrews under persecution, to encourage them to persist in their confidence of deliverance by the coming of Jesus Christ, and in their belief of the promises they now had under the gospel: by those examples he exhorts them not to "draw back" from the hope that was set before them, nor apostatize from the profession of the Christian religion. This is plain from ver. 35—38. of the precedent chapter: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have great need of persisting, or perseverance" (for so the Greek word signifies here, which our translation renders "patience," see Luke viii. 15.), "that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith. But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

The examples of "faith," which St. Paul enumerates and proposes in the following words, chap. xi. plainly shew, that the "faith" whereby those believers of old pleased God was nothing but a stedfast reliance on the goodness and faithfulness of God, for those good things which either the light of nature, or particular promises, had given them grounds to hope for. Of what avail this "faith" was with God, we may see, ver. 4. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." Ver. 5. "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Ver. 7. "Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet;" being wary, "by faith prepared an ark, to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." And what it was that God so graciously accepted and rewarded, we are told, ver. 11. "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child, when she was past age." How she came to obtain this grace from God, the apostle tells us; "because she judged him faithful who had promised." Those therefore who pleased God, and were accepted by him before the coming of Christ,

Christ, did it only by believing the promises, and relying on the goodness of God, as far as he had revealed it to them. For the apostle, in the following words, tells us, ver. 13. "These all died in faith, not having received (the accomplishment of) the promises; but having seen them afar off: and were persuaded of them, and embraced them." This was all that was required of them, to be persuaded of, and embrace the promises which they had. They could be "persuaded of" no more than was proposed to them; "embrace" no more than was revealed, according to the promises they had received, and the dispensations they were under. And if the faith of things "seen afar off," if their trusting in God for the promises he then gave them; if a belief of the Messiah to come, were sufficient to render those who lived in the ages before Christ acceptable to God, and righteous before him; I desire those, who tell us that God will not (nay, some go so far as to say cannot) accept any who do not believe every article of their particular creeds and systems, to consider, why God, out of his infinite mercy, cannot as well justify man now for believing Jesus of Nazareth to be the promised Messiah, the king and deliverer, as those heretofore, who believed only that God would, according to his promise, in due time, send the Messiah to be a king and deliverer?

There is another difficulty often to be met with, which seems to have something of more weight in it; and that is, that though the "faith" of those before Christ (believing that God would send the Messiah, to be a prince, and a Saviour to his people, as he had promised), and the "faith" of those since his time (believing Jesus to be that Messiah, promised and sent by God), shall be accounted to them for righteousness; yet what shall become of all the rest of mankind, who, having never heard of the promise or news of a Saviour, not a word of a Messiah to be sent, or that was come, have had no thought or belief concerning him?

To this I answer, that God will require of every man, "according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not." He will not expect ten talents where he gave but one; nor require any one should believe a promise, of which he has never heard. The apostle's reasoning, Rom, x. 14. is very just: "how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?" But though there be many, who, being strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, were also strangers to the oracles of God committed to that people; many, to whom the promise of the Messiah never came, and so were never in a capacity to believe or reject that revelation; yet God had, by the light of reason, revealed to all mankind, who would make use of that light, that he was good and merciful. The same spark of the divine nature, and knowledge in man, which making him a man shewed him the law he was under as a man, shewed him also the way of atoning the merciful, kind, compassionate author and father of him and his being, when he had transgressed that law. He that made use of this candle of the Lord, so far as to find what was his duty, could not miss to find also the way

way to reconciliation and forgiveness, when he had failed of his duty; though, if he used not his reason this way, if he put out, or neglected this light, he might, perhaps, see neither.

The law is the eternal, immutable standard of right. And a part of that law is, that a man should forgive, not only his children, but his enemies, upon their repentance, asking pardon, and amendment. And therefore he could not doubt that the author of this law, and God of patience and consolation, who is rich in mercy, would forgive his frail offspring, if they acknowledged their faults, disapproved the iniquity of their transgressions, begged his pardon, and resolved in earnest for the future to conform their actions to this rule, which they owned to be just and right. This way of reconciliation, this hope of atonement, the light of nature revealed to them. And the revelation of the gospel having said nothing to the contrary, leaves them to stand and fall to their own father and master, whose goodness and mercy is over all his works.

I know some are forward to urge that place of the Acts, chap. iv. as contrary to this. The words, ver. 10. and 12. stand thus: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man" [i. e. the lame man restored by Peter] "stand here before you whole. This is the stone which is set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, in which we must be saved." Which, in short, is, that Jesus is the only true Messiah; neither is there any other person but he, given to be a mediator between God and man, in whose name we may ask and hope for salvation.

It will here possibly be asked, "Quorsum perditio hæc?" What need was there of a Saviour? What advantage have we by Jesus Christ?

It is enough to justify the fitness of any thing to be done, by resolving it into "the wisdom of God," who has done it, though our short views, and narrow understandings, may utterly incapacitate us to see that wisdom, and to judge rightly of it. We know little of this visible, and nothing at all of the state of that intellectual world, wherein are infinite numbers and degrees of spirits out of the reach of our ken or guess; and therefore know not what transactions there were between God and our Saviour, in reference to his kingdom. We know not what need there was to set up a head and a chieftain, in opposition to "the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air," &c. whereof there are more than obscure intimations in scripture. And we shall take too much upon us, if we shall call God's wisdom or providence to account, and pertly condemn for needless, all that our weak, and, perhaps, biased "understandings" cannot account for.

Though this general answer be reply enough to the forementioned demand, and such as a rational man, or fair searcher after truth,

will acquiesce in; yet in this particular case, the wisdom and goodness of God has shewn itself so visibly to common apprehensions, that it hath furnished us abundantly wherewithal to satisfy the curious and inquisitive; who will not take a blessing, unless they be instructed what need they had of it, and why it was bestowed upon them. The great and many advantages we receive by the coming of Jesus the Messiah, will shew, that it was not without need that he was sent into the world.

The evidence of our Saviour's mission from heaven is so great, in the multitude of miracles he did before all sorts of people, that what he delivered cannot but be received as the oracles of God, and unquestionable verity; for the miracles he did were so ordered by the divine providence and wisdom, that they never were, nor could be, denied by any of the enemies or opposers of Christianity.

Though the works of nature, in every part of them, sufficiently evidence a deity, yet the world made so little use of their reason, that they saw him not, where even by the impressions of himself he was easy to be found. Sense and lust blinded their minds in some, and a careless inadvertency in others, and fearful apprehensions in most (who either believed there were, or could not but suspect there might be, superior unknown beings), gave them up into the hands of their priests, to fill their heads with false notions of the deity, and their worship with foolish rites, as they pleased; and what dread or craft once began, devotion soon made sacred, and religion immutable. In this state of darkness and ignorance of the true God, vice and superstition held the world; nor could any help be had or hoped for from "reason," which could not be heard, and was judged to have nothing to do in the case, the priests everywhere, to secure their empire, having excluded "reason" from having any thing to do in religion. And in the crowd of wrong notions, and invented rites, the world had almost lost the sight of the one only true God. The rational and thinking part of mankind, it is true, when they sought after him, found the one, supreme, invisible God; but, if they acknowledged and worshipped him, it was only in their own minds. They kept this truth locked up in their own breasts as a secret, nor ever durst venture it amongst the people, much less the priests, those wary guardians of their own creeds and profitable inventions: hence we see that "reason," speaking never so clearly to the wise and virtuous, had never authority enough to prevail on the multitude, and to persuade the societies of men, that there was but one God, that alone was to be owned and worshiped. The belief and worship of one God was the national religion of the Israelites alone; and, if we will consider it, it was introduced and supported amongst that people by Revelation. They were in Goshen, and had light; whilst the rest of the world were in almost Egyptian darkness, "without God in the world." There was no part of mankind, who had quicker parts, or improved them more; that had a greater light of reason, or followed it farther in all sorts of speculations, than the Athenians; and yet

yet we find but one Socrates amongst them, that opposed and laughed at their polytheisms, and wrong opinions of the deity; and we see how they rewarded him for it. Whatsoever Plato, and the soberest of the philosophers, thought of the nature and being of the one God, they were fain, in their outward worship, to go with the herd, and keep to the religion established by law; which what it was, and how it had disposed the mind of these knowing and quick-sighted Grecians, St. Paul tells us, Acts xvii. 22—29. “Ye men of Athens,” says he, “I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in Temples made with hands: neither is worshiped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth unto all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all the nations of men, for to dwell on the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel him out, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.” Here he tells the Athenians, that they, and the rest of the world (given up to superstition), whatever light there was in the works of creation and providence, to lead them to the true God, yet they few of them found him. He was every where near them; yet they were but like people groping and feeling for something in the dark, and did not see him with a full clear day-light; “but thought the God-head like to gold, and silver, and stone, graven by art and man’s device.”

In this state of darkness and error, in reference to “the true God,” our Saviour found the world. But the clear revelation he brought with him dissipated this darkness; made “the one invisible true God” known to the world; and that with such evidence and energy, that “polytheism” and “idolatry” hath nowhere been able to withstand it. But where-ever the preaching of the truth he delivered, and the light of the gospel hath come, those mists have been dispelled. And, in effect, we see, that since our Saviour’s time, “the belief of one God” has prevailed and spread itself over the face of the earth. For even to the light that the Messiah brought into the world with him, we must ascribe the owning and profession of “one God,” which the Mahometan religion hath derived and borrowed from it. So that, in this sense, it is certainly and manifestly true of our Saviour, what St. John says of him, 1 John iii. 8. “For this purpose the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” This light the world needed, and this light it received from him, That there is but “one God,” and he “eternal, invisible;” not like to any visible objects, nor to be represented by them.

If it be asked, whether the revelation to the Patriarchs by Moses did not teach this, and why that was not enough; the answer is obvious, that however clearly the knowledge of one invisible God, maker of heaven and earth, was revealed to them, yet that revelation was shut up in a little corner of the world, amongst a people, by that very law which they received with it, excluded from a commerce and communication with the rest of mankind. The Gentile world, in our Saviour's time, and several ages before, could have no attestation of the miracles on which the Hebrews built their faith, but from the Jews themselves, a people not known to the greatest part of mankind, contemned and thought vilely of by those nations that did know them; and therefore very unfit and unable to propagate the doctrine of "one God" in the world, and diffuse it through the nations of the earth, by the strength and force of that ancient revelation upon which they had received it. But our Saviour, when he came, threw down this wall of partition, and did not confine his miracles or message to the land of Canaan, or the worshippers at Jerusalem; but he himself preached at Samaria, and did miracles in the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and before multitudes of people gathered from all quarters; and after his resurrection sent his apostles amongst the nations, accompanied with miracles, which were done in all parts so frequently, and before so many witnesses of all sorts, in broad day-light, that, as I have before observed, the enemies of Christianity have never dared to deny them; no, not Julian himself, who neither wanted skill nor power to enquire into the truth, nor would have failed to have proclaimed and exposed it, if he could have detected any falshood in the history of the gospel, or found the least ground to question the matter of fact published of Christ and his apostles. The number and evidence of the miracles done by our Saviour and his followers, by the power and force of truth, bore down this mighty and accomplished emperor, and all his parts, in his own dominions. He durst not deny so plain matter of fact; which being granted, the truth of our Saviour's doctrine and mission unavoidably follows, notwithstanding whatsoever artful suggestions his wit could invent, or malice should offer, to the contrary.

2. Next to the knowledge of one God, maker of all things, a clear, "knowledge of their duty" was wanting to mankind. This part of knowledge, though cultivated with some care by some of the heathen philosophers, yet got little footing among the people. All men indeed, under pain of displeasing the gods, were to frequent the temples, every one went to their sacrifices and services; but the priests made it not their business to teach them "virtue." If they were diligent in their observations and ceremonies, punctual in their feasts and solemnities, and the tricks of religion, the holy tribe assured them, the gods were pleased; and they looked no farther. Few went to the schools of the philosophers, to be instructed in their duties, and to know what was good and evil in their action. The priests sold the better penny-worths, and therefore

fore had all their custom. Lustrations and processions were much easier than a clean conscience, and a steady course of virtue; and an expiatory sacrifice, that atoned for the want of it, was much more convenient, than a strict and holy life. No wonder then, that religion was every where distinguished from, and preferred to "virtue," and that it was dangerous heresy and prophaneness to think the contrary. So much "virtue" as was necessary to hold societies together, and to contribute to the quiet of governments, the civil laws of commonwealths taught, and forced upon men that lived under magistrates. But these laws, being for the most part made by such who had no other aims but their own power, reached no farther than those things that would serve to tie men together in subjection, or, at most, were directly to conduce to the prosperity and temporal happiness of any people. But "natural religion," in its full extent, was no where, that I know, taken care of by the force of natural reason. It should seem, by the little that has hitherto been done in it, that it is too hard a task for unassisted reason to establish morality, in all its parts, upon its true foundations, with a clear and convincing light. And it is at least a surer and shorter way, to the apprehensions of the vulgar, and mass of mankind, that one manifestly sent from God, and coming with visible authority from him, should, as a king and lawmaker, tell them their duties, and require their obedience, than leave it to the long, and sometimes intricate deductions of reason, to be made out to them: such strains of reasonings the greatest part of mankind have neither leisure to weigh, nor, for want of education and use, skill to judge of. We see how unsuccessful in this the attempts of philosophers were before our Saviour's time. How short their several systems came of the perfection of a true and complete "morality." is very visible. And if, since that, the Christian philosophers have much outdone them, yet we may observe, that the first knowledge of the truths they have added are owing to revelation; though, as soon as they are heard and considered, they are found to be agreeable to reason, and such as can by no means be contradicted. Every one may observe a great many truths which he receives at first from others; and readily assents to, as consonant to reason, which he would have found it hard, and perhaps beyond his strength, to have discovered himself. Native and original truth is not so easily wrought out of the mine, as we who have it delivered ready dug and fashioned into our hands are apt to imagine. And how often, at fifty or threescore years old are thinking men told what they wonder how they could miss thinking of, which yet their own contemplations did not, and possibly never would have helped them to! Experience shews that the knowledge of morality, by mere natural light (how agreeable soever it be to it), makes but a slow progress, and little advance in the world. And the reason of it is not hard to be found, in men's necessities, passions, vices, and mistaken interests, which turn their thoughts another way. And the designing leaders, as well as the following herd, find it not to their purpose to employ much

much of their meditations this way. Or whatever else was the cause, it is plain in fact, that human reason unassisted failed men in its great and proper business of "morality." It never, from unquestionable principles, by clear deductions, made out an entire body of "the law of nature." And he that shall collect all the moral rules of the philosophers, and compare them with those contained in the New Testament, will find them to come short of "the morality" delivered by our Saviour, and taught by his apostles: a college made up for the most part of ignorant, but inspired fishermen.

Though yet, if any one should think, that, out of the sayings of the wise Heathens, before our Saviour's time, there might be a collection made of all those rules of "morality" which are to be found in the Christian religion; yet this would not at all hinder, but that the world nevertheless stood as much in need of our Saviour, and "the morality" delivered by him. Let it be granted (though not true) that all "the moral precepts" of the gospel were known by somebody or other, amongst mankind, before. But where, or how, or of what use, is not considered. Suppose they may be pickt up here and there; some from Solon and Bias in Greece; others from Tully in Italy; and, to complete the work, let Confucius, as far as China, be consulted; and Anacharsis the Scythian contribute his share. What will all this do, to give the world "a complete morality," that may be to mankind the unquestionable rule of life and manners? I will not here urge the impossibility of collecting from men, so far distant from one another, in time, and place, and languages. I will suppose there was a Stobæus in those times, who had gathered "the moral sayings" from all the sages of the world. What would this amount to, towards being a steady rule, a certain transcript of a law that we are under? Did the saying of Aristippus, or Confucius, give it an authority? Was Zeno a lawgiver to mankind? If not, what he or any other philosopher delivered, was but a saying of his. Mankind might hearken to it or reject it, as they pleased, or as it suited their interest, passions, principles, or humours: they were under no obligation; the opinion of this or that philosopher was of no authority: and, if it were, you must take all he said under the same character. All his dictates must go for law, certain and true, or none of them. And then, if you will take any of the moral sayings of Epicurus (many whereof Seneca quotes with esteem and approbation) for precepts of "the law of nature," you must take all the rest of his doctrine for such too, or else his authority ceases: and so no more is to be received from him, or any of the sages of old, for parts of "the law of nature," as carrying with it an obligation to be obeyed, but what they prove to be so. But such a body of Ethics, proved to be the law of nature, from principles of reason, and reaching all the duties of life, I think nobody will say the world had before our Saviour's time. It is not enough, that there were up and down scattered sayings of wise men, conformable to right reason.

son. The law of nature was the law of convenience too; and it is no wonder that those men of parts, and studious of virtue, (who had occasion to think on any particular part of it), should by meditation light on the right, even from the observable convenience and beauty of it, without making out its obligation from the true principles of the law of nature, and foundations of "morality." But these incoherent apophthegms of philosophers and wise men, however excellent in themselves, and well intended by them, could never make a morality whereof the world could be convinced, could never rise to the force of a law that mankind could with certainty depend on. Whatsoever should thus be universally useful as a standard to which men should conform their manners, must have its authority either from reason or revelation. It is not every writer of morals, or compiler of it from others, that can thereby be erected into a lawgiver to mankind; and a dictator of rules, which are therefore valid, because they are to be found in his books, under the authority of this or that philosopher. He that any one will pretend to set up in this kind, and have his rules pass for authentic directions, must shew, that either he builds his doctrine upon principles of reason, self-evident in themselves, and that he deduces all the parts of it from thence, by clear and evident demonstration; or must shew his commission from heaven, that he comes with authority from God, to deliver his will and commands to the world. In the former way, nobody that I know, before our Saviour's time, ever did, or went about to give us a "morality." It is true, there is "a law of nature:" but who is there that ever did, or undertook to give it us all entire as a law, no more nor no less than what was contained in, and had the obligation of that law? who ever made out all the parts of it, put them together, and shewed the world their obligation? where was there any such code, that mankind might have recourse to, as their unerring rule, before our Saviour's time? If there was not, it is plain, there was need of one to give us such a "morality," such a law, which might be the sure guide of those who had a desire to go right; and, if they had a mind, need not mistake their duty, but might be certain when they had performed, when failed in it. Such a "law of morality" Jesus Christ hath given us in the New Testament; but by the latter of these ways, by revelation. We have from him a full and sufficient rule for our direction, and conformable to that of reason. But the truth and obligation of its precepts have their force, and are put past doubt to us, by the evidence of his mission. He was sent by God: his miracles shew it; and the authority of God in his precepts cannot be questioned. Here "morality" has a sure standard, that revelation vouches, and reason cannot gainsay, nor question, but both together witness to come from God the great lawmaker. And such an one as this out of the New Testament, I think, the world never had, nor can any one say is any where else to be found. Let me ask any one, who is forward to think that the doctrine of "morality" was full and clear in the world at our Saviour's birth, whether would

he have directed Brutus and Cassius (both men of parts and virtue, the one whereof believed, and the other disbelieved, a future being), to be satisfied in the rules and obligations of all the parts of their duties; if they should have asked him where they might find the law they were to live by, and by which they should be charged or acquitted, as guilty or innocent? If to the sayings of the wise, and the declarations of philosophers, he sends them into a wild wood of uncertainty, to an endless maze, from which they should never get out: if to the religions of the world, yet worse: and if their own reason, he refers them to that which had some light and certainty; but yet had hitherto failed all mankind in a perfect rule; and, we see, resolved not the doubts that had risen amongst the studious and thinking philosophers; nor had yet been able to convince the civilized parts of the world, that they had not given, nor could without a crime take away the lives of their children, by exposing them.

If any one should think to excuse human nature, by laying blame on mens "negligence," that they did not carry morality to an higher pitch, and make it out entire in every part, with that clearness of demonstration which some think it capable of, he helps not the matter. Be the cause what it will, our Saviour found mankind under a corruption of manners and principles, which ages after ages had prevailed, and must be confessed was not in a way or tendency to be mended. The rules of morality were, in different countries and sects, different. And natural reason no where had, nor was like to cure the defects and errors in them. Those just measures of right and wrong, which necessity had any where introduced, the civil laws prescribed or philosophy recommended, stood not on their true foundations. They were looked on as bonds of society, and conveniences of common life, and laudable practices. But where was it that their obligation was thoroughly known and allowed, and they received as precepts of a law, of the highest law, the law of nature? That could not be, without a clear knowledge and acknowledgement of the lawmaker, and the great rewards and punishments for those that would or would not obey him. But the religion of the Heathens, as was before observed, little concerned itself in their morals. The priests that delivered the oracles of heaven, and pretended to speak from the God, spoke little of virtue and a good life. And, on the other side, the philosophers who spoke from reason, made not much mention of the Deity in their Ethicks. They depended on reason and her oracles, which contain nothing but truth: but yet some parts of that truth lie too deep for our natural powers easily to reach, and make plain and visible to mankind, without some light from above to direct them. When truths are once known to us, though by tradition, we are apt to be favourable to our own parts, and ascribe to our own understandings the discovery of what, in reality, we borrowed from others; or, at least, finding we can prove what at first we learnt from others, we are forward to conclude it an obvious truth, which, if we had sought, we could not have missed. Nothing seems hard

to our understandings, that is once known; and because what we see, we see with our own eyes, we are apt to over-look or forget the help we had from others, who shewed it us, and first made us see it, as if we were not at all beholden to them for those truths they opened the way to, and led us into; for knowledge being only of truths that are perceived to be so, we are favourable enough to our own faculties to conclude, that they, of their own strength, would have attained those discoveries, without any foreign assistance; and that we know those truths by the strength and native light of our own minds, as they did from whom we received them by theirs, only they had the luck to be before us. Thus the whole stock of human knowledge is claimed by every one, as his private possession, as soon as he (profiting by others discoveries) has got it into his own mind: and so it is; but not properly by his own single industry, nor of his own acquisition. He studies, it is true, and takes pains to make a progress in what others have delivered; but their pains were of another sort, who first brought those truths to light, which he afterwards derives from them. He that travels the roads now, applauds his own strength and legs, that have carried him so far in such a scantling of time, and ascribes all to his own vigour, little considering how much he owes to their pains, who cleared the woods, drained the bogs, built the bridges, and made the ways passable; without which he might have toiled much with little progress. A great many things which we have been bred up in the belief of, from our cradles, and are notions grown familiar (and, as it were, natural to us, under the gospel), we take for unquestionable obvious truths, and easily demonstrable; without considering how long we might have been in doubt or ignorance of them, had revelation been silent. And many are beholden to revelation, who do not acknowledge it. It is no diminishing to revelation, that reason gives its suffrage too; to the truths revelation has discovered. But it is our mistake to think, that, because reason confirms them to us, we had the first certain knowledge of them from thence, and in that clear evidence we now possess them. The contrary is manifest, in the “defective morality of the Gentiles” before our Saviour’s time, and the want of reformation in the principles and measures of it, as well as practice. Philosophy seemed to have spent its strength, and done its utmost; or if it should have gone farther, as we see it did not, and from undeniable principles given us Ethicks in a science like mathematics, in every part demonstrable, this yet would not have been so effectual to man in this imperfect state, nor proper for the cure. The greatest part of mankind want leisure or capacity for demonstration, nor can carry a train of proofs, which in that way they must always depend upon for conviction, and cannot be required to assent to till they see the demonstration. Wherever they stick, the teachers are always put upon proof, and must clear the doubt, by a thread of coherent deductions from the first principle, how long, or how intricate soever that be. And you may as soon hope to have all the day-labourers and tradesmen,

the spinsters and dairy-maids, perfect mathematicians, as to have them perfect in Ethicks this way: hearing plain commands is the sure and only course to bring them to obedience and practice: the greatest part cannot know, and therefore they must believe. And I ask, whether one coming from heaven in the power of God, in full and clear evidence and demonstration of miracles, giving plain and direct rules of morality and obedience, be not likelier to enlighten the bulk of mankind, and set them right in their duties, and bring them to do them, than by reasoning with them from general notions and principles of human reason? And were all the duties of human life clearly demonstrated, yet I conclude, when well considered, that method of teaching men their duties would be thought proper only for a few, who had much leisure, improved understandings, and were used to abstract reasonings: but the instruction of the people were best still to be left to the precepts and principles of the gospel. The healing of the sick, the restoring sight to the blind by a word, the raising, and being raised from the dead, are matters of fact, which they can without difficulty conceive; and that he who does such things must do them by the assistance of a divine power. These things lie level to the ordinarie apprehension; he that can distinguish between sick and well, lame and sound, dead and alive, is capable of this doctrine. To one who is once persuaded that Jesus Christ was sent by God to be a king, and a Saviour of those who do believe in him, all his commands become principles; there needs no other proof for the truth of what he says, but that he said it: and then there needs no more but to read the inspired books to be instructed; all the duties of morality lie there clear and plain, and easy to be understood. And here I appeal, whether this be not the surest, the safest, and most effectual way of teaching; especially if we add this farther consideration, that as it suits the lowest capacities of reasonable creatures, so it reaches and satisfies, nay, enlightens the highest. The most elevated understandings cannot but submit to the authority of this doctrine as divine; which coming from the mouths of a company of illiterate men, hath not only the attestation of miracles, but reason to confirm it, since they delivered no precepts, but such as though reason of itself had not clearly made out, yet it could not but assent to when thus discovered, and think itself indebted for the discovery. The credit and authority our Saviour and his apostles had over the minds of men, by the miracles they did, tempted them not to mix (as we find in that of all the sects of philosophers, and other religions) any conceits, any wrong rules, any thing tending to their own by-interest, or that of a party, in their morality; no tang of prepossession or fancy; no footsteps of pride or vanity; no touch of ostentation or ambition appears to have a hand in it: it is all pure, all sincere; nothing too much, nothing wanting; but such a complete rule of rule, as the wisest men must acknowledge tends entirely to the good of mankind; and that all would be happy, if all would practise it.

3. The outward forms of "worshipping the Deity" wanted a reformation: stately buildings, costly ornaments, peculiar and uncouth habits, and a numerous huddle of pompous, phantastical, cumbersome ceremonies, every where attended divine worship. This, as it had the peculiar name, so it was thought the principal part, if not the whole of religion; nor could this possibly be amended whilst the Jewish ritual stood, and there was so much of it mixed with the worship of the true God. To this also our Saviour, with the knowledge of the infinite, invisible, supreme spirit, brought a remedy, in a plain, spiritual, and suitable worship. Jesus says to the woman of Samaria, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father: but the true worshippers shall worship the Father both in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship." To be worshipped in spirit and in truth, with application of mind and sincerity of heart, was what God henceforth only required. Magnificent temples, and confinement to certain places, were now no longer necessary for his worship, which by a pure heart might be performed any where. The splendor and distinction of habit, and pomp of ceremonies, and all outside performances, might now be spared. God, who was a spirit, and made known to be so, required none of those, but the spirit only; and that in public assemblies (where some actions must lie open to the view of the world), all that could appear and be seen should be done decently, and in order, and to edification. Decency, order, and edification, were to regulate all their public acts of worship; and beyond what these required, the outward appearance (which was of little value in the eyes of God) was not to go. Having shut indecency and confusion out of their assemblies, they need not be solicitous about useless ceremonies: praises and prayer, humbly offered up to the Deity, was the worship he now demanded; and in these every one was to look after his own heart, and know that it was that alone which God had regard to, and accepted.

4. Another great advantage received by our Saviour, is the great encouragement he brought to a virtuous and pious life; great enough to surmount the difficulties and obstacles that lie in the way to it, and reward the pains and hardships of those who stuck firm to their duties, and suffered for the testimony of a good conscience. The portion of the righteous has been in all ages taken notice of to be pretty scanty in this world: virtue and prosperity do not often accompany one another, and therefore virtue seldom had many followers: and it is no wonder she prevailed not much in a state, where the inconveniences that attended her were visible, and at hand, and the rewards doubtful, and at a distance. Mankind, who are and must be allowed to pursue their happiness, nay, cannot be hindered, could not but think themselves excused from a strict observation of rules, which appeared so little to consist with their chief end, happiness, whilst they kept them from the enjoyments of this life; and they had little evidence and security of another. It is

true, they might have argued the other way, and concluded, that, because the good were most of them ill-treated here, there was another place where they should meet with better usage : but it is plain they did not. Their thoughts of another life were, at best, obscure; and their expectations uncertain. Of maues, and ghosts, and the shades of departed men, there was some talk ; but little certain, and less minded. They had the names of Styx and Acheron ; of Elysian fields, and seas of the blessed : but they had them generally from their poets, mixed with their fables, and so they looked more like the inventions of wit, and ornaments of poetry, than the serious persuasions of the grave and the sober. They came to them bundled up amongst their tales ; and for tales they took them. And that which rendered them more suspected, and less useful to virtue, was, that the philosophers seldom set their rules on men's minds and practices, by consideration of another life. The chief of their arguments were from the excellency of virtue ; and the highest they generally went, was the exalting of human nature, whose perfection lay in virtue. And if the priest at any time talked of the ghosts below, and a life after this, it was only to keep men to their superstitious and idolatrous rites, whereby the use of this doctrine was lost to the credulous multitude, and its belief to the quicker-sighted, who suspected it presently of priestcraft. Before our Saviour's time, the doctrine of a future state, though it were not wholly hid, yet it was not clearly known in the world. It was an imperfect view of reason ; or, perhaps, the decayed remains of an antient tradition, which rather seemed to float on men's fancies, than sink deep into their hearts. It was something, they knew not what, between being and not being. Something in man they imagined might escape the grave ; but a perfect complete life of an eternal duration after this, was what entered little into their thoughts, and less into their persuasions. And they were so far from being clear herein, that we see no nation of the world publickly professed it, and built upon it ; no religion taught it ; and it was no where made an article of faith, and principle of religion, till Jesus Christ came : of whom it is truly said, that he at his appearing " brought life and " immortality to light." And that not only in the clear revelation of it, and in instances shewn of men raised from the dead, but he has given us an unquestionable assurance and pledge of it, in his own resurrection and ascension into heaven. How hath this one truth changed the nature of things in the world ! and given the advantage to piety over all that could tempt or deter men from it ! The philosophers, indeed, shewed the beauty of virtue : they set her off so as drew men's eyes and approbation to her ; but leaving her unendowed, very few were willing to espouse her. The generality could not refuse her their esteem and commendation, but still turned their backs on her, and forsook her, as a match not for their turn. But now there being put into the scales, on her side, " an exceeding " and immortal weight of glory," interest is come about to her ; and virtue now is visibly the most enriching purchase, and by much the

the best bargain. That she is the perfection and excellency of our nature, that she is herself a reward, and will recommend our names to future ages, is not all that can now be said for her. It is not strange that the learned Heathens satisfied not many with such airy commendations. It has another relish and efficacy to persuade men, that if they live well here, they shall be happy hereafter. Open their eyes upon the endless unspeakable joys of another life; and their hearts will find something solid and powerful to move them. The view of heaven and hell will cast a slight upon the short pleasures and pains of this present state, and give attractions and encouragements to virtue, which reason and interest, and the care of ourselves, cannot but allow and prefer. Upon this foundation, and upon this only, morality stands firm, and may defy all competition. This makes it more than a name, a substantial good, worth all our aims and endeavours; and thus the gospel of Jesus Christ hath delivered it to us.

5. To these I must add one advantage more we have by Jesus Christ, and that is, the promise of assistance. If we do what we can, he will give us his spirit to help us to do what, and how we should. It will be idle for us, who know not how our own spirits move and act us, to ask in what manner the spirit of God shall work upon us. The wisdom that accompanies that spirit knows better than we how we are made, and how to work upon us. If a wise man knows how to prevail on his child, to bring him to what he desires; can we suspect, that the spirit and wisdom of God should fail in it, though we perceive or comprehend not the ways of his operation? Christ has promised it, who is faithful and just; and we cannot doubt of the performance. It is not requisite on this occasion, for the inhancing of this benefit, to enlarge on the frailty of minds, and weakness of our constitutions; how liable to mistakes, how apt to go astray, and how easily to be turned out of the paths of virtue. If any one needs go beyond himself, and the testimony of his own conscience in this point; if he feels not his own errors and passions always tempting him, and often prevailing, against the strict rules of his duty; he need but look abroad into any age of the world, to be convinced. To a man under the difficulties of his nature, beset with temptations, and hedged in with prevailing custom, it is no small encouragement to set himself seriously on the courses of virtue, and practice of true religion, that he is from a sure hand, and an almighty arm, promised assistance to support and carry him through.

There remains yet something to be said to those who will be ready to object. If the belief of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, together with those concomitant articles of his resurrection, rule, and coming again to judge the world, be all the faith required as necessary to justification, to what purpose were the epistles written; I say, if the belief of those many doctrines contained in them, be not also necessary to salvation? And if what is there delivered, a Christian may believe or disbelieve, and yet nevertheless be a member of Christ's church, and one of the faithful?

To this I answer, That the epistles were written upon several occasions; and he that will read them as he ought must observe what it is in them is principally aimed at; find what is the argument in hand, and how managed, if he will understand them right, and profit by them. The observing of this will best help us to the true meaning and mind of the writer; for that is the truth which is to be received and believed, and not scattered sentences in a scripture-language accommodated to our notions and prejudices. We must look into the drift of the discourse, observe the coherence and connexion of the parts, and see how it is consistent with itself, and other parts of Scripture, if we will conceive it right. We must not cull out, as best suits our system, here and there a period or a verse, as if they were all distinct and independent aphorisms; and make these the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, and necessary to salvation, unless God has made them so. There be many truths in the Bible, which a good Christian may be wholly ignorant of, and so not believe, which, perhaps, some lay great stress on, and call fundamental articles, because they are the distinguishing points of their communion. The epistles, most of them, carry on a thread of argument, which in the style they are writ cannot every where be observed without great attention. And to consider the texts, as they stand and bear a part in that, is to view them in their due light, and the way to get the true sense of them. They were writ to those who were in the faith, and true Christians already; and so could not be designed to teach them the fundamental articles and points necessary to salvation: the epistle to the Romans was writ to all "that were at Rome, beloved of God, called to be the saints," whose faith was spoken of through the world," chap. i. 7, 8. To whom St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians was, he shews, chap. i. 2, 4. &c. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints; with all them that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge: even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." And so likewise the second was, "To the church of God at Corinth, with all the saints in Achaia," chap. i. 1. His next is to the "churches of Galatia." That to the Ephesians was, "To the saints that were at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." So likewise, "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse, who had faith in Christ Jesus, and love to the saints. To the church of the Thessalonians. To Timothy his son in the faith. To Titus his own son after the common faith. To Philemon his dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer." And the author to the Hebrews, calls those he writes to, "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," chap. iii. 1. From whence it is evident, that all those whom

whom St. Paul wrote to, were "brethren, saints, faithful in the "church," and so "Christians" already, and therefore wanted not the fundamental articles of the Christian religion; without a belief of which they could not be saved: nor can it be supposed, that the sending of such fundamentals was the reason of the apostle's writing to any of them. To such also St. Peter writes, as is plain from the first chapter of each of his epistles. Nor is it hard to observe the like in St. James and St. John's epistles. And St. Jude directs his thus: "To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." The epistles therefore being all written to those who were already believers and Christians, the occasion and end of writing them could not be to instruct them in that which was necessary to make them Christians. This, it is plain, they knew and believed already; or else they could not have been Christians and believers. And they were writ upon particular occasions; and without those occasions had not been writ, and so cannot be thought necessary to salvation; though they, resolving doubts, and reforming mistakes, are of great advantage to our knowledge and practice. I do not deny, but the great doctrines of the Christian faith are dropt here and there, and scattered up and down in most of them. But it is not in the epistles we are to learn what are the fundamental articles of faith, where they are promiscuously, and without distinction, mixed with other truths in discourses that were (though for edification indeed, yet) only occasional. We shall find and discern those great and necessary points best in the preaching of our Saviour and the apostles, to those who were yet strangers, and ignorant of the faith, to bring them in, and convert them to it. And what that was, we have seen already out of the history of the Evangelists, and the Acts; where they are plainly laid down, so that nobody can mistake them. The epistles to particular churches, besides the main argument of each of them (which was some present concernment of that particular church to which they severally were addressed) do in many places explain the fundamentals of the Christian religion; and that wisely, by proper accommodations to the apprehensions of those they were writ to, the better to make them imbibe the Christian doctrine, and the more easily to comprehend the method, reasons, and grounds of the great work of salvation. Thus we see in the epistle to the Romans adoption (a custom well known amongst those of Rome) is much made use of, to explain to them the grace and favour of God, in giving them eternal life; to help them to conceive how they became the children of God, and to assure them of a share in the kingdom of heaven, as heirs to an inheritance. Whereas the setting out, and confirming the Christian faith to the Hebrews, in the epistle to them, is by allusions and arguments, from the ceremonies, sacrifices, and œconomy of the Jews, and reference to the records of the Old Testament. And as for the general epistles, they, we may see, regard the state and exigencies, and some peculiarities of those times. These holy writers, inspired from above,

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writ nothing but truth, and, in most places very weighty truths to us now; for the expounding, clearing, and confirming of the Christian doctrine, and establishing those in it who had embraced it. But yet every sentence of theirs must not be taken up and looked on as a fundamental article necessary to salvation; without an explicit belief whereof, nobody could be a member of Christ's church here, nor be admitted into his eternal kingdom hereafter. If all, or most of the truths declared in the epistles, were to be received and believed as fundamental articles, what then became of those Christians who were fallen asleep (as St. Paul witnesses, in his first to the Corinthians, many where) before these things in the epistles were revealed to them? most of the epistles not being written till above twenty years after our Saviour's ascension, and some after thirty.

But farther, therefore, to those who will be ready to say, May those truths delivered in the epistles, which are not contained in the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, and are therefore by this account not necessary to salvation, be believed or disbelieved without any danger? May a Christian safely question or doubt of them?

To this I answer, That the law of faith being a covenant of free grace, God alone can appoint what shall be necessarily believed by every one whom he will justify. What is the faith which he will accept, and account for righteousness, depends wholly on his good pleasure; for it is of grace, and not of right, that this faith is accepted. And therefore he alone can set the measures of it; and what he has so appointed and declared is alone necessary. Nobody can add to these fundamental articles of faith, nor make any other necessary, but what God himself hath made and declared to be so. And what these are, which God requires of those who will enter into, and receive the benefits of, the new covenant, has already been shewn. An explicit belief of these is absolutely required of all those to whom the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, and salvation through his name proposed.

The other parts of divine revelation are objects of faith, and are so to be received. They are truths, whereof no one can be rejected; none that is once known to be such may or ought to be disbelieved; for to acknowledge any proposition to be of divine revelation and authority, and yet to deny or disbelieve it, is to offend against this fundamental article, and ground of faith, that God is true. But yet a great many of the truths revealed in the gospel, every one does, and must confess, a man may be ignorant of; nay, disbelieve without danger to his salvation: as is evident in those, who, allowing the authority, differ in the interpretation and meaning of several texts of scripture, not thought fundamental: in all which, it is plain, the contending parties, on one side or the other, are ignorant of, nay, disbelieve the truths delivered in holy writ, unless contrarieties and contradictions can be contained in the same words, and divine revelation can mean contrary to itself.

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Though all divine revelation requires the obedience of faith, yet every truth of inspired scriptures is not one of those that by the law of faith is required to be explicitly believed to justification. What those are, we have seen by what our Saviour and his apostles proposed to, and required in those whom they converted to the faith. Those are fundamentals, which it is not enough not to disbelieve; every one is required actually to assent to them. But any other proposition contained in the scripture, which God has not thus made a necessary part of the law of faith (without an actual assent to which he will not allow any one to be a believer), a man may be ignorant of, without hazarding his salvation by a defect in his faith. He believes all that God has made necessary for him to believe and assent to; and as for the rest of divine truths, there is nothing more required of him, but that he receive all the parts of divine revelation, with a docility and disposition prepared to embrace and assent to all truths coming from God; and submit his mind to whatsoever shall appear to him to bear that character. Where he, upon fair endeavours, understands it not, how can he avoid being ignorant? And where he cannot put several texts, and make them consist together, what remedy? He must either interpret one by the other, or suspend his opinion. He that thinks that more is, or can be, required of poor frail man in matters of faith, will do well to consider what absurdities he will run into. God, out of the infiniteness of his mercy, has dealt with man as a compassionate and tender father. He gave him reason, and with it a law, that could not be otherwise than what reason should dictate, unless we should think that a reasonable creature should have an unreasonable law. But considering the frailty of man, apt to run into corruption and misery, he promised a deliverer, whom in his good time he sent; and then declared to all mankind, that whoever would believe him to be the Saviour promised, and take him now raised from the dead, and constituted the lord and judge of all men, to be their king and ruler, should be saved. This is a plain intelligible proposition; and the all-merciful God seems herein to have consulted the poor of this world, and the bulk of mankind: these are articles that the labouring and illiterate man may comprehend. This is a religion suited to vulgar capacities, and the state of mankind in this world, destined to labour and travel. The writers and wranglers in religion fill it with niceties, and dress it up with notions, which they make necessary and fundamental parts of it; as if there were no way into the church, but through the academy or lycæum. The greatest part of mankind have not leisure for learning or logick, and superfine distinctions of the schools. Where the hand is used to the plough and the spade, the head is seldom elevated to sublime notions, or exercised in mysterious reasonings. It is well if men of that rank (to say nothing of the other sex) can comprehend plain propositions, and a short reasoning about things familiar to their minds, and nearly allied to their daily experience. Go beyond this, and you amaze the greatest part of mankind; and may as well talk

talk Arabick to a poor day-labourer, as the notions and language that the books and disputes of religion are filled with, and as soon you will be understood. The dissenting congregations are supposed by their teachers to be more accurately instructed in matters of faith, and better to understand the Christian religion, than the vulgar conformists, who are charged with great ignorance; how truly I will not here determine. But I ask them to tell me seriously, Whether half their people have leisure to study? nay, Whether one in ten of those who come to their meetings in the country, if they had time to study, do or can understand the controversies at this time so warmly managed amongst them, about justification, the subject of this present treatise? I have talked with some of their teachers, who confess themselves not to understand the difference in debate between them: and yet the points they stand on are reckoned of so great weight, so material, so fundamental in religion, that they divide communion, and separate upon them. Had God intended that none but the learned scribe, the disputer or wise of this world, should be Christians, or be saved; thus religion should have been prepared for them, filled with speculations and niceties, obscure terms, and abstract notions. But men of that expectation, men furnished with such acquisitions, the apostle tells us, 1 Cor. i. are rather shut out from the simplicity of the gospel, to make way for those poor, ignorant, illiterate, who heard and believed the promises of a deliverer, and believed Jesus to be him; who could conceive a man dead and made alive again, and believe that he should, at the end of the world, come again, and pass sentence on all men, according to their deeds. That the poor had the gospel preached to them, Christ makes a mark, as well as business, of his mission, Matt. xi. 5. And if the poor had the gospel preached to them, it was, without doubt, such a gospel as the poor could understand, plain and intelligible: and so it was, as we have seen, in the preachings of Christ and his apostles.

A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

The Unalterable Obligations of NATURAL RELIGION,

AND

The Truth and Certainty of the CHRISTIAN REVELATION.

THE INTRODUCTION.

HAVING in a former discourse * endeavoured to lay firmly the first foundations of religion, in the certainty of the existence and of the attributes of God, by proving severally and distinctly,

That something must needs have existed from eternity: and how great soever the difficulties are, which perplex the conceptions and apprehensions we attempt to frame of an eternal duration; yet they neither ought nor can raise in any man's mind any doubt or scruple concerning the truth of the assertion itself, that "something has really been eternal."

That there must have existed from eternity some one unchangeable and independent being; because, to suppose an eternal succession of merely dependent beings, proceeding one from another in an endless progression without any original independent cause at all, is supposing things, that have in their own nature no necessity of existing, to be from eternity caused or produced by nothing; which is the very same absurdity and express contradiction as to suppose them produced by nothing at any determinate time.

That that unchangeable and independent being, which has existed from eternity, without any external cause of its existence, must be self-existent, that is, necessarily-existing.

That it must of necessity be infinite or every where present; a being most simple, uniform, invariable, indivisible, incorruptible, and infinitely removed from all such imperfections as are the known qualities and inseparable properties of the material world.

That it must of necessity be but one; because, to suppose two, or more, different self-existent independent principles, may be reduced to a direct contradiction.

That it must necessarily be an intelligent being.

* Demonstration of the being and attributes of God,

That

That it must be free and voluntary, not a necessary agent.

That this being must of necessity have infinite power; and that in this attribute is included, particularly, a possibility of creating or producing things, and also a possibility of communicating to creatures the power of beginning motion, and a possibility of enduing them with liberty or freedom of will; which freedom of will is not inconsistent with any of the divine attributes.

That he must of necessity be infinitely wise.

And, lastly, that he must necessarily be a being of infinite goodness, justice, and truth, and all other moral perfections; such as become the supreme governor and judge of the world.

It remains now, in order to complete my design of proving and establishing the truth and excellency of the whole superstructure of our most holy religion; that I proceed, upon this foundation of the certainty of the being and attributes of God, to demonstrate in the next place the unalterable obligations of natural religion, and the certainty of divine revelation; in opposition to the vain arguings of certain vicious and profane men, who, merely upon account of their incredulity, would be thought to be strict adherers to reason, and sincere and diligent inquirers into truth; when indeed, on the contrary, there is but too much cause to fear, that they are not at all sincerely and really desirous to be satisfied in the true state of things, but only seek, under the pretence and cover of infidelity, to excuse their vices and debaucheries, which they are so strongly inflamed to, that they cannot prevail with themselves upon any account to forsake them; and yet a rational submitting to such truths, as just evidence and unanswerable reason would induce them to believe, must necessarily make them uneasy under those vices, and self-condemned in the practice of them. It remains therefore (I say) in order to finish the design I proposed to myself, of establishing the truth and excellency of our holy religion, in opposition to all such vain pretenders to reason as these; that I proceed, at this time, by a continuation of the same method of arguing by which I before demonstrated the being and attributes of God, to prove distinctly the following propositions.

I. That the same necessary and eternal different relations, that different things bear one to another; and the same consequent fitness or unfitness of the application of different things or different relations one to another, with regard to which the will of God always and necessarily does determine itself to choose to act only what is agreeable to justice, equity, goodness, and truth, in order to the welfare of the whole universe; ought likewise constantly to determine the wills of all subordinate rational beings, to govern all their actions by the same rules, for the good of the public in their respective stations. That is; these eternal and necessary differences of things make it fit and reasonable for creatures so to act; they cause it to be their duty, or lay an obligation upon them so to do, even separate from the consideration of these rules being the positive will

or

or command of God, and also antecedent to any respect or regard, expectation or apprehension, of any particular, private, and personal advantage or disadvantage, reward, or punishment, either present or future, annexed either by natural consequence, or by positive appointments, to the practising or neglecting those rules.

II. That though these eternal moral obligations are indeed of themselves incumbent on all rational beings, even antecedent to the consideration of their being the positive will and command of God; yet that which most strongly confirms, and in practice most effectually and indispensably enforces them upon us, is this; that both from the nature of things, and the perfections of God, and from several other collateral considerations, it appears, that as God is himself necessarily just and good in the exercise of his infinite power in the government of the whole world, so he cannot but likewise positively require that all his rational creatures should in their proportion be so too, in the exercise of each of their powers in their respective spheres. That is; as these eternal moral obligations are really in perpetual force merely from their own nature and the abstract reason of things; so also they are moreover the express and unalterable will, command, and law of God to his creatures, which he cannot but expect should in obedience to his supreme authority, as well as in compliance with the natural reason of things, be regularly and constantly observed through the whole creation.

III. That therefore, though these eternal moral obligations are also incumbent indeed on all rational creatures, antecedent to any respect of particular reward or punishment; yet they must certainly and necessarily be attended with rewards and punishments. Because the same reasons, which prove God himself to be necessarily just and good; and the rules of justice, equity, and goodness, to be his unalterable will, law, and command, to all created beings; prove also that he cannot but be pleased with and approve such creatures as imitate and obey him by observing those rules, and be displeased with such as act contrary thereto; and consequently that he cannot but some way or other make a suitable difference in his dealings with them; and manifest his supreme power and absolute authority, in finally supporting, maintaining, and vindicating effectually the honour of these his divine laws; as becomes the just and righteous governor and disposer of all things.

IV. That consequently, though in order to establish this suitable difference between the fruits or effects of virtue and vice, so reasonable in itself, and so absolutely necessary for the vindication of the honour of God, the nature of things, and the constitution and order of God's creation, was originally such, that the observance of the eternal rules of justice, equity, and goodness, does indeed of itself tend by direct and natural consequence to make all creatures happy; and the contrary practice, to make them miserable: yet since through some great and general corruption and depravation (whencesoever they may have risen, the particular original whereof could hardly have been known now without revelation); since, I say, the condition

dition of men in this present state is such, that the natural order of things in this world is in event manifestly perverted, and virtue and goodness are visibly prevented in great measure from obtaining their proper and due effects in establishing men's happiness proportionable to their behaviour and practice; therefore it is absolutely impossible, that the whole view and intention, the original and the final design, of God's creating such rational beings as men are, and placing them in this globe of earth, as the chief and principal, or indeed (may we not say) the only inhabitants, for whose sake alone this part at least of the creation is manifestly fitted up and accommodated; it is absolutely impossible (I say) that the whole of God's design in all this should be nothing more than to keep up eternally a succession of such short-lived generations of men as at present are; and those in such a corrupt, confused, and disorderly state of things, as we see the world is now in; without any due observation of the eternal rules of good and evil, without any clear and remarkable effect of the great and most necessary differences of things, and without any final vindication of the honour and laws of God in the proportionable reward of the best, or punishment of the worst of men. And consequently it is certain and necessary (even as certain as the moral attributes of God before demonstrated), that, instead of continuing an eternal succession of new generations in the present form and state of things, there must at some time or other be such a revolution and renovation of things, such a future state of existence of the same persons, as that, by an exact distribution of rewards and punishments therein, all the present disorders and inequalities may be set right; and that the whole scheme of providence, which to us who judge of it by only one small portion of it seems now so inexplicable and much confused, may appear at its consummation to be a design worthy of infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness.

V. That, though the indispensable necessity of all the great and moral obligations of natural religion, and also the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments, be thus in general deducible, even demonstrably, by a chain of clear and undeniable reasoning; yet (in the present state of the world, by what means soever it came originally to be so corrupted, of which more hereafter) such is the carelessness, inconsiderateness, and want of attention of the greater part of mankind; so many the prejudices and false notions imbibed by evil education: so strong and violent the unreasonable lusts, appetites, and desires of sense; and so great the blindness, introduced by superstitious opinions, vicious customs, and debauched practices through the world; that very few are able, in reality and effect, to discover these things clearly and plainly for themselves; but men have great need of particular teaching, and much instruction, to convince them of the truth, and certainty, and importance of these things; to give them a due sense, and clear and just apprehensions concerning them; and to bring them effectually to the practice of the plainest and most necessary duties.

VI. That,

VI. That, though in almost every age there have indeed been in the heathen world some wise and brave and good men, who have made it their business to study and practise these things themselves, and to teach and exhort others to do the like; who seem therefore to have been raised up by providence, as instruments to reprove in some measure and put some kind of check to the extreme superstition and wickedness of the nations wherein they lived; yet none of these have ever been able to reform the world, with any considerably great and universal success; because they have been but very few, that have in earnest set themselves about this excellent work; and they that have indeed sincerely done it have themselves been entirely ignorant of some doctrines, and very doubtful and uncertain of others, absolutely necessary for the bringing about that great end; and those things which they have been certain of and in good measure understood, they have not been able to prove and explain clearly enough; and those that they have been able both to prove and explain by sufficiently clear reasoning, they have not yet had authority enough to enforce and inculcate upon men's minds with so strong an impression, as to influence and govern the general practice of the world.

VII. That therefore there was plainly wanting a divine revelation, to recover mankind out of their universally degenerate estate, into a state suitable to the original excellency of their nature: which divine revelation both the necessities of men and their natural notions of God gave them reasonable ground to expect and hope for; as appears from the acknowledgments which the best and wisest of the heathen philosophers themselves have made, of their sense of the necessity and want of such a revelation; and from their expressions of the hopes they had entertained, that God would some time or other vouchsafe it unto them.

VIII. That there is no other religion now in the world, but the Christian, that has any just pretence or tolerable appearance of reason to be esteemed such a divine revelation: and therefore, if Christianity be not true, there is no revelation of the will of God at all made to mankind.

IX. That the Christian religion, considered in its primitive simplicity, and as taught in the holy scriptures, has all the marks and proofs of its being actually and truly a divine revelation, that any divine revelation, supposing it was true, could reasonably be imagined or desired to have.

X. That the practical duties which the Christian religion enjoins are all such as are most agreeable to our natural notions of God, and most perfective of the nature, and conducive to the happiness and well-being of men. That is; Christianity even in this single respect, as containing alone and in one consistent system all the wise and good precepts (and those improved, augmented, and exalted to the highest degree of perfection), that ever were taught singly and scatteredly, and many times but very corruptly, by the several schools of the philosophers; and this without any mixture of the fond,

absurd, and superstitious practices of any of those philosophers; ought to be embraced and practised by all rational and considering Deists, who will act consistently, and steadily pursue the consequences of their own principles; as at least the best scheme and sect of philosophy, that ever was set up in the world; and highly probable, even though it had no external evidence to be of divine original.

XI. That the motives, by which the Christian religion enforces the practice of these duties, are such as are most suitable to the excellent wisdom of God, and most answerable to the natural expectations of men.

XII. That the peculiar manner and circumstances with which it enjoins these duties, and urges these motives, are exactly consonant to the dictates of sound reason, or the unprejudiced light of nature, and most wisely perfective of it.

XIII. That all the [credenda, or] doctrines, which the true, simple, and uncorrupted Christian religion teaches (that is, not only those plain doctrines, which it requires to be believed as fundamental and of necessity to eternal salvation, but even all the doctrines which it teaches as matters of truth), are, though indeed many of them not discoverable by bare reason unassisted with revelation, yet, when discovered by revelation, apparently most agreeable to sound unprejudiced reason; have every one of them a natural tendency, and a direct and powerful influence, to reform men's lives and correct their manners; and do together make up an infinitely more consistent and rational scheme of belief, than any that the wisest of the antient philosophers ever did, or the cunningest of modern unbelievers can invent or contrive.

XIV. That as this revelation, to the judgement of right and sober reason, appears even of itself highly credible and probable; and abundantly recommends itself in its native simplicity, merely by its own intrinsic goodness and excellency, to the practice of the most rational and considering men, who are desirous in all their actions to have satisfaction and comfort and good hope within themselves, from the conscience of what they do: so it is moreover positively and directly proved, to be actually and immediately sent to us from God, by the many infallible signs and miracles, which the author of it worked publicly as the evidence of his divine commission; by the exact completion both of the prophecies that went before concerning him, and of those that he himself delivered concerning things that were to happen after; and by the testimony of his followers: which, in all its circumstances, was the most credible, certain, and convincing evidence, that was ever given to any matter of fact in the world.

XV. And, lastly; that they who will not, by such arguments and proofs as these, be convinced of the truth and certainty of the Christian religion, and be persuaded to make it the rule and guide of all their actions, would not be convinced (so far as to influence their hearts, and reform their lives), by any other evidence whatsoever;

foever; no, not though one should rise on purpose from the dead, to endeavour to convince them.

OF THE SEVERAL SORTS OF DEISTS.

I might here, before I enter upon the particular proof of these several propositions, justly be allowed to premise, that having now to deal with another sort of men than those against whom my former discourse was directed; and being consequently in some parts of this treatise to make use of some other kinds of arguments than those which the nature of that discourse permitted and required; the same demonstrative force of reasoning, and even mathematical certainty, which in the main argument was there easy to be obtained, ought not here to be expected; but that such moral evidence, or mixt proofs from circumstances and testimony, as most matters of fact are only capable of, and wise and honest men are always satisfied with, ought to be accounted sufficient in the present case. Because all the principles indeed upon which Atheists attempt to build their schemes, are such as may by plain force of reason, and undeniably demonstrative argumentations, be reduced to express and direct contradictions. But the Deists pretend to own all the principles of reason, and would be thought to deny nothing but what depends entirely on testimony and evidence of matter of fact, which they think they can easily evade.

But, if we examine things to the bottom, we shall find that the matter does not in reality lie here. For I believe there are in the world, at least in any part of the world where the Christian religion is in any tolerable purity professed, very few, if any, such Deists as will truly stand to all the principles of unprejudiced reason, and sincerely both in profession and practice own all the obligations of natural religion, and yet oppose Christianity merely upon account of their not being satisfied with the strength of the evidence of matter of fact. A constant and sincere observance of all the laws of reason, and obligations of natural religion, will unavoidably lead a man to Christianity; if he has due opportunities of examining things, and will steadily pursue the consequences of his own principles. And all others, who pretend to be Deists without coming up to this, can have no fixt and settled principles at all, upon which they can either argue or act consistently; but must of necessity sink into downright Atheism (and consequently fall under the force of the former arguments); as may appear by considering the several sorts of them.

I. OF THE FIRST SORTS OF DEISTS; AND OF PROVIDENCE.

Some men would be thought to be Deists, because they pretend to believe the existence of an eternal, infinite, independent, intelligent being; and, to avoid the name of Epicurean Atheists, teach also that this supreme being made the world: though at the same time they agree with the Epicureans in this, that they fancy * God
does

* "Omnis enim per se Divinum natura necesse est

"Immortali ævo summa cum pace fruatur,

"Semota a nostris rebus, sejunctaque longe,

does not at all concern himself in the government of the world, nor has any regard to, or care of, what is done therein. But, if we examine things duly, this opinion must unavoidably terminate in absolute Atheism. For although to imagine that God at the creation of the world, or at the formation of any particular part of it, could (if he had pleased) by his infinite wisdom, foresight, and unerring design, have originally so ordered, disposed, and adapted all the springs and series of future necessary and unintelligent causes, that, without the immediate interposition of his almighty power upon every particular occasion, they should regularly by virtue of that original disposition have produced effects worthy to proceed from the direction and government of infinite wisdom; though this, I say, may possibly by very nice and abstract reasoning be reconcilable with a firm belief both of the being and attributes of God, and also with a consistent notion even of Providence itself: yet to fancy that God originally created a certain quantity of matter and motion, and left them to frame a world at adventures, without any determinate and particular view, design or direction; this can no way be defended consistently, but must of necessity recur to downright Atheism; as I shall show presently, after I have made only this one observation, that as that opinion is impious in itself, so the late improvements in mathematics and natural philosophy have discovered, that, as things now are, that scheme is plainly false and impossible in fact. For, not to say, that, seeing matter is utterly incapable of obeying any laws, the very original laws of motion themselves cannot continue to take place, but by something superior to matter, continually exerting on it a certain force or power according to such certain and determinate laws; it is now evident beyond question, that the bodies of all plants and animals, much the most considerable parts of the world, could not possibly have been formed by mere matter according to any general laws of motion. And not only so; but that most universal principle of gravitation itself, the spring of almost all the great and regular inanimate motions in the world, answering (as I hinted in my former discourse) not at all to the surfaces of bodies (by which alone they can act one upon another), but entirely to their solid content, cannot possibly be the result of any motion originally impressed on matter, but must of necessity be caused (either immediately or mediately) by something which penetrates the very solid substance of all bodies, and continually puts forth in them a force or power entirely different from that by which matter acts on matter. Which is, by the way, an evident demonstration, not only of the world's being made originally by a supreme

“ Nam privata dolore omni, privata periculis,

“ Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,

“ Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira.”

Lucret. lib. I.

Τὸ μακάριον ἢ ἀφθαρτόν, ὅτε αὐτὸ πλεονεχία ἔχει, ὅτε ἄλλω παρῆχει ὥς ὅτε ἡγήσῃ, ὅτε χάρισι συνέχεται. Laert. in vita Epicuri.

Nor is the doctrine of those modern philosophers much different, who ascribe every thing to matter and motion, exclusive of final causes, and speak of God as an “intelligentia supramundana;” which is the very cant of Epicurus and Lucretius.

intelligent

intelligent cause; but moreover that it depends every moment on some superior being, for the preservation of its frame; and that all the great motions in it are caused by some immaterial power, not having originally impressed a certain quantity of motion upon matter, but perpetually and actually exerting itself every moment in every part of the world. Which preserving and governing power, whether it be immediately the power and action of the same supreme cause that created the world, of him “without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, and with whom the very hairs of our head are all numbered;” or whether it be the action of some subordinate instruments appointed by him to direct and preside respectively over certain parts thereof; does either way equally give us a very noble idea of providence. Those men indeed, who, merely through a certain vanity of philosophizing, have been tempted to embrace that other opinion, of all things being produced and continued only by a certain quantity of motion, originally impressed on matter without any determinate design or direction, and left to itself to form a world at adventures; those men, I say, who, merely through a vanity of philosophizing, have been tempted to embrace that opinion, without attending whither it would lead them, ought not, indeed, to be directly charged with all the consequences of it. But it is certain, that many under that cover have really been Atheists; and the opinion itself (as I before said) leads necessarily and by unavoidable consequence to plain Atheism. For if God be an all-powerful, omnipresent, intelligent, wise, and free being (as it hath been before demonstrated that he necessarily is), he cannot possibly but know, at all times and in all places, every thing that is; and foreknow what at all times and in all places it is fittest and wisest should be; and have perfect power, without the least labour, difficulty, or opposition, to order and bring to pass what he so judges fit to be accomplished: and consequently it is impossible but * he must actually direct and appoint every particular thing and circumstance that is in the world, or ever shall be, excepting only what by his own pleasure he puts under the power and choice of subordinate free agents. If therefore God does not concern himself in the government of the world, nor has any regard to what is done therein; it will follow that he is not an omnipresent, all-powerful, intelligent, and wise being; and consequently, that he is not at all. Wherefore the opinion of this sort of Deists stands not upon any certain consistent principles. but leads unavoidably to downright Atheism; and, however in words they may confess a God, yet in reality and in truth they deny him †.

HUMAN AFFAIRS NOT BENEATH THE REGARD OF PROVIDENCE.

If, to avoid this, they will own God's government and providence over the greater and more considerable parts of the world, but deny

* “*Quo confesso, confitendum est eorum consilio mundum administrari.*” Cic. De Nat. Deor. lib. II.

† “*Epicurum verbis reliquisse Deos, re sustulisse.*” Cic. De nat. Deor. lib. II.

his inspection and regard to human affairs here upon earth, as being too minute and small for the supreme governor of all things to concern himself in *; this still amounts to the same. For if God be omnipresent, all-knowing, and all-powerful; he cannot but equally know, and with equal ease be able to direct and govern, † all things as any, and the ‡ minutest things as the greatest. So that if he has no regard nor concern for these things, his attributes must, as before, be denied; and consequently his being. But, besides: human affairs are by no means the minutest and most inconsiderable part of the creation. For (not to consider now, that excellency of human nature which Christianity discovers to us), let a Deist suppose the universe as large as the widest hypothesis of astronomy will give him leave to imagine; or let him suppose it as immense as he himself pleases, and filled with as great numbers of rational creatures as his own fancy can suggest; yet the system wherein we are placed will, at least for aught he can reasonably suppose, be as considerable as any other single system; and the earth whereon we dwell, as considerable as most of the other planets in this system; and mankind manifestly the only considerable inhabitants on this globe of earth. Man therefore has manifestly a better claim to the particular regard and concern of Providence, than any thing else in this globe of ours; and this our globe of earth, as just a pretence to it, as most other planets in the system; and this system, as just an one, as far as we can judge, as any system in the universe. If therefore there be any providence at all, and God has any concern for any part of the world; Mankind, even separate from the consideration of that excellency of human nature which the Christian doctrine discovers to us, may as reasonably be supposed to be under its particular care and government, as any other part of the universe.

2. OF THE SECOND SORT OF DEISTS.

Some others there are, that call themselves Deists, because they believe, not only the being, but also the providence of God; that is, that every natural thing that is done in the world is produced by the power, appointed by the wisdom, and directed by the government of God; though, not allowing any difference between moral good and evil, they suppose that God takes no notice of the morally good or evil actions of men; these things depending, as they imagine, merely on the arbitrary constitution of human laws. But how handsomely soever these men may seem to speak of the natural attributes of God, of his knowledge, wisdom, and power;

* Εἰς τὴν γὰρ τινες οἱ νομίζουσιν εἶναι τὰ θεῖα, καὶ τοιαῦτα διὰ περὶ ὃ λόγῳ αὐτὰ ἐξέφηγεν, ἀγαθὰ, καὶ δυνάμει ἔχοντα τὴν ἀκροτάτην, καὶ γινώσκιν τὴν τελειότητα τῶν μέντοι ἀνθρώπων κάλλος, ὡς μικρῶν καὶ ἐπειλῶν ὄντων, καὶ ἀναξίων τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἐπιμελείας. Simplic. in Epictet.

† “Deorum providentia mundus administratur; iidemque consulunt rebus humanis; neque solum universis, verum etiam singulis.” Cic. de Divinat. lib. I.

‡ Ἄλλ’ ὅθεν τάχ’ ἂν ἴσως εἴη χαλεπὸν ἐνδείξασθαι τῷ τόγῳ, ὡς ἐπιμελεῖς σμικρῶν εἰσι θεοί, οὐκ ἦσαν ἢ τῶν μεγάλων διαφερόντων. Lib. X.

Εἰ δὲ τὸ ὅλον κόσμος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιμελεῖται, ἀνάγκη καὶ τῶν μερῶν αὐτοῦ περιεοῖν; ὅσπερ καὶ αἱ τέχνηαι ποιοῦσι. Καὶ γὰρ ἰατροὶ τῷ ὅλῳ σώματι ἐπιμεληθῆναι περιέμενον, ἐν ᾧ ἂν ἐμελίσσειε τῶν μερῶν ἑδὲ σφαλερὸς, ἢ δ’ οἰκονόμος, ἢ πολιτικὸς ἀνὴρ τῶν γὰρ μερῶν ἀμελεμένων, ἀνάγκη χειρῶνος τὸ ὅλον διατίθεσθαι. Simplic. in Epictet.

yet neither can this opinion be settled on any certain principles, nor defended by any consistent reasoning; nor can the natural attributes of God be so separated from the moral, but that he who denies the latter may be reduced to a necessity of denying the former likewise. For since (as I have formerly proved) there cannot but be eternal and necessary differences of different things one from another; and from these necessary differences of things there cannot but arise a fitness or unfitness of the application of different things or different relations one to another; and infinite knowledge can no more fail to know, or infinite wisdom to choose, or infinite power to act according to these eternal reasons and proportions of things, than knowledge can be ignorance, wisdom be folly, or power weakness; and consequently the justice and goodness of God are as certain and necessary, as his wisdom and power: it follows unavoidably, that he who denies the justice or goodness of God, or, which is all one, denies his exercise of these attributes in inspecting and regarding the moral actions of men, must also deny, either his wisdom, or his power, or both; and consequently must needs be driven into absolute Atheism. For though, in some moral matters, men are not indeed to be judged of by the consequences of their opinions, but by their profession and practice; yet in the present case it * matters not at all what men affirm, or how honourably they may seem to speak of some particular attributes of God; but what, notwithstanding such profession, must needs in all reason be supposed to be their true opinion; and their practice generally appears answerable to it.

PROFANE AND DEBAUCHED DEISTS, NOT CAPABLE OF BEING
ARGUED WITH.

For, concerning these two sorts of Deists, it is observable, that as their opinions can terminate consistently in nothing but downright Atheism; so their practice and behaviour is generally agreeable to that of the most openly professed Atheists. They not only oppose the revelation of Christianity, and reject all the moral obligations of natural religion, as such; but generally they despise also the wisdom of all human constitutions made for the order and benefit of mankind, and are as much contemners of common decency as they are of religion. They endeavour to ridicule and banter all human as well as divine accomplishments; all virtue and government of man's self, all learning and knowledge, all wisdom and honour, and every thing for which a man can justly be commended or be esteemed more excellent than a beast. They pretend commonly, in their discourse and writings, to expose the abuses and corruptions of religion; but (as is too manifest in some of their modern books, as well as in their talk) they aim really against all virtue in general, and all good manners, and against whatsoever is truly valuable and commendable in men. They pretend to ridicule certain vices and follies of ignorant or superstitious men; but the many

* “ Quasi ego id curem, quid ille aiat aut neget: illud quero, quid ei consentaneum sit dicere, qui, &c.” Cic. de Finib. lib. II.

very profane and very lewd images, with which they industriously affect to dress up their discourse, show plainly that they really do not so much intend to expose and deride any vice or folly, as on the contrary to foment and please the debauched and vicious inclinations of others as void of shame as themselves. They discover clearly, that they have no sense at all of the dignity of human nature, nor of the superiority and excellency of their reason above even the meanest of the brutes. They will sometimes in words seem to magnify the wisdom, and other natural attributes of God; but in reality, by ridiculing whatever bears any resemblance to it in men, they show undeniably that they do not indeed believe there is any real difference in things, or any true excellency in one thing more than in another. By turning every thing alike, and without exception, into ridicule and mockery; they declare plainly, that they do not believe any thing to be wise, any thing decent, any thing comely or praise-worthy at all. They seem not to have any esteem or value for those distinguishing powers and faculties, by induing them wherewith God has "taught them more than the beasts of the field, and made them wiser than the fowls of heaven." Job xxxv. 11. In a word: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise;" these things they make the constant subject of their mockery and abuse, ridicule and raillery. On the contrary; whatsoever things are profane, in pure, filthy, dishonourable, and absurd; these things they make it their business to represent as harmless and indifferent, and to laugh men out of their natural shame and abhorrence of them, and even to recommend them with their utmost wit. Such men these are not to be argued with, till they can be persuaded to use arguments instead of drollery. For banter is not capable of being answered by reason; not because it has any strength in it; but because it runs out of all the bounds of reason and good sense, by extravagantly joining together such images, as have not in themselves any manner of similitude or connexion; by which means all things are alike easy to be rendered ridiculous, by being represented only in an absurd dress. These men therefore are first to be convinced of the true principles of reason, before they can be disputed with; and then they must of necessity either retreat into downright Atheism, or be led by undeniable reasoning to acknowledge and submit to the obligations of morality, and heartily repent of their profane abuse of God and religion.

3. OF THE THIRD SORT OF DEISTS.

Another sort of Deists there are, who, having right apprehensions concerning the natural attributes of God, and his all-governing providence, seem to have some notion of his moral perfections also. That is; as they believe him to be a being infinitely knowing, powerful, and wise; so they believe him to be also in some sense a being of infinite justice, goodness, and truth; and that he governs

governs the universe by these perfections, and expects suitable obedience from all his rational creatures. But then, having a prejudice against the notion of the immortality of human souls, they believe that men perish entirely at death, and that one generation shall perpetually succeed another, without any thing remaining of men after their departure out of this life, and without any future restoration or renovation of things. And imagining that justice and goodness in God are not the same as in the ideas we frame of these perfections when we consider them in men, or when we reason about them abstractly in themselves; but that in the supreme governor of the world they are something transcendent, and of which we cannot make any true judgement, nor argue with any certainty about them; they fancy, though there does not indeed seem to us to be any equity or proportion in the distribution of rewards and punishments in this present life, yet that we are not sufficient judges concerning the attributes of God, to argue from thence with any assurance for the certainty of a future state. But neither does this opinion stand on any consistent principles. For if justice and goodness be not * the same in God, as in our ideas; then we mean nothing, when we say that God is necessarily just and good; and for the same reason it may as well be said, that we know not what we mean, when we affirm that he is an intelligent and wise being; and there will be no foundation at all left, on which we can fix any thing. Thus the moral attributes of God, however they be acknowledged in words, yet in reality they are by these men entirely taken away; and, upon the same grounds, the natural attributes may also be denied. And it, upon the whole, this opinion likewise, if we argue upon it consistently, must finally recur to absolute Atheism.

4. OF THE FOURTH SORT OF DEISTS.

The last sort of Deists are those, who, if they did indeed believe what they pretend, have just and right notions of God, and of all the divine attributes in every respect: who declare they believe, that there is one, eternal, infinite, intelligent, all-powerful, and wise being, the creator, preserver, and governor of all things: that this supreme cause is a being of infinite justice, goodness, and truth, and all other moral as well as natural perfections: that he made the world for the manifestation of his power and wisdom, and to communicate his goodness and happiness to his creatures: that he preserves it by his continual all-wise providence, and governs it according to the eternal rules of infinite justice, equity, goodness, mercy, and truth: that all created rational beings, depending continually upon him, are bound to adore, worship, and obey him; to praise him for all things they enjoy, and to pray to him for every thing they want: that they are all obliged to promote, in their proportion, and according to the extent of their several powers and abilities, the general good and welfare of those parts of the world, wherein they are placed; in like manner as the divine goodness is

* Καὶ ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ ἐστὶ τῶν μακροῦν πάντων ὥστε καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ ἀνθρώπου καὶ θεοῦ. Orig. contr. Cels. lib. IV.

continually promoting the universal benefit of the whole: that, men in particular are every one obliged to make it their business, by an universal benevolence, to promote the happiness of all others: that, in order to this, every man is bound always to behave himself so towards others, as in reason he would desire they should in like circumstances deal with him: that, therefore, he is obliged to obey and submit to his superiours in all just and right things, for the preservation of society, and the peace and benefit of the public; to be just and honest, equitable and sincere, in all his dealings with his equals, for the keeping inviolable the everlasting rule of righteousness, and maintaining an universal trust and confidence, friendship and affection amongst men; and, towards his inferiours, to be gentle and kind, easy and affable, charitable and willing to assist as many as stand in need of his help, for the preservation of universal love and benevolence amongst mankind, and in imitation of the goodness of God, who preserves and does good to all creatures, which depend entirely upon him for their very being and all that they enjoy: that, in respect of himself, every man is bound to preserve, as much as in him lies, his own being, and the right use of all his faculties, so long as it shall please God, who appointed him his station in this world, to continue him therein: that therefore he is bound to have an exact government of his passions, and carefully to abstain from all debaucheries and abuses of himself, which tend either to the destruction of his own being, or to the disordering of his faculties, and disabling him from performing his duty, or hurrying him into the practice of unreasonable and unjust things: lastly, that accordingly as men regard or neglect these obligations, so they are proportionably acceptable or displeasing unto God; who, being supreme governor of the world, cannot but testify his favour or displeasure at some time or other; and consequently, since this is not done in the present state, therefore there must be a future state of rewards and punishments in a life to come. But all this, the men we are now speaking of pretend to believe only so far, as it is discoverable by the light of nature alone, without believing any divine revelation. These, I say, are the only true Deists; and indeed the only persons who ought in reason to be argued with, in order to convince them of the reasonableness, truth, and certainty of the Christian revelation. But alas! there is, as I * before said, too much reason to believe, that there are very few or none such Deists as these among modern deniers of revelation. For such men as I have now described, if they would at all attend to the consequences of their own principles, could not fail of being quickly persuaded to embrace Christianity. For, being fully convinced of the obligations of natural religion, and the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments; and yet observing, at the same time, how little use men generally are able to make of the light of reason, to discover the one, or to convince themselves effectually of the certainty and importance of the other; it is impossible but they must earnestly

desire God would be pleased, by some direct discovery of his will, to make these things more clear and plain, more easy and obvious, more certain and evident to all capacities ; it is impossible but they must wish, God would be pleased particularly, to signify expressly the acceptableness of repentance, and his willingness to forgive returning sinners ; it is impossible but they must be very solicitous, to have some more particular and certain information concerning the nature of that future state, which reason teaches them in general to expect. The consequence of this is, that they must needs be possessed beforehand with a strong hope, that the Christian revelation may upon due examination appear to be true. They must be infinitely far from ridiculing and despising any thing that claims to be a divine revelation, before they have sincerely and thoroughly examined it to the bottom. They must needs be beforehand very much disposed in its favour ; and be very willing to be convinced, that what tends to the advancing and perfecting the obligations of natural religion, to the securing their great hopes, and ascertaining the truth of a future state of rewards and punishments, and can any way be made appear to be worthy of God, and consistent with his attributes, and has any reasonable proof of the matters of fact it depends upon ; is really and truly, what it pretends to be, a divine revelation. And now, is it possible that any man, with these opinions and these dispositions, should continue to reject Christianity, when proposed to him in its original and genuine simplicity, without the mixture of any corruptions or inventions of men ? Let him read the sermons and exhortations of our Saviour, as delivered in the gospels ; and the discourses of the apostles preserved in their acts and their epistles ; and try if he can withstand the evidence of such a doctrine, and reject the hopes of such a glorious immortality so discovered to him.

THAT THERE IS NOW NO CONSISTENT SCHEME OF DEISM IN
THE WORLD.

The heathen philosophers, those few of them who taught and lived up to the obligations of natural religion, had indeed a consistent scheme of Deism so far as it went ; and they were very brave and wise men, if any of them could keep steady and firm to it. But the case is not so now. The same scheme of Deism is not any longer consistent with its own principles, if it does not now lead men to embrace and believe revelation, as it then taught them to hope for it. Deists, in our days, who obstinately reject revelation when offered to them, are not such men as Socrates and Tully were ; but, under pretence of Deism, it is plain, they are generally ridiculers of all that is truly excellent even in natural religion itself. Could we see a Deist, whose mind was heartily possess'd with worthy and just apprehensions of all the attributes of God, and a deep sense of his duty towards that supreme author and preserver of his being : could we see a Deist, who lived in an exact performance of all the duties of natural religion ; and by the practice of righteousness, justice, equity, sobriety, and temperance, expressed in his actions, as well as words,
a firm

a firm belief and expectation of a future state of rewards and punishments: in a word, could we see a Deist, who with reverence and modesty, with sincerity and impartiality, with a true and hearty desire of finding out and submitting to reason and truth, would inquire into the foundations of our belief, and examine thoroughly the pretensions which pure and uncorrupt Christianity has to be received as a divine revelation; I think we could not doubt to affirm of such a person, as our Saviour did of the young man in the gospel, that he was "not far from the kingdom of God;" and that, being "willing to do his will, he should know of the doctrine, "whether it was of God." But, as I have said, there is great reason to doubt, there are no such Deists as these among the infidels of our days. This indeed is what they sometimes pretend, and seem to desire should be thought to be their case. But, alas! their trivial and vain cavils; their mocking and ridiculing, without and before examination; their directing the whole stress of their objections against particular customs, or particular and perhaps uncertain opinions, or explications of opinions, without at all considering the main body of religion; their loose, vain, and frothy discourses; and, above all, their vicious and immoral lives; show plainly and undeniably, that they are not really Deists but mere Atheists; and consequently not capable to judge of the truth of Christianity. If they were truly and in earnest such Deists as they pretend and would sometimes be thought to be; those principles (as has been already shown in part, and will more fully appear in the following discourse) would unavoidably lead them to Christianity. But, being such as they really are, they cannot possibly avoid recurring to downright Atheism.

The sum is this. There is now * no such thing, as a consistent scheme of Deism. That which alone was once such, namely, the scheme of the best heathen philosophers, ceases now to be so, after the appearance of revelation: because (as I have already shown, and shall more largely prove in the sequel of this discourse) it directly conducts men to the belief of Christianity. All other pretences to Deism may by unavoidable consequence be forced to terminate in absolute Atheism. He that cannot prevail with himself to obey the Christian doctrine, and embrace those hopes of life and immortality, which our Saviour has brought to light through the gospel, cannot now be imagined to maintain with any firmness, steadiness, and certainty, the belief of the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments after death; because all the main difficulties and objections lie equally against both. For the same reason, he who disbelieves the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments, cannot defend, to any effectual purpose, or enforce with any sufficient strength, the obligations of morality and natural religion; notwithstanding that they are indeed incumbent upon men, from the very nature and reason of the

* "Ita fit, ut si ab illa rerum summa, quam superius comprehendimus, aberraveris; omnis ratio intereat, et ad nihilum omnia revertantur." Lactant. lib. VII.

things themselves. Then; he who gives up the obligations of morality and natural religion cannot possibly have any just and worthy notion of the moral attributes of God, or any true sense of the nature and necessary differences of things. And he that once goes thus far has no foundation left, upon which he can be sure of the natural attributes or even of the existence of God: because, to deny what unavoidably follows from the supposition of his existence and natural attributes, is in reality denying those natural attributes and that existence itself. On the contrary: he who believes the being and natural attributes of God must of necessity (as has been shown in my former discourse) confess his moral attributes also. Next: he who owns and has just notions of the moral attributes of God cannot avoid acknowledging the obligations of morality and natural religion. In like manner; he who owns the obligations of morality and natural religion must needs, to support those obligations and make them effectual in practice, believe a future state of rewards and punishments. And, finally; he who believes both the obligations of natural religion, and the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments, has no manner of reason left, why he should reject the Christian revelation, when proposed to him in its original and genuine simplicity. Wherefore since those arguments which demonstrate to us the being and attributes of God are so closely connected with those which prove the reasonableness and certainty of the Christian revelation, that there is now no consistent scheme of Deism left; all modern Deists being forced to shift from one cavil to another, and having no fixt and certain set of principles to adhere to; I thought I could no way better prevent their ill designs, and obviate all their different shifts and objections, than, by endeavouring, in the same method of reasoning by which I before demonstrated the being and attributes of God, to prove in like manner, by one direct and continued thread of arguing, the reasonableness and certainty of the Christian revelation also.

To proceed therefore to the proof of the propositions themselves.

I. The same necessary and eternal different relations, that different things bear one to another; and the same consequent fitness or unfitness of the application of different things or different relations one to another; with regard to which, the will of God always and necessarily does determine itself, to choose to act only what is agreeable to justice, equity, goodness, and truth, in order to the welfare of the whole universe; ought likewise constantly to determine the wills of all subordinate rational beings, to govern all their actions by the same rules, for the good of the public, in their respective stations. That is; these eternal and necessary differences of things make it fit and reasonable for creatures so to act; they cause it to be their duty, or lay an obligation upon them, so to do; even separate from the consideration of these rules being the positive will or command of God; and also antecedent to any respect or regard, expectation or apprehension, of any particular private and personal

personal advantage or disadvantage, reward or punishment, either present or future; annexed either by natural consequence, or by positive appointment, to the practising or neglecting of those rules.

The several parts of this proposition may be proved distinctly in the following manner.

I. THAT THERE ARE ETERNAL AND NECESSARY DIFFERENCES
OF THINGS.

That there are differences of things, and different relations, respects or proportions, of some things towards others, is as evident and undeniable as that one magnitude or number is greater, equal to, or smaller than another. That from these different relations of different things, there necessarily arises an agreement or disagreement of some things with others, or a fitness or unfitness of the application of different things or different relations one to another, is likewise as plain, as that there is any such thing as proportion or disproportion in geometry and arithmetic, or uniformity or difformity in comparing together the respective figures of bodies. Further, that there is a fitness or suitableness of certain circumstances to certain persons, and an unsuitableness of others; founded in the nature of things and the qualifications of persons, antecedent to all positive appointment whatsoever; also that from the different relations of different persons one to another, there necessarily arises a fitness or unfitness of certain manners of behaviour of some persons towards others; is as manifest, as that the properties which flow from the essences of different mathematical figures have different congruities or incongruities between themselves; or that, in mechanics, certain weights or powers have very different forces, and different effects one upon another, according to their different distances, or different positions and situations in respect of each other. For instance: that God is infinitely superior to men, is as clear, as that infinity is larger than a point, or eternity longer than a moment. And it is as certainly fit, that men should honour and worship, obey and imitate God, rather than on the contrary in all their actions endeavour to dishonour and disobey him; as it is certainly true, that they have an entire dependence on him, and he on the contrary can in no respect receive any advantage from them; and not only so, but also that his will is as certainly and unalterably just and equitable in giving his commands, as his power is irresistible in requiring submission to it. Again: it is a thing absolutely and necessarily fitter in itself, that the supreme author or creator of the universe should govern, order, and direct all things to certain constant and regular ends; than that every thing should be permitted to go on at adventures, and produce uncertain effects merely by chance and in the utmost confusion, without any determinate view or design at all. It is a thing manifestly fitter in itself, that the all-powerful governor of the world should do always what is best in the whole, and what tends most to the universal good of the whole creation; than that he should make the whole continually miserable; or that, to satisfy the unreasonable desires of any particular depraved natures, he should

at any time suffer the order of the whole to be altered and perverted. Lastly, it is a thing evidently and infinitely more fit, that any one particular innocent and good being should by the supreme ruler and disposer of all things be placed and preserved in an easy and happy estate; than that, without any fault or demerit of its own, it should be made extremely, remedilessly, and endlessly miserable. In like manner; in men's dealing and conversing one with another, it is undeniably more fit, absolutely and in the nature of the thing itself, that all men should endeavour to promote the universal good and welfare of all, than that all men should be continually contriving the ruin and destruction of all. It is evidently more fit, even before all positive bargains and compacts, that men should deal one with another according to the known rules of justice and equity; than that every man for his own present advantage, should without scruple disappoint the most reasonable and equitable expectations of his neighbours, and cheat and defraud, or spoil by violence, all others without restraint. Lastly, it is without dispute more fit and reasonable in itself, that I should preserve the life of an innocent man, that happens at any time to be in my power; or deliver him from any imminent danger, though I have never made any promise so to do; than that I should suffer him to perish, or take away his life, without any reason or provocation at all.

THE ABSURDITY OF THOSE WHO DENY THE ETERNAL AND NECESSARY DIFFERENCES OF THINGS.

These things are so notoriously plain and self-evident, that nothing but the extremest stupidity of mind, corruption of manners, or perverseness of spirit, can possibly make any man entertain the least doubt concerning them. For a man, endued with reason, to deny the truth of these things, is the very same thing, as if a man that has the use of his sight should, at the same time that he beholds the sun, deny that there is any such thing as light in the world; or as if a man that understands geometry or arithmetic, should deny the most obvious and known proportions of lines or numbers, and perversely contend that the whole is not equal to all its parts, or that a square is not double to a triangle of equal base and height. Any man of ordinary capacity, and unbiassed judgement, plainness and simplicity, who had never read, and had never been told, that there were men and philosophers, who had in earnest asserted and attempted to prove, that there is no natural and unalterable difference between good and evil, would at the first hearing be as hardly persuaded to believe that it could ever really enter into the heart of any intelligent man, to deny all natural difference between right and wrong, as he would be to believe, that ever there could be any geometer who would seriously and in good earnest lay it down as a first principle, that a crooked line is as strait as a right one. So that indeed it might justly seem altogether a needless undertaking, to attempt to prove and establish the eternal difference of good and evil; had there not appeared certain men, as Mr. Hobbes and some few others, who have presumed, contrary to the plainest and most obvious

reason of mankind, to assert, and not without some subtilty endeavoured to prove, that there is no such real difference originally, necessarily, and absolutely in the nature of things; but that all obligation of duty to God arises merely from his absolutely irresistible power; and all duty towards men, merely from positive compact; and have founded their whole scheme of politics upon that opinion. Wherein as they have contradicted the judgement of all the wisest and soberest part of mankind, so they have not been able to avoid contradicting themselves also. For (not to mention now, that they have no way to shew how compacts themselves come to be obligatory, but by inconsistently owning an eternal original fitness in the thing itself, which I shall have occasion to observe hereafter; besides this, I say) if there be naturally and absolutely in things themselves no difference between good and evil, just and unjust; then in the state of nature, before any compact be made, it is equally as good, just, and reasonable, for one man to destroy the life of another, not only when it is necessary for his own preservation, but also arbitrarily and without any * provocation at all, or any appearance of advantage to himself; as to preserve or save another man's life, when he may do it without any hazard of his own. The consequence of which is, that not only the first and most obvious way for every particular man to secure himself effectually, would be (as Mr. Hobbes teaches) to endeavour to prevent and cut off all others; but also that men might destroy one another upon every foolish and peevish or arbitrary humour, even when they did not think any such thing necessary for their own preservation. And the effect of this practice must needs be, that it would terminate in the destruction of all mankind. Which being undeniably a great and unsufferable evil, Mr. Hobbes himself confesses it reasonable, that, to prevent this evil, men should enter into certain compacts to preserve one another. Now if the destruction of mankind by each other's hands be such an evil, that, to prevent it, it was fit and reasonable that men should enter into compacts to preserve each other; then, before any such compacts, it was manifestly a thing unfit and unreasonable in itself, that mankind should all destroy one another. And if so, then for the same reason it was also unfit and unreasonable, antecedent to all compacts, that any one man should destroy another arbitrarily and without any provocation, or at any time when it was not absolutely and immediately necessary for the preservation of himself. Which is directly contradictory to Mr. Hobbes's first supposition, of † there being no natural and absolute difference between good and evil, just and unjust, antecedent to positive compact. And in like manner all others, who upon any pretence whatsoever teach that good and evil depend originally on the constitution of positive laws, whether divine or human, must unavoidably run into the same absurdity. For if there be no such thing as good and evil in the nature of things, an-

* See Hobbes de Cive, c. 3. § 4.

† “ Ex his sequitur injuriam nemini fieri posse, nisi ei quocum initur pactum.” De Cive, c. 3. § 4. where see more to the same purpose.

precedent to all laws; then neither can any one law be better than another; nor any one thing whatever be more justly established, and enforced by laws, than the contrary; nor can * any reason be given, why any laws should ever be made at all: but all laws equally will be either † arbitrary and tyrannical, or frivolous and needless; because the contrary might with equal reason have been established, if, before the making of the laws, all things had been alike indifferent in their own nature. There is no possible way to avoid this absurdity, but by saying, that out of things in their own nature absolutely indifferent, those are chosen by wise governors to be made obligatory by law, the practice of which they judge will tend to the public benefit of the community. But this is an express contradiction in the very terms. For if the practice of certain things tends to the public benefit of the world, and the contrary would tend to the public disadvantage; then those things are not in their own nature indifferent, but were good and reasonable to be practised before any law was made, and can only for that very reason be wisely enforced by the authority of laws. Only here it is to be observed, that by the public benefit must ‡ not be understood the interest of any one particular nation, to the plain injury or prejudice of the rest of mankind; any more than the interest of one city or family, in opposition to their neighbours of the same country: but those things only are truly good in their own nature, which either tend to the universal benefit and welfare of all men, or at least are not destructive of it. The true state therefore of this case is plainly this: some things are in their own nature good and reasonable and fit to be done; such as keeping faith, and performing equitable compacts, and the like; and these receive not their obligatory power from any law or authority, but are only declared, confirmed, and enforced by penalties upon such as would not perhaps be governed by right reason only. Other things are in their own nature absolutely evil; such as breaking faith, refusing to perform equitable compacts, cruelly destroying those who have neither directly nor indirectly given any occasion for any such treatment, and the like; and these cannot, by any law or authority whatsoever, be made fit and reasonable, or excusable to be practised. Lastly, other things are in their own nature indifferent; that is, (not absolutely and strictly so, as such trivial actions which have no way any tendency at all either to the public welfare or damage; for concerning such things, it would be childish and trifling to suppose any laws to be made at all; but they are) such things, whose tendency to the public benefit or disadvantage is either so small or so remote, or so obscure and involved, that the generality of people are not able of

* “Manifestum est rationem nullam esse lege prohibentinoxas tales, nisi agnoscunt tales actus, etiam antecederent ad ullam legem, mala esse.” Cumberl de Leg. Nat p. 194.

† “Nam stoliditas inveniri quæ inanius potest, quam mala esse nulla contendere, & tantum quam malos perdere & condemnare peccantes?” Arnob. advers. Gentes, Lib. II.

‡ “Qui autem Civium rationem dicunt habendam, Externorum negant; dirimunt hi communem generis humani societatem; quæ sublata, justitia funditus tollitur.” Cic. de Offic. Lib. III.

themselves to discern on which side they ought to act: and these things are made obligatory by the authority of laws; though perhaps every one cannot distinctly perceive the reason and fitness of their being enjoined; of which sort are many particular penal laws, in several countries and nations. But to proceed.

AN ANSWER TO THE OBJECTION DRAWN FROM THE VARIETY OF THE OPINIONS OF LEARNED MEN, AND THE LAWS OF DIFFERENT NATIONS CONCERNING RIGHT AND WRONG.

The principal thing that can, with any colour of reason, seem to countenance the opinion of those who deny the natural and eternal difference of good and evil (for Mr. Hobbes's false reasonings I shall hereafter consider by themselves), is the difficulty there may sometimes be, to define exactly the bounds of right and wrong; the variety * of opinions, that have obtained even among understanding and learned men concerning certain questions of just and unjust, especially in political matters; and the many contrary laws that have been made in divers ages and in different countries concerning these matters. But as, in painting, two very different colours, by diluting each other very slowly and gradually, may from the highest intenseness in either extreme terminate in the midst insensibly, and so run one into the other, that it shall not be possible even for a skilful eye to determine exactly where the one ends, and the other begins; and yet the colours may really differ as much as can be, not in degree only, but entirely in kind, as red and blue, or white or black: so, though it may perhaps be very difficult in some nice and perplexed cases (which yet are very far from occurring frequently) to define exactly the bounds of right and wrong, just and unjust; and there may be some latitude in the judgement of different men, and the laws of divers nations; yet right and wrong are nevertheless in themselves totally and essentially different; even altogether as much as white and black, light and darkness. The Spartan law perhaps, which † permitted their youth to steal, may, as absurd as it was, bear much dispute whether it was absolutely unjust or no: because every man having an absolute right in his own goods, it may seem that the members of any society may agree to transfer or alter their own properties upon what conditions they shall think fit. But if it could be supposed that a law had been made at Sparta, or at Rome, or in India, or any other part of the world; whereby it had been commanded or allowed, that every man might rob by violence, and murder whomsoever he met with; or that no faith should be kept with any man, nor any equitable compacts performed; no man, with any tolerable use of his reason, whatever diversity of judgement might be among them in other matters, would have thought that such a law could have authorized or excused, much less have justified such actions, and have made them

* Τὰ δὲ καλὰ καὶ τὰ δίκαια, περὶ ὧν ἡ πολιτικὴ σκοπεῖται, τοσάυτην ἔχει διαφορὰν καὶ πλάτην, ὥστε δοκεῖν νόμωρεῖναι, φύσει δὲ μὴ Aristot. Ethic. lib. I. cap. 1.

† Κλέπτειν νενόμιστο τῶς Ἰλευθέρας, παῖδας, ὅ, τι τις βύλασθ. Plutarch. Apophthegmata Laconica.

become good; because it is plainly not in men's power to make falsehood be truth, though they may alter the property of their goods as they please. Now if, in flagrant cases, the natural and essential difference between good and evil, right and wrong, cannot but be confessed to be plainly and undeniably evident; the difference between them must be also essential and unalterable in all even the smallest and nicest and most intricate cases, though it be not so easy to be discerned and accurately distinguished. For if, from the difficulty of determining exactly the bounds of right and wrong in many perplexed cases, it could truly be concluded that just and unjust were not essentially different by nature, but only by positive constitution and custom; it would follow equally, that they were not really, essentially, and unalterably different, even in the most flagrant cases that can be supposed. Which is an assertion so very absurd, that Mr. Hobbes himself could hardly vent it without blushing, and discovering plainly, by his shifting expressions, his secret self-condemnation. There are therefore certain necessary and eternal differences of things; and certain consequent fitnesses or unfitnesses of the application of different things or different relations one to another; not depending on any positive constitutions, but founded unchangeably in the nature and reason of things, and unavoidably arising from the differences of the things themselves. Which is the first branch of the general proposition I proposed to prove.

2. THAT THE WILL OF GOD ALWAYS DETERMINES ITSELF TO ACT ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL REASON OF THINGS.

Now what these eternal and unalterable relations, respects, or proportions of things, with their consequent agreements or disagreements, fitnesses or unfitnesses, absolutely and necessarily are in themselves; that also they appear to be, to the understandings of all intelligent beings, except those only, who understand things to be what they are not, that is, whose understandings are either very imperfect, or very much depraved. And by this understanding or knowledge of the natural and necessary relations, fitnesses, and proportions of things, the wills likewise of all intelligent beings are constantly directed, and must needs be determined to act accordingly; excepting those only, who will things to be what they are not and cannot be; that is, whose wills are corrupted by particular interest or affection, or swayed by some unreasonable and prevailing passion. Wherefore, since the natural attributes of God, his infinite knowledge, wisdom, and power, set him infinitely above all possibility of being deceived by any error, or of being influenced by any wrong affection; it is manifest his divine will cannot but always and necessarily determine itself to choose to do what in the whole is absolutely best and fittest to be done; that is, to act constantly according to the eternal rules of infinite goodness, justice, and truth; as I have endeavoured to show distinctly in a former discourse, in deducing severally the moral attributes of God.

3. THAT ALL RATIONAL CREATURES ARE OBLIGED TO GOVERN THEMSELVES IN ALL THEIR ACTIONS BY THE SAME ETERNAL RULE OF REASON.

And now, that the same reason of things, with regard to which the will of God always and necessarily does determine itself to act in constant conformity to the eternal rules of justice, equity, goodness, and truth, ought also constantly to determine the wills of all subordinate rational beings, to govern all their actions by the same rules is very evident. For, as it is absolutely impossible in nature, that God should be deceived by any error, or influenced by any wrong affection; so it is very unreasonable and blame-worthy in practice, that any intelligent creatures, whom God has made so far like unto himself, as to endue them with those excellent faculties of reason and will, whereby they are enabled to distinguish good from evil, and to chuse the one and refuse the other, should either negligently suffer themselves to be imposed upon and deceived in matters of good and evil, right and wrong, or wilfully and perversely allow themselves to be over-ruled by absurd passions and corrupt or partial affections, to act contrary to what they know is fit to be done. Which two things, viz. negligent misunderstanding or wilful passions and lusts, are, as I said, the only causes which can make a reasonable creature act contrary to reason, that is, contrary to the eternal rules of justice, equity, righteousness, and truth. For, was it not for these inexcusable corruptions and depravations, it is impossible but the same proportions and fitnesses of things, which have so much weight and so much excellency and beauty in them, that the all-powerful creator and governor of the universe (who has the absolute and uncontrollable dominion of all things in his own hands, and is accountable to none for what he does, yet) thinks it no diminution of his power to make this reason of things the unalterable rule and law of all his own actions in the government of the world, and does nothing by mere will and arbitrariness; it is impossible, (I say) if it was not for inexcusable corruption and depravation, but the same eternal reason of things must much more have weight enough to determine constantly the wills and actions of all subordinate, finite, dependent, and accountable beings.

PROVED FROM THE ORIGINAL NATURE OF THINGS.

For originally, and in reality, it is as natural and (morally speaking) necessary, that the will should be determined in every action by the reason of the thing, and the right of the case; as it is natural and (absolutely speaking) necessary, that the understanding should submit to a demonstrated truth. And it is as absurd and blame-worthy, to mistake negligently plain right and wrong, that is, to understand the proportions of things in morality to be what they are not; or wilfully to act contrary to known justice and equity; that is, to will things to be what they are not and cannot be; as it would be absurd and ridiculous for a man in arithmetical matters, ignorantly to believe that twice two is not equal to four; or wilfully

fully and obstinately to contend, against his own clear knowledge, that the whole is not equal to all its parts. The only difference is, that assent to a plain speculative truth is not in a man's power to with-hold; but to act according to the plain right and reason of things, this he may, by the natural liberty of his will, forbear. But the one he ought to do, and it is as much his plain and indispensable duty; as the other he cannot but do, and it is the necessity of his nature to do it. He that wilfully refuses to honour and obey God, from whom he received his being, and to whom he continually owes his preservation, is really guilty of an equal absurdity and inconsistency in practice; as he that in speculation denies the effect to owe any thing to its cause, or the whole to be bigger than its part. He that refuses to deal with all men equitably, and with every man as he desires they should deal with him, is guilty of the very same unreasonableness and contradiction in one case; as he that in another case should affirm one number or quantity to be equal to another, and yet that other at the same time not to be equal to the first. Lastly, he that acknowledges himself obliged to the practice of certain duties both towards God and towards men, and yet takes no care either to preserve his own being, or at least not to preserve himself in such a state and temper of mind and body as may best enable him to perform those duties, is altogether as inexcusable and ridiculous, as he that in any other matter should affirm one thing at the same time that he denies another, without which the former could not possibly be true; or undertake one thing, at the same time that he obstinately omits another, without which the former is by no means practicable. Wherefore all rational creatures, whose wills are not constantly and regularly determined, and their actions governed, by right reason and the necessary differences of good and evil, according to the eternal and invariable rules of justice, equity, goodness, and truth; but suffer themselves to be swayed by unaccountable arbitrary humours, and rash passions, by lusts, vanity and pride, by private interest, or present sensual pleasures, these, setting up their own unreasonable self-will in opposition to the nature and reason of things, endeavour (as much as in them lies) to make things be what they are not, and cannot be; which is the highest presumption and greatest insolence, as well as the greatest absurdity, imaginable. It is acting contrary to that understanding, reason, and judgement, which God has implanted in their natures; on purpose to enable them to discern the difference between good and evil. It is attempting to destroy that order, by which the universe subsists. It is offering the highest affront imaginable to the creator of all things, who made things to be what they are, and governs every thing himself according to the laws of their several natures. In a word; all wilful wickedness and perversion of right, is the very same insolence and absurdity in moral matters; as it would be in natural things, for a man to pretend to alter the certain proportions of numbers, to take away the demonstrable relations and properties of mathematical figures; to make

light darkness, and darkness light; or to call sweet bitter, and bitter sweet.

AND FROM THE SENSE, THAT ALL EVEN WICKED MEN UN-AVOIDABLY HAVE OF THEIR BEING UNDER SUCH AN OBLIGATION.

Further: as it appears thus from the abstract and absolute reason and nature of things, that all rational creatures ought, that is, are obliged to take care that their wills and actions be constantly determined and governed by the eternal rule of right and equity; so the certainty and universality of that obligation is plainly confirmed, and the force of it particularly discovered and applied to every man, by this; that in like manner as no one, who is instructed in mathematicks, can forbear giving his assent to every geometrical demonstration, of which he understands the terms, either by his own study, or by having had them explained to him by others; so no man, who either has patience and opportunities to examine and consider things himself, or has the means of being taught and instructed in any tolerable manner by others, concerning the necessary relations and dependences of things, can avoid giving his assent to the fitness and reasonableness of his governing all his actions by the law or rule beforementioned, even though his practice, through the prevalence of brutish lusts, be most absurdly contradictory to that assent. That is to say: by the reason of his mind, he cannot but be compelled to own and acknowledge, that there is really such an obligation indispensably incumbent upon him; even at the same time that in the actions of his life he is endeavouring to throw it off and despise it. For the judgement and conscience of a man's own mind, concerning the reasonableness and fitness of the thing, that his actions should be conformed to such or such a rule or law, is the truest and formallest obligation, even more properly and strictly so, than any opinion whatsoever of the authority of the giver of a law, or any regard he may have to its sanction by rewards and punishments. For whoever acts contrary to this sense and conscience of his own mind, is necessarily self-condemned; and the greatest and strongest of all obligations is that which a man cannot break through without condemning himself. The dread of superior power and authority, and the sanction of rewards and punishments, however indeed absolutely necessary to the government of frail and fallible creatures, and truly the most effectual means of keeping them in their duty, is yet really in itself only a secondary and additional obligation, or enforcement of the first. The original obligation of all (the ambiguous use of which word as a term of art has caused some perplexity and confusion in this matter) is the eternal reason of things; that reason, which God himself, who has no superior to direct him, and to whose happiness nothing can be added, nor any thing diminished from it, yet constantly obliges himself to govern the world by; and the more excellent and perfect any creatures are, the more cheerfully and steadily are their wills always determined by this supreme obligation,

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in conformity to the nature, and in imitation of the most perfect will of God. So far therefore as men are conscious of what is right and wrong, so far they are under an obligation to act accordingly; and consequently that eternal rule of right, which I have been hitherto describing, it is evident, ought as indispensably to govern mens actions, as it cannot but necessarily determine their assent.

AND FROM THE JUDGEMENT OF MENS CONSCIENCES UPON
THEIR OWN PAST ACTIONS.

Now that the case is truly thus: that the eternal differences of good and evil, the unalterable rule of right and equity, do necessarily and unavoidably determine the judgement, and force the assent of all men that use any consideration, is undeniably manifest from the universal experience of mankind. For no man willingly and deliberately transgresses this rule, in any great and considerable instance, but he acts contrary to the judgement and reason of his own mind, and secretly reproaches himself for so doing. And no man observes and obeys it steadily, especially in cases of difficulty and temptation, when it interferes with any present interest, pleasure, or passion; but his own mind commends and applauds him for his resolution, in executing what his conscience could not forbear giving its assent to, as just and right. And this is what St. Paul means, when he says, (Rom. ii; 14, 15.) that "when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another."

OF THAT NATURAL KNOWLEDGE, WHICH PLATO THOUGHT
TO BE REMINISCENSE.

It was a very wise observation of Plato, which he received from Socrates; that if you take a young man, impartial and unprejudiced, one that never had any learning, nor any experience in the world; and examine him about the natural relations and proportions of things, [or the moral differences of good and evil]; you may, only by asking him questions, without teaching him any thing at all directly, cause him to express in his answers just and adequate notions of geometrical truths [and true and exact determinations concerning matters of right and wrong]. From whence he thought it was to be concluded, that all knowledge and learning is nothing but memory, or only a recollecting upon every new occasion what had been before known in a state of præ-existence. And some others, both ancients and moderns, have concluded that the ideas of all first and simple truths, either natural or moral, are innate, and originally impressed or stampd upon the mind. In their inference from the observation, the authors of both these opinions seem to be mistaken. But thus much it proves unavoidably; that the differences, relations, and proportions, of things both natural and moral, in which all unprejudiced minds thus naturally agree, are certain, unalterable, and real in the things themselves; and do

not at all depend on the variable opinions, fancies, or imaginations of men prejudiced by education, laws, customs, or evil practices: and also that the mind of man naturally and unavoidably gives its assent, as to natural and geometrical truth, so also to the moral differences of things, and to the fitness and reasonableness of the obligation of the everlasting law of righteousness, whenever fairly and plainly proposed.

THE MOST PROFLIGATE MEN, NOT UTTERLY INSENSIBLE OF
THE DIFFERENCE OF GOOD AND EVIL.

Some men indeed, who, by means of a very evil and vitious education, or through a long habit of wickedness and debauchery, have extremely corrupted the principles of their nature, and have long accustomed themselves to bear down their own reason, by the force of prejudice, lust, and passion; that they may not be forced to confess themselves self-condemned, will confidently and absolutely contend that they do not really see any natural and necessary difference between what we call right and wrong, just and unjust; that the reason and judgement of their own mind does not tell them they are under any such indispensable obligations as we would endeavour to persuade them; and that they are not sensible they ought to be governed by any other rule, than their own will and pleasure. But even these men, the most profligate of all mankind, however industriously they endeavour to conceal and deny their self-condemnation, yet cannot avoid making a discovery of it sometimes when they are not aware of it. For example: there is no man so vile and desperate, who commits at any time a murder and robbery, with the most unrelenting mind, but would choose; if such a thing could be proposed to him, to obtain all the same profit or advantage, whatsoever it be that he aims at, without committing the crime, rather than with it; even though he was sure to go unpunished for committing the crime*. Nay, I believe, there is no man, even in Mr. Hobbes's state of nature, and of Mr. Hobbes's own principles, but if he was equally assured of securing his main end, his self-preservation, by either way, would choose to preserve himself rather without destroying all his fellow-creatures, than with it; even supposing all impunity, and all other future conveniences of life, equal in either case. Mr. Hobbes's own scheme, of men's agreeing by compact to preserve one another, can hardly be supposed without this. And this plainly evinces, that the mind of man unavoidably acknowledges a natural and necessary difference between good and evil, antecedent to all arbitrary and positive constitution whatsoever.

MEN'S NATURAL SENSE OF ETERNAL MORAL OBLIGATIONS
PROVED FROM THE JUDGEMENT THEY ALL PASS UPON THE
ACTIONS OF OTHERS.

But the truth of this, that the mind of man naturally and necessarily assents to the eternal law of righteousness, may still better
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* "Quis est enim, aut quis unquam fuit, aut avaritia tam ardenti, aut tam effrenatis cupiditatibus, ut eandem illam rem, quam adipisci scelere quovis velit, non multis parti-
bus

and more clearly and more universally appear, from the judgement that men pass upon each other's actions, than from what we can discern concerning their consciousness of their own. For men may dissemble and conceal from the world the judgement of their own conscience; nay, by a strange partiality, they may even impose upon and deceive themselves; (for who is there, that does not sometimes allow himself, nay, and even justify himself in that, wherein he condemns another?) But men's judgements concerning the actions of others, especially where they have no relation to themselves, or repugnance to their interest, are commonly impartial; and from this we may judge, what sense men naturally have of the unalterable difference of right and wrong. Now the observation which every one cannot but make in this matter, is this; that virtue and true goodness, righteousness and equity, are things so truly noble and excellent, so lovely and venerable in themselves, and do so necessarily approve themselves to the reason and consciences of men, that even those very persons, who, by the prevailing power of some interest or lust, are themselves drawn aside out of the paths of virtue, can yet hardly ever forbear to give it its true character and commendation in others*. And this observation holds true, not only in the generality of vicious men, but very frequently even in the worst sort of them, viz. those who persecute others for being better than themselves. Thus the officers who were sent by the Pharisees to apprehend our Saviour, could not forbear declaring, that "he spake as never man spake:" John vii, 46. and the Roman governour, when he gave sentence that he should be crucified, could not at the same instant forbear openly declaring, that he "found no fault in him." John xviii. 38. Even in this case, men cannot chuse but think well of those persons, whom the dominion of their lusts will not suffer them to imitate, or whom their present interest and the necessity of their worldly affairs compels them to discourage. They cannot but desire, that they themselves were the men they are not; and wish with Balaam, that though they imitate not the life, yet at least they might die the death of the righteous, and that their last end might be like theirs. And hence it is that Plato judiciously observes, that even the worst of men seldom or never make so wrong judgement concerning persons, as they do concerning things; there being in virtue an unaccountable and as it were divine force, which, whatever confusion men endeavour to introduce in things by their vicious discourses and debauched practices, yet almost always compels them to distinguish right concerning persons, and makes them admire and praise just and equitable and honest men †. On the contrary; vice and injustice, profaneness

"bus malit ad sese, etiam omni impunitate proposita, sine facinore, quam illo modo pervenire?" Cic. de Finib. lib. III.

* "Placet suapte natura, adeoque gratiosa virtus est, ut insitum etiam sit malis probare meliores." Senec. de Benef. l. IV.

† Οὐ γὰρ ὅσον οὐσίαις ἀρετῆς ἀπεσφραγμένοι τυγχάνουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ, τοσούτων καὶ τῇ κρείσσονι τῆς ἄλλης οἱ πονηροὶ καὶ ἀχρεῖς. θεῶν δέ τι καὶ εὐσεβὲς ἐστὶ καὶ τίσι κακοῖς, ὃς γε πάμπολλοι καὶ τῶν σφίδρα κακῶν, εὖ τοῖς λόγοις καὶ δόξαις διακρίνεται τὰς ἀμαρτίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τὴν γέφυρα. Plato de Leg. lib. XII.

and debauchery, are things so absolutely odious in their own nature, that, however they insinuate themselves into the practice, yet they can never gain over to themselves the judgement of mankind. They who do evil, yet see and approve what is good; and condemn in others what they blindly allow in themselves; nay and very frequently condemn even themselves also, not without great disorder and uneasiness of mind, in those very things wherein they allow themselves. At least there is hardly any wicked man, but when his own case is represented to him under the person of another, will freely enough pass sentence against the wickedness he himself is guilty of; and with sufficient severity exclaim against all iniquity. This shows abundantly, that all variation from the eternal rule of right is absolutely and in the nature of the thing itself to be abhorred and detested; and that the unprejudiced mind of man as naturally disapproves injustice in moral matters, as in natural things it cannot but dissent from falsehood, or dislike incongruities. Even in reading the histories of past and far distant ages, when it is manifest we can have no concern for the events of things, nor prejudices concerning the characters of persons; who is there, that does not praise and admire, nay highly esteem and in his imagination love (as it were), the equity, justice, truth, and fidelity of some persons; and with the greatest indignation and hatred detest the barbarity, injustice, and treachery of others? Nay further; when the prejudices of corrupt minds lie all on the side of injustice; as when we have obtained some very great profit or advantage through another man's treachery or breach of faith; yet * who is there that upon that very occasion does not (even to a proverb) dislike the person and the action, how much soever he may rejoice at the event? But when we come ourselves to suffer by iniquity, then where are all the arguments and sophistries, by which unjust men, while they are oppressing others, would persuade themselves that they are not sensible of any natural difference between good and evil? When it comes to be these men's own case, to be oppressed by violence, or over-reached by fraud; where then are all their pleas against the eternal distinction of right and wrong? How, on the contrary, do they then cry out for equity, and exclaim against injustice! how do they then challenge and object against providence, and think neither God nor man severe enough, in punishing the violators of right and truth! Whereas, if there was no natural and eternal difference between just and unjust; no man could have any reason to complain of injury, any other than what laws and compacts made so; which in innumerable cases will be always to be evaded.

AN ANSWER TO THE OBJECTION DRAWN FROM THE TOTAL IGNORANCE OF SOME BARBAROUS NATIONS IN MATTERS OF MORALITY.

There is but one thing, that I am sensible of, which can here with any colour be objected against what has been hitherto said

* "Quis Pullum Numitorem Fregellanum proditorem, quanquam reipublicæ nostræ profuit, non odit?" Cic. de Finib. lib. V.

concerning the necessity of the mind's giving its assent to the eternal law of righteousness; and that is, the total ignorance, which some whole nations are reported to lie under, of the nature and force of these moral obligations. The matter of fact is not very true: but, if it was, it is certain there are more nations and people totally ignorant of the plainest mathematical truths; as, of the proportion, for example, of a square to a triangle of the same base and height: and yet these truths are such, to which the mind cannot but give its assent necessarily and unavoidably, as soon as they are distinctly proposed to it. All that this objection proves therefore, supposing the matter of it to be true, is only this; not, that the mind of man can ever dissent from the rule of right; much less, that there is no necessary difference in nature between moral good and evil; any more than it proves, that there is no certain and necessary proportions of numbers, lines, or figures: but this it proves only, that men have great need to be taught and instructed in some very plain and easy, as well as certain truths; and, if they be important truths, that then men have need also to have them frequently inculcated, and strongly enforced upon them. Which is very true, and is (as shall hereafter be particularly made to appear) one good argument for the reasonableness of expecting a revelation.

4. OF THE PRINCIPAL MORAL OBLIGATIONS IN PARTICULAR.

Thus it appears in general, that the mind of man cannot avoid giving its assent to the eternal law of righteousness; that is, cannot but acknowledge the reasonableness and fitness of men's governing all their actions by the rule of right or equity: and also that this assent is a formal obligation upon every man actually and constantly to conform himself to that rule. I might now from hence deduce, in particular, all the several duties of morality or natural religion. But because this would take up too large a portion of my intended discourse, and may easily be supplied abundantly out of several late excellent writers; I shall only mention the three great and principal branches, from which all the other and smaller instances of duty do naturally flow, or may without difficulty be derived.

OF PIETY, OR MEN'S DUTY TOWARDS GOD.

First then, in respect of God, the rule of righteousness is, that we keep up constantly in our minds the highest possible honour, esteem, and veneration for him; which must express itself in proper and respective influences upon all our passions, and in the suitable direction of all our actions: that we worship and adore him, and him alone, as the only supreme author, preserver and governour of all things: that we employ our whole beings, and all our powers and faculties, in his service, and for his glory; that is, in encouraging the practice of universal righteousness, and promoting the design of his divine goodness amongst men, in such way and manner as shall at any time appear to be his will we should do it: and, finally, that, to enable us to do this continually, we pray unto him constantly for whatever we stand in need of, and return him continual and hearty thanks for whatever good things we at any time receive.

receive. There is no congruity or proportion, in the uniform disposition and correspondent order of any bodies or magnitudes, no fitness or agreement in the application of similar and equal geometrical figures one to another, or in the comparing them one with another, so visible and conspicuous as is the beauty and harmony of the exercise of God's several attributes, meeting with suitable returns of duty and honour from all his rational creatures throughout the universe. The consideration of his eternity and infinity, his knowledge, and his wisdom, necessarily commands our highest admiration. The sense of his omnipresence forces a perpetual awful regard towards him. His supreme authority, as being the creator, preserver, and absolute governor of all things, obliges us to pay him all possible honour and veneration, adoration, and worship; and his unity requires, that it be paid to him alone. His power and justice demand our fear. His mercy and placableness encourage our hope. His goodness necessarily excites our love. His veracity and unchangeableness secure our trust in him. The sense of our having received our being and all our powers from him, makes it infinitely reasonable that we should employ our whole beings and all our faculties in his service. The consciousness of our continual dependence upon him, both for our preservation and the supply of every thing we want, obliges us to constant prayer. And every good thing we enjoy, the air we breathe, and the food we eat, the rain from heaven, and the fruitful seasons, all the blessings and comforts of the present time, and the hopes and expectations we have of what is to come, do * all demand our heartiest gratitude and thanksgiving to him. The suitableness and proportion, the correspondency and connexion of each of these things respectively, is as plain and conspicuous, as the shining of the sun at noon-day; and it is the greatest absurdity and perverseness in the world, for creatures endued with reason to attempt to break through and transgress this necessary order and dependency of things. All inanimate and all irrational beings, by the necessity of their nature, constantly obey the laws of their creation; and tend regularly to the ends for which they were appointed. How monstrous then is it, that reasonable creatures, merely because they are not necessitated, should abuse that glorious privilege of liberty, by which they are exalted in dignity above the rest of God's creation, to make themselves the alone unreasonable and disorderly part of the universe! That a tree planted in a fruitful soil, and watered continually with the dew of heaven, and cherished constantly with the kindly warmth and benign influence of the sun-beams, should yet never bring forth either leaves or fruit, is in no degree so irregular and

* "Quem vero astrorum ordines, quem dierum noctiumque vicissitudines, quem mensum temperatio, quemque ea quæ gignuntur nobis ad fruendum, non gratum esse cogant; hunc hominem omnino numerare qui decet?" Cic. de Legib. lib. II.

Εἰ γὰρ νοῦν εἴχομεν, ἀλλό τι ἔδει ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν καὶ νοῦν καὶ ἰδίαν, ἢ ὑμεῖν τὸ θεῖον, καὶ εὐφραίνειν, καὶ ἐπεξέρχεσθαι τὰς χάριτας; ἢ ἔδει καὶ σκάνησιν καὶ ἀργύρῳ καὶ ἐσθίοντι ἀδαι τὸν ἱμῶν τὸν εἰς τὸν θεόν. Μέγας ὁ θεός, ὅτι ἡμῶν παρῆσεν ὄργανα ταῦτα δι' ὧν τὴν γῆν ἐργαζόμεθα; Μέγας ὁ θεός, ὅτι χαίρας δίδωκεν, &c, Arrian, lib. I. cap. 16.

contrary to nature, as that a rational being, created after the image of God, and conscious of God's doing every thing for him, that becomes the relation of an infinitely good and bountiful creator to his creatures, should yet never on his part make any return of those duties which arise necessarily from the relation of a creature to his creator.

2. OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, OR THE DUTY OF MEN ONE TOWARDS ANOTHER.

In respect of our fellow-creatures, the rule of righteousness is that in particular we so deal with every man, as in like circumstances we could reasonably expect he should deal with us; and that in general we endeavour, by an universal benevolence, to promote the welfare and happiness of all men. The former branch of this rule is equity; the latter, is love.

OF JUSTICE AND EQUITY.

As to the former, viz. Equity, the reason which obliges every man in practice so to deal always with another, as he would reasonably expect that others should in like circumstances deal with him, is the very same as that which forces him in speculation to affirm, that if one line or number be equal to another, that other is reciprocally equal to it. Iniquity is the very same in action, as falsity or contradiction in theory; and the same cause which makes the one absurd, makes the other unreasonable. Whatever relation or proportion one man in any case bears to another; the same that other, when put in like circumstances, bears to him. Whatever I judge reasonable or unreasonable, for another to do for me; that, by the same judgment, I declare reasonable or unreasonable, that I in the like case should do for him. And to deny this either in word or action is as if a man should contend, that, though two and three are equal to five, yet five are not equal to two and three. Wherefore *, were not men strangely and most unnaturally corrupted, by perverse and unaccountably false opinions, and monstrous evil customs and habits, prevailing against the clearest and plainest reason in the world; it would be impossible, that universal equity should not be practised by all mankind; and especially among equals, where the proportion of equity is simple and obvious, and every man's own case is already the same with all others, without any nice comparing or transposing of circumstances. It would be as impossible, that † a man, contrary to the eternal reason of things, should desire to gain some small profit to himself, by doing violence and damage to his neighbour; as that he should be willing to be deprived of necessities himself, to satisfy the unreasonable covetousness or ambition of another. In a word; it would be impossible for men not

* "Nihil est unum uni tam simile, tam par, quàm omnes inter nosmetipsos sumus. Quod si depravatio consuetudinum, si opinionum vanitas, non imbecillitatem miorum torqueret, & flecteret quocunque cæpisset; sui nemo ipse tam similis esset, quam omnes sunt omnium;—& coleretur jus æque ab omnibus." Cic. de Leg. lib. I.

† "Hoc exigit ipsa nature ratio, quæ est lex divina & humana; cui parere qui vellet, nunquam committeret ut alienum appetat, & id, quod alteri detraxerit, sibi assumat." Cic. de Offic. lib. III.

to be as much ashamed of doing iniquity, as they are of believing contradictions. In considering indeed the duties of superiors and inferiors in various relations, the proportion of equity is somewhat more complex; but still it may always be deduced from the same rule of doing as we would be done by, if careful regard be had at the same time to the difference of relation; that is, if, in considering what is fit for you to do to another, you always take into the account not only every circumstance of the action, but also every circumstance wherein the person differs from you; and in judging what you would desire that another, if your circumstances were transposed, should do to you; you always consider, not what any unreasonable passion or private interest would prompt you, but what impartial reason would dictate to you to desire. For example: a magistrate, in order to deal equitably with a criminal, is not to consider what fear or self-love would cause him, in the criminal's case, to desire; but what reason and the public good would oblige him to acknowledge was fit and just for him to expect. And the same proportion is to be observed, in deducing the duties of parents and children, of masters and servants, of governors and subjects, of citizens and foreigners; in what manner every person is obliged, by the rule of equity, to behave himself in each of these and all other relations. In the regular and uniform practice of all which duties among all mankind, in their several and respective relations, through the whole earth, consists that universal justice, which is the top and perfection of all virtues; which, if, as * Plato says, it could be represented visibly to mortal eyes, would raise in us an inexpressible love and admiration of it; which would introduce into the world such a glorious and happy state, as the ancient poets have attempted to describe in their fiction of a golden age; which in itself is so truly beautiful and lovely, that, as † Aristotle elegantly expresses it, the motions of the heavenly bodies are not so admirably regular and harmonious, nor the brightness of the sun and stars so ornamental to the visible fabric of the world, as the universal practice of this illustrious virtue would be conducive to the glory and advantage of the rational part of this lower creation; which, lastly, is so truly noble and excellent in its own nature, that the wisest and most considering men have always declared, that ‡ neither life itself, nor § all other possible enjoyments in the world put together, are of any value or esteem, in comparison of, or in competition with, that right temper and disposition of mind, from which flows the practice of

* Δεινὸς γὰρ ἂν παρῆχεν ἑώρας, εἰσι τοιοῦτον ἑαυτῆς ἑταρῆς εἰδῶλον παρῆχέη, &c. Plat. in Phædr.

“ Quæ si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores, ut ait Plato, excitaret sui.” Cic. de Offic. lib. I.

“ Oculorum est in nobis sensus acerrimus, quibus sapientiam non cernimus; quàm illa “ ardentis amores excitaret sui, si videretur !” Id de Fin. lib. II.

† Δύτη μὲν ἔν ἡ δικαιοσύνη, ἀρετὴ μὲν ἐστὶ τελεία· καὶ ἔθ' "Εσπερῶ· ἔθ' "Εὐῶ· ἔτω θαν-
μαστὸν. Eth. lib. X. c. 3.

‡ “ Non enim mihi est vita mea utilior, quam animi talis affectio, neminem ut violenter “ commodi mei gratia.” Cic. de Offic. lib. III.

§ Καὶ το παράπαν ζῆν, μέγιστον μὲν κακὸν, τον ξύμπασιλα χρονον ἀθάνατον ὄντα, καὶ κεκῆ-
μένον πάντα τὰ λεγόμενα ἀγαθὰ, πλὴν δικαιοσύνης τε καὶ ἀρετῆς ἀπάσης. Plato de Leg. lib. II.

this universal justice and equity. On the contrary: injustice and iniquity, violence, fraud, and oppression; the universal confusion of right and wrong, and the general neglect and contempt of all the duties arising from men's several relations one to another; is the greatest and most unnatural corruption of God's creation, that it is possible for depraved and rebellious creatures to introduce, as they themselves, who practise iniquity most, and are most desirous to defend it, yet, whenever it comes to be their own turn to suffer by it, are not very backward to acknowledge. To comprize this matter therefore in one word: what the sun's forsaking that equal course, which now by diffusing gentle warmth and light cherishes and invigorates every thing in a due proportion through the whole system; and on the contrary, his burning up, by an irregular and disorderly motion, some of the orbs with insupportable heat, and leaving others to perish in extreme cold and darkness: what this, I say, would be to the natural world; that very same thing, injustice and tyranny, iniquity and all wickedness, is to the moral and rational part of the creation. The only difference is this: that the one is an obstinate and wilful corruption, and most perverse depravation of creatures made after the image of God; and a violating the eternal and unalterable law or reason of things, which is of the utmost importance; whereas the other would be only a revolution or change of the arbitrary and temporary frame of nature.

OF UNIVERSAL MUTUAL BENEVOLENCE.

The second branch of the rule of righteousness with respect to our fellow-creatures, I said, was universal love or benevolence; that is, not only the doing barely what is just and right, in our dealings with every man; but also a constant endeavouring to promote in general, to the utmost of our power, the welfare and happiness of all men. The obligation to which duty also may easily be deduced from what has been already laid down. For if (as has been before proved) there be a natural and necessary difference between good and evil; and that which is good is fit and reasonable, and that which is evil is unreasonable to be done; and that which is the greatest good is always the most fit and reasonable to be chosen; then, as the goodness of God extends itself universally over all his works through the whole creation, by doing always what is absolutely best in the whole; so every rational creature ought in its sphere and station, according to its respective powers and faculties, to do all the good it can to all its fellow creatures. To which end, universal love and benevolence is as plainly the most direct, certain, and effectual means; as * in

* "Universaliter autem verum est, quod non certius fluxus puncti lineam producit, aut additio numerorum summam, quam quod benevolentia effectum præstat bonum." Cumberland. de Leg. Naturæ, p. 10.

"Pari sane ratione [ac in arithmetice operationibus] doctrinæ moralis veritas fundatur in immutabili cohærentia inter felicitatem summam quam hominum vires assequi valent, & actus benevolentia universalis." Id. ibid. p. 23.

"Eadem est mensura boni malique, quæ mensura est veri falsique in propositionibus pronuntiantibus de efficacia motuum ad rerum aliarum conservationem & corruptionem facientium." Id. p. 30.

mathematics the flowing of a point is, to produce a line; or in arithmetic, the addition of numbers, to produce a sum; or in physics, certain kinds of motions, to preserve certain bodies, which other kinds of motions tend to corrupt. Of all which, the mind of man is so naturally sensible, that, except in such men whose affections are prodigiously corrupted by most unnatural and habitual vicious practices, there is no duty whatsoever the performance whereof affords a man so * ample pleasure and satisfaction, and fills his mind with so comfortable a sense of his having done the greatest good he was capable to do, of his having best answered the ends of his creation, and nearest imitated the perfections of his creator, and consequently of his having fully complied with the highest and principal obligations of his nature; as the performance of this one duty, of universal love and benevolence, naturally affords. But further: the obligation to this great duty may also otherwise be deduced from the nature of man, in the following manner. Next to that natural self-love, or care of his own preservation, which every one necessarily has in the first place for himself; there is in all men a certain natural affection for their children and posterity who have a dependence upon them; and for their near relations and friends, who have an intimacy with them. And because the nature of man is such, that they cannot live comfortably in independent families, without still further society and commerce with each other; therefore they naturally desire to increase their dependencies by multiplying affinities; and to enlarge their friendships by mutual good offices; and to establish societies by a communication of arts and labour, till † by degrees the affection of single persons becomes a friendship of families; and this enlarges itself to a society of towns and cities and nations; and terminates in the agreeing community of all mankind. The foundation, preservation, and perfection of which universal friendship or society is mutual love and benevolence. And nothing hinders the world from being actually put into so happy a state, but perverse iniquity and unreasonable want of mutual charity. Wherefore, since men are plainly so constituted by nature, that they stand in need of each other's assistance to make themselves easy in the world; and are fitted to live in communities; and society is absolutely necessary for them; and mutual love and benevolence is the only possible means to establish this society in any tolerable and durable manner; and in this respect ‡ all men stand upon the same

* "Angusta admodum est circa nostra tantummodo commoda, lætitiæ materia; sed eadem erit amplissima, si aliorum omnium felicitas cordi nobis sit. Quippe hæc ad illam, eandem habebit proportionem, quam habet immensa beatitudo Dei, totiusque humani generis ad curiam illam fictæ felicitatis suppellectilem, quam uni homini, eique invidio & malevolo, fortunæ bona possint suppeditare." Id. *ibid.* p. 214.

† "In omni honesto, nihil est tam illustre, nec quod latius pateat, quam conjunctio inter homines hominum, & quasi quædam societas & communicatio utilitatum, & ipsa charitas generis humani; quæ nata a primo satù, quo a procreatoribus nati dilliguntur, —serpit sensim foras, cognitionibus primum,—deinde totius complexu gentis humanæ." Cic. de Finib. lib. V.

‡ "Nihil est unum uni tam simile, tam par, quam omnes inter nosmetipsos sumus. Quod nisi depravatio, &c; sui nemo ipse tam similis esset, quam omnes sunt omnium." Cic. de Legib. lib. I.

level, and have the same natural wants and desires, and are in the same need of each other's help, and are equally capable of enjoying the benefit and advantage of society; it is evident every man is bound by the law of his nature, as he is also prompted by the * inclination of his uncorrupted affections, to † look upon himself as a part and member of that one universal body or community, which is made up of all mankind; to think himself ‡ born to promote the public good and welfare of all his fellow-creatures; and consequently obliged, as the necessary and only effectual means to that end, to § embrace them all with universal love and benevolence; so that he || cannot, without acting contrary to the reason of his own mind, and transgressing the plain and known law of his being, do willingly any hurt and mischief to any man; no, ** not even to those who have first injured him; but ought, for the public benefit, to endeavour to appease with gentleness, rather than exasperate with retaliations; and, finally, to comprehend all in one word (which is the top and complete perfection of this great duty), ought to †† love all others as himself. This is the argumentation of the great master, Cicero, whose knowledge and understanding of the true state of things, and of the original obligations of human nature, was as much greater than Mr. Hobbes's, as his helps and advantages to attain that knowledge were less.

OF SOBRIETY, OR MENS DUTY TOWARDS THEMSELVES; AND OF THE UNLAWFULNESS OF SELF-MURDER.

Thirdly, with respect to ourselves, the rule of righteousness is, that every man preserve his own being as long as he is able; and take care to keep himself at all times in such temper and disposition both of body and mind, as may best fit and enable him to perform his duty in all other instances. That is, he ought to bridle his appetites, with temperance; to govern his passions, with moderation; and to apply himself to the business of his present station in the world, whatsoever it be, with attention and contentment. That every man ought to preserve his own being as long as he is able, is evident; because what he is not himself the author and giver of, he can never of himself have just power or authority to take away. He that sent us into the world, and alone knows for how long time he appointed us our station here, and when we have finished all the business he intended we should do, can alone judge when it is fit for

* "Impellimur autem natura, ut prodesse velimus quamplurimis." Cic. de Finib. lib. III.

† "Hominem esse quasi partem quandam civitatis & universi generis humani, eumque esse conjunctum cum hominibus humana quadam societate." Cic. Quæst. Academ. lib. I.

‡ Homines hominum causa sunt generati, ut ipsi inter se alii aliis prodesse possint." Cic. de Offic. lib. I.

§ "Ad tuendos conservandosque homines, hominem natum esse." Cic. de Finib. lib. III.

|| "Omnes inter se naturali quadam indulgentia & benevolentia contineri." Cic. de Legib. lib. I.

** "Ex quo efficitur, hominem naturæ obediens, homini nocere non posse." Cic. de Offic. lib. III.

* * Oύτε ἀγαθὰ ἀνταρξήσῃς θεῶν, οὔτε κακῶς, ποιεῖν ἐθέλεις ἀνθρώπων, ἐδ' αὖ ἵπῃσι πάσχειν ὑπ' αἰσῶ. Plato in Critone.

†† "Tum illud effici, quod quibusdam incredibile videatur, sit autem necessarium, ut nihilo sese plusquam alterum diligat." Cic. de Legib. lib. I.

us to be taken hence; and has alone authority to dismiss and discharge us. This reasoning has been admirably applied by Plato, Cicero, and others of the best philosophers. So that though the Stoicks of old, and the Deists of late, have in their ranting discourses, and some few of them in their rash practice, contradicted it; yet they have never been able, with any colour of reason, to answer or evade the force of the argument: which indeed, to speak the truth, has been urged by the forementioned philosophers, with such singular beauty, as well as invincible strength, that it seems not capable of having any thing added to it. Wherefore I shall give it you, only in some of their own words: "We men," says * Plato in the person of Socrates, "are all, by the appointment of God, in " a certain prison or custody, which we ought not to break out of, " and run away. We are as servants, or as cattle, in the hand of " God. And would not any of us," saith he, "if one of our " servants should, contrary to our direction, and to escape out of " our service, kill himself, think that we had just reason to be very " angry, and if it was in our power, punish him for it?" So likewise Cicero: "God," says † he, "the supreme governor of all " things, forbids us to depart hence without his order: and " though, when the divine providence does itself offer us a just occasion of leaving this world," as when a man chooses to suffer death rather than commit wickedness, "a wise man will then indeed depart joyfully, as out of a place of sorrow and darkness into " light; yet he will not be in such haste as to break his prison contrary to law, but will go when God calls him, as a prisoner when " dismissed by the magistrate or lawful power." Again: "That " short remainder of life," saith ‡ he, "which old men have a " prospect of, they ought neither too eagerly to desire, nor yet on " the contrary unreasonably and discontentedly deprive themselves " of it; for, as Pythagoras teaches, it is as unlawful for a man " without the command of God to remove himself out of the " world, as for a soldier to leave his post without a general's order." And in another place: "Unless that God," saith § he, "whose " temple and palace this whole world is, discharges you himself out " of the prison of the body; you can never be received to his fa-

* *Ἐν τινι φέρει ἔσμεν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, καὶ ὃ δεῖ δὴ ἑαυτὸν ἐκ ταύτης λυεῖν, ὅδ' ἀποδιδοῦσκειν. —*
Θεὸς εἶναι ἡμῶν τὸς ἐπιμελημένους καὶ ἡμᾶς τὸς ἀνθρώπους ἐν τῶν κλημάτων τοῖς θεοῖς εἶναι.
Οὐκὲν καὶ σὺ ἀν, τῶν ταυτῶ κλημάτων εἶναι αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ ἀποκλινούσι, μὴ σημαντὲς σὺ ἴτ.
βίβλι αὐτὸ πεινάσαι, χαλεπαίνουσιν ἀν αὐτῷ, καὶ, εἴ τινα ἔχουσιν τιμωρίαν, τιμωροῦσιν αὐ; Plato in Phæd.

† "Vetat enim dominans ille in nobis Deus, injussu hinc nos suo demigrare. Cum ve. d causam justam Deus ipse dederit, nã ille medius fidius vir sapiens, latus ex his tenebris in lucem illam excesserit: nec tamen illa vincula carceris ruperit; leges enim ventant; sed tanquam a magistratu, aut ab aliqua potestate legitima, sic a Deo evocatus, atque emissus, exierit." Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. I.

‡ "Illud breve vitæ reliquum nec avidè appetendum senibus, nec sine causa deferendum est; vetatque Pythagoras, injussu imperatoris, id est, Dei, de præsidio & statione Dei, de præsidio & statione vitæ decedere." Cic. de Senect.

§ "Nisi enim Deus is, cujus hoc templum est omne quod conspicias, istis te corporis custodiis liberaverit; huc tibi aditus patere non potest. — Quare & tibi & piis omnibus retinendus est animus in custodia corporis; nec injussu ejus, a quo ille est nobis catus, ex hominum vita migrandum est; ne munus humanum assignatum a Deo defugisse videamini." Cic. Somn. Scipion.

“ your. Wherefore you, and all pious men, ought to have patience to continue in the body, as long as God shall please, who sent us hither ; and not force yourselves out of the world, before he calls for you ; lest you be found deserters of the station appointed you of God.” And, to mention no more, that excellent author, Arrian : “ Wait,” saith * he, “ the good pleasure of God : when he signifies it to be his will, that you should be discharged from this service, then depart willingly ; but, in the meantime, have patience, and tarry in the place where he has appointed you : wait, and do not hurry yourselves away wilfully and unreasonably.” The objections, which the author of “ The defence of self-murder” prefixed to “ The oracles of reason,” has attempted to advance, against this argument, are so very weak and childish, that it is evident he could not, at the time he wrote them, believe in earnest that there was any force in them : as when he says, that the reason why it is not lawful for a centinel to leave his station without his commander’s order, is because he entered into the service by his own consent ; as if God had not a just power to lay any commands upon his creatures, without their own consent ; or when he says, that there are many lawful ways to seek death in ; as if, because a man may lawfully venture his life in many public services, therefore it was lawful for him directly to throw it away upon any foolish discontent. But the author of that discourse has since been so just, as to confess his folly, and retract it publicly himself. Wherefore, to proceed. For the same reason, that a man is obliged to preserve his own being at all, he is bound likewise to preserve himself, as far as he is able, in the right use of all his faculties ; that is, to keep himself constantly in such temper both of body and mind, by regulating his appetites and passions, as may best fit and enable him to perform his duty in all other instances. For, as it matters not whether a soldier deserts his post, or by drunkenness renders himself incapable of performing his duty in it ; so for a man to disable himself by any intemperance or passion, from performing the necessary duties of life, is, at least for that time, the same thing as depriving himself of life. And neither is this all. For great intemperance and ungoverned passions, not only incapacitate a man to perform his duty ; but also expose him to run headlong into the commission of the greatest enormities, there being no violence or injustice whatsoever, which a man, who has deprived himself of his reason by intemperance or passion, is not capable of being tempted to commit. So that all the additional obligations which a man is any way under, to forbear committing the most flagrant crimes, lie equally upon him to govern his passions and restrain his appetites : without doing which, he can never secure himself effectually from being betrayed into the commission of all iniquity. This is indeed the great difficulty of life, to subdue and conquer our unreasonable

* Ἐκδέξασθι τὸν Θεὸν ὅταν ἐκείνος ἐπιμένη καὶ ὑπολύσῃ ἡμᾶς ταύτης τῆς ὑπηρεσίας, τὸ ὑπολύσεσθε πρὸς αὐτὸν· ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ παρόντι ἀνάσχετε νοικούντες ταύτην τὴν χώραν, εἰς ἣν ἐκείνος ἡμᾶς ἔταξεν. Μίνατε, μὴ αλοχίσας ἀπέλθῃτε. Arrian, lib. 1.

appetites and passions. But it is absolutely necessary to be done; and * it is moreover the bravest and most glorious conquest in the world. Lastly: for the same reason that a man is obliged not to depart wilfully out of this life, which is the general station that God has appointed him, he is obliged likewise to attend the duties of that particular station or condition of life, whatsoever it be, wherein providence has at present placed him, with diligence and contentment, without being either uneasy and discontented, that others are placed by providence in different and superior stations in the world; or so extremely and unreasonably solicitous to change his state for the future, as thereby to neglect his present duty.

From these three great and general branches, all the smaller and more particular instances of moral obligations may (as I said) easily be deduced.

5. THE LAW OF NATURE ETERNAL, UNIVERSAL, AND ABSOLUTELY UNCHANGEABLE.

And now this (this eternal rule of equity, which I have been hitherto describing) is that right reason, which makes the principal distinction between man and beasts. "This is the law of nature, which (as Cicero excellently expresses it) is † of universal extent, and everlasting duration; which can neither be wholly abrogated, nor repealed in any part of it, nor have any law made contrary to it, nor be dispensed with by any authority; which ‡ was in force before ever any law was written, or the foundation of any city or commonwealth was laid; which § was not invented by the wit of man, nor established by the authority of any people, but its obligation was from eternity, and the force of it reaches throughout the universe; which || being founded in the nature and reason of things, did not then begin to be a law, when it was first written and enacted by men, but is of the same original with the eternal reasons or proportions of things, and the perfections or attributes of God himself; so that, if there was no law at Rome against rapes, at that time when Tarquin offered violence to Lucretia, it does not therefore follow that he was at all the more excusable, or that his sin against the eternal rule of equity was the less heinous." This is that law of nature, ** to which the reason

* Οἱ μὲν ἄρα νίκης ἕνεκα πάλης καὶ δρόμων καὶ τῶν τοιούτων, ἐτόλμησαν ἀπείχεσθαι.—Οἱ δὲ ἡμέτεροι παῖδες, ἀδυνατήσουσι καθίερεῖν, πολὺ καλλίονος ἕνεκα νίκης. Plato de Leg. lib. VII.

† "Est quidem vera lex, recta ratio naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna, quæ vocet ad officium jubendo; vetando, a fraude deterreat.—Huic legi nec abrogari fas est, neque derogari ex hac aliquid licet, neque tota abrogari potest. Nec vero aut per senatum, aut per populum solvi hac lege possumus." Cic. de Repub. lib. III. fragment.

‡ "Lex quæ seculis omnibus ante nata est, quam scripta lex ulla, aut quam omnino civitas constituta." Cic. de Leg. lib. I.

§ "Legem neque hominum ingenio excogitatam, neque scitum aliquod esse populorum, sed æternum quiddam, quod universum mundum regat." Cic. de Legib. lib. II.

|| "Nec si, regnante Tarquinio, nulla erat Romæ scripta lex de stupris, idcirco non contra illam legem sempiternam Sextus Tarquinius vim Lucretiæ attulit. Erat enim ratio profecta a rerum natura, & ad recte faciendum impellens, & a delicto avocans; quæ non tum denique incipit lex esse, cum scripta est, sed tum cum orta est: orta autem simul est cum mente divina." Cic. de Legib. lib. II.

** "In judicio de bonitate harum rerum, æquæ omnes ubique conveniunt, ac omnia ani-

son of all men every where as naturally and necessarily assents, as all animals conspire in the pulse and motion of their heart and arteries, or as all men agree in their judgement concerning the whiteness of snow, or the brightness of the sun. For though in some nice cases the bounds of right and wrong may indeed (as was before observed *) be somewhat difficult to determine, and, in some few even plainer cases, the laws and customs of certain barbarous nations may be contrary one to another (which some have been so weak as to think a just objection against there being any natural difference between good and evil at all); yet, in reality, this † no more disproves the natural assent of all men's unprejudiced reason to the rule of right and equity, than the difference of most men's countenances in general, or the deformity of some few monsters in particular, proves there is no general likeness or uniformity in the bodies of men. For, whatever difference there may be in some particular laws, it is certain, as to the main and principal branches of morality, there never was any nation upon earth but owned, that to love and honour God, to be grateful to benefactors, to perform equitable compacts, to preserve the lives of innocent and harmless men, and the like, were things fitter and better to be practised than the contrary. In fine: this is that law of nature, which, being founded in the eternal reason of things, is as absolutely unalterable, as natural good and evil, as ‡ mathematical or arithmetical truths, as light and darkness, as sweet and bitter; the § observance of which, though no man should commend it, would yet be truly commendable in itself. Which to suppose depending on the opinions of men, and the customs of nations; that is, to suppose that what shall be accounted the virtue of a man depends merely on imagination or custom to determine, is || as absurd, as it would be to affirm, that the fruitfulness of a tree or the strength of a horse depends

“malia in motu cordis & arteriarum pulsu, aut omnes homines in opinione de nivis candore & splendore solis.” Cumberland, de Leg. Naturæ, p. 167.

* Pag. 130.

† “Hoc tamen non magis tollit consensum hominum de generali natura boni, ejusque partibus vel speciebus præcipuis, quam levis vultuum diversitas tollit convenientiam inter homines in communi hominum definitione, aut similitudinem inter eos in partium principalium conformatione & usu. Nulla gens est, quæ non sentiat actus Deum diligendi, &c. Nulla gens non sentit fratritudinem erga parentes & benefactores, toti humano generi salutarem esse. Nulla temperamentorum diversitas facit ut quisquam non bonum esse sentiat universis, ut singulorum innocentium vitæ, membra, & libertas conserventur.” Cumberland, de Legib. Naturæ, p. 166.

“Neque enim an honorificè de Deo sentiendum sit, neque an sit amandus, timendus, colendus, dubitari potest. Sunt enim hæc religionum, per omnes gentes communia.—Deum eo ipso, quod homines fecerit rationales, hoc illis præcepisse, & cordibus omnium insculpsisse, ne quisquam cuiquam faceret, quod alium sibi facere iniquum duceret.” Hobbes, de Homine, cap. 14. [Inconsistently enough with his own principles].

‡ “Nam ut vera & falsa, ut consequentia & contraria, sua sponte, non aliena, judicantur; sic constans & perpetua ratio vitæ, quæ est virtus; itemque inconstantia, quod est vitium; sua natura probatur.” Cic. de Legib. lib. 1.

§ “Quod vere dicimus, etiam si a nullo laudetur, laudabile esse natura.” Cic. de Offic. lib. 1.

|| “Hæc autem in opinione existimare, non in natura ponere, dementis est. Nam nec arboris nec equi virtus, quæ dicitur, in opinione sita est, sed in natura.” Cic. de Legib. lib. 1.

merely on the imagination of those who judge of it. In a word, it is that law, which if it had its original from the authority of men, and could be changed by it, then * all the commands of the cruellest and most barbarous tyrants in the world would be as just and equitable as the wisest laws that ever were made; and † to murder men without distinction, to confound the rights of all families by the grossest forgeries, to rob with unrestrained violence, to break faith continually, and defraud and cheat without reluctance, might by the decrees and ordinances of a mad assembly be made lawful and honest. In which matters if any man thinks that the votes and suffrages of fools have such power as to be able to change the nature of things; why do they not likewise decree (as Cicero admirably expresses himself), that poisonous things may become wholesome; and that any other thing, which is now destructive of mankind, may become preservative of it?

6. ETERNAL MORAL OBLIGATIONS, ANTECEDENT IN SOME RESPECT EVEN TO THIS CONSIDERATION OF THEIR BEING THE WILL AND COMMAND OF GOD HIMSELF.

Further yet: as this law of nature is infinitely superior to all authority of men, and independent upon it; so its obligation, primarily and originally, is ‡ antecedent also even to this consideration of its being the positive will or command of God himself. For, § as the addition of certain numbers necessarily produces a certain sum; and certain geometrical or mechanical operations give a constant and unalterable solution of certain problems or propositions; so in moral matters there are certain necessary and unalterable respects or relations of things, which have not their original from arbitrary and positive constitution, but are of eternal necessity in their own nature. For example: || as in matters of sense, the reason why a thing is visible, is not because it is seen; but it is therefore seen, because it is visible: so in matters of natural reason and morality, that which is

* “ Jam vero stultissimum illud; existimare omnia justa esse, quæ scita sint in populo-
“ lorum institutis aut legibus. Etiamne siquæ sunt tyrannorum leges, si triginta illi
“ Athenis leges imponere voluissent, aut si omnes Athenienses delectarentur tyrannicis
“ legibus, num ideo hæc leges justæ haberentur?” Cic. de Legib. lib. I.

† “ Quod si populorum jussis, si principum decretis, si sententiis judicum, jura constitu-
“ erentur; jus esset latrocinari, jus adulterare, jus testamenta falsa supponere, si hæc suf-
“ fragiis aut scitis multitudinis probarentur. Quæ si tanta potentia est stultorum sententiis
“ a quæ jussis, ut eorum suffragiis rerum natura vertatur; cur non sanciant, ut quæ mala
“ perniciosaque sunt, habeantur pro bonis ac salutaribus; aut cur, cum jus ex injuriâ lex
“ facere possit, bonum eadem facere non possit ex malo?” Id. ibid.

‡ “ Virtutis & vitiorum, sine ulla divina ratione, grave ipsius conscientiæ pondus est.”
Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. III.

§ “ Denique nequis obligationem legum naturalium arbitrium & mutabilem a nobis
“ fingi suspicetur, hoc adjiciendum censui; virtutum exercitium, habere rationem mediæ
“ necessarii ad finem (seposita consideratione imperii divini), manente rerum natura tali
“ qualis nunc est. Hoc autem ita intelligo, uti agnoscunt plerique omnes, additionem
“ duarum unitatum duabus prius positæ, necessario constituere numerum quaternarium;
“ aut, uti praxæ geometricæ & mechanicæ, problemata proposita solvunt immutabiliter;
“ adeo ut nec sapientia nec voluntas divina cogitari possit quicquam in contrarium consti-
“ tuere posse.” Cumberland, de Legib. Naturæ, p. 231.

|| Τὸ δῶρα μὲν, οὐ διότι δέονται γὰρ ἐστὶν, διὰ τὸ δέονται· ἀλλὰ τοῦναντίον, διότι δέονται·
Διὰ τὸ δῶρα μὲν. [Note, these words are by Cicero ridiculously translated, *videtur*
and *visum est*.] Οὐκοῦν καὶ τὸ εἶπαι, διότι εἶπὼν ἐστὶν, φιλεῖται ὑπὸ τῶν δέων· ἀλλ’ ἐν ὅτι φι-
λεῖται, διὰ τοῦτο εἶπὼν ἐστὶν. Plato in Euthyphr.

holy and good (as creatures depending upon and worshipping God, and practising justice and equity in their dealings with each other, and the like) is not therefore holy and good, because it is commanded to be done; but is therefore commanded by God, because it is holy and good. The existence indeed of the things themselves, whose proportions and relations we consider, depend entirely on the mere arbitrary will and good pleasure of God, who can create things when he pleases, and destroy them again whenever he thinks fit. But when things are created, and so long as it pleases God to continue them in being, their proportions, which are abstractly of eternal necessity, are also in the things themselves absolutely unalterable. Hence God himself, though he has no superior, from whose will to receive any law of his actions, yet disdains not to observe the rule of equity and goodness as the law of all his actions in the government of the world, * Ezek. xviii. and condescends to appeal even to men for the equity and righteousness of his judgements. To this law, the infinite perfections of his divine nature make it necessary for him (as has been before proved †) to have constant regard; and (as a learned prelate of our own ‡ has excellently shown), not barely his infinite power, but the rules of this eternal law, are the true foundation and the measure of his dominion over his creatures. Now for the same reason that God, who hath no superior to determine him, yet constantly directs all his own actions by the eternal rule of justice and goodness; it is evident all intelligent creatures, in their several spheres and proportions, ought to obey the same rule according to the law of their nature; even though it could be supposed separate from that additional obligation of its being the positive will and command of God. And doubtless there have been many men in all ages in many parts of the heathen world, who not having philosophy enough to collect from mere nature any tolerably just and explicit apprehensions concerning the attributes of God, much less having been able to deduce from thence any clear and certain knowledge of his will, have yet had a very great sense of right and truth, and been fully persuaded in their

* Καὶ ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ ἐστὶ τῶν μακαρίων πάντων· ὥστε καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ ἀνθρώπων καὶ Θεῶν. Origen. advers. Celsum. lib. IV.

† Pag. 132.

‡ “*Diætamina divini intellectus fanciuntur in leges apud ipsum valituras, per immutabilitatem suarum perfectionum.*” (Cumberland, de Leg. Naturæ, p. 243)

“*Solebam ipse quidem, cum aliis plurimis, antequam dominii jurisque omnis originem universaliter & distincte considerassem; dominium Dei, in creationem velut integram ejus originem, referre. Verum quoniam, &c.—in hanc tandem concessi sententiam, dominium Dei esse jusve potestatem ei a sua sapientia & bonitate, velut a lege, datam ad regimen eorum omnium quæ ab ipso unquam creata fuerint vel creabuntur.—Nec poterit quisquam merito conqueri, dominium Dei intra nimis angustos limites hac explanatione exerceri; qua hoc unum dicitur, illius nullam partem consistere in potestate quicquam faciendi contra finem optimum, bonum commune.*” Idem. p. 345, 346.

“*Contrà autem, Hobbiana resolutio dominii divini in potentiam ejus irresistibilem adeo apertè ducit ad, &c.—ut mihi dubium non sit, illud ab eo fictum fuisse, Deoque attributum. in eum tantum finem, ut juri suo omnium in omnia patrocinaretur.*” Id. p. 344.

“*Nos e contrario, fontem indicavimus, e quo demonstrari potest, justitiam universalem, omnemque adeo virtutem moralem, quæ in rectore requiritur, in Deo præ cæteris refulgere, eadem planè methodo, qua homines ad eas excolendas obligari ostendimus.*” Id.

own minds of many unalterable obligations of morality. But this speculation, though necessary to be taken notice of in the distinct order and method of discourse, is in itself too dry, and not of great use to us, who are abundantly assured that all moral obligations are moreover the plain and declared will of God; as shall be shown particularly in its proper place.

7. THE LAW OF NATURE OBLIGATORY, ANTECEDENT TO ALL CONSIDERATION OF PARTICULAR REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

Lastly, this law of nature has its full obligatory power, antecedent to all consideration of any particular private and personal reward or punishment, annexed either by natural consequence, or by positive appointment, to the observance or neglect of it. This also is very evident: because, if good and evil, right and wrong, fitness and unfitness of being practised, be (as has been shown) originally, eternally, and necessarily, in the nature of the things themselves; it is plain that the view of particular rewards or punishments, which is only an after-consideration, and does not at all alter the nature of things, cannot be the original cause of the obligation of the law, but is only an additional weight to enforce the practice of what men were before obliged to by right reason. There is no man, who has any just sense of the difference between good and evil, but must needs acknowledge, that virtue and goodness * are truly amiable, and to be chosen for their own sakes and intrinsic worth, though a man had no prospect of gaining any particular advantage to himself by the practice of them; and that, on the contrary, cruelty, violence, and oppression, fraud, injustice, and all manner of wickedness, are of themselves hateful, and by all means to be avoided, even † though a man had absolute assurance, that he should bring no manner of inconvenience upon himself by the commission of any or all of these crimes. This likewise is excellently and admirably expressed by Cicero: "Virtue," saith he ‡, "is that, which, though no profit
" or advantage whatsoever was to be expected to a man's self from
" the practice of it, yet must without all controversy be acknowledged
" to be truly desirable for its own sake alone. And accordingly § all
" good

* "Dignæ itaque sunt, quæ propter intrinsecam sibi perfectionem appetantur, etiam si nulla esset nature lex, quæ illas imperaret." Cumberland, de Leg. Nat. p. 281.

†

Αὐτὸς δίκαιος ἐστίν, ὅχ' ὃ μὴ ἀδικῶν,

Ἀλλ' ὅστις ἀδικεῖν δυνάμεται, μὴ βάλῃται.

Οὐδ' ὅς τὸ μικρὰ λαμβάνειν ἀπέσχει.

Ἀλλ' ὅς τὰ μεγάλα καρτερεῖ μὴ λαμβάνων,

Ἔχειν δυνάμεται καὶ κρατεῖν ἀζημίως.

Οὐδ' ὅς γε ταῦτα πάντα διαλύει μόνον,

Ἀλλ' ὅστις ἀδίκηον γινώσκειν τ' ἔχων φύσιν,

ἔχει δίκαιον, καὶ ἐδοκεῖν εἰπὼς δέδεικε. Philemonis Fragmenta.

‡ "Honestum id intelligimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate, sine ullis præmiis fructibusque, per seipsum possit jure laudari." Cic. de Finib. II.

"Atque hæc omnia propter se solum, ut nihil adjungatur emolumentum, petenda sunt." Id. de Inventione, lib. II.

"Nihil est de quo minus dubitari possit, quam & honesta expetenda per se, & eodem modo turpia per se esse fugienda." Id. de Finib. lib. III.

§ "Jus & omne honestum, sua sponte est expetendum. Etenim omnes viri boni, ipsam æquitatem & jus ipsum amant." Id. de Legib. lib. I.

"Optimè

“ good men love right and equity; and do many things without
 “ any prospect of advantage at all, merely because they are just and
 “ right, and fit to be done.” On the contrary, “ Vice is so odious
 “ in its own nature, and so fit to be avoided, even though no pu-
 “ nishment was to ensue; that * no man, who has made any toler-
 “ able proficiency in moral philosophy, can in the least doubt, but
 “ if he was sure the thing could be for ever concealed entirely both
 “ from God and men, so that there should not be the least suspicion
 “ of its being ever discovered; yet he ought not to do any thing
 “ unjustly, covetously, wilfully, passionately, licentiously, or any way
 “ wickedly. Nay, † if a good man had it in his power to gain all
 “ his neighbour’s wealth by the least motion of his finger, and was
 “ sure it would never be at all suspected either by God or man;
 “ unquestionably he would think, he ought not to do it. And
 “ whoever wonders at this has no notion what it is to be really a
 “ good man.” Not ‡ that any such thing is possible in nature, that
 any wickedness can be indeed concealed from God; but only, upon
 such a supposition, the natural and necessary difference between
 justice and injustice is made to appear more clearly and undeniably.

YET IT DOES NOT FROM THENCE AT ALL FOLLOW, EITHER THAT
 A GOOD MAN OUGHT TO HAVE NO RESPECT TO REWARDS AND
 PUNISHMENTS, OR THAT REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS ARE
 NOT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE PRACTICE
 OF VIRTUE IN THIS PRESENT WORLD.

Thus far is clear. But now from hence it does not at all follow,
 either that a good man ought to have no respect to rewards and
 punishments, or that rewards and punishments are not absolutely
 necessary to maintain the practice of virtue and righteousness in this
 present world. It is certain, indeed, that virtue and vice are eter-
 nally and necessarily different; and that the one truly deserves to be
 chosen for its own sake, and the other ought by all means to be
 avoided, though a man was sure for his own particular, neither to
 gain nor lose any thing by the practice of either. And, if this was
 truly the state of things in the world, certainly that man must have
 a very corrupt mind, indeed, who could in the least doubt, or so
 much as once deliberate with himself, which he would choose.
 But the case does not stand thus. The question now in the general

“ Optimi quique permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum,
 “ quia honestum est; ceteri nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident.” Id. de Finib.
 lib. II.

* “ Satis enim nobis (si modo aliquid in philosophia profecimus) persuasum esse debet,
 “ si omnes deos hominesque celare possimus, nihil tamen avare, nihil injuste, nihil libi-
 “ dinose, nihil incontinententer esse faciendum.” Id. de Offic. lib. III.

“ Si nemo sciturus, nemo ne suspicaturus quidem sit, quum aliqui divitiarum, potentie,
 “ dominationis, libidinis causa feceris; si id diis hominibusque futurum sit semper igno-
 “ tum, sine facturus?” Id. ibid.

† “ Itaque si vir bonus habeat hanc vim; ut, si digitis concrepuerit, possit in locu-
 “ pletum testamenta nomen ejus irrepere; hac vi non utatur, ne si exploratum quidem ha-
 “ beat id omnino neminem unquam suspicaturum.—Hæc qui admiratur, is se, quis sit vir
 “ bonus, nescire fatetur.” Idem. de Offic. lib. III.

‡ “ Εἰ μὴ δυνατόν εἰν ταῦτα λαμβάνειν καὶ θεὸς καὶ ἀνθρώπους, ὅμως δολέον εἶναι, τῷ λόγῳ
 ἵνα καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ δικαιοσύνη περὶ ἀδικίαν αὐτὴν κριθῇ. Plato de Republ. lib. X.

practice

practice of the world, supposing all expectation of rewards and punishments set aside, will not be, whether a man would choose virtue for its own sake, and avoid vice; but the practice of vice is accompanied with great temptations and allurements of pleasure and profit; and the practice of virtue is often threatened with great calamities, losses, and sometimes even with death itself. And this alters the question, and destroys the practice of that which appears so reasonable in the whole speculation, and introduces a necessity of rewards and punishments. For though virtue is unquestionably worthy to be chosen for its own sake, even without any expectation of reward; yet it does not follow that it is therefore entirely self-sufficient, and able to support a man under all kinds of sufferings, and even death itself, for its sake, without any prospect of future recompence. Here therefore began the error of the Stoicks; who taught that the bare practice of virtue was itself the chief good, and able of itself to make a man happy under all the calamities in the world. Their defence indeed of the cause of virtue was very brave: they saw well that its excellency was intrinsic, and founded in the nature of the things themselves, and could not be altered by any outward circumstances; that therefore virtue must needs be desirable for its own sake, and not merely for the advantage it might bring along with it; and, if so, then consequently neither could any external disadvantage, which it might happen to be attended with, change the intrinsic worth of the thing itself, or ever make it cease to be truly desirable. Wherefore, in the case of sufferings and death for the sake of virtue; not having any certain knowledge of a future state of reward (though the wisest of them did indeed hope for it, and think it highly probable), they were forced, that they might be consistent with their own principles, to suppose the practice of virtue a sufficient reward to itself in all cases, and a full compensation for all the sufferings in the world. And accordingly they very bravely indeed taught, that the practice of virtue was not only * infinitely to be preferred before all the sinful pleasures in the world; but also † that a man ought without scruple to chuse, if the case was proposed to him, rather to undergo all possible sufferings with virtue, than to obtain all possible worldly happiness by sin; and the suitable practice of some few of them, as of Regulus for instance, who chose to die the cruellest death that could be invented, rather than break his faith with an enemy, is indeed very wonder-

* “Est autem unus dies bene & ex præceptis tuis actus, peccanti immortalitati anteponendus.” Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. V.

† “Quæro si duo sint, quorum alter optimus vir, æquissimus, summa justitia, singulari fide; alter insigni scelere & audacia: et si in eo sit errore civitas, ut bonum illum virum, sceleratu & facinorosum, nefarium putet; contra autem qui sit improbissimus, existimet esse summam a probitate ac fide: proque hac opinione omnium civium, bonus ille vir vexetur, rapiatur, manus ei denique auferantur, effodiantur oculi, damnetur, vinciatur, uratur, ex-te minetur, egeat; postremo jure etiam optimo omnibus miserrimus esse videatur; contra autem ille improbus laudetur, colatur, ab omnibus diligatur, omnes ad eum honores, omnia imperia, omnes opes, omnes denique copię conferantur, vir denique optimus omnium æstimatione, & dignissimus omni fortuna juveticetur: quis tandem erit tam demens, qui dubitet utrum se esse malit?” Idem, de Republ. lib. III. fragment.

ful and to be admired. But yet, after all this, it is plain that the general practice of virtue in the world can never be supported upon this foot. The discourse is admirable, but it seldom goes further than meer words: and the practice of those few, who have acted accordingly, has not been imitated by the rest of the world. Men never will generally, and indeed it is not very reasonably to be expected they should, part with all the comforts of life, and even life itself, without expectation of any future recompence. So that, if we suppose no future state of rewards, it will follow, that God has endued men with such faculties as put them under a necessity of approving and chusing virtue in the judgement of their own minds; and yet has not given them wherewith to support themselves in the suitable and constant practice of it. The consideration of which inexplicable difficulty ought to have led the philosophers to a firm belief and expectation of a future state of rewards and punishments, without which their whole scheme of morality cannot be supported. And, because a thing of such necessity and importance to mankind was not more clearly and directly and universally made known, it might naturally have led them to some farther consequences also, which I shall have occasion particularly to deduce hereafter.

THE MANIFOLD ABSURDITIES OF MR. HOBBS'S DOCTRINES,
CONCERNING THE ORIGINAL OF RIGHT, SHOWN IN PAR-
TICULAR.

And now, from what has been said upon this head, it is easy to see the falsity and weakness of Mr. Hobbes's doctrines; that there is no such thing as just and unjust, right and wrong, originally in the nature of things; that men in their natural state, antecedent to all compacts, are not obliged to universal benevolence, nor to any moral duty whatsoever; but are in a state of war, and have every one a right to do whatever he has power to do; and that, in civil societies, it depends wholly upon positive laws, or the will of governors, to define what shall be just or unjust. The contrary to all which having been already fully demonstrated, there is no need of being large in further disproving and confuting particularly these assertions themselves. I shall therefore only mention a few observations, from which some of the greatest and most obvious absurdities of the chief principles upon which Mr. Hobbes builds his whole doctrine in this matter, may most easily appear.

I. First then; the ground and foundation of Mr. Hobbes's scheme is this; that * all men, being equal by nature, and naturally desiring the same things, have † every one a right to every thing, are every one desirous to have absolute dominion over all others, and may every one justly do whatever at any time is in

* "Ab æqualitate naturæ oritur unicuique ea, quæ cupit, acquirendi spes." *Leviath.* cap. 13.

† "Natura dedit unicuique jus in omnia. Hoc est; in statu merè naturali, sive antequam homines ullis pactis sese invicem obstrinxissent, unicuique licebat facere quæcunque & in quoscunque libebat; & possidere, uti, frui omnibus, quæ volebat & poterat." *De Cive*, c. 1. § 10.

his power, by violently taking from others either their possessions or lives, to gain to himself that absolute dominion. Now this is exactly the same thing, as if a man should affirm, that a part is equal to the whole, or that one body can be present in a thousand places at once. For, to say that one man has a full right to the same individual things, which another man at the same time has a full right to, is saying that two rights may be * contradictory to each other; that is, that a thing may be right, at the same time that it is confessed to be wrong. For example; if every man has a right to preserve his own life, then † it is manifest I can have no right to take any man's life away from him, unless he has first forfeited his own right by attempting to deprive me of mine. For, otherwise, it might be right for me to do that, which at the same time, because it could not be done but in breach of another man's right, it could not be right for me to do; which is the greatest absurdity in the world. The true state of this case, therefore, is plainly this. In Mr. Hobbes's state of nature and equality, every man having an equal right to preserve his own life, it is evident every man has a right to an equal proportion of all those things which are either necessary or useful to life. And consequently so far is it from being true, that any one has an original right to possess all, that, on the contrary, whoever first attempts, without the consent of his fellows, and except it be for some public benefit, to take to himself more than his proportion, is the beginner of iniquity, and the author of all succeeding mischief.

2. To avoid this absurdity, therefore, Mr. Hobbes is forced to assert, in the next place, that since every man has confessedly a right to preserve his own life, and consequently to do every thing that is necessary to preserve it; and since in the state of nature men will necessarily have ‡ perpetual jealousies and suspicions of each other's incroaching; therefore just precaution gives every one a right to § endeavour, for his own security, to prevent, oppress, and destroy all others, either by secret artifice or open violence, as it shall happen at any time to be in his power, as being the || only certain means of self-preservation. But this is even a plainer absurdity, if possible, than the former. For, (besides that, according to Mr. Hobbes's principles, men, before positive compacts, may justly do what mischief they please, even without the pretence of self-preservation), what can be more ridiculous than to imagine a war of all men against all, the directest and certainest means of the preservation of all?

* “ Si impossibile sit singulis, omnes & omnia sibi met subjicere; ratio quæ hunc finem proponit singulis, qui uni tantum contingere potest, sæpius quam millies proponeret impossibile.” Cumberl. de Lég. Nat. p. 217.

† “ Nec potest cujusquam jus seu libertas ab ulla lege relicta, eo extendere, ut liceat oppugnare ea, quæ aliis eadem lege imperantur facienda.” Id. p. 219.

‡ “ Omnium adversus omnes, perpetuæ suspensiones.—Bellum omnium in omnes.” De Cive, c. 1. § 12.

§ “ Spes unicuique securitatis conservationisque suæ in eo sita est, ut viribus artibusque propriis proximum suum vel palam vel ex insidiis præoccupare possit.” Ibid. c. 5. § 1.

|| “ Securitatis viam meliorem habet nemo anticipatione.” Leviath. cap. 13.

Yes, says he, because it leads men to a necessity of entering into compact for each other's security. But then, to make these compacts obligatory, he is forced (as I shall presently observe more particularly) to recur to an * antecedent law of nature; and this destroys all that he had before said. For the same law of nature which obliges men to fidelity, after having made a compact, will unavoidably, upon all the same accounts, be found to oblige them, before all compacts, to contentment and mutual benevolence, as the readiest and certainest means to the preservation and happiness of them all. It is true, men by entering into compacts and making laws agree to compel one another to do what perhaps the mere sense of duty, however really obligatory in the highest degree, would not, without such compacts, have force enough of itself to hold them to in practice; and so compacts must be acknowledged to be in fact a great addition and strengthening of men's security. But this compulsion makes no alteration in the obligation itself; and only shows, that that entirely lawless state, which Mr. Hobbes calls the state of nature, is by no means truly natural, or in any sense suitable to the nature and faculties of man; but, on the contrary, is a state of extremely unnatural and intolerable corruption; as I shall presently prove more fully from some other considerations.

3. Another notorious absurdity and inconsistency in Mr. Hobbes's scheme is this: that he all along supposes some particular branches of the law of nature (which he thinks necessary for the foundation of some parts of his own doctrine) to be originally obligatory from the bare reason of things; at the same time that he denies and takes away innumerable others, which have plainly in the nature and reason of things the same foundation of being obligatory as the former, and without which the obligation of the former can never be solidly made out and defended. Thus he supposes that in the state of nature, before any compact be made, every † man's own will is his only law; that ‡ nothing a man can do is unjust; and that § whatever mischief one man does to another is no injury nor injustice; neither has the person, to whom the mischief is done, how great soever it be, any just reason to complain of wrong; (I think it may here reasonably be presumed, that if Mr. Hobbes had lived in such a state of nature, and had happened to be himself the suffering party, he would in this case have been of another opinion): and yet at the same time he supposes, that in the same state of nature, men are by all means obliged || to seek peace, and

* See, De Cive, c. 3. § 1.

† "Unicuique licebat facere quæcumque libebat." De Cive, c. 1. § 10.

‡ "Consequens est, ut nihil dicendum sit injustum. Nomina iusti & iniusti locum in hac conditione non habent." Leviath. c. 13.

§ "Ex his sequitur, injuriam nemini fieri posse, nisi ei quocum initur pactum.—Siquis alicui noceat, quocum nihil pactus est; damnum ei infert, non injuriam.---Etenim si is qui damnum recipit, injuriam expostularet; is qui fecit sic diceret, quid tu mihi? quare facerem ego tuo potius, quam meo libitu? &c. In qua ratione, ubi nulla intercesserunt pacta, non video quid sit quod possit reprehendi." De Cive, c. 3. § 4.

|| "Prima & fundamentalis lex naturæ est, querendam esse pacem, ibi haberi potest, &c." De Cive, c. 2. § 2.

to * enter into compacts to remedy the forementioned mischiefs. Now if men are obliged by the original reason and nature of things to seek terms of peace, and to get out of the pretended natural state of war as soon as they can; how come they not to be obliged originally, by the same reason and nature of things, to live from the beginning in universal benevolence, and avoid entering into the state of war at all? He must needs confess they would be obliged to do so, did not self-preservation necessitate them every man to war upon others: but this cannot be true of the first aggressor; whom yet Mr. Hobbes, in the † place now cited, vindicates from being guilty of any injustice; and therefore herein he unavoidably contradicts himself. Thus again: in most instances of morality, he supposes right and wrong, just and unjust, to have no foundation in the nature of things, but to depend entirely on positive laws; that ‡ the rules or distinction of good and evil, honest and dishonest, are mere civil constitutions; and whatever the chief magistrate commands is to be accounted good; whatever he forbids, evil: that § it is the law of the land only, which makes robbery to be robbery; or adultery, to be adultery: that || the commandments, to honour our parents, to do no murder, not to commit adultery; and all the other laws of God and nature; are no further obligatory than the civil power shall think fit to make them so: nay, that ** where the supreme authority commands men to worship God by an image or idol in heathen countries (for in this instance he cautiously excepts Christian ones), it is lawful and their duty to do it; and (agreeably, as a natural consequence to all this) that †† it is men's positive duty to obey the commands of the civil power in all things, even in things clearly and directly against their conscience (that is, that it is their positive duty to do that, which

* See, De Cive, cap. 2 & 3.

† “Ex his sequitur, injuriam nemini fieri posse, &c.”

‡ “Regulas boni & mali, justi & injusti, honesti & inhonesti, esse leges civiles; ideoque quod legislator præceperit, id pro bono; quod vetuerit, id pro malo habendum esse.” De Cive, c. 12. § 1.

§ “Quod actio justa vel injusta sit, a jure imperantis provenit. Reges legitimi quæ imperant, justa faciunt imperando; quæ vetant, vetando faciunt injusta.” De Cive, c. 12. § 1. [In which section it is worth observing, how he ridiculously interprets those words of Solomon (“dabis servum tunc cor docile, ut possit discernere inter bonum & malum”), to signify, not his understanding or discerning, but his decreeing what shall be good, and what evil].

§ “Si tamen lex civilis jubeat invadere aliquid, non est illud furtum, adulterium, &c.” De Cive, c. 14. § 10.

|| “Sequitur ergo, legibus illis, non occides, non mactabere, non furabere, parentes honorabis, nihil aliud præcepisse Christum, quam ut cives & subditi suis principibus & summis imperatoribus in quæstionibus omnibus circa meum, tuum, suum, alienum, absolute obedirent.” De Cive, c. 17. § 10.

** “Si quærat an obediendum civitati sit, si imperetur Deum colere sub imagine, coram iis qui id fieri honorificum esse putant; certe faciendum est.” De Cive, c. 15. § 18.

†† “Universaliter & in omnibus obedire obligamur.” De Cive, c. 14. § 10.

Doctrina alia, quæ obedientiæ civili repugnat, est, quicquid faciat civis quicumque contra conscientiam suam, peccatum esse.” Leviath. c. 29.

“Opinio eorum qui docent, peccare subditos, quoties mandata principum suorum, quæ sibi injusta videntur esse, exsequuntur; & erronea est, & inter eas numeranda quæ obedientiæ civili adversantur.” De Cive, c. 12. § 2.

at the same time they know plainly it is their duty not to do); * keeping up indeed always in their own minds an inward desire to observe the laws of nature and conscience; but not being bound to observe them in their outward actions, except when it is safe to do: (he might as well have said, that human laws and constitutions have † power to make light be darkness, and darkness light; to make sweet be bitter, and bitter sweet: and indeed, as one absurdity will naturally lead a man into another, he does say something very like it; namely that ‡ the civil authority is to judge of all opinions and doctrines whatsoever; to § determine questions philosophical, mathematical; and, because indeed the signification of words is arbitrary, even || arithmetical ones also; as, whether a man shall presume to affirm that two and three make five or not); and yet at the same time, some particular things, which it would either have been too flagrantly scandalous for him to have made depending upon human laws; as that ** God is to be loved, honoured and adored; that †† a man ought not to murder his parents; and the like: or else, which were of necessity to be supposed for the foundation of his own scheme; as that ‡‡ compacts ought to be faithfully performed, and obedience §§ to be duly paid to civil powers: the obligation of these things, he is forced to deduce entirely from the internal reason and fitness of the things themselves; ||| antecedent to, independent upon, and unalterable by, all human constitutions whatsoever. In which matter, he is guilty of the grossest absurdity and inconsistency that can be. For if those greatest and strongest of all our obligations, to love and honour God, for instance, or to perform compacts faithfully, depend not at all on any human constitution, but must of necessity (to avoid making obligations reciprocally depend on each other in a circle) be confessed to arise originally from, and be founded in, the eternal reason and unalterable nature and relations of things themselves; and the nature and force of these obligations be sufficiently clear and evident; so that

* “Concludendum est, legem naturæ semper et ubique obligare in foro interno, sive conscientia; non semper in foro externo; sed tum solum modo, cum securè id fieri possit.” De Cive, c. 3.

† “Quæ si tanta potentia est stultorum sententiis atque iussis, ut eorum suffragiis rerum natura vertatur; cur non fanciunt, ut quæ mala pernicioque sunt, habeantur pro bonis ac salutaribus?” Cicero de Legib. lib. I.

‡ De Cive, c. 6. § 11.

§ Ibid. c. 17. § 12.

|| Ibid. c. 18. § 4.

** “Neque enim an honorificè de Deo sentiendum sit, neque an sit amandus, timendus, colendus, dubitari potest. Sunt enim hæc religionum per omnes gentes communia.” De Homine, cap. 14.

†† “Si is qui summum habet imperium, seipsum, imperantem dico, interficere alicui imperet; non tenetur. Neque parentem, &c. cum filius mori quam vivere infamis atque exosus malit. Et alii casus sunt, cum mandata factu inhonesta sunt, &c.” De Cive, c. 6. § 13.

‡‡ “Lex naturalis est pactis standum esse, sive fidem observandam esse.” De Cive, c. 3. § 1.

§§ “Lex naturalis omnes leges civiles jubet observari.” Ibid. c. 14. § 10.

||| “Legem civilem, quæ non sit lata in contumeliam Dei (cujus respectu ipsæ civitates non sunt sui juris, nec dicuntur leges ferre, &c.)” De Cive, c. 14. § 10.

“Pacti violatio, &c. See, De Cive, c. 3. § 3.

he who * dishonours God, or † wilfully breaks his faith, is (according to Mr. Hobbes's own reasoning) guilty of as great an absurdity in practice, and of as plainly contradicting the right reason of his own mind, as he who in a dispute is reduced to a necessity of asserting something inconsistent with itself; and the original obligation to these duties can from hence only be distinctly deduced; then, for the same reason, all the other duties likewise of natural religion, such as universal benevolence, justice, equity, and the like (which I have before proved to receive in like manner their power of obliging from the eternal reason and relations of things), must needs be obligatory, antecedent to any consideration of positive compact, and unalterably and independently on all human constitutions whatsoever; and consequently Mr. Hobbes's whole scheme (both of a state of nature at first, wherein there was no such thing as right or wrong, just or unjust, at all, and of these things depending afterwards, by virtue of compact, wholly and absolutely on the positive and arbitrary determination of the civil power;) falls this way entirely to the ground, by his having been forced to suppose some particular things obligatory, originally, and in their own nature. On the contrary: if the rules of right and wrong, just and unjust, have none of them any obligatory force in the state of nature, antecedent to positive compact; then, for the same reason, neither will they be of any force after the compact, so as to afford men any certain and real security; (excepting only what may arise from the compulsion of laws, and fear of punishment; which, therefore, it may well be supposed, is all that Mr. Hobbes really means at the bottom.) For if there be no obligation of just and right antecedent to the compact; then whence arises the obligation of the compact itself, on which he supposes all other obligations to be founded? If, before any compact was made, it was no injustice for a man to take away the life of his neighbour, not for his own preservation, but merely to satisfy an ‡ arbitrary humour or pleasure, and without any reason or provocation at all; how comes it to be an injustice, after he has made a compact, to break and neglect it? or what is it that makes breaking one's word to be a greater and more unnatural crime than killing a man merely for no other reason, but because no positive compact has been made to the contrary? So that § this way also Mr. Hobbes's whole scheme is entirely destroyed.

4. That

* See, De Cive, c. 14. sect. 10.

† “Est similitudo quædam inter id quod in vita communi vocatur injuria, & id, quod in scholis solet appellari absurdum. Quemadmodum enim is, qui argumentis cogitur ad negationem assertionis quam prius asseruerat, dicitur redigi ad absurdum: eodem modo is, qui præ animi impotentia facit vel omittit id quod se non facturum vel non omittiturum pacto suo ante promiserat, injuriam facit: neque minus in contradictionem incidit, quam qui in scholis reducitur ad absurdum.—Est itaque injuria, absurditas quædam in conversatione; sicut absurditas, injuria quædam est in disputatione.” De Cive, c. 3. sect. 3.

‡ “Ex his sequitur, injuriam nemini fieri posse, nisi ei quocum initur pactum.” De Cive, c. 3. sect. 4. [Which whole section highly deserves to be read and well considered, as containing the secret of Mr. Hobbes's whole scheme.]

§ “Itaque patet quod, si Hobbiana ratiocinatio esset valida, omnis simul legum civilium obligatio collaberetur; nec aliter fieri potest quin earum vis labefacteretur ab omnibus principis, quæ legum naturalium vim tollunt aut minuunt; quoniam in his fundatur & regiminis

4. That state which Mr. Hobbes calls the state of nature, is not in any sense a natural state; but a state of the greatest, most unnatural, and most intolerable corruption, that can be imagined. For reason, which is the proper nature of man, can never (as has been before shewn) lead men to any thing else than universal love and benevolence: and wars, hatred, and violence, can never arise but from extreme corruption. A man may sometimes, it is true, in his own defence, be necessitated, in compliance with the laws of nature and reason, to make war upon his fellows: but the first aggressors, who upon Mr. Hobbes's principles (that all men * have a natural will to hurt each other, and that every one in the state of nature has a † right to do whatever he has a will to): the first aggressors, I say, who upon these principles assault and violently spoil as many as they are superior to in strength, without any regard to equity or proportion; these can never, by any colour whatsoever, be excused from "having ‡ utterly divested themselves of human nature," and having § introduced into the world, contrary to all the laws of nature and reason, the greatest calamities and most unnatural confusion that mankind by the highest abuse of their natural powers and faculties are capable of falling under. Mr. Hobbes pretends; indeed, that one of the first and most natural principles of human life, is || a desire necessarily arising in every man's mind, of having power and dominion over others: and that this naturally impels men to use force and violence to obtain it. But neither is it true, that men, following the dictates of reason and uncorrupted nature, desire disproportionate power and dominion over others: neither, if it was natural to desire such power, would it at all follow, that it was agreeable to nature to use violent and hurtful means to obtain it. For, since the only natural and good reason to desire power and dominion (more than what is necessary for every man's self-preservation) is, that the possessor of such power may have a larger compass and greater abilities and opportunities of doing good (as is evident from God's exercise of perfectly absolute power); it is plain that no man, obeying the uncorrupted dictates of nature and reason, can desire to increase his power by such destructive and pernicious methods, the prevention of which is the only good rea-

"regiminis civilis auctoritas ac securitas, & legum a civitatibus latarum vigor." Cumberland, de Leg. Nat. p. 303.

"Etiam extra regimen civile, a malis omnigenis simul consideratis tutior erit, qui actibus externis leges naturæ constantissimè observabit; quam qui, juxta doctrinam Hobbianam, vi aut insidiis alios omnes conando præoccupare, securitatem sibi quasi verit." Id. p. 304.

* "Voluntas lædendi, omnibus inest in statu naturæ." De Cive, c. 1. sect. 4.

† "In statu naturali, unicuique licebat facere quæcunque & in quoscunque libebat." Ibid. sect. 10.

‡ "Si nihil existimat contra naturam fieri, hominibus violandis; quid cum eo differas, qui omnino hominem ex homine tollat?" Cic. de Offic. lib. III.

§ "Τὰ δὲ δὲ δίκαια οὐδ' εἶναι τοπαράπαν φύσει.—γινώμενα τέχνη καὶ τοῖς νόμοις, ἀλλ' ὅτι τινι φύσει.—Φασκόντων εἶναι τὸ δικαιοτάτον, ὅ, τι τις ἀν νικᾷ βιαζόμενος. Ἰδὲν δόξειαι τε καὶ εἰσεῖς.—ὅσον λόγον ἀνθρώπων νέων δημοσία πώλεσι τε καὶ ἰδίῳς οἰκοῖς. Plato de Leg. lib. X.

|| "Homines libertatis & dominii per naturam amatores." Leviath. c. 17.

"Nemini dubium esse debet, quin avidius ferrentur homines natura sua, si metus abesset, ad dominationem quàm ad societatem." De Cive, c. 1. sect. 2.

son that makes the power itself truly desirable. All violence therefore and war are plainly the effects, not of natural desires, but of unnatural and extreme corruption. And this Mr. Hobbes himself unwarily proves against himself, by those very arguments, whereby he endeavours to prove that war and contention is more natural to men, than to bees or ants. For his arguments on this head are all drawn from men's using themselves (as the animals he is speaking of cannot do) to * strive about honours and dignities, till the contention grows up into hatred, seditions and wars; to † separate each one his private interest from the public, and value himself highly above others, upon getting and engrossing to himself more than his proportion of the things of life; to ‡ find fault with each other's management, and, through self-conceit, bring in continual innovation and distractions; to § impose one upon another, by lies, falsifying, and deceit, calling good evil, and evil good; to || grow envious at the prosperity of others, or proud and domineering when themselves are in ease and plenty; and to ** keep up tolerable peace and agreement among themselves, merely by artificial compacts, and the compulsion of laws. All which things are so far from being truly the natural effects and result of men's reason and other faculties, that, on the contrary, they are evidently some of the grossest abuses and most unnatural corruptions thereof, that any one, who was arguing on the opposite side of the question, could easily have chosen to have instanced in.

5. Lastly: that chief and principal argument, which is one of the main foundations of Mr. Hobbes's and his followers system; namely, that †† God's irresistible power is the only foundation of his dominion, and the only measure of his right over his creatures; and consequently, ‡‡ that every other being has just so much right,

* "Homines inter se de honoribus & dignitatibus perpetuo contendunt; sed animalia illa [apes & formicæ] non item. Iraque inter homines invidia, odium, bellum, &c." *Leviath. c. 17.*

† "Inter animalia illa, bonum publicum & privatum idem est.—Homini autem in bonis propriis nihil tam jucundum est, quam quod alienis sunt majora." *Ibid.*

‡ "Animantia quæ rationem non habent, nullum defectum vident, vel videre se putant, in administratione suarum rerum publicarum. Sed in multitudine hominum, plurimi sunt qui præ cæteris sapere existimantes, conantur res novare; et diversi novatores innovant diversis modis; id quod est distractio & bellum civile." *De Cive, c. 5. sect. 5.*

§ "Animantia illa verborum arte illa carent, qua homines alii aliis videri faciunt bona vel malum, & malum bonum; magnum parvum, & parvum magnum." *Leviath. c. 17.*

|| "Animalia bruta, quamdiu bene sibi est, cæteris non invident: homo autem tum maxime molestus est, quando otio opibusque maximè abundat." *Ibid.*

** "Consensio creaturarum illarum brutarum, naturalis est; hominum pactitia tantum, id est, artificiosa." *De Cive, c. 5. sect. 5.*

†† "Regni divini naturalis jus derivatur ab eo, quod divinæ potentix resistere impossibile est." *Leviath. c. 31.*

"In regno naturali, regnandi & puniendi eos qui leges suas violant, jus Deo est a sola potentia irresistibili." *De Cive, c. 15. sect. 5.*

"Iis quorum potentix resisti non potest, & per consequens Deo omnipotenti, jus domnandi ab ipsa potentia derivatur." *Ibid.*

‡‡ "Nam quoniam Deus jus ad omnia habet; & jus Dei nihil aliud est quam ipsa Dei potentia; hinc sequitur, unamquamque rem naturalem tantum juris ex natura habere, quantum potentix habet." *Spinoz. de Monarch. cap. 2. [See also Tractat. Theolog. politic. cap. 16.]*

as it has natural power ; that is, that it is naturally right for every thing to do whatever it has power to do : this argument, I say, is of all his others the most notoriously false and absurd. As may sufficiently appear (besides what has been * already said, of God's other perfections being † as much the measure of his right, as his power is,) from this single consideration. Suppose the devil (for when men run into extreme impious assertions, they must be answered with suitable suppositions) ; suppose, I say, such a being as we conceive the devil to be, of extreme malice, cruelty, and iniquity, was endued with supreme absolute power, and made use of it only to render the world as miserable as was possible, in the most cruel, arbitrary, and unequal manner that can be imagined ; would it not follow undeniably, upon Mr. Hobbes's scheme, since dominion is founded in power, and power is the measure of right, and consequently absolute power gives absolute right ; that such a government as this would not only be as much of necessity indeed to be submitted to, but also that it would be as just and right, and ‡ with as little reason to be complained of, as is the present government of the world in the hands of the ever blessed and infinitely good God, whose love and goodness and tender mercy appears every where over all his works ?

Here Mr. Hobbes, as an unanswerable argument in defence of his assertion, urges ; that § the only reason, why men are bound to obey God, is plainly nothing but weakness or want of power ; because, if they themselves were all powerful, it is manifest they could not be under any obligation to obey ; and consequently power would give them an undoubted right to do what they pleased. That is to say ; if men were not created and dependent beings, it is true they could not indeed be obliged to the proper relative duty of created and dependent beings, viz. to obey the will and command of another in things positive. But, from their obligation to the practice of moral virtues, of justice, righteousness, equity, holiness, purity, goodness, beneficence, faithfulness, and truth, from which Mr. Hobbes fallaciously in this argument, and most impiously in his whole scheme, endeavours || to discharge them ; from this they could not be discharged by any addition of power whatsoever. Because the obligation to these things is not, as the obligation to obey in things of arbitrary and positive constitution, founded only in the weakness, subjection, and dependency of the

* Pag. 150, 151.

† See Cumberland, de Leg. Nat. locis supra citatis.

‡ See Hobbes de Cive, c. 3. sect. 4.

§ " Quod si jus regnandi habeat Deus ab omnipotentia sua, manifestum est obligationem ad præstandum ipsi obedientiam, incumbere hominibus propter imbecillitatem." [To explain which, he adds in his note] ; " Si cui durum hoc videbitur, illum rogo ut tacita cogitatione considerare velit, si essent duo omnipotentes, uter utri obedire obligaretur. " Confitebitur, credo, neutrum neutri obligari. Hoc si verum est, verum quoque est quod posui, homines ideo Deo subiectos esse, quia omnipotentes non sunt," De Cive, c. 15. sect. 7.

|| " Ut enim omittam vim & naturam deorum ; ne homines quidem censetis, nisi imbecilli essent, futuros beneficos & benignos fuisse." Cic de Nat. Deor. lib. I.

persons obliged ; but also and chiefly in the eternal and unchangeable nature and reason of the things themselves. For, these things are the law of God himself; not only to his creatures, but also to himself, as being the rule of all his own actions in the government of the world.

I have been the longer upon this head, because moral virtue is the foundation and the sum, the essence and the life, of all true religion: for the security whereof, all positive institution was principally designed: for the restoration whereof, all revealed religion was ultimately intended: and inconsistent wherewith, or in opposition to which, all doctrines whatsoever, supported by what pretence of reason or authority soever, are as certainly and necessarily false, as God is true.

II. Though these eternal moral obligations are indeed of themselves incumbent on all rational beings, even antecedent to the consideration of their being the positive will and command of God; yet that which most strongly confirms, and in practice most effectually and indispensably enforces them upon us, is this; that both from the perfections of God, and the nature of things, and from several other collateral considerations, it appears, that as God is himself necessarily just and good in the exercise of his infinite power in the government of the whole world, so he cannot but likewise positively require that all his rational creatures should in their proportion be so too, in the exercise of each of their powers in their several and respective spheres. That is: as these eternal moral obligations are really in perpetual force, merely from their own nature, and the abstract reason of things; so also they are moreover the express and unalterable will, command, and law of God to his creatures, which he cannot but expect should, in obedience to his supreme authority, as well as in compliance with the natural reason of things, be regularly and constantly observed through the whole creation.

This proposition is very evident, and has little need of being particularly proved.

THAT MORAL DUTIES ARE THE POSITIVE WILL AND COMMAND OF GOD, PROVED FROM THE CONSIDERATION OF THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

For, 1st. The same reasons which prove to us that God must of necessity be himself infinitely holy, and just, and good, manifestly prove, that it must also be his will, that all his creatures should be so likewise, according to the proportions and capacities of their several natures. That there are eternal and necessary differences of things, agreements and disagreements, proportions and disproportions; fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, absolutely in their own nature, has been before largely demonstrated. That, with regard to these fixt and certain proportions and fitnesses of things, the will of God, which can neither be influenced by any external power,

nor

nor imposed upon by any error or deceit, constantly and necessarily determines itself to choose always what in the whole is best and fittest to be done, according to the unalterable rules of justice, equity, goodness and truth, has likewise been already proved. That the same considerations ought also regularly to determine the wills of all subordinate rational beings, to act in constant conformity to the same eternal rules, has in like manner been shown before. It remains therefore only to prove, that these very same moral rules, which are thus of themselves really obligatory, as being the necessary result of the unalterable reason and nature of things, are moreover the positive will and command of God to all rational creatures: and consequently, that the wilful transgression or neglect of them is as truly an insolent contempt of the authority of God, as it is an absurd confounding of the natural reasons and proportions of things. Now this also plainly follows from what has been already laid down. For, the same absolute perfection of the divine nature, which (as has been before shown) makes us certain that God must himself be of necessity infinitely holy, just, and good; makes it equally certain, that he cannot possibly approve iniquity in others. And the same beauty, the same excellency, the same weight and importance of the rules of everlasting righteousness, with regard to which God is always pleased to make those rules the measure of all his own actions, prove it impossible but he must likewise will and desire, that all rational creatures should proportionably make them the measure of theirs. Even among men, there is no earthly father, but in those things which he esteems his own excellencies, desires and expects to be imitated by his children. How much more is it necessary that God, who is infinitely far from being subject to such passions and variableness as frail men are, and who has an infinitely tenderer and heartier concern for the happiness of his creatures, than mortal men can have for the welfare of their posterity, must desire to be imitated by his creatures in those perfections, which are the foundation of his own unchangeable happiness? In the exercise of his supreme power, we cannot imitate him; in the extent of his unerring knowledge, we cannot attain to any similitude with him. We cannot at all thunder with a voice like him; nor are we able to search out and comprehend the least part of the depth of his unfathomable wisdom. Job xl. 9. But his holiness and goodness, his justice, righteousness, and truth; these things we can understand; in these things we can imitate him; nay, we cannot approve ourselves to him as obedient children, if we do not imitate him therein. If God be himself essentially of infinite holiness and purity (as, from the light of nature, it is of all things most manifest that he is); it follows, that it is impossible but he must likewise be of purer eyes than to behold with approbation any manner of impurity in his creatures: Hab. i. 13. And consequently it must needs be his will, that they should all (according to the measure of their frail and finite nature) be holy as he is holy. If God is himself a being of infinite justice,

righteousness, and truth; it must needs be his will, that all rational creatures, whom he has created after his own image, to whom he has communicated some resemblance of his divine perfections, and whom he has endued with excellent powers and faculties to enable them to distinguish between good and evil, should imitate him in the exercise of those glorious attributes, by conforming all their actions to the eternal and unalterable law of righteousness. If God is himself a being of infinite goodness; "making his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sending rain on the just and on the unjust;" Matt. v. 45. having "never left himself wholly without witness, but always doing good, giving men rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling their hearts with food and gladness," Acts xiv. 17; it cannot but be his will, that all reasonable creatures should, by mutual love and benevolence, permit and assist each other to enjoy in particular the several effects and blessings of the divine universal goodness. Lastly, if God is himself a being of infinite mercy and compassion; as it is plain he bears long with men before he punishes them for their wickedness, and often freely forgives them his "ten thousand talents," Matt. xviii. 24. 28: it must needs be his will, that they should forgive one another their hundred pence; being merciful, Luke vi. 36. one to another, as he is merciful to them all; and having compassion each on his fellow-servants, as God has on them, Matt. xi. 23. Thus from the attributes of God; natural reason leads men to the knowledge of his will; all the same reasons and arguments, which discover to men the natural fitnesses or unfitnesses of things, and the necessary perfections or attributes of God, proving equally at the same time, that * that which is truly the law of nature, or the reason of things, is in like manner the will of God. And from hence the soberest and most intelligent persons among the Heathens, in all ages, very rightly and wisely concluded, that the best and truest part of natural religion, which was of the greatest importance, and wherein was the least danger of their being mistaken, was † to imitate the moral attributes of God by a life of holiness, righteousness, and charity; whereas in the external part of their worship there was nothing but uncertainty and doubtfulness; it being absolutely impossible, without express revelation, to discover what, in that particular, they might be secure would be truly acceptable to God.

* "Ita principem legem illam & ultimam, mentem esse omnia ratione aut cogentis aut vetantis Dei." Cic. de Legib. lib. II.

"Quæ vis non modo senior est quam ætas populorum & civitatum, sed æqualis illius cælum atque terras tuentis & regentis Dei. Neque enim esse mens divina sine ratione potest, nec ratio divina non hanc vim in rebus pravissime faciendis habere." Ibid.

† "Vis Deos propitiare? bonus esto. Satis illos coluit, qui imitatus est." Senec. epist. 96.

Καὶ γὰρ δεῖνόν ἄν εἴη, εἰ πρὸς τὰ δῶρα καὶ τὰς δυσίας ἀποβλέψουσιν ἡμῶν οἱ θεοί, ἀλλὰ μὴ πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν, ἃν τις ὕσσει καὶ δικαιῶν ἃν τυγχάνῃ. Πολλὰ γε μάλλον, οἶμαι, ἢ πρὸς τὰς πολυτελεῖς ταύτας πομπάς τε καὶ δυσίας. Plato in Alcibiade 2.

"Colitur autem, non taurorum opimis corporibus contrucidatis, nec auro argenteo, suspensio, nec in thesauros stipe infusa; sed pia & recta voluntate." Senec. epist. 116.

This method of deducing the will of God from his attributes, is of all others the best and clearest, the certainest and most universal, that the light of nature affords. Yet there are also (as I said) some other considerations, which help to prove and confirm the same thing; namely, that all moral obligations, arising from the nature and reason of things, are likewise the positive will and command of God. As

2. AND FROM THE CONSIDERATION OF THE NATURE OF GOD'S CREATION.

This appears in some measure from the consideration of God's creation. For God, by creating things, manifests it to be his will, that things should be what they are. And as Providence wonderfully preserves things in their present state; and all necessary agents, by constantly and regularly obeying the laws of their nature, necessarily employ all their natural powers in promoting the same end; so it is evident it cannot but * be the will of God, that all rational creatures, whom he has indued with those singular powers and faculties, of understanding, liberty, and free-choice, whereby they are exalted in dignity above the rest of the world, should likewise employ those their extraordinary faculties in preserving the order and harmony of the creation, and not in introducing disorder and confusion therein. The nature indeed and relations, the proportions and disproportions, the fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, are eternal and in themselves absolutely unalterable; but this is only upon supposition that the things exist, and that they exist in such manner as they at present do. Now that things exist in such manner as they do, or that they exist at all, depends entirely on the arbitrary will and good pleasure of God. At the same time, therefore, and by the same means, that God manifests it to be his will that things should exist, and that they should exist in such manner as they do (as by creating them he at first did, and by preserving them he still continually does, declare it to be his will they should); he at the same time manifestly declares, that all such moral obligations, as are the result of the necessary proportions and relations of things, are likewise his positive will and command. And consequently, whoever acts contrary to the forementioned reasons and proportions of things, by dishonouring God, by introducing unjust and unequal dealings among equals, by destroying his own being, or by any way corrupting, abusing, and misapplying the faculties wherewith God has endued him (as has been above more largely explained), is unavoidably guilty of transgressing at the same time the positive will and command of God, which in this manner also is sufficiently discovered and made known to him.

* “Mens humana non potest non judicare, esse longè credibilis, quod eadem constantissima voluntas, à qua hominibus datum est esse, pariter mallet ipsos porro esse & valere, hoc est, conservari & felicitate frui, quam illo deturbari de statu, in quo ipsos collocavit. — Sic scilicet e voluntate creandi, cognoscitur voluntas conservandi tuendique homines. Ex hac autem innotescit obligatio, qua tenemur ad inserviendum eidem voluntati notæ.”
Cumberl. de Leg. Nat. p. 227.

3. AND FROM THE TENDENCY OF THE PRACTICE OF MORALITY TO THE GOOD AND HAPPINESS OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

The same thing may likewise further appear from the following consideration. Whatever tends directly and certainly to promote the good and happiness of the whole, and, (as far as is consistent with that chief end) to promote also the good and welfare of every particular part of the creation, must needs be * agreeable to the will of God, who, being infinitely self-sufficient to his own happiness, could have no other motive to create things at all, but only that he might communicate to them his goodness and happiness, and who consequently cannot but expect and require that all his creatures should, according to their several powers and faculties, endeavour to promote the same end. Now that the exact observance of all those moral obligations, which have before been proved to arise necessarily from the nature and relations of things (that is to say, living agreeably to the unalterable rules of justice, righteousness, equity, and truth), is the certainest and directest means to promote the welfare and happiness, as well of every man in particular, both in body and mind, as of all men in general considered with respect to society; is so very manifest, that even the greatest enemies of all religion, who suppose it to be nothing more than a worldly or state-policy, do yet by that very supposition confess thus much concerning it. And indeed this it is not possible for any one to deny. For the practice of moral virtue does † as plainly and undeniably tend to the natural good of the world, as any physical effect or mathematical truth is naturally consequent to the principles on which it depends, and from which it is regularly derived. And, without such practice in some degree, the world can never be happy in any tolerable measure; as is sufficiently evident from Mr. Hobbes's own description of the extreme miserable condition that men would be in, through the total defect of the practice of all moral virtue, if they were to live in that state which he styles (falsely and contrary to all reason, as has been before fully proved) the state of nature; but which really is a state of the grossest abuse and most unnatural corruption and misapplication of men's natural faculties that can be imagined. For since God has plainly so constituted the nature of man, that they stand continually in need of each other's help and assistance, and can never live comfortably without society and mutual friendship; and are endued with the faculties of reason and speech, and with other natural powers evidently fitted to enable

* "Dubitari non potest, quin Deus, qui ita naturalem rerum omnium ordinem constituit, ut talia sint actionum humanarum consequentia erga ipsos auctores, fecitque ut ordinaria hæc consequentia ab ipsis præsciri possint, aut summa cum probabilitate expectari; veluerit hæc ab iis considerari, antequam ad agendum se accingerent; atque eos his provisus velut argumentis in legum sanctione contentis determinari." Cumberl. de Leg. Nat. p. 228.
 "Rector, seu causa prima rationalis, cujus voluntate res ita disponuntur, ut hominibus satis evidenter indicetur, actus quosdam illorum esse media necessaria ad finem ipsis necessarium; vult homines ad hos actus obligari, vel hos actus imperat." Id. p. 285.
 † "Pari sane ratione (ac in arithmeticis operationibus) doctrinæ moralis veritas fundatur in immutabili coheræntia inter felicitatem summam quam hominum vires assequi valent, & actus benevolentiae universalis." Id. p. 23.

them to assist each other in all matters of life, and mutually to promote universal love and happiness; it is manifestly agreeable to nature, and to the will of God, who gave them these faculties, that they should employ them wholly to this regular and good end. And consequently it is on the contrary evident likewise, that all abuse and misapplication of these faculties to hurt and destroy, to cheat and defraud, to oppress, insult, and domineer over each other, is directly contrary both to the dictates of nature and to the will of God, who, necessarily doing always what is best and fittest and most for the benefit of the whole creation, it is manifest, cannot will the corruption and destruction of any of his creatures; any otherwise than as his preserving their natural faculties (which in themselves are good and excellent, but cannot but be capable of being abused and misapplied) necessarily implies a consequential permission of such corruption.

And this now is the great aggravation of the sin and folly of all immorality, that it is an obstinate setting up the self-will of frail, finite, and fallible creatures, as in opposition to the eternal reason of things, the unprejudiced judgement of their own minds, and the general good and welfare both of themselves and their fellow-creatures; so also in opposition to the will of the supreme author and creator of all things, who gave them their beings and all the powers and faculties they are endued with; in opposition to the will of the all-wise preserver and governor of the universe, on whose gracious protection they depend every moment for the preservation and continuance of their beings; and in opposition to the will of their greatest benefactor, to whose bounty they wholly owe whatever they enjoy at present, and all the hopes of what they expect hereafter. This is the highest of all aggravations, the utmost unreasonableness, joined with obstinate disobedience, and with the greatest ingratitude.

III. Though the forementioned eternal moral obligations are incumbent indeed on all rational creatures, antecedent to any respect of particular reward or punishment; yet they must certainly and necessarily be attended with rewards and punishments. Because the same reasons, which prove God himself to be necessarily just and good, and the rules of justice, equity and goodness, to be his unalterable will, law and command, to all created beings; prove also that he cannot but be pleased with and approve such creatures as imitate and obey him by observing those rules, and be displeased with such as act contrary thereto; and consequently that he cannot but, some way or other, make a suitable difference in his dealings with them, and manifest his supreme power and absolute authority, in finally supporting, maintaining, and vindicating effectually the honour of these his divine laws, as becomes the just and righteous governor and disposer of all things.

This proposition also is in a manner self-evident.

THAT

THAT THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE OR VICE MUST BE ATTENDED WITH REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS, PROVED FROM THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

For, 1st, if God is himself necessarily a being (as has been before shewn) of infinite goodness, justice, and holiness; and if the same reasons, which prove the necessity of these attributes in God himself, prove moreover (as has likewise been shewn already), that the same moral obligations must needs be his positive will, law, and command, to all rational creatures; it follows also necessarily, by the very same argument, that he cannot but be pleased with and approve such creatures as imitate and obey him by observing those rules; and be displeased with such as act contrary thereto. And, if so; then in the nature of the thing itself it is evident, that having absolute power and uncontrollable authority, as being supreme governor and disposer of all things, he cannot but signify, by some means or other, his approbation of the one, and his displeasure against the other. And this can no way be done to any effectual purpose, but by the annexing of respective rewards and punishments. Wherefore if virtue goes finally unrewarded, and wickedness unpunished; then God never signifies his approbation of the one, nor his displeasure against the other; and, if so, then there remains no sufficient proof, that he is really at all pleased or displeased with either; and the consequence of that will be, that there is no reason to think the one to be his will and command, or that the other is forbidden by him; which being once supposed, there will no longer remain any certain evidence of his own moral attributes. Contrary to what has been already demonstrated.

2. AND FROM THE NECESSITY THERE IS, THAT THERE SHOULD BE SOME VINDICATION OF THE HONOUR OF GOD'S LAWS AND GOVERNMENT.

The certainty of rewards and punishments in general may also somewhat otherwise be deduced from their being necessary to support the honour of God, and of his laws and government, in the following manner. It is manifest, we are obliged, in the highest ties of duty and gratitude, to pay all possible honour to God, from whom we receive our being, and all our powers and faculties, and whatever else we enjoy. Now it is plain likewise, that we have no other way to honour God (whose happiness is capable of no addition from any thing that any of his creatures are capable of doing), than by honouring, that is, by obeying his laws. The honour therefore that is thus done to his laws, God is pleased to accept as done immediately to himself. And though we were indeed absolutely obliged in duty to honour him in this manner, notwithstanding that there had been no reward to be expected thereupon; yet it is necessary in the government of the world, and well-becoming an infinitely wise and good governor, that "those who honour him, " he should honour," 1 Sam. ii. 30. that is, should distinguish them with suitable marks of his favour. On the contrary; though nothing that weak and finite creatures are able to do can in the least

least diminish from the absolute glory and happiness of God; yet, as to us, the dishonouring, that is, the disobeying his laws, is a dishonouring of himself; that is, it is, as much as in us lies, a despising his supreme authority, and bringing his government into contempt. Now the same reason that there is, why honour should be paid to the laws of God at all; the same reason there is, that that honour should be vindicated, after it has been diminished and infringed by sin. For no law-giver, who has authority to require obedience to his laws, can or ought to see his laws despised and dishonoured, without taking some measures to vindicate the honour of them, for the support and dignity of his own authority and government. And the only way, by which the honour of a law; or of its author, can be vindicated after it has been infringed by wilful sin, is either by the repentance and reformation of the transgressor, or by his punishment and destruction. So that God is necessarily obliged, in vindication of the honour of his laws and government, to punish those who presumptuously and impenitently disobey his commandments. Wherefore, if there be no distinction made by suitable rewards and punishments, between those who obey the laws of God, and those who obey them not, then God suffers the authority of his laws to be finally trampled upon and despised, without ever making any vindication of it. Which being impossible; it will follow that these things are not really the laws of God, and that he has no such regard to them as we imagine. And the consequence of this must needs be the denial of his moral attributes; contrary, as before, to what has been already proved. And consequently the certainty of rewards and punishments in general is necessarily established.

IV. Though, in order to establish this suitable difference between the fruits or effects of virtue and vice, so reasonable in itself, and so absolutely necessary for the vindication of the honour of God; the nature of things, and the constitution and order of God's creation, was originally such, that the observance of the eternal rules of justice, equity, and goodness, does indeed of itself tend by direct and natural consequence to make all creatures happy; and the contrary practice, to make them miserable: yet since, through some great and general corruption and depravation (whencesoever that may have arisen), the condition of men in this present state is such, that the natural order of things in this world is in event manifestly perverted, and virtue and goodness are visibly prevented in great measure from obtaining their proper and due effects in establishing men's happiness proportionable to their behaviour and practice; therefore it is absolutely impossible, that the whole view and intention, the original and the final design of God's creating such rational beings as men are, and placing them on this globe of earth as the chief and principal, or indeed (to speak more properly) the only inhabitants, for whose sake alone this part at least of the creation is manifestly fitted up and accommodated; it is absolutely impossible (I say)

say) that the whole of God's design in all this should be nothing more than to keep up eternally a succession of such short-lived generations of men as we at present are; and those in such a corrupt, confused, and disorderly state of things as we see the world is now in, without any due observation of the eternal rules of good and evil, without any clear and remarkable effect of the great and most necessary difference of things, and without any final vindication of the honour and laws of God in the proportionable reward of the best, or punishment of the worst of men. And consequently it is certain and necessary (even as certain as the moral attributes of God before demonstrated), that, instead of the continuing an eternal succession of new generations in the present form and state of things, there must at some time or other be such a revolution and renovation of things, such a future state of existence of the same persons, as that, by an exact distribution of rewards and punishments therein, all the present disorders and inequalities may be set right; and that the whole scheme of providence, which to us who judge of it by only one small portion of it, seems now so inexplicable and confused, may appear at its consummation to be a design worthy of infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness.

I. THAT, ACCORDING TO THE ORIGINAL CONSTITUTION OF THINGS, VIRTUE AND VICE ARE ATTENDED WITH NATURAL REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

In order to establish a just and suitable difference between the respective fruits or effects of virtue and vice; the nature of things, and the constitution and order of God's creation, was originally such, that the observance of the eternal rules of piety, justice, equity, goodness, and temperance, does of itself plainly tend by direct and natural consequence to make all creatures happy, and the contrary practice to make them miserable. This is evident in general; because the practice of universal virtue is (in imitation of the divine goodness) the practice of that which is best in the whole; and that which tends to the benefit of the whole must of necessary consequence originally and in its own nature tend also to the benefit of every individual part of the creation. More particularly: a frequent and habitual contemplating the infinitely excellent perfections of the all-mighty creator and all-wise governor of the world, and our most bountiful benefactor, so as to excite in our minds a suitable adoration, love, and imitation of those perfections, a regular employing all our powers and faculties in such designs and to such purposes only as they were originally fitted and intended for by nature, and a due subjecting all our appetites and passions to the government of sober and modest reason, are evidently the directest means to obtain such settled peace and solid satisfaction of mind as is the first foundation and the principal and most necessary ingredient of all true happiness. The temperate and moderate enjoyment of all the good things of this present world, and of the pleasures of life, according to the measures of right reason and simple nature, is plainly and confessedly the certainest and most direct method

thod to preserve the health and strength of the body. And the practice of universal justice, equity, and benevolence, is manifestly (as has been before observed) as direct and adequate a means to promote the general welfare and happiness of men in society, as any physical motion or geometrical operation is to produce its natural effect. So that if all men were truly virtuous, and practised these rules in such manner, that the miseries and calamities arising usually from the numberless follies and vices of men, were prevented; undoubtedly this great truth would evidence itself visibly in fact, and appear experimentally in the happy state and condition of the world. On the contrary; neglect of God, and insensibleness of our relation and duty towards him; abuse and unnatural misapplication of the powers and faculties of our minds; inordinate appetites, and unbridled and furious passions; necessarily fill the mind with confusion, trouble, and vexation. And intemperance naturally brings weakness, pains, and sicknesses into the body. And mutual injustice and iniquity; fraud, violence, and oppression; wars and desolations; murders, rapine, and all kinds of cruelty; are sufficiently plain causes of the miseries and calamities of men in society. So that the original constitution, order, and tendency of things, is evidently enough fitted and designed to establish naturally a just and suitable difference in general between virtue and vice, by their respective fruits or effects.

2. BUT THAT NOW, IN THIS PRESENT WORLD, THE NATURAL ORDER OF THINGS IS SO PERVERTED, THAT VICE OFTEN FLOURISHES IN GREAT PROSPERITY, AND VIRTUE FALLS UNDER THE GREATEST CALAMITIES OF LIFE.

But though originally the constitution and order of God's creation was indeed such, that virtue and vice are by the regular tendency of things followed with natural rewards and punishments; yet in event, through some great and general corruption and depravation (whencesoever that may have arisen, of which more hereafter), the condition of men in the present state is plainly such, that this natural order of things in the world is manifestly perverted; virtue and goodness are visibly prevented in great measure from obtaining their proper and due effect, in establishing men's happiness proportionable to their behaviour and practice; and wickedness and vice very frequently escape the punishment which the general nature and disposition of things tends to annex unto it. Wicked men, by stupidity, inconsiderateness, and sensual pleasure, often make shift to silence the reproaches of conscience, and feel very little of that confusion and remorse of mind, which ought naturally to be consequent upon their vicious practices. By accidental strength and robustness of constitution, they frequently escape the natural ill consequences of intemperance and debauchery; and enjoy the same proportion of health and vigour, as those who live up to the rules of strict and unblameable sobriety. And injustice and iniquity, fraud, violence, and cruelty, though they are always attended indeed with sufficiently calamitous consequences in the general; yet the most of those ill consequences

consequences fall not always upon such persons in particular as have the greatest share in the guilt of the crimes, but very commonly on those that have the least. On the contrary; virtue and piety, temperance and sobriety, faithfulness, honesty, and charity; though they have indeed both in themselves the true springs of happiness, and also the greatest probabilities of outward causes to concur in promoting their temporal prosperity; though they cannot indeed be prevented from affording a man the highest peace and satisfaction of spirit, and many other advantages both of body and mind in respect of his own particular person; yet in respect of those advantages which the mutual practice of social virtues ought to produce in common, it is in experience found true, that the vices of a great part of mankind do so far prevail against nature and reason, as frequently to oppress the virtue of the best; and not only hinder them from enjoying those public benefits, which would naturally and regularly be the consequences of their virtue, but oft-times bring upon them the greatest temporal calamities, even for the sake of that very virtue. For it is but too well known, that good men are very often afflicted and impoverished, and made a prey to the covetousness and ambition of the wicked; and sometimes most cruelly and maliciously persecuted, even upon account of their goodness itself. In all which affairs, the providence of God seems not very evidently to interpose for the protection of the righteous. And not only so; but even in judgements also, which seem more immediately to be inflicted by the hand of heaven, it frequently suffers the righteous to be involved in the same calamities with the wicked, as they are mixed together in business and the affairs of the world.

3. THAT THEREFORE THERE MUST NEEDS BE A FUTURE STATE OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

Which things being so (viz. that there is plainly in event no sufficient distinction made between virtue and vice; no proportionable and certain reward annexed to the one, nor punishment to the other, in this present world); and yet it being no less undeniably certain in the general, as has been before shown, that if there be a God (and that God be himself a being of infinite justice and goodness; and it be his will, that all rational creatures should imitate his moral perfections; and he * cannot but see and take notice how every creature behaves itself; and cannot but be accordingly pleased with such as obey his will and imitate his nature, and be displeased with such as act contrary thereto); it being certain, I say, that, if these things be so, God must needs, in vindication of the honour of his laws and government, signify at some time or other

* Εἰ δὲ μὴ λανθάνειτον τῆς θεῆς, ὁ μὲν δίκαιος θεοφιλὴς ἂν εἴη, ὁ δὲ ἀδίκος θεομισήτης.— τῷ δὲ θεοφιλεῖ, ἔσα γε ὑπὸ θεῶν γίγνεται, πάντα γίγνεται ὡς οἶόν τε ἄριστα.— Οὕτως ἄρα ἀποληπτόν περὶ τοῦ δίκαιου ἀνδρός, ἔάν τ' ἐν πένει γίγνεται, ἔάν τ' ἐν νόσοις, ἢ τινι ἄλλῳ τῶν δοκούντων κακῶν, ἐς τὴν ταῦτα εἰς ἀγαθὸν τι τελευτήσῃ ζῶντι ἢ καὶ ἀποθανόντι. Οὐ γὰρ δὴ ὑπὸ γε θεῶν ποτε ἀμελεῖται, ἐς ἃν προθυμείσθαι ἐθέλη δίκαιος γίγνεσθαι, καὶ ἐπιπλεῖν ἀρετῇ εἰς ἕσπον δυνάτον ἀνθρώπου ὁμοιοῦσθαι θεῷ. Plato de Republ. lib. X.

this his approbation or displeasure, by making finally a suitable difference between those who obey him and those who obey him not: it follows unavoidably, either that all these notions which we frame concerning God, are false; and that there is no providence, and God sees not, or at least has no regard to what is done by his creatures, and consequently the ground of all his own moral attributes is taken away, and even his being itself; or else that there must necessarily be a future state of rewards and punishments after this life, wherein all the present difficulties of providence shall be cleared up, by an exact and impartial administration of justice. But now, that these notions are true; that there is a God and a providence, and that God is himself a being indued with all moral perfections, and expects and commands that all his rational creatures should govern all their actions by the same rules, has been particularly and distinctly proved already. It is therefore directly demonstrated, that there must be a future state of rewards and punishments. "Let not
 "thine heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all
 "the day long; for surely there is a reward, and thine expectation
 "shall not be cut off," Prov. xxiii. 17, 18.

4. OF THE STOICAL OPINION CONCERNING THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF VIRTUE TO ITS OWN HAPPINESS.

This argument is indeed a common one; but it is nevertheless strongly conclusive and unanswerable. So that, whoever denies a future state of rewards and punishments, must of necessity, by a chain of unavoidable consequences, be forced to recur to downright Atheism. The only middle opinion that can be invented, is that assertion of the Stoicks, that virtue is self-sufficient to its own happiness, and a full reward to itself in all cases, even under the greatest sufferings that can befall a man for its sake. Men who were not certain of a future state (though most of them did indeed believe it highly probable), and yet would not give up the cause of virtue; had no other way left to defend it, than by asserting that it was in all cases and under all circumstances absolutely self-sufficient to its own happiness; whereas on the contrary, because it is manifestly not self-sufficient, and yet undoubtedly the cause of virtue is not to be given up; therefore they ought from thence to have concluded the certainty of a future state. That virtue is truly worthy to be chosen, even merely for its own sake, without any respect to any recompence or reward, must indeed necessarily be acknowledged. But it does not from hence follow, that he who dies for the sake of virtue, is really any more happy than he that dies for any fond opinion or any unreasonable humour or obstinacy whatsoever; if he has no other happiness than the bare satisfaction arising from the sense of his resoluteness in persisting to preserve his virtue, and in adhering immoveably to what he judges to be right; and there be no future state wherein he may reap any benefit of that his resolute perseverance. On the contrary, it will only follow, that God has made virtue necessarily amiable, and such as men's judgement and conscience can never but choose; and yet that he has not annexed to it
 any

any sufficient encouragement to support men effectually in that choice. Brave indeed and admirable were the things which some of the philosophers have said upon this subject; and which some very few extraordinary men (of which Regulus is a remarkable instance) seem to have made good in their practice, even beyond the common abilities of human nature: but it is very plain (as I before intimated) that the general practice of virtue in the world can never be supported upon this foot; it being indeed neither possible nor truly reasonable that men by adhering to virtue should part with their lives, if * thereby they eternally deprived themselves of all possibility of receiving any advantage from that adherence. Virtue, it is true, in its proper seat, and with all its full effects and consequences unhindered, must be confessed to be the chief good; as being truly the enjoyment as well as the imitation of God. But, as the † practice of it is circumstantiated in this present world, and in the present state of things; it is plain it is not itself the chief good, but only the means to it; as running in a race, is not itself the prize, but the way to obtain it.

3. FROM WHENCE THE CERTAINTY OF A FUTURE STATE IS AGAIN CONCLUDED.

It is therefore absolutely impossible, that the whole view and intention, the original and the final design of God's creating such rational beings as men are; endued with such noble faculties, and so necessarily conscious of the eternal and unchangeable differences of good and evil: it is absolutely impossible (I say) that the whole design of an infinitely wise and just and good God, in all this, should be nothing more than to keep up eternally a succession of new generations of men; and those in such a corrupt, confused, and disorderly state of things, as we see the present world is in, without any due and regular observation of the eternal rules of good and evil, without any clear and remarkable effect of the great and most necessary differences of things, without any sufficient discrimination of virtue and vice, by their proper and respective fruits; and without any final vindication of the honour and laws of God, in the proportionable reward of the best, or punishment of the worst of men. And consequently it is certain and necessary (even as certain as the moral attributes of God before demonstrated), that, instead of the continuing an eternal succession of new generations in the present state and form of things, there must at some time or other be such a revolution and renovation of things, such a future state of existence of the same persons, as that by an exact distribution

* Οὐκ οἶδα ὅπως μάταιός ἐστιν ὑπολάβω τῆς μηδὲν ἀπολαύσασθαι τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀγαθόν. δι' αὐτὴν καὶ ταύτην ἀπολλυμένων. Dionys. Halicarn.

† “ Perro ipsa virtus, cum sibi bonorum culmen vendicet humanorum, quid hic agit nisi perpetua bella cum vitiis; nec exterioribus, sed interioribus; nec alienis, sed plane nostris & propriis?—Absit ergo, ut quamdiu in hoc bello intestino fumus, jam nos beatitudinem, ad quam vincendo volumus pervenire, adeptos esse credamus.” Augustin. de Civitate Dei, lib. XIX. c. 4.

“ Non enim virtus ipsa est summum bonum, sed efficitrix & mater est summi boni; quoniam perveniri ad illud sine virtute non potest.” Lactant. lib. III.

of rewards and punishments therein, all the present disorders and inequalities may be set right; and that the whole scheme of providence, which to us who judge of it by only one small portion of it, seems now so inexplicable and much confused, may appear at its consummation to be a design worthy of infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness. Without this, all * comes to nothing. If this scheme be once broken; there is no justice, no goodness, no order, no reason, nor any thing upon which any argument in moral matters can be founded, left in the world. Nay, even though we should set aside all consideration of the moral attributes of God, and consider only his natural perfections, his infinite knowledge and wisdom, as framer and builder of the world; it would even in that view only appear infinitely improbable, that God should have created such beings as men are, and indued them with such excellent faculties, and placed them on this globe of earth, as the only inhabitants for whose sake this part at least of the creation is manifestly fitted up and accommodated; and all this without any further design, than † only for the maintaining a perpetual succession of such short-lived generations of mortals as we at present are; to live in the utmost confusion and disorder for a very few years, and then perish eternally into nothing. What ‡ can be imagined more vain and empty? what more absurd? what more void of all marks of wisdom, than the fabric of the world, and the creation of mankind, upon this supposition? But then, take in also the consideration of the moral attributes of God; and it amounts (as I have said) to a complete demonstration, that there must be a future state.

6. WHY THE WISDOM OF GOD IS NOT SO CLEARLY AND PLAINLY SEEN IN HIS GOVERNMENT OF THE MORAL, AS IN THE FABRIC OF THE NATURAL WORLD.

It may here at first sight seem to be a very strange thing, that through the system of nature in the material, in the inanimate, in the irrational part of the creation, every single thing should have in itself so many and so obvious, so evident and undeniable marks of the infinitely accurate skill and wisdom of their almighty creator; that from the brightest star in the firmament of heaven, to the meanest pebble upon the face of the earth, there is no one piece of matter which does not afford such instances of admirable artifice and exact proportion and contrivance, as exceeds all the wit of man (I do not say to imitate, but even) ever to be able fully to search out and comprehend; and yet, that in the management of the rational and moral world, for the sake of which all the rest was created,

* “Ita fit, ut si ab illa rerum summa, quam superius comprehendimus, aberraveris; omnis ratio intereat, & ad nihilum omnia revertantur.” Lactant. lib. VII.

† “Non enim temerè, nec fortuito facti & creati sumus; sed profecto fuit quædam vis, quæ generi consuleret humano; nec id gigneret aut aleret, quod cum exantlavisset omnis labores, tum incideret in mortis malum sempiternum.” Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. I.

‡ Si sine causa gignimur; si in hominibus procreandis providentia nulla vertatur; si casu nobismetipsis ac voluptatis nostræ gratia nascimur; si nihil post mortem sumus; quid potest esse tam supervacuum, tam inane, tam vanum, quam humana res est, quam mundus ipse?” Lactant. lib. VII.

and is preserved only to be subservient to it, there should not in many ages be plain evidences enough, either of the wisdom, or of the justice and goodness of God, or of so much as the interposition of his divine Providence at all, to convince mankind clearly and generally of the world's being under his immediate care, inspection, and government. This, I say, may indeed at first sight seem very wonderful. But if we consider the matter more closely and attentively, it will appear not to be so strange and astonishing as we are apt to imagine. For as, in a great machine, contrived by the skill of a consummate artificer, fitted up and adjusted with all conceivable accuracy for some very difficult and deep-projected design, and polished and fine-wrought in every part of it with admirable niceness and dexterity; any man who saw and examined one or two wheels thereof, could not fail to observe in those single parts of it the art and exact skill of the work-man; and yet the excellency of the end or use for which the whole was contrived, he would not at all be able, even though he was himself also a skilful artificer, to discover and comprehend, without seeing the whole fitted up and put together: so though in every part of the natural world, considered even single and unconnected, the wisdom of the great Creator sufficiently appears; yet his wisdom and justice and goodness in the disposition and government of the moral world, which necessarily depends on the connexion and issue of the whole scheme, cannot perhaps be distinctly and fully comprehended by any finite and created beings, much less by frail and weak and short-lived mortals, before the period and accomplishment of certain great revolutions. But it is exceedingly reasonable to believe, that as the great discoveries which by the diligence and sagacity of later ages have been made in astronomy and natural philosophy, have opened surprising scenes of the power and wisdom of the Creator, beyond what men could possibly have conceived or imagined in former times: so at the unfolding of the whole scheme of providence in the conclusion of this present state, men will be surprized with the amazing manifestations of justice and goodness, which will then appear to have run through the whole series of God's government of the moral world.

This is the chief and greatest argument, on which the natural proof of a future state of rewards and punishments must principally be founded. Yet there are also several other collateral evidences, which jointly conspire to render the same thing extremely credible to mere natural reason. As,

I. OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, AND THE NATURAL PROOFS WE HAVE OF IT.

There is very great reason, even from the bare nature of the thing itself, to believe the soul to be immortal; separate from all moral arguments drawn from the attributes of God; and without any consideration of the general system of the world, or of the universal order and constitution, connexion and dependencies of things. The immortality of the soul has been commonly believed in

in all ages and in all places *, by the unlearned part of all civilized people, and by the almost general consent of all the most barbarous nations under heaven; from a tradition so ancient and so universal, as cannot be conceived to owe its original either to chance or to vain imagination, or to any other cause than to the Author of Nature himself. And the most learned and thinking part of mankind, at all times and in all countries, where the study of philosophy has been in any measure cultivated, have almost generally agreed, that it is capable of a just proof from the abstract consideration of the nature and operations of the soul itself. That none of the known qualities of matter can, in any possible variation, division, or composition, produce sense and thought and reason, is abundantly evident; as has been demonstrated in the former † discourse. That matter consists of innumerable, divisible, separable, and for the most part actually disjoined parts, is acknowledged by all philosophers. That, the powers and faculties of the soul being the most remote and distant from all the known properties of matter that can be imagined, it is at least a putting great violence upon our reason, to imagine them superadded by Omnipotence to one and the same substance, cannot easily be denied. That it is highly unreasonable and absurd, to suppose the soul made up of innumerable consciousnesses, as matter is necessarily made up of innumerable parts; and, on the contrary, that it is highly reasonable to believe the seat of thought to be a simple substance, such as cannot naturally be divided and crumbled into pieces, as all matter is manifestly subject to be, must of necessity be confessed. Consequently the soul will not be liable to be dissolved at the dissolution of the body; and therefore it will naturally be immortal. All this seems to follow, at least with the highest degree of probability, from the single consideration of the soul's being endued with sense, thought or consciousness. "I cannot imagine," saith ‡ Cyrus (in that speech which Xenophon relates he made to his children a little before his death), "that the soul, while it is in this mortal body, lives; and " that when it is separated from it, then it should die. I cannot " persuade myself, that the soul, by being separated from this body " which is devoid of sense, should thereupon become itself like- " wise devoid of sense: on the contrary, it seems to me more rea- " sonable to believe, that, when the mind is separated from the " body, it should then become most of all sensible and intelligent;" thus he. But then further; if we take also into the consideration all the higher and nobler faculties, capacities, and improvements of the soul; the argument will still become much stronger, "I am

* " Et primum quidem omni antiquitate, &c " Cic. Tusc. Quest. lib. I.

† Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God. See also a Letter to Mr Dodwell, with the several Answers and Replies.

‡ Οὐ τοι ἔγωγε, ὦ παῖδες, ἔδδ' ἔτι τοῦτο πῶποτε ἐπεισθῆναι, ὡς ἡ ψυχὴ ἕως αὖν ἐν θνητῷ σώματι κῆ, ζῇ· δὲ τότε ἀπαλλαγῇ, τίθνηκεν. Οὐδ' γε ἕπως ἄφρων ἔσαι ἡ ψυχὴ ἐπειδὴν τοῦ ἀφρονος σώματος διχα γίνηται, ἔδδ' ἔτι τοῦτο πῶποτε ἐπεισθῆναι. Ἀλλ' ὅταν ἀν' ἡσυχίας καὶ καθεσθός, ὁ νῦν ἐκκρησθὴ τότε καὶ φρονιμώτατος εἰκὸς εἶναι. Cyrus apud Xen.

“persuaded,” saith * Cicero, “when I consider with what swiftness of thought the soul is endued, with what a wonderful memory of things past, and fore-cast of things to come; how many arts, how many sciences, how many wonderful inventions it has found out; that that nature, which is possessor of such faculties, cannot be mortal.” Again: “the memory,” saith † he, “which the soul has of things that have been, and its foresight of things that will be, and its large comprehension of things that at present are, are plainly divine powers: nor can the wit of man ever invent any way, by which these faculties could possibly come to be in men, but by immediate communication from God.” Again; “though we see not,” saith ‡ he, “the soul of man, as indeed neither are we able to see God; yet, as from the works of God we are certain of his being; so from the faculties of the soul, its memory, its invention, its swiftness of thought, its noble exercise of all virtues, we cannot but be convinced of its divine original and nature.” And, speaking of the strength and beauty of that argument, which, from the wonderful faculties and capacities of the soul, concludes it to be of an immaterial and immortal nature; “Though all the vulgar and little philosophers in the world,” saith § he, “for so I cannot but call all such, as dissent from Plato and Socrates and those superior geniuses, should put their heads together; they will not only never, while they live, be able to explain any thing so neatly and elegantly; but even this argument itself, they will never have understanding enough fully to perceive and comprehend, how neat and beautiful and strong it is.” The chief prejudice against the belief of the soul’s existing thus and living after the death of the body; and the sum of all the objections brought against this doctrine by the Epicurean philosophers of old, who denied the immortality of the soul; and by certain Atheistical persons of late, who differ very little from them in their manner of reasoning; is this: that they || cannot ap-

* “Quid multa? Sic mihi persuasi, sic sentio; quum tanta celeritas animorum sit, tanta memoria præteritorum, futurorum providentia, tot artes, tantæ scientiæ, tot inventa; non posse eam naturam, quæ res eas contineat, esse mortalem.” Cic. de Senectute.

† “Quod & præterita teneat, & futura provideat, & complecti possit præsentia; hæc divina sunt. Nec invenietur unquam, unde ad hominem venire possint, nisi a Deo.” Idem. Tusc. Quæst. Lib. I.

‡ “Mentem hominis, quamvis eam non videas, ut Deum non vides; tamen, ut Deum agnoscis ex operibus ejus, sic ex memoria rerum & inventione & celeritate motus, omni-que pulchritudine virtutis, vim divinam mentis agnoscito.” Id. ibid.

§ “Licet concurrant plebei omnes philosophi (sic enim ii qui a Platone & Socrate & ab illa familia dissident, appellandi videntur): non modo nihil unquam tam eleganter explicabunt, sed ne hoc quidem ipsum quam subtiliter conclusum sit intelligent.” Id. ibid.

|| “— Si immortalis natura anima est,

“Et sentire potest secreta a corpore nostro;

“Quinque (ut opinor) eam faciendum est sensibus auctam:

“— At neque scorsum oculi, &c.” Lucret. Lib. III.

“Quod autem corpus animæ per se? quæ materia? ubi cogitatio illi? quomodo visus?

“auditus? aut qui tangit? qui usus ejus? aut quod sine his bonum?” Plin. lib. VII.

“Neque aliud est quidquam cur incredibilis his animorum videatur æternitas, nisi quod neque eunt qualis sit animus vacans corpore intelligere, & cogitatione comprehendere.”

Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. I.

prehend how the soul can have any sense or perception without the body, wherein evidently are all the organs of sense. But neither * can they any better apprehend or explain how the soul in the body (that is, the body itself, according to their opinion) is capable of sense or perception, by means of the organs of sense. And besides: this argument, that the soul can have no perception, when all the ways of perception that we have at present ideas of are removed; is exactly the very same argument, and no other than what a man born blind might make use of with the very same force, to prove that none of us can possibly have in our present bodies any perception of light or colours; as I have explained more particularly in the † former discourse.

THE NATURAL CREDIBILITY OF THE SOUL'S BEING IMMORTAL,
OF GREAT USE TO THE WISER HEATHENS.

This consideration, of the soul's appearing in all reason to be naturally immortal, afforded great pleasure and satisfaction to the wisest and soberest men in the heathen world; was a great support under calamities and sufferings, especially under such as men brought upon themselves by being virtuous; filled them with great hopes and comfortable expectations of what was to come hereafter; and was a mighty encouragement to the practice of all moral virtue, and particularly to take pains in subduing the body and keeping it in subjection to the reason of the mind. First, it afforded great pleasure and satisfaction to the wisest and soberest men in the heathen world, from the bare contemplation of the thing itself. "No-body," saith ‡ Cicero, "shall ever drive me from the hope of immortality: and, § if this my opinion concerning the immortality of the soul should at last prove an error; yet it is a very delightful error; and I will never suffer myself to be undeceived in so pleasing an opinion, as long as I live." Secondly, it was a great support to them under calamities and sufferings, especially under such as men brought upon themselves by being virtuous: "these and the like contemplations," saith || Cicero, "had such an effect upon Socrates, that when he was tried for his life, he neither desired any advocate to plead his cause, nor made any supplication to his judges for mercy; and, on the very last day of his life, made many excellent discourses upon this subject; and a few days before, when he had an opportunity offered him to have escaped out of prison, he would not lay hold of it. For

* "Quasi vero intelligant qualis sit in ipso corpore — Mihi quidem naturam animi intuiti, multo difficilior occurrit cogitatio, multoque obscurior, qualis animus in corpore sit, quam qualis cum exierit." Id. ibid.

† Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, p. 76, 77.

‡ "Sed me nemo de immortalitate depellet." Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. I.

§ "Quod si in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro; nec mihi hunc errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo." Idem, de Senectute.

|| "His & talibus adductus Socrates, nec patronum quesivit ad judicium capitis, nec iudicibus supplex fuit; & supremo vitæ die, de hoc ipso multa disseruit; & paucis ante diebus, cum facile posset educi ex custodia, noluit. — Ita enim censebat, itaque disseruit, duas esse vias, duplicesque cursus animorum ex corpore excedentium, &c." Id. Tusc. Quæst. lib. I.

“ thus he believed, and thus he taught: that when the souls of men depart out of their bodies, they go two different ways; the virtuous to a place of happiness, the wicked and the sensual to misery.” Thirdly, it filled them with great hopes, and comfortable expectations of what was to come hereafter: “ O happy day,” saith the good old man in Cicero *, “ when I shall go to that blessed assembly of spirits, and depart out of this wicked and miserably confused world !” Lastly, it was a mighty encouragement to the practice of all moral virtue, and particularly to take pains in subduing the body, and keeping it in subjection to the reason of the mind: “ We ought to spare no pains,” saith † Plato, “ to obtain the habit of virtue and wisdom in this life; for the prize is noble, and the hope is very great.” Again; having reckoned up the temporal advantages of virtue in the present world, he adds; “ ‡ but we have not yet mentioned the greatest and chiefest rewards, which are proposed to virtue; for what can be truly great in so small a proportion of time, the whole age of the longest liver in this our present world being inconsiderable and nothing in comparison of eternity?” And again; “ These things,” saith he §, “ are nothing, either in number or greatness, in comparison with those rewards of virtue, and punishments of vice, which attend men after death.” And, to mention no more places: “ They,” saith he ||, “ who in the games hope to obtain a victory in such poor matters, as wrestling, running, and the like, think not much to prepare themselves for the contest by great temperance and abstinence; and shall our scholars, in the study of virtue, not have courage and resolution enough, to persevere with patience, for a far nobler prize?” Words very like those of St. Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 24. “ Know ye not, that they which run in a race, run all; and every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things? Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.”

2. THE ARGUMENT FOR A FUTURE STATE, DRAWN FROM MEN'S NATURAL DESIRE OF IMMORTALITY.

Another argument, which may be used in proof of a future state, so far as to amount to a very great probability, is that necessary desire of immortality which seems to be naturally implanted in all men, with an unavoidable concern for what is to come hereafter. If there be no existence after this life; it will seem that the irrational creatures, who always enjoy the present good without any care or

* “ O præclarum diem, quum in illud animorum concilium cætumque proficiscar, & quum ex hac turba & colluvione disceram !” Idem, de Senect.

† Χρὴ πάντα ποιεῖν, ὥς τε ἀρετῆς καὶ φρονήσεως ἐν τῇ βίῳ μέλασχεῖν· καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἀθλοῦν, καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς μεγάλη. Plato in Phædone.

‡ Καὶ μὲν τὰ γε μέγιστα ἐπιχίσεια ἀρετῆς καὶ προσιέμενα ἀθλα ἔ διακλύθμεν.—Τὶ δ' ἂν ἦν γε ὀλίγον χρόνον μέγα γένεσθαι; πᾶσι γὰρ ἑτός γε ὁ ἐν παιδὶ, μέγχι πρεσβύτε χρόνος πρὸς πάντα ὀλίγον· πῶς τις ἂν εἴη. Plato de Republ. lib. X.

§ Ταῦτα τοίνυν ἑδὲν ἐς τιπλάθει ἑδὲ μέγιστοι πρὸς ἐκεῖνα ἀτελευτήσαντα ἐκάτερον περιμένει. Idem, ibid.

|| Οἱ μὲν ἄρα νίκης ἕνεκα πάλης καὶ δρόμων καὶ τῶν τοιούτων, ἐτόλμησαν ἀπέχεσθαι.—Οἱ δὲ ἡμετέροι παῖδες ἀδυνατήσουσι καθερεῖν; πολλὸν καλλίον· ἕνεκα νίκης. Plato de Legib. lib. VIII, folicitude

solicitude for what may happen afterwards, are better provided for by nature than men, whose reason and foresight, and all other those very faculties, by which they are made more excellent than beasts, serve them, upon this supposition, scarcely for any other purpose than to render them uneasy and uncertain and fearful and solicitous about things which are not. And it is not at all probable, that God should have given men appetites, which were never to be satisfied; desires, which had no objects to answer them; and unavoidable apprehensions of what was never really to come to pass.

3. ANOTHER, DRAWN FROM MEN'S CONSCIENCE OR JUDGEMENT OF THEIR OWN ACTIONS, ROM. ii. 14, 15

Another argument, which may be brought to prove a future state, is, that conscience which all men have of their own actions, or that inward judgement which they necessarily pass upon them in their own minds: whereby they that "have not any law are a law unto themselves, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or else excusing one another." There is no man, who at any time does good and brave and generous things, but the reason of his own mind applauds him for so doing; and no man at any time does things base and vile, dishonourable and wicked, but at the same time he condemns himself in what he does. The one is necessarily accompanied with good hope and expectation of reward; the other with continual torment and fear of punishment. And hence, as before, it is not probable, that God should have so framed and constituted the mind of man, as necessarily to pass upon itself a judgement which shall never be verified, and stand perpetually and unavoidably convicted by a sentence which shall never be confirmed.

4. ANOTHER, DRAWN FROM MAN'S BEING BY NATURE AN ACCOUNTABLE CREATURE.

Lastly, another argument, which may be drawn from right reason in proof of a future state, is this, that man is plainly in his nature an accountable creature, and capable of being judged. Those creatures, indeed, whose actions are all determined by something without themselves, or by what we call mere instinct; as they are not capable of having a rule given them, so it is evident that neither can they be accountable for their actions. But man, who has entirely within himself a free principle or power of determining his own actions upon moral motives, and has a rule given him to act by, which is right reason, can be, nay, cannot but be, accountable for all his actions, how far they have been agreeable or disagreeable to that rule. Every man, because of the natural liberty of his will, can and ought to govern all his actions by some certain rule, and give a reason for every thing he does. Every moral action he performs, being free and without any compulsion or natural necessity, proceeds either from some good motive or some evil one; is either conformable to right reason, or contrary to it; is worthy either of praise or dispraise, and capable either of excuse or aggravation. Consequently it is highly reasonable to be supposed, that since

there is a superior being, from whom we received all our faculties and powers; and since in the right use or in the abuse of those faculties, in the governing them by the rule of right reason, or in the neglecting that rule, consists all the moral difference of our actions; there will at some time or other be an examination or inquiry made into the grounds and motives and circumstances of our several actions, how agreeable they have been to the rule that was given us; and a suitable judgement be passed upon them. Upon these considerations, the wisest of the ancient Heathens believed and taught, that the actions of every particular person should all be strictly tried and examined after his death, and he have accordingly a just and impartial sentence passed upon him: which doctrine though the poets indeed wrapt up in fables and obscure riddles, yet the wisest of the philosophers had a better notion of it, and more agreeable to reason. "From this judgement," saith * Plato, "let no man hope to be able to escape: for though you could descend into the very depth of the earth, or fly on high to the extremities of the heavens; yet should you never escape the just judgement of the gods, either before or after death." An expression very agreeable to that of the Psalmist, Psal. cxxxix. 8, 9.

These, I say, are very good and strong arguments for the great probability of a future state: but that drawn, as above, from the consideration of the moral attributes of God, seems to amount even to a demonstration.

V. Though the necessity and indispensableness of all the great and moral obligations of natural religion, and also the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments, be thus in general deducible, even demonstrably, by a chain of clear and undeniable reasoning: yet (in the present state of the world, by what means soever it came originally to be so corrupted; the particular circumstances whereof could not now be certainly known but by Revelation) such is the carelessness, inconsiderateness, and want of attention of the greater part of mankind; so many the prejudices and false notions taken up by evil education; so strong and violent the unreasonable lusts, appetites, and desires of sense; and so great the blindness introduced by superstitious opinions, vicious customs, and debauched practices through the world, that very few are able, in reality and effect, to discover these things clearly and plainly for themselves; but men have great need of particular teaching, and much instruction, to convince them of the truth, and certainty, and importance of these things, to give them a due sense, and clear and just apprehensions concerning them, and to bring them effectually to the practice of the plainest and most necessary duties.

* Ταύτης τῆς δίκης ὅτε σὺ μή ποτε, ὅτε εἰ ἀλλ' αὐτοχῆς γενόμενος ἐπεύξῃται περιγενέσθαι δεῶν.—Οὐ γὰρ ἀμελεθήσῃ ποτ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς· οὐχ οὕτω σμικρὸς αἶν, δύστη κατὰ τὸ τῆς γῆς βᾶθ'· οὐδ' ἰψυλλὸς γενόμενος, εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναπλήσῃ τίσεις δὲ αὐτῶν τὴν προσήκουσαν τιμωρίαν, εἴτ' ἐνθάδε μένων, εἴτε καὶ ἐν ᾧδε διαπορεύσεις, εἴθε καὶ τούτων εἰς ἀγνώτερον ἔτι διακομισθεὶς ἔσῃ.—Plato de Legib. lib. X.

I. MEN HINDERED FROM DISCOVERING AND UNDERSTANDING RELIGIOUS TRUTHS BY CARELESSNESS AND WANT OF ATTENTION.

There is naturally, in the greater part of mankind, such a prodigious carelessness, inconsiderateness, and want of attention, as not only hinders them from making use of their reason, in such manner as to discover these things clearly and effectually for themselves, but is the cause of the grossest and most stupid ignorance imaginable. Some seem to have little or hardly any notion of God at all; and more take little or no care to frame just and worthy apprehensions concerning him, concerning the divine attributes and perfections of his nature; and still many more are entirely negligent and heedless to consider and discover what may be his will. Few make a due use of their natural faculties to distinguish rightly the essential and unchangeable difference between good and evil; fewer yet so attend to the natural notices which God has given them, as by their own understanding to collect, that what is good is the express will and command of God, and what is evil is forbidden by him; and still fewer consider with themselves the weight and importance of these things, the natural rewards or punishments that are frequently annexed in this life to the practice of virtue or vice, and the much greater and certainer difference that shall be made between them in a life to come. Hence it is, that (as travellers assure us) even some whole nations seem to have very little notion of God, or at least very poor and unworthy apprehensions concerning him; and a very small sense of the obligations of morality, and very mean and obscure expectations of a future state. Not that God has any where left himself wholly without witness, or that the difference of good and evil is to any rational being undiscernible, or that men at any time or in any nation could ever be firmly and generally persuaded in their own minds, that they perished absolutely at death; but through supine negligence and want of attention, they let their reason (as it were) sleep, and * are deaf to the dictates of common understanding; and, like brute beasts, minding only the things that are before their eyes, never consider any thing that is abstract from sense, or beyond their present private temporal interest. And it were well, if, even in civilized nations, this was not, very nearly, the case of too many men, when left entirely to themselves, and void of particular instruction.

2. AND BY EARLY PREJUDICES AND FALSE NOTIONS.

The greater part of mankind are not only unattentive, and barely ignorant; but commonly they have also, through a careless and evil education, taken up early prejudices, and many vain and foolish notions; which pervert their natural understanding, and hinder them from using their reason in moral matters to any effectual purpose. This cannot be better described than in the words of Cicero:

* “ Multis signis natura declarat quid velit:—obsurdescimus tamen nescio quo modo, nec audimus.” Cic. de Amicit.

“ If we had come into the world,” saith * he, “ in such circumstances, as that we could clearly and distinctly have discerned nature herself, and have been able in the course of our lives to follow her true and uncorrupted directions ; this alone might have been sufficient, and there would have been little need of teaching and instruction. But now nature has given us only some small sparks of right reason, which we so quickly extinguish with corrupt opinions and evil practices, that the true light of nature no where appears. As soon as we are brought into the world, immediately we dwell in the midst of all wickedness, and are surrounded with a number of most perverse and foolish opinions ; so that we seem to suck in error even with our nurses milk. Afterwards, when we return to our parents, and are committed to tutors ; then we are further stocked with such variety of errors, that truth becomes perfectly overwhelmed with falsehood ; and the most natural sentiments of our minds are entirely stifled with confirmed follies. But when, after all this, we enter upon business in the world, and make the multitude, conspiring every where in wickedness, our great guide and example ; then our very nature itself is wholly transformed, as it were, into corrupt opinions.” A livelier description of the present corrupt estate of human nature is not easily to be met with.

3. AND BY SENSUAL APPETITES AND WORLDLY BUSINESS.

In the generality of men, the appetites and desires of sense are so violent and importunate, the business and the pleasures of the world take up so much of their time, and their passions are so very strong and unreasonable, that, of themselves, they are very backward and unapt to employ their reason, and fix their attention upon moral matters ; and still more backward to apply themselves to the practice of them. The love of pleasure is (as Aristotle elegantly † expresses it) so nourished up with us from our very childhood, and so incorporated (as it were) into the whole course of our lives, that it is very difficult for men to withdraw their thoughts from sensual objects, and fasten them upon things remote from sense. And if perhaps they do attend a little, and begin to see the reasonableness of governing themselves by a higher principle than mere sense and appetite ; yet with such ‡ variety of temptations are they perpetually

* “ Si tales nos natura genuisset, ut eam ipsam intueri & perspicere, eaque optima duce cursum vitæ consicere possemus ; haud esset sanè quod quisquam rationem & doctrinam requireret. Nunc verò, &c.” Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. III.

“ Nunc parvulos nobis dedit igniculos, quos celeriter malis moribus opinionibusque depravatis sic restringimus, ut nusquam naturæ lumen appareat.—Simul atque editi in lucem & suscepti sumus, in omni continuo pravitare, & in summa opinionum perversitate verisamur ; ut pene cum lacte nutricis, errorem suxisse videamur. Cum vero parentibus rediti, deinde magistris traditi sumus, tum ita variis imbuimur erroribus, ut vanitati veritas, & opinioni confirmatæ natura ipsa cedat.—Cum vero accedit eodem, quasi maximus quidem magister, populus, atque omnis undique ad vitia consentiens multitudo ; tum plane inficimur opinionum pravitare, a naturaque ipsa desciscimus.” Ibid.

† “ Ἐν δὲ ἐκ νηπίου παῶσιν ἡμῶν συνέθραπται [ἡδονή] διὰ καὶ χαλεπὸν ἀποδείξασθαι τὸ τοῦ πάθος, ἐγκρατῶσιν τῷ βίῳ. Aristotle. Ethic. lib. II. c. 2.

‡ “ Vitia de mercede solliciti : avaritia pecuniam promittit : luxuria multas ac varias voluptates : ambitio purpuram & plausum ; & ex hoc potentiam, & quicquid potentia ponit.” Senec. Epist. 59.

tually incompassed, and continually solicited; and the strength of passions and appetites makes so great opposition to the motions of reason; that commonly they yield and submit to practise those things, which at the same time the reason of their own mind * condemns; and what they allow not that they do. Which observation is so true of too great a part of mankind, that Plato upon this ground declares, † “All arts and sciences to have in his opinion less “ of difficulty in them than that of making men good;” insomuch that, “it ‡ is well,” saith he, “if men can come to attain a right “ sense, and just and true notions of things, even by that time they “ arrive at old age.”

4. AND ABOVE ALL, BY VITIOUS HABITS AND PRACTICES.

But that which, above all other things, most depraves men's natural understanding, and hinders them from discerning and judging rightly of moral truths, is this; that as stupid and careless ignorance leads them into fond and superstitious opinions, and the appetites of sense overcome and tempt them into practices contrary to their conscience and judgement; so, on the reverse, the multitude of superstitious opinions, vitious habits, and debauched practices, which prevail in all ages through the greater part of the world, do reciprocally increase men's gross ignorance, carelessness, and stupidity. False and unworthy notions of God, or superstitious apprehensions concerning him, which men carelessly and inconsiderately happen to take up at first, do (as it were) blind the eyes of their reason for the future, and hinder them from discerning what of itself originally was easy enough to be discovered. “That which “ may be known of God,” Rom. i. 19. &c. “has been manifest “ enough unto men in all ages; for God hath shewed it unto them; “ for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world “ are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; “ even his eternal power and Godhead:” so that they, who are ignorant of him, cannot but be without excuse. But notwithstanding all the heathen world had so certain means of knowing God: yet generally they glorified him not as God; neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into images of the meanest and most contemptible creatures; and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. The natural consequence of which absurd idolatry, and also the just judgement of God upon them for it, was, that they were given up to a reprobate mind, to uncleanness and to all vile affections to such a degree, that not only their common practices, but even their most sacred rites and religious perform-

Τόδε δὲ ἴσμεν, ὅτι ταῦτα τὰ πάθη ἐν ἡμῖν οἷον νεῦρα ἢ μήνινθοί τινες ἐνέσται, σπᾶσί τε ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἀλλήλοις ἀνθελκύνουσιν, ἐναντίαι ὄνται, ἐπ' ἐναντίας πρᾶττει. Plato de Legib. lib. I.

* “ —Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor.

† “Ἔδοξε δὲ, καὶ νῦν ἔτι δοκεῖ, τὰ μὲν ἅλλα ἐπισηδεύματα πάντα, ἢ σφόδρα χαλεπὰ εἶναι. τὸ δὲ τίνα τρόπον χρὴ γίγνεσθαι χρηστὸς ἀνθρώπος, παγχάλεπον. Plato in Epinomide.

‡ Φρόνησιν δὲ καὶ ἀληθείας διόζας βεβαιῶν, εὐτυχὲς ὄντα καὶ πρὸς τὸ γῆρας παρσγέμελο. Id. de Legib. lib. II.

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ances, became themselves the extremest abominations. And when men's morals are thus corrupted, and they run with greediness into all excess of riot and debauchery; then, on the other hand, by the same natural consequence, and by the same just judgement of God, both their vitious customs and actions, as well as superstitious opinions, reciprocally increase "the blindness of their hearts," Eph. iv. 18, 19. darken the judgement of their understandings, stupify and sear their consciences so as to become past feeling, and by degrees * extinguish wholly that light of nature in their own minds, which was given them originally to enable them to discern between good and evil.

WHEREFORE MEN HAVE GREAT NEED TO BE TAUGHT AND INSTRUCTED IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

By these means it comes to pass, that though the great obligations and the principal motives of morality are indeed certainly discoverable and demonstrable by right reason; and all considerate men, when those motives and obligations are fairly proposed to them, must of necessity (as has been fully proved in the foregoing heads) yield their assent to them as certain and undeniable truths: yet under the disadvantages now mentioned (as it is the case of most men to fall under some or other of them), very few are of themselves able, in reality and effect, to discover those truths clearly and plainly for themselves; but most men have great need of particular teaching and much instruction, not without some weight of authority, as well as reason and persuasion:

1st. To raise and stir up their attention; to move them to shake off their habitual carelessness, stupidity, and inconsiderateness; to persuade them to make use of their natural reason and understanding, and to apply their minds to apprehend and study the truth and certainty of these things. For, as men, notwithstanding all the rational faculties they are by nature endued with, may yet through mere neglect and incogitancy be grossly and totally ignorant of the plainest and most obvious mathematical truths: so men may also, for want of consideration, be very ignorant of some of the plainest moral obligations, which, as soon as distinctly proposed to them, they cannot possibly avoid giving their assent unto.

2. To give them a due sense, and right and just apprehensions concerning these things; to convince them of the great concern and vast importance of them; to correct the false notions, vain prejudices, and foolish opinions, which deprave their judgment; and to remove that levity and heedlessness of spirit, which makes men frequently to be in their practice very little influenced by what in abstract opinion they may seem firmly to believe. For there are many men, who will think themselves highly injured, if any one should make any doubt of their believing the indispensable obligations of morality, and the certainty of a future state of rewards

* "Justos natura esse factos;—tantam autem esse corruptelam malæ consuetudinis, ut ab ea tanquam igniculi extinguantur a natura dati; exorianturque & confirmantur vitia contraria." Cic. de Legib. lib. 1.

and punishments; who yet in their lives and actions seem to have upon their minds but a very small sense of the weight and infinite importance of these great truths.

3. To inculcate these things frequently upon them, and press them effectually to the practice of the plainest and most necessary duties; to persuade them to moderate those passions, to subdue those lusts, to conquer those appetites, to despise those pleasures of sense, and (which is the greatest difficulty of all) to reform and correct those vicious customs and evil habits, which tempt and hurry them too often into the commission of such things as they are convinced at the same time, in the reason of their own minds, ought not to be practised. For it is very possible men may both clearly understand their duty, and also be fully convinced of the reasonableness of practising it; and yet, at the same time, find “a law in their members warring and prevailing against the law of their mind, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin and death,” Rom. vii. 23. Men * may be pleased with the beauty and excellency of virtue, and have some faint inclinations and even resolutions to practise it; and yet, at the return of their temptations, constantly fall back into their accustomed vices; if the great motives of their duty be not very frequently and very strongly inculcated upon them, so as to make very deep and lasting impressions upon their minds; and they have not some greater and higher assistance afforded them, than the bare conviction of their own speculative reason.

For these reasons (I say) it is absolutely necessary, that, notwithstanding the natural demonstrableness both of the obligations and motives of morality, yet considering the manifest corruptness of the present estate which human nature is in, the generality of men must not by any means be left wholly to the workings of their own minds, to the use of their natural faculties, and to the bare convictions of their own reason; but must be particularly taught and instructed in their duty, must have the motives of it frequently and strongly pressed and inculcated upon them with great weight and authority, and must have many extraordinary assistances afforded them; to keep them effectually in the practice of the great and plainest duties of religion.

THE GREAT USE AND NECESSITY OF AN ORDER OF PREACHERS.

And hence we may, by the way, justly observe the exceeding great use and necessity there is, of establishing an order or succession of men, whose peculiar office and continual employment it may be, to teach and instruct people in their duty, to press and exhort them perpetually to the practice of it, and to be instruments of conveying to them extraordinary assistances for that purpose. To which excellent institution, the right and worthy notion of God and his

* “Quidam ad magnificas voces excitantur, & transeunt in affectum dicentium, a'acres vultu & animo. Rapii illos instigatque rerum pulchritudo.—Juva, protinus quæ audias facere. Asticiuntur illi, & sunt quales jubentur, si illa animo f'ama permanea, si non impetum insignem protinus populus honesti dilator excipiat. Pauci inam quam conceperant mentem, donum perficere poterant.” Sen. c. Epist. 119.

divine perfections, the just sense and understanding of the great duties of religion, and the universal belief and due apprehension of a future-state of rewards and punishments, which the generality even of the meaner and more ignorant sort of people among us are now possess of is manifestly and undeniably almost wholly owing. As I shall have occasion hereafter more particularly to observe.

VI. Though in almost every age there have indeed been in the heathen world some wise and brave and good men, who have made it their business to study and practise the duties of natural religion themselves, and to teach and exhort others to do the like; who seem therefore to have been raised up by providence, as instruments to reprove in some measure and put some kind of check to the extreme superstition and wickedness of the nations wherein they lived; yet none of these have ever been able to reform the world, with any considerably great and universal success; because they have been but very few, that have in earnest set themselves about this excellent work; and they that have indeed sincerely done it, have themselves been entirely ignorant of some doctrines, and very doubtful and uncertain of others, absolutely necessary for the bringing about that great end; and those things which they have been certain of, and in good measure understood, they have not been able to prove and explain clearly enough; and those that they have been able both to prove and explain by sufficiently clear reasoning, they have not yet had authority enough to enforce and inculcate upon men's minds with so strong an impression, as to influence and govern the general practice of the world.

1. There have indeed in almost every age been, in the heathen world, some wise and brave and good men, who have made it their business to study and practise the duties of natural religion themselves, and to teach and exhort others to do the like. An eminent instance whereof, in the Eastern nations, the Scripture itself affords us in the history of Job; concerning whom it does not certainly appear, that he knew any positive revealed institution of religion, or that, before his sufferings, any immediate revelation was made to him, as there was to Abraham and the rest of the Patriarchs. Among the Greeks, Socrates seems to be an extraordinary example of this kind. Concerning whom Plato tells us, in his "Apology," that * he did nothing else, but go continually about, persuading both old and young, not to be so much solicitous to gratify the appetites of the body, or to heap up wealth, or to raise themselves to honour, or gain any outward advantage whatsoever, as to improve the mind, by the continual exercise of all virtue and goodness; teaching them, that a man's true value did not arise from his riches, or from any outward circumstances of life; but that true riches,

* Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο πρᾶττον ἐγὼ περὶ ἑχομαι, ἢ πείθειν ὁμᾶν καὶ νουθετεῖν καὶ πειρᾶσθαι, μήτε σωμάτων ἐπιμελίσθαι, μήτε χρημάτων πρᾶττειν, μήτε ἄλλου τινὸς ὅτι σφόδρα, ὡς τῆς ψυχῆς ἔπος ὡς ἀρίστη ἔσαι λέγων, ὅτι ἐκ ἐκ χρημάτων ἢ ἀρετῆς γίνεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀρετῆς χρημάτων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ταύτα δὲ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὑπάρχει, καὶ ἰδὲ καὶ ἐνημερία. Plato in Apol. Socrat.

and every real good, whether public or private, proceeded wholly from virtue. After him, Plato, and Aristotle, and others, followed his example in teaching morality. And among the Romans, Cicero: and, in later times, Epictetus and Antoninus, and several others, gave the world admirable systems of Ethics, and noble and moral instructions and exhortations of excellent use and benefit to the generations wherein they lived, and deservedly of great value and esteem even unto this day.

2. WHO SEEM TO HAVE BEEN DESIGNED BY PROVIDENCE TO BEAR WITNESS AGAINST THE WICKEDNESS OF THE NATIONS WHEREIN THEY LIVED.

So that, I think, it may very justly be supposed, that these men were raised up and designed by Providence (the abundant goodness of God having never left itself wholly without witness, notwithstanding the greatest corruptions and provocations of mankind), as instruments to reprove in some measure, and put some kind of check to the extreme superstition and wickedness of the nations wherein they lived; or at least to bear witness against, and condemn it. Concerning Job, the case is evident and confessed. And for the same reason, some of the ancientest writers of the church have not scrupled to * call even Socrates also, and some others of the best of the heathen moralists, by the name of Christians; and to affirm, that † as the law was as it were a schoolmaster to bring the Jews unto Christ, so true moral philosophy was to the Gentiles a preparative to receive the gospel. This perhaps was carrying the matter somewhat too far; but, to be sure, thus much we may safely assert, that ‡ whatever any of these men were at any time enabled to deliver wisely and profitably and agreeably to divine truth, was as a light shining in a dark place, derived to them by a ray of that infinite overflowing goodness, which does good to all even both just and unjust; from God, the sole author of all truth and wisdom; and this for some advantage and benefit to the rest of the world, even in its blindest and most corrupt estate.

3. BUT YET NONE OF THESE MEN WERE EVER ABLE TO REFORM THE WORLD WITH ANY CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS.

But then, notwithstanding the most that can be made of this supposition, it is certain the effect of all the teaching and instruction even of the best of the philosophers in the heathen world, was in comparison very small and inconsiderable. They never were able to reform the world with any great and universal success, nor to keep together any considerable number of men in the knowledge and practice of true virtue. With respect to the worship of God, idolatry prevailed universally in all nations; and, notwithstanding men did indeed know God, so as to be without excuse, yet they

* Καὶ ἐν μέσῳ λόγῳ βιάσαντες, Χριστιανοὶ εἰσι, καὶ ἄλλοι ἐνομιζόμενοι οὖν ἐν Ἑλληνισμῷ μέν Σωκράτης καὶ Ἡράκλειος, καὶ ἐν ἱμαίοις αὐτοῖς ἐν βαρβάρῳ δὲ Ἀβραάμ, &c. Justin. Apolog. 2.

† Τὴν αὖ δὲ καὶ περιηγεμένους τοὺς Ἕλλησιν ἐδόξη ἡ φιλοσοφία τότε, πρὶν ἢ τὸν κύριον καὶ ἔσαι καὶ τὴν Ἑλληνισμῷ ἐπαιδευόμενους γὰρ καὶ αὐτὴ τὸ Ἑλληνικόν, ὡς ὁ νόμος τὴν Ἑβραϊκὴν εἰς Χριστὸν περιπαρεσκευάζει τοῖσιν ἢ φιλοσοφία, περιδοποιοῖσα τὴν ἐκ Χριστοῦ τελειούμενον. Clem. Alexand. Strom. 1.

‡ Ὁ αὖ γὰρ αὐτοῦ, ταῦτα, καὶ ἕσα καλῶς λήλειται, ἐφάνηκεν. Orig. Advers. Cels. lib. I.

“ did not like to retain him in their knowledge, but became vain
 “ in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, and
 “ they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into images,”
 Rom. i. 21, and 28. of the vilest creatures; and no philosophers
 ever turned any great number of men from this absurd idolatry, to
 the acknowledgement and worship of the only true God. In re-
 spect of men’s dealings one with another; honour, and interest, and
 friendship, and laws, and the necessities of society, did indeed cause
 justice to be practised in many heathen nations to a great degree;
 but very few men among them were just and equitable upon right
 and true principles, a due sense of virtue, and a constant fear and
 love of God. With respect to themselves, intemperance and lux-
 ury and unnatural uncleanness was commonly practised, even in
 the most civilized countries; and this not so much in opposition
 to the doctrine of the philosophers, as by the consent indeed and
 encouragement of too great a part of them. I shall not enlarge
 upon this ungrateful and melancholy subject: there are accounts
 enough extant of the universal corruption and debauchery of the
 heathen world. St. Paul’s description of it, in the whole first chap-
 ter of his epistle to the Romans, is alone sufficient; and * the com-
 plaints of their own writers abundantly confirm it. The disciples
 of the best moralists, at least the practisers of their doctrine, were,
 in their own life-time, very † few; as too plainly appears from the
 evil treatment which that great man Socrates met withal all Athens.
 And, at their deaths, their doctrine in great measure died with them;
 not having any sufficient evidence or authority to support it. And
 their followers quickly fell back into the common idolatry, super-
 stition, uncleanness, and debauchery. Of which, the character the
 Roman writers give of those that called themselves the disciples of
 Socrates, is a particular and remarkable instance. These considera-
 tions (so very early did they appear to be true) affected in such a
 manner that great admirer of Socrates, Plato; that he sometimes
 seems to give over all hopes of working any reformation in men by
 philosophy; and says, that ‡ “ a good man, when he considers these
 “ things, would even choose to sit quiet, and shift for himself; like
 “ a man that, in a violent hurricane, creeps under a wall for his de-
 “ fence; and seeing the whole world round about him filled with
 “ all manner of wickedness, be content if, preserving his single self

* “ Egregium sanctumque virum si cerno, bimenbri

“ Hoc monstrum puero, vel mirandis sub aratro

“ Pileicibus inventis, & sæpe comparo mule.” Juvenal. Sat. xiii. 64.

† “ Sint licet perhonesti;—sed audire deprecemur quot sint aut fuerint numero.—Unus,
 “ Tuo, Tres.—At genus humanum non ex bonis pauculis, sed ex cæteris omnibus æstimari
 “ convenit.” Arnob. advers. Gentes, lib. II.

“ Da mihi virum qui sit iracundus, maledicus, effrænatus; paucissimis Dei verbis tam
 “ placidum, quam ovem, reddam. Da libidinosum, &c.—Numquis hæc Philosophorum

“ aut unquam præstitit, aut præstare, si velit, potest?” Lactant. lib. III.

Παρά μὲν τοῖς Ἕλλησιν εἰς τις φαίδων, καὶ ὕκ εἶδα εἰ δούτε, &c. Origen. advers. Cels. lib. I.

‡ Ταῦτα λογισμὸς ἡρώδης, κουχίαν ἔχων, καὶ τὰ αὐτῷ πρᾶτλαν, αὖν ἐν χειρὶ κοινωθῆ
 καὶ ζῆλος ὑπὸ πνεύματι φερεμένη, ὑπὸ ταχίον ἰστοῦ, ὅσον τὸ ἀλλος καλαμπημένους
 ἐντομίας, ὡς αὐτὸς καὶ αὐτὸς ἀδινίας τε καὶ ἀδινίας ἔργων, τοῖς ἐκείνους βίον βίωσιν,
 καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν μέλῳ καὶ τὸς ἐκείνους ἰσχύς τε καὶ εὐμενίας ἀπαρτῆται. Plato de
 Republ. lib. IV.

“ from iniquity and every evil work, he can pass away the present
 “ life in peace, and at last die with tranquillity and good hope.”
 And indeed, for many reasons, it was altogether impossible, that
 the teaching of the philosophers should ever be able to reform man-
 kind, and recover them out of their very degenerate and corrupt
 estate, with any considerably great and universal success.

I. BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN BUT VERY FEW, THAT HAVE IN
 EARNEST SET THEMSELVES ABOUT THAT EXCELLENT WORK.

In the first place, because the number of those who have in ear-
 nest set themselves about this excellent work have been exceedingly
 few. Philosophers indeed, that called themselves so, there were
 enough in every place, and in every age. But those who truly made
 it their business to improve their reason to the height; to free them-
 selves from the superstition, which overwhelmed the whole world;
 to search out the obligations of morality, and the will of God their
 creator; to obey it sincerely themselves, as far as they could discover
 it by the light of nature; and to encourage and exhort others to do
 the like; were but a very few names. The doctrine of far the
 greatest part of the philosophers consisted plainly in nothing but
 words, and subtilty, and strife, and empty contention; and did not
 at all amend even their own manners; much less was fitted to re-
 form the world. Their scholars, as Aristotle * excellently describes
 them, “ thought themselves greatly improved in philosophy, and that
 “ they were become gallant men, if they did but hear and understand
 “ and learn to dispute about morality; though it had no effect at
 “ all, nor influence upon their manners. Just as if a sick man
 “ should expect to be healed, by hearing a physician discourse;
 “ though he never followed any of his directions. Undoubtedly,”
 saith he, “ the mind of the one was exactly as much improved by
 “ such philosophy; as the health of the other’s body, by such phy-
 “ sic.” And no wonder the generality of the common hearers
 judged of their own improvement in philosophy by such false mea-
 sures; when the enormous vitiousness of the lives of the philoso-
 phers themselves made it plainly appear, that † their art was not so
 much intended and fitted for the reformation of men’s manners, as
 to be an exercise of wit and subtilty, and an instrument of vain-
 glory. Excepting perhaps Socrates and Plato, and some others of
 that rank; this account is too plainly true of the greatest part of
 the philosophers. The argument is too unpleasant, to instance in
 particulars. Whoever pleases may, in Diogenes Laertius and other
 writers, find accounts enough of the lewdness and unnatural vices
 of most of the philosophers. It is a shame for us so much as to
 speak of those things which were done of them, not only in secret,

* ἅλλ’ οἱ πολλοὶ τὰυτὰ μὲν ἐπὶ ἀρετῇ ἐπὶ δὲ τὸν λόγον ἀσφαφέγγοντες οἴονται φιλοσοφεῖν, καὶ ὅπως ἔσονται σπουδαῖοι· ὁμοῖόν τι ποιεῖν τούτοις κάμνουσιν, οἱ τῶν ἱατρῶν ἀκούουσι μὲν ἐπιμε-
 λῶς, ποιοῦσι δ’ ὅθεν τῶν περὶ σαρκομέων, ὥσπερ ὅν ἐδ’ ἐκείνοι εὖ ἔχουσι τὸ σῶμα, ὅτω θερα-
 πεύομενοι· ἐδ’ ὅτοι τὴν ψυχὴν, ὅτω φιλοσοφῶντες. Aristot. Ethic. lib. II. cap. 3.

† “ Inclusos [Philosophos] in angulis, facienda præcipere, quæ ne ipsi quidem faciunt
 “ qui loquuntur; & quoniam se a veris actibus removerunt, apparet eos exercendæ linguæ
 “ causa, vel advocandi gratia, artem ipsam philosophiæ reperisse.” Laëtant. lib. III.

but even in the most public manner. I shall here only add the judgement of Cicero; a man as able to pass a right judgement in this matter as ever lived. "Do you think," says * he, "that these things [meaning the precepts of morality] had any influence upon those men (excepting only a very few of them), who taught, and writ, and disputed about them? No; who is there of all the philosophers, whose mind and life and manners were conformable to right reason? who ever made his philosophy to be the law and rule of his life, and not a mere boast and show of his wit and parts? who observed his own instructions, and lived in obedience to his own precepts? On the contrary; many of them were slaves to filthy lusts, many to pride, many to covetousness, &c."

2. AND THOSE FEW OF THE PHILOSOPHERS, WHO DID INDEED SINCERELY ENDEAVOUR TO REFORM MANKIND, WERE YET THEMSELVES ENTIRELY IGNORANT OF SOME DOCTRINES ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO THE BRINGING ABOUT THAT GREAT END.

Those few extraordinary men of the philosophers, who did indeed in good measure sincerely obey the laws of natural religion themselves, and made it their chief business to instruct and exhort others to do the same, were yet themselves entirely ignorant of some doctrines absolutely necessary to the bringing about this great end, of the reformation and recovery of mankind.

In general: having no knowledge of the whole scheme, order, and state of things, the method of God's governing the world, his design in creating mankind, the original dignity of human nature, the ground and circumstances of men's present corrupt condition, the manner of the divine interposition necessary to their recovery, and the glorious end to which God intended finally to conduct them; having no knowledge (I say) of all this, their whole attempt to discover the truth of things, and to instruct others therein, was † like wandering in the wide sea, without knowing whither they were to go, or which way they were to take, or having any guide to conduct them. And accordingly ‡ the wisest of them were never backward to confess their own ignorance and great blindness: that truth § was hid from them, as it were in an unfathomable depth: that || they were much in the dark, and very dull and stu-

* "Sed hæc eadem num censes apud eos ipsos valere, nisi admodum paucos, a quibus inventa, disputata, conscripta sunt? Quotus enim quisque philosophorum invenitur, qui sit ita moratus, ita animo ac vita constitutus, ut ratio postulat; qui disciplinam suam non ostentationem scientiæ, sed legem vitæ putet; qui obtemperet ipse sibi, & decretis suis pareat? Videre licet multos, libidinum servos, &c." Cic. Tusculan. Quæstion. lib. II.

† "Errant ergo velut in mari magno, nec quo ferantur intelligunt; quia nec viam cernunt, nec ducem sequuntur." Lactant. lib. VI.

‡ "Ex cæteris philosophis, nonne optimus & gravissimus quisque constitetur, multa se ignorare; & multa sibi etiam atque etiam esse discenda?" Cic. Tusc. Quæst. 3.

§ 'Εν βύθῳ ἀλήθεια.

|| "Tui ergo te, Cicero, libri arguunt, quam nihil a philosophia disci possit ad vitam. Hæc tua verba sunt: mihi autem non modo ad sapientiam cæci videmur; sed ad ea ipsa, quæ aliqua ex parte cerni videantur, hebetes & obruti." Lactant. lib. III.

pid, not only as to the profounder things of wisdom, but as to such things also which seemed very capable of being in great part discovered: nay, that even * those things, which in themselves were of all others the most manifest (that is, which, whenever made known, would appear most obvious and evident), their natural understanding was of itself as unqualified to find out and apprehend, as the eyes of bats to behold the light of the sun: that the very first and most necessary thing of all, the nature and attributes of God himself †, were, notwithstanding all the general helps of reason, very difficult to them to find out in particular, and still more difficult to explain; it being much ‡ more easy to say what God was not, than what he was: and, finally, that the method of instructing men effectually, and making them truly wise and good, was a thing § very obscure and dark, and difficult to be found out. In a word, Socrates himself always openly professed, that he pretended to be wiser than other men only in this one thing, that he was duly sensible of his own ignorance, and || believed that it was merely for that very reason, that the oracle pronounced him the wisest of men.

PARTICULARLY, THEY WERE VERY IGNORANT IN WHAT MANNER GOD MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLY WORSHIPPED.

More particularly: the manner in which God might be acceptably worshipped, these men were entirely and unavoidably ignorant of. That God ought to be worshipped, is, in the general, as evident and plain from the light of nature as any thing can be: but in what particular manner, and with what kind of service he will be worshipped, cannot be certainly discovered by bare reason. Obedience to the obligations of nature, and imitation of the moral attributes of God, the wisest philosophers easily knew, was undoubtedly the most acceptable service to God. But some external adoration seemed also to be necessary; and how this was to be performed, they could not with any certainty discover. Accordingly even the very best of them complied therefore generally with the outward religion of their country, and advised others to do the same; and so, notwithstanding all their wise discourses, they fell lamentably into the practice of the most foolish idolatry. Lactantius observes that Socrates himself **, at the conclusion of one of the bravest discourses that ever was made by any philosopher, superstitiously ordered a sacrifice to be offered for him to Æsculapius. But herein Lactantius was

* "Ωςπερ γὰρ ἡ τὰ τῶν νυκτιερῶν ὀμματα πρὸς τὸ φέγγος ἔχει τὸ μεθ' ἡμέραν, ὅτω καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς ὁ νῦν πρὸς τὰ τῆ φύσεως φανερώτατα πάντων. Aristot. Metaphys. lib. II. cap. 1.

† Τὸν μὲν ἔν ποιήσῃ καὶ πάλῃ τὰς τῶ πάντων, εὐρεῖν τε ἔργον, καὶ εὐρίσκειν λέγειν εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον. Plato in Timæo.

“ Profecto eos ipsos, qui se aliquid certi habere arbitrantur, addubitare coget doctrinæ sumorum hominum de maxima re tanta dissensio.” Cic. de Natura Deor. lib. I.

‡ “ Utinam tam facile vera invenire possem, quam falsa convincere.” Id. Ibid.

§ “Επεὶ εὐχόμενοι μετ' ἐμοῦ.—Καὶ μοι δύσβατος γέ τις τόπος φαίνεται καὶ ἐπίσκειται ἔστιν ἔν σκοτεινῷ καὶ δυσδιερεύνητον. Plato de Republ. lib. IV.

|| See Plato in Apologia Socratis.

** Ἔπιν, ὃ δὴ τελευτήσαν ἐφθέρχαιο. Ὁ Κρίτων, τῷ Ἀσκληπιῷ θρεῖσθαι ἀλεχθέντα, ἀλλὰ ἀπόδοτε, καὶ μὴ ἀμελήσῃτε. Plato in Phædone.

“ Illud vero nonne summæ vanitatis; quod ante mortem familiares suos rogavit, ut Æsculapio gallum, quem voverat, pro se sacrent.” Lactant. lib. III.

certainly mistaken: for Socrates undoubtedly spake this in mockery of Æsculapius; looking upon death as his truest deliverance. Plato, after having delivered very noble and almost divine truths concerning the nature and attributes of the Supreme God, * weakly advises men to worship likewise inferior gods, dæmons, and spirits; and dared not to condemn the worshipping even of statues also and images, dedicated according to the laws of their country; as if † the honour they paid to lifeless idols, could procure the favour and good-will of superior intelligences. And so ‡ he corrupted and spoiled the best philosophy in the world, by adding idolatry to that worship, which he had wisely and bravely before proved to be due to the Creator of all things. After him, Cicero, the greatest and best philosopher that Rome or perhaps any other nation ever produced, allowed § men to continue the idolatry of their ancestors; advised them || to conform themselves to the superstitious religion of their country, in offering such sacrifices to different gods, as were by law established; and ** disapproves and finds fault with the Persian Magi, for burning the temples of the Grecian gods, and asserting that the whole universe was God's temple. In all which, he fondly contradicts himself, by †† inexcuseably complying with the practices of those men, whom in many of his writings he largely and excellently proves to be extremely foolish upon account of those very practices. And to mention no more (for indeed those of a lower rank, the Minuter philosophers, as Tully calls them, are not worth the mentioning); that admirable moralist Epictetus, who, for a true sense of virtue, seems to have had no superior in the heathen world; even he also ‡‡ advises men to offer libations and sacrifices to the gods, every one according to the religion and custom of his country.

AND IN WHAT METHOD GOD WOULD BE RECONCILED TO
RETURNING SINNERS.

But still more particularly: that which of all other things, these best and wisest of the philosophers were most absolutely and una-

* Πρῶτον μὲν, φημὲν, τιμὰς τὰς μετ' ὀλυμπίας τε καὶ τὰς τὴν πόλιν ἔχοντας θεῶν, τοῖς χθόνιοις ἂν τις εἰσὶν ἀθρία καὶ δευτέρᾳ νέμωσι, θεοτάτα τῇ τῆς εὐσεβείας σκοποῦ συγχάνει.—Μετὰ θεῶν δὲ τὰςδε, καὶ τοῖς δαίμοσιν ὅγ' ἔμφρων ὀργιάζοντ' ἂν—Ἐπακολοθεῖ δ' αὐτοῖς ἰδούμενα ἴδια παλάσθων θεῶν κατὰ νόμον ὀργιαζόμενα. Plato de Legib. lib. IV.

† Τὰς μὲν γὰρ τῶν θεῶν βεβήλους σαφῶς, τιμῶμεν. τῶν δὲ εἰκόνας ἀγάλματα ἰδρυτάμενοι, ἃς ἡμῖν ἀγάλλεσσι, καίπερ ἀψύχους ὄντας, ἐκείνους ἡγούμεθα τὴς ἐμψύχους θεῶν πολλὴν διὰ ταυτ' εὐνοίαν καὶ χάριν ἔχειν. Plato de Legib. lib. XI.

‡ Τὰ Πλάτωνι οὐκ ἀπιθάνως μὲν εἰρημένα, ἢ μὴν καὶ διέθετο τὸν φιλόσοφον ἀξίως καὶ αὐτῷ ἀναστραφῆναι ἐν τῇ πρὸς τὸν ποιητὴν τῶν ἑλλων εὐσεβείᾳ, ἣν ἔχῃ μὴ νοθεύειν, μηδὲ μιάνειν τῇ εἰδωλολατρείᾳ. Orig. advers. Cels. lib. VI.

§ “A patribus acceptos Deos placet coli.” Cic. de Legib. lib. II.

|| “Item illud ex institutis pontificum & aruspicum non mutandum est, quibus hostiis immolandum cuique Deo.” Id. ibid.

** “Nec sequor Magos Persarum, quibus auctoribus Xerxes inflammâsse templa Græciæ

“dicitur, quod parietibus includerent deos, quorum hic mundus omnis templum esset & domus. Melius Græci atque nostri, qui, ut augerent pietatem in Deos, easdem illos,

“quas nos, urbes incolere voluerunt.” Id. ibid.

†† “Video te, Cicero, terrena & manufacta venerari. Vana esse intelligis, & tamen eadem facis, quæ faciunt ipsi, quos ipse stultissimos confiteris.—Si libenter errant etiam

“ii, qui errare se sentiunt, quanto magis vulgus indoctum?” Lactant. lib. II.

‡‡ Σπένδειν δὲ καὶ θύειν, καὶ ἀπάρχεσθαι κατὰ τὰ πάτρια ἐκείνῳ προσήκει. Epictet. cap. 38.
voidably

voidably ignorant of, and yet which of all other things was of the greatest importance for sinful men to know, was the method by which such as have erred from the right way, and have offended God, may yet again restore themselves to the favour of God, and to the hopes of happiness. From the consideration of the goodness and mercifulness of God, the philosophers did indeed very reasonably hope, that God would shew himself placable to sinners, and might be some way reconciled; but when we come to enquire more particularly, what propitiation he will accept, and in what manner this reconciliation must be made, here nature stops, and expects with impatience the aid of some particular revelation. That God will receive returning sinners, and accept of repentance instead of perfect obedience, they cannot certainly know, to whom he has not declared that he will do so. For though this be the most probable and only means of reconciliation that nature suggests; yet whether this will be alone sufficient, or whether God will not require something further, for the vindication of his justice, and of the honour and dignity of his laws and government, and for the expressing more effectually his indignation against sin, before he will restore men to the privileges they have forfeited, they cannot be satisfactorily assured. For it cannot positively be proved from any of God's attributes, that he is absolutely obliged to pardon all creatures all their sins at all times barely and immediately upon their repenting. There arises therefore from nature no sufficient comfort to sinners, but anxious and endless solicitude about the means of appeasing the Deity. Hence those divers ways of sacrificing, and numberless superstitions, which overspread the face of the heathen world, but were so little satisfactory to the wiser part of mankind; even in those times of darkness, that the more considering philosophers could not forbear frequently declaring, that * they thought those rights could avail little or nothing towards appeasing the wrath of a provoked God, or making their prayers acceptable in his sight; but that something still seemed to them to be wanting, though they knew not what.

3. AND OTHER DOCTRINES ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY IN ORDER TO REFORM MANKIND, THE BEST PHILOSOPHERS WERE VERY DOUBTFUL AND UNCERTAIN ABOUT.

Some other doctrines absolutely necessary likewise to the bringing about this great end of the reformation of mankind; though there was indeed so much proof and evidence of the truth of them to be drawn from reason, as that the best philosophers could not by any means be entirely ignorant of them; yet so much doubtfulness, uncertainty, and unsteadiness, was there in the thoughts and assertions of these philosophers concerning them, as could not but † very much diminish their proper effect and influence upon the hearts and lives of men. I instance in the immortality of the soul, the

* See Plato's Alcibiades 2, throughout.

† "Præterea nihil apud eos certi est, nihil quod à scientia veniat;—& nemo paret, quia nemo vult ad incertum laborare." Lactant. lib. III.

certainty of a future state, and the rewards and punishments to be distributed in a life to come. The arguments which may be drawn from reason and from the nature of things, for the proof of these great truths, seem really (as I have before shewn) to come very little short of strict demonstration; and accordingly the wisest philosophers (as has likewise been shewn before) did indeed sometimes seem to have reasoned themselves into a firm belief of them, and to have been fully convinced of their certainty and reality, even so far as to apply them to excellent purposes and uses of life. But then, on the other hand, a man cannot, without some pity and concern of mind, observe how strangely at other times the weight of the same arguments seems to have slipped (as it were) out of their minds; and with what wonderful diffidence, wavering, and unsteadiness, they discourse about the same things. I do not here think it of any very great moment, that there were indeed some whole sects of philosophers, who absolutely denied the immortality of the soul, and peremptorily rejected all kind of expectation of a life to come (though, to be sure, this could not but in some measure shock the common people, and make them entertain some suspicion about the strength of the arguments used on the other side of the question by wiser men; yet) I say, it cannot be thought of any very great moment, that some whole sects of philosophers did indeed absolutely deny the immortality of the soul; because these men were weak reasoners in other matters also, and plainly low and contemptible philosophers, in comparison of those greater geniuses we are now speaking of. But that which I now observe, and which I say cannot be observed without some pity and concern of mind, is this, that even those great philosophers themselves, the very best and wisest, and most considerate of them that ever lived, notwithstanding the undeniable strength of the arguments which sometimes convinced them of the certainty of a future state, did yet at other times express themselves with so much hesitancy and unsteadiness concerning it, as, without doubt, could not but extremely hinder the proper effect and influence which that most important consideration ought to have upon the hearts and lives of men. "I am now," said Socrates, a little before his death *, "about to leave this world; and ye are still to continue in it: which of us have the better part allotted us, God only knows:" † seeming to express some doubtfulness, whether he should have any existence after death, or not. And again, at the end of his most admirable discourse concerning the immortality of the soul; "I would have you to know," said he to his friends who came to pay him their last visit ‡, "that I have great hopes I am now going into the company of good men; yet I would not be too peremptory and confident concerning it.

* Ἐμοὶ μὲν ἀποθανεῖναι, ὑμῖν βιωσόμεναις· ὁπότεροι δὲ ἡμῶν ἔρχονται ἐπὶ ἀμείνονα πᾶν, ἴδμεν πάντῃ πλὴν ἢ τῷ θεῷ. Plato in Apolog. Socr.

† "Quod præter Deos negat scire quæquam, scit ipse, utrum melius sit; nam dixit antè. Sed ipsum illud, nihil ut affirmet, tenet ad extremum." Cic. Tusc. Qu. lib. I.

‡ Νῦν δὲ ὃ ἔρε ὅτι παρ' ἀνδρας τε ἐλπίζω ἀφίξεσθαι ἀγαθῶς, καὶ τῶτο μὲν ἐκ ἀν' ἀνάνδρως αἰσίνην. Plato in Phæd.

“ But * if death be only as it were a transmigration from hence
 “ into another place, and those things, which are told us, be in-
 “ deed true, that those who are dead to us do all live there; then,
 “ &c.” So likewise Cicero, speaking of the same subject: “ I will
 “ endeavour,” saith † he, “ to explain what you desire; yet I would
 “ not have you depend upon what I shall say as certain and in-
 “ fallible; but I may guess, as other men do, at what shall seem
 “ most probable; and further than this, I cannot pretend to go.”
 Again: “ which of those two opinions,” saith ‡ he, [that the soul
 is mortal, or that it is immortal], “ be true, God only knows;
 “ which of them is most probable, is a very great question.” And
 again, in the same discourse, having brought all those excellent ar-
 guments before-mentioned in proof of the immortality of the soul;
 “ Yet we ought not,” saith § he, “ to be over-confident of it; for
 “ it often happens that we are strongly affected at first with an
 “ acute argument; and yet, a little while after, stagger in our judge-
 “ ment and alter our opinion, even in clearer matters than these;
 “ for these things must be confessed to have some obscurity in
 “ them.” And again: “ I know not how,” saith he ||, “ when I
 “ read the arguments in proof of the soul’s immortality, methinks,
 “ I am fully convinced; and yet, after I have laid aside the book,
 “ and come to think and consider of the matter alone by myself,
 “ presently I find myself fallen again insensibly into my old doubts.”
 From all which it appears, that, notwithstanding all the bright ar-
 guments and acute conclusions, and brave sayings of the best phi-
 losophers; yet life and immortality were ** not fully and satis-
 factorily brought to light by bare natural reason; but men still
 plainly stood in need of some farther and more compleat discovery.

4. AND THOSE THINGS WHICH THEY WERE INDEED CERTAIN
 OF, YET THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO PROVE AND EXPLAIN
 CLEARLY AND DISTINCTLY ENOUGH.

Those things which the philosophers were indeed the most fully
 certain of, and did in good measure understand; such as the obli-
 gations of virtue, and the will of God in matters of morality; yet
 they were never able to prove and explain clearly and distinctly

* Εἰ δ' αὖ οὗον ἀποδημεῖσαι ἐστὶν ὁ θάνατος ἐνθέρπει εἰς ἄλλον τόπον καὶ ἀληθῆ ἐστὶ τὰ λεγόμενα,
 ὥ; ἄρα ἐκεῖ εἰσὶν πάντες οἱ τεθνεώτες, &c. Plato in Apolog. Socrat.

† “ Ea, quæ vis, ut potero, explicabo; nec tamen quasi Pythius Apollo, certa ut sint
 “ & fixa quæ dixerō; sed ut homunculus unus e multis, probabilia conjectura sequens.
 “ Ultra enim quo progrediar, quam ut verisimilia videam, non habeo.” Cic. Tusc. Quæst.
 lib. I.

‡ “ Harum sententiarum quæ vera sit, Deus aliquis viderit; quæ verisimillima, magna
 “ quæstio est.” Id. ibid.

§ “ Etfi nihil nimis oportet confidere. Movemur enim sæpe aliquo acutè conclusō:
 “ labamus mutamusque sententiam clarioribus etiam in rebus; in his est enim aliqua ob-
 “ scuritas.” Id. ibid.

|| “ Nescio quomodo, dum lego, assentior; cum posui librum, & mecum ipse de im-
 “ mortalitate animorum cæpi cogitare, assensio omnis illa elabitur.” Id. ibid.

** “ Credebam facîle opinionibus magnorum virorum, rem gratissimam [animæ im-
 “ mortalitatem] promittentium magis quam probantium.” Senec. Epist. 102.

“ Adeo omnis illa tunc sapientia Socratis, de industria venerat consultæ æquanimitatis,
 “ non de fiducia compertæ veritatis.” Tertullian, de Anima,

enough, to persons of all capacities, in order to their complete conviction and reformation. First, because most of their discourses upon these subjects have been rather speculative and learned, nice and subtle disputes, than practical and universally useful instructions. They proved, by strict and nice argumentation, that the practice of virtue is wise and reasonable and fit to be chosen; rather than that it is of plain, necessary, and indispensable obligation; and were able to deduce the will of God only by such abstract and subtle reasonings as the generality of men had by no means either abilities or opportunities to understand or be duly affected by. Their very profession and manner of life led them to make their philosophy rather * an entertainment of leisure time, a trial of wit and parts, an exercise of eloquence, and of the art and skill of good speaking; than an endeavour to reform the manners of men, by shewing them their plain and necessary duty. And accordingly the study of it was, as Cicero † himself observes, unavoidably confined to a few, and by no means fitted for the bulk and common sort of mankind, who, as they cannot judge of the true strength of nice and abstract arguments, so they will always be suspicious of some fallacy in them. None ‡ but men of parts and learning, of study and liberal education, have been able to profit by the sublime doctrine of Plato, or by the subtle disputations of other philosophers; whereas the doctrine of morality, which is the rule of life and manners, ought to be plain, easy, and familiar, and suited fully to the capacities of all men. Secondly, another reason why the philosophers were never able to prove and explain clearly and distinctly enough, even those things of which they were the most certain, to persons of all capacities, in order to their complete conviction and reformation; was because they never were able to frame to themselves any complete, regular, and consistent system or scheme of things; but the truths which they taught, were § single and scattered, accidental as it were, and hit upon by chance, rather than by any knowledge of the whole true state of things; and consequently less universally convictive. Nothing could be more certain (as they all well knew), than that virtue was unquestion-

* “Profecto omnis istorum disputatio, quanquam uberrimos fontes virtutis & scientiæ contineat, tamen collata cum horum [qui rempublicam gubernant] actis perfectisque rebus, vereor ne non tantum videatur attulisse negotiis hominum utilitatis, quantum oblectationem quandam otii.” Cic. de Repub. fragm.

† “Est, inquit Cicero, philosophia paucis contenta iudiciis, multitudinem consulto ipsa fugiens — Maximum itaque argumentum est, philosophiam neque ad sapientiam tendere, neque ipsam esse sapientiam; quod mysterium ejus, barba tantum celebratur & pallio.” Lactant. lib. III.

‡ “Ολίγους μὲν ὤντην ἡ περιβαλλὴς καὶ ἐπιτελῆδευμένη Πλάτωνος λέξις πωρεῖας δὲ ἡ τῶν εὐτελέστερον ἅμα καὶ πραγματικῶς καὶ ἐσοχασμένως τῶν πολλῶν διδασκάλων καὶ γραβῶνων· ἔστι γὰρ ἰδεῖν, τὸν μὲν Πλάτωνα ἐν χειρὶ τῶν δοκούντων εἶναι φιλολόγων μόνων. Orig. advers. Cels. lib. VI.

§ “Αγροικότερον εἰπῶν ὁ Ἰσοῦς, Τῷ Θέλοντι τὸν χιτῶνά σε λαβεῖν, ἄφες καὶ τὸ ἱμάτιον, βιωφελέςτερον κεκίνηκε τὸν λόγον καὶ παρέσχεν ἕτοις εἰπῶν, ἡ ὥς ἐν τῷ Κρίτῳ Πλάτων, ἢ μὴδ’ ἀνέειν ἰδιῶται δύνασθαι, ἀλλὰ μόγις οἱ τὰ ἐγκύκλια πρὸς τῆς σεμνῆς Ἑλλήνων φιλοσοφίας μετασθηνότες. Id. lib. VII.

§ “Οὐκ ὅτι ἀλλότριά ἐστι τὰ Πλάτωνος διδάγματα τῷ Χριστῷ· ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἐκ ἐστὶ πάντῃ ὁμοία, ὥσπερ ἐδὲ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων. — ἕκαστος γὰρ τις, ἀπὸ μέρους τῷ σπερματικῷ θεῷ λόγε τὸ συγγενὲς ὄραν, καλῶς ἐφθέρχασθαι. Οἱ δὲ τὰναντία αὐτοῖς ἐν κυριατέροις εἰρηκότες, ἢ ἐπιστήμην τὴν ἀποπλὸν καὶ γῶσιν τὴν ἀνέλεστον φαίνονται ἐσχηκέναι. Justin. Apolog. 1.

ably to be chosen, and the practice of it to be recommended necessarily above all things; and yet they could never clearly and satisfactorily make out, upon what principles originally, and for what end ultimately, this choice was to be made, and upon what grounds it was universally to be supported. Hence they perpetually * disagreed, opposed, and contradicted one another in all their disputations to such a degree, that St. Austin somewhere out of Varro reckons up no less than 280 opinions concerning that one question, what was the chief good or final happiness of man. The effect of all which differences could not, without doubt, but be a mighty hindrance to that conviction and general influence which that great truth, in the certainty whereof they all clearly agreed (namely, that the practice of virtue was necessary and indispensable), ought to have had upon the minds and lives of men. This whole matter is excellently set forth by Lactantius: "The philosophers," saith † he "take them altogether, did indeed discover all the particular
 "doctrines of true religion; but, because each one endeavoured to
 "confute what the others asserted, and no one's single scheme was
 "in all its parts consistent, and agreeable to reason and truth;
 "and none of them were able to collect into one whole and entire
 "scheme the several truths dispersed among them all, therefore
 "they were not able to maintain and defend what they had discovered." And again; having set down a brief summary of the whole doctrine and design of true religion, from the original to the consummation of all things; "this entire scheme," says ‡ he, "because the philosophers were ignorant of, therefore they were
 "not able to comprehend the truth; notwithstanding that they
 "saw and discovered singly almost all the particulars of which the
 "whole scheme consists. But this was done by different men and
 "at different times, and in different manners;" (with various mixtures of different errors, in what every one discovered of truth singly;) and without finding the connexion of the causes, and consequences and reasons of things; from the mutual dependencies of which the compleatness and perfection of the whole scheme arises. Whereas, had there been any man, who could have collected and put together in order all the several truths which were taught singly and scatteredly by philosophers of all the different sects, and have

* "Nec, quid defendere debeant, scientes; nec quid refutare. Incurfantque passim sine defectu omnia quæ asserunt, quicumque dissentiunt." Lactant. lib. VII.

† "Totam igitur veritatem, & omne divinæ religionis arcanum philosophi attigerunt. Sed aliis resistentibus, defendere id, quod invenerant, nequiverunt; quia singulis ratio non quadravit; nec ea, quæ vera senserant, in summam redigere potuerunt." Lactant. lib. VII.

‡ "Quam summam, quia philosophi non comprehenderunt; nec veritatem comprehendere potuerunt; quamvis ea ferè, quibus summa ipsa, constat, & viderint & explicaverint. Sed diversi ac diversè illa omnia protulerunt, non annectentes nec causas rerum, nec consequentias, nec rationes; ut summam illam, quæ continet universa, & compingerent & complerent." Lactant. lib. VII.

"Quod si extitisset aliquis qui veritatem sparsam per singulos, per sectasque diffusam, colligeret in unum, ac redigeret in corpus; is profecto non dissentiret a nobis. Sed hoc nemo facere, nisi veri peritus ac sciens, potest. Verum autem non nisi ejus scire est, qui sit doctus a Deo." Id. ibid.

THE EVIDENCE OF NATURAL

made up out of them one entire consistent scheme; truly, he would not have differed much from us Christians; but this, it was not possible for any man to do, without having the true system of things first revealed to him.

5. AND THOSE THINGS WHICH THEY WERE ABLE TO PROVE AND EXPLAIN CLEARLY AND DISTINCTLY ENOUGH, YET THEY HAD NOT SUFFICIENT AUTHORITY TO ENFORCE IN PRACTICE.

Lastly: even those things, which the philosophers were not only themselves certain of, but which they have also been able to prove and explain to others, with sufficient clearness and plainness; such as are the most obvious and necessary duties of life; they have not yet had authority enough to enforce and inculcate upon men's minds with so strong an impression as to influence and govern the general practice of the world. The truths which they proved by speculative reason * wanted still some more sensible authority to back them, and make them of more force and efficacy in practice; and the † precepts which they laid down, however evidently reasonable and fit to be obeyed, seemed still to want weight, and to be but the precepts of men. Hence ‡ none of the philosophers, even of those who taught the clearest and certainest truths, and offered the best and wisest instructions, and enforced them with the strongest motives that could be, were yet ever able to work any remarkable change in the minds and lives of any considerable part of mankind; as the preaching of Christ and his apostles undeniably did. Nor does it appear in history, that § any number of Socrates's or Plato's followers were convinced of the excellency of true virtue, or the certainty of its final reward, in such a manner as to be willing to lay down their lives for its sake; as innumerable of the disciples of Christ are known to have done. In speculation, indeed, it may perhaps seem possible, that, notwithstanding it must be confessed philosophy cannot discover any complete and satisfactory remedy for past miscarriages, yet the precepts and motives offered by the best philosophers might at least be sufficient to amend and reform men's manners for the future. But in experience and prac-

* "Platonis documenta, quamvis ad rem multum conferant, tamen parum habent firmitatis ad probandam & implendam veritatem." Lactant. lib. VII.

† "Quid ergo? nihilne illi [philosophi] simile præcipiunt? Imo permulta, & ad verum frequenter accedunt. Sed nihil ponderis habent illa præcepta, quia sunt humana; & auctoritate majori, id est, divina illa, carent. Nemo igitur credit; quia tam se hominem putat esse qui audit, quam est ille qui præcipit." Lactant. lib. III.

‡ Εἴποιμι δ' ἂν ἀληθεύειν τὰς δυνθέντας διαθεῖναι τὰς ἀκροατὰς τῶν λεγομένων ἵτω βουδύνας, ἕς τῶτον ἔγωγος ἔχόντων. Διατίθειναι Ἰεδαῖοι καὶ Χριστιανοὶ περὶ τοῦ ἀπ' αὐτῶν καλεμένου μέλλουσιν αἰῶνος.—δεικνύτω ὅτι καὶ Κέλσος ἢ ὁ βυζαντινός, τίνες διετέθησαν περὶ αἰώνων κολάσεων, ὑπὸ τῶν τελειῶν καὶ μυσαρωγῶν. Origen. Cels. lib. VIII.

§ Παρὰ μὲν τρεῖς Ἑλλήσιν εἰς τις Φαίδων, καὶ ἕκαστος εἰς δέυτερον· καὶ εἰς Πολέμων, μετὰ λαλόντες ἀπὸ ἀσίου καὶ μοχθηροτάτου βίης ἐφίλοσόντησαν· παρὰ δὲ τῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὃ μόνον τότε οἱ δώδεκα, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ καὶ πολλὰ πλείους ὅτινες γινόμενοι σωφρόνων χορός. Idem. lib. III.

"Da mihi virum qui sit iracundus, &c. Numquid hæc philosophorum, &c." Lactant. lib. III. See this passage cited above, p. 197.

§ Σωκράτης μὲν γὰρ ἔδειξεν ἐπιστεύθαι ὑπὲρ τούτου τῷ δόγματι ἀποθνήσκειν. Χριστῷ δὲ τῷ καὶ ἀπὸ Σωκράτους ἀπὸ μέρες γνωσθέντι ὁ φιλόσοφος οἶδεν φιλόλογος μόνον ἐπείσθησαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ παντὶ ὡς ἰδιώται καὶ δόξης καὶ φόβου καὶ θανάτου ἀναφρονήσαντες. Justin. Apolog. 1.

tice it hath on the contrary appeared to be altogether impossible, for philosophy and bare reason to reform mankind effectually, without the assistance of some higher principle. For, though the bare natural possibility of the thing cannot indeed easily be denied; yet in this case (as Cicero excellently expresses * it), in like manner as in physic, it matters nothing, whether a disease be such as that no man does, or no man can recover from it; so neither does it make any difference, whether by philosophy no man is, or no man can be made wise and good. So that, without some greater help and assistance, mankind is plainly left in a very bad state. Indeed, in the original uncorrupted state of human nature, before the mind of man was depraved with prejudicate opinions, corrupt affections, and vitious inclinations, customs and habits; right reason may justly be supposed to have been a sufficient guide, and a principle powerful enough to preserve men in the constant practice of their duty. But, in the present circumstances and condition of mankind, the wisest and most sensible of the philosophers themselves have not been backward to complain, that they found the understandings of men so dark and cloudy, their wills so biased and inclined to evil, their passions so outrageous and rebelling against reason, that they looked upon the rules and laws of right reason as very hardly practicable, and which they had very little hopes of ever being able to persuade the world to submit to. In a word, they confessed that human nature was strangely corrupted; and they acknowledged this corruption to be a disease whereof they knew not the true cause, and could not find out a sufficient remedy. So that the great duties of religion were laid down by them as matters of speculation and dispute, rather than as the rules of action; and not so much urged upon the hearts and lives of men, as proposed to the admiration of those, who thought them hardly possible to be effectually practised by the generality of men. To remedy all these disorders, and conquer all these corruptions, there was plainly wanting some extraordinary and supernatural assistance; which was above the reach of bare reason and philosophy to procure, and yet without which the philosophers themselves were sensible there † could never be any truly great men.

VII. For these reasons, there was plainly wanting a divine Revelation, to recover mankind out of their universally degenerate estate, into a state suitable to the original excellency of their nature. Which divine Revelation, both the necessities of men, and their natural notions of God, gave them reasonable ground to expect and hope for, as appears from the acknowledgments which the best and wisest of the Heathen philosophers themselves have made of their sense of the necessity and want of such a revelation; and from their

* "Nam si, consensu omnium philosophorum, sapientiam nemo assequitur; in summis malis omnes sumus, quibus vos optimè consultum a Diis immortalibus dicitis. Nam ut nihil interest utrum nemo valeat, an nemo possit valere; sic non intelligo quid intersit, utrum nemo sit sapiens, an nemo esse possit." (ic. de Natura Deor. lib. III.

† "Nemo unquam vir magnus, sine divino afflatu fuit." Cicero.

expressions of the hopes they had entertained, that God would some time or other vouchsafe it unto them.

I. A DIVINE REVELATION ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR THE RECOVERY OF MANKIND.

There was plainly wanting a divine Revelation, to recover mankind out of their universal corruption and degeneracy; and without such a revelation; it was not possible that the world should ever be effectually reformed. For if (as has been before particularly shewn) the gross and stupid ignorance, the innumerable prejudices and vain opinions, the strong passions and appetites of sense, and the many vitious customs and habits, which the generality of mankind continually labour under, make it undeniably too difficult a work for men of all capacities to discover every one for himself, by the bare light of nature, all the particular branches of their duty; but most men, in the present state of things, have manifestly need of much teaching, and particular instruction: if those who were best able to discover the truth and instruct others therein, namely the wisest and best of the philosophers, were themselves unavoidably altogether ignorant of some doctrines, and very doubtful and uncertain of others, absolutely necessary to the bringing about that great end, the reformation of mankind: if those truths, which they were themselves very certain of, they were not yet able to prove and explain clearly enough to vulgar understandings: if even those things which they proved sufficiently, and explained with all clearness, they had not yet authority enough to inforce and inculcate upon men's minds with so strong an impression, as to influence and govern the general practice of the world; nor pretended to afford men any supernatural assistance, which yet was very necessary to so great a work: and if, after all, in the discovery of such matters as are the great motives of religion, men are apt to be more easily worked upon, and more strongly affected, by good testimony, than by the strictest abstract arguments; so that, upon the whole, it is plain the philosophers were never by any means well qualified to reform mankind with any considerable success: then there was evidently wanting some particular revelation, which might supply all these defects: there was plainly a necessity of some particular revelation, to discover * in what manner, and with what kind of external service, God might acceptably be worshipped: there was a necessity of some particular revelation to discover what expiation God would accept for sin; by which the authority, honour, and dignity of his laws might be effectually vindicated: there was a necessity of some particular revelation, to † give men full assurance of the truth of those great motives of religion, the rewards and punishments of a future state;

* Νομοθέτης ὅστις νῦν κέκληται, ἔπολε μὴ τολμήσῃ καινολογῶν ἐπὶ Θεοσέβειαν, ἥτις μὴ σαφές ἔχει τι τρέφει πᾶσι αὐτοῦ. — μηδὲν τοπαράπαν εἰδώς, ὥσπερ ἔδ' ἐν δυνατόν εἰδέναι τῇ θνητῇ φύσει τῶν τοιούτων περὶ. Plato in Epinomide.

Τὰ γὰρ δὴ τοιαῦτα [θεῶν θεραπείας] ἔτ' ἐπιστάμεθα ἡμεῖς, οἰκίζοντες τε πᾶσι οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ πεισόμεθα ἢ ἀν' ἑαυτοῦ, οὐδὲ χρισόμεθα ἐξηγητῇ, ἀλλ' ἢ τῷ παρίῃ Θεῷ. Plato de Republ. lib. IV.

† Τὸ μὲν ἀληθές, ὃ ἔξενε, δι' ὀχυρίζεσθαι ταῦτα ἔτ' αἰετὶς ἔχειν, πολλῶν ἀμφισβητούντων, Θεὸς ἐστὶ. Plato de Legib. lib. I.

which,

which, notwithstanding the strongest arguments of reason, men could not yet forbear doubting of: in fine, there was a necessity of some particular divine revelation, to * make the whole doctrine of religion clear and obvious to all capacities, to add weight and authority to the plainest precepts, and to furnish men with extraordinary assistances to enable them to overcome the corruptions of their nature. And without the assistance of such a revelation, it is manifest, it was not possible that the world could ever be effectually reformed. “Ye may even give over,” saith Socrates †, “all hopes
“ of amending men’s manners for the future, unless God be pleased
“ to send you some other person to instruct you.” And Plato:
“ Whatever,” saith he ‡, “ is set right and as it should be, in the
“ present evil state of the world, can be so only by the particular
“ interposition of God.”

2. THAT IT WAS AGREEABLE TO THE DICTATES OF NATURE
AND RIGHT REASON, TO EXPECT OR HOPE FOR SUCH A DI-
VINE REVELATION.

Since therefore there was plainly and confessedly wanting a divine revelation, to relieve the necessities of men in their natural state; and since no man can presume to say, that it is inconsistent with any of the attributes of God, or unbecoming the wisdom of the Creator of all things, to supply that want; to reveal to his creatures more fully the way to happiness; to make more particular discoveries of his will to them; to set before them, in a clearer light, the rewards and punishments of a future state; to explain in what manner he will be pleased to be worshipped, and to declare what satisfaction he will accept for sin, and upon what conditions he will receive returning sinners; nay since, on the contrary, it seems more suitable to our natural notions of the goodness and mercy of God, to suppose that he should do all this, than not: it follows undeniably, that it was most reasonable, and agreeable to the dictates of nature, to expect or hope for such a divine revelation. The generality of the heathen world, who were far more equal and less prejudiced judges in this matter, than modern Deists, were so fully persuaded, that the great rules for the conduct of human life must receive their authority from heaven, that their chief law-givers thought it not a sufficient recommendation of their laws, that they were agreeable to the light of nature, unless they pretended also, that they received them from God. But I have no need, in this argument, to make use of the examples of idolatrous law-givers. The philosophers themselves, the best and wisest, and the least superstitious of them, that ever lived, were not ashamed to confess openly their sense of the want of a divine revelation; and to de-

* Τοῦτο δὲ ἐν τῷ μέρῳ φημεν φύσει κυριώτατον, καὶ δυνατὸν ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε μέγιστον καὶ ἄριστον μαθεῖν εἰ διδάσκει τις· ἀλλ’ ἂν διδάξῃεν, εἰ μὴ θεὸς ἐφηγοῖτο. Plato in Epinomide.

* Ἦτα τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον καθυπόδοντες διατελοῖτε ἂν, εἰ μὴ τινα ἄλλον ὑμῖν ὁ θεὸς ἐπιπέμῃσειε κιδόμενος ὑμῶν. Plato in Apolog. Socratis.

† Εὐ γὰρ χρὴ εἰδέναι, ὅτι τί πᾶσι ἂν σωθῇ τε καὶ γένῃσι οὐκ δεῖ, ἐν τοιαύτῃ καταστάσει πολλοῖσιν, οἷα μοῖραν αὐτῶ σῶμασι. Plato de Republ. lib. VI.

clare their judgement, that it was most natural and truly agreeable to right and sound reason to hope for something of that nature. There is, besides the several places before cited, a most excellent passage in Plato to this purpose; one of the most remarkable passages indeed in his whole works; though not quoted by any that I have met with; which therefore I think highly worthy to be transcribed at large, as a just and unanswerable reproach to all those who deny that there is any want or need of a revelation. “It seems best to me,” saith * Socrates to one of his disciples, “that we expect quietly; nay, it is absolutely necessary, that we wait with patience, till such time as we can learn certainly how we ought to behave ourselves both towards God and towards men.” “When will that time come,” replies the disciple; “and who is it that will teach us this? For methinks I earnestly desire to see and know who the person is that will do it.” “It is one,” answers Socrates, “who has now a concern for you. But in like manner as Homer relates that Minerva took away the mist from before Diomedes’s eyes, that he might be able to distinguish one person from another; so it is necessary that the mist, which is now before your mind, be first taken away, that afterwards you may learn to distinguish rightly between good and evil; for, as yet, you are not able to do it.” “Let the person you mentioned,” replies the disciple, “take away this mist, or whatever else it be, as soon as he pleases: for I am willing to do any thing he shall direct, whosoever this person be; so that I may but become a good man.” “Nay,” answers Socrates, “that person has a wonderful readiness and willingness to do all this for you.” “It will be best then,” replies the disciple, “to forbear offering any more sacrifices, till the time that this person appears.” “You judge very well,” answers Socrates; “it will be much safer so to do, than to run so great a hazard of offering sacrifices, which you know not whether they are acceptable to God or no.” “Well then,” replies the disciple, “we will then make our offerings to the gods, when that day comes; and I hope, God willing, it may not be far off.” And in another place, the same author having given a large account of that most excellent discourse, which Socrates made a little before his death, con-

* ΣΩΚ: Ἐμοὶ μὲν ἔν δοκεῖ κράτιστον εἶναι, ἡσυχίαν ἔχειν.—ἀναγκαῖον ἔν ἐς περιμένειν, ἕως ἄν τις μάθῃ ὡς δεῖ πρὸς Θεὸς καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους διακεῖσθαι. ΑΛΚ. Πότε ἔν παύεσαι ὁ χρόνος ἔτος, ὃ Σώκρατες; καὶ τίς ὁ παιδεύων; ἤδιστα γὰρ ἄν μοι δοκῶ ἰδεῖν τοῦτον τὸν ἀνθρώπον τίς ἐστίν. ΣΩΚ: Οὕτως ἐστίν, ὃ μέλει περὶ σοῦ. ΑΛΛὰ δρκεῖ μοι, ὅσπερ ἔ Διομήδης φησὶ τὴν Ἀθηνῶν Ὀμηρος ἀπὸ τῶν ὑφθαλμῶν ἀφελεῖν τὴν ἀχλὺν, ὅφρ ᾗ γινώσκῃ ἡμὲν Θεὸν ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρᾶ, οὕτω καὶ σοῦ δεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς πρῶτον ἀφελόντα τὴν ἀχλυν, ἣ νῦν παροῦσα τυγχάνει, τοῖσιν καὶ ἡδὲ προσφέρειν δι ἣν μελλεῖς γινώσκειν ἡμὲν κατὸν ἠδὲ καὶ ἐσθλόν· νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἄν μοι δεκτὴς δυνηθῇ. ΑΛΚ: Ἀφαιρέτω, εἴτε βούλει, τὴν ἀχλύν, εἴτε ἄλλο τί· ὡς ἐγὼ παρυσθενέσθαι μηδὲν ἄν φεύγειν τῶν ὑπ ἑκείνῃ πρὸς αἰσθημένων, ὅς τις ποτ ἐστίν ὁ ἀνθρώπος, εἴτε μελλοίμην βελτίων γενέσθαι. ΣΩΚ: Ἀλλὰ μὴν κακείνους θάυμασιν ἔσιν περὶ σε ποροθυμίαν ἔχει. ΑΛΚ: Εἰς τότε τοῖνον καὶ τὴν θυσίαν ἀναβάλλεσθαι κράτιστον εἶναι μοι δοκεῖ. ΕΩΚ: Καὶ ὁρθῶς γε σαί δοκεῖ· ἀσφαλέστερον γὰρ ἐστίν, ἢ παρακινδυνεύειν τοσοῦτον κίνδυνον. ΑΛΚ: Τοῖς θεοῖς δὲ καὶ εὐφάνεις καὶ τὰλλα πάντα τὰ νομιζόμενα τότε δάσσομεν, ὅταν ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν ἐλθῶσαν ἰδῶ· ἥξει δ ἢ ἐὰν μακροῦ, τέταν θελόσιν. Plato in Alcibiade 2. [If it be supposed that Socrates in this passage means himself (which is very difficult); yet it nevertheless very lively represents the great sense which the most considerate Heathens had of their want of some extraordinary instruction]

cerning the great doctrines of religion, the immortality of the soul and the certainty of a life to come; he introduces one of his disciples replying in the following manner: "I am," saith he, * "of the same opinion with you, O Socrates, concerning these things; that, to discover the certain truth of them, in this present life, is either absolutely impossible for us, or at least exceedingly difficult. Yet not to enquire with our utmost diligence into what can be said about them, or to give over our enquiry before we have carried our search as far as possible, is the sign of a mean and low spirit. On the contrary, we ought therefore by all means to do one of these two things; either, by hearkening to instruction, and by our own diligent study, to find out the truth; or, if that be absolutely impossible, then to fix our foot upon that which to human reason, after the utmost search, appears best and most probable; and, trusting to that, venture upon that bottom to direct the course of our lives accordingly; unless a man could have still some more sure and certain conduct to carry him through this life; such as a divine discovery of the truth would be." I shall mention but one instance more, and that is of Porphyry; who, though he lived after our Saviour's time, and had a most inveterate hatred to the Christian revelation in particular, yet † confess in general, that he was sensible there was wanting some universal method of delivering men's souls, which no sect of philosophy had yet found out.

3. THE UNREASONABLENESS OF MODERN DEISTS, IN DENYING THE WANT AND USE OF A REVELATION.

This sense of the ancient and wisest philosophers is much departed from by modern Deists, who contend that there was no want, no need of a revelation; that philosophy and right reason was by itself sufficiently able to instruct and preserve men in the practice of their duty; and that nothing was to be expected from revelation. But, besides what has been already intimated concerning the extreme barbarity of the present heathen world, and what the philosophers both Greeks and Latins have confessed concerning the state of the more civilized nations wherein they lived; I think we may safely appeal even to our adversaries themselves, whether the testimony of

* Ἐμοὶ γὰρ δοκεῖ, ὦ Σωκράτης, περὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἴσως ὥσπερ καὶ σοί· τὸ μὲν σαφὲς εἰδέναι ἐν τῷ νῦν βίῳ ἢ ἀδύνατον εἶναι, ἢ παρὰ γὰρ ἄλλο τι· τὸ μὲντοι αὐτὰ [leg. τὰ] λεγόμενα περὶ αὐτῶν μὴ οὐκ παντὶ τῷ ὅπῳ ἐλέγχω, καὶ προαφίσταται πρὶν ἂν πανταχῇ σκοπῶν ἀπείπῃ τις, πάντῃ μαλθακῶ εἶναι ἀνδρὸς. [Note, that Ficinus, in his translation of this passage, as if the word ἐκί was to be repeated ἀπὸ τοῦ καινοῦ with προαφίσταται, writes absurdly *non desistere*, instead of *desistere*]. Δεῖν γὰρ περὶ αὐτὰ ἐν γε τι τοῦτων διαπραχῆσθαι· ἢ μαθεῖν ὅπῃ ἔχει, ἢ εὐρεῖν, ἢ, εἰ ταῦτα ἀδύνατον, τὸν γοῦν βέλτιστον τοῦ Ἀνθρώπων Λόγον λαβόντα καὶ δυσσελεγκτότατον, ἐπὶ τοῦτο ὀχοῦμενον, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ σχεδίας, κινδυνεύοντα διαπλεῦσαι τὸν βίον· εἰ μὴ τις δύναμις ἀσφαλτέρεον καὶ ἀκινδυνότερον, ἐπὶ βέλτιστῳ ὀχλήματι, ἢ λόγῳ θεοῦ τιδὸς, διαπορευθῆναι. Plato in Phædone.

† "Quum autem dicit Porphyrius, in primo de Regressu Animæ libro, nondum receptum in unam quandam sectam quæ universalem viam animæ contineat liberandæ, nondumque in suam notitiam eandem viam historialia cognitione perlatam; procul dubio confitetur, esse aliquam; sed nondum in suam venisse notitiam. Ita ei non sufficiebat quicquid de anima liberanda studiosissime didicerat, sibi que, vel potius aliis, nosse ac tenerè videbatur. Sentiebat enim adhuc sibi deesse aliquam præstantissimam auctoritatem, quam de re tanta sequi oporteret." Augustin. de Civitate Dei, lib. X. c. 32.

Christ (without considering at present what truth and evidence it has), concerning the immortality of the soul, and the rewards and punishments of a future state, have not had (notwithstanding all the corruptions of Christians) visibly in experience and effect a * greater and more powerful influence upon the lives and actions of men, than the reasonings of all the philosophers that ever were in the world: whether credible testimony, and the belief and authority of revelation, be not in itself as it were a light held to the consciences of stupid and careless men; and the most natural and proper means that can be imagined, to awaken and rouse up many of those who would be little affected with all the strict arguments and abstract reasonings in the world; and, to bring this matter to a short issue, whether in Christian countries (at least where Christianity is professed in any tolerable degree of purity) the generality even † of the meaner and most vulgar and ignorant people have not truer and worthier notions of God, more just and right apprehensions concerning his attributes and perfections, a deeper sense of the differences of good and evil, of greater regard to moral obligations and to the plain and most necessary duties of life, and a more firm and universal expectation of a future state of rewards and punishments, than in any Heathen country any considerable number of men were ever found to have had.

THE GREAT NECESSITY AND USE OF DIVINE REVELATION.

It may here perhaps be pretended by modern Deists, that the great ignorance and undeniable corruptness of the whole Heathen world has always been owing, not to any absolute insufficiency of the light of nature itself, but merely to the fault of the several particular persons, in not sufficiently improving that light; and that Deists now, in places where learning and right reason are cultivated, are well able to discover and explain all the obligations and motives of morality, without believing any thing of Revelation. But this, even though it were true (as, in the sense they intend, it by no means is; because, as has been before shewn, there are several very necessary truths not possible to be discovered with any certainty by the bare light of nature; but) supposing it, I say, to be true, that all the obligations and motives of morality could possibly be discovered and explained clearly by the mere light of nature alone; yet even this would not at all prove, that there is no need of Revelation. For, whatever the bare natural possibility was, it is certain in fact, the wisest philosophers of old ‡ never were able to do it to any

* Οὐκ ὀλίγους, "Ελληνας καὶ Βαρβάρους, σόφους καὶ ἀνοήτους, μέχρι θανάτου ἀγωνίζεσθαι ὑπὲρ Χριστιανισμοῦ ἢ αὐτὸν μὴ ἐξομολογῆναι· ὅπερ οὐδεὶς ὑπὲρ ἄλλης δόγματις ἐβόηθηαι ποιεῖν. Orig. advert. Cels. lib. 1.

† Ὡς ἐμνήσθη κατὰ τὸ παλαιὸν βραχυῖς τινες καὶ ἀριθμῶ ληπτὸς, θεὸς περὶ Θεοῦ φέρειν δόξας ἀλλὰ μυρία πλήθη βαρβάρων. Euseb. Demonstrat. Evangel. lib. III. c. 3.

Αἱ δὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ Χριστοῦ μαθητευθεῖσαι ἐκκλησίαι, συνεξεταζόμεναι ταῖς ὡν παροικεῖσι δὴμων ἐκκλησίαις· ὡς φωστῆρες εἰσιν ἐν κόσμῳ. Τίς γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ὁμολογήσεται, καὶ τοὺς χεῖρους τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ συγκρίσει τῶν βελτιόνων ἐλάττους, πολλῶν κρείττους τυγχάνειν τῶν ἐν τοῖς δήμοις ἐκκλησιῶν. [Note, this passage is both corruptly printed, πολλῶν instead of πολλῶ; and also the sense of it hurt by an imperfect translation. Orig. advers. Cels. lib. III. edit. Cantab. p. 128.]

‡ See an excellent passage of Cicero to this purpose cited above, p. 203.

effectual purpose, but always willingly acknowledged that they still wanted some higher assistance. And as to the great pretences of modern Deists; it is to be observed, that the clearness of moral reasonings was much improved, and the regard to a future state very much increased, even in heathen writers, after the coming of Christ. And almost all the things that are said wisely and truly by modern Deists are plainly borrowed from that revelation which they refuse to embrace, and without which they could never have been able to have said the same things. Now, indeed, when our whole duty, with its true motives, is clearly revealed to us; its precepts appear plainly agreeable to reason; and conscience readily approves what is good, as it condemns what is evil; nay, after our duty is thus made known to us, it is easy not only to see its agreement with reason, but also to begin and deduce its obligation from reason. But had we been utterly destitute of all revealed light; then, to have discovered our duty in all points, with the true motives of it, merely by the help of natural reason, would have been a work of nicety, pains, and labour; like groping for an unknown way in the obscure twilight. What ground have any modern Deists to imagine, that, if they themselves had lived without the light of the gospel, they should have been wiser than Socrates and Plato and Cicero? How are they certain, they should have made such a right use of their reason, as to have discovered the truth exactly, without being any way led aside by prejudice or neglect? If their lot had been among the vulgar; how are they sure they should have been so happy, or so considerate, as not to have been involved in that idolatry and superstition which overspread the whole world? If they had joined themselves to the philosophers, which sect would they have chosen to have followed? and what book would they have resolved upon to be the adequate rule of their lives and conversations? Or, if they should have set up for themselves, how are they certain they should have been skilful and unprejudiced enough to have deduced the several branches of their duty, and applied them to the several cases of life, by argumentation and dint of reason? It is one thing to see that those rules of life which are beforehand plainly and particularly laid before us, are perfectly agreeable to reason; and another thing to find out those rules merely by the light of reason, without their having first been any otherwise made known. We see that even many of those who profess to govern their lives by the plain written rule of an instituted and revealed religion, are yet most miserably ignorant of their duty, and how can any man be sure he should have made so good improvement of his reason, as to have understood it perfectly in all its parts, without any such help? We see that many of those who profess to believe firmly that great and everlasting happiness, which Christ has promised to obedience; and that great and eternal misery, which Christ has threatened to disobedience; are yet hurried away by their lusts and passions to transgress the conditions of that covenant, to which these promises and these threatenings are annexed; and how can any man

be sure he should be able to overcome those great temptations, if these mighty motives were less distinctly known, or less powerfully enforced? But suppose he could, and that by strength of reason he could demonstrate to himself these things with all clearness and distinctness; yet could all men do so? Assuredly all men are not equally capable of being philosophers, though all men are equally obliged to be religious. At least thus much is certain, that the rewards and punishments of another world, the great motives of religion, cannot be so powerfully enforced, to the influencing the lives and practice of all sorts of men, by one who shall undertake to demonstrate the reality of them by abstract reasons and arguments; as by one who, shewing sufficient credentials of his having been himself in that other state, shall assure them of the truth and certainty of these things. But, after all, the question does not really lie here. The truth, at the bottom, is plainly this. All the great things that modern Deists affect to say of right reason, as to its sufficiency in discovering the obligations and motives of morality, is only a pretence, to be made use of, when they are opposing Christianity. At other times, and in reality, they have no hearty regard for morality, nor for the natural evidences of the certainty of a future state; they are willing enough to believe, that men perish absolutely at death: and so they have no concern to support effectually the cause of virtue, nor care to make out any consistent scheme of things; but unavoidably recur, in truth, to downright Atheism. At least, in the manners of most of them, it is too plain and apparent, that absolute libertinism is the thing they really aim at; and however their creed may pretend to be the creed of Deists, yet almost always their practice is the practice of very Atheists.

4. YET GOD WAS NOT ABSOLUTELY OBLIGED TO AFFORD MEN
THE HELP OF SUCH A REVELATION.

To return, therefore, to the argument. From what has been said upon this head, it appears plainly, that it is agreeable to the natural hopes and expectations of men, that is, of right reason duly improved, to suppose God making some particular revelation of his will to mankind, which may supply the undeniable defects of the light of nature. And, at the same time, it is evident that such a thing is by no means unworthy of the divine wisdom, or inconsistent with any of the attributes of God; but rather, on the contrary, most suitable to them. Consequently, considering the manifold wants and necessities of men, and the abundant goodness and mercy of God; there is great ground, from right reason and the light of nature, to believe, that God would not always leave men wholly destitute of so needful an assistance, but would at some time or other actually afford it them. Yet it does not from hence at all follow (as some have imagined) that God is obliged to make such a revelation. For then it must needs have been given in all ages, and to all nations; and might have been claimed and demanded as of justice, rather than wished for and desired as of mercy and condescending goodness. But the forementioned considerations are
such

such as might afford men reasonable ground to hope for some favour of this kind, to be conferred at such time, and in such manner, and upon such persons, as should seem best to supreme infinite wisdom; at least, they might well dispose and prepare men before-hand, whenever any doctrine should come accompanied with just and good evidence of its being such a revelation, to believe and embrace it with all readiness.

WANT OF UNIVERSALITY, NO SUFFICIENT OBJECTION AGAINST
THE TRUTH OF A REVELATION.

It has been made use of, by a modern author *, as his principal and strongest argument against the reasonableness of believing any revelation at all, that it is confessed there has been no revelation universally owned and embraced as such, either in all ages, or by all nations in any age. He pretends to acknowledge, that if the doctrine of Christianity was universally entertained, he would not doubt of its being truly a revelation of the will of God to mankind; but since, in fact, there is no instituted religion universally received as a divine revelation; and there are several nations to whom the Christian doctrine in particular was never so much as preached, nor ever came to their knowledge at all; he concludes, that what is not universal and equally made known to all men, cannot be needful for any; and consequently, that there never was any real want of a revelation at all, nor any ground to think any further assistance necessary, to enable men to answer all the ends of their creation, than the bare light of nature. This is the sum and strength of this author's reasoning; and herein all the deniers of revelation agree with him. Now (not to take notice here, that it is by no means impossible, but all men may be capable of receiving some benefit from a revelation, which yet a great part of them may have never heard of), if these men's reasonings were true, it would follow by the same argument, that neither was natural religion necessary to enable men to answer the ends of their creation. For, though all the truths of natural religion are indeed certainly discoverable by the due use of right reason alone; yet it is evident all men are not endued with the same faculties and capacities, nor have they all equally afforded to them the same means of making that discovery, as these gentlemen themselves upon some occasions are willing enough to own, when they are describing the barbarous ignorance of some poor Indian nations; and, consequently, the knowledge of natural religion being, in fact, by no means universal, it will follow that there is no great necessity even of that, but that men may do very well without it, in performing the functions of the animal life, and directing themselves wholly by the inclinations of sense; and thus these gentlemen must at last be forced to let go all moral obligations, and so recur unavoidably to absolute Atheism. The truth is; as God was not obliged to make all his creatures equal; to make men, angels; or to endue all men with the same faculties

* Oracles of Reason, p. 197, &c.

and capacities as any; so neither is he bound to make all men capable of the same degree or the same kind of happiness, or to afford all men the very same means and opportunities of obtaining it. There is ground enough, from the consideration of the manifest corruption of human nature, to be so far sensible of the want of a divine revelation, as that right reason and the light of nature itself will lead a wise and considerate man to think it very probable; that the infinitely merciful and good God may actually vouchsafe to afford men some such supernatural assistance; and consequently such a person will be very willing, ready, and prepared, to entertain a doctrine which shall at any time come attended with just and good evidence of its being truly a revelation of the will of God. But it does not at all from hence follow, either that God is absolutely bound to make such a revelation; or that, if he makes it, it must equally be made to all men; or that, since in fact it is not made to all, therefore there is no reason to believe that there is any need or any probability of its being made to any.

VIII. There is no other religion now in the world, but the Christian, that has any just pretence, or tolerable appearance of reason, to be esteemed such a divine revelation; and therefore, if Christianity be not true, there is no revelation of the will of God at all made to mankind.

This proposition will easily be granted by all modern unbelievers; and therefore I need not be particular in the proof of it.

OF THE MAHOMETAN RELIGION.

The Mahometan religion was founded by a vicious person, proposes ridiculous and trifling doctrines to be believed, was propagated merely by violence and force of arms, was confirmed by no public and uncontestable miracles, promises vain and sensual rewards to its professors, and is every way encompassed with numberless such absurdities and inconsistencies (as those who have given us accounts of the life of Mahomet, and the nature of his religion, have abundantly made out, and is sufficiently evident even from the Alcoran itself), that there is no great danger of its imposing upon rational and considerate men.

OF THE JEWISH RELIGION.

The Jewish religion was founded wholly upon the expectation of a Messiah to come; and the time of his appearance was limited by such plain and determinate prophecies, that what difficulties soever there may be in computing the very nice and exact time of their completion; or what different periods soever may be fixed, from whence to begin several computations; yet the time of their being fulfilled is now, in all possible ways of computing, so very far elapsed, that, if the Christian doctrine be false, there is no supposition left, upon which the Jewish religion can, with any colour of reason, be believed to be true.

It being evident, therefore, that either the Christian revelation is true, or else (how great want soever there may be of it) there is no such

such thing as revelation at all; it remains that I proceed to consider what positive and direct evidence there is, to prove the actual truth of this divine revelation.

IX. The Christian religion, considered in its primitive simplicity, and as taught in the holy scriptures, has all the marks and proofs of being actually and truly a divine revelation, that any divine revelation, supposing it were true, could reasonably be imagined or desired to have.

THE MARKS OF A RELIGION COMING FROM GOD.

The necessary marks and proofs of a religion coming from God, are these. First, that the duties it enjoins be all such as are agreeable to our natural notions of God; and perfective of the nature, and conducive to the happiness and well-being of men; and that the doctrines it teaches be all such, as, though not indeed discoverable by the bare light of nature, yet, when discovered by revelation, may be consistent with, and agreeable to, sound and unprejudiced reason. For, otherwise, no evidence whatsoever can be of so great force to prove that any doctrine is true; as its being either contradictory in itself, or wicked in its tendency, is, to prove that it must necessarily be false. Secondly, for the same reason, the motives likewise, by which it is recommended to mens belief and practice, and all the peculiar circumstances with which it is attended, must be such as are suitable to the excellent wisdom of God, and fitted to amend the manners and perfect the minds of men. Lastly, it must moreover be positively and directly proved to come from God, by such certain signs and matters of fact, as may be undeniable evidences of its author's having actually a divine commission. For otherwise, as no evidence can prove a doctrine to come from God, if it be either impossible or wicked in itself; so, on the other hand, neither can any degree of goodness or excellency in the doctrine itself, make it certain, but only highly probable, to have come from God, unless it has moreover some positive and direct evidence of its being actually revealed.

The entire proof, therefore, of this proposition must be made by an induction of particulars. as follows.

X. First, the practical duties which the Christian religion enjoins, are all such, as are most agreeable to our natural notions of God, and most perfective of the nature, and conducive to the happiness and well-being of men: that is, Christianity even in this single respect, as containing alone and in one consistent system all the wise and good precepts (and those improved, augmented, and exalted to the highest degree of perfection) that ever were taught singly and scatteredly, and many times but very corruptly, by the several schools of the philosophers; and this without any mixture of the fond, absurd, and superstitious practices of any of those philosophers; ought to be embraced and practised by all rational and considering Deists, who will act consistently, and steadily pursue

the consequences of their own principles, as at least the best scheme and sect of philosophy that ever was set up in the world, and highly probable, even though it had no external evidence, to be of divine original.

THE PROPOSITION PROVED, IN THE SEVERAL INSTANCES OF
DUTY.

This proposition is so very evident, that the greatest adversaries of the Christian institution have never been able to deny it any otherwise, than by confounding the inventions of men, the superstitious practices of particular persons, or the corrupt additions of certain particular churches or societies of Christians, with the pure and simple precepts of the gospel of Christ. In all those instances of duty which pure and uncorrupt Christianity enjoins, the proposition is manifest and altogether undeniable. The duties of love, fear, and adoration, which the Christian religion obliges us to render unto God, are so plainly incumbent upon us from the consideration of the excellent attributes of the divine nature, and our relation to him as our creator and preserver, that no man who considers can think himself free from the obligations which our religion lays upon him to practise these duties; without denying the very being of God, and acting contrary to the reason and all the natural notions of his own mind. Its placing the true and acceptable worship of God, not so much in any positive and ritual observances, as in approaching him with pure hearts and undefiled bodies, with unfeigned repentance for all past miscarriages, and sincere resolutions of constant obedience for the future; in praying to him for whatever we want, and returning him our most hearty thanks for whatever good things we receive, with such dependence and humility, such submission, trust, and reliance, as are the proper affections of dutiful children; all this is plainly most agreeable to our natural notions and apprehensions of God. And that the prayers of sinful and depraved creatures, sincerely repenting, should be offered up to God, and become prevalent with him, through and by the intercession of a mediator, is very consonant to right and unprejudiced reason; as I shall have occasion to shew more particularly hereafter, when I come to consider the articles of our belief. Again: the duties of justice, equity, charity, and truth, which the Christian religion obliges us to exercise towards men, are so apparently reasonable in themselves, and so directly conducive to the happiness of mankind; that their unalterable obligation is not only in great measure deducible from the bare light of nature and right reason; but even those men also, who have broken through all the bonds of natural religion itself, and the original obligations of virtue, have yet thought it necessary, for the preservation of society and the well-being of mankind, that the observation of these duties to some degree should be enforced by the penalties of human laws. And the additional improvements which our Saviour has made to these duties, by commanding his disciples to be as it were lights in the world, and examples of good works to all men, Matth. v. 16, &c.

to be so far from injuring others, that, on the contrary, they should not indulge themselves in any degree of anger or passion; to seek reconciliation immediately upon any difference or offence that may arise; to bear injuries patiently, rather than return evil for evil; to be always willing to forgive one another their trespasses, as they all expect forgiveness at the hands of God: to be kind and charitable to all men; to assist readily, and be willing to do all good offices, not only to their friends, but even to their bitterest enemies also; in a word, to raise their virtue and goodness far above the common practice of men, extending their charity universally, in imitation of the goodness of God himself, who maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust: these precepts, I say, are such, as no unprejudiced philosopher would have been unwilling to confess were the utmost improvements of morality, and to the highest degree perfective of human nature. In like manner; the duties of sobriety, temperance, patience, and contentment; which our religion enjoins us to practise in ourselves, are so undeniably agreeable to the inward constitution of human nature, and so perfective of it, that the principal design of all true philosophy has ever been to recommend and set off these duties to the best advantage; though, as the philosophers themselves have always confessed, no philosophy was ever able to govern mens practice effectually in these respects. But the additional precepts, and the new weight and authority, which our Saviour has added to his instructions of this kind, Matt. v. 28. Matt. vi. 19. 24. &c. teaching his disciples to govern their very thoughts, desires, and inclinations; to condemn and get above all the desires of this present world, and to set their affections principally upon that which is to come; these are the things, which, when the Christian religion was in its primitive and purest state, worked men up actually to such a pitch of cheerful and generous obedience to the laws of God, and taught them to obtain such a complete victory over the world, and over all the desires and appetites of sense, as, the best philosophers have acknowledged, their instructions were never able to do. Lastly, even those positive and external observances (the two sacraments) which are instituted in the Christian religion, as means and assistances to keep men steadfast in the practice of those great and moral duties which are the weightier matters of the law; even those positive institutions (I say) are so free from all appearance of superstition and vanity, and so wisely fitted to the end for which they were designed, that no adversaries of Christianity have ever been able to object any thing at all against the things themselves, but only against certain corruptions and superstitions, which some, who call themselves Christians, have, directly in opposition to the true design of Christianity, introduced and annexed to them. For, what reasonable man can pretend to say, that it is any way unreasonable or superstitious, for every member of the society to be solemnly admitted into his profession by a plain and significant rite, intitling him to all the privileges, and charging him with all the

obligations, which belong to the members of that society as such? which is the design of one of the sacraments; or, that it is unreasonable and superstitious, for men frequently to commemorate with all thankfulness the love of their greatest benefactor, and humbly and solemnly to renew their obligations and promises of obedience to him? which is the design of the other.

THIS, A GREAT EVIDENCE OF A RELIGION COMING
FROM GOD.

Let now any impartial person judge, whether this be not a wise and excellent institution of practical religion, highly conducive to the happiness of mankind, and worthy to be established by a revelation from God, when men had confessedly corrupted themselves to such a degree, that not only the light of nature and right reason was altogether insufficient to restore true piety, but even that light itself (as Cicero * expressly acknowledges) no where appeared. Let any impartial person judge, whether a religion that tends thus manifestly to the recovery of the rational part of God's creation, to restore men to the imitation and likeness of God, and to the dignity and highest improvement of their nature, has not within itself an intrinsic and very powerful evidence of its being truly divine. Let any one read the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel, and judge if they do not, as it were, set before his eyes such a lovely image and representation of true virtue, as Plato † said could not but charm men with the highest degree of love and admiration imaginable. In a word, let any man of an honest and sincere mind consider, whether that practical doctrine has not even in itself the greatest marks of a divine original; wherein "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any thing praise-worthy," Phil. iv. 8; all these, and these only, are the things that are earnestly recommended to men's practice. What wise precept was ever delivered by any philosopher of any sect, which is not more plainly laid down by our Saviour and his apostles? and not only so, but enforced moreover with greater efficacy and strength? founded upon nobler and more consistent principles? urged with greater weight and authority? and pressed with more powerful and affecting argument? Nay, neither is this all the difference, even in respect barely of the excellency of the doctrine itself. For the philosophers taught indeed many excellent moral truths; but some upon one occasion and upon one set of principles, some upon another; and every one of them were mistaken in some instances of duty, and mingled particular superstitions and false notions with their good instructions, and built their doctrine upon no sure foundation of consistent principles; and all of them (as has been before shewn) were

* "—ut Naturæ lumen nusquam appareat." Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. III. See this passage cited before at large, p. 186.

† "Formam ipsam, & tanquam faciem honesti; quæ si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores, ut ait Plato, excitaret sui." Cic. de Offic. lib. I.

very imperfect and deficient, and far from being able to make up an entire and complete scheme of the whole duty of man in all cases. But now, to * put together all the wise and good precepts that ever were delivered by any wise men of any sect and in any age; to improve and exalt every one of them to the highest possible degree of excellency and perfection; to separate and lay aside all the superstitious opinions and practices, that had been mixed by all or any of the different sects of philosophers, or teachers of religion in any nation, with their respective moral instructions; and to supply all those doctrines, wherein both moral philosophy and the additional institutions of all religions in the world, had in the whole been hitherto altogether deficient; and all this, in one plain, entire, and regular system, upon the foundation of certain and consistent principles; this is the peculiar character of the Christian institution; and all this cannot, with any colour of reason, be imagined to have ever been done by any man, but one sent immediately from God. Upon this consideration alone, all sincere Deists (if any such there be) who really are what they pretend to be, who believe the being and attributes of God, and are firmly convinced of the obligations of virtue and natural religion, and the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments, must needs by their own principles be strongly inclined to embrace the Christian religion; to believe, at least to hope confidently, that a doctrine so plainly fitted to recover men out of their universally corrupt estate, and restore them to the knowledge and favour of God, is truly divine; and to entertain it with all cheerfulness, as what in itself has those manifold marks of goodness and perfection, which are themselves sufficient to satisfy a good man, that it cannot be any thing else than a revelation from God, even † though it had wanted all those outward proofs, and divine and miraculous testimonies, which shall hereafter be mentioned in their proper place.

XI. Secondly, the motives, by which the Christian religion enforces the practice of the duties it enjoins, are such as are most suitable to the excellent wisdom of God, and most answerable to the natural expectations of men.

I. OF THE ACCEPTABLENESS OF TRUE REPENTANCE, AS A MOTIVE TO OBEDIENCE.

The acceptableness of true repentance in the sight of God, and the certain assurance of pardon upon such repentance, which the Christian religion affords us, is a most powerful and necessary mo-

* Οὐχ ὅτι ἀλλότριώ ἐστι τὰ Πλάτωνος διδάγματα, τῷ Χριστῷ ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐκ ἐστὶ πάντη ἴμοια· ὥσπερ ἐδὲ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων.—ἐκαστος γὰρ τις, ἀπὸ μέρους τῆ σπέρματινῃ θεῷ λόγῳ τὸ συρλενὲς ὁρᾶν, καλῶς ἐφθέρχεται.—ὅσα ἂν παρὰ πᾶσι καλῶς εἴρηται, ἡμῶν τῶν χριστιανῶν ἐστὶ. Justin. Apolog. 1.

“ Quod si extitisset aliquis, qui veritatem sparsam per singulos, per sectasque diffusam, colligeret in unum ac reageret in corpus; is profecto non dissentiret a nobis. Sed hoc nemo facere, nisi veri peritus ac sciens, potest. Verum autem non nisi ejus scire est, qui sit doctus à Deo.” Lactant. lib. VII.

† “ Sed si vel casu id efficeret, certissime philosopharetur; & quamvis non posset divinis testimoniis illa defendere, tamen seipsam veritas illustraret suo lumine.” Lactant. lib. VII.

tive to frail and sinful creatures to encourage and support them effectually in the practice of their duty. It is, indeed, in general evidently most agreeable to right reason, and to men's natural notions of God, to believe him placable and merciful and willing to forgive. But since at the same time it cannot be proved by any arguments from reason, that God is absolutely obliged to forgive; and it is confessedly evident, that it becomes the supreme governor of the universe to vindicate the honour and authority of his laws and government, to give some evidences of his hatred and indignation against sin, and sometimes by instances of severity to prevent sinners from abusing his mercy and patience; no less than that it is agreeable to his infinite wisdom and goodness to suffer his anger to be by some means appeased; no motive in this case can be imagined more expedient and powerful to encourage sinners to return to the practice of their duty, and to persuade them to continue therein immovable for the future; nothing can be imagined more seasonable and satisfactory to the mind of man, and more agreeable to the excellent wisdom of God, and worthy of the supreme and infinitely merciful governor of all things, than such a positive declaration of the acceptableness of sincere repentance, and such an authentic assurance of pardon and forgiveness thereupon, as under the Christian dispensation the divine goodness and mercy has found means to afford unto us, in such manner as is at the same time abundantly consistent with the honour and dignity of the laws of God, and with his irreconcilable hatred against all unrighteousness and sin.

2. OF THE DIVINE ASSISTANCE, AS ANOTHER MOTIVE TO OBEDIENCE.

That divine and supernatural assistance, which, under the Christian dispensation, they who sincerely endeavour to obey the will of God have encouragement to hope for upon all necessary occasions, is another powerful motive to support men effectually in the practice of their duty. The wisest of the philosophers were so far sensible of the great corruption and depravity of human nature in its present state: they were sensible that such was the carelessness, stupidity, and want of attention, of the greater part of mankind: so many the early prejudices and false notions taken in by evil education, so strong and violent the unreasonable lusts, appetites, and desires of sense, and so great the blindness, introduced by superstitious opinions, vicious customs, and debauched practices through the world; that (as has been before shewn) they themselves openly confessed, they had very little hope of ever being able to reform mankind with any considerably great and universal success, by the bare force of philosophy and right reason; but that, to produce so great a change, and enable men effectually to conquer all their corrupt affections, there was need of some supernatural and divine assistance, or the immediate interposition of God himself. Now this divine assistance is vouchsafed to men under the Christian dispensation in such a manner, as (from what has been already said concerning the judgement of the wisest

wisest of the antient philosophers in this matter) appears to be undeniably agreeable to the natural expectations of right reason, and suitable to the best and worthiest notions that men have ever by the light of nature been able to frame to themselves concerning the attributes and perfections of God. "If ye," says our Saviour, "being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly father give the holy spirit to them that ask him?" Luke xi. 13. The effect of this divine assistance evidenced itself in a very visible and remarkable manner in the primitive times, by * the sudden wonderful and total reformation of far greater numbers of wicked men than ever were brought to repentance by the teaching and exhortations of all the philosophers in the world. And even at this day, notwithstanding all the corruptions introduced among Christians, I think it can hardly be denied by any unbelievers of revelation, but that there are among us many more persons of all conditions who worship God in sincerity and simplicity of heart, and live in the constant practice of all righteousness, holiness, and true virtue, than ever were found in any of the most civilized nations, and most improved by philosophy in the Heathen world,

3. OF THE CLEAR DISCOVERY OF FUTURE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS, AS ANOTHER MOTIVE TO OBEDIENCE.

The rewards and punishments, which the Christian religion proposes to obedience or disobedience, are a motive perfectly agreeable to men's natural hopes and fear, and worthy of God to make known by positive and express revelation. For since it is confessedly suitable to the divine wisdom, to make variety of creatures endued with very different powers and faculties, and capable of very different kinds and degrees of improvements; and since all rational creatures, by reason of that natural liberty of will which is essentially necessary to their being such, cannot but be capable of exalting and improving their nature by the practice of virtue and the imitation of God, and on the contrary of depraving and debasing their nature by the practice of vice and alienation of themselves from God; it follows undeniably (as has been before shewn by a more particular deduction) that it is highly agreeable to the light of nature and to right reason to suppose, that God, the supreme governor and disposer of all things, will finally make a just and suitable distinction between his creatures, by the distribution of proportionable rewards and punishments. Nevertheless, both the truth itself of these final rewards and punishments was so far called in question, and rendered doubtful and uncertain, by the disputations even of the wisest philosophers that ever lived; and those who did in general believe the truth and certainty of them had so very blind and obscure notions of what nature and kind they were to be, having their

* "Da mihi virum, qui sit iracundus, maled'cus, effrænatus; paucissimis Dei verbis tam placidum, quam ovem, reddam. Da libidinosum, &c." Lactant. lib. III.

Παρά μὲν τῶν Ἑλλήνων εἰς τὴν, &c. Origen, advers. Celsi, lib I. See this passage cited above, p. 202.

imagination strangely prejudiced with poetical fictions and fabulous stories, that the setting this matter clear and right, and the supplying this single defect in the light of nature, was a thing highly worthy of divine revelation: it being plainly a very different thing, and of very different force as to the influencing men's actions, for men to be able to argue themselves into a reasonable expectation of future rewards and punishments, and to be certainly assured of the reality of them by express testimony of divine revelation. And accordingly by divine revelation in the gospel this defect of the light of nature is now actually supplied in such a manner, life and immortality are so brought to light, and the wrath of God is so revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, that this very thing, the clear and distinct and consistent account which the gospel gives us of these final rewards and punishments (which, though indeed in themselves so absolutely necessary, that without them no tolerable vindication could be made of the attributes of God, yet neither by the light of nature, nor by any positive institution of religion, excepting only the Christian, were they ever so clearly and plainly represented to mankind, as to have their full and proper effect upon the hearts and lives of men); this very thing (I say) the clear, distinct, and consistent account, which the gospel give us of these final rewards and punishments, is itself no contemptible argument of the truth and divine authority of the Christian revelation. By the certain knowledge of these rewards and punishments it is, that the practice of virtue is now established upon a sure foundation. Men have now abundantly sufficient encouragement to support them in their choice of virtue, and in their constant adherence to it in all cases and under all circumstances that can be supposed. There is now sufficient weight on the side of virtue, to enable men to conquer all the temptations of the devil, the flesh, and the world, and to despise the severest threatenings, even death itself. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. The only difficulty in this matter, arising from the duration of the final punishment of the wicked, shall be considered when I come to discourse of the articles of our belief.

XII. Thirdly, the peculiar manner and circumstances, with which the Christian religion enjoins the duties, and urges the motives before-mentioned, are exactly consonant to the dictates of sound reason, or the unprejudiced light of nature, and most wisely perfective of it.

THE PROPOSITION PROVED BY PARTICULAR INSTANCES.

For, what can be more agreeable to the light of nature, and more evidently perfective of it, than to have those duties, which nature hints at only in general, explained fully and largely, and urged in particular, and inculcated upon the meanest capacities with great weight and authority, and exemplified in the lives of holy persons proposed as patterns for our imitation? What can be more perfective of the light of nature than to have those great motives of religion,

religion, the rewards and punishments of a future state which nature only obscurely points at, described to us most plainly, affectionately, and lively? what can be more perfective of the light of nature, than to have the means of atoning for sin, which nature discovers only the want of, plainly declared and exhibited to us? what can be more perfective of the light of nature, than such a discovery of the heinousness of sin and the necessity of holiness, as the death of Christ and the purity of the gospel does make unto us? In fine, what can more effectually perfect the religion of nature, than the gathering together the worshippers of the true God into one body? the causing them to enter into solemn obligations, to live suitably to their holy profession? the giving them gracious assurances, that true repentance shall be accepted for what is past, and sincere renewed obedience for the future? the uniting them by a few positive rites in one religious as well as civil communion, for mutual assistance and improvement? and the establishing a certain order or perpetual succession of men, whose constant business it may be to explain the great duties of religion to persons of meaner capacities, to urge and enforce the practice of them, to set before men the reasons of their duty, and the necessity of it; to shew them clearly and impartially the danger of neglecting it, and the great advantage of performing it sincerely; in a word, to instruct the ignorant, and to admonish the wicked, to reduce those that err, to comfort the doubting, to reprove the obstinate, and to be instruments of conveying to men all proper assistances to enable them to perform their whole duty effectually?

If these things be the ordinances of one who came to contradict the dictates of right reason, and not to perfect the law of nature, but to destroy it; then let all wise men for ever forsake the assemblies of Christians, and profess themselves again disciples of the philosophers. But if these things be perfectly agreeable to nature and right reason, and tend exceedingly to the supplying the deficiencies thereof; then let none, under pretence of maintaining natural religion, revile and blaspheme the Christian, lest they be found liars unto God.

AN ANSWER TO THE OBJECTION DRAWN FROM THE DIVISIONS AMONG CHRISTIANS.

The many contentions, indeed, about opinions of great uncertainty and little importance, which, to the very great scandal of Christianity, have in several ages of the church been with unreasonable zeal kept up, instead of promoting the universal interest of the true practical religion and virtue, have, it must be confessed, given some occasion to the enemies of our most holy religion to blaspheme and revile both it and the teachers of it. But though such things as these have indeed afforded them too plausible an occasion, yet they have not given them any just reason so to do. For the acknowledged corruption of a doctrine or institution in any particular part or respect, is by no means a weighty or real objection against the truth of the whole. And there has always been extant
a sufficient

a sufficient rule, to enable sincere persons, in the midst of the greatest disputes and contentions, to distinguish the doctrine which is of God, from the opinions of men; the doctrine of Christ having been plainly and fully delivered in our Saviour's own discourses, and in the writings of his immediate followers the apostles, who cannot with any reason be imagined either to have misrepresented it, or to have represented it imperfectly. But, besides, I think it can hardly be denied, even by our adversaries themselves, but that, in all times and places wherein Christianity has been professed in any tolerable degree of purity, whatever contentions and disputes may have arisen about particular, and perhaps unnecessary doctrines, yet the great, the most necessary, and fundamental doctrines of religion, concerning God and providence, concerning the gracious method of God's reconciliation with penitent sinners, concerning the necessity of true piety, righteousness, and sobriety, concerning a judgement to come, and the final reward of the righteous, and the punishment of wicked men, in such a manner as will effectually vindicate both the justice and goodness, the wisdom and honour of God; these things (I say) have, notwithstanding all differences concerning smaller matters, been nevertheless at the same time universally and constantly taught, pressed, and inculcated upon persons of all capacities by the earnest and continual preaching of all the ministers of the gospel, with an effect infinitely more considerable and visible, both in extent and duration, than by the teaching of any heathen philosophers that ever lived. Which shews undeniably the excellency at least, if not the divine authority, of the Christian institution, in this particular respect.

XIII. Fourthly: all the [credenda, or] doctrines, which the true, simple, and uncorrupted Christian religion teaches (that is, not only those plain doctrines which it requires to be believed as fundamental and of necessity to eternal salvation, but even all the doctrines which it teaches as matters of truth) are, though indeed many of them not discoverable by bare reason unassisted with revelation, yet, when discovered by revelation, apparently most agreeable to sound unprejudiced reason, have every one of them a natural tendency, and a direct and powerful influence, to reform men's minds and correct their manners, and do together make up an infinitely more consistent and rational scheme of belief, than any that the wisest of the ancient philosophers ever did, or the cunningest of modern unbelievers can invent or contrive.

I. OF THE ONE SUPREME GOD.

That there is one only living and true God, existing of himself by the necessity of his own nature, absolutely independent, eternal, omnipresent, unchangeable, incorruptible, without body, parts, or passions, of infinite power, knowledge, and wisdom, of perfect liberty and freedom of will, of infinite goodness, justice, and truth, and all other possible perfections; so as to be absolutely self-sufficient to his own infinite and unalterable happiness; this is, not only the
first

first and principal article of the Christian faith, but also the first and most evident truth that the light of nature itself teaches us; being clearly demonstrable upon certain and undeniable principles of right reason.

2. OF THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.

That this supreme self-existent Cause and Father of all things did before all ages, in an incomprehensible manner, by his almighty power and will, beget or produce a divine person; styled the Logos, the Word, or Wisdom, or Son, of God; God *, of God; in whom dwells the fulness of divine perfections (excepting absolute supremacy, independency, or self-origination), being “the image of the invisible God;” Col. i. 15. the “brightness of his Father’s glory,” and the express image of his person;” Heb. i. 3. *Ἀπαύλασμα τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ* having been “in the beginning with God,” John i. 2. xvii. 5. partaker with him of his “glory before the world was;” “the upholder of all things by the word of his power;” Heb. i. 3. and himself “over all” (by communication of his Father’s glory and dominion) “God blessed for ever.” Rom. ix. 5. and John i. 1. this doctrine (I say), though not indeed discoverable by bare reason, yet, when made known by revelation, appears plainly very consistent with right reason, and (it is manifest) contains nothing that implies any manner of absurdity or contradiction in it.

Indeed, if any men, pretending to be wise above and beyond what is written, have at any time given such explications of the manner how the Son of God derived his being from the Father, or have offered such accounts of his nature and attributes as can by any just and necessary consequence be reduced to imply or involve any contradiction (which perhaps many of the † schoolmen have but too justly been accused of doing); such explications are without all controversy false, and very injurious to religion. But as this doctrine is delivered in Scripture, I think, there is nothing in it in any degree contrary to right reason, as I have elsewhere endeavoured to shew in a particular Discourse, to which I refer the reader.

OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Now the same that is said of the Son may in like manner, with little variation, be, very agreeably to right reason, understood concerning the original procession or manner of derivation of the Holy Spirit likewise from the Father.

* “It is not to be denied but that the schoolmen, who abounded in wit and leisure, though very few among them had either exact skill in the holy Scriptures, or in ecclesiastical antiquity, and the writings of the antient Fathers of the Christian church: I say, it cannot be denied but that these speculative and very acute men, who wrought a great part of their divinity out of their own brains, as spiders do cobwebs out of their own bowels, have started a thousand subtilties about this mystery, such as no Christian is bound to trouble his head withal; much less is it necessary for him to understand those niceties, which we may reasonably presume that they who talk of them did themselves never thoroughly understand; and least of all is it necessary to believe them.” Abp. Tillotson, Sermon concerning the Unity of the Divine Nature.

† It were to be wished, that some Religionists did not here symbolize too much with the Atheists, in affecting to represent the mystery of the Christian Trinity as a thing directly contradictory to all human reason and understanding.” Cudworth’s System, p. 560.

* *ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ*, in contradiction to *ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ*.

3. OF THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE.

That the universe, the heavens and the earth, and all things that are therein, were created and made by God; and this, through the operation of his Son, that divine word, or wisdom of the Father; by whom, the Scripture says that God "made the worlds;" Heb. i. 2. that by him God created "all things;" Eph. iii. 9. that "by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist;" Col. i. 16. that "all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made:" John i. 3. All this, likewise, is very agreeable to sound and unprejudiced reason. For, that neither the whole, nor any part of the world; neither the form, nor motion, nor matter of the world, could exist of itself, by any necessity in its own nature; is abundantly demonstrable from undeniable principles of reason, as has been shewn in my former discourse. Consequently, both the whole world, and all the variety of things that now exist therein, must of necessity have received both their being itself, and also their form and manner of being, from God the alone supreme and self-existent cause; and must needs depend upon his good-pleasure every moment for the continuance and preservation of that being. Accordingly, if we set aside the Epicureans (whose absurd hypothesis has long since been given up even by all Atheists themselves); and some very few others, who with no less absurdity (as I have also at large shewn) contended that the world was in its present form self-existent and necessary; all the philosophers of all ages (even not excepting those who held the eternity of the world) have unanimously agreed in this great truth, that the world evidently owes both its being and preservation to God, the supreme cause and author of all things. And then, that God made the world by the operation of his Son; though this could not indeed be known certainly without express revelation, yet is it by no means incredible, or contrary to right reason. For, to the judgement of reason, it is one and the same thing, whether God made the world immediately by himself, or mediately by the ministration of a second principle. And what Plato and his followers have said concerning the eternal *Nēs*, or mind, whom they frequently style *Διευεργός*, the minister or workman by whom God framed all things, proves undeniably thus much at least, that the doctrines delivered in Scripture concerning this matter cannot be rejected as inconsistent and irreconcilable with right reason.

4. OF THE FORMATION OF THE EARTH. GEN. i. 2.

That, about the space of 6000 years since, the earth was without form and void, that is, a confused chaos! out of which God framed this beautiful and useful fabric we now inhabit, and stocked it with the seeds of all kinds of plants, and formed upon it man, and all the other species of animals it is now furnished with; is also very

very agreeable to right reason. For though the precise time indeed, when all this was done, could not now have been known exactly, without revelation; yet even at this day there are remaining many considerable and very strong rational proofs, which make it exceedingly probable (separate from the authority of revelation) that this present frame and constitution of the earth cannot have been of a very much longer date. The universal tradition delivered down from all the most ancient nations of the world, both learned and barbarous; the constant and agreeing doctrine of all ancient philosophers and poets, concerning the earth's being formed within such a period of time, out of water or a chaos; the manifold absurdities and contradictions of those few accounts, which pretend to a much greater antiquity; the number of men, with which the earth is at present inhabited; the late original of learning and all useful arts and sciences; the impossibility, that universal deluges, or other accidents, should at certain long periods have oft-times destroyed far the greatest part of mankind, with the memory of all former actions and inventions, and yet never have happened to destroy them all; the changes that must necessarily fall out naturally in the earth in vast length of time, by the sinking and washing down of mountains, the consumption of water by plants, and innumerable other such like accidents; these (I say) and many more arguments, drawn from nature, reason, and observation, make that account of the time of the earth's formation exceedingly probable in itself, which from the revelation delivered in scripture-history we believe to be certain.

5. OF THE CONTINUAL GOVERNMENT OF PROVIDENCE.

That the same God who created all things by the word of his power, and upholds and preserves them by his continual concurrence, does also by his all-wise providence perpetually govern and direct the issues and events of things; takes care of this lower world, and of all, even the smallest things that are therein; disposes things in a regular order and succession in every age, from the beginning of the world to its final period; and inspects, with a more particular and especial regard, the moral actions of men; this, as it is far more expressly, clearly, and constantly taught in scripture, than in any of the writings of the philosophers; so it is also highly agreeable to right and true reason. For, that an omnipresent and infinitely wise Being cannot but know every thing that is done in every part of the universe, and with equal ease take notice of the minutest things as of the greatest; that an infinitely powerful Being must needs govern and direct every thing in such manner, and to such ends, as he knows to be best and fittest in the whole, so far as is consistent with that liberty of will, which he has made essential to all rational creatures; and that an infinitely just and good Governor cannot but take more particular and exact notice of the moral actions of all his rational creatures, and how far they are conformable or not conformable to the rules he has set them; all this (I say) is most evidently agreeable to right reason, and, as has been before shewn, deducible from it.

6. OF PARADISE, AND THE LOSS OF IT BY SIN.

That God, after the formation of the earth, created man at first upright and innocent, and placed him in a happy and paradisiacal state, where he enjoyed plenty and abundance of all things without labour or sorrow; and that sin was the original cause, that now on the contrary the very “ground is cursed and barren for our sake,” and in sorrow we eat of it all the days of our life; that thorns “also and thistles are brought forth to us, and in the sweat of our face we eat bread, till we return unto the ground,” Gen. iii. 17, 18, and 19; this likewise is very reasonable and credible in itself; as appears, not only from the abstract consideration of the nature of the thing; but also from the general opinion that the ancient learnedest Heathens entertained, upon very obscure and uncertain tradition, that the original state of man was innocent and simple, and the earth, whereon they dwelt, * fruitful of itself, and abundant with all plenty; but that God, for the sin of man, changed this happy constitution of things, and made labour necessary for the support of our lives.

7. OF THE FLOOD.

That, in process of time, after the first entrance of sin into the world, men by degrees corrupted themselves more and more, till at length God, for the † punishment of their sin and incorrigibleness, brought upon them a general flood, which destroyed them all, except a few persons, preserved for the restoration of human race; is a truth delivered down to us, not only by authority of Scripture, but also by the concurrent testimony of almost all heathen philosophers and poets; and the histories of all nations backwards terminate in it; and (which is the most remarkable thing of all, because it is a demonstrative and ocular proof of the universality of some such kind of dissolution) the present visible frame and constitution of the earth throughout; the disposition and situation of the several strata of different kinds of matter, whereof it is composed; the numberless shells of fishes, bones of other animals, and parts of all kinds of plants, which in every country and in almost every place are at great variety of depths found inclosed in earth, in clay, in stones, and in all sorts of matter; are such apparent demonstrations of the earth’s having been in some former times (the whole surface of it at least) in a state of fluidity, that whosoever has seen the collections of this kind made by the very ingenious Dr. Woodward and others, must in a manner abandon all use both of his senses and reason, if he can in the least doubt of this truth.

* Τὸ παλαιὸν πάντα ἦν ἀλφίτων καὶ αὐέων πλήρη, καθάπερ καὶ νῦν κόνεας καὶ κρήναι δ’ ἔρπον, αἱ μὲν ὕδατος, γάλακος δ’ ἄλλαι· καὶ ὁμοίως αἱ μὲν μέλιτος, αἱ δ’ οἶνου, τινὲς δ’ ἐλαίου· ὑπὸ πλοσυρονός δ’ οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ τρυφῆς, εἰς ὕβριν ἐξέπεσον. Ζεὺς δὲ μισήσας τὴν κατὰρσιν, ἠφάνισα πάντα, καὶ διὰ πόνου τὸν βίον ἀπέδειξε. Calamus Indus apud Strabon. lib. XV.

† Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἡ τῷ θεῷ μὲν μοῖρα ἐξήτηλος ἐγένετο ἐν αὐτοῖς, πολλὰ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πολλὰς ἀνακεραννύμενη, τὸ δὲ ἀνθρώπινον ἔθνος ἐπεκράτει, τότε θεὸς ὁ θεὸς Ζεὺς, ὅτε δύναμεις καθαρὰ τὰ τελευτὰ, ἐνοήσας γένος ἐπικεικὸς ἀδελφῶς διατιθέμενον, δίκην αὐτοῖς ἐπέσειναι βούλοισι, &c. Plato in Critia sive Atlantico.

8. OF GOD'S REVEALING HIMSELF TO THE PATRIARCHS, AND GIVING THE LAW TO THE JEWS.

That God, after the flood, made particular revelations of himself and of his will to the Patriarchs, is a thing very credible in itself, for the same reasons that I have before shewn in general, that the expectation of some revelation from God was a reasonable and probable expectation. And that, after this, God should vouchsafe by express revelation to give a law to the whole nation of the Jews, consisting very much in sacrifices, and in external rites and ceremonious observances, cannot with any just reason be rejected as an incredible fact; if we consider, that such a kind of institution was necessary, in those times and circumstances, to preserve that nation from the idolatry and worship of false Gods, wherewith the countries around them were overspread; that those rites and ceremonies were typical of, and preparative to, a higher and more excellent dispensation; that the Jews were continually told by their prophets, that their observance of those rites and ceremonies was by no means so highly acceptable to God, nor so absolutely and indispensably insisted upon by him, as obedience to the moral law; and that the whole matter of fact relating to that revelation is delivered down to us in a history, on which the polity of a whole nation was founded, at a time when nobody could be ignorant of the truth of the principal facts, and concerning which we can now have no more reason to doubt than of any history of any ancient matter of fact in the world. The most considerable and real difficulty, viz. why this favour was granted to that single nation only, and not to all the rest of the world likewise; is to be accounted for by the same reasons, which prove (as has been before shewn*) that God was not obliged to make known the revelation of the gospel to all men alike.

9. OF THE OTHER PARTICULARS OF SCRIPTURE-HISTORY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

That all the other particulars of Scripture-history contained in the Old Testament are true relations of matter of fact (not to insist now on the many arguments which prove in general the antiquity, genuineness, and authority of the books themselves), will to a rational enquirer appear very credible from hence, that very many of the particular histories, and some even of the minuter circumstances also of those histories, are confirmed by concurrent testimonies of profane and unquestionably unprejudiced authors; of which Grotius †, in his excellent book of "The Truth of the Christian Religion," has given us a large collection. As particularly; that the manner of the formation of the earth out of a chaos, is mentioned by the ancientest Phœnician, Ægyptian, Indian, and Greek historians; the very names of Adam and Eve, by Sancho-niathon and others; the longevity of the Antediluvians, by Berosus, and Manethos and others; the ark of Noah, by Berosus; many particulars of the flood, by Ovid and others; the family of Noah, and two of every kind of animals entering into the ark with him, mentioned

* Page 211.

† Lib. I. c. 16. and Lib. III. c. 16. where see the citations at large.

by Lucian himself as a tradition of the ancient Grecians ; the dove which Noah sent out of the ark, by Abydenus and Plutarch * ; the building of Babel, by Abydenus ; the burning of Sodom, by Diodorus Siculus, and Strabo, and Tacitus, and others ; several particulars of the history of Abraham and the rest of the patriarchs, by Berosus and others ; many particulars of Moses's life, by several ancient writers ; the eminent piety of the most ancient Jews, by Strabo † and Justin ; divers actions of David and Solomon, in the Phœnician annals ; some of the actions of Elijah, by Menander, and confessed by Julian himself ; the history of Jonah, under the name of Hercules, by Lycophron and Æneas Gazæus ; and the histories of the following times, by many more authors. Besides that (as learned men ‡ have upon exceeding probable grounds supposed) many of the most antient Scripture-histories are acknowledged and asserted in the writings of the poets both Greeks and Latins, the true histories being couched under fictitious names and fabulous representations.

10. OF GOD'S SENDING HIS SON INTO THE WORLD FOR THE REDEMPTION OF MANKIND.

That God, in the fulness of time ; that is, at that time which his infinite wisdom had fore-appointed, which all the ancient prophecies had determined, and which many concurrent circumstances in the state of the Jewish religion, and in the disposition of the Roman empire, had made a fit season for the reception and propagation of a new institution of religion ; that God (I say) at that time should send his only-begotten Son, that Word or Wisdom of the Father, that divine person by whom (as has been before shewn) he created the world, and by whom he made all former particular manifestations of himself unto men ; that he should send him to take upon him our human nature, and therein to make a full and particular revelation of the will of God to mankind (who by sin had corrupted themselves and forfeited the favour of God, so that by the bare light of nature they could not discover any certain means by which they could be satisfactorily and absolutely secure of regaining that favour), to preach unto men repentance and remission of sin, and, by giving himself a sacrifice and expiation for sin, to declare the acceptableness of repentance, and the certainty of pardon thereupon, in a method evidently consistent with all necessary vindication of the honour and authority of the divine laws, and with God's irreconcilable hatred against sin ; to be a mediator and intercessor between God and man ; to procure the particular assistance of God's holy spirit, which might be in men a new and effectual principle of a heavenly and divine life ; in a word, to be the Saviour and judge of mankind, and finally to bring them to eternal life : all this, when clearly and

* Δευκαλιωνι φασι περιγεραν εκ της λάρνακος αφιεμένην δήλωμα γενέσθαι, χειμῶνος μὲν ἔσση πάλιν ἐνδυομένην, εὐδίας δ' ἀποπλήσαν. Plutarch : utrum Terrestria an Aquatica animantia plus habeant solertia.

† Οἱ δὲ [Μωσῆν] διαδεχόμενοι, γένετ' ἄν τις ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς διέμενοι διανοησαμένους, καὶ θεοσεβείας ὡς ἀλυθῶς ἐπέε' Ἔπειτ' &c. lib. XVI.

‡ See Stillingfleet's Origin. Sacre, lib. III. cap. 5 ; and Bocharti Phaleg, & Vossius de Idololatria.

expressly revealed, and by good testimony proved to be so revealed, is apparently agreeable and very credible to right and true reason : as (because it is the main and fundamental article of the Christian faith) I shall endeavour to make out more largely and distinctly, by shewing in particular, that none of the several objections, upon which speculative unbelievers reject this doctrine, do at all prove any inconsistency in the belief of it with sound and unprejudiced reason.

THAT IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO SUPPOSE GOD MAKING A REVELATION OF HIS WILL TO MEN.

For, first, it cannot be thought unreasonable to be believed in the general, that God should make a revelation of his will to mankind; since, on the contrary (as has been before proved at large), it is very agreeable to the moral attributes of God, and to the notions and expectations of the wisest and most rational men that lived in the Heathen world.

THAT IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO BELIEVE, THAT GOD WOULD APPOINT A SACRIFICE OR EXPIATION FOR SIN.

Secondly, it cannot be thought unreasonable to be believed, that in such a revelation, wherein God freely proclaims remission of sin, and the acceptableness of repentance, he should nevertheless have appointed such a sacrifice or expiation for sin, as might at the same time be a sufficient testimony of his irreconcilable hatred against it. For though, by the light of nature, it was indeed exceedingly probable and to be hoped for, that God would forgive sin upon true repentance, yet it could not be proved, that he was absolutely obliged to do so, or that he would certainly do so. On the contrary, there was reason to suppose, that, in vindication of the honour and dignity of his laws, he would require some further satisfaction and expiation. And accordingly we find the custom of sacrificing to have prevailed universally over the Heathen world in all ages; which, how unreasonable soever an expectation it was, to think that the blood of beasts could truly expiate sin; yet thus much it plainly and undeniably shews, that it has been the common apprehension of mankind in all ages, that God would not be appeased, nor pardon sin, without some punishment and satisfaction; and yet at the same time they had good hopes, that, upon the repentance of sinners, God would accept some other satisfaction instead of the destruction of the offenders. It is, therefore, plainly agreeable to right reason, to believe that God, in vindication of the honour of his laws, and for a testimony of his hatred against sin, should appoint some sacrifice or expiation for sin, at the same time that he forgives the sinner upon his true repentance.

THAT IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO BELIEVE, THAT A MEDIATOR SHOULD BE APPOINTED BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

Thirdly, it cannot be thought unreasonable to be believed, that a mediator or intercessor should be appointed between God and man, through and by whom the prayers of sinners may be offered up so as to be acceptable in the sight of God. It is well known, the ge-

nerality of the wisest heathens thought it agreeable to reason to make use of subordinate intelligence, dæmons, or heroes, by whom they put up their prayers to the superior gods, hoping that by the mediation of those intercessors, the unworthiness of their own persons, and the defects of these prayers, might be supplied; and they might obtain such merciful and gracious answers to their prayers, as they could not presume to hope for upon their own account. Wherein though those Pagans laboured indeed under very great uncertainty, in doing a thing for which they had no sufficient warrant, and in using mediators whom they neither knew distinctly to have any being, nor could they however have any good security that such mediation would be acceptable to the supreme God; yet, at the same time this undeniably proves, that it is by no means inconsistent with right reason, to believe that a mediator may by divine authority be appointed between God and sinful men, to be their intercessor and advocate with a justly offended God.

OF THE OBJECTION DRAWN FROM THE DIGNITY OF THE PERSON WHOM WE BELIEVE TO BE OUR MEDIATOR AND REDEEMER.

Fourthly, the greatest real difficulty in this matter, to the judgment of right reason, seems to arise from the consideration of the dignity of the person, whom we believe to have given himself a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of mankind; viz. how it is possible, that the only-begotten Son of God should be incarnate and become man, how it is conceivable that God should condescend so far as to send, and the Son of God condescend willingly to be sent, and do such great things for his creatures; and, above all, how it is consistent with reason to suppose God condescending to do so much for such frail and weak creatures as men, who, in all appearance, seem to be but a very small, low, and inconsiderable part of the creation. And here indeed it must readily be acknowledged, that human reason could never have discovered such a method as this, for the reconciliation of sinners to an offended God, without express revelation. But then neither on the other side, when once this method is made known, is there any such difficulty or inconceivableness in it, as can reasonably make a wise and considerate man call in question the truth of a well-attested revelation merely upon that account; which, indeed, any plain absurdity or contradiction in the matter of a doctrine pretended to be revealed, would, it must be confessed, unavoidably do. For, as to the possibility of the incarnation of the Son of God; whatever mysteriousness there confessedly was in the manner of it, yet, as to the thing itself, there is evidently no more unreasonableness in believing the possibility of it, than in believing the union of the soul and body, or any other certain truth which we plainly see implies no contradiction in the thing itself, at the same time that we are sensible we cannot discover the manner how it is effected. Again; as to the incredibility of the doctrine, that God should make so great a condescension to his creatures; and that a person of such dignity as the only-begotten Son of God should

should vouchsafe to give himself a sacrifice for the sins of men; he that duly considers, how it is no diminution to the glory and greatness of the Creator of all things, to inspect, govern, and direct every thing by his all-wise Providence through the whole creation, to take care even of the meanest of his creatures, so that not a sparrow falls to the ground or a hair of our head perishes without his knowledge; and to observe exactly every particle even of inanimate matter in the universe; he (I say) who duly considers this cannot with reason think it any real disparagement to the Son of God (though it was indeed a most wonderful and amazing instance of humility and condescension), that he should concern himself so far for sinful men, as to appear in their nature to reveal the will of God more clearly to them, to give himself a sacrifice and expiation for their sins, and to bring them to repentance and eternal life. The greatest enemies and deriders of Christianity have asserted things far more incredible to have been done upon far less occasions; witness what Julian the apostate * thought fit to believe concerning Æsculapius's coming down from heaven, and conversing upon earth in a visible form, only to teach men the art of healing diseases. And modern unbelievers, who seem willing in the contrary extreme to deny God's having any regard, or taking any care in any respect, for the welfare and happiness of his creatures, are forced, if they will go about to give any account or explication of things, to invent much more incredible hypotheses, dishonourable to God, and utterly inconsistent with his divine attributes. Indeed, if we will consider things impartially, so far is it from being truly any diminution of the greatness and glory of God, to send his Son into the world for the redemption and salvation of mankind, that, on the contrary, it is a means of bringing the very greatest honour to the laws and government of God that can be imagined. For what can be imagined more honourable, and worthy of the supreme Lord and Governor of all things, than to shew forth his mercy and goodness, in forgiving the sins of frail and fallible creatures, and suffering himself to be reconciled to them upon their true repentance; and yet at the same time to cause such an expiation to be made for sin, by the sufferings and death of his own Son in their nature, as might be an abundant evidence of his irreconcilable hatred against sin, a just vindication of the authority and dignity of his laws, and a sufficient and effectual warning to deter men from sin, to create in them the greatest dread and detestation of it, and for ever to terrify them from venturing upon wilful transgression and disobedience? It is true, no man can take upon him certainly to say, but God, by his absolute sovereignty and authority, might, if he had so pleased, have pardoned sin upon repentance, without any sacrifice or expiation at all. But this method of doing it by the death of Christ is more wise and fit, and evidently more proper and effectual to discountenance and prevent presumption, to discourage men from repeating their

* 'Ο γὰρ Ζεὺς ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ τὸν Ἀσκληπίον ἐγέννησεν· εἰς δὲ τὴν γῆν διὰ τῶν ἰλίων γοιμῶν ζωῆς ἐπέφηνεν· ἔπειτα ἐπὶ γῆς ἐξ ἑβανῶν ποιησάμενος περόδον, ἐνοειδῶς μὲν περὶ τὴν ἑπίδαστον ἐφάνη.
Julian.

transgressions, to give them a deep sense of the heinous nature of sin, and to convince them of the excellency and importance of the laws of God, and the indispensable necessity of paying obedience to them; so far as it shews us, that at the same time that God was willing to save the sinner, yet, lest encouragement should be given to sin by letting it go unpunished, he did not think fit to forgive the transgressions of men without great sufferings in our nature, and to do away the guilt of our sins but upon such difficult terms as the death of his own Son. So that, in this dispensation, justice and mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. And by how much the greater the dignity of the person was, who gave himself thus a sacrifice for the sins of men; of so much the greater weight and force is this argument to deter men for the future from sin, and to convince them of the necessity of obedience. Wherefore, so far is it from being true, that the consideration of the dignity of the person suffering is a real objection against the credibility of the doctrine; that, on the contrary, that very consideration contains the highest vindication imaginable of the greatness, and honour, and authority of the laws of God, and, at the same time, the greatest possible instance or expression of his mercy and compassion towards men, agreeable to our natural notions of his divine attributes. And then, as to the last part of this difficulty, viz. how it can be consistent with reason to suppose God condescending to do so very great things for such mean and weak creatures as men are, who, in all appearance, seem to be but a very small, low, and inconsiderable part of the creation; so far as the whole earth itself is but a little spot that bears no proportion at all to the universe, and, in all probability of reason, the large and numberless orbs of heaven cannot but be supposed to be filled with beings more capable than we to shew forth the praise and glory of their almighty Creator, and more worthy to be the objects of his care and love: to this part of the difficulty, I say, the answer is very easy; that the mercy and love of the infinitely good God is extended equally over all his works; that, let the universe be supposed as large, and the rational creatures, with which it is furnished, as many and excellent as any one can imagine; yet mankind is plainly the chief, indeed the only inhabitant, for whose sake it is evident this our globe of earth was formed into a habitable world, and this our earth is, as far as we have any means of judging, as considerable and worthy of the divine care as most other parts of the system; and this our system, as considerable as any other single system in the universe: and, finally, that, in like manner as the same divine Providence, which presides over the whole creation, does particularly govern and direct every thing in this our lower world, as well as in every other particular part of the universe; so there is no real difficulty to right reason, in conceiving that the same divine Logos, the word or messenger of the Father, who in various dispensations, according to the particular needs, and exigences of mankind, has made various manifestations of God, and discoveries of the

the divine will to us here upon earth, may also, for aught we know, have to other beings, in other parts of the universe, according to their several capacities or wants, made different manifestations of God, and discoveries of his will, in ways of which we can know nothing, and in which we have no concern; there being nothing in this at all contrary to the nature of God, or the condition of things.

OF THE OBJECTION DRAWN FROM THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION NOT BEING IN FACT UNIVERSAL.

Fifthly, and lastly; if any one thinks it unreasonable to be believed that God should send his son into the world for the redemption of mankind; and yet that this appearance of the Son of God upon earth should not be till the latter ages of the world, and after he has appeared, yet his appearance not be made known equally to all nations: such a one * must likewise for the same reason affirm, that it is unreasonable to believe the necessity and obligations even of natural religion itself, because it is plain all men are not furnished equally with the same capacities and opportunities of understanding those obligations; and consequently no Deist can, consistently with his own principles, make this objection against the truth of Christianity. He must likewise for the same reason affirm, that God is obliged in all other respects also to make all his creatures equal; to make men, angels; to endue all men with the same faculties and capacities as any; at least, to make all men capable of the very same kind, and the same degree of happiness, and to afford to all of them all the very same means or opportunities of obtaining it: in a word, he must assert, that Infinite Wisdom cannot reasonably be supposed to have a right of making variety of creatures in very various circumstances; which is an assertion palpably most absurd, in experience false, and a very unjust diminution of God's sovereignty in the world. But besides; though the redemption purchased by the Son of God is not indeed actually made known unto all men; yet as no man ever denied, but that the benefit of the death of Christ extended backwards to those who lived before his appearance in the world, so no man can prove, but that the same benefit may likewise extend itself forwards to those who never heard of his appearance, though they lived after it.

II. OF THE OTHER PARTICULARS OF SCRIPTURE-HISTORY CONTAINED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

That the history of the life of Christ, contained in the New Testament, is a true relation of matters of fact (not to insist here on the testimony of his disciples and followers, which shall be considered hereafter in its proper place), will to a rational inquirer appear very credible from hence; that very many particulars of that history are confirmed by concurrent testimonies of profane and unquestionably unprejudiced authors. That, before the coming of our Saviour, there was a general expectation spread over all the Eastern nations, that out of Judæa should arise a person, who should be

* See above, p. 212.

governor of the world, is expressly affirmed by the Roman historians Suetonius * and Tacitus †. That there lived in Judæa, at the time which the gospel relates, such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, is acknowledged by all authors, both Jewish and Pagan, who have written since that time. The star that appeared at his birth, and the journey of the Chaldæan wise men, is mentioned by Chalcidius ‡ the Platonist. Herod's causing all the children in Bethlehem under two years old to be slain, and a reflection made upon him on that occasion by the emperor Augustus, is related by Macrobius §. Many of the miracles that Jesus worked in his life-time are, as to matters of fact (particularly his healing the lame and the blind, and casting out devils), expressly owned by the most implacable enemies of Christianity, by Celsus || and Julian, and the authors of the Jewish Talmud. And how the power of the Heathen gods ceased after the coming of Christ is acknowledged by Porphyry **, who attributes it to their being angry at the setting up of the Christian religion, which he styles impious and profane. Many particulars of the collateral history, concerning John Baptist, and Herod, and Pilate (not to mention the famous testimony concerning Jesus himself, because it is by some suspected not to be genuine, notwithstanding it is found in all the ancient copies), are largely recorded by Josephus. The crucifixion of Christ under Pontius Pilate is related by Tacitus ††; and diverse of the most remarkable circumstances attending it, such as the earthquake and miraculous darkness, were recorded in the †† public Roman registers, commonly appealed to by the first Christian writers as what could not be denied by the adversaries themselves, and are in a very particular manner attested by Phlegon §§. Then, as to the resurrection and ascension of Christ, these depend on the general proofs of the credibility of his disciples testimony, and other following evidences; which will be considered hereafter in their proper place.

12. OF THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT, AND CHRIST THE JUDGE.

That God has appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by that person whom he has ordained, in order to

* "Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus & constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut Judæa profecti rerum potirentur." Sueton.

† "Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum libris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur." Tacit. lib. XXI.

‡ See the place cited by Grotius, de Veritate Christianæ Religionis, lib. III. c. 14.

§ "Cum audisset [Augustus] inter pueros quos in Syria Herodes rex Judæorum intra bimatum iussit interfici, filium quoque ejus occisum; ait, Melius est Herodis porcum esse quam filium." Macrobi. lib. II. cap. 4. [A testimony so very remarkable and pertinent, that it is strange how Grotius could omit to mention it in the place now cited.]

|| See the places cited by Grotius, de Veritate Christi. Rel. lib. II. cap. 5.

** Ibid.

†† "Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum, supplicio affectus erat." Lib. XV.

‡‡ "Eum mundi casum relatum in arcanis vestris habetis." Tertullian. Apol.

§§ Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐπὶ Τίτῳ καὶ σαρὸς ἐκλείψεως, ἡ βασιλευμένη, καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι οἶκεν ἐς αὐτῶσθαι καὶ περὶ τῶν μεγάλων τότε γενομένων σεισμῶν τῆς γῆς, ἀνέγραψε καὶ φλέγων. Origen. advers. Cels. lib. II.

Τετάρτῳ δ' ἔπει τῆς διακοσιῶς δ' ὕλης Ὀλυμπιάδος ἐγένετο ἐκλείψις ἡλίου, μέγιστη τῶν ἐγνωρισμένων πρότερον καὶ νῦν ὡς ἐξακτὴ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐγένετο, ὥς καὶ ἀξέγρας ἐν ἄρα φανῆναι καὶ σεισμὸς, &c. Phlegon.

reward every man according to his works, is a doctrine perfectly agreeable to right reason, and to our natural notions of the attributes of God; as may appear more particularly from what has been before said concerning the necessity and certainty of another life after this, and is evident from the opinion of all the wiser heathens concerning this matter. Nor may it perhaps be altogether impertinent to observe here, that the poets both Greek and Latin have unanimously agreed in this one particular circumstance, that men after death should not have judgement passed upon them immediately by God himself, but by just men appointed for that purpose.

13. OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

That, in order to this final judgement, not only the soul shall survive the dissolution of the body, but the body itself also shall be raised again; this doctrine, though not indeed discoverable with any kind of certainty by the bare light of nature; because the belief of the soul's immortality (for aught that appears to reason alone) is sufficient to answer all the purposes of a future state, as far as is discoverable merely by the light of nature; yet this doctrine (I say) of the resurrection of the body, when made known by revelation, evidently contains nothing in it in the least contrary to right reason. For, what reasonable man can deny, but that it is plainly altogether as easy for God to raise the body again after death, as to create and form it at first? Some of the * Stoical philosophers seem to have thought it not only possible, but even probable; and many of the Jews, who had no express revelation concerning it, did yet believe it upon an ancient tradition; as appears from all their writings, and particularly from the translation of the last verse of the book of Job, which according to the Seventy runs thus: "So Job
" died, being old and full of days; but † it is written that he shall
" rise again with those whom the Lord raises up." The only real difficulty in this doctrine seems to arise upon putting the supposition of the body's being turned into the nourishment, and becoming part of the substance of another; so as that the same parts may equally belong to two bodies, to both of which it shall nevertheless be absolutely impossible that the same parts should be restored. But this objection, as great and principal a difficulty as it is, is really but a great trifle. For there does not at all appear any absolute necessity, that, to constitute the same body, there must be an exact restitution of all and only the same parts. And if there was any such necessity; yet even still, without making that hard supposition (which Grotius ‡ and others have done), that God by a miraculous providence always interposes to prevent the parts of one human body from incorporating with and becoming the nourishment of another (for I cannot see any sufficient ground to deny, but that it may be possible in nature, for barbarous Cannibals, if any such there

* Δῆλον ὡς ἔδεν ἀδύνατον εἰς ἡμᾶς μετὰ τὸ τελευτῆσαι, πάλιν περιέδαν τινῶν εἰλυμένων χρέου, εἰς ὃ νῦν ἐσμὲν ἀποκαταστήσεσθαι σχῆμα. Chrysippus citat. a Lactant. lib. VII.

† Γέγραπται δὲ αὐτὸν πάλιν ἀναστήσεσθαι, μετ' ὧν ὁ Κύριος ἀστήνησι. Job xlii. ult.

‡ De Veritate Rel. Chr. lib. II. c. 10.

be, to subsist for some time and live wholly one upon another, if deprived of all other sustenance): without any such hard suppositions as these (I say), it is easy to imagine many ways, by which the resurrection of the same body, properly speaking, shall nevertheless be very possible; and the whole foundation of this, and all other difficulties of this kind, concerning the parts and forms and magnitudes and proportions of our future bodies, be entirely taken away.

OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE SAME BODY.

As, first; no man can say it is improbable (and they who have been most and best versed in microscopical observations think it more than probable), that the original stamina, which contain all and every one of the solid parts and vessels of the body, not excepting even the minutest nerves and fibres, are themselves the entire body; and that all the extraneous matter, which, coming in by way of nourishment, fills up and extends the minute and insensible vessels, of which all the visible and sensible vessels are composed, is not strictly and properly part of the body. Consequently while all this extraneous matter, which serves only to swell the body to its just magnitude, is in continual flux, the original stamina may continue unchanged; and so no confusion of bodies will be possible in nature. There may be made many very considerable observations, concerning the determinate figure into which every respective body unfolds itself by growth, concerning the impossibility of the body's extending itself by any nourishment whatsoever, beyond that certain magnitude, to which the original vessels are capable of being unfolded, and concerning the impossibility of restoring by any nourishment any the smallest vessel or solid part of the body, that has at any time happened to be mutilated by any accident; all which observations, often and carefully made, will seem very much to favour some such speculation as this.

Secondly: it may also be supposed otherwise, not without good probability, that * in like manner as in every grain of corn there is contained a minute insensible seminal principle, which is itself the entire future blade and ear, and, in due season, when all the rest of the grain is corrupted, evolves, and unfolds itself visibly into that form; so our present mortal and corruptible body may be but the exuviae, as it were, of some hidden and at present insensible principle (possibly the present seat of the soul), which at the resurrection shall discover itself in its proper form. This way also there can be no confusion of bodies possible in nature. And it is not without some weight, that the ancientest writers of the church have always made use of this very similitude, that the apostle St. Paul himself alledges the same comparison, and that the Jewish writers seem to have had some obscure glimpse of this notion when they talked of a certain incorruptible part of the body; though these latter indeed explained themselves very weakly and unphilosophically.

* Ἡμεῖς μὲν ὅν ἔφαμεν τὸ διαφθαρὲν σῶμα ἐπανέσχεσθαι εἰς τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς φύσιν, ὡς ἔδδ τὸν διαφθαρέντα κόκκον τῷ σίτῃ· λέγομεν γὰρ ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῷ κόκκῳ τῷ σίτῃ ἐγείρεται σάχυν, ἔτω λόγῳ τις ἐγείρεται τῷ σώματι, ἀφ' ἧ μὴ φθισομένου ἐγείρεται τὸ σῶμα ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ. Origen. advers. Cels. lib. V.

Many other ways perhaps may be imagined, by which the same thing may be explained intelligibly. But these speculations are nice and subtle, and neither needful nor proper to be enlarged upon in this place. Only the bare mention of them shews the manifold possibility of the doctrine of the resurrection, against the objections of those who would have it seem contradictory.

14. OF THE ETERNAL HAPPINESS OF THE BLESSED, AND THE ETERNAL PUNISHMENT OF THE DAMNED.

Lastly; that after the resurrection and the general judgement, wherein every man shall be judged according to his works; they that have done well, shall go into everlasting happiness; and they that have done evil, into everlasting punishment; is a doctrine in itself very credible, and reasonable to be believed. Concerning the everlasting happiness of the righteous, there is no dispute; it being evident that God in his infinite bounty may reward the sincere obedience of his creatures, as much beyond the merit of their own weak and imperfect works, as he himself pleases. But the everlasting punishment threatened to the wicked has seemed to many a great difficulty; since it is certain, from our natural notions of the attributes of God, that no man shall be punished beyond the just demerit of his sins. Here therefore it is to be observed; first, that no man can say it is unreasonable, that they who by wilful and stubborn disobedience to their Almighty Creator and most merciful benefactor, and by the habitual practice of unrepented wickedness, have, during the state of trial, made themselves unfit for the enjoyment of that happiness which God has prepared for them that love and obey him, should be eternally rejected, and excluded from it. Thus much the wickedest of men are willing enough to believe; and, if bare deprivation of happiness was all the punishment they had reason to fear, they would be well content to sit still in their wickedness. But is it at all agreeable to reason to believe, that the punishment to be inflicted by the final wrath of a provoked God upon his most obstinate and incorrigible enemies, should be merely such a thing as is in its own nature less dreadful and terrible than even those afflictions which by certain experience we see in this present life fall sometimes upon such persons with whom God is not angry at all? Is it agreeable to reason to believe, that God, who (as is evident by experience) suffers the very best of his own servants, for the punishment of their sins, or even only for the trial of their virtue, to fall sometimes under all the calamities and miseries, which it is possible for the cruellest and most powerful tyrants to invent and execute; should punish his most obstinately rebellious and finally impenitent creatures with nothing more than the negation of happiness? There must therefore in the next place be some sensible and positive punishment, besides the mere negative loss of happiness. And whoever seriously considers the dreadful effects of God's anger in this present world, in the instance of the general deluge, the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, the amazing calamities which befell the whole Jewish nation at the destruction of Jerusalem

lem, and other such like examples; in some of which cases the judgments have fallen upon mixt multitudes of good men and bad together (not to mention the calamities which sometimes befall even good men by themselves); whosoever, I say, seriously considers all this, cannot but frame to himself very terrible apprehensions of the greatness of that punishment which the despised patience of God shall finally inflict on the impenitently wicked and incorrigible, when they shall be separated and be by themselves. And then, as to the duration of this punishment, no man can presume in our present state of ignorance and darkness to be able truly to judge, barely by the strength of his own natural reason, what in this respect is or is not consistent with the wisdom and justice and goodness of the Supreme Governor of the world; since we neither know the place, nor kind, nor manner, nor circumstances, nor degrees, nor all the ends and uses of the final punishment of the wicked; only this one thing we are certain of, that the justice of God will abundantly vindicate itself, and all mouths shall be stopped before him, and be forced to acknowledge the exact righteousness of all his judgements, and to condemn their own folly and wickedness; forasmuch as the degrees or intenseness of the punishment which shall be inflicted on the impenitent, shall be exactly proportionate to their sins, as a recompense of their demerit, so that no man shall suffer more than he has deserved. This being once clearly established, the difficulty about the duration of the punishment will not appear so insuperable to right reason. For nothing can be more evident than that God may justly banish the wicked eternally from his kingdom of glory, and from that happiness which is his free and undeserved gift to the righteous; and the positive punishment which shall be inflicted upon them in that state of eternal rejection, shall undoubtedly be such and so proportionated to men's deserts, as the righteous judge will then make appear before men and angels* to be just and wise and necessary, and such only as becomes the infinitely wise and good Lord and Governor of the universe to inflict. The wisest of the Heathen philosophers, without the help of revelation, have taught, and did believe it agreeable to right reason, that † the punishment of the incorrigible should be [αἰώνιος] without any determinate or known end. And we cannot tell how many wise designs God may serve thereby. We know not but that, as God has now discovered to us in some measure the fall and punishment of evil angels, to be a warning to us; so he may hereafter use the example of the punishment of wicked and incorrigible men, to be a means of preserving other beings in their obedience. And many other considerations there may possibly be,

* “ Shall he tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” Rev xiv. 10.

† Οἱ δὲ ἀνδρόωνιν, ἀνάτως ἔχειν διὰ τὰ μεγέθη τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων, τὴ τῆς ἡμετέρας μοῦ, ἅ ῥίπται εἰς τὸν Τάβλαρον, ὅθεν ἔπολε ἐκβαίνουσι. Plato in Phæd.

“ Ὅσπερ σὺ κολάσεις αἰώνιος ἰομῆεις, ἔτω καὶ οἱ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐκείνων ἐξηγηταί, τελεσταί τε καὶ μυσταγωγοί. Cels apud Origen. lib. VIII.

Οἱ δὲ αἰτικοὶ παμπαν αἰώνιος κακῆς συνέζονται. Id. ibid.

very necessary to enable us to judge rightly concerning this matter; which, in this present state, we have no sufficient means of coming to the knowledge of.

Thus all the credenda, or doctrines, which the Christian religion teaches (that is, not only those plain doctrines which it requires to be believed as fundamental and of necessity to eternal salvation, but even all the doctrines which it teaches as matters of truth), are in the first place, though indeed many of them not discoverable by bare reason unassisted with revelation, yet, when discovered by revelation, apparently most * agreeable to sound and unprejudiced reason.

EVERY ONE OF THEM HAS A DIRECT TENDENCY AND POWERFUL INFLUENCE TO REFORM MENS MANNERS.

In the next place; every one of these doctrines has a natural tendency, and a direct and powerful influence, to reform men's lives, and correct their manners. This is the great end, and ultimate design, of all true religion; and it is a very great and fatal mistake, to think that any doctrine or any belief whatsoever can be any otherwise of any benefit to men, than as it is fitted to promote this main end. There was none of the doctrines of our Saviour (as an † excellent prelate of our church admirably expresses this matter) "calculated for the gratification of men's idle curiosities, the busying and amusing them with airy and useless speculations; much less were they intended for an exercise of our credulity, or a trial how far we could bring our reason to submit to our faith; but, as on the one hand they were plain and simple, and such as, by their agreeableness to the rational faculties of mankind, did highly recommend themselves to our belief; so on the other hand they had an immediate relation to practice, and were the genuine principles and foundation upon which all human and divine virtues were naturally to be superstructed." Particularly, what can be a more necessary and excellent foundation of true religion, than that doctrine which the Christian religion clearly and distinctly teaches us, concerning the nature and attributes of the one only true God; without any of that ambiguity and doubtfulness, those various and inconsistent opinions and conjectures, those uncertain and oft-times false reasonings concerning the nature of God, which, notwithstanding the natural possibility of discovering very many of the attributes of God by the light of true reason, did yet in fact overspread the greatest part of the heathen world with Polytheism or Atheism? What can be so certain a preservative against idolatry, and the worship of false gods; as the doctrine, that the universe, the heavens and the earth, and all things contained therein, are the creatures and workmanship of the one true God, and have a continual dependence upon him for the preservation of their being? What can be so sure a ground of true piety and re-

* Τὰ τῆς κρίσεως ἡμῶν, ταῖς νομοῖς ἐνδοκίαις ἀρχαῖον συστασθέντα. Crigen. advers. Cels. lib. III.

† Archbishop Sharp's Sermon before the Queen on Christmas-day, 1704.

liance upon God, as the clear Christian doctrine concerning Providence, concerning God's perpetually governing and directing the issues and events of all things, and inspecting with a more especial regard the moral actions of men? which doctrine was perplexed by the philosophers with endless disputes. What can be so just a vindication of the goodness of God, and consequently so necessary in order to our maintaining in our minds worthy and honourable notions concerning him, as the doctrine, that God created man at first upright, and that the original of all evil and misery is sin? The want of a clear knowledge of which truth extremely perplexed the heathen world, and made many recur to that most absurd fiction of a self-existent evil principle. What can be a more proper motive to piety, than the doctrine that the deluge and other remarkable calamities which have befallen mankind, were sent upon them by God's immediate direction, as punishments for their wickedness? What can be a greater encouragement to the practice of holiness, than the doctrine, that God has at several times vouchsafed to make several particular revelations of his will to men, to instruct and support them more effectually in that practice? But, above all, what doctrine could ever have been imagined so admirably fitted in all respects to promote all the ends of true religion, as that of the incarnation of the Son of God? Which way could men have been filled with so deep a sense of the mercy and love of God towards them, and have been instructed in all divine truths in a method so well accommodated to their present infirmities; as by God's sending his only-begotten son, to take upon him our nature, and therein to make a general revelation of the will of God to mankind? How could the honour and dignity and authority of the laws of God have been so effectually vindicated, and at the same time so satisfactory an assurance of pardon upon true repentance have been given unto men, as by this method, of the Son of God giving himself a sacrifice and expiation for sin? What could have been a more glorious manifestation of the mercy and compassion of God, and at the same time a more powerful means to discountenance men's presumption, to discourage them from repeating their transgressions, to give them a deep sense of the heinous nature of sin, and of God's extreme hatred and utter irreconcilableness to it, and to convince them of the excellency and importance of the laws of God and the indispensable necessity of paying obedience to them; than this expedient of saving sinners by the sufferings and death of the Son of God, and by establishing with them a new and gracious covenant upon the merits of that satisfaction? How could men be better encouraged, to begin a religious life, than by having such a mediator, advocate, and intercessor for them with God, to obtain pardon of all their frailties; and, by being assured of the assistance of the spirit of God, to enable them to conquer all their corrupt affections, and to be in them an effectual principle of a heavenly and divine life? In fine; What stronger and more powerful motives could possibly have been contrived, to persuade men to live
virtuously,

virtuously, and to deter them from vice; than the clear discovery made to us in the gospel, of God's having appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, every man according to his works; and that they who have done well, shall be adjudged to everlasting happiness; and they that have done evil, to endless punishment; of which the light of nature afforded men but obscure glimpses? And may we not here, upon the whole, appeal now even to our adversaries themselves, whether in all and every one of these doctrines there be not a more powerful, a more effectual method laid down for the reforming human nature, and obliging the whole world to forsake their sins; and to lead holy and virtuous lives, than was ever taught before; nay, or than was possible to have been contrived by all the wit of mankind? This is the great and highest recommendation of the Christian doctrine; this is what, to a well-disposed mind, would well-nigh satisfactorily prove, even without the addition of any external testimony, than the Revelation of Christianity could not possibly but come from God; seeing that not only all its practical precepts, but even all its articles of belief also, tend plainly to this one and the same end, to make men universally amend and reform their lives; to recover and restore them to their original excellent state, from the corruption and misery which had been introduced by sin; and to establish upon earth the practice of everlasting righteousness, and entire and hearty obedience to the will of God; which would have been the religion of men (had they continued innocent) in Paradise, and now is the religion of angels, and for ever will be the religion of saints in heaven. Vain men may value themselves upon their speculative knowledge, right opinions, and true and orthodox belief, separate from the practice of virtue and righteousness; but, as sure as the gospel is true, no belief whatsoever shall finally be of any advantage to men, any otherwise than only so far as it corrects their practice, hinders them from being "workers of iniquity," Luke xiii. 7. and makes them like unto God.

AND ALL OF THEM TOGETHER MAKE UP THE MOST CONSISTENT AND RATIONAL SCHEME OF BELIEF IN THE WORLD.

Lastly; all the doctrines of the Christian faith do together make up an infinitely more consistent and rational scheme of belief, than any that the wisest of the antient philosophers ever did, or the cunningest of modern unbelievers can invent or contrive. This is evident from a summary view of the forementioned scheme of the Christian doctrines; wherein every article has a just dependence on the foregoing ones, and a close connexion with those that follow; and the whole account of the order and disposition of things, from the original to the consummation of all things, is one entire, regular, complete, consistent, and every way a most rational scheme; whereas the wisest of the antient philosophers, that is, those of them who hit upon the greatest number of single truths, and taught the

fewest absurdities; were yet * never able to make out any universal, entire, and coherent system of doctrines, and scheme of the whole state of things, with any manner of probability; and the cunningest of modern Deists (besides that they must needs, in their own way, believe some particular things stranger and in themselves more incredible than any of the forementioned Christian doctrines), cannot in the whole, as has been before shewn, frame to themselves any fixt and settled principles, upon which to argue consistently; but must unavoidably either be perplexed with inextricable absurdities, or confessedly recur to down-right Atheism. There have indeed, even among Christians themselves, been many differences and disputes about particular doctrines; but (excepting such as have intolerably corrupted the very fundamental doctrines, and even the main design itself of the whole Christian dispensation; of which there are too many instances, in writers of the Romish church especially) these disputes among Christians have not been, like those among the philosophers, “*de rerum summa*,” concerning the whole scheme and system of things, but only concerning particular explications of particular doctrines; which kind of disputes do not at all † affect the certainty of the whole religion itself, nor ought in reason to be any manner of hinderance to the ‡ effect which the plain and weightier and confessedly more important fundamental doctrines ought to have upon the hearts and lives of men.

XIV. Fifthly; as this revelation, to the judgement of right and sober reason, appears of itself highly credible and probable, and abundantly recommends itself in its native simplicity, merely by its own intrinsic goodness and excellency, to the practice of the most rational and considering men, who are desirous in all their actions to have satisfaction and comfort and good hope within themselves, from the conscience of what they do; so it is moreover positively and directly proved to be actually and immediately sent us from God; by the many infallible signs and miracles, which the author of it worked publicly as the evidence of his divine commission; by the exact completion both of the prophecies that went before concerning him, and of those that he himself delivered concerning things that were to happen after; and by the testimony of his followers, which, in all its circumstances, was the most credible, certain, and convincing evidence, that was ever given to any matter of fact in the world.

First, The Christian Revelation is positively and directly proved, to be actually and immediately sent to us from God, by the many

* “*Diversi ac diversè omnia protulerunt, non annectentes nec causas rerum, nec consequentias, nec rationes; ut Summam illam, quæ continet universa, & compingerent & complerent.*” Lactant. lib. VII.

† “*Sed perturbat nos opinionum varietas, hominumque dissensio; et quia non idem contingit in sensibus, hos natura certos putamus; illa, quæ allis sic, aliis secus, nec iisdem semper uno modo videntur, ficta esse dicimus. Quod est longè aliter.*” Cic. de Legib. lib. I.

‡ See above, p. 221, 222.

infallible signs and miracles, which the author of it worked publicly as the evidence of his divine commission.

OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF OUR SAVIOUR, AS AN EVIDENCE OF THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION.

Besides the great excellency and reasonableness of the doctrine considered in itself, of which I have already treated; it is here of no small moment to observe, that the Author of it (separate from all external proof of his divine commission) appeared in all his behaviour, words, and actions, to be neither * an impostor nor an enthusiast. His life was innocent and spotless, spent entirely in serving the ends of holiness and charity, in doing good to the souls and bodies of men, in exhorting them to repentance, and inviting them to serve and glorify God. When his bitterest enemies accused him, in order to take away his life; they could not charge him with any appearance of vice or immorality. And so far was he from being guilty of what they did accuse him of, namely of vain-glory and attempting to move sedition; that once, when the admiring people would by force have taken him and made him their king, he chose even to work a miracle, to avoid that which was the only thing that could be imagined to have been the design of an impostor. In like manner, whoever seriously considers the answers he gave to all questions whether moral or captious, his occasional discourses to his disciples, and more especially the wisdom and excellency of his sermon upon the mount, which is as it were the system and summary of his doctrine, manifestly surpassing all the moral instructions of the most celebrated philosophers that ever lived, cannot, without the extremest malice and obstinacy in the world, charge him with enthusiasm.

OF THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST, AS THE EVIDENCE OF HIS DIVINE COMMISSION.

These considerations cannot but add great weight and authority to his doctrine, and make his own testimony concerning himself exceedingly credible. But the positive and direct proof of his divine commission are the miracles which he worked for that purpose; his healing the sick; his giving sight to the blind; his casting out devils; his raising the dead; the wonders that attended his crucifixion; his own resurrection from the dead; his appearance afterwards to his disciples; and his ascension visibly into heaven.

These, and the rest of his stupendous miracles, were, to the disciples that saw them, sensible demonstrations of our Lord's divine commission. And to those who have lived since that age, they are as certain demonstrations of the same truth, as the testimony of those first disciples, who were eye-witnesses of them, is certain and true.

To the disciples that saw them, these miracles were sensible and complete demonstrations of our Lord's divine commission; because

* Πευρέον δὲ αὐτῶν, εἰ ποίῃ τις ἄλλῃ τοιῦτ' ὁπλάν· ἰσχυρῆσαι, πρᾶοτήτος καὶ ἐπισεικείας, σφραγισμένης τε καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ἀρετῆς διδάσκαλος, τοῖς ἀπαλαμμένους γελῶντος αἰτίας, &c. Euseb. Demonstrat. Evangelic. lib. iij. c. 3.

they were so great, and so many, and so public, and so evident, that it was absolutely impossible they should be the effect of any art of man, of any chance or fallacy; and the doctrine they were brought to confirm was of so good and holy a tendency, that it was impossible he should be enabled to work them by the power and assistance of evil spirits; so that, consequently, they must of necessity have been performed, either immediately or mediately, by God himself.

OF MIRACLES IN GENERAL.

But here, because there have been many questions raised, and some perplexity introduced, by the disputes and different opinions of learned men, concerning the power of working miracles, and concerning the extent of the evidence which miracles give to the truth of any doctrine; and because it hath been much controverted, whether true miracles can be worked by any less power than the immediate power of God; and whether, to complete the evidence of a miracle, the nature of the doctrine pretended to be proved thereby is requisite to be taken into the consideration, or no; it may not perhaps be improper, upon this occasion, to endeavour to set this whole matter in its true light as briefly and clearly as I can.

THAT, IN RESPECT OF THE POWER OF GOD, ALL THINGS ARE ALIKE EASY.

Ist, then: in respect of the power of God, and in respect to the nature of the things themselves, absolutely speaking, all things that are possible at all, that is, which imply not a direct contradiction, are equally and alike easy to be done. The power of God extends equally to great things, as to small; and to many, as to few: and the one makes no more difficulty at all, or resistance to his will, than the other.

THAT THEREFORE MIRACLES OUGHT NOT TO BE DEFINED BY ANY ABSOLUTE DIFFICULTY IN THE NATURE OF THINGS THEMSELVES TO BE DONE.

It is not, therefore, a right distinction to define or distinguish a miracle by any absolute difficulty in the nature of the thing itself to be done; as if the things we call natural were absolutely and in their own nature easier to be effected than those that we look upon as miraculous. On the contrary, it is evident and undeniable, that it is at least as great an act of power to cause the sun or a planet to move at all; as to cause it to stand still at any time. Yet this latter, we call a miracle; the former, not. And, to restore the dead to life, which is an instance of an extraordinary miracle, is in itself plainly altogether as easy, as to dispose matter at first into such order, as to form a human body in that which we commonly call a natural way. So that, absolutely speaking, in this strict and philosophical sense, either nothing is miraculous, namely, if we have respect to the power of God; or, if we regard our own power and understanding, then almost every thing, as well what we call natural, as what we call supernatural, is in this sense really miraculous; and it is only usualness or unusualness that makes the distinction.

2. WHAT DEGREES OF POWER, GOD MAY HAVE COMMUNICATED TO CREATED BEINGS, IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR US TO DETERMINE.

What degrees of power God may reasonably be supposed to have communicated to created Beings, to subordinate intelligences, to good or evil angels, is by no means possible for us to determine. Some things absolutely impossible for men to effect, it is evident, may easily be within the natural powers of angels; and some things beyond the power of inferior angels may as easily be supposed to be within the natural power of others that are superior to them, and so on. So that, excepting the original power of creating, which we cannot indeed conceive communicable to things which were themselves created; we can hardly affirm with any certainty, that any particular effect, how great or miraculous soever it may seem to us, is beyond the power of all created Beings in the universe to have produced.

THAT THEREFORE A MIRACLE IS NOT RIGHTLY DEFINED TO BE SUCH AN EFFECT AS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PRODUCED BY ANY LESS POWER THAN THE DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE.

It is not, therefore, a right distinction to define a miracle (as some very learned and very pious men have done) to be such an effect as could not have been produced by any less power than the Divine Omnipotence. There is no instance of any miracle in Scripture, which to an ordinary spectator would necessarily imply an immediate creation of something out of nothing; and consequently such a spectator could never be certain that the miraculous effect was beyond the power of all created beings in the universe to produce. There is one supposition, indeed, upon which the opinion of all miracles being necessarily the immediate effects of the Divine Omnipotence may be defended; and that is, if God, together with the natural powers wherewith he hath endued all subordinate intelligent beings, has likewise given a law, or restraint, whereby they be hindered from ever interposing in this lower world, to produce any of those effects which we call miraculous or supernatural: but then, how certain soever it is that all created beings are under some particular laws and restraints; yet it can never be proved, that they are under such restraints universally, perpetually, and without exception; and without this, a spectator that sees a miracle, can never be certain that it was not done by some created intelligence. Reducing the natural power of created beings to as low a degree as any one can desire to suppose, will help nothing in this matter: for, supposing (which is very unreasonable to suppose) that the natural powers of the highest angels were no greater than the natural powers of men; yet since thereby an angel would be enabled to do all that invisibly, which a man can do visibly, he would even in this supposition be naturally able to do numberless things which we should esteem the greatest of miracles.

3. ALL THINGS THAT ARE DONE IN THE WORLD, ARE DONE EITHER IMMEDIATELY BY GOD HIMSELF, OR BY CREATED INTELLIGENT BEINGS; MATTER BEING CAPABLE OF NO LAWS OR POWERS. AND CONSEQUENTLY THERE IS, PROPERLY SPEAKING, NO SUCH THING AS THE COURSE OR POWER OF NATURE.

All things that are done in the world are done either immediately by God himself, or by created intelligent beings, matter being evidently not at all capable of any laws or powers whatsoever any more than it is capable of intelligence; excepting only this one negative power, that every part of it will of itself always and necessarily continue in that state, whether of rest or motion, wherein it at present is. So that all those things which we commonly say are the effects of the natural powers of matter, and laws of motion, of gravitation, attraction, or the like, are indeed (if we will speak strictly and properly) the effects of God's acting upon matter continually and every moment, either immediately by himself, or mediately by some created intelligent beings (which observation by the way furnishes us, as has been before noted, with an excellent natural demonstration of Providence). Consequently there is no such thing as what men commonly call the course of nature, or the power of nature. The course of nature, truly and properly speaking, is nothing else but the will of God producing certain effects in a continued, regular, constant, and uniform manner; which course or manner of acting, being in every moment perfectly arbitrary, is as easy to be altered at any time as to be preserved. And if (as seems most probable) this continual acting upon matter be performed by the subserviency of created intelligences appointed to that purpose by the Supreme Creator; then it is as easy for any of them, and as much within their natural power (by the permission of God), to alter the course of nature at any time, or in any respect, as to preserve or continue it.

THAT THEREFORE A MIRACLE IS NOT RIGHTLY DEFINED TO BE THAT WHICH IS AGAINST THE COURSE OF NATURE, OR ABOVE THE NATURAL POWERS OF CREATED AGENTS.

It is not, therefore, a right distinction to define a miracle to be that which is against the course of nature; meaning, by the course of nature, the power of nature, or the natural powers of created agents. For, in this sense, it is no more against the course of nature, for an angel to keep a man from sinking in the water, than for a man to hold a stone from falling in the air, by over-powering the law of gravitation; and yet the one is a miracle, the other not so. In like manner, it is no more above the natural power of a created intelligence to stop the motion of the sun or of a planet, than to continue to carry it on in its usual course; and yet the former is a miracle, the latter not so. But if by the course of nature be meant only (as it truly signifies) the constant and uniform manner of God's acting either immediately or mediately in preserving and continuing the order of the world; then, in that sense, indeed, a miracle may be rightly defined to be an effect produced contrary to the usual course or order of nature, by the unusual interposition

terposition of some intelligent being superior to men; as I shall have occasion presently to observe more particularly.

THE UNREASONABLENESS OF THOSE WHO DENY THE POSSIBILITY OF MIRACLES IN GENERAL.

And from this observation we may easily discover the vanity and unreasonableness of that obstinate prejudice which modern Deists have universally taken up against the belief of miracles in general. They see that things generally go on in a constant and regular method, that the frame and order of the world is preserved by things being disposed and managed in an uniform manner; that certain causes produce certain effects in a continued succession, according to certain fixed laws or rules; and from hence they conclude, very weakly and unphilosophically, that there are in matter certain necessary laws or powers, the result of which is that which they call the course of nature, which they think is impossible to be changed or altered, and consequently that there can be no such thing as miracles. Whereas, on the contrary, if they would consider things duly, they could not but see, that dull and lifeless matter is utterly incapable of obeying any laws, or of being indued with any powers, and that therefore that order and disposition of things, which they vulgarly call the course of nature, cannot possibly be any thing else but the arbitrary will and pleasure of God exerting itself and acting upon matter continually, either immediately by itself, or mediately by some subordinate intelligent agents, according to certain rules of uniformity and proportion, fixed indeed and constant, but which yet are made such merely by arbitrary constitution, not by any sort of necessity in the things themselves, as has been abundantly proved in my former discourse; and consequently it cannot be denied, but that it is altogether as easy to alter the course of nature as to preserve it; that is, that miracles, excepting only that they are more unusual, are in themselves, and in the nature and reason of the thing, as credible in all respects, and as easy to be believed, as any of those we call natural effects.

4. SOME EFFECTS PROVE THE CONSTANT PROVIDENCE OF GOD, AND OTHERS PROVE THE OCCASIONAL INTERPOSITION EITHER OF GOD HIMSELF, OR OF SOME INTELLIGENT BEING SUPERIOR TO MAN.

Those effects which are produced in the world regularly and constantly, which we call the works of nature, prove to us in general the being, the power, and the other attributes of God. Those effects, which, upon any rare and extraordinary occasion, are produced in such manner, that it is manifest they could neither have been done by any power or art of man, nor by what we call chance, that is, by any composition or result of those laws which are God's constant and uniform actings upon matter; these undeniably prove to us the immediate and occasional interposition either of God himself, or at least of some intelligent agent superior to men, at that particular time, and on that particular account. For instance, the regular and continual effects of the power of gravitation,

tation, and of the laws of motion, of the mechanic, and of the animal powers; all these prove to us in general the being, the power, the presence, and the constant operation, either immediate or mediate, of God in the world. But if, upon any particular occasion, we should see a stone suspended in the air, or a man walking upon the water, without any visible support, a chronical disease cured by a word speaking, or a dead and corrupted body restored to life in a moment; we could not then doubt, but there was an extraordinary interposition either of God himself, in order to signify his pleasure upon that particular occasion, or at least of some intelligent agent far superior to man, in order to bring about some particular design.

5. WHETHER SUCH INTERPOSITION BE THE IMMEDIATE WORK OF GOD, OR SOME GOOD OR EVIL ANGEL, CAN HARDLY BE DISCOVERED MERELY BY THE WORK ITSELF.

Whether such an extraordinary interposition of some power superior to men be the immediate interposition of God himself, or of some good angel, or of some evil angel, can hardly be distinguished certainly merely by the work or miracle itself (except there be a plain Creation of something out of nothing, which, as I have said, there does not certainly appear to be in any of the miracles recorded in Scripture); because it is impossible for us to know with any certainty, either that the natural power of good angels, or of evil ones, extends not beyond such or such a certain limit, or that God always restrains them from exercising their natural power in producing such or such particular effects. Some singular miracles, such as raising the dead, there is indeed all the reason in the world to believe are absolutely beyond the power of evil spirits to effect; because we have the greatest reason to believe that the souls of men are in the hand of God, and cannot be removed by the natural power of any inferior beings. But there are not many other instances, wherein we can certainly say or determine, that this or that particular thing is absolutely beyond the natural power of good or evil spirits.

THAT THERE IS NO REASON TO SUPPOSE ALL THE WONDERS WORKED BY EVIL SPIRITS TO BE MERE DELUSIONS.

It is not, therefore, a right distinction to suppose the wonders which the scripture attributes to evil spirits to be mere præstigiæ, sleights, or delusions. For if the devil has any natural power of doing any thing at all, even but so much as the meanest of men, and be not restrained by God from exercising that natural power, it is evident he will be able, by reason of his invisibility, to work true and real miracles. Neither is it a right distinction to suppose the miracles of evil spirits not to be real effects in the things where they appear, but impositions upon the senses of the spectators; for, to impose in this manner upon the senses of men (not by sleights and delusions, but by really so affecting the organs of sense as to make things appear what they are not) is to all intents and purposes as true

true a miracle, and as great an one, as making real changes in the things themselves.

6. HOW WE ARE TO DISTINGUISH MIRACLES WORKED BY GOD FOR THE PROOF OF ANY DOCTRINE FROM THE FRAUDS OF EVIL SPIRITS.

When therefore upon any particular occasion; for instance, when at the will of a person who teaches some new doctrine as coming from God, and in testimony to the truth of that doctrine there is plainly and manifestly an interposition of some superior power, producing such miraculous effects as have been before mentioned; the only possible ways, by which a spectator may certainly and infallibly distinguish, whether those miracles be indeed the works either immediately of God himself, or (which is the very same thing) of some good angel employed by him; and consequently the doctrine witnessed by the miracles be infallibly true and divinely attested; or whether, on the contrary, the miracles be the works of evil spirits, and consequently the doctrine a fraud and imposition upon men; the only possible ways (I say) of distinguishing this matter certainly and infallibly are these. If the doctrine attested by miracles be in itself impious, or manifestly tending to promote vice; then without all question the miracles, how great soever they may appear to us, are neither worked by God himself, nor by his commission; because our natural knowledge of the attributes of God, and of the necessary difference between good and evil, is greatly of more force to prove any such doctrine to be false than any miracles in the world can be to prove it true. As, for example, suppose a man pretending to be a prophet should work any miracle, or give any sign or wonder whatsoever, in order to draw men from the worship of the true God, and tempt them to idolatry, and to the practice of such vices as in all heathen nations have usually attended the worship of false gods; nothing can be more infallibly certain, than that such miracles, Deut. xiii. 1, &c. ought at first sight to be rejected as diabolical. If the doctrine attested by miracles be in itself indifferent, that is, such as cannot by the light of nature and right reason alone be certainly known whether it be true or false; and, at the same time, in opposition to it, and in proof of the direct contrary doctrine, there be worked other miracles, more and greater than the former, or at least attended with such circumstances as evidently shew the power by which these latter are worked to be superior to the power that worked the former; then that doctrine which is attested by the superior power must necessarily be believed to be divine. This was the case of Moses, and the Ægyptian magicians. The magicians worked several miracles to prove that Moses was an impostor, and not sent of God; Moses, to prove his divine commission, worked miracles more and greater than theirs, or else (which is the very same thing) the power by which he worked his miracles restrained the power by which they worked theirs, from being able at that time to work all the same miracles that he did, and so appeared evidently the superior power; wherefore

wherefore it was necessarily to be believed, that Moses's commission was truly from God. If, in the last place, the doctrine attested by miracles be such as in its own nature and consequences tends to promote the honour and glory of God, and the practice of universal righteousness amongst men; and yet nevertheless be not in itself demonstrable, nor could without revelation have been discovered to be actually true (or even if it was but only indifferent in itself, and such as could not be proved to be any way contrary to, or inconsistent with these great ends), and there be no pretence of more or greater miracles on the opposite side to contradict it (which is the case of the doctrine and miracles of Christ); then the miracles are unquestionably divine, and the doctrine must without all controversy be acknowledged as an immediate and infallible revelation from God: because, Matth. xii. 25. (besides that it cannot be supposed that evil spirits would overthrow their own power and kingdom), should God in such cases as these permit evil spirits to work miracles to impose upon men, the error would be absolutely invincible; and that would in all respects be the very same thing as if God worked the miracles to deceive men himself. No man can doubt, but evil spirits, if they have any natural powers at all, have power to destroy men's bodies and lives, and to bring upon men innumerable other calamities; which yet, in fact, it is evident God restrains them from doing, by having set them laws and bounds which they cannot pass. Now, for the very same reason, it is infinitely certain that God restrains them likewise from imposing upon men's minds and understandings in all such cases, where wise and honest and virtuous men would have no possible way left, by which they could discover the imposition.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO TEACH THAT THE IMMEDIATE POWER OF GOD IS, OR IS NOT, NECESSARILY REQUISITE TO THE WORKING OF A MIRACLE, IS NOT VERY GREAT AT BOTTOM.

And here at last the difference between those who believe that all miracles necessarily require the immediate power of God himself to effect them, and those who believe created spirits able to work miracles, is not very great. They who believe all miracles to be effected only by the immediate power of God, must do it upon this ground, that they suppose God by a perpetual law restrains all subordinate intelligent agents from interposing at any time to alter the regular course of things in this lower world (for, to say that created spirits have not otherwise a natural power, when unrestrained, to do what we call miracles, is saying that those invisible agents have no power naturally to do any thing at all). And they who believe that subordinate beings have power to work miracles, must yet of necessity suppose that God restrains them in all such cases at least, where there would not be sufficient marks left, by which the frauds of evil spirits could be clearly distinguished from the testimony and commission of God.

And now, from these few clear and undeniable propositions, it evidently follows :

THE

THE TRUE DEFINITION OF A MIRACLE.

1st, That the true definition of a miracle, in the theological sense of the word, is this, that it is a work effected in a manner unusual, or different from the common and regular method of Providence, by the interposition either of God himself, or of some intelligent agent superior to man, for the proof or evidence of some particular doctrine, or in attestation to the authority of some particular person. And if a miracle so worked be not opposed by some plainly superior power, nor be brought to attest a doctrine either contradictory in itself, or vicious in its consequences (a doctrine of which kind no miracles in the world can be sufficient to prove), then the doctrine so attested must necessarily be looked upon as divine, and the worker of the miracle entertained as having infallibly a commission from God.

2. THE STRENGTH OF THE EVIDENCE OF OUR SAVIOUR'S MIRACLES.

From hence it appears, that the complete demonstration of our Saviour's being a teacher sent from God was, to the disciples who saw his miracles, plainly this, that the doctrine he taught, being in itself possible, and in its consequences tending to promote the honour of God and true righteousness among men; and the miracles he worked, being such, that there neither was, nor could be, any pretence of more or greater miracles to be set up in opposition to them; it was as infallibly certain that he had truly a divine commission, as it was certain that God would not himself impose upon men a necessary and invincible error.

3. CONCERNING THE OBJECTION, THAT WE PROVE IN A CIRCLE THE MIRACLES BY THE DOCTRINE, AND THE DOCTRINE BY THE MIRACLES.

From hence it appears how little reason there is to object, as some have done, that we prove in a circle the doctrine by the miracles, and the miracles by the doctrine. For the miracles, in this way of reasoning, are not at all proved by the doctrine; but only the possibility and the good tendency, or at least the indifferency of the doctrine, are a necessary condition or circumstance, without which the doctrine is not capable of being proved by any miracles. It is indeed the miracles only that prove the doctrine, and not the doctrine that prove the miracles: but then, in order to this end, that the miracles may prove the doctrine, it is always necessarily to be first supposed that the doctrine be such as is in its nature capable of being proved by miracles. The doctrine must be in itself possible and capable to be proved, and then miracles will prove it to be actually and certainly true. The doctrine is not first known or supposed to be true, and then the miracles proved by it; but the doctrine must be first known to be such as is possible to be true, and then miracles will prove that it actually is so. Some doctrines are in their own nature necessarily and demonstrably true, such as are all those which concern the obligation of plain moral precepts; and these neither need nor can receive any stronger proof from miracles,

than what they have already (though not perhaps so clearly indeed to all capacities) from the evidence of right reason. Other doctrines are in their own nature necessarily false and impossible to be true; such as are all absurdities and contradictions, and all doctrines that tend to promote vice; and these can never receive any degree of proof from all the miracles in the world. Lastly, other doctrines are in their own nature indifferent, or possible, or perhaps probable to be true; and these could not have been known to be positively true, but by the evidence of miracles, which prove them to be certain. To apply this to the doctrine and Miracles of Christ. The moral part of our Saviour's doctrine would have appeared infallibly true, whether he had ever worked any miracles or no. The rest of his doctrine was what evidently tended to promote the honour of God, and the practice of righteousness amongst men: therefore that part also of his doctrine was possible and very probable to be true; but yet it could not from thence be known to be certainly true, nor ought to have been received as a revelation from God, unless it had been proved by undeniable miracles. And the miracles he worked did indeed undeniably prove it to be the doctrine of God. Nevertheless, had his doctrine in any part of it been either absurd and contradictory in itself, or vicious in its tendency and consequences, no miracles could then possibly have proved it to have been true. It is evident, therefore, that the nature of the doctrine to be proved must be taken into the consideration as a necessary circumstance; and yet, that only the miracles are properly the proof of the doctrine, and not the doctrine of the miracles.

4. OF THE PRETENDED MIRACLES OF APOLLONIUS AND OTHERS.

From hence it follows, that the pretended miracles of Apollonius Tyaneus, Aristeas Proconnesius, and some few others among the Heathens, even supposing them to have been true miracles (which yet there is no reason at all to believe, because they are very poorly attested, and are in themselves very mean and trifling, as has been fully shewn by Eusebius in his book against Hierocles, and by many late writers; but supposing them, I say, to have been true miracles), yet they will prove nothing at all to the disadvantage of Christianity; because they were worked either without any pretence of confirming any new doctrine at all, or else to prove absurd and foolish things, or to establish idolatry and the worship of false gods; and consequently they could not be done by the divine power and authority, nor bear any kind of * comparison with the miracles of

* Διὰ τι ἢ χηὶ καὶ βεβασανισμένως τὰς ἐπαγγελιομένης τὰς δυνάμεις ἐξετάσομεν ἀπὸ τῶν βίβη καὶ τῶ ἡθῶς καὶ τῶν ἐπακολουθήσαντων ταῖς δυνάμειν, ἥτοι εἰς βλάβην τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἢ εἰς ἡθῶν ἐπανάρθωσιν; Origen. advert. Cell. lib. II.

Μέσον τοίνυν σαυτὸν κρίσεως τῶν περὶ τῶν Ἀριστέων γινόμενων, καὶ τῶν περὶ τῶν Ἰησοῦ ἰσορρομούντων, ἵδε εἰ μὴ ἐκ τῆ ἀποδείξεως, καὶ τῶν ὠφελωμένων εἰς ἡθῶν ἐπανάρθωσιν καὶ εὐλαΐαν τὴν πρὸς τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεόν, ἐστὶν εἰπεῖν ὅτι πιστεύον μὲν ὡς ἐκ ἀθεῖς γινόμενοις τοῖς περὶ Ἰησοῦ ἰσορρομούντοις, ἔχῃ δὲ τοῖς περὶ τῆς Προκονησίης Ἀριστεύ. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ βυβλωμένη ἡ πρόνοια τὰ περὶ τῶν Ἀριστέων παραδοξα ἐπραγματεύετο, καὶ τί ὠφελεῖσαι τῶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γενεῖ βυβλωμένη, τὰ τηλικαῦτα (ὡς αἰεὶ) ἐπαδεικνύτο, ἐκ ἐχθρῶς λέγειν. Id. lib. III.

Christ, which were worked to attest a doctrine that tended in the highest degree to promote the honour of God and the general reformation of mankind.

To return, therefore, to the argument. The miracles (I say) which our Saviour worked were, to the disciples that saw them, sensible demonstrations of his divine commission. And to those who have lived since that age, they are as certain demonstrations of the same truth, as the testimony of those first disciples who were eye-witnesses of them is certain and true; which I shall have occasion to consider presently.

OF THE FULFILLING THE PROPHECIES, AS AN EVIDENCE OF OUR SAVIOUR'S DIVINE COMMISSION.

Secondly, the divine authority of the Christian revelation is positively and directly proved, by the exact completion both of all those prophecies that went before concerning our Lord, and of those that he himself delivered concerning things that were to happen after.

OF THE PROPHECIES THAT WENT BEFORE, CONCERNING THE MESSIAH.

Concerning the Messiah, it was foretold Gen. xlix. 10. that he "should come before the sceptre departed from Judah;" and accordingly Christ appeared a little before the time when the Jewish government was totally destroyed by the Romans. It was foretold that he should come before the destruction of the second Temple, Hagg. ii. 7. "The desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts; the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former;" and accordingly Christ appeared some time before the destruction of the city and Temple. It was foretold that he should come at the end of 490 years, after the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which had been laid waste during the captivity, Dan. ix. 24. and that he should "be cut off;" and that, after that, "the city and sanctuary should be destroyed and made desolate;" and accordingly, at what time soever the beginning of the four hundred and ninety years can, according to any interpretation of the words, be fixed, the end of them will fall about the time of Christ's appearing; and it is well known how entirely the city and sanctuary were destroyed some years after his being cut off. It was foretold that he should do many great and beneficial miracles; that "the eyes of the blind Isai. xxxv. 5. should be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; that the lame man should leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing;" and this was literally fulfilled in the miracles of Christ; "the blind received their sight, Matth. xi. 5.; and the lame walked; the deaf heard, &c." It was foretold that he should die a violent death, Isai. liii. throughout, and that "not for himself," Dan. ix. 26. but "for our transgressions," Isai. liii. 5, 6, and 12. for "the iniquity of us all," and that he might bear "the sin of many;" all which was exactly accomplished in the sufferings of Christ. It was foretold, Gen. xlix. 10. that "to him should the gathering of the people be;" and Psal. ii. 8. that God

would "give him the Heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession:" which was punctually fulfilled by the wonderful success of the Gospel; and its universal spreading through the world. Lastly, many minuter circumstances were foretold of the Messiah; that he should be of the tribe of Judah, and of the seed of David; that he should be born in the town of Bethlehem, Mic. v. 2; that he should "ride upon an ass" in humble triumph into the city of Jerusalem, Zech. ix. 9; that he should be "sold for thirty pieces of silver," Zech. xi. 12; that he should be "scourged, buffeted, and spit upon," Isai. l. 6; that "his hands and feet should be pierced," Psal. xxii. 16; that he should be numbered among malefactors, Isai. liii. 12; that he should have "gall and vinegar offered him to drink," Psal. lxix. 21; that they who saw him crucified, should mock at him, and at his "trusting in God to deliver him," Psal. xxii. 8; that the soldiers should "cast lots for his garments," Psal. xxii. 18; that he should "make his grave with the rich," Isai. liii. 9; and that he should rise again without "seeing corruption," Psal. xvi. 10. All which circumstances were fulfilled to the greatest possible exactness in the person of Christ: not to mention the numberless typical representations, which had likewise evidently their complete accomplishment in him. And it is no less evident, that none of these prophecies can possibly be applied to any other person that ever pretended to be the Messiah.

OF THE PROPHECIES THAT CHRIST HIMSELF DELIVERED
CONCERNING THINGS THAT WERE TO HAPPEN AFTER

Further; the prophecies or predictions which Christ delivered himself, concerning things that were to happen after, are no less strong proofs of the truth and divine authority of his doctrine than the prophecies were which went before concerning him. He did very particularly and at several times foretell his own death, and the circumstances of it, Matth. xvi. 21. that the "chief priests and Scribes should condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles," that is, to Pilate and the Roman soldiers, to "mock and scourge and crucify him," Matth. xx. 18 and 19; that he should be betrayed into their hands, Matth. xx. 18; that Judas Iscariot was the person who would "betray him," Matth. xxvi. 23; that all his disciples would "forsake him and flee," Matth. xxvi. 31; that Peter, particularly, would "thrice deny him in one night," Mark xiv. 30. He foretold further, that he would "rise again the third day," Matth. xvi. 21; that after his ascension he would send down the Holy Ghost upon his apostles, John xv. 26. which should enable them to work many miracles, Mark xvi. 17. He foretold also the destruction of Jerusalem with such very particular circumstances, in the whole 24th chapter of St. Matthew, and the 13th of St. Mark, and 21st of St. Luke, that no man who reads * Josephus's history of that dreadful

* Very remarkable also is the history recorded by a Heathen writer, of what happened upon Julian's attempting to rebuild the Temple. "Imperii sui memoriam magnitudine operum

dreadful and unparalleled calamity, can, without the greatest obstinacy imaginable, doubt of our Saviour's divine fore-knowledge. Lastly, he foretold likewise many particulars concerning the future success of the Gospel, and what should happen to several of his disciples: he foretold what opposition and persecution they should meet withal in their preaching, Matth. x. 17: he foretold what particular kind of death St. Peter should die, John xxi. 18; and hinted, that St. John should live till after the destruction of Jerusalem, John xxi. 22; and foretold, that, notwithstanding all opposition and persecutions, the Gospel should yet have such success, as to spread itself over the world; Matt. xvi. 18. xxiv. 14. xxviii. 12: all and every one of which particulars were exactly accomplished without failing in any respect.

Some of these things are of permanent and visible effects, even unto this day. Particularly the captivity and dispersion of the Jews, through all nations, for more than 1600 years; and yet their continuing a distinct people, in order to the fulfilling the prophecies of things still future: this (I say) is particularly a permanent proof of the truth of the ancient prophecies. But the greatest part of the instances abovementioned were sensible and ocular demonstrations of the truth of our Lord's doctrine only to those persons who lived at the time when they happened; the credibility of whose testimony, therefore, shall be considered presently in its proper place.

But, before I proceed to this, it may not be improper in this place to take notice of some objections, which have of late been revived and urged, against this whole notion both of the prophecies themselves, and of the application of them to Christ. The sum and strength of which objections is briefly this:

That all the promises supposed to be made to the Jews before Christ's time, of a Messias or Deliverer, were understood and meant of some "temporal deliverer" only, who should restore to the Israelites a mere worldly kingdom, "without the least imagination of a spiritual deliverance," or of any such Saviour as is preached in the New Testament.

That, consequently, "All the prophecies" in the Old Testament, applied to Christ by the apostles in the New, are applied to him in a sense merely "typical, mystical, allegorical, or enigmatical;" in a sense "different from the obvious and literal sense;" by "new interpretations put upon them, not agreeable to the obvious and literal meaning of those books" from whence they are cited. That is to say; that the prophecies were all of them intended concerning other persons, and other persons only; and therefore are

"operum gessiens propagare, ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolymam templum, quod post multa & interneciva certamina obsidente Vespasiano posteaque Tito ægrè est expugnatum, instaurare sumptibus cogitabat immodicis; negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiocheni, qui olim Britannias curaverat pro præfectis. Cum itaque rei idem instaret Alypius, juvaretque provinciæ rector; metuendi globi flammæ prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes fecere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus inaccessum; hocque modo, elemento destinatius repellente, cessavit inceptum." Ammian. Marcellum. lib. XXII. sub initio.

falsely and groundlessly applied either to Christ in particular, or in general to the expectation of any such Messiah as should introduce a spiritual and eternal kingdom.

That there are several passages, cited by the apostles out of the Old Testament, which are either not found there at all, or else are very different in the text itself from the citations alledged, and consequently are by the apostles either misunderstood or misapplied.

That even miracles themselves “ can never render a foundation “ valid, which is in itself invalid ; can never make a false inference, true ; can never make a prophecy fulfilled, which is not “ fulfilled ;” can never make those things to be spoken concerning Christ, which were not spoken concerning Christ. And, consequently, that the miracles said to have been worked by Christ, could not possibly have been really worked by him, but must of necessity, together with the whole system both of the Old and New Testament, have been wholly the effect of imagination and enthusiasm, if not of imposture.

Now, in order to enable every careful and sincere reader to find a satisfactory answer to these, and all other objections of the like nature, I would lay before him the following considerations.

1. I suppose it to have been already proved in the foregoing part of this discourse, that there is a God ; and that the nature and circumstances of men, and the necessary perfections of God, do demonstrate the obligations and the motives of NATURAL RELIGION ; that is, that God is a MORAL as well as natural governor of the world. Whoever denies either of these assertions is obliged to invalidate the arguments alledged for proof of them in the former part of this book, before he has any right to intermix Atheistical arguments and objections in the present question, it being evidently ridiculous, in all who believe not that God is, and that he is a moral judge as well as natural governor, to argue at all about a revelation concerning religion, or to make any inquiry whether it be from God or no.

2. As God has in fact made known even demonstrable truths, natural and moral truths *, not to all men equally ; but in different degrees and proportions, to such as have a disposition and desire to enquire after them ; so it is agreeable to reason and to the analogy of God’s proceedings, to believe, that he may possibly, by revelation and tradition, have given some further degrees of light, to such as are sincerely desirous to know and obey him ; so that they who will do his will may know of the doctrine whether it be of God. As our natural knowledge of moral and religious truths in fact is, so Revelation possibly may further be, as it were, a light shining in a dark place.

3. It appears in history, that the great truths and obligations of natural religion have from the beginning been confirmed by a perpetual tradition in particular families. who, though in the midst of idolatrous nations, yet steadfastly adhered to the worship of the God

* See above, Prop. VII. § 4.

of nature, the one God of the universe. And by the nation of the Jews (notwithstanding all their corruptions in practice, yet in the system and constitution of their religion) has the same tradition been continually preserved; whereby they have been as it were a city upon a hill, a standing testimony against an idolatrous world.

4. Among the writings of all, even the most ancient and learned nations, there are none but the books of the Jews, which (agreeably to the above demonstrated truths concerning the God of nature, and the foundations of natural religion,) have, exclusive of chance and of necessity, ascribed either the original of the universe in general (an universe full of infinite variety and choice) to the will and operation of an intelligent and free cause; or given any tolerable account in particular of the formation of this our earth into its present habitable state.

5. But in these books, there is not only (in order to prevent idolatry) a full account (agreeable to the principles of natural reason) how the heavens and the earth and all things therein contained are the creatures of GOD; but, moreover, an uniform series of history, from the infancy of mankind, consistent with itself, and with the state of the Jewish and Christian church at this day, and with the possibilities of the predicted series for the future, for several thousands of years. Which consistency, with the possibilities of such predicted future events, could not be by chance (as I shall shew presently), but is itself a great and standing miracle.

6. In these books, agreeably to the hopes and expectations naturally founded on the divine perfections, God did from the beginning make, and has all along continued to his church or true worshippers, a promise, that truth and virtue should finally prevail, should prevail over the spirit of error and wickedness, of delusion and disobedience. That the "seed of the woman, Gen. iii. 15. " should bruise the serpent's head;" that among her posterity should arise a deliverance from the delusion and power of sin, by which "Satan (Rom. xvi. 20.) should be bruised under their feet." That in particular from the seed of Abraham, and from the family of Isaac, and from the posterity of Jacob, and from the house of David, should arise the accomplishment of all God's promises to his church, and all the blessings included in God's covenant with his true worshippers. That, at length, "the earth, Isai. xi. 9. " should be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover "the sea;" that, Rev. xi. 15. Dan. vii. 27. "the kingdoms of " this world should become the kingdoms of the Lord;" that, "in the last days, Isai. ii. 2. unto the mountain of the Lord's "house," the seat of his true worship, should "all nations flow." That God would, Isai. lxxv. 17. "create new heavens, and a "new earth, 2 Pet. iii. 13. wherein dwelleth righteousness;" wherein, Isai. lx. 21. lxxv. 25. xi. 9. i. 26. "the people should "be all righteous, and inherit the land for ever;" should be all "holy, Isai. iv. 3. even every one that is" or, "written unto "life, לחיים הכתוב. So Dan. xii. 1. "Every one that shall be
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“ found written in the book,” “ written among the living.” That God would, Dan. ii. 44. “ set up a kingdom, which should never “ be destroyed, but stand for ever;” and that, Dan. vii. 18. 22. 27. Isai. lx. tot. “ the saints of the most high should take the kingdom, “ and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.”

7. All the great promises, therefore, which God has ever made to his CHURCH, to his PEOPLE, to the FAMILIES or NATIONS of his true worshippers, are evidently to be all along so understood, as that wicked and unworthy persons, of whatever family or nation or profession of religion they be, shall be excluded from the benefit of those promises, shall be cut off from God’s people; and worthy persons of all nations, from the East and from the West, and from the North and from the South, shall be accepted in their stead. That is to say, in like manner as the promise was made originally, not to all the children of Abraham, but to Isaac only; and not to both the sons of Isaac, but to Jacob only: and among the posterity of Jacob, all were not Israel, which were of Israel; but, in Elijah’s days, seven thousand only were the true Israel; and, in the time of Isaiah, “ though the number of the children of Israel was as the “ sand of the sea,” Is. x. 22. Rom. ix. 27; yet a remnant only was to be saved; and in Hosea God says, “ I will call them my “ people, which were not my people, and her beloved, which was “ not beloved,” Hof. ii. 23. Rom. ix. 25: so it is all along evidently to be understood, that the children of the promise in the literal sense according to the flesh, the visible church or professed worshippers of the true God, are but the type or representative of the real invisible church of God, the true children of Abraham, Rom. ii. 28. iii. 7. and 9. iv. 12. in the spiritual and religious sense, “ the “ saints of the most high, Dan. vii. 18. who shall possess the “ kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever,” even, Is. iv. 3. every “ one that is written among the living.”

8. It being evident that God cannot be the God of the dead, but of the living; and that all promises, made to such worshippers of the true God as at any time forsook all that they had and even life itself for the sake of that worship, could be nothing but mere mockery, if there was no life to come, and God had no power to restore them from the dead: this (I say) being self-evident, it follows necessarily, that when the time comes that the promised kingdom shall take place, the dead must be raised; and the saints, which had died in the intermediate time, must live again, Dan. xii. 13. “ stand in “ their lot at the end of the days.” When God styles himself, Exod. iii. 6. 16. “ THE God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;” and said to Abraham, Gen. xv. 1. “ I am THY exceeding great reward;” and Gen. xvii. 7. “ I will—be a God unto THEE, and to thy seed after thee;” and, Gen. xvii. 8. xiii. 15. 17. “ I will give the land unto “ THEE, and to thy seed after thee;” and repeated the very same promises to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 3. and to Jacob personally, Gen. xxviii. 13. as well as to their posterity after them, Deut. i. 8; and yet, Acts vii. 5. “ gave Abraham none inheritance in the land, though he prom-
“ mised

“mised that he would give it to HIM and to his seed after him;” but Abraham himself, Heb. xi. 9. “sojourned only in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;” who all, Heb. xi. 13. “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;” and Jacob particularly complained, Gen. xlvii. 9. that “the days of the years of his pilgrimage had been few and evil;” and in blessing Isaac and Ishmael, God promised, Gen. xviii. 20, 18. to “make Ishmael fruitful, and to multiply him exceedingly,” so that he should “beget twelve princes,” and God would “make him a great nation;” and, Gen. xvi. 10. “multiply his seed exceedingly, that it should not be numbered for multitude;” and yet, in the very same sentence, expressly by way of opposition, and of high and eminent distinction, declares that, notwithstanding all this, “yet, his COVENANT, his EVERLASTING covenant, he would establish with Isaac,” Gen. xvii. 19. 21; when all this (I say) is considered, the inference of the apostle to the Hebrews cannot but appear unanswerably just, that these patriarchs, Heb. xi. 10. “looked for a city” somewhat more than temporal, even “a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God;” and that, Heb. xi. 14. 16. “they, who said such things, declared plainly that they sought a country, a better country, that is, an heavenly;” and that, for this reason, “God was not ashamed to be called THEIR GOD, because he had prepared for them a city.” And if this inference was necessarily true concerning the patriarchs, who, Heb. xi. 13. “confessed that they were “strangers and pilgrims on the earth;” much more concerning those who, Heb. xi. 35. “were tortured, not accepting deliverance,” must it needs be true that the only possible reason of this their choice was, “that they might obtain a better resurrection.”

Other notices in the Old Testament, that the worshippers of the true God in every age of the world, should at the end have their lot in the kingdom promised to the saints of the Most High, are, Gen. v. 24. the translation of Enoch, Heb. xi. 5. Wisd. iv. 10. Eccclus. xlv. 16. xlix. 14. “that he should not see death;” and 2 Kings ii. 11. Eccclus. xlviii. 9. 1 Macc. ii. 58. the taking up of Elijah into heaven. Allusions to it at least, if perhaps not direct assertions, are the words of Job, xix. 25: * “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” And those of Isaiah: xxvi. 19. “Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the

* The introduction to these words is very solemn: “Oh, that my words were now—graven with an iron pen, and lead, in the rock for ever.” And how they were anciently understood, appears from that addition to the end of the book of Job in the LXX. γέγραπται δὲ, αὐτὸν πάλιν ἀναστήσεσθαι, μετ’ αὖν ὁ κύριος ἀνίστηται. So, Job died, being old, and full of days: “But it is written that he shall rise again, with those whom the Lord raises up.”

“dead.” And, Isai. lxvi. 14. “your bones shall flourish like an herb.” And that passage in Hosea, xiii. 14. “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.” And that in Ezekiel, xxxvii. 7, 8, 10, 12. “Behold,—the bones came together, bone to his bone; and—the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above; and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet:—Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.” Again: the words of Isaiah, lvii. 1, 2. “The righteous perisheth, and—is taken away from the evil to come? he shall enter into PEACE:” what more natural signification have they than that which the book of Wisdom expresses, ch. iii. 1, 3; “the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God;—they are in peace?” And what, but the future state, can the conclusion of Isaiah’s prophecy, ch. lxv. 17. lxvi. 22, 23, 24, reasonably be referred to? “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth:—as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith the Lord; so shall your seed and your name remain. And—all flesh shall come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” In like manner; whom does God speak of by Ezekiel, when he says, Ezek. xlv. 16. “the sons of עֲרוֹק בְּנֵי, the sons of righteousness,” Zadock, that kept the charge of my sanctuary, WHEN the children of Israel went astray from me;” [which, Ezek. -xlvi. 11. went not astray, when the children of Israel went astray]—“they shall enter into my sanctuary?” and to what do the following words of the same prophet most naturally refer? * “Every thing shall live, whither the river cometh:—and by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat; whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.” Still more strong is that allusion in Daniel, vii. 9, 10. “I beheld till the thrones were cast down [till the thrones were placed], and the Ancient of days did sit:—a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgement was set, and the books were opened.” But the following words of the

* Ezek. xlvi. 9, 12. compared with Rev. xxii. 1, 2. “He shewed me a pure river of water of life.—and of either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

same prophet are direct and express, Dan. xii. 2, 3. 13. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life [every one, ver. 1. that shall be found written in the book], and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.—But go thou thy way, till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days." Can any one, who considers these texts, with any truth or reason affirm, that all the promises supposed to be made to the Jews before Christ's time were meant of some "temporal" deliverance only, "without the least imagination of a spiritual deliverance?"

9. There are in the Old Testament many intimations, and some direct predictions, that all the great promises of God, made to his true worshippers, shall receive their final accomplishment by means of a particular person, anointed of God for that person; who, after the reduction of all adversaries, shall set up the everlasting kingdom. The seed of Abraham, in which all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, (and in like manner the seed of the woman, which was to bruise the serpent's head) might originally with equal propriety, and in as reasonable and natural a sense of the words, be understood to signify (what St. Paul afterward * asserts it did signify), in the singular sense, a particular person; as, in the plural sense, a number of persons. The Shiloh, Gen. xlix. 10. which was to come, and to "whom the gathering of the people was to be" (the promise laid up in store, τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ, as the LXX render it); by its opposition in the text to the terms "sceptre" and "lawgiver," most naturally signifies a single person who was to reign; and, by the gradation in the words of the text, somewhat of superior dignity to that of a sceptre and a lawgiver. The words of Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 17. 19. "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel:—Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion;" are words so put in his mouth, as most properly and obviously to describe a much greater person than perhaps he thought of, a much greater person than one who should smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. Again: that the words of Moses, Deut. xviii. 15. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken;" were not meant barely of Joshua, or of "a succession of prophets," but of one who should have as eminent a legislative authority as Moses; may reasonably be gathered from the occasion of their being spoken, not merely by Moses, upon a general reliance and trust that God would provide him a successor; but by God himself, Deut. xviii. 16, 17, 18, 19. upon the people's "desiring in Ho-

* Gal. iii. 16. "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed." That is to say, in the promise to Abraham, the scripture uses the ambiguous word, "seed," not in the plural sense, but in the singular sense.

reb,"—saying, "Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not; then the Lord said, they have well spoken:—I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." And that the words were anciently, long before the application of them by the writers of the New Testament, thus understood, and not concerning Joshua or a succession of prophets; appears from those additional words, at the conclusion of the book of Deuteronomy, chap. xxxiv. 9, 10. "Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him.—But there arose not a prophet since in Israel, like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." The prediction of Isaiah is still clearer: ch. ix. 6, 7. "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called * Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace: of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even FOR EVER; the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." Again: Isai. xi. 1. 3. 6. 9. "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse,—he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.—The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, &c.—They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." And, Isai. xlii. 1, 3, 4. Matt. xii. 17. "Behold my servant,—mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; —A bruised reed shall he not break:—He shall bring forth judgement unto truth:—till he have set judgement in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law." The prophet Jeremiah no less plainly: ch. xxiii. 5, 6. xxxiii. 15, 16. "I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth:—and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." And Ezekiel, ch. xxxiv. 23. 25. xxxvii. 22, 23, 24, 25. Hos. iii. 5. "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David;—and I will make with them a covenant of peace, &c.—One king shall be king to

* אביעזר פלא יועץ אל גבור. "Wonderful, Counsellor [LXX, *μεγάλος βελη* ἄγγελος as Mal. iii. 1. ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς διαθέσεως] "the Mighty, the Potent one, the Father of the age to come." [Vulg. "Pater futuri seculi." Compare Heb. ii. 5.]

“ them all ;—neither shall they defile themselves any more with
 “ their idols ;—and they all shall have one shepherd ; they shall also
 “ walk in my judgements,—and my servant David shall be their
 “ prince FOR EVER.” By Haggai is the same predicted : Hagg.
 ii. 6, 7. Heb. xii. 26. “ Yet once, it is a little while, and I will
 “ shake the heavens and the earth,—and the * desire of all nations
 “ shall come.” And by Zechary, ch. ix. 9, 10. Matt. xxi. 5.
 “ Behold, thy king cometh unto thee ; he is just, and having sal-
 “ vation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal
 “ of an ass :—he shall speak peace unto the Heathen ; and his do-
 “ minion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to
 “ the ends of the earth.” And by Malachi, ch. iii. 1. “ The
 “ LORD whom we seek, shall suddenly come to his temple ; even
 “ the messenger of the covenant.” But most expressly of all, by
 Daniel, ch. vii. 13, 14. “ I saw in the night-visions, and be-
 “ hold, one like † the son of man, came with the clouds of hea-
 “ ven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near
 “ before him ; and there was given him dominion, and glory, and
 “ a kingdom ; that all people, nations, and languages should serve
 “ him ; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not
 “ pass away ; and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed.”
 And the anointing the Holy One, this prophet calls, Dan. ix. 24.
 “ the sealing up of the vision and prophecy, and the finishing of
 “ transgression, and the making an end of sins, and the making
 “ reconciliation for iniquity, and the bringing in everlasting righte-
 “ ousness.” (Do all these things denote nothing but “ temporal”
 deliverance, “ without the least imagination of a spiritual deliver-
 “ ance) ?” And in the words next following, he is styled by name
 “ Messiah,” Dan. ix. 25. “ Know therefore, [וְהַיָּדוּעַ know also] and
 “ understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to
 “ restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the prince, shall
 “ be ‡ seven weeks.”

10. Concerning this Messiah, in the setting up of whose king-
 dom all the promises of God terminate, it is clearly predicted in
 the Old Testament, that he should arise particularly from the tribe
 of Judah, from the family of David, and in the town of Bethlehem.

The first of these particulars is expressed in those emphatical
 words of Jacob : Gen. xlix. 8. 10. “ Judah, thou art he whom thy
 “ brethren shall praise,—thy father’s children shall bow down be-
 “ fore thee :—the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-

* The Shiloh, unto whom “ shall the gathering of the people be,” Gen. xlix. 10.

† With reference to this it is, that Christ in the gospel perpetually styles himself “ THE
 “ Son of man ;” and once, “ The Son of man which is in” [which in the prophecy is
 described as coming in the clouds of] “ heaven,” John iii. 13. And tells his disciples,
 that “ they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven,” Matt. xxiv. 30.
 And the high-priest, that “ hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand
 “ of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Matth. xxvi. 64.

‡ Seven Septenaries (or weeks) of years (as the word is used, Gen. xxix. 27.) ; that is
 to say, forty-nine years ; the number of years appointed until the Jubilee, Levit. xxv. 8,
 9, 10. Concerning the other numbers of Daniel in this place, I shall have occasion to
 speak presently.

“giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come,” [LXX, ὡς ἂν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ, till the accomplishment of the promises which God has laid up in store for him,] “and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” To which the writer of the Chronicles seems to refer, when he says: 1 Chr. v. 1, 2. “The genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birth-right; for Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler, [וְלִנְיָדָהּ מִמֶּנִּי and from him was it prophesied the ruler should arise.]” And the Psalmist; Ps. lx. 7. cviii. 8. “Judah is my lawgiver.”

The second is expressed in that promise to David; 2 Sam. vii. 16. “Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee, [LXX, ἐνώπιόν μου, before me:] thy throne shall be established for ever.” Which words might indeed, of themselves, be understood concerning a succession of kings in the house of David. But that God had a further and a greater meaning in them, he very clearly explains by the following prophets. By Isaiah, ch. xi. 1. &c. compare Rev. iii. 7. v. 5. xxii. 16, “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and then follows, through the whole chapter, a glorious description of an everlasting kingdom of righteousness, over both Jews and Gentiles. By Jeremiah, ch. xxiii. 5. “I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth:—and this is his name, whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” By Ezekiel, ch. xxxvii. 23, 24, 25, 26. “They shall be my people, and I will be their God; and David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd;—and my servant David shall be their prince FOR EVER: moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant.” And by Hosea, ch. iii. 4. “The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king and without a prince, and without a sacrifice:—afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness, in the LATTER days.”

The third particular is expressed in those words of Micah, ch. v. 2. Matt. ii. 6. “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting.” After the passages now cited out of the foregoing Prophets, what can be more jejune, than to understand these words of Micah concerning Zorobabel, only as having been of an ancient family?

11. In the books of the Old Testament it is expressly predicted, that the kingdom of the Messiah should extend, not over the Jews only, but also over the Gentiles. The promise made to Abraham, and so often repeated to him, and to Isaac and to Jacob, that in their seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed, Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxii. 18. xxvi. 4. xxviii. 14. is thus opened and explained by

by the Prophets, Isai. xi. 10. "There shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious, Isai. xlii. 1. 6. Matt. xii. 18. "Behold my servant—in whom my soul delighteth;—he shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles:—I will—give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." Isai. xlix. 6. "It is a light thing, that thou should'st be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Is. lvi. 6, 7, 8. Joh. x. 16. "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord,—even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and —mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. The Lord God, which gathereth the out-casts of Israel, saith: Yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered unto him." Ezek. xlvii. 22. "The strangers that sojourn among you,—shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel." Mal. i. 11. "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts."

12. Concerning the same Messiah, of whom so great things are spoken, and whose kingdom is to be an everlasting kingdom; it is still expressly predicted by the Prophets, that he should suffer and be cut off. Concerning the very same person, who (with respect to his coming to reign, and to introduce the everlasting jubilee, or rest to the people of God, Heb. iv. 9. *σάββατος*) is styled, Dan. ix. 25. Messiah the prince; concerning the very same person, I say, it is in the very same sentence expressly predicted that he should, Dan. ix. 26. "be cut off, but not for himself, [לְבַדּוֹ and the "people should not then be his; unto him should not then the "gathering of the people be," Gen. xlix. 10.] For which reason, and also because the words can with no tolerable sense be applied to any other person, and because moreover the connexion of the whole prophecy leads to the same interpretation; the 53d chapter of Isaiah likewise is most justly understood to be spoken of the Messiah: Is. xi. 1. "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse:"—Is. xi. 4. "With righteousness shall he judge the poor:"—Is. xlii. 1, 2, 3. "Behold my servant,—mine elect in whom my soul delighteth;—he shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street: a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgement unto truth."—Is. lii. 13. "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently;"—Is. liii. 4. &c. "Surely he hath borne our griefs; —he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:—he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth: he was taken from prison and from judgement, and who shall de-

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“clare his generation?—For the transgression of my people was he stricken; and he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death:—when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin;—my righteous servant shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities:—he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

13. All prophecies of blessings to the worshippers of the true God, expressed either as being to happen in the latter days, or in words which imply a lasting duration, are in reason to be understood, as having reference to the times of the promised kingdom of the Messiah; of whom it is expressly said, Dan. ix. 24. that he shall “bring in everlasting righteousness;” and, Dan. vii. 14. that “his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” Some prophecies of this kind are direct and express. Others, beginning with promises of particular intermediate blessings, and proceeding with general expressions more great and lofty than can naturally be applied to the temporal blessing immediately spoken of, are most reasonably understood to have a perpetual view and regard to that great and general event, in which all God’s promises to his true worshippers do center and terminate; and of which, all intermediate blessings promised by God are justly looked upon as beginnings, types, pledges, or earnest.

14. For, since from the express prophecies before cited of the Messiah’s everlasting kingdom of righteousness, it appears that God had in fact a view to that, as the great and general end of all the dispensations of providence towards his true worshippers from the beginning, and, 2 Pet. i. 20. “no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation” (that is, the meaning of prophecies is not what perhaps the prophet himself might imagine in his private judgement of the state of things then present), because “the prophecy in old time came not by the will of man, but holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:” there may, therefore, very possibly and very reasonably be supposed to be many prophecies, which, though they may have a prior and immediate reference to some nearer event, yet by the spirit of God (whom those prophecies which are express shew to have had a further view) may have been directed to be uttered in such words, as may even more properly and more justly be applied to the great event which providence had in view, than to the intermediate event which God designed as only a pledge or earnest of the other. For instance: suppose the words of Daniel, ch. vii. 9, 10. “I beheld till the thrones were cast down [till the thrones were placed], and the Ancient of days did sit:—a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgement was set, and the books were opened:” suppose (I say) these words were spoken concerning “the slaying of a wild beast,”

ver. 11. or "the destruction of a temporal empire;" yet what reasonable man, who had ever elsewhere met with any notices of a judgement to come, could doubt but the destruction there spoken of was therefore expressed in those words, that it might be understood to be the introduction to the general judgement? The exact and very particular description of a resurrection in the 37th of Ezekiel, supposing it to be indeed spoken of a temporal restoration of the Jews, yet who can doubt but it was so worded with design, to allude to a real resurrection of the dead? The words of Micah, ch. v. 2. Matth. ii. 6. "Thou, Bethlehem, though thou be little
 " among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come
 " forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth
 " have been from of old, from everlasting;" supposing it possible they could be spoken of Zorobabel, yet, if afterwards there should arise out of Bethlehem one in whom were found all the other prophetic characters of the promised Messiah, who could doubt but the words were intended either solely or at least chiefly of the latter? The words of Jeremy, ch. i. 7. vi. 5. "Babylon hath been a golden cup;
 "—the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the
 " nations are mad: flee out of the midst of Babylon,—be not cut
 " off in her iniquity:—my people, go ye out of the midst of her,
 " and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the
 " Lord;" who, that considers the nature and character of the Babylon in Jeremiah's time, and compares it with the nature and character of the Babylon described by St. John, can doubt but the spirit which influenced Jeremy, foresaw and intended to allude to that Babylon, which had, Rev. xvii. 4. "a golden cup in her hand,
 " full of abominations, ver. 2. "and the inhabitants of the earth
 " have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication," ch. xviii. 3. 4. "and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her:—Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues?" For the words of Jeremy are more strictly applicable to this latter Babylon than to that in his own time. Again: the words of Isaiah, ch. vii. 14. Matth. i. 23. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and
 " bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, that is to say,
 " God with us:" supposing Isaiah himself could possibly at that time understand them concerning a son of his own, concerning a son to be born of a young woman afterwards, who at the time then present was a virgin; and that his being styled Immanuel meant nothing more than that, before this child was grown up, Judah should be delivered from the then threatened incursions of Israel and Syria (all which, notwithstanding the seeming connexion of the words in the place they stand, is very difficult to suppose); yet if afterwards any person, comparing the solemn introduction wherewith the words are brought in, ("Hear ye now, O house of David;
 " is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my
 " God also? therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign;
 " behold, a virgin shall conceive &c.") If any one, I say, comparing

paring this solemn introduction with the promises repeated to the house of David in other passages of the prophets, that there should be born unto them a son who (Isai. ix. 7. Ezek. xxxvii. 25) should "sit upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom for ever, and of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end;" and considering moreover the character of this promised son, that he (Dan. ix. 24.) should "finish transgression, and make an end of sins, and make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness:" if a person, considering and comparing these things, should in his own days find a son really born of a virgin, attested to by numerous miracles, and by God's command named Jesus (which is synonymous to Immanuel, a Potent Saviour, or God with us), because he (Matth. i. 21.) "should save his people from their sins," that is, (Dan. ix. 24.) should "make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness:" could such a person possibly entertain the least doubt, whether God, who sent Isaiah to repeat the fore-cited words to the house of David, did not intend thereby to describe, if not wholly and solely, at least chiefly and ultimately, this latter Saviour? In like manner: suppose those great promises to David, 2 Sam. vii. 13, 14. 16. concerning "the establishment of the throne of his Son for ever," were by David and by the prophet himself that delivered them, understood (*τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐπιλύσει*, as St. Peter speaks) concerning Solomon and a succession of kings in his family; yet, when following prophecies clearly and expressly declared, that out of the root of Jesse should arise a Messiah who should reign for ever; no reasonable man can doubt, but that the former and less clear prophecy was likewise intended of God, and therefore rightly applied by the apostles of Christ to the same purpose. To give but one instance more: suppose the words, Psal. xvi. 10. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption," were by David spoken concerning himself (which, however, can no way be proved); yet who, that, Acts ii. 30. knew David himself to be a prophet, and that had compared the other prophecies, concerning "the branch out of the roots of Jesse," Isai. xi. 1, &c. "the one shepherd of Israel, even God's "servant David," Ezek. xxxvii. 24. who should be "their prince for ever," ver. 25. and yet was to be "cut off" before he should "reign for ever;" Dan. ix. 26. Isai. lii. 10. and that had himself seen (as St. Peter did) and actually conversed with "Christ risen from the dead;" who (I say) in these circumstances could possibly doubt, but that "the spirit of the Lord which spake by David," 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. intended the forementioned words should be understood of, and applied to, Christ? and the like may be said concerning some other prophecies, which are vulgarly supposed to be applied typically to Christ.

15. It is not agreeable to reason, or to the analogy of Scripture, to suppose that the Jews before our Saviour's time could have a clear and distinct understanding of the full meaning even of the

express prophecies, much less of those which were more obscure and indirect; when both were intended to be only * as it were “a light shining in a dark place.” But thus much is evident, that the Jews, both before and in our Saviour’s time, had from these prophecies † a general expectation of a Messiah, and that this Messiah was to be, not merely a “temporal” deliverer, but אבינו, “Pater futuri seculi,” the head of the future state, as well as of the present. Nor does it at all appear that our Lord’s disciples, when they (Luke xxiv. 21.) “thought he would have redeemed Israel,” or when they (Acts i. 6.) “asked if he would at this time restore † again the kingdom to Israel;” I say, it does not at all appear that they expected MERELY a “temporal” kingdom; but their error was in expecting a present kingdom; and therefore our Lord’s answer to them is not concerning the nature, but the time of the kingdom. And the modern Jews at this day, who to be sure have entertained no prejudicate notions from the New Testament writers interpretation or application of prophecies, have (I think) still an universal expectation, that the Messiah shall be their prince in the future state as well as in the present.

16. When Jesus Christ, by (John x. 25.) “the works which he did in his Father’s name,” and (John v. 36.) “which his Father gave him to finish,” had proved himself to be sent of God (which truth the apostles likewise confirmed by their testimony, by their works, and by laying down their lives, not for their opinions, which possibly erroneous and enthusiastic persons may sometimes sincerely do, but in attestation to facts of their own knowledge), and it appeared moreover, that there was wanting in him no circumstance, no “*sine quâ non*,” no character, appropriated by any of the ancient prophets to the promised Messiah; he had then a clear right to apply to himself all the prophecies, which either directly spoke of the Messiah, or which, through any intermediate events, pointed at him, and were applicable to him.

17. The application of this latter sort of prophecies to Christ is not allegorical. It is not an allegorical application, much less an allegorical argument or reasoning. But they are applied to him, as being really and intentionally, in the view of Providence, the end and complete accomplishment of that, whereof the intermediate blessing was a pledge or beginning.

18. The application of this latter sort of prophecies to Christ was never by reasonable men urged as being itself a proof that Jesus was the true Messiah. Nay, the application of the most direct and express prophecies whatsoever has not of itself the nature of a direct or positive proof; but can only be a “*sine quâ non*,” an application of certain marks or characters, without which no person could be

* See above, p. 256, and Prop. VII. § 4. p. 210, 211.

† “Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus & constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut Judæa profecti rerum potirentur.” Sueton.

“Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum libris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret * Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur.” Tacit.

* Possibly from that text in Zechary, יְדֹאֲגֻלְךָ אֶת כָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת לְפָנֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ. LXX.

the promised Messiah. Many men were of the seed of Abraham, and of the tribe of Juda, and of the family of David, and born in Bethlehem of Judæa, and suffered, and were cut off; and yet neither any nor all of these characters could prove any man to be the promised Messiah; but the want of any one of them would prove that any man was not he. The proof of Jesus being the Christ, were, "The works which his Father gave him to finish." John v. 36. The application of direct and express prophecies to him is nothing but such a congruity of marks or characters, as removes all objections by which an adversary would endeavour to prove that it was not he. Ought not Christ to have suffered "these things, and to enter into his glory?" Luke xxiv. 26. is not proving from his sufferings, that Jesus was the Christ; but removing the objection, by which some were apt to infer from his sufferings, that he could not possibly be the Christ. The application of indirect prophecies to him, is only a giving of further light, from the analogy and conformity of the Old Testament to the New, by way of illustration and confirmation to such as have been before convinced by the direct proofs. The proof, therefore, of the truth of Christianity does not stand upon the application of prophecies; but the works by which Christ proved himself to be sent of God gave him a right to apply to himself the prophecies concerning the Messiah; and the marks or characters of the promised Messiah, given by the prophets, were so many tests by which his claim was to be tried. "Miracles," indeed, "can never render a foundation valid, which is in itself invalid; can never make a false inference, true; can never make a prophecy fulfilled, which is not fulfilled; can never mark out a Messias, or Jesus for the Messias, if both are not marked out in the Old Testament;" but miracles can give a man a just and undeniable claim to be received as the promised Messiah, if the prophetic characters of the Messiah be applicable to him. And this it is, by which Jesus was proved to be the Christ.

19. From what has been said concerning the application of indirect prophecies, it is easy to observe the nature and use of types, and figures, and allegorical manners of speaking; that these were much less intended to be ever alledged for proofs of the truth of a doctrine; and yet, in their proper place, may afford very great light and assistance towards the right understanding of it. An instance or two will make this matter obvious. There is a very remarkable passage in the epistle to the Galatians, where the apostle himself styles the thing he is speaking of "an allegory," Gal. iv. 24; that is, he draws an argument *à simili*. The allegory or similitude he makes use of is not alledged by him as a "proof" of the truth of the doctrine he is asserting; but as a proof of the falseness and groundlessness of a particular objection urged by the unbelieving Jews against it. The doctrine the apostle asserts (both in the epistle to the Romans, and in this to the Galatians) is, that Christians of the Gentiles, who imitate the faith and obedience of Abraham

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(being circumcised with the circumcision—of Christ, Col. ii. 11.), are equally capable of being admitted to the benefit of God's promises to his people, as the Jews of the literal circumcision, who were lineally descended from that patriarch. In opposition to this, the Jews alledged, that since to the Israelites confessedly, Rom. ix. 4. "pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;" since theirs confessedly were the fathers or patriarchs, to whom all the promises of God were originally made; it could not possibly be true, nor consistent with the promises of God made to their fathers, that these Israelites, who had been all along the peculiar people or church of God, should at last be rejected for not receiving the gospel; and that believers from among the Gentiles of all nations should be received in their stead. Now, in reply to this objection, the apostle argues with the greatest justness and strength, from the analogy of a like case acknowledged by themselves, in which the reason of the thing was the same; even from the analogy of God's method and manner of proceeding in the giving of those very original promises to the patriarchs, upon which this prejudice of the Jews was founded, "Tell me," says he, "ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" Gal. iv. 21. &c. That is, will ye not attend to the analogy of God's method of proceeding, in those very promises on which ye depend? "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman; but he who was of the bond-woman was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman was by promise: which things are an allegory," &c. That is to say, even originally, the promise was not made to all the children of Abraham, but to Isaac only: which was, from the beginning, a very plain declaration, that God did not principally intend his promise to take place in Abraham's descendants according to the flesh, Rom. ix. 8. but in those who, by a faith or fidelity like his, were in a truer and higher sense the children and followers of that great father of the faithful. In like manner, and for the same reason, the promise was not made, Rom. ix. 10. to both the sons of Isaac, but to Jacob only: and, among the posterity of Jacob, all "were not Israel, which were of Israel." Rom. ix. 6. What ye yourselves therefore, saith St. Paul, Gal. iv. 21. who are so desirous to be under the Mosaic law, cannot but acknowledge to have been originally and always true, the same is true now, ver. 29. What was true concerning the two sons of Abraham, and likewise concerning the two sons of Isaac, who were the patriarchs with whom God's covenant was originally made, is, by continuance of the same analogy, true concerning the covenant established with the families, and with the nation of the Jews, descended from those patriarchs; it is true concerning the church of God, through all successive ages; it is true concerning the Jerusalem which now is, and concerning that which is to come, Gal. iv. 25. As, ver. 22. "Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by
" a free

“a free woman:” and as, ver. 30. the son of the bond-maid, though, according to the flesh, no less truly his natural descendant than the other, yet was not to be co-heir with him who, by the promise of God, was appointed to inherit: so says the apostle, “the Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children,” ver. 25, 26. the visible earthly church which received the external ceremonial law from mount Sinai; is not, by that outward general denomination, intitled to the eternal favour of God; but “the Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all,” of all who by true faith and sincere obedience are pleasing to God; this heavenly Jerusalem, this spiritual invisible church or city of the living God, it is, to which all the promises of God, made in all ages to his church, are, in reality, originally and finally appropriated.

From this remarkable instance, it is well worth observing by the way, that when the apostles are supposed to argue with the Jews *ad hominem*, the meaning is, that arguments alledged by the apostles to the Jews in particular differ from arguments brought to the Gentiles, in this; not that they were at any time arguments drawn from things acknowledged by the Jews, and in themselves otherwise inconclusive; but that they were drawn, justly and strongly, from things well known among the Jews, though what the Gentiles were strangers to.

The correspondences of types and antitypes, though they are not themselves proper proofs of the truth of a doctrine, yet they may be very reasonable confirmations of the foreknowledge of God, of the uniform view of Providence under different dispensations, of the analogy, harmony, and agreement between the Old Testament and the New. The words in the law, concerning one particular kind of death, Deut. xxi. 23. “He that is hanged, is accursed of God.” can hardly be conceived to have been put in upon any other account than with a view and foresight to the application made of it by St. Paul, Gal. iii. 13. The analogies between “the Paschal lamb,” and “the lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world;” Exod. xii. 22. 46. John i. 29. xix. 36. Rev. i. 5; between “the Egyptian bondage,” and “the tyranny of sin;” between “the baptism of the Israelites in the sea and in the cloud,” 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. and “the baptism of Christians;” between “the passage” through “the wilderness,” and through “the present world;” Heb. iii. 15—9. iv. 1, 2, 3. 1 Cor. x. 1—11; between Jesus [Joshua] bringing the people into “the promised land,” and Jesus Christ being “the captain of salvation” to believers, Heb. iv. 8, 9. between “the Sabbath of rest” promised to “the people of God” in the earthly Canaan, and “the eternal rest” promised in “the heavenly Canaan,” Heb. i. 5. ix. 1. between “the liberty granted from the time of the death of the high priest,” to him that had fled into “a city of refuge,” and “the redemption” purchased by “the death of Christ,” Numb. xxxv. 25. 28. between “the high priest entering into the holy place every year with blood of others,” Heb. ix. 25. and Christ’s “once entering with
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his own blood into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God "for us," Heb. ix. 12. 24. 26: these (I say) and innumerable other analogies, between "the shadows of things to come," Col. ii. 17. "the shadows of good things to come," Heb. x. 1. "the shadows of heavenly things," Heb. viii. 5: "the figures for the time then present," Heb. ix. 9. "the patterns of things in the heavens," Heb. ix. 23. and "the heavenly things themselves;" Heb. ix. 23. cannot, without the force of strong prejudice, be conceived to have happened by mere chance, without any foresight or design. There are no such analogies; much less such series of analogies, found in the books of mere enthusiastic writers, much less of enthusiastic writers living in such remote ages from each other. It is much more credible and reasonable to suppose (what St Paul affirms) that "these things were our examples;" 1 Cor. x. 6. and that, in the uniform course of God's government of the world, "all these things happened unto them of old for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come," viii. 11. And hence arises that aptness of similitude, in the application of several legal performances to the morality of the Gospel; that it can very hardly be supposed, not to have been originally intended. As, "know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." 1 Cor. v. 6, 7, 8. Again, "We are THE circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. iii. 3. And, "You being dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath God quickened together with Christ;—in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by" [the Christian, the spiritual circumcision] "the circumcision of Christ." Col. ii. 13. 11. And, "Do ye not know, that they which—wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel.—Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn: Doth God take care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes?" 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. 8, 9, 10. 1 Tim. v. 18.

Some application of texts out of the Old Testament are mere allusions. That is, nothing more is intended to be affirmed, than that the words spoken in the Old Testament are as truly and as justly applicable to the present occasion, as they were to that upon which they were originally spoken. Of this kind, I think, is that of St. Matthew: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard,

“lamentation and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping
 “for her children, and would not be comforted, because they
 “are not.” Matth. ii. 17. Jer. xxxi. 15. Thus likewise St. Paul:
 “I mean not that other men be eased, and you burdened: but by
 “an equality; As it is written, He that had gathered much, had
 “nothing over; and he that had gathered little, had no lack.”
 2 Cor. viii. 13, 14, 15. Again, what Isaiah says of the Jews (sup-
 posing he did not speak there prophetically, though the solemnity
 of the introduction makes it much more reasonable to believe he
 did; but supposing he spake of the Jews in his own time), “Go
 “and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and
 “see ye indeed, but perceive not: make the heart of this people
 “fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they
 “see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with
 “their heart, and convert and be healed;” Isai. vi. 9. was ful-
 filled, was verified, was equally true, equally applicable to the
 Jews, in our Saviour’s days, Matth. xiii. 14. Of the same kind
 seems to be St. Matthew’s explication, ch. viii. 17, of that pas-
 sage in Isaiah; “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our
 “sorrows,” Isai. liii. 4. The sense of the words in the prophecy is,
 what St. Peter expresses; “Who his ownself bare our sins in his
 “own body on the tree,” 1 Pet. ii. 24; and the apostle to the
 Hebrews, “Christ was once offered, to bear the sins of many.”
 Heb. ix. 28. Yet St. Matthew says, “He healed all that were
 “sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the
 “prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sick-
 “nesses.” Matth. viii. 16, 17. His meaning is, Christ healed dis-
 eases in such a manner, that even in that sense also the words of
 Isaiah were literally verified. To give but one instance more.
 “All these things” (saith the evangelist) “spake Jesus unto the
 “multitude in parables,—that it might be fulfilled which was
 “spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables,
 “I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation
 “of the world,” Matth. xiii. 34, 35; that is, the words (Psal.
 lxxviii. 2.) of the Psalmist were as properly, as truly, and as justly
 applicable to the things which our Lord spake, as to the occasion
 upon which they were originally spoken by the Psalmist.

To such as are accustomed only to modern languages, and under-
 stand not the nature of the Hebrew and Syriac speech, it may seem
 very surprising, that in the two last-mentioned passages the
 citations are introduced with these words, “that it might be ful-
 “filled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, &c.” Matth. viii.
 17. xiii. 35. But all who understand those languages well
 know, that the phrases answering to these expressions, *ἵνα πληρωθῇ*,
 “that it might be fulfilled;” mean nothing more than, “hereby
 “was verified,” or, “so that hereby was verified,” or the like.
 And they who understand not the languages may yet easily apprehend
 this, by considering the nature and force of some other ex-
 pressions of the like kind. As, “They prophecy a lie in my name,
 “THAT

“THAT I might drive you out.” Jer. xxvii. 15. “Behold, I send unto you prophets,—THAT upon you may come all the righteous blood.” Matth. xxiii. 34, 35. With many other passages of the same nature: where the words, “THAT such a thing may be,” do not at all signify the intention, “To the end that it may be;” but merely the event, “So that it will be.” In the case of the most direct and express prophecies of all; the words, “This was done, THAT it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,” Exod. xi. 9. xvii. 3. Numb. xxii. 14. Psal. li. 4. Jer. vii. 18. Matth. x. 34, 35. never do, never possibly can signify literally, that the thing was done for that end, that the prophecy might be fulfilled; because, on the reverse, the reason why any thing is predicted always is, because the thing was (before that prediction) appointed to be done. Much more, therefore, in the case of indirect prophecies; the words, “This was done, THAT it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,” necessarily and evidently mean this only, that the thing was so done, as that thereby or therein was verified what the prophet had spoken.

20. It cannot, therefore, with any sort of reason or justice, be inferred from such citations out of the Old Testament as I have now mentioned, that the apostles either misunderstood or enthusiastically misapplied the writings of the prophets. Nor can any just argument be drawn against the authority of the books of the Old and New Testament from such topics as these; that the copies of the law, in the times of the idolatrous kings of Judah and Israel, were well nigh lost; that some texts cited out of the Old Testament by the writers of the New are not now found in the Old Testament at all; that other texts are read differently in the Old Testament itself from the citations of the same text recorded in the New; and the like. Which things have indeed given occasion to weak and ridiculous writers to invent certain senseless rules or regulations; according to which, men may at any time rightly make what wrong quotations they please. But in truth, the things themselves I am here speaking of are nothing but what must of necessity happen in a long succession of ages.

When “Hilkiah the priest” (in the days of Josiah) “found in the house of the Lord, a book of the law of the Lord, given by Moses,” 2 Chr. xxxiv. 14; it is very probable, indeed, from the circumstances of the history, that copies of the law were then very scarce; and that this found by Hilkiah was, to his surprize, an authentic or original copy. But that the whole should have been at that time a forgery of Hilkiah, is evidently impossible; because the very being and polity of the nation, as well as their religion, was founded upon the acknowledgment of the law of Moses; how much soever idolatrous kings might at certain times have corrupted that religion, and caused the study of the law to have been neglected. And in the very same book, wherein the account is given of this particular fact of Hilkiah’s finding a copy [an authentic copy] of the law; it is expressly and at large recorded, how, in a

foregoing reign, the king “sent to his princes—to teach in the cities” of Judah; and with them he sent Levites and priests;—and they “taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and “taught the people.” 2 Chr. xvii. 7, 8, 9.

That, in length of time, some whole books should have been lost, is nothing wonderful. There are several books expressly cited in the Old Testament, of which we have now nothing remaining. That in the books which remain, there should sometimes, for want of * infallibility in transcribers, happen omissions, transpositions, and various readings, is still less to be wondered at. Nothing, but perpetual miracle, could prevent it. They who have skill to compare, in the original, certain passages in the books of Chronicles with the correspondent places in the books of Kings, or the xviith Psalm with 2 Sam. ch. xxii. which is a transcript of the same Psalm, or the xivth Psalm with the liiid, which are also one and the same Psalm transcribed; and, much more, they who can compare the Septuagint translation with the original, will be able to find instances of these things, and very often also to see plainly how and whence they happened (all which, far from diminishing the authority of the books, are strong arguments of their antiquity, and against their having been forged by Esdras, or any other hand). What wonder then is it, that among the numerous texts cited in the New Testament out of the Old, one or two should now not be found in our present copies of the Old Testament? and that some others should be read differently in the Old Testament, from the citations of the same texts recorded in the New? or how does this at all affect the authority of either; when much the greatest part of the texts cited agree perfectly, either in words, or at least in sense; and the whole series, harmony, analogy, connection, and uniformity of both, compared with the system of natural and moral truths, and with the history of the world and the state of nations, through a long succession of ages from the days of Moses to this present time, shews that the books are not the result of random and enthusiastic imaginations, but of long fore-sight and design? For, the spirit of enthusiasm is very hardly consistent with itself through the writings of one single person. How then is it possible, that for 3000 years together, and pretending too (through all that time) to an uniform series of predictions, it should HAPPEN never to have fallen into such a track of expected events, as the nature and truth of things and the situation of the kingdoms of the world should have rendered absolutely IMPOSSIBLE, and altogether INCAPABLE of any farther, much less of any final, completion?

* In some few places there is reasonable ground for a worse suspicion. As for instance, Psal. xxii. 16. where the sense most evidently shews it ought to be read, and the LXX version shews it anciently was read, כָּאֵרָוּ אוֹרְיָי, “they pierced my hands and my feet;” the Jewish masters, in all their correct Hebrew editions, have written it, כָּאֵרָוּ, “as a lion my hands and my feet.” Which has no tolerable sense at all.

21. I shall conclude this head with pointing at some particular extraordinary prophecies, which deserve to be carefully considered and compared with the events, whether they could possibly have proceeded from chance or from enthusiasm. Some of them are of such a nature as that they can only be judged of by persons learned in history; and these I shall but just mention. Others are obvious to the consideration of the whole world; and with those I shall finish what I think proper at this time to offer upon this subject.

Concerning Babylon, "it was * particularly foretold, that it should be shut up, and besieged by the Medes, Elamites, and Armenians," Isai. xiii. 17. xxi. 2; "that the river should be dried up," Jer. l. 38. li. 36; "that the city should be taken in the time of a feast, while her—mighty men were drunken," Jer. li. 39. 57; which "accordingly came to pass" when "Belshazzar and all his thousand princes who were drunk with him at the feast," were † "slain by Cyrus's soldiers.—Also it was particularly foretold, that God would make the country of Babylon a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; which was accordingly fulfilled by the overflowing and drowning of it, on the breaking down of the great dam in order to take the city." Isai. xiv. 23. Could the correspondence of these events with the predictions be the result of chance? But suppose these predictions were forged after the event: can the following ones also have been written after the event? or, with any reason, be ascribed to chance? "The wild beasts of the desert—shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be NO MORE inhabited for EVER, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, &c." Jer. l. 39. "They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner,—but thou shalt be desolate for EVER, saith the Lord: Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing without an inhabitant:—it shall sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her." Jer. li. 26. 37. 64. "Babylon the glory of kingdoms,—shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah: it shall NEVER be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there: but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there." Isai. i. 19, 20, 21.

Concerning Egypt, was the following prediction forged after the event? or can it, with any reason, be ascribed to chance? "Egypt—shall be a BASE kingdom: it shall be the BASEST of kingdoms, neither shall it exalt itself ANY MORE above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall NO MORE RULE over the nations." Ezek. xxix. 14, 15.

Concerning Tyre, the prediction is no less remarkable; "I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to

* Prideaux, Connexion, part I. book II. p. 67, edit. fol.

† Cyropædia, lib VII.

“spread nets upon; thou shalt be built NO MORE;—thou shalt be “NO MORE,” Ezek. xxvi. 14, 21; “the merchants among the “people shall hiss at thee, thou shalt be a terror, and NEVER shalt “be any more.” Ezek. xxvii. 36. “All they that know thee “among the people shall be astonished at thee.” Ezek. xxviii. 19.

The description of the extent of the dominion of that people, who were to possess Judea in the latter days, was it forged after the event? or can it reasonably be ascribed to chance? Dan. xi. 40, 41, 42, 43. He “shall come—with horse-men, and with many ships, and “—shall overflow and pass over: he shall enter also into the glorious land, [and, ver. 45. shall plant the tabernacles of his palace “between the seas in the glorious holy mountain]; and many “countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape out of his “hand, even Edom and Moab and the chief of the children of “Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries, “and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power “over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious “things of Egypt; and the Libyans and Ethiopians [כְּשִׁי] “shall be as his steps.”

When Daniel, in the * vision of Nebuchadnezzar’s image, foretold “Four great successive monarchies,” Dan. ii. 38—44, was this written after the event? or can the congruity of his description with the things themselves, reasonably be ascribed to mere chance?

When the angel says to Daniel; “Seventy weeks † are determined “upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation “for iniquity, &c.” Dan. ix. 24. was this written after the event? or can it reasonably be ascribed to chance, that from “the seventh “year of Artaxerxes the king,” Ezra vii. 6, 7, 8. (when Ezra went up from Babylon—unto Jerusalem with a commission to restore the government of the Jews) to the “death of Christ,” [from ann. Nabonass. 290, to ann. Nabonass. 780], should be precisely 490 [70 weeks of] years?

When the angel tells Daniel, ch. ix. 25. that “threescore “and two weeks the street [of Jerusalem] shall be built again, “and the wall, even in troublous times [ובצוק חמתי], but “this in troublous times,” not like those that should be under Messiah the prince, when he should come to reign]; was this written after the event? or can it reasonably be ascribed to chance, that from the ‡ “twenty-eighth of Artaxerxes,” when the walls were finished, to the birth of Christ [from ann. Nabonass. 311 to ann. Nabonass. 745], should be precisely 434 [62 weeks of] years?

When Daniel further says: “And he shall confirm [or, never- “theless he shall confirm] the covenant with many for one week,”

* The same of which was so early spread, that Ezekiel, who was contemporary with Daniel, plainly alludes to it, when he says of the prince of Tyre, ch. xxviii. 3. “Thou “art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret, that they can hide from thee.”

† Weeks, or Septenaries, of years. Compare Gen. xxix. 27. Numb. xiv. 34. Ezek. iv. 6.

‡ Τοῖς ἱεροσολύμοις ἀνακοδόμηθη τὸ τεῖχος, ὃ δὲ ἔργον αὐτοῦ τῆς ἐξέρξε βασιλείας ἔτει, μὴν ἑνέτης· τέλει δὲ τῶν τευχῶν λαβὼν, &c. Josephus, Antiquit. Judaic. lib. XI. cap. 5.

Dan. ix. 27, was this written after the event; or can it reasonably be ascribed to chance, that from the death of Christ (anno Dom. 35) to the command given first to St. Peter to preach to Cornelius and the Gentiles (anno Dom. 40) should be exactly seven [one week of] years?

When he still adds, "And in the midst of the week [וּחֲצִי הַשָּׁבוּעַ], "and in half a week] he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate," Dan. ix. 27, was this written after the event? or can it with any reason be ascribed to chance, that from Vespasian's marching into Judæa in the spring anno Dom. 67, to the taking of Jerusalem by Titus in the autumn anno Dom. 70, should be [half a septenary of years] three years and a half?

When the same Daniel foretells a tyrannical power, which should "wear out the saints of the Most High, and they should be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time," Dan. vii. 25, and again, "For * a time, times, and a half," Dan. xii. 7; (which can no way be applied to the short persecution of Antiochus, because these prophecies are expressly declared to be "for many days," Dan. viii. 26; concerning "what shall befall thy people in the latter days, for yet the vision is for many days," Dan. x. 14; concerning "the time of the end," ch. viii. 17; "what shall be in the last end of the indignation," ch. viii. 19; concerning those who "shall fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil, many days," ch. xi. 33; "to try them, even to the time of the end, because it is yet for a time appointed," ch. xi. 35; concerning "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation," ch. xii. 1; the time "when God shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people," ch. xii. 7; "the time of the end, till which the words are closed up and sealed," ch. xii. 9; "to which the prophet is commanded to shut up his words, and seal the book, for many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," ch. xii. 4; even "the end, till which Daniel was to rest, and then stand in his lot at the end of the days," ch. xii. 13): when Daniel, I say, foretells such a tyrannical power, to continue such a determined period of time; and St. John prophecies, that "the Gentiles should tread the holy city under foot forty and two months," Rev. xi. 2; which is exactly the same period of time with that of Daniel; and again, that "two witnesses, clothed in sackcloth, should prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days," Rev. xi. 3; which is again exactly the very same period of time; and again, that "the woman which fled into the wilderness" from persecution, should continue there "a thousand two hundred and threescore days," Rev. xii. 6; and again, that she should "fly into the wilderness, for a time and times, and half a time," Rev. xii. 14; which is still the very same period; and again, that a

* Three years and a half, or 1260 days, is, according to the analogy of all the fore-mentioned numbers, 1260 years.

wild beast, a tyrannical power, "to whom it was given to make war with the saints, and to overcome them," ch. xiii. 7. was "to continue forty and two months*," ch. xiii. 5, (still the very same period of time), and to have "power over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, so that all that dwell upon the earth should worship him," ch. xiii. 7, 8: is it credible, or possible, that ignorant and enthusiastical writers should, by mere chance, hit upon such coincidences of [occult] numbers; especially since St. John could not possibly take the numbers from Daniel, if he understood Daniel to mean nothing more than the short persecution of Antiochus? And if he did understand Daniel to mean a much longer and greater and more remote tyranny, which John himself prophesied of as in his time still future; then the wonder is still infinitely greater, than in those early times, when there was not the least footstep in the world of any such power as St. John distinctly describes, (but which now is very conspicuous, as I shall presently observe more particularly); it should ever enter into the heart of man to conceive so much as the possibility of such a power, sitting, not upon the pavilion of Heathen persecutors, but expressly (2 Thess. ii. 4.) in the temple and upon the seat of God himself.

But these prophecies, which either relate to particular places, or depend upon the computation of particular periods of time, are (as I said) of such a nature, as that they cannot be judged of but by persons skilled in history. There are some others more general, running through the whole Scripture, and obvious to the consideration of the whole world.

For instance: it was foretold by Moses, that, when the Jews forsook the true God, they should be "removed into all the kingdoms of the earth," Deut. xxviii. 25; should be "scattered among the Heathen," Levit. xxvi. 33; "among the nations," Deut. iv. 27; "among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other," Deut. xxviii. 64; should "there be left few in number among the Heathen," Deut. iv. 27; and pine away in their iniquity in their enemies lands," Levit. xxvi. 39; and should "become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations," Deut. xxviii. 37; and that "among these nations

* There has prevailed among learned men a very important error, as if the 1260 days (or years) here spoken of took their beginning from the rise of the tyranny here described. Whereas, on the contrary, the words of Daniel are express, that, not from the time of his rise, but after his having made war with the saints, and from the time of their being given into his hand, should be a time, and times, and the dividing of time, ch. vii. 24, 25. And St. John no less expressly says, that the time, not of the two witnesses prophesying (for in part of that time they had great power) but of their prophesying in sackcloth, should be a thousand two hundred and threescore days, Rev. xi. 3. And the persecuted woman, after her flight, was to be actually in the wilderness (and in her place there, of riches and honour) "a thousand two hundred and threescore days," ch. xii. 6. Wherefore also the forty and two months (the very same period), during which time power was given unto the wild beast to continue (in the original it is *μενῆσαι*, "to do what he pleased," Rev. xiii. 5), evidently ought not to be reckoned from his rise, or from the time when the ten kings (ch. xvii. 12) received power with him, but from the time of his having totally overcome the saints, and of his being "worshipped by all that dwell upon the earth," ch. xiii. 7, 8.

"they

“ they should find no ease, neither should the sole of their foot have
 “ rest; but the Lord should give them a trembling heart, and fail-
 “ ing of eyes, and sorrow of mind,” Deut. xxviii. 65; and “ send
 “ a faintness into their hearts, in the lands of their enemies; so
 “ that the sound of a shaken leaf should chase them,” Levit. xxvi.
 36. Had any thing like this, in Moses’s time, ever happened to any
 nation? or was there in nature any probability, that any such
 thing should ever happen to any people? That, when they were
 conquered by their enemies, and led into captivity, they should nei-
 ther continue in the place of their captivity, nor be swallowed up
 and lost among their conquerors, but be scattered among all the na-
 tions of the world, and hated by all nations for many ages, and yet
 continue a people? Or could any description of the Jews, written
 at this day, possibly be a more exact and lively picture of the state
 they have now been in for many ages, than this prophetic descrip-
 tion given by Moses more than 3000 years ago?

The very same thing is in like manner continually predicted
 through all the following prophets; that God would “ scatter them
 “ among the Heathen,” Jer. ix. 16. Ezek. iv. 13; that he would
 “ cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth,”
 Jer. xv. 4. xxiv. 9. xxix. 18. xxxiv. 17; that he would “ scatter
 “ them into all the winds,” Ezek. v. 10, 12; and “ disperse
 “ them through the countries of the Heathen,” Ezek. xx. 23.
 xxii. 15; that he would “ sift them among all nations, like as
 “ corn is sifted in a sieve,” Amos ix. 9; that “ in all the kingdoms
 “ of the earth, whither they should be driven, they should be a
 “ reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, and an astonish-
 “ ment, and an hissing,” Jer. xxiv. 9. xxix. 18; and that they
 should “ abide MANY DAYS without a king, and without a prince,
 “ and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an
 “ ephod, and without teraphim.” Hos. iii. 4. And here, concerning
 the predictions of Ezekiel, it is remarkable in particular, that they
 being spoken in the very time of the Babylonian captivity (see Ezek.
 i. I. iii. II. xi. 24) it is therefore evident from the time of his pro-
 phesying, as well as from the nature and description of the thing
 itself, that he must needs be understood of that latter “ capti-
 “ vity into all places,” Tobit xiv. 5, which was to happen after
 the “ fulfilling the time of that age” wherein God was first to
 “ bring them again” (out of the Babylonian captivity) “ into the
 “ land where they should build a temple,” but not like to that
 which afterwards (after their final return) should “ be built for ever
 “ with a glorious building.” The forecited prophecies (I say)
 must of necessity be understood of that wide and long dispersion,
 which in the New Testament also is expressly mentioned by our
 Saviour, Luke xxi. 24; and by St. Paul, Rom. xi. 25.

It is also, further, both largely and distinctly predicted, as well by
 Moses himself, as by all the following prophets; that, notwith-
 standing this unexampled dispersion of God’s people, “ yet, for all
 “ that, when they be in the land of their enemies, God will not
 “ destroy

“destroy them utterly,” Levit. xxvi. 44; but, “when they shall
 “call to mind among all the nations whither God has driven them,
 “and shall return unto the Lord, he will turn their captivity, and
 “gather them from all the nations,—from the outmost parts of
 “heaven,—even in the **LATTER** days,” Deut. xxx. 1, 2, 3, 4.
 iv. 30: that “though he makes a full end of all other nations,
 “yet will he not make a full end of them,” Jer. xxx. 11; but
 “a remnant of them shall be preserved, and return out of all coun-
 “tries whither God has driven them,” Is. x. 21, 22. vi. 13. Jer.
 xxiii. 3. Ezek. vi. 8, 9: that he “will sift the house of Israel among
 “all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve; yet shall not the least
 “grain fall upon the earth,” Amos ix. 9: that “the Lord shall
 “set his hand again the second time, to recover the remnant of his
 “people,—and shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall
 “assemble the out-casts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed
 “of Judah, from the four corners of the earth,” Is. xi. 11—16.
 xxvii. 13: for “I will bring thy seed from the East,” saith the
 Lord, “and gather thee from the West; I will say to the North,
 “give up; and to the South, keep not back; bring my sons from
 “far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth,” Is. xliii. 5, 6.
 Jer. xvi. 15. xxiii. 7, 8. xxxi. 8—12. 32. 37, &c. Ezek. xi. 15,
 16, 17. 20. 41. xxviii. 25. xxxiv. 12. 13. xxxvi. 24. xxxvii. 21.
 xxxix. 27, 28, 29: “Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gen-
 “tiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring
 “thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon
 “their shoulders,” Isai. xlix. 22. lx. 8, 9, 10. lxvi. 20: “for a
 “small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercy will
 “I gather thee: in a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a
 “moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on
 “thee;” Isai. liv. 7, and the whole chapter. And that these pro-
 phecies might not be applied to the return from the 70 years
 captivity in Babylon (which moreover was not a dispersion into all
 nations), they are expressly referred to the **LATTER** days, not only
 by Moses, Deut. iv. 30, but by Hosea, ch. iii. 4, 5, who lived
 long after “(For the children of Israel shall abide **MANY** **DAYS**
 “without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice;
 “**AFTERWARD** they shall return, and seek the Lord their God,
 “and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness
 “in the **LATTER** **DAYS**);” and by Ezekiel, who lived in the cap-
 tivity itself; “**After MANY** **DAYS**” [speaking of those who should
 oppose the return of the Israelites] “thou shalt be visited; in
 “the **LATTER** **YEARS** thou shalt come into the land;—upon the
 “people that are gathered out of the nations;—in that day, when
 “my people of Israel dwelleth safely;—thou shalt come up against
 “them,—it shall be in the **LATTER** **DAYS**.” Ezek. xxxviii. 8. 12.
 xiv. 16. These predictions, therefore, necessarily belong to that
 age, when “the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled,” Luke
 xxi. 24; and “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,” Rom.
 xi. 25. 29. And that, through all the changes which have hap-
 pened

pened in the kingdoms of the earth, from the days of Moses to the present time, which is more than 3000 years, nothing should have happened, to prevent the POSSIBILITY of the accomplishment of these prophecies; but, on the contrary, the state of the Jewish and Christian nations at this day should be such as renders them easily capable, not only of a figurative, but even of a literal completion in every particular, if the will of God be so; this (I say) is a miracle, which hath nothing parallel to it in the phænomena of nature.

Another instance, no less extraordinary, is as follows: Daniel foretells “a kingdom upon the earth, which shall be divers from
“all kingdoms,” Dan. vii. 23; “divers from all that were before
“it,” ver. 7; “exceeding dreadful,” ver. 19; “and shall devour the
“whole earth,” ver. 23; that, among the powers into which this kingdom shall be divided, there shall arise one power, “divers from
“the rest,” ver. 24, who, “shall subdue unto himself THREE of
“the first powers,” ver. 8. 20. 24; and he shall have “a mouth
“speaking very great things, and a look more stout than his
“fellows,” ver. 8. 20. He shall “make war with the saints, and
“prevail against them,” ver. 21. “And he shall speak great words
“against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most
“High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given
“into his hands,” ver. 25, for a long season; even till “the judgement shall sit, and—the kingdom under the whole heaven shall
“be given to the people of the saints of the Most High,” ver. 26, 27.
“He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every God, and
“shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods,” Dan. xi. 36, &c.—neither shall he regard * the God of his fathers, nor † the desire of women, nor regard any God; for he shall magnify himself above all. And in his estate, shall he honour ‡ the God of forces; and § a God whom his fathers knew not, shall he honour.—Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange God, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.” Suppose now all this to be spoken by Daniel, of nothing more than the short persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes; which that it cannot be, I have shewn || above: But suppose it were, and that it was all forged after the event; yet this cannot be the case of St. Paul and St. John, who describe exactly a like power, and in like words; speaking of things to come in the latter days, of things still future in their time, and of which there was then no footsteps, no appearance in the world. “The day of Christ,” saith St. Paul, 2 Thessl. ii. 3, &c. “shall not come, except there come a falling-away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he,

* “The God of gods,” as in the foregoing verse.

† “Forbidding to marry,” 1 Tim. iv. 3.

‡ “Gods-protectors,” as it is in the margin of the Bible; or “Saints-protectors.”

§ “Changing times and laws,” ch. vii. 25, setting up new religions.

|| Page 279.

“ as God, sitteth * in the temple of God, shewing himself that he
 “ is God:—whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all
 “ power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness
 “ of unrighteousness.” Again: “ The spirit speaketh expressly,
 “ that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving
 “ heed to seducing spirits, and † doctrines of devils;—forbidding
 “ to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, &c.” 1 Tim.
 iv. 1, &c. St. John in like manner prophesies of a wild beast, or
 tyrannical power, to whom was given great authority, and “ a
 “ mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies: and he opened
 “ his mouth in blasphemy against God: and it was given unto
 “ him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and
 “ power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations;
 “ and all that dwell upon the earth, shall worship him.—And he
 “ that exerciseth his power before him,—doth great wonders,—
 “ and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of
 “ those miracles which he had power to do.—And he causeth—
 “ that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the
 “ name of the beast.” Rev. xiii. 2. 5, 6, 7, 8. 12, 13, 14. 16, 17.
 And the kings of the earth “ have one mind, and shall give their
 “ power and strength unto the beast;—even peoples, and multitudes,
 “ and nations, and tongues.—For God hath put in their hearts”
 [in the hearts of the kings] “ to fulfill his will, and to agree, and
 “ give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall
 “ be fulfilled.” Rev. xvii. 13. 15. 17. The name of the person in
 whose hands the reins or principal direction of the exercise of
 this power is lodged, Rev. xvii. 3. 7, is “ Mystery, Babylon the
 “ great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth,”
 Rev. xvii. 5: “ With whom the kings of the earth ‡ have com-
 “ mitted fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been
 “ made drunk with the wine of her fornication,” ver. 2: and she
 herself is “ drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood
 “ of the martyrs of Jesus,” Rev. xvii. 6; and by her § forceries are
 “ all nations deceived: and in her is found the blood of prophets,
 “ and of saints, and of all that are slain upon the earth.” Rev.
 xviii. 23, 24. And this person [the political person], to whom
 these titles and characters belong, “ is that great city,” Rev. xvii.
 18. (standing “ upon seven mountains,” ver. 9.) “ which reign-
 “ eth over the kings of the earth.”

If, in the days of St. Paul and St. John, there was any footstep of
 such a sort of power as this in the world; or, if there ever had been
 any such power in the world; or if there was then any appearance
 of probability, that could make it enter into the heart of man to
 imagine, that there ever could be any such kind of power in the
 world, much less in “ the temple or church of God,” 2 Thess. ii. 4;

* It is therefore a Christian (not an Infidel) power, that he here speaks of.

† Doctrines concerning Demons, that is, ghosts or souls of (good or bad) men departed.

‡ Have been led into idolatrous practices.”

§ *Θαυμασία* [*σοφίᾳ θαυμασίᾳ*], “ methods of making men religious without virtue.”
 and,

and, if there be not now such a power actually and conspicuously exercised in the world; and if any picture of this power, drawn after the event, can now describe it more plainly and exactly than it was originally described in the words of the prophecy; then may it with some degree of plausibleness be suggested, that the prophecies are nothing more than enthusiastic imaginations.

OF THE TESTIMONY OF OUR SAVIOUR'S DISCIPLES, AS AN EVIDENCE OF THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION.

Thirdly; the chief evidence of the facts on which the truth and certainty of the Christian revelation depends, to us who live now at this distance of time, is the testimony of our Saviour's followers; which, in all its circumstances, was the most credible, certain, and convincing evidence, that was ever given to any matter of fact in the world.

WHAT THINGS ARE REQUISITE TO MAKE THE TESTIMONY OF OUR SAVIOUR'S DISCIPLES A COMPLETE EVIDENCE.

To make the testimony of our Saviour's followers a sufficient evidence to us in this case, there can be required but these three things. 1. That it be certain, the apostles could not be imposed upon themselves. 2. That it be certain, they neither had, nor could have, any design to impose upon others. And, 3. That it be certain, their testimony is truly conveyed down to us unto this day. All which things are indeed abundantly certain, and clear enough to satisfy any reasonable and unprejudiced person.

THAT THE APOSTLES COULD NOT BE IMPOSED UPON THEMSELVES.

For, 1. That the apostles could not be imposed upon themselves, is evident from what has been already said concerning the nature and number and publickness of our Saviour's miracles. They conversed from the beginning with our Saviour himself; they heard with their ears, and saw with their eyes; they "looked upon," and they "handled with their hands the word of life," as St. John expresses it, 1 John i. 1. They saw all the prophecies of the Old Testament precisely fulfilled in his life and doctrine, his sufferings and death. They saw him confirm what he taught with such mighty and evident miracles, as his bitterest and most malicious enemies could not but confess to be supernatural, even at the same time that they obstinately blasphemed the Holy Spirit that worked them. They saw him alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs; he appearing, not only to one or two, but to all the eleven, several times, and once to above five hundred together. And this, not merely in a transient manner; but they conversed with him familiarly for no less than forty days, and at last they beheld him ascend visibly into heaven; and soon after, they received the spirit according to his promise. These were such sensible demonstrations of his being a teacher sent from heaven, and consequently that his doctrine was an immediate and express revelation of the will of God; that if the apostles, even though they had been men of the

weakest

weakest judgements and strongest imaginations that can be supposed, could be all and every one of them deceived in all these several instances; men can have no use of their senses, nor any possible proof of any facts whatsoever; nor any means to distinguish the best attested truths in the world from enthusiastic imaginations.

2. THAT THE APOSTLES COULD HAVE NO DESIGN OF IMPOSING UPON OTHERS.

It is certain, the apostles neither had nor could have any design of imposing upon others. This is evident both from the nature of the things they did and suffered, and from the characters of the persons themselves. They confirmed what they taught by signs and miracles; they lived according to the doctrine they preached, though manifestly contrary to all the interests and pleasures of the present world; and, which deceivers can never be supposed to do, they died with all imaginable cheerfulness and joy of mind, for the testimony of their doctrine, and the confirmation of their religion. This, I say, is what deceivers can never possibly be supposed to do. For, it is very remarkable, the apostles did not lay down their lives for their opinions, (which enthusiasts may possibly be supposed to do), but in attestation to facts of their own knowledge. They were innocent and plain men, men that had no bad ends to serve, nor preferment to hope for in the world. Their religion itself taught them to expect not dominion and glory, not the praise of men, not riches and honour, not power and ease, not pleasure nor profit; but poverty and want, trouble and vexation, persecution and oppression, imprisonments, banishments, and death. These things are not the marks and tokens of impostors. Besides, the success and event of their undertaking; that plain and illiterate men should be able to preach their doctrine to many different nations of different languages, and prevail also in establishing the belief of it; that they should all agree exactly in their testimony, and none of them be prevailed upon either by hopes or fears to desert their companions and discover their imposture, if there had been any; these things plainly shew, that their doctrine was more than human, and not a contrivance to impose upon the world. This argument is excellently urged by Eusebius: "Is it a thing possible to be conceived," saith he*, "that deceivers and unlearned men, men that understood no other language but their mother-tongue, should ever think of attempting so extravagant a thing, as to travel over all nations? and not only so, but that they should be able also to accomplish their design, and establish their doctrine in

* Κακέινω σὲ πῶς ὁ μερὶς ἐκπλήξεις, τὸ πλάνης ἀνδρας καὶ ἰδιώτας, μήτε λαλεῖν μήτε ἀκείειν πλεόν τῆς πάρις φωνῆς ἐπισταμένους, μὴ μόνον διανοηθῆναι τοιμῆσαι παρελθεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν ἀπάντων περίοδον, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρελθόντας κατορθῶσαι τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα; Σκέψαι δὲ, ἐποῖόν ἐστι, καὶ τὸ μηδὲνα μηδαμῇ διάφωνον ἐξεργεῖν περὶ τῶν πράξεων τοῦ Ἰησοῦ λόγον· εἰ γὰρ ἐπὶ πάντων ἀμφιγνομένων πραγμάτων, ἐν τε τοῖς κατὰ νόμους δικαστηρίοις, καὶ ἐν ταῖς κοιναῖς ἀμφισβηλήσεσι, τῶν μαρτύρων συμφωνία κυροῖ τὸ ἀμφιγνούμενον· πῶς ἂν ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἐπὶ τῶνδε συσταίη, δώδεκα μὲν ὄντων Ἀποστόλων, ἐξ ἡκομήκοντα δὲ Μαθητῶν, μυρίη τὴν πλῆθος τῶν ἐλθόντων ἀπ' ἀπάντων θαυμαστὴν συμφωνίαν ἐπιδηδεγμένους, καὶ μαρτυροῦσάντων γὰρ τοῖς ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ πεπραγμένοις, ἃ καὶ ἀνιθεύει, διὰ δὲ βασιλέων ὑπομονῆς, καὶ πάσης αἰκίας καὶ θανάτου; Euseb. Demonstrat. Evang. lib. III. cap. 2.

all parts of the world? Consider moreover how remarkable a thing it is, that they should in no respect disagree one from another in the account they gave of the actions of Christ. For if in all questions of fact, and in all trials at law, and in all ordinary disputes, the agreement of several witnesses is always accounted sufficient to determine satisfactorily the matter in question; is it not an abundant evidence of the truth in this case, that twelve apostles, and seventy disciples, and innumerable other believers, have borne witness to the actions of Christ, with the most exact and perfect agreement among themselves; and not only so, but have endured also all kinds of torments, and even death itself, to confirm their testimony?" Again; "that illiterate men," saith he*, "should preach the name of Christ in all parts of the world; some of them in Rome itself, the imperial city; others, in Persia; others, in Armenia; others, in Parthia; others, in Scythia; others, in India and the furthest parts of the world; and others, beyond the sea, in the British isles; this I cannot but think to be a thing far exceeding the power of man; much more, the power of ignorant and unlearned men; and still much more, the power of cheats and deceivers." And again: "no one of them," saith † he, "being ever terrified at the torments and deaths of others, forsook his companions, or ever preached contrary to them, and detected the forgery. Nay, on the contrary, that one, who did forsake his master in his life-time, and betray him to his enemies, being self-condemned, destroyed himself with his own hands." And much more to the same purpose may be found excellently said by the same author, in the seventh chapter of the third book of his *Demonstratio Evangelica*.

3. THAT THE APOSTLES TESTIMONY HATH BEEN TRULY CONVEYED DOWN TO US.

It is very certain, that the Apostles testimony concerning the works and doctrine of Christ, is truly and without corruption conveyed down to us, even unto this day. For they left this their testimony in their writings: which writings have been delivered down to us by an uninterrupted succession through all intermediate ages. Their books were all translated very early into several languages, and dispersed through all parts of the world; and have most of them been acknowledged to be the genuine writings of those whose names they bear, even by the bitterest enemies of Christianity in all ages. Passages, containing the most material doctrines, have been cited out of them by numberless authors, who lived in every age

* Κηρύττειν δ' ἀγένηκας ἄνδρας εἰς πᾶν τὸ τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἔννομα, καὶ τοὺς μὲν αὐτῶν τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχὴν καὶ αὐτὴν τε τὴν βασιλικὴν πόλιν νεύμασθαι· τὰς δὲ τὴν Περσῶν, τὰς δὲ τὴν Ἀρμενίων, ἑτέρας δὲ τὸ Παρθῶν ἔθνη, καὶ αὐ πάλιν τὸ Σκυθῶν, τινὰς δὲ ἤδη καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὰ τῆς δικημένης ἐλθεῖν τὰ ἄκρα, ἐπὶ τε τὴν Ἰνδοῦ φθάσαι χώραν, καὶ ἑτέρας ὑπὲρ τὴν Ὠκεανὸν παρελθεῖν ἐπὶ τὰς καλημένας Βρετανικὰς νήσους· ταῦτα ἢ ἐτ' ἔγω γε ἠγῶμαι κατὰ ἀνθρώπων εἶναι, μή τι γε κατὰ εὐτελεῖς καὶ ἰδιώτας, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ πλάνους καὶ γόητας. Id. *ibid.* cap. 7.

† Οὐδεὶς τε αὐτῶν πώποτε τὰ συμβῆναι τοῖς περιανηρημένοις τρέσας, ἐξέστη τῆς ἐταιρίας, ὅθ' ἀνέκλυσε τοῖς ἄλλοις, εἰς φῶς ἀγαγὼν τὰ συζητημένα· Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ ζῶντα περιδύνας τολμήσας αὐτὸν, αὐτοχειρία καὶ ἐαυτοῦ παραχρῆμα τὴν θύνην ὑπερπάσας. Id. *ibid.*

from the very days of the Apostles unto this time : so that there is no room or possibility of any considerable corruption, such as might in any wise diminish our certainty of the truth of the whole. In sum ; there is no matter of fact in the world, attested in any history, with so many circumstances of credibility, with so many collateral evidences, and in every respect attended with so many marks of truth, as this concerning the doctrine and works of Christ.

OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE BOOKS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

And here, by the way, it is to be observed, that the peculiar authority which we attribute to the books of holy scripture contained in the New Testament, is founded in this ; that they were written or dictated by the Apostles themselves. The Apostles were endued with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost ; and this not only enabled them to preach the doctrine of Christ with power, but also effectually secured them from making any error, mistake, or false representation of it. And the very same authority that by this singular privilege was added to their preaching, it is manifest, ought for the same reasons to be equally attributed to their writings also. Now all the books of the New Testament were either written by the Apostles ; or, which is the very same thing, approved and authorized by them. Most of the books were uncontrovertedly written by the Apostles themselves ; St. Paul having been made one of that number by a commission from heaven, no less visible and sensible, than that which was granted to the rest at Pentecost. And those books which were written by the companions of the Apostles were either dictated or at least approved and authorized by the Apostles themselves. Thus Eusebius expressly tells us, that St. Peter reviewed and approved the gospel of St. Mark, and that * it was this approbation that authorized it to be received by the churches. And Irenæus ; that † what St. Mark wrote was dictated by St. Peter ; and that ‡ the gospel of St. Luke was only a transcript of St. Paul's preaching. And Tertullian in like manner : that § St. Mark was only St. Peter's scribe, and St. Luke St. Paul's. And Eusebius ; that St. John || also reviewed the gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, and confirmed the truth of them. And, to mention no more, the same historian tells us, that (besides some smaller reasons drawn from some mistaken passages in the book itself) the chief reason why the authority of the epistle to the Hebrews was questioned by some was, ** because they thought it not to be written by St. Paul himself.

* *Χρῆσαι τε τὴν γραφὴν εἰς ἔντευξιν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.* Euseb. Hist. lib. II. c. 15.

† “ Marcus discipulus & interpres Petri, quæ a Petro annuntiata erant, edidit.” Irenæ. lib. III. c. 1.

‡ “ Lucas sectator Pauli, quod ab illo predicabatur Evangelium in libro condidit.” Id. ibid. Vide & Tertullian, adv. Marcion. lib. IV.

§ “ Licet & Marcus quod edidit, Petri adfirmetur, cujus interpres Marcus : nam & “ Lucæ digestum, Paulo adscribere solent.” Tertull. adv. Marcion. lib. IV.

|| “ Ἦδη δὲ Μαρκὲ καὶ Λουκᾷ τῶν κατ' αὐτὸς ἐναγγελίων τὴν ἔκδοσιν πεποιημένων, Ἰωάννην ἀπορίξασθαι μὴ φασιν, ἀλήθειαν αὐτοῖς ἐπιμαρτυρήσαντα. Euseb. Hist. lib. III. c. 24.

** *Τινὲς ᾔθετόκασιν τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους, πρὸς τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίας ὡς μὴ Παύλου ἔσαν αὐτὴν ἀντιλέγεσθαι γήσαντες.* Id. lib. III. c. 3.

XV. Lastly; they who will not, by the arguments and proofs beforementioned, be convinced of the truth and certainty of the Christian religion, and be persuaded to make it the rule and guide of all their actions, would not be convinced (so far as to influence their practice and reform their lives) by any other evidence whatsoever; no, not though one should rise on purpose from the dead to endeavour to convince them.

THAT THE EVIDENCE WHICH GOD HAS AFFORDED US OF THE TRUTH OF OUR RELIGION, IS ABUNDANTLY SUFFICIENT.

From what has been said upon the foregoing heads, it is abundantly evident that men are not called upon to believe the Christian religion without very reasonable and sufficient proof; much less are they * required to set up faith in opposition to reason; or to believe any thing for that very reason, because it is incredible. On the contrary, God has given us all the proofs of the truth of our religion, that the nature of the thing would bear, or that were reasonable either for God to give, or men to expect. And unless God should work upon men by such methods as are wholly inconsistent with the design of religion and the nature of virtue and vice, which we are sure he will never do; nothing could have been done more, than has already been done, to convince men of the truth of religion, and to persuade them to embrace their own happiness. And indeed no reasonable man can fail of being persuaded by the evidence we now have. For if, in other cases, we assent to those things as certain and demonstrated, which, if our faculties of judging and reasoning do not necessarily deceive us, do upon the most impartial view appear clearly and plainly to be true; there is the same reason why in moral and religious matters we should look upon those things likewise to be certain and demonstrated, which, upon the exactest and most deliberate judgement we are capable of making, do appear to us to be as clearly and certainly true, as it is certain that our faculties do not necessarily and unavoidably deceive us, in all our judgements concerning the nature of God, concerning the proper happiness of man, and concerning the difference of good and evil. And if, in other cases, we always act without the least hesitation, upon the credit of good and sufficient testimony; and look upon that man as foolish and ridiculous, who sustains great losses, or lets slip great opportunities and advantages in business, only by distrusting the most credible and well-attested things in the world; it is plain there is the same reason, why we should do so also in matters of religion. So that unless our actions be determined by some other thing, than by reason and right judgement, the evidence which we have of the great truths of religion ought to have the same effect upon our lives and actions, as if they were proved to us by any other sort of evidence that could be desired.

* "Αλλοις δὲ, ὅση δύναμις, ἀποδεικτικῶς δι' ἐρωτήσεων καὶ ἀποκρίσεων περὶ σεβασμῶν. Οὐδὲ λέγομεν (τὸ μετὰ χλῆσις ὑπὸ τῶ Κέλση εἰρημένον) ὅτι Πίστευσον, ὅν εἰσηγῆμαι σοι τῶτον εἶναι ἰδὼν Θεῶ, κἄν ἢ δεδωμένῳ ἀτιμώτατα, ἢ κεκορασμένῳ ἀσχεῖρα. — Οὐδὲ φαρμὶ, ταύτη καὶ μάλλον πίστευσον. Orig. adv. Cels. lib. I.

THAT THE CAUSE OF MENS UNBELIEF, IS NOT WANT OF BETTER EVIDENCE TO PROVE THE GREAT TRUTHS OF RELIGION.

It is true; the resurrection of Christ, and his other mighty works, must after all be confessed not to be such ocular demonstrations of the truth of his divine commission to after-generations, as they were to those men who then lived and saw him and conversed with him. But since the matters of fact are as clearly proved to us, as it is possible for any matter of fact at that distance of time to be; since the evidence of this is as great and greater than of most of those things on which men venture the whole of their secular affairs, and on which they are willing to spend all their time and pains; since (I say) the case is thus; he that will rather venture all that he can possibly enjoy, or suffer; he that will run the hazard of losing eternal happiness, and falling into eternal misery, rather than believe the most credible and rational thing in the world, merely because he does not see it with his eyes; it is plain that that man does not disbelieve the thing because he thinks the evidence of it not sufficiently strong, but because it is contrary to some particular vice of his, which makes it his interest that it should not be true; and, for that reason, he might also have disbelieved it, though he had seen it himself. Men may invent what vain pretences they please, to excuse their infidelity and their wickedness; but certainly that man who can despise the authority both of reason and scripture in conjunction; who can elude the plainest evidence of matter of fact; who can be deaf to all the promises and kind admonitions of the gospel, and to all the threatnings and terrible denuntiations of the wrath of God, made known in good measure by the light of nature, and confirmed by the addition of express revelation; certainly (I say) that man must have some other reason for his unbelief, than the pretended want of sufficient evidence. Did men follow the unprejudiced judgement of their own minds, and the impartial dictates of natural reason; the least possibility of obtaining eternal happiness, or the least suspicion of falling into endless misery, would immediately determine them to make it the great study and business of their lives, to obtain the one, and to avoid the other. If then we see men act directly contrary to this natural principle, and almost wholly neglect these things, not only when there is a fair appearance and probability of their being true, which the light of nature itself affords; but also when there is all reasonable evidence given, of their being certainly true, by express revelation in the gospel; is it not very plain that such men are governed, not by reason and the force of evidence, but by some other very different cause of their actions?

BUT THAT WICKEDNESS AND UNGOVERNED LUSTS ARE THE ONLY CAUSES OF OBSTINATE INFIDELITY.

What that cause is, is very apparent from the lives and actions of most of those persons, who pretend want of evidence to be the ground of their infidelity. Their lusts, their appetites, their affections, are interested: they are lovers of vice and debauchery, and
slaves.

slaves to evil habits and customs; and therefore they are not willing to discern the evidence, which would compel them to believe that, which yet they cannot believe with any comfort, so long as they resolve not to part with their beloved vices. Their hearts and affections are habitually fixt upon things here below; and therefore they will not attend to the force of any argument, that would raise their affections to things above: They are enslaved to the sensual pleasures and sinful enjoyments of earth; and therefore they will not hearken to any reasonable conviction; which would persuade them to relinquish these present gratifications, for the future and more spiritual joys of heaven. The love of this present world has blinded their eyes*; and therefore they “receive not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto them; neither can they know them, because they are spiritually discerned,” 1 Cor. ii. 14. In a word: the true and only reason, why “men love darkness rather than light, is, because their deeds are evil.”

AND SO LONG AS MEN ARE UNDER THE DOMINION OF THEIR LUSTS, THEY WOULD NOT BE CONVINCED, THOUGH THE EVIDENCE OF RELIGION WAS EVEN MUCH STRONGER THAN IT IS.

And this reason affords a sufficient account, indeed, why men should be very unwilling to believe the doctrines of Christianity. If they are resolved not to reform their lives, it is no wonder they care not to discern the evidence of those truths, which must needs make them very uneasy in the midst of the enjoyment of all their sinful pleasures. In this case, were the proofs of the truth of our religion much stronger than they are, or than they can be imagined or desired to be; yet still these men would be in the very same case, and perpetually want stronger and stronger evidence. It is true; many men, who now are conscious and willing to acknowledge, that they act contrary to all the reasonable evidence and convictions of religion, are nevertheless very apt to imagine within themselves, that if the great truths of religion were proved to them by some stronger evidence, they should by that means be worked upon to act otherwise than they do. But if the true reason why these men act thus foolishly, is not because the doctrines of religion are not sufficiently evidenced, but because they themselves are, without allowing themselves time for consideration, hurried away by some unruly passions to act directly contrary to all reason and evidence; it is plain (unless God should irresistibly compel them) they might well continue to act as they do, though the evidence of these things were really greater than it is. They are willing fondly to imagine, that if they had lived in our Saviour's time; if they had heard his preaching, and seen his miracles; if they had had the advantage of beholding those mighty works, which he performed for the proof of his divine commission, as the Jews then had; they

* Έτιςι υποκεχυμένως έχουσι τής οφθαλμός, ή μη βλέπωνας τὸ φῶς τῆς ἡλίας. Οὕτω καὶ ἐν, ὃ ἀνθρώποις, έχεις υποκεχυμένως τής οφθαλμός τῆς ψυχῆς σὺ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων καὶ τῶν παρὰ τὸν νόμον τῶν περὶ τῆς. Theophil. Antioch. lib. 1.

should not like them have rejected the counsel of God against themselves, but with all cheerfulness have believed his doctrine, and embraced his religion. They fancy they should immediately have become disciples of Christ; and that the truths which he taught would have had a most powerful influence upon the whole course of their lives. And if their hearts and affections were not set upon this world, more than upon the next; if they valued not the present sinful enjoyments of sense, above the expectation of the glory that shall be revealed; most certainly they would do the same now. But if their hearts be set upon earthly things, and their passions be stronger than all the arguments of reason; if they do indeed so love the pleasures of sin now, as that they cannot persuade themselves by all the motives of religion to live like Christians; we need not doubt to affirm, that they might very well have been in the same case, though they had lived in our Saviour's time. The Jews are a notorious and standing instance, how far prejudice, envy, pride, and affection, are able to prevail over the strongest convictions. When our Saviour began to preach that he was sent from God to instruct them in their duty, they required a sign of him, and they would believe him; but when he had worked so many miracles, that even the world itself could not contain the books if they should all be written, they persisted still in their infidelity. When they saw him hanging upon the cross, and thought themselves secure of him, they said, "Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him;" Matth. xxvii. 42. but when he arose out of the grave, wherein he had lain three days, which was a much greater and more convincing miracle, they grew more hardened and obstinate in their unbelief.

NAY, NOT EVEN THOUGH ONE SHOULD RISE ON PURPOSE FROM THE DEAD TO CONVINCE THEM.

Others there are, who imagine, that if they could but be convinced of the truth of another world, by the appearance of one sent directly from that unknown state, they would immediately become new creatures. But if God should satisfy their unreasonable demands, by sending one on purpose from the dead to convince them; there is little room to doubt, but as they hearkened not to Moses and the prophets, to Christ and his apostles, so neither would they be persuaded by one rising on purpose from the dead. They might indeed be at first surprised and terrified, at the appearance of so unusual and unexpected a messenger; but as wicked men upon a bed of sickness, at the amazing approach of death and eternity, resolve, in the utmost anguish of horror and despair, to amend their lives and forsake their sins; but as soon as the terror is over, and the danger of death past, return to their old habits of sin and folly; so it is more than probable it would be in the present case. Should God send a messenger from the dead, to assure men of the certainty of a future state, and the danger of their present wickedness; as soon as the fright was over, and their present terrible apprehensions ceased,

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It is by no means impossible or improbable that their old vicious habits and beloved sins should again by degrees prevail over them. Some there are in our present age, who pretend to be convinced of the being of spirits, by the powerful demonstration of their own senses; and yet we do not observe, that their lives are more remarkably eminent for exemplary piety, than other good men's, who, being convinced by the rational evidence of the gospel, go on in a sober, constant, and regular exercise of virtue and righteousness.

THAT THEREFORE, TO MAKE MEN JUDGE RIGHTLY OF THE EVIDENCE OF RELIGION, IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY IN THE FIRST PLACE, THAT, LAYING ASIDE PREJUDICE, LUST AND PASSION, THEY BECOME IMPARTIALLY WILLING TO EMBRACE ALL TRUTH, AND TO OBEY ALL REASONABLE OBLIGATIONS, WHICH SHALL AT ANY TIME BE MADE KNOWN TO THEM.

It is not therefore for want of sufficient evidence, that men disbelieve the great truths of religion; but plainly for want of integrity, and of dealing ingenuously and impartially with themselves, that they suffer not the arguments of religion to have that weight and influence upon them, which in the judgement of right reason they ought manifestly to have. So long as men permit their passions and appetites to over-rule their reason, it is impossible they should have due apprehensions in matters of religion, or make any right and true judgement concerning these things. Men that are strongly biased and prejudiced even in worldly affairs, it is well known how hard and difficult it is for them to judge according to reason, and to suffer the arguments and evidences of truth to have their due weight with them. How much more in matters of religion, which concern things future and remote from sense, must it needs be, that men's present interests, lusts, and passions, will pervert their judgement, and blind their understandings! Wherefore, men that pretend to be followers of right reason, if they will judge truly of the reasonableness and credibility of the Christian Revelation, it is absolutely necessary that in the first place, in order to that end, they become impartially willing to embrace whatever shall upon the whole appear to be agreeable to reason and truth, and grounded upon good evidence, without interesting their lusts and appetites in the judgement; and that before all things they resolve to be guided, in all their actions, by whatever rule shall at any time be well proved to them to be the will of God. And when they have put themselves into this temper and frame of mind; then let them try if they can any longer reject the evidence of the gospel. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God," Joh. vii. 17. For "them that are meek, God will guide in judgement; and such as are gentle, them he will learn his way," Ps. xxv. 8.

THAT MEN OF SUCH A DISPOSITION WOULD THINK IT THEIR GREATEST WISDOM TO BE TRULY RELIGIOUS, EVEN THOUGH THE EVIDENCES OF RELIGION WERE MUCH LESS THAN THEY ARE,

Indeed, men that are of this good disposition, willing to be governed by reason, and not prejudiced by lusts and vicious appetites, could not but give their assent to the doctrines of Christianity, upon account of the very intrinsic excellency and reasonableness of the things themselves, even though the external evidence of their certainty had been much less than it at present is. Nay, were there hardly any other evidence at all, than barely the excellency and reasonableness and natural probability of the great truths of religion, together with the consideration of the vast importance of them; yet even in that case it would be infinitely wisest and most agreeable to reason, for men to live according to the rules of the gospel. And though their faith extended no further, than only to a belief of the possibility of the truth of the Christian Revelation; yet even this alone ought in all reason to have weight enough to determine reasonable creatures, to live soberly, righteously and godly. For, “is it not plainly most reasonable,” as * an ancient writer expresses it, “if each of the opposite opinions were equally doubtful and uncertain, yet by all means to embrace and entertain that which brings some hope along with it, rather than that which brings none? For on one side of the question there is no danger at all of incurring any calamity, if that which we believe and expect should at last prove false; but, on the other side, there is the greatest hazard in the world, the loss of eternal life, if the opinion which unbelievers rely upon, should at last prove an error.” And † again: “What say ye, O ye ignorant men, ye men of miserable and most deplorable folly? Can ye forbear fearing within yourselves, that at least those things may possibly prove true, which ye now despise and mock at? Have ye not at least some misgivings of mind, lest possibly that which ye now perversely and obstinately refuse to believe, ye should at last be convinced of by sad experience, when it will be too late to repent?” Nor is this the judgement of Christian writers only, but also of the wisest and more considerate Heathens. “We ought to spare no pains,” saith ‡ Plato, “to obtain the habits of virtue and wisdom in this present life; for the prize is noble, and the

* “Non purior ratio est, ex duobus incertis & in ambigua expectatione pendentibus, id potius credere, quod aliquas spes ferat, quam quod nullas? In illo enim, periculi nihil est, si, quod dicitur imminere, casum fiat & vacuum; in hoc, damnum est maximum (id est, salutis amissio), si, cum tempus advenerit, apudiat hoc fuisse mendacium.” Arnob. adv. Gentes, lib. II.

† “Quid dicitis, o nesci, etiam fletu & miseratione dignissimi? ira non tam extimescitis, ne forte hæc vera sint, quæ sunt despectui vobis & præbent materiam risus? nec saltem vobiscum sub obscuris cogitationibus volutis, ne, quod hoc die credere obstinata renuitis perversitate, redarguat iterum tempus, & irrevocabilis poenitentia castiget?” Id. ibid.

‡ *Καὶ πάλιν ποιεῖν, ὅς τις ἀρετῆς καὶ φρονήσεως ἐν τῇ βίῃ μελαγχρεῖ· καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἀθλοῦν καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς μεγάλη.* Plato in Phæd.

“hope is very great.” And * Cicero: “they have gained a great prize indeed, who have persuaded themselves to believe, that, when death comes, they shall perish utterly; what comfort is there, what is there to be boasted of, in that opinion?” And again: “If after death,” saith † he, “as some little and contemptible philosophers think, I shall be nothing; yet there is no danger, that, when we are all dead, those philosophers should laugh at me for my error.”

But this is not our case. God has afforded us, as has been largely and particularly shewn in the foregoing discourse, many and certain proofs of the truth of our religion; even as certain, as any matter of fact is capable of having. And we now exhort men to believe, not what is barely possible, and excellent, and probable, and of the utmost importance in itself; but what moreover they have all the positive evidence, and all the reason in the world to oblige them to believe.

THAT GOD MAY REQUIRE US TO TAKE NOTICE OF CERTAIN THINGS, AND TO INQUIRE INTO THEM AND CONSIDER THEM AT OUR PERIL.

To conclude: no man of reason can pretend to say, but God may require us to take notice of some things, at our peril, to inquire into them, and to consider them thoroughly. And pretence of want of greater evidence will not excuse carelessness or unreasonable prejudices; when God has vouchsafed us all that evidence, which was either fit for him to grant, or reasonable for men to desire; or indeed which the nature of the thing itself to be proved was capable of.

* “Præclarum nescio quid adepti sunt, qui di dixerunt se, cum tempus mortis venisset, totos esse perituros.—Quid habet ista res aut lætabile aut gloriosum?” Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. I.

† “Sin mortuus, ut quidam minuti philosophi censent, nihil sentiam; non vereor ne hoc errorem meum mortui philosophi irrideant.” Cic. De Senect.

OF PROPHECY:.

OR,

A DISCOURSE,

TREATING OF

The nature of Prophecy.

The different degrees of the prophetic Spirit.

The difference of prophetic Dreams from all Dreams recorded in Scripture.

The difference of the true prophetic Spirit from enthusiastical Imposture.

What the meaning of those actions is that are frequently in Scripture attributed to the Prophets, whether they were real or only imaginary.

The Schools of the Prophets.

The Sons, or Disciples, of the Prophets.

The dispositions antecedent and preparatory to Prophecy.

The Periods of time when the prophetic Spirit ceased in the Jewish and Christian churches.

Rules for the better understanding of prophetic writ.

2 PET. i. 21.

For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake being moved by the Holy Ghost.

Philo Jud. περὶ τῆς, τίς ὁ τῆς θεῶν πραγμάτων, κληρονομος Προφήτης ἴδιον μὲν ἑδὲν ἀποφθέγξεται, ἀλλότρια δὲ πάντα ὑπηχῶν ἑτέροις. Φαῦλον δ' ἡ δέμις ἐρμηνεῖ γενέσθαι θεῶν, ὥστε κυρίως μοχθηρὸς ἐδὲ ἐνθεσιᾶ· μόνον δὲ σοφῶ ταῦτ' ἐφαρμόττει, ἐπεὶ καὶ μόνον ὄργανον θεῶν ἐστὶν ἡχῆν, κρηόμενον καὶ πληττόμενον ἀοράτως ὑπ' αὐτῶν.

C H A P. I.

That Prophecy is the way whereby revealed truth is dispensed and conveyed to us. Man's mind capable of conversing and being acquainted as well with revealed or positive truth, as with natural truth. Truths of natural inscription may be excited in us and cleared to us by means of prophetic influence. That the Scripture frequently accommodates itself to vulgar apprehension, and speaks of things in the greatest way of condensation.

HAVING spoken to those principles of natural theology which have the most proper and necessary influence into life and practice, and are most pregnant with moral goodness; we come
now

now to consider those pieces of revealed truth which tend most of all to foment and cherish true and real piety.

But before we fall preſſly into any ſtrict enquiry concerning them, it may not be amiſs to examine “how and in what manner this kind of truth, which depends ſolely upon the free will of God, is “ manifested unto mankind ;” and ſo treat a little concerning prophecy, which, indeed, is the only way whereby this kind of truth can be diſpenſed to us. For though our own reaſon and underſtanding carry all natural truth neceſſary for practice in any ſort, engraven upon themſelves, and folded up in their own eſſences more immediately, as being the firſt participations of the divine mind conſidered in its own eternal nature ; yet poſitive truth can only be made known to us by a free influx of the divine mind upon our minds and underſtandings. And as it ariſeth out of nothing elſe but the free pleaſure of the Divinity, ſo without any natural determination it freely ſhines upon the ſouls of men where and when it liſteth, hiding its light from them, or diſplaying it forth upon them, as it pleaſeth.

Yet the ſouls of men are as capable of converſing with it, though it do not naturally ariſe out of the fecundity of their own underſtandings, as they are with any ſenſible and external objects. And as our ſenſations carry the notions of material things to our underſtandings which before were unacquainted with them ; ſo there is ſome analogical way whereby the knowledge of divine truth may alſo be revealed to us. For ſo we may call as well that hiſtorical truth of corporeal and material things, which we are informed of by our ſenſes, truth of revelation, as that divine truth which we now ſpeak of ; and therefore we may have as certain and infallible a way of being acquainted with the one as with the other. And God having ſo contrived the nature of our ſouls, that we may converſe one with another, and inform one another of things we knew not before, would not make us ſo deaf to his divine voice that breaks the rocks and rends the mountains aſunder ; he would not make us ſo undiſciplinable in divine things, as that we ſhould not be capable of receiving any impreſſions from himſelf of thoſe things which we were before unacquainted with. And this way of communicating truth to the ſouls of men is originally nothing elſe but propheticall or enthuſiaſtical ; and ſo we may take notice of the general nature of prophecy.

Though I would not all this while be miſtaken, as if I thought no natural truth might be by the means of propheticall influence awakened within us, and cleared up to us, or that we could not “ lumine propheticò” behold the truths of natural inſcription ; for indeed one main end and ſcope of the propheticall ſpirit ſeems to be the quickening up of our minds to a more lively converſe with thoſe eternal truths of reaſon, which commonly lie buried in ſo much fleſhly obſcurity within us, that we diſcern them not. And therefore the ſcripture treats not only of thoſe pieces of truth which are the reſults of God’s free counſels, but alſo of thoſe which are
moſt

most akin and allied to our own understandings, and that in the greatest way of condescension that may be, speaking to the weakest sort of men in the most vulgar sort of dialect; which it may not be amiss to take a little notice of.

Divine truth hath its humiliation and exanation, as well as its exaltation. Divine truth becomes many times in Scripture incarnate, debasing itself to assume our rude conceptions, that so it might converse more freely with us, and infuse its own divinity into us, God having been pleased herein to manifest himself more jealous of his own glory, than he is (as I may say) zealous of our good, “*Nos non habemus aures, sicut Deus habet linguam.*” If he should speak in the language of eternity, who could understand him, or interpret his meaning? or if he should have declared his truth to us only in a way of the purest abstraction that human souls are capable of, how should then the more rude and illiterate sort of men have been able to apprehend it? Truth is content, when it comes into the world, to wear our mantles, to learn our language, to conform itself as it were to our dress and fashions; it affects not that state or fastus which the disdainful rhetorician sets out his style withal, “*Non Tarentinis aut Siculis hæc scribimus;*” but it speaks with the most idiotical sort of men in the most idiotical way, and becomes all things to all men, as every son of truth should do, for their good. Which was well observed in that old cabbalistical axiom among the Jews, “*Lumen supernum nunquam descendit sine indumento.*” And therefore (it may be) the best way to understand the true sense and meaning of the Scripture is not rigidly to examine it upon philosophical interrogatories, or to bring it under the scrutiny of school-definitions and distinctions. It speaks not to us so much in the tongue of the learned sophies of the world, as in the plainest and most vulgar dialect that may be. Which the Jews constantly observed and took notice of, and therefore it was one common rule among them for a true understanding of the Scripture, *התורה רברה בלשון בני אדם* “*Lex loquitur linguâ filiorum hominum.*” Which Maimonides expounds thus, in *More Nevoch*. Par. I. c. 26. “*Quicquid homines ab initio cogitationis suæ intelligentiâ et imagiatione suâ possunt assequi, id in Scriptura attribuitur Creatori.*” And therefore we find almost all corporeal properties attributed to God in Scripture, “*quia vulgus hominum ab initio cogitationis entitatem non apprehendunt, nisi in rebus corporeis,*” as the same author observes. But such of them as sound imperfection in vulgar ears, as eating and drinking, and the like, these (saith he) the scripture no where attributes to him. The reason of this plain and idiotical style of scripture it may be worth our farther taking notice of, as it is laid down by the fore-named author C. 33. “*Hæc causa est propter quam lex loquitur linguâ filiorum hominum, &c.*” “*For this reason the law speaks according to the language of the sons of men, because it is the most commodious and easy way of initiating and teaching children, women, and the common people, who have not ability to apprehend*

“hend things according to the very nature and essence of them.” And in C. 34. “Et si per exempla et similitudines non deducemus, &c.” “And if we were not led to the knowledge of things by examples and similitudes, but were put to learn and understand all things in their formal notions and essential definitions, and were to believe nothing but upon preceding demonstrations; then we may well think that (seeing this cannot be done but after long preparations) the greater part of men would be at the conclusion of their days, before they could know whether there be a God or no, &c.” Hence is that axiom, so frequent among the Jewish doctors, “magna est virtus vel fortitudo prophetarum, qui assimilant formam cum formante eam.” i. e. great is the power of the prophets, who while they looked down upon these sensible and conspicuous things, were able to furnish out the notion of intelligible and inconspicable beings thereby to the rudenesses of illiterate people.

The Scripture was not writ only for sagacious and abstracted minds, or philosophical heads; for then how few are there that should have been taught the true knowledge of God thereby? “Vidi filios cœnaculi, et erant pauci,” was an ancient Jewish proverb. We are not always rigidly to adhere to the very letter of the text. There is a גלגל and a נסתר in the Scripture, as the Jewish interpreters observe. We must not think that it always gives us formal definitions of things, for it speaks commonly according to vulgar apprehensions; as when it tells of “the ends of the heaven,” Psal. xix. Matth. xxiv. which now almost every idiot knows hath no ends at all. So when it tells us, that “God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul,” Gen. ii. 7; the expression is very idiotical as may be, and seems to comply with that vulgar conceit, that the soul of man is nothing else but a kind of vital breath or air; and yet the immortality thereof is evidently insinuated in setting forth a double original of the two parts of man, his body and his soul; the one of which is brought in as arising up out of the earth, the other as proceeding from the breath of God himself.

So we find very vulgar expressions concerning God himself, besides those which attribute sensation and motion to him, as when he is set forth as “riding upon the wings of the wind, riding upon the clouds, sitting in heaven,” and the like, which seem to determine his indifferent omnipresence to some peculiar place: whereas indeed such passages as these are can be fetched from nothing else but these crass apprehensions which the generality of men have of God, as being most there, from whence the objects of dread and admiration most of all smite and insinuate themselves into their senses, as they do from the air, clouds, winds or heaven. So the state of hell and misery is set forth by such denominations as were most apt to strike a terror into the minds of men, and accordingly it is called “Coetus gigantum,” the place where all those old giants, whom divine vengeance pursued in the general deluge, were assembled

bled together, as it is well observed by a late * author of our own upon Proverbs xxi. 16. "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding, in cœtu gigantum commorabitur." And accordingly we find the state and condition of these expressed, Job xxvi. 5. "Gigantes gemunt sub aquis, & qui habitant cum iis. "Nudus est infernus coram illo, & nullum est operimentum perditioni," as the vulgar Latin renders it, "The giants groan under the waters, and they that dwell with them. Hell is naked before him (that is, God); and destruction hath no covering." In like manner our Saviour sets forth hell as a great valley of fire like that of Hinnom, which was prepared with a great deal of skill, to torture and torment the devils in. Again, we find heaven set forth sometimes as a place of continual banqueting, where, according to the Jewish customs, they should lie down in one another's bosoms at a perpetual feast; sometimes as a paradise furnished with all kinds of delight and pleasure. Again, when the Scripture would insinuate God's seriousness and reality in any thing, it brings him in as ordering it a great while ago before the foundation of the world was laid, as if he more regarded that than the building of the world.

I might instance in many more things of this nature, wherein the philosophical or physical nature and literal verity of things cannot so reasonably be supposed to be set forth to us, as the moral and theological. But I shall leave this argument, and now come more precisely to consider of the nature of prophecy, by which God flows in upon the minds of men extrinsically to their own proper operations, and conveys truth immediately from himself into them.

C H A P. II.

That the prophetic Spirit did not always manifest itself with the same clearness and evidence. The gradual difference of divine illumination between Moses, the Prophets, and the Hagiographi. A general survey of the nature of prophecy properly so called. Of the joint impressions and operations of the understanding and phantasy in prophecy. Of the four degrees of prophecy. The difference between a vision and a dream.

BUT, before we do this, we shall briefly premise something in general concerning that gradual variety whereby these divine enthusiasms were discovered to the prophets of old. The prophetic spirit did not always manifest itself "eodem vigore luminis," with the same clearness and evidence, in the same exaltation of its light; but sometimes that light was more strong and vivid, sometimes more wan and obscure; which seems to be insinuated in that passage, Heb. i. 1. "God who in time past spake unto the fathers" by the prophets, πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως. So we find an evident difference of prophetic illumination asserted in Scripture between Moses and the rest of the prophets, Deut. xxxiv. 10. "And there arose

* Mr. Mede in Diatrib. first part.

“not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face;” which words have a manifest reference to that which God himself in a more public and open way declared concerning Moses, upon occasion of some arrogant speeches of Aaron and Miriam, who would equalize their own degree of prophecy to that of Moses, Numb: xii. 5, 6, 7, 8. “And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth: and he said, Hear my words; if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream: my servant Moses is not so; who is faithful in all mine house; with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold. Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” In which words that degree of divine illumination whereby God made himself known to Moses seems to be set forth as something transcendent to the prophetical illumination; and so the phrase of the New Testament is wont to distinguish between Moses and the prophets, as if indeed Moses had been greater than any prophet. But, besides this gradual difference between Moses and the Prophets, there is another difference very famous amongst the Jewish writers between the Prophets and the Hagiographi, which Hagiographi were supposed by them to be much inferior to the Prophets. But what this difference between them was, we shall endeavour to shew more fully hereafter.

Having briefly premised this, and glanced at a threefold inspiration relating to Moses, the Prophets, and the Hagiographi; we shall first of all enquire into the nature of that which is peculiarly amongst the Jews called prophetical. And this is thus defined to us by Maimonides in Par. ii. c. 36. of his “More Nevochim, veritas & quidditas prophetiæ nihil aliud est quàm influentia à Deo optimo maximo, mediante intellectu agente, super facultatem rationalem primò, deinde super facultatem imaginatricem influens.” i. e. “The true essence of prophecy is nothing else but an influence from the Deity upon the rational first, and afterwards the imaginative faculty, by the mediation of the active intellect.” Which definition belongs indeed to prophecy as it is technically so called, and distinguished by Maimonides both from that degree of divine illumination which was above it, which the masters constantly attribute to Moses, and from that other degree inferior to it, which they call רוח הקודש, “spiritus sanctus,” that holy spirit that moved in the souls of the Hagiographi.

But Rabbi Joseph Albo in Maam 3. c. 8. “De fundamentis fidei,” hath given us a more large description, so as to take in also the “gradus Mosaicus.” הוא שפע שופע מהשם יתברך על הברא i. e. “Prophecy is an influence from God upon the rational faculty, either by the mediation of the fancy or otherwise; and this influence, whether by the ministry
“ of

“ of an angel or otherwise, makes a man to know such things as
 “ by his natural abilities he could not attain to the knowledge of.”
 Though here our author seems too much to have streightened the
 latitude of prophetic influence, whereby (as we intimated before)
 not only those pieces of divine truth may be communicated to the
 souls of men which are not contained within their own ideas, but
 also those may be excited which have a necessary connexion with
 and dependence upon reason.

But the main thing that we shall observe in this description is,
 that faculty or power of the soul upon which these extraordinary
 impressions of divine light or influence are made; which in all proper
 prophecy is both the rational and imaginative power. For in
 this case they supposed the imaginative power to be set forth as a
 stage upon which certain *visa* and *simulacra* were represented to
 their understandings, just indeed as they are to us in our common
 dreams; only that the understandings of the prophets were always
 kept awake and strongly acted by God in the midst of these appar-
 itions, to see the intelligible mysteries in them, and so in these
 types and shadows, which were symbols of some spiritual things, to
 behold the antitypes themselves; which is the meaning of that old
 maxim of the Jews which we formerly cited out of Maimonides,
 “ Magna est virtus seu fortitudo prophetarum qui assimilant formam
 “ cum formante eam.” But in case the imaginative faculty be not
 thus set forth as the scene of all prophetic illumination, but that
 the impressions of things nakedly without any schemes or pictures
 be made immediately upon the understanding itself, then is it rec-
 koned to be the “ gradus Mosaicus,” wherein God speaks as it
 were face to face; of which more hereafter.

Accordingly R. Albo, in the book before cited and 10th chap-
 ter, hath distinguished prophecy into these four degrees. The first
 and lowest of all is, when the imaginative power is most predomi-
 nant, so that the impressions made upon it are too busy, and the
 scene becomes too turbulent for the rational faculty to discern the
 true mystical and anagogical sense of them clearly; and in this case
 the enthusiasts spend themselves extremely in parables, similitudes,
 and allegories, in a dark and obscure manner, as is very manifest in
 Zachary, and many of Ezekiel’s prophecies, as also those of
 Daniel; where, though we have first the outward frame of things
 dramatically set forth so potently in the prophet’s fancy, as that
 his mind was not at the same time capable of the mystical meaning,
 yet that was afterward made known to him, but yet with much
 obscurity still attending it.

This declining state of prophecy the Jews supposed then princi-
 pally to have been, and this divine illumination to have been then
 setting in the horizon of the Jewish church, when they were car-
 ried captive into Babylon. All which we may take a little more
 fully from our author himself in his 3d book and 17th chapter,
 וְנוֹ i. e. “ Every prophet that is of a strong,
 “ sagacious, and piercing understanding, will apprehend the thing
 “ nakedly

“ nakedly without any similitude, whence it comes to pass that all
 “ his sayings prove distinct and clear, and free from all obscurity,
 “ having a literal truth in them ; but a prophet of an inferior rank
 “ or degree, his words are obscure, enwrapped in riddles and pa-
 “ rables, and therefore have not a literal but allegorical truth con-
 “ tained in them.” Thus he. And so afterwards, according to
 the general opinion of the Jewish masters, he tells us that after the
 captivity, in the twilight of prophecy, Ezekiel began to speak alto-
 gether in riddles and parables ; and so he himself complains to God,
 “ Ah Lord God, they say of me, doth he not speak parables ?”
 Chap. xx. 49.

The second degree which our forementioned author makes of
 prophecy is, when the strength of the imaginative and rational
 powers equally balance one another.

The third is, when the rational power is most predominant ; in
 which case (as we heard before) the mind of the prophet is able to
 strip those things that are represented to it in the glass of fancy of all
 their materiality and sensible nature, and apprehend them more dis-
 tinctly in their own naked essence.

The last and highest is the “ gradus Mosaicus,” in which all ima-
 gination ceaseth, and the representation of truth descends not so
 low as the imaginative part, but is made in the highest stage of rea-
 son and understanding.

But we shall hereafter speak more fully concerning the several de-
 grees of prophetic inspiration, and discourse more particularly of the
 “ Ruach hakkodesh,” the highest degree of prophecy or “ gradus
 “ Mosaicus,” and “ Bath col” or the lowest degree of prophecy.

Seeing then that generally all prophecy or prophetic enthusiasm
 lies in the joint impressions and operations of both these foremen-
 tioned faculties, the Jews were wont to understand that place,
 Numb. xii. 6, &c. as generally decyphering that state or degree of
 prophecy by which God would discover himself to all those pro-
 phets that ever should arise up amongst them, or ever had been,
 except Moses and the Messiah. And there are only these * two
 ways declared whereby God would reveal himself to every other
 prophet, either in a vision or a dream ; both which are perpetually
 attended with those “ visa” and “ simulacra sensibilia” as must
 needs be impressed upon common sense or fancy, whereby the pro-
 phets seemed to have all their senses waking and exercising their
 several functions, though indeed all was but scenical or dramatical.
 According to this twofold way of divine inspiration, the prophet
 Joel, chap. i. 28. foretells the nature of that prophetic spirit that
 should be poured out in the latter times ; and in Jeremy xiv. 14.
 we have the false prophets brought in as endeavouring apishly to
 imitate the true prophets of God, in fortifying their fancies by the
 power of divination, that they might talk of dreams and visions
 when they came among the people.

* “ In istis duabus partibus, somnio & visione, continentur omnes prophetiæ gradus.”
 Maimon. in More Nev. p. 2. c. 36.

Now for the difference of these two, a dream and a vision, it seems rather to lie in circumstantialia than in any thing essential; and, therefore, Maimon. Par. II. "More Nev." c. 45. tells us that in a dream a voice was frequently heard, which was not usual in a vision. But the representation of divine things by some sensible images or some narrative voice must needs be in both of them. But yet the Jews are wont to make a vision superior to a dream, as representing things more to the life, which indeed seizeth upon the prophet while he is awake, but it no sooner surprizeth him but that all his external senses are bound; and so often declines into a true dream, as Maimonides, in the place fore-named, proves by the example of Abraham, Gen. xv. 12. where the vision in which God had appeared to him (as it is related ver. 1.) passed into a sleep. "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham, and lo an horror of great darkness fell upon him." Which words seem to be nothing else but a description of that passage which he had by sleep out of his vision into a dream.

Now these ecstatical impressions, whereby the imagination and mind of the prophet was thus ravished from itself, and was made subject wholly to some agent intellect informing it and shining upon it, I suppose St. Paul had respect to, 1 Cor. xiii. "Now we see *ὡς ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐν αἰνίγματι*, by a glass, in riddles or parables;" for so he seems to compare the highest illuminations which we have here, with that constant irradiation of the divinity upon the souls of men in the life to come: and this glassing of divine things by hieroglyphics and emblems, in the fancy which he speaks of, was the proper way of prophetic inspiration.

For the further clearing of which I shall take notice of one passage more out of a Jewish writer, that is, R. Bechai, concerning this present argument, which I find Com. in Num. xii. 9. *רצה להמשיל נבואה שאר הנכאים ובו* "Voluit Deus assimilare prophetiam re-liquorum prophetarum homini speculum inspicienti, prout innuunt Rabbini nostri illo axiomatico proverbiali, Nemo inspiciat speculum Sabbato: illud speculum est vitreum, in quo reflectitur homini sua ipsius forma & imago per vim reflexivam speculi, cum revera nihil ejusmodi in speculo realiter existat. Talis erat prophetia reliquorum prophetarum, eo quod contuebantur sacras & puras imagines & lumina superna, ex medio splendoris & puritatis istorum luminum realium, visæ sunt illis similitudines, visæ sunt illis tales formæ quales sunt formæ humanæ." By which he seems to refer to those images of the living creatures represented in a prophetic vision to Esay and Ezekiel; but generally intimates thus much to us, that the light and splendour of prophetic illumination was not so triumphant over the prophet's fancy, but that he viewed his own image, and saw like a man, and understood things after the manner of men in all these prophetic visions.

C H A P. III.

How the Prophetical Dreams did differ from all other kinds of Dreams recorded in Scripture. This further illustrated out of several passages of Philo Judæus pertinent to this purpose.

WE have now taken a survey of the nature of prophecy, which is always attended (as we have shewed) with a vision or a dream, though indeed there is no dream properly without a vision. And here before we pass from hence, it will be necessary to take notice of a main distinction the Hebrew doctors are wont to make of dreams, lest we mistake all those dreams which we meet with in Scripture, and take them all for prophetical, whereas many of them were not such. For though indeed they were all *ἀποπεμπταί*, “sent by God,” yet many were sent as monitions and instructions, and had not the true force and vigour of prophetical dreams in them; and so they are wont commonly to distinguish between *חלום הלום* and *חלום הנבוא*, “There are “*somnia vera*,” and “*somnia prophetica*,” and these Maimonides, in “More Nev.” Par. II. cap. 41. hath thus generally characterized, “Quando dicitur, ‘Deus venit ad N. in “*somnio noctis*,’ id Prophetia minimè nūcupari potest, neque vir “*talis*, Prophetas, &c.” “When it is said in holy writ, that “God came to such a man in a dream of the night, that cannot “be called a Prophecy, nor such a man a prophet; for the meaning is no more than this, that some admonition or instruction “was given by God to such a man, and that it was in a dream.” Of this sort he and the rest of the Hebrew writers hold those dreams to be, which were sent to Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Abimelech, and Laban; upon which two last, our author observes the great caution of Onkelos the proselyte (who was instructed in the Jewish learning by R. Eleazar, and R. Joshua, the most famous doctors of that age), that, in his Preface to those dreams of Laban and Abimelech, he says, “et venit verbum à Domino;” but doth not say (as when the dreams were prophetical) “et revelavit se “Dominus.” Besides, a main reason for which they deny these dreams to be prophetical is, for that they that were made partakers of them were unsanctified men; whereas it is a tradition amongst them, that the spirit of prophecy was not communicated to any but good men.

But indeed the main difference between these two sorts of dreams seems to consist in this, that such as were not prophetical were much weaker in their energy upon the imagination than the others were, insomuch that they wanted the strength and force of a divine evidence, so as to give a plenary assurance to the mind of him who was the subject of them, of their divine original; as we see in those dreams of Solomon, 1 Kings iii. 5. 15. and ch. ix. 2. where it is said, when he awaked he said, “Behold it was a dream;” as if he had

had not been effectually confirmed from the energy of the dream itself that it was a true prophetical influx.

But there is yet another difference they are wont to make between them, which is, that these "somnia vera," or *νεθελια*, ordinarily contained in them *בטלים* *רברים*, something that was *ἀργόν*, or "void of reality:" as in that dream of Joseph concerning "the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowing down to him;" whereas his mother, which should there have been signified by the moon, was dead and buried before, and so incapable of performing that respect to him which the other at last did. Upon occasion of which dream the Gemarist. doctors in "Berachoth," c. 9. have framed this axiom, *בשם שאין אפשר לבר בלא חבן כו אין אפשר להלום בלא דברים בטלים* "As there is no corn without straw, so neither is there any mere dream without something that is *ἀργόν*, void of reality, and insignificant." Accordingly Rab. Albo, in Maam. III. c. 9. have framed this distinction between them, *אין חלום בלא דברים בטלים* "There is no mere dream without something in it that is *ἀργόν*, but prophecy is a thing wholly and most exactly true."

The general difference between prophetical dreams and those that are merely nouthetical or monitory, and all else which we find recorded in Scripture, Philo Judæus, in his Tract *περὶ τῆ θεοπέμπτης εἰναι ὄνειρος*, and elsewhere, hath at large laid down. The proper character of those that were prophetical he clearly insinuates to be that ecstatical rapture whereby in all prophetical dreams some more potent cause, acting upon the mind and imagination of the prophets, snatched them from themselves, and so left more potent and evident impressions upon them.

I shall the more largely set down his notion, because it tends to the clearing of this business in hand, and is, I think, much obscured, if not totally corrupted, by his translator Gelenius. His design is, indeed, to shew that Moses taught these several ways whereby dreams are conveyed from heaven, that so his sublime and recondite doctrine might be the better hid up therein; and therefore, failing between Cabbalism and Platonism, he gropes after an allegorical and mystical meaning in them all. His first sort of divine dreams he thus defines, *τὸ μὲν πρῶτον, ἢ ἀρχόντι τῆς κινήσεως θεῷ, καὶ ὑπηχύνει ἀοράτως τὰ ἡμῖν μὲν ἀδύνατα, γνώριμα δὲ ἑαυτῷ*, "the first kind was when God himself did begin the motion in the fancy, and secretly whispered such things as are unknown indeed to us, but perfectly known to himself." And of this sort he makes Joseph's dreams, the sense whereof was unknown to Joseph himself at first, and then runs out into an allegorical exposition of them in the book entituled Joseph, *Περὶ Ἰωσήφ*.

The second kind is this, *τῆς ἡμέτερας διανοίας τῇ τῶν ὅλων συγκινήσει ψυχῇ, καὶ θεοφορήτε μανίας ἀναπνευλαμένης*, &c. "When our rational faculty being moved together with the soul of the world, and filled with a divinely-inspired fury, doth predict those things

“that are to come.” In which words, by his $\psi\chi\eta\tilde{\tau\omega\nu}\ \epsilon\lambda\alpha\nu$ he means the same thing with that which in a former book about the same argument he had called $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\ \epsilon\lambda\omega\nu\ \epsilon\tilde{\alpha}\nu$, “the mind of the universe,” which, mingling its influence with our minds, begets these $\pi\rho\omicron\gamma\mu\acute{\omega}\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, or “previsions.” And this is nothing else but that which others of his tribe call $\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\pi\ \lambda\epsilon\omega$ or “intellectus agens,” which it seems he understood to be the same with “anima mundi,” or “universal soul,” as it is described by the Pythagoreans and Platonists. Of this sort of dreams he makes those of Jacob’s ladder and of Laban’s sheep. And these kinds of dreams, viz. that wherein the “intellectus agens” doth simply act upon our minds as patients to it, and that wherein our minds do co-operate with the universal soul, and so understand the meaning of the influx, he, thus compares together; $\Delta\acute{\iota}\delta\ \delta\iota\epsilon\rho\phi\acute{\alpha}\nu\eta\varsigma\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \mu\epsilon\nu\ \kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\alpha}\ \tau\omicron\ \pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\omicron\nu\ \sigma\eta\mu\alpha\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\mu\epsilon\nu\ \Phi\alpha\lambda\alpha\varsigma\iota\alpha\varsigma,\ \tau\rho\alpha\nu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\iota\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \alpha\rho\iota\theta\acute{\eta}\lambda\omega\varsigma\ \epsilon\mu\mu\acute{\eta}\nu\sigma\epsilon\nu,\ \acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon\ \tau\tilde{\epsilon}\ \Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\ \chi\rho\eta\sigma\mu\acute{\omicron}\iota\varsigma\ \zeta\alpha\phi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\iota\nu\ \epsilon\iota\kappa\acute{\omicron}\tau\alpha\ \delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\ \tau\omega\nu\ \delta\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\rho\omega\nu\ \upsilon\pi\omicron\varsigma\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\upsilon\theta\iota.$ $\tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \delta\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\alpha}\ \tau\omicron\ \delta\epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\ \sigma\phi\acute{\omicron}\delta\epsilon\rho\alpha\ \tau\eta\lambda\alpha\nu\gamma\acute{\omega}\varsigma,\ \acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\ \sigma\kappa\acute{\omicron}\lambda\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\nu,\ \&c.$ In which words it is to be observed, that he calls the matter of the first sort of dreams $\chi\rho\eta\sigma\mu\acute{\omicron}\iota\varsigma\ \sigma\alpha\phi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\iota\nu\ \epsilon\iota\kappa\acute{\omicron}\tau\alpha$, which Gelenius hath mistook whilst he translates it “*Dei oraculis certis convenientia.*” With his leave, therefore, I should thus interpret that whole passage, “*Quare Moses facer Antistes indigitans illas phantasias quæ oboritur secundum primam speciem, eas perspicuè & admodum manifestè indicavit;*” (i. e. by adding an explication of those ænigmata of Joseph’s sun, moon, stars, and sheaves, which he himself in his dream understood not; which explication is not made in the examples of the second sort) “*quippe Deus subjecit illas phantasias per somnia quæ similes sunt veris prophetis, (i. e. $\gamma\omicron\mu\eta\tau\epsilon\ \pi\rho\phi\eta\tau\iota\alpha\ \nu\omicron\beta\alpha\iota\ \pi\epsilon\rho\phi\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\ \pi\rho\phi\eta\tau\iota\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$, sive $\nu\omicron\beta\alpha\iota\ \pi\eta\lambda\omicron\tau\eta\ \pi\eta\lambda\omicron\tau\eta$ “somnia propheticis, uti loqui amant magistri). Secundi verò generis somnia nec plane dilucidè nec valde obscurè indigitavit; qualia erant somnia de scala cœlesti, &c.”* Now these dreams of Joseph, though they contained matter of a like nature to prophetic inspiration, yet were they indeed not such, and therefore are accounted of by all the Jewish writers only as “somnia vera;” and so our author endeavours to prove very fitly to our purpose, though indeed upon a mistake which he took out of the version of the * Seventy, Gen. xxxvii. 7. $\text{”}\omicron\mu\eta\nu,\ \phi\alpha\sigma\iota\nu,\ \acute{\eta}\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \delta\epsilon\sigma\mu\epsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \delta\rho\acute{\alpha}\gamma\mu\alpha\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\ \mu\epsilon\nu,\ \acute{\omega}\mu\eta\nu,\ \epsilon\iota\theta\acute{\epsilon}\omega\varsigma\ \alpha\delta\eta\lambda\epsilon\nu\theta\iota\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \epsilon\nu\delta\omicron\iota\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omicron\nu\theta\iota\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \alpha\mu\nu\delta\acute{\rho}\omega\varsigma\ \upsilon\pi\omicron\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota,\ \acute{\epsilon}\ \pi\alpha\rho\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\eta\lambda\alpha\nu\gamma\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \delta\rho\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota\ \alpha\nu\alpha\phi\theta\epsilon\gamma\mu\acute{\alpha}\ \epsilon\iota\nu,\ \&c.$ “Joseph said [+ me-thought we were binding sheaves]. That word [me-thought] is the language of one that is uncertain, dubious, and obscurely surmising; not of one that is firmly assured, and plainly sees things: indeed it very well befits those who are

* Though he was a Jew, yet was he trained up amongst the Greeks, and not well acquainted with the Hebrew language.

† Which word is not in the Hebrew.

“ newly awaked out of a sound sleep, and have scarce ceased to
 “ dream, to say [me-thought]; not those who are fully awake,
 “ and behold all things clearly. But Jacob, who was more exer-
 “ cised in divine things, hath no such word as [me-thought]
 “ when he speaks of his dream; but, says he, Behold, a ladder set
 “ upon the earth, and the top of it reached up to heaven, &c.”
 After the same manner almost doth Maimonides, in his “ More
 “ Nev.” distinguish between “ somnia vera & prophetica,” making
 Jacob’s dreams (as all the Jewish writers do) to be prophetic.

The third kind of dreams mentioned by Philo is thus laid down
 by him, Συμίσταται δὲ τὸ τρίτον εἶδος, ὁπότεν ἐν τοῖς ὕπνοις ἐξ αὐτῆς ἡ
 ψυχὴ κινεμένη, καὶ ἀναδιῶσα ἑαυτὴν, κορυθαλιᾷ καὶ ἐνθουσιῶσα, δυνάμει
 προγνωστικῇ τὰ μέλλοντα θεαπίζει, i. e. “ The third kind is when in
 “ sleep the soul being moved of itself, and agitating itself, is in a
 “ kind of rapturous rage, and in a divine fury doth foretell future
 “ things by a prophetic faculty.” And then, which is more to
 our purpose, he thus sets forth the nature of those fancies which
 discover themselves in these kind of dreams. Αἱ δὲ κατὰ τὸ τρίτο,
 εἶδος φαντασίαι μᾶλλον τῶν προτέρων δηλέμεναι, διὰ τὸ βαθὺ καὶ καίλακορές
 ἔχειν τὸ αἶνιγμα, ἐδείχθησαν καὶ τῆς οὐνειροκριτικῆς ἐπιστήμης, i. e. “ The
 “ phantasms which belong to the third kind are more plainly declared
 “ by Moses than the former; for they containing a very profound
 “ and dark meaning, they required to the explaining of them a
 “ knowledge of the art of interpreting dreams:” as those dreams
 of Pharaoh and his butler and baker, and of Nebuchadnezzar, who
 were only amazed and dazzled with those strange apparitions that
 were made to them, but not at all enlightened by them. These
 are of that kind which Plato sometimes speaks of, that cannot be
 understood without a prophet; and therefore he would have some
 prophet or wise man always set over this μαντική. Thus we have
 seen these three sorts of dreams according to Philo, the first and
 last whereof the Jewish doctors conjoin together, and constantly
 prefer the oneirocritics of them to the dreamers themselves; and
 therefore, whereas they depress the notion of them considered in
 themselves below any degree of prophecy, yet the interpretation
 of them they attribute to the ἁγίου πνεύματος or “ Holy Spirit;” ex-
 cept there be an interpretation of the dream in the dream itself, so
 as that the mind of the dreamer be fully satisfied both in the meaning
 and divinity thereof; for then it is truly prophetic. And thus
 much for this particular.

C H A P. IV.

A large account of the difference between the true Prophetical Spirit and Enthusiastical Impostures. That the Pseudo-Prophetical Spirit is seated only in the imaginative powers and faculties inferior to reason. That Plato and other wise men had a very low opinion of this Spirit, and of the gift of divination, and of consulting the oracles. That the true Prophetical Spirit seats itself as well in the rational powers as in the sensitive, and that it never alienates the mind, but informs and enlightens it. This further cleared by several testimonies from Gentile and Christian writers of old. An account of those fears and consternations which often seized upon the Prophets. How the Prophets perceived when the prophetical influx seized upon them. The different evidence and energy of the true and false Prophetical Spirit.

FROM what we have formerly discoursed concerning the stage of fancy and imagination upon which those Vifa presented themselves to the mind of the prophet, in which he beheld the real objects of divine truth in which he was inspired by this means; it may be easily apprehended how easy a matter it might be for the devil's prophets many times, by an apish imitation, to counterfeit the true prophets of God, and how sometimes melancholy and turgent fancies, fortified with a strong power of divination, might unfold themselves in a semblance of true enthusiasms. For indeed herein the prophetical influx seems to agree with a mistaken enthusiasm, that both of them make strong impressions upon the imaginative powers, and require the imaginative faculty to be vigorous and potent; and therefore Maimonides tells us that the gift of divination, which consisted in a mighty force of imagination, was always given to the prophets, and that this and a spirit of fortitude were the main bases of prophecy. More Nev. par. II. c. 38. "Duas istas facultates, fortitudinis scilicet & divinationis, in prophetis fortissimas & vehementissimas esse necesse est, &c." i. e. "It is necessary that these two faculties of fortitude and divination should be most strong and vehement in the prophets; whereunto if at any time there was an accession of the influence of the intellect, they were then beyond measure corroborated; inasmuch that (as it is well known) it hath come to this, that one man by a naked staff did prevail over a potent king, and most manfully delivered a whole nation from bondage, viz. after it was said to him, Exod. iii. 12. 'I will be with thee.' And though there be different degrees of these in men, yet none can be altogether without that fortitude and magnanimity. So it was said to Jeremy, chap. 17, 18. 'Be not dismayed at their faces, &c. Behold I have made thee this day a defenced city;' and so to Ezek. ch. ii. 6. 'Be not afraid of them nor their words.' And generally in all the prophets we shall find a great fortitude and magnanimity of spirit. But by the excellency of the gift of divining

“ vining they could on a sudden and in a moment foretel future things; in which faculty notwithstanding there was great diversity.” Thus he.

It will not therefore be any great digression here, awhile to examine the nature of this false light, which pretends to prophesy, but is not; as being seated only in the imaginative power, from whence the first occasion of this delusion ariseth, seeing that power is also the seat of all prophetic vision. For this purpose it will not be amiss to premise that threefold degree of cognitive influence pointed out by Maimonides, par. II. cap. 37. More Nev. The first is wholly intellectual, descending only into the rational faculty, by which that is extremely fortified and strengthened in the distinct apprehension of metaphysical truths, from whence, as he tells us, ariseth the sect of philosophers, and contemplative persons. The second is jointly into the rational and imaginative faculty together, and from thence springs the sect of prophets. The third into the imaginative only, from whence proceeds the sect of politicians, lawyers, and law-givers (whose conceptions only run in a secular channel), as also the sect of diviners, inchanters, dreamers, and soothsayers.

We shall copy out of him a character of some of this third sort, the rather because it so graphically delineates to us many enthusiastical impostors of our age. His words are these, “ *Hic verò monendus es, ex tertio genere esse quosdam, quibus phantasiæ, somnia & ecstases, quales in prophetiæ visione esse solent, ita mirabiles obveniunt, ut planè sibi persuadeant se prophetas esse, &c.*” i. e. “ But here I must advertise thee, that there are some of this third sort, who have sometimes such strange phantasies, dreams, and ecstasies, that they take themselves for prophets, and much marvel that they have such phantasies and imaginations; conceiting at last that all sciences and faculties are without any pains or study infused into them. And hence it is that they fall into great confusions in many theoretical matters of no small moment, and do so mix true notions with such as are merely seeming and imaginary, as if heaven and earth were jumbled together. All which proceeds from the too great force of the imaginative faculty and the imbecillity of the rational, whence it is that nothing in it can pass forth into act.” Thus he. This delusion then, in his sense of those *Ἐνεργήμενοι* which pretend to Revelations, ariseth from hence, that all this foreign force that is upon them serves only to vibrate and impregnate their phancies and imaginations, but does not inform their reasons, nor elevate them to a true understanding of things in their coherence and contexture; and therefore they can so easily embrace things absurd to all true and sober reason; whereas the prophetic spirit acting principally upon the reason and understanding of the prophets, guided them consistently and intelligibly into the understanding of things. But this pseudo-prophetic spirit being not able to rise up above this low and dark region of sense or matter, or to soar aloft into a clear

dent men, who by reason of the sagacity of their understandings, were able to judge of those things which were uttered by this dull spirit of divination, which resided only in faculties inferior to reason. So in his Charmides, *Εἰ δὲ βέλαιο γέ, καὶ τὴν μανικὴν εἶναι συγχωρήσομεν ἐπιστήμην τῶ μέλλοσι* ἔσσεσθαι, &c. i. e. “But if you will, “we will grant the gift of divination to be a knowledge of what “is to come; but withal that it is fit that wisdom and sobriety “should be judge and interpreter.” But further, that his age was acquainted with no other divination than that which ariseth from a troubled phancy, and is conceived in a dark melancholy imagination, he confirms to us in his Phædrus, where he rightly gives us the true etymon of this *μανικὴ*, that it was called so *ἀπὸ τῆς μανίας*, “from rage and fury,” and therefore says it was anciently called *μανική*. However he grants that it happened to many *θεία μοίρα*, “by divine allotment;” yet it was most vulgarly incident to sick and melancholy men, who oftentimes by the power thereof were able to presage by what medicines their own distempers might be best cured, as if it were nothing else but a discerning of that sympathizing and symbolizing complexion of their own bodies with some other bodies without them. And elsewhere he tells us that these *μάντις* never, or very rarely, understood the meaning and nature of their own Vifa.

And therefore indeed the Platonists generally seemed to reject, or very much to slight, all this kind of revelation, and to acknowledge nothing transcendent to the naked reason and understanding of man. So Maximus Tyrius in Dissert. 3. *Θεὸς δὲ μαντεῖον καὶ ἀνθρώπων νόος* (τολμηρὸν μὲν εἰπεῖν, φράσω δὲ ὁμῶς) *χρημα συληνὲς*, “It is a “bold assertion, yet I shall not doubt to say, that God’s oracles “and men’s understandings are of a near alliance.” And so according to Porphyrius, lib. II. § 52. *περὶ ἀπορχῆς*, a good man is *Διὸς μεγάλη ὁαρις*, one that needs not soothsaying, being familiarly and intimately acquainted with God himself.

Likewise the Stoicks will scarce allow their wise man at any time to consult an oracle, as we may learn from Arrian, lib. II. c. 7. and Epictetus, c. 39. and Simplicius’s comment thereupon; where that great philosopher, making a scrupulous search what those things were which it might be fit to consult the oracle about, at last brings them into so narrow a compass, that a wise man should never find occasion to honour the oracle with his presence. A famous instance whereof we have in Lucan, lib. IX. where Cato, being advised to consult Jupiter Hammon’s oracle after Pompey’s death, answers,

- “*Estnè Dei sedes nisi terra & pontus & aër*
- “*Et cœlum & virtus? Superos quid quærimus ultra?*
- “*Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quodcunque moveris.*
- “*Sortilegis egeant dubii sempérque futuris*
- “*Casibus ancipites; me non oracula certum,*
- “*Sed mors certa facit ————”*

But enough of this particular; and I hope by this time I have sufficiently unfolded the true seat of prophecy, and shewed the right stage thereof: as also how lame and delusive the spirit of divination was, which endeavoured to imitate it.

Now from what hath been said ariseth one main characteristical distinction between the prophetical and pseudo-prophetical spirit, viz. That the prophetical spirit doth never alienate the mind (seeing it seats itself as well in the rational powers as in the sensitive), but always maintains a consistency and clearness of reason, strength and solidity of judgement, where it comes; it doth not ravish the mind, but inform and enlighten it; but the pseudo-prophetical spirit, if indeed without any kind of dissimulation it enters into any one, because it can rise no higher than the middle region of man, which is his fancy, it there dwells as in storms and tempests, and being *ἄλογόν τι* in itself, is also conjoined with alienations and abstractions of mind. For whensoever the phantasms come to be disordered and to be presented tumultuously to the soul, as it is either in a *μανία*, “fury,” or in melancholy (both which kinds of alienations are commonly observed by physicians), or else by the energy of this spirit of divination; the mind can pass no true judgement upon them; but its light and influence becomes eclipsed. But of this alienation we have already discoursed out of Plato and others. And thus the Pythian prophetess is described by the Scholiast upon Aristophanes’s *Plutus*, and by Lucan, lib. V. as being filled with inward fury, while she was inspired by the fatidical spirit, and uttering her oracles in a strange disguise, with many antic gestures, her hair torn, and foaming at her mouth. As also Cassandra is brought, in prophesying in the like manner, by Lycophron. So the Sibyl was noted by Heraclitus, *ὡς μαινομένην σώματι γελασὰ καὶ ἀκαλ- λώπιστα φθεγγομένην*, “as one speaking ridiculous and unseemly speeches “with her furious mouth.” And Ammianus Marcellinus, in the beginning of his 21st book, hath told us an old observation concerning the Sibyls, “Sibyllæ crebro se dicunt ardere, torrente vi mag- nâ flammæ.”

This was cautelously observed by the primitive fathers, who hereby detected the impostures of the Montanists that pretended much to prophecy, but indeed were acquainted with nothing more of it than ecstasies or abstractions of mind; for that is it which they mean by ecstasies. I shall first mention that of Clem. Alexandr. Strom. I. *Ἐν δὲ τοῖς ψεύδεσι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ τινα ἔλεγον οἱ ψευδοπροφῆται· καὶ τῷ ὅντι ἔτοι ἐν ἐκστάσει προσηύτεον, ὡς ἂν Ἀποστάτη διάκονοι*, that is, “The false prophets mingled truth sometimes with falsehood; and “indeed when they were in an ecstasy, they prophesied, as being “servants to that grand apostate the devil.” Eusebius mentions in *Histor. Eccles. lib. V. c. 17*, a discourse of Miltiades to this purpose, *περὶ τῶ μὴ δεῖν προφήτην ἐν παρεκστάσει λαλεῖν*. Tertullian, who was a great friend to Montanus and his prophetical sisters Maximilla and Priscilla, speaking of them, endeavours to alleviate this business; and

and though he grants they were ecstatical in their prophecies, that is, only transported by the power of a spirit more potent than their own, as he would seem to imply; yet he denies that they used to fall into any rage or fury, which he says is the character of every false prophet; and so Montanus excused himself. But yet for all this, they could not avoid the lash of Jerome, who thought he saw through this ecstasy, and that indeed it was a true alienation, seeing they understood not what they spoke. “*Neque verò (ut Montanus cum insanis fœminis somniat) prophetæ in ecstasy locuti sunt, ut nescirent quid loquerentur; & cum alios erudirent, ipsi ignorarent quid dicerent.*” The prophets did not (as Montanus, together with some mad women, dreams) speak in ecstasies, nor did they speak they knew not what; nor were they, when they went about to instruct others, ignorant of what they said themselves.” So he in his Preface to Esay. This also he elsewhere brands the Montanists withal; as in his Proœmium to Nahum, “*Non loquitur propheta εν ενσάσει, ut Montanus & Prisca Maximillaque delirant: sed quod prophetat, liber est intelligentis quæ loquitur.*” And in his Preface to Habakkuk,—“*Prophetæ visio est, & adversum Montani dogma perversum intelligit quod videt, nec ut amens loquitur, nec in morem insanientium fœminarum dat sine mente sonum.*” I shall add but one author more, and that is Chrysostome, who hath very fully and excellently laid down this difference between the true and false prophets. Hom. 29. on the first epistle to the Corinthians: *Τὸ το μάντις ἴδιον, τὸ ἐξεγνέαι, τὸ ἀνάγκην ὑπομένειν, τὸ ὠθεῖσθαι, τὸ ἔλκεσθαι ὥσπερ μαινόμενον,* “It is the property of a diviner to be ecstatical, to undergo some violence, to be tossed and hurried about like a mad man:” *Ὁ δὲ προφήτης ἐχ ἕως, ἀλλὰ μετὰ διανοίας νηφέσης, καὶ σωφρονέσης καλῆς ἐνστάσεως, καὶ εἰδῶς ἃ φέρεται φησὶν ἀπαίῃα,* “But it is otherwise with a prophet, whose understanding is awake, and his mind in a sober and orderly temper, and he knows every thing that he saith.”

But here we must not mistake the business, as if there were nothing but the most absolute clearness and serenity of thoughts lodging in the soul of the prophet amidst all his visions; and therefore we shall further take notice of that observation of the Jews, which is vulgarly known by all acquainted with their writings, which is concerning those panic fears, consternations, and affrightments and tremblings, which frequently seized upon them together with the prophetic influx. And indeed by how much stronger and more vehement those impressions were which were made by those unwonted Vises which came in to act upon their imaginative faculty, by so much the greater was this perturbation and trouble; and by how much the more the prophet's imagination was exercised by the laboriousness of these phantasms, the more were his natural strength and spirits exhausted, as indeed it must needs be. Therefore Daniel, being wearied with the toilsome work of his fancy about those visions, that were presented to him, chap. x. 8. &c. complains

complains that "there was no strength left in him; that his comeliness was turned into corruption, and he retained no strength; that when he heard the voice, he was in a deep sleep, and his face toward the ground; that his sorrows were turned upon him, and no breath was left in him." So, Gen. xv. 12. when the vision presented to Abraham passed into a prophetic dream, it is said, "a deep sleep fell upon Abraham, and a horror of great darkness fell upon him." Upon which passage Maimonides in the 2d part, and 41st chap. of his *More Nevochim*, thus discourseth; "Quandoque autem prophetia incipit in visione prophetica, & postea multiplicatur terror & passio illa vehemens, quæ sequitur perfectionem operationem facultatis imaginatricis, & tum demum venit prophetiæ, sicuti contigit Abrahamo. In principio enim prophetiæ illius dicitur," (Gen. xv. 1.) "Et fuit verbum Domini ad Abrahamum in visione; & in fine ejusdem" (vers. 12). "Et sopor irruit in Abrahamum, &c." And in like manner he speaks of those fatigations that Daniel complains of, "Est autem terror quidam panicus qui occupat prophetam inter vigilandum sicut ex Daniele patet, quando ait, Et vidi visionem magnam hanc, neque remansit in me ulla fortitudo, & vis mea mutata est in corruptionem, nec retinui fortitudinem ullam. Et fui lethargo oppressus super faciem meam; & facies mea ad terram." And thus this whole business is excellently decyphered unto us by R. Albo, in his third book and tenth chapter, *הנה מצד חתונברת הבוח המדמה ובו*, "Behold, by reason of the strength of the imaginative faculty and the precedency of the influence upon that to the influence upon the rational, the influx doth not remain upon the prophet without terror and consternation; insomuch that his members shake, and his joints are loosened, and he seems like one that is ready to give up the ghost, by reason of his great astonishment; after all which perturbation, the prophetic influx settles itself upon the rational faculty."

From this notion perhaps we may borrow some light for the clearing of Jeremy xxiii. 9. "Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets, all my bones shake: I am like a drunken man (and like a man whom wine hath overcome), because of the Lord, and because of the words of his holiness." The importance of which words is, that the energy of prophetic vision wrought thus potently upon his animal part. Though I know R. Solomon seems to look at another meaning; but Abarbanel is here full for our present purpose, *בדאות ירמיהו אותם הנביאים אבלים ושוחים*: "When Jeremy saw those false prophets eating and drinking and faring deliciously, he cried out and said, My heart is broken within me because of the prophets; for while I behold their works, my heart is rent asunder with the extremity of my sorrow; and because of the prophetic influx residing upon me, my bones are all rotten, and I am like a drunken man, that neither sees nor hears. And all this hath befell me because of the Lord, that is, because

“ of the divine influx that seized upon me, and because of the
 “ words of his holiness, which have wrought such a conturbation
 “ within me, that all my senses are stupified thereby.” And thus
 I suppose is also that passage in Ezekiel iii. 14. to be expounded,
 where the prophet describes the energy and dominion which the
 prophetic spirit had over him, when in a prophetic vision he was
 carried by way of imagination a tedious journey to those of the
 captivity that dwelt by the river Chebar. “ The spirit of the Lord
 “ lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, and
 “ in the heat (or hot chafing and anger) of my spirit; but the
 “ hand of the Lord was strong upon me.” So Habbak. iii. 2. “ O
 “ Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid;” that is, the
 prophetic voice heard by him, and represented in his imagination,
 was so strong that it struck a panic fear (as Maimonides ex-
 presseth it) into him. And it may be the same thing is meant by
 Esay xxi. 3. where the prophet describes that inward conturbation
 and consternation that his vision of Babylon’s ruin was accompanied
 withal. “ Therefore are my loins filled with pain, pangs have
 “ taken hold upon me as the pangs of a woman that travaileth :
 “ I was bowed down at the hearing of it, I was dismayed at the
 “ seeing of it.” Though I know there may be another meaning
 of that place not improper, viz. that the prophet personates Babylon
 in the horror of that anguish that should come upon them, whereby
 he sets it forth the more to the life, as Jonathan the Targumist and
 others would have it; though yet I cannot think this the most con-
 gruous meaning.

But I have now done with this particular, and I hope by this
 time have gained a fair advantage of solving one difficulty, which
 though it be not so much observed by our own as it is by the
 Jewish writers, yet it is worth our scanning, viz. How the proph-
 ets perceived when the prophetic inspiration first seized upon
 them. For (as we have before shewed) there may be such dreams
 and visions which are merely delusive, and such as the false proph-
 ets were often partakers of; and besides, the true prophets might
 have often such dreams as were merely “ vera somnia,” true dreams,
 but not prophetic.

For the full solution of this knot, we have before shewed how
 this pseudo-prophetic spirit only flutters below upon the more ter-
 rene parts of man’s soul, his passions and fancy. The prince of
 darkness comes not within the sphere of light and reason to order
 affairs there, but that is left to the sole œconomy and sovereignty
 of the Father of lights. There is a clear and bright heaven in man’s
 soul, in which Lucifer himself cannot subsist, but is tumbled down
 from thence as often as he essays to climb up into it.

But to come more pressly to the business; the Hebrew masters
 here tell us that in the beginning of prophetic inspiration the
 prophets use to have some apparition or image of a man or angel
 presenting itself to their imagination. Sometimes it began with a
 voice, and that either strong and vehement, or else soft and fami-
 liar.

liar. And so God is said first of all to appear to Samuel, 1 Sam. iii. 7. who is said "not yet to have known the Lord," that is, as Maimon. in Par. II. c. 44. of his "More Nevochim" expounds it, "Ignoravit adhuc tunc temporis Deum hoc modo cum prophetis loqui solere, & quod hoc mysterium nondum fuit ei revelatum." In the same manner R. Albo, Maam. III. cap. 11. For otherwise we must not think that Samuel was then ignorant of the true God, but that he knew not the manner of that voice by which the prophetic spirit was wont to awaken the attention of the prophets.

And that this was the ancient opinion of the Jews R. Solomon tells us out of the "Massecheth Tamid," where the doctors thus gloss upon this place, שרם ירע את יהוה עריין לא היה מבין ענין i. e. "as yet he knew not the Lord," that is, "he knew not the manner of the prophetic voice;" that is, that soft and gentle voice whereby the sense of the prophet is sometimes attempted, but sometimes this voice is more vehement. It will not be amiss to hear Maimonides's words, Par. II. c. 44. of his "More Nevochim," "Nonnunquam fit ut verbum illud quod propheta audit in visione prophetiæ, ei videatur fieri voce robustissimâ, &c." i. e. "It sometimes happens that the word which the prophet hears in a prophetic vision, seems to strike him with a more vehement noise; and accordingly some dream that they hear thunder and earthquake, or some great clashing; and sometimes again with an ordinary and familiar noise, as if it was close by him." We have a famous instance of the last, in that voice whereby God appeared unto Adam after he had sinned, and of the former in Job and Elijah. That instance of Adam is set down Gen. iii. 8, 9. "And they heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam hid himself from the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden: and the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" where those words, רוח היום which we render "the cool of the day," the Jews expound of "a gentle vocal air," such an one as breathed in the day-time more pacately. For this appearance of God to him they suppose to be in a prophetic vision; and so Nachmanides comments upon those words, ונעם לרוח היום כי בהגלות השבינה תבוא רוח גדולה וחזק ובו: "The sense of this, לרוח היום [in the gale of the day], is, that ordinarily in the manifestation of the Shechina or divine presence, there comes a great and mighty wind to usher it in, according to that we read of Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 11. And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord: and in Psal. xviii. and elsewhere, He flew upon the wings of the wind. Accordingly it is written concerning Job, ch. xxxviii. 1. that the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind. Wherefore, by way of distinction, it is said in this place, that they heard the voice of the Lord, that is, that the divine majesty was revealed to them in the garden,

" as

“ as approaching to them, in the gale of the day. For the wind
 “ of the day blew according to the manner of the day-time, in the
 “ garden; not as a great and strong wind in this vision (as it was
 “ in other prophetic approaches) lest they should fear and be
 “ dismayed.” This mighty voice we also find recorded as rousing
 up the attention of Ezekiel, ch. ix. 1. “ He cried also in mine ears
 “ with a loud voice, saying, &c.” So that all these schemes are
 merely prophetic, and import nothing else but the strong awaken-
 ing and quickening of the prophet’s mind into a lively sense of the
 divine majesty appearing to him.

And of these the Apocalypse is full, there being indeed no pro-
 phetic writ, where the whole dramatical series of things, as they
 were acted over in the mind of the prophet, are more graphically
 and to the life set forth. So we have this “ vox præcentrix” to
 the whole scene sometimes sounding like a trumpet, “ I was in the
 “ spirit on the Lord’s-day, and heard behind me a great voice as of
 “ a trumpet,” Rev. i. 10. And chap. iv. upon the beginning of a
 new vision we find this prologue, “ I looked, and behold a door
 “ was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as
 “ it were the sound of a trumpet, talking with me, which said,
 “ Come up hither, &c.” And when a new act of opening the
 seals begins, chap. vi. 1. he is excited by another voice sounding
 like thunder. “ And I saw when the lamb opened one of the
 “ seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four
 “ beasts saying, come and see.” And chap. viii. ver. 5. “ voices
 “ and thunders and lightnings and an earthquake” are the proce-
 mium to the vision of the seven angels with seven trumpets. Lastly,
 to name no more, sometimes it is brought in sounding like the
 roaring of a lion. So when he was to receive the little book of
 Prophecy, ch. x. 3. “ An angel cried with a loud voice, as when a
 “ lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered
 “ their voices.” Hence it is that we find the prophets ordinarily
 prefacing to their visions in this manner, “ the hand of the Lord
 was upon me;” that is, indeed, some potent force rousing them
 up to a lively sense of the Divine Majesty, or some heavenly embas-
 sador speaking with them. And that the sense hereof might be the
 more energetical, sometimes in a prophetic vision they are com-
 manded to eat those prophetic rolls given them, which are described
 with the greatest contrariety of taste that may be, “ sweet as honey
 “ in their mouths, and in their bellies as bitter as gall,” Rev. x. 9.
 Ezek. ii. 8.

Thus we have seen in part how those impressions, by which the
 prophets were made partakers of divine inspiration, carried a strong
 evidence of their original along with them, whereby they might be
 able to distinguish them both from any hallucination, as also from
 their own true dreams, which might be *θεοπέμπτα*, “ sent by God,”
 but not prophetic: which yet I think is more universally unfolded
 Jeremy xxiii. where the difference between true divine inspiration
 and such false dreams and visions as sometimes a lying spirit
 breathed

breathed into the false prophets is on set purpose described to us from their different evidence and energy. The pseudo-prophetical spirit being "chaff," ver. 28. as vain as vanity itself, subject to every wind: the matter itself indeed which was suggested in such tending to nourish immorality and prophaneness: and besides for the manner of inspiration, it was more dilute and languid. Whereas true prophecy entered upon the mind "as a fire," ver. 29. and "like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces:" and therefore the true prophets might know themselves to have received command from heaven, when the false might, if they would have laid aside their own fond self-conceit, have known as easily that God sent them not. For so I think those words are spoken by way of conviction, and to provoke a self-condemnation, "Behold I am against those that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, neither commanded them," ver. 32. And this might be evident to them from the feeble nature of those inspirations which they boasted of, as it is insinuated verse 28, 29. "The prophet that hath a dream, &c." And thus Abarbanel expounds this place, whose sense I shall a little the more pursue, because he from hence undertakes to solve the difficulty of that question which we are now upon, and thus speaks of it as a question of very great moment, באמת שאלה עמיקה כעניני הובואה ובו, "Certainly it is one of the profoundest questions that are made concerning prophecy, and I have enquired after the opinion of the wise men of our nation about it." What answer they gave to this question which he anxiously enquired after, it seems he tells us not, but his own answer which he adheres to he founds upon those words, verse 28. מה-להבן את-הבר, "What is the chaff to the wheat?" And upon this occasion, he says, that old rule of the Jews was framed which we formerly spoke of, "As there is no wheat without chaff, so neither is there any dream without something that is *אפס*, void of reality and insignificant." Maimonides here in a general way resolves the business הנבואה חדיע לנביא, שהוא נבואה, i. e. "All prophecy makes itself known to the prophet that it is prophecy indeed." Which general solution Abarbanel having a little examined, thus collects the sense of it, ובו יכדל הנביא בהיותי ישן בין החלום הנבואי לאשר, i. e. "A prophet when he is asleep may distinguish between a prophetic dream and that which is not such, by the vigour and liveliness of the perception whereby he apprehends the thing propounded, or else by the imbecillity and weakness thereof. And therefore Maimonides hath said well, All prophecy makes itself known to the prophet that it is prophecy indeed, that is, it makes itself known to the prophet by the strength and vigour of the perception, so that his mind is freed from all scruple whatsoever about it." And this he concludes to be the true meaning of Jeremy,

ch. xxiii. 29. "Is not my word like a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" which he thus glosses upon, כן היתה הנבואה בחזק הרגשו והפלגת הפעלותו "Such a thing is the prophetic spirit, by reason of the strength of its impression and the forcibleness of its operation upon the heart of the prophet; it is even like a thing that burns and tears him: and this happens to him either amidst the dream itself, or afterwards when he is fully awoken and roused out of that prophetic dream. But those dreams which are not prophetic, although they be true, are weak and languid things, easily blasted as it were with the east wind:" and, as he further goes on by way of allusion, like those dreams that the prophet Esay speaks of, "when a hungry man dreams he eats, but when he awakes behold he is still hungry; and as when a thirsty man dreams he drinks, but when he is awake he is still thirsty." And thus also the Chaldee paraphrast, Jeremy, ch. xxiii. 29. הלא בל "Nonne omnia verba mea sunt fortia sicut ignis, &c." But we have yet another evident demonstration of this notion, which may not be omitted, which is Jer. xx. 9. "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name: but his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up within my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." And verse 11. "the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one." With reference to which paragraph, R. Solomon thus glosseth on the formerly-quoted chap. xxiii. 29. דבר נבואה בשבחה בפי הנביא בגבורה היא באה בו "כאש בערת כענין שנאמר ותהי בלבי כאש בערת ואמר ויד "עלו חזקה: "The word of prophecy when it enters into the mouth of the prophet in its strength, it comes upon him like a fire that burneth, according to what is said [in Jer. xx. 9.] and it was in my heart as a burning fire:" [and in Ezek. iii. 13.] "And the hand of the Lord was strong upon me."

I have now done with the main characteristical nature of prophecy, and given those *Τεμάχια* of it which most properly belong to true prophecy; though yet the other two degrees of divine influx (of which hereafter) may also have their share in them.

CH A P. V.

An Enquiry concerning the immediate efficient that represented the prophetic visions to the fancy of the Prophet. That these representations were made in the Prophet's fancy by some angel. This cleared by several passages out of the Jewish monuments, and by testimonies of Scripture.

BEFORE I conclude this present discourse concerning Prophecy properly so called, I think it may be useful to treat a little of two

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things more, that most commonly are to be considered in this degree
of divine inspiration, which we call Prophecy.

The first whereof is, to enquire “ what that *intellectus agens*
“ was, or, if you will, that immediate efficient that represented the
“ propheticall visions to the fancy of the Prophet.”

Secondly, “ What the meaning of those actions is, that are fre-
“ quently attributed to the Prophets, whether they were real, or
“ only imaginary and scenical.”

I shall begin with the first, and enquire, “ By whom these repre-
“ sentations were made in the Prophets imagination, or who ordered
“ the propheticall scene, and brought up all those *Idolums* that
“ therein appeared upon the stage.” For though there be no question
but that it was God himself by whom the whole frame of prophecy
was disposed and originally dispensed, seeing the scope thereof was
to reveal his mind and will; yet the immediate efficient seems not to
be God himself, as perhaps some may think, but indeed an angel:
and so the generality of all the Jewish writers determine. Maimo-
nides’s sense is full for this purpose, both in his “ *De Fundamentis*
“ *Legis*,” and his “ *More Nevochim*.” And perhaps he hath
too universally determined that every apparition of angels imports
presently some propheticall dispensation: which hath made some of
his countrymen by an ἀμερία ἀνβολής to fall too much off from
him into a contrary assertion. His words are these, “ *More*
“ *Nevochim*,” Par. II. c. 41. “ *Scito quòd omnium eorum pro-*
“ *phetarum qui prophetiam sibi factam esse dicunt, quidam eam*
“ *angelo alicui, quidam verò Deo Opt. Max. ascribant & attri-*
“ *buant, licèt per angeli ministerium quoque ipsis obtigerit: de*
“ *quo Sapientes nostri nos erudierunt quando aiunt, ‘Et dixit*
“ *Dominus ad eam (scilicet על יד המלאך h. e. per manus*
“ *angeli), Gen. xxv. 23.’* For so, it seems, the masters expounded
this place (where God reveals to Rebekah her future conception and
progeny) of a propheticall apparition by some angel, though yet all
agree not in it. But it may be worth our while to hear out Maimo-
nides, who pleads the authority of all Jewish antiquity for this opi-
nion that we have now laid down. “ *Insuper, de quocunque*
“ *scriptum occurrit, quòd angelus cum eo locutus, aut quod aliquid*
“ *ipsi à Deo revelatum sit, id nullo alio modo quàm in somnio aut*
“ *visione prophetica factum esse noveris, &c.*” “ Moreover, of
“ whomsoever you read that an angel spoke with him, or that
“ something was revealed to him by God, you are to understand
“ it was performed no other way than by a dream or a propheticall
“ vision. Our wise men have a discourse about the word that
“ came to the prophets, according to what the prophets themselves
“ have declared (that is, concerning the several ways, as Bux-
“ torf expounds it, by which the prophets say the word of God
“ came to them). Now this was (say they) four ways. The first
“ is, when the prophet declares he received the word from an
“ angel

“ angel in a dream or in a vision. Secondly, when he only mentions the words of the angel, without declaring that they came to him in a dream or in a vision; relying upon this known fundamental, viz. ‘ That there is no prophecy revealed but by one of these two ways, whereof God makes mention, saying, ‘ I will make myself known in a vision, and speak to him in a dream.’ Thirdly, when he makes no mention of the angel, but ascribes all to God, as if he alone had conveyed it; yet with this addition, that it came in a vision or in a dream. Fourthly, when the prophet says absolutely, that God spake with him, or said unto him, ‘ Do this, or, speak this,’ making no mention at all either of angel, or vision, or dream; and that because of this known principle and fundamental truth, That there is no prophecy but either in a dream or vision, or by the ministry of an angel.” Thus Maimonides, who, as we see, pretends this to be a known thing, and generally agreed upon by all Jewish antiquity.

But, before we go on to any confirmation of it, it will be requisite a little to see what Nachmanides, his great adversary in this business, alledgeth against him, which I find in his Comment upon Genesis xviii. which chapter Maimonides makes to relate nothing else but a prophetic apparition of three angels to Abraham, which promised a son: they are said to eat and drink with him, and two of them to depart from him to Sodom, to be there entertained by Lot, whom they rescued from the violence of his neighbour-citizens, and led him the next day out of the city, before they brought down fire and brimstone from heaven upon it. All which passages seem to make it evident, that this apparition of angels was real and historical, and not merely prophetic and imaginary. Wherefore Nachmanides, having got this unhappy advantage of his adversary, pursues this mistake of his with another of his own as gross in an opposite way. His words are these, *המשגיח לדאיה מלאך או דיכור* “ He that beholds an angel, or hath any conference with one, is not a prophet: for the business is not so as Maimonides hath determined it, namely, That every prophet receives his prophecy by the ministry of an angel, our Master Moses only accepted: for our Rabbins have told us concerning Daniel and his companions, that they were upon this account more excellent than he, because they were prophets, and he none. And therefore his book is not reckoned amongst the prophets, because he had to do with the angel Gabriel, although he both beheld him, and had conference with him when he was awake.” Thus we see Nachmanides as clearly expungeth all those out of his catalogue of the prophets, to whom any apparition of angels was made, as Maimonides had put them in: and pretends for this the authority of the Talmudists, who for this cause exclude Daniel from the number of the prophets, and, as he would have us believe, reckoned his book among the Hagiographa, because of his converse with the angel Gabriel. But all this is *gratis dictum*, and scarce

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bonâ fide ; for it is manifest that all antiquity reckoned upon Zachary
as a prophet, notwithstanding all his visions are perpetually repre-
sented by angels.

But we shall a little examine that sentence of the Talmudists
which Nachmanides founds his opinion upon, which I find set
down, "Maslecheth Megillah," cap. 1. "in the Gemara," where
the masters gloss on that, Dan. x. 7. "And I Daniel alone saw
the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision ;
but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide
themselves." Here they enquire who those companions of
Daniel were, and then pass their verdict upon him and them.
"מאן נהו אנשים אמר רבי ירמיהו זה חגי וזכריה ומלאכי וכו' What
were those men that were with Daniel? R. Jeremy said, They were
Haggai, Zachary, and Malachi. They excelled Daniel, and
he also excelled them. Herein they excelled him, because they
were prophets, and he none ; and in this he excelled them, that
he beheld a vision, and they none." Thus those masters ; who
indeed deny Daniel to be a prophet, and accordingly his book was
by them reckoned among the Hagiographa, yet they here give no
reason at all for it. But whereas Nachmanides says, that the visions
of angels which Daniel conversed with were real, and not imaginary
or prophetic, it is a manifest elusion, and contrary to the express
words of the text, which relates these apparitions to have been in
his sleep, ch. x. 9, "And when I heard the voice of his words,
then I was in a deep sleep upon my face, and my face towards
the ground." And ch. viii. 18. "Now as he was speaking with
me, I was in a deep sleep." This sleep was upon the *Exit*,
verse 15. of his vision: for so (as we have shewed before) there was
a frequent *μεταστροφή* from a vision which began upon the pro-
phets while they were awake into a prophetic dream. So ch. vii.
1. "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had
a dream, and visions of his head upon his bed ;" and in this
dream and night-vision, as in the other before-mentioned, a man
or angel comes in to expound the matter, verse 15, 16. "I Daniel
was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions
of my head troubled me. I came near to one of them that
stood by, and asked him the truth of all this: so he told me,
and made me know the interpretation of the things."

But that the Talmudists do maintain true Prophecy to have been
communicated by angels, we shall further confirm from one place
which is in "Gemara Beracoth," cap. 9. where the doctors are
brought in comparing two places of Scripture, which seem contra-
dictory. One of them is Numb. xii. 6. "In a dream will I speak
unto him ;" the other is Zech. x. 2. "They have told false
dreams:" which they solve thus, R. Rami said, "It is written
'בחלום אדבר בו וכתיב והלמדת חיווא ידברו' I will speak to him in
a dream ;" and again, 'They have told false dreams'. Now
there is no difficulty at all in this: for the first sort of dreams
came

“came by the hand of an angel* ; and the other by an evil “genius†.” And this opinion is generally followed by the rest of the Jewish writers, commentators and others, who thus compound the difference between those two famous adversaries, Nachmanides and Maimonides, by granting a twofold appearance of angels, the one real, and the other imaginary. And so they say this real vision of angels is a degree inferior to the prophetic vision of them. As we are told by R. Jehudah, in the book “Cofri ;” where having disputed, Maam. III. what hallowed minds they ought to have who maintain commerce with the Deity, he thus goes on, **אם יחזק בחסידותו וכו**, “If a man be very pious, “and be in those places where the divine influence uses to manifest itself, the angels will accompany him with their real presence, “and he shall see them face to face ; yet in an inferior way to that “vision of angels which accompanies the prophetic degree. “Under the second temple, according as men were more endowed “with wisdom, they beheld apparitions, and heard the Bath kol, “which is a degree of sanctity, but yet inferior to the prophetic.” To conclude, R. Bechai makes it an article of faith to believe the existence of angels, for this reason, that angels were the furnishers of the prophetic scene, and therefore to deny them was to deny all prophecy ; so he in “Parasha Terumah,” **לפי שר מלאכים** “because” (faith he) “the divine influx comes “by the ministry of angels, who order and dispose the word in “the mouth of the prophet according to the mind of God : and, if “it were not so, there would be no prophecy ; and, if no prophecy, “no law.” So Jos. Albo, we may remember, defined prophecy by the immediate orderers of it, the angels.

But it is best to consult the Scripture itself in this business, which declares all that way by which it descended from God to the sons of men. The first place which Maimonides, in “More Nevochim,” Par. II. c. 42. brings for confirmation of this opinion, is that of Genesis xviii. 1. with the exposition of R. Chija, which he leaves as a great secret. But that which is more for his and our purpose, is Gen. xxxii. 24. where “Jacob wrestled all night with the angel ;” for so that man was, as Hosea tells us ; and ver. 1. “The angels “of God met Jacob.” Neither doth this interpretation of that *Lutia* between the angel and Jacob, to have been only in a prophetic vision, at all prejudice the historical truth of that event of it, which was Jacob’s halting upon his thigh : for that is no very unusual thing at other times to have some real passions in our bodies represented to us in our dreams then when they first begin. Another place is Jos. v. 13. “Joshua lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold a man stood over against him.” Again, Judges v. 23. Deborah attributes the command she had to curse Meroz, to an angel. “Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord :” which words Kimchi would have to be understood in “a literal sense,”

זרה "for Deborah was
 "a prophetess, and so spake according to prophetic inspiration;"
 and so Rabbi Levi Ben Gersom also expounds it: Onkelos and Rasi,
 with less reason I think, make this angel to be none else but Baruch.
 Though I am not ignorant that sometimes the prophets themselves
 are called angels of God, and thence Malachi the last of them
 had his name; yet we have no such testimony concerning Baruch,
 that ever he was any prophet, but only a judge or commander of the
 military forces. In the first book of Kings, ch. xix. 11, 12. we
 have a large description of this imaginary appearance of angels in
 the several modes of it; "Behold the Lord passed by, and a great
 "and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the
 "rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind: and
 "after the wind an earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, &c." All
 which appearances Jonathan the Targumist expounds by משרית מלאכי
 "armies of angels," which were attended with those terrible phænomena.
 And "the still voice" in which the Lord was, he renders answerably to the rest
 by קל ומשחקי בהשי "the voice of angels praising God in a gentle kind of harmony."
 For though it be there said that "the Lord was in the soft voice," yet
 that paraphrast seems to understand it only of his ambassador: which
 in some places of Scripture is very manifest; as in 2 Kings, ch. i. 3. 15, 16.
 where, verse 3, we find "the angel" delivered to Elijah the message to
 Ahaziah king of Israel, who sent to Baalzebub the God of Ekron to enquire
 about his disease! "But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise,
 go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them,
 Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire
 of Baalzebub." And, verse 16, we have all this message attributed
 "to God himself" by the prophet, as if he had received the dictate
 immediately from God himself: and in Daniel, the Apocalypse, and Zachary,
 we find all things perpetually represented and interpreted by angels.
 And Abarbanel, upon Zachary ii. tells us that several prophets had
 several angels that delivered the heavenly embassy to them, for that every
 prophet was not so well fitted to converse with any kind of angel: אין כל
 נביא מובן לקבל "every prophet was not in a fit capacity of receiving
 "prophetic influence from any angel indifferently; but according to the
 "disposition of the receiver, the degree and quality of an angel was
 "accommodated." But I shall not further pursue this argument. In the
 general, that "the prophetic scene was perpetually ordered by some
 angel," I think it is evident from what hath been already said, which I
 might further confirm from Ezekiel, all whose prophecies about the temple
 are expressly attributed to a man as the actor of them, that is, indeed,
 an angel; for so they used constantly to appear to the prophets in an
 human shape. And likewise Gen. xxviii. 18. in Jacob's vision of a
 ladder that reached up to heaven, we find the angels ascending and
 descending, to intimate

mate that this “scala prophetica,” whereby divine influence descended upon the mind of the prophet, is always filled with angels. From this place compared with Gen. xxxi. 11. Jacob’s vision of Laban’s sheep presented to him by an angel, Philo thus determines in his book *περὶ τῶν θεοπέμπτης εἶναι τὰς ὁνείρας*, ‘Ὁρᾷς ὅτι θεοπέμπτης ὁνείρας ἀναγράφει ὁ θεῖος λόγος, ἢ μόνον τὰς κατὰ τὸ πρεσβύτερον τῶν αἰτιῶν προφαινομένης, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς τῶν ὑποφθίων αὐτῶν καὶ ὁπαδῶν αἰγέλων,’ “You see how “ the Scripture represents such dreams as sent of God, not only “ those that proceed from the first cause [God], but such also as “ come by his ministers, the angels.” But St. Jerome hath given us a more full and ample testimony in this matter, in his Comment on Gal. iii. 19. “The law was ordained by angels in the hand of “ a mediator.” His words are these: “Quod autem ait, Lex “ ordinata per Angelos, hoc vult intelligi, quod in omni Veteri “ Testamento, ubi angelus primum visus refertur, & postea quasi “ Deus loquens inducitur, angelus quidem verè ex ministris pluribus quicumque sit visus, sed illo mediator [Christus] loquatur “ qui dicat, Ego sum Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, & Deus Jacob. “ Nec mirum si Deus loquatur in Angelis, cum etiam per angelos “ qui in hominibus sunt loquatur Deus in prophetis; dicente Zacharia, Et ait angelus qui loquebatur in me, ac deinceps inferente, Hæc dicit Dominus omnipotens.”

We might further add to all this, those visions which we meet with in the New Testament, which, as a thing vulgarly known, were attributed to angels. So Acts xxvii. 23. “There stood by “ me the angel of God this night,” that is, in a prophetic dream. And Acts xii. when the angel of God did really appear to Peter, and bring him out of prison, he could scarce be persuaded of a long time but that all this was a vision, this indeed being the common manner of prophetic vision. And Acts xxiii. when the Pharisees would describe St. Paul as a prophet that had received some vision or revelation from heaven, they phrase it by “the speaking of an “ angel or spirit unto him,” ver. 9. “We find no evil in this “ man; but if an angel or spirit hath spoken to him, let us not “ fight against God.”

C H A P. VI.

The Second Enquiry, What the meaning of those actions is that are frequently attributed to the Prophets, whether they were real, or only imaginary and scenical. What actions of the Prophets were only imaginary and performed upon the stage of fancy. What we are to think of several actions and res gestæ recorded of Hefai, Jeremy, and Ezekiel, in their Prophecies.

THUS we have done with our first enquiry concerning the contriver and orderer of the prophetic stage: that which was acted upon

upon it, no doubt, every one will grant to have been a masking or imaginary business. But there are many times, in the midst of prophetic narrations, some things related to be done by the prophets themselves upon the command of the prophetic voice, which have been generally conceived to have been acted really, the grossest of all not excepted, as Hosea's taking a harlot for his wife, and begetting children, &c. Which conceit Mr. Calvin hath in part happily undermined. But we shall not here doubt to conclude, both of that and all other actions of the prophets which they were enjoined upon the stage of prophecy, that they were only scenical and imaginary; except indeed they were such as of their own nature must have an historical meaning, in which an imaginary performance would not serve the turn. For this purpose it may be worth our while to take notice of what Maimonides hath well determined in this case, More Nev. par. II. cap. 46. "Scias ergo, quemadmodum in somnio accidit, &c. Know therefore, that as it is in a dream, a man thinks that he hath been in this or that country, that he has married a wife there, and continued there for some certain time, that by this wife he has had a son of such a name, of such a disposition, and the like; know" (saith he) that even just so it was with the prophetic parables, as to what the prophets see or do in a prophetic vision. For whatsoever those parables inform us concerning any action the prophet doth, or concerning the space of time between one action and another, or going from one place to another; all this is in a prophetic vision; neither are these actions real to sense, although some particularities may be precisely reckoned up in the writings of the prophets. For because it was well known that it was all done in a prophetic vision; it was not necessary, in the rehearsing of every particularity, to reiterate that it was in a prophetic vision; as it was also needless to inculcate that it was in a dream. But now the vulgar sort of men think that all such actions, journeys, questions and answers, were really and sensibly performed, and not in a prophetic vision. And therefore I have an intention to make plain this business, and shall bring such things as no man shall be able to doubt of; adding thereunto some examples, by which you may be able to judge of the rest which I shall not for the present mention." Thus we see how Maimonides rejects it as a vulgar error, to conceive, that those actions which are commonly attributed to the prophets in the current of their prophecy, their travelling from place to place, their propounding questions and receiving answers, &c. were real things to sense; whereas they were only imaginary, represented merely to the phancy.

But, for a more distinct understanding of this business, we must remember what hath been often suggested, "That the prophetic scene or stage upon which all apparitions were made to the prophet, was his imagination;" and that there all those things which God would have revealed unto him were acted over symbolically, as in a masque, in which divers persons are brought in, amongst
which

which the prophet himself bears a part; and therefore he, according to the exigency of this dramatical apparatus, must, as the other actors, perform his part, sometimes by speaking and reciting things done, propounding questions, sometimes by acting that part which in the drama he was appointed to act by some others; and so not only by speaking, but by gestures and actions come in his due place among the rest; as it is in our ordinary dreams, to use Maimonides's expression of it. And therefore it is no wonder to hear of those things done, which indeed have no historical or real verity; the scope of all being to represent something strongly to the prophet's understanding, and sufficiently to inform it in the substance of those things which he was to instruct that people in to whom he was sent. And so sometimes we have only the intelligible matter of prophecies delivered to us nakedly without the imaginary ceremonies or solemnities. And as this notion of those actions of the prophet that are interweaved with their prophecies is most genuine and agreeable to the general nature of prophecy, so we shall further clear and confirm it in some particulars.

We shall begin with that of Hosea's marrying of Gomer a common harlot, and taking to himself children of whoredoms, which he is said to do a first and second time, chap. i. and chap. iii. which kind of action, however it might be void of true vice, yet it would not have been void of all offence, for a prophet to have thus unequally yoked himself (to use St. Paul's expression) with any such infamous persons, though by way of lawful wedlock, if it had been done really. I know that this way of interpreting both this and other prophetic actions displeaseth Abarbanel, who thinks the literal sense and historical verity of all ought to be entertained, except it be *חזון*, expressed to have been done in a vision; and the general current of our Christian writers till Calvin's time have gone the same way. And to make the literal interpretation here good, R. Solomon and our former Author both tell us, that the ancient Rabbins have determined those prophetic narrations of Hosea to be understood *ממש* literally. The place they refer to is Gem. Pesac. cap. 8. where yet I find no such thing positively concluded by the Talmudists. Indeed they there, after their fashion, expound the place, by inserting a long dialogue between God and the prophet about this matter, but so as that without R. Sol. or Abarbanel's gloss we could no more think their scope was to establish the literal sense, than I think that the prophet himself intended to insinuate the same to us. We shall therefore chuse to follow Abenezra as a more genuine commentator, who in this place and others of the like nature follows Maimonides *ואלו מופת*, making all those transactions to have been only imaginary. For though it be not always positively laid down in these narrations, that the "res gesta" was in a vision; yet the nature and scope of prophecy so requiring that things should thus be acted in imagination, we should rather expect some positive declaration to assure us that they were performed in the history, if indeed it were so.

And therefore in these recitals of prophetic visions we find many times things less coherent than can agree to a true history, as in the narrative of Abraham's vision, Gen. xv. (for so the Rabbins in Pirke R. Eliezer expound that whole chapter to be nothing else) we find ver. 1. that God appeared to Abraham in a vision, and ver. 5. God brings him into the field as if it were after the shutting up of evening, and shews him the stars of heaven; and yet for all this, ver. 12. it was yet day-time, and the sun not gone down; "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham;" and ver. 17. "And it came to pass that when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces." From whence it is manifest that Abraham's going out into the field before to take a view of the stars of heaven, and his ordering of those several living creatures, ver. 9, 10. for a sacrifice, was all performed in a prophetic vision, and upon the stage of his imagination: it being no strange thing to have incoherent junctures of time made in such a way.

So Jeremy xiii. we have there a very precise narrative of Jeremiah's getting a linen girdle, and putting it upon his loins; and after a while he must needs take a long journey to Euphrates, to hide it there in a hole of the rock; and then returning, after many days, makes another weary journey to the same place, to take it out again after it was all corrupted: all which could manifestly be nothing else but merely imaginary; the scope thereof being to imprint this more deeply upon the understanding of the prophet, that the house of Judah and Israel, which was nearly knit and united to God, should be destroyed and ruined.

The same prophet, ch. xviii. is brought in, going to the house of a potter, to take notice how he wrought a piece of work upon the wheel; and when the vessel he intended was all marred, that then he made of his clay another vessel. And ch. xix. he is brought in as taking the ancients of the people and the ancients of the priests along with him into the valley of the son of Hinnom, with a potter's earthen bottle under his arm, and there breaking it in pieces in the midst of them.

In this last chapter it is very observable how the scheme of speech is altered, when the prophet relates a real history concerning himself, ver. 14. speaking of himself in the third person, as if now he were to speak of somebody else, and not of a prophet or his actions; for so we read, ver. 14. "Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, &c." The like change of the person we find ch. xxviii. ver. 10. where a formal story is told of some things that passed between Jeremiah and Hananiah the false prophet, who, in the presence of all the people, broke Jeremiah's yoke from off his neck: for it seems to have been a wonted thing for the prophets by bonds and yokes to type out unto the people victory or captivity in war. Not unlike is that we read of Zedekiah the false prophet, 1 Kings xxii. who made himself horns of iron, when he prophesied to Ahab his prosperity

perity against the Syrians at Ramoth Gilead, vulgarly to represent to him the success he should have against his enemies. But, in all this business, the mode of Jeremiah's language insinuates a literal sense, by speaking altogether in the third person, as if the relation concerned somebody else, and not himself; and so must be of some real thing, and that which to sense and observation had its reality, and not only a reality in apprehension or imagination. So ch. xxxii. we seem to have an insinuation of a real history in Jeremiah's purchase of a field of Hanameel his uncle's son, from the mode of expression which is there observable.

But other times we meet with things graphically described with all the circumstantial pomp of the business, when yet it could be nothing else but a dramatical thing; as ch. xxxv. where the prophet goes and finds out the chief of the Rechabites particularly described, and brings them into such a particular chamber as is there set forth by all its bounds, and there sets pots and cups full of wine before them, and bids them drink wine. Just in the same mode with this we have another story told, ch. xxv. 15. and 17, &c. of his taking a wine-cup from God, and his carrying it up and down to all nations far and near, Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, and the kings and princes thereof; to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, princes, people; to all the Arabians, and kings of the land of Uz; to the kings of the land of the Philistines, Edom, Moab, Ammon; the Kings of Tyre and Sidon, and of the isles beyond the sea, Dedan, Tema, Buz; the kings of Zimri, of the Medes and Persians, and all the kings of the North: and all these, he said, he made to drink of this cup. And in this fashion, ch. xxvii. he is sent up and down with yokes, to put upon the necks of several kings: all which can have no other sense than that which is merely imaginary, though we be not told that all this was acted only in a vision, for the nature of the thing would not permit any real performance thereof.

The like we may say of Ezekiel's "res gestæ," his eating a roll given him of God, ch. iii. and ch. iv. It is especially remarkable how ceremoniously all things are related concerning his taking a tile, and portraying the city of Jerusalem upon it, his laying siege to it; all which I suppose will be evident to have been merely dramatical, if we carefully examine all things in it, notwithstanding that God tells him he should in all this be a sign to the people. Which is not so to be understood, as if they were to observe in such real actions in a sensible way what their own fates should be; for he is here commanded to lie continually before a tile 390 days, which is full 12 months, upon his left side, and after that 40 more upon his right, and to bake his bread that he should eat all this while with dung, &c.

So ch. v. he is commanded to take a barber's razor, and to shave his head and beard, then to weigh his hair in a pair of scales, and divide it into three parts; and after the days of his siege should be fulfilled, spoken of before, then to burn a third part of it in the
midst

midst of the city, and to finite about the other third with a knife, and to scatter the other third to the wind. All which as it is most unlikely in itself ever to have been really done, so was it against the law of the priests to shave the corners of their heads and the corners of their beards, as Maimonides observes. But that Ezekiel himself was a priest, is manifest from ch. i. ver. 3. Upon these passages of Ezekiel, Maimonides hath thus soberly given his judgement, "*More Nevochim*," Par. II. c. 46. "*Abfit ut Deus prophetas suos stultis vel ebriis similes reddat, eosque stultorum aut furiosorum actiones facere jubeat: præterquam quòd præceptum illud ultimum legi repugnasset, &c.*" Far be it from God to render his prophets like to fools and drunken men, and to prescribe them the actions of fools and mad men; besides that this last injunction would have been inconsistent with the law; for Ezekiel was a great priest, and therefore obliged to the observation of these two negative precepts, viz. of not shaving the corners of his head and corners of his beard; and therefore this was done only in a prophetic vision." The same sentence likewise he passeth upon that story of Eisaiah, ch. xx. 3. his walking naked and bare-foot, wherein Eisaiah was no otherwise a sign to Ægypt and Æthiopia, or rather Arabia, where he dwelt not, and so could not more literally be a type therein, than Ezekiel was here to the Jews.

Again, ch. xii. we read of Ezekiel's removing his household-stuff in the night, as a type of the captivity, and of his digging with his hands through the wall of his house, and of the people's coming to take notice of this strange action, with many other uncouth ceremonies of the whole business, which carry no shew of probability; and yet, ver. 6. God declares upon this to him, "I have set thee for a sign to the house of Israel;" and ver. 9. "Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, 'what doest thou?'" As if all this had been done really; which indeed seems to be nothing else but a prophetic scheme. Neither was the prophet any real sign, but only imaginary, as having the type of all those fates symbolically represented in his phancy which were to befall the Jews; which sense Kimchi, a genuine commentator, follows, with the others mentioned. And, it may be, according to this same notion is that in ch. xxiv. to be understood of the death of the prophet's wife, with the manner of those funeral solemnities and obsequies which he performed for her.

But we shall proceed no further in this argument, which I hope is by this time sufficiently cleared, that we are not in any prophetic narratives of this kind to understand any thing else but the history of the visions themselves which appeared to them, except we be led, by some farther argument of the reality of the thing in a way of sensible appearance, to determine it to have been any sensible thing,

C H A P. VII.

Of that degree of divine inspiration properly call'd Ruach hakkodesh, i. e. The Holy Spirit. The nature of it described out of Jewish antiquities. Wherein this Spiritus Sanctus differed from prophecy strictly so called, and from the spirit of holiness in purified souls. What books of the Old Testament were ascribed by the Jews to Ruach hakkodesh. Of the Urim and Thummim.

THUS we have done with that part of divine inspiration which was more technically and properly by the Jews called Prophecy. We shall now a little search into that which is hagiographical, or, as they call it, "The dictate of the Holy Spirit;" in which the book of Psalms, Job, the works of Solomon and others, are comprised. This we find very appositely thus defined by Maimonides, More Nevochim, Par. II. c. 45. "Cum homo in se sentit rem vel facultatem quampiam exoriri, & super se quiescere, quæ eum impellit ad loquendum, &c. When a man perceives some power to arise within him, and rest upon him, which urgeth him to speak, so that he discourse concerning the sciences or arts, and utter psalms or hymns, or profitable and wholesome rules of good living, or matters political and civil, or such as are divine; and that, whilst he is waking, and hath the ordinary vigour and use of his senses, this is such a one of whom it is said, that he speaks by the Holy Spirit." In this definition we may seem to have the strain of the book of Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes fully decyphered to us. In like manner we find this degree of inspiration described by R. Albo. Maam. III. c. 10. after he had set down the other degrees superior to it, יפתח לאיש טה טער אהר שלא ושער, "Now to explain to you what is that other door of divine influx, through which none can enter by his own natural ability; it is when a man utters words of wisdom, or song, or divine praise, in pure and elegant language, besides his wont; so that every one that knows him admires him for this excellent knowledge and composure of words; but yet he himself knows not from whence this faculty came to him, but is as a child that learns a tongue, and knows not from whence he had this faculty. Now the excellence of this degree of divine inspiration is well known to all, for it is the same with that which is called the Holy Spirit." Or, if you please, we shall render these definitions of our former Jewish doctors in the words of Proclus, who hath very happily set forth the nature of this piece of divine inspiration, according to their mind, in these words, lib. V. in "Plat. Tim." Ὁ δὲ χαρακτὴρ ἐνθουσιαστικὸς, διαλάμπων τὰ νοεαῖς ἐπιβολαῖς, καθαρὸς τε καὶ ἁγνός, ὃ ἀπὸ πατρὸς τελειούμενός τῶν Θεῶν, ἐξηλλαγμένός τε καὶ ὑπερέχων τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἐννοιῶν, ἁγρός δὲ ἑμῷ καὶ καθαπληντικός, καὶ χαρίτων αἰάμετος, κάλλος τε πλήρης, καὶ

καὶ σύντομον ἅμα καὶ ἀπηνεικισμένον. "This degree or enthusiastical character, shining so bright with the intellectual influences is pure and venerable, receiving its perfection from the father of the Gods, being distinct from human conceptions, and far transcending them, always conjoining with delightfulness and amazement, full of beauty and comeliness, concise, yet withall exceeding accurate."

This kind therefore of divine inspiration was always more pacate and serene than the other of prophecy, neither did it so much fatigue and act upon the imagination. For though these Hagiographi, or holy writers, ordinarily expressed themselves in parables and similitudes, which is the proper work of fancy; yet they seem only to have made use of such a dress of language to set off their own sense of divine things, which in itself was more naked and simple, the more advantageously, as we see commonly in all other kind of writings. And seeing there was no labour of the imagination in this way of Revelation, therefore it was not communicated to them by any dreams or visions, but while they were waking, and their senses were in their full vigour, their minds calm: it breathing upon them, Enn. vi. lib. 9. c. 11. ὡς ἐν γαλήνῃ, as Plotinus describes his pious enthusiast, Ἀρπασθεὶς ἢ ἐνθουσιάσας ἡσυχῇ ἐν ἐρήμῳ καλίστασι γένηται, ἀτρεμεῖ τῇ αὐτῇ ἐστὶ ἐδαμῆ ἀποκλίνων. For indeed this enthusiastical spirit seated itself principally in the higher and purer faculties of the soul, which were ὥσπερ ἀλάτγεια πρὸς αὐτὴν, that I may allude to the ancient opinion of Empedocles, who held there were two suns, the one archetypal, which was always in the inconspicible hemisphere of the world, but the beams thereof shining upon this world's sun were reflected to us, and so further enlightened us.

Now this kind of inspiration, as it always acted pious souls into strains of devotion, or moved them strongly to dictate matters of true piety and goodness, did manifest itself to be of a divine nature; and as it came in abruptly upon the minds of those holy men without courting their private thoughts, but transported them from that temper of mind they were in before, so that they perceived themselves captivated by the power of some higher light than that which their own understanding commonly poured out upon them, they might know it to be more immediately from God.

For indeed that seems to be the main thing wherein this Holy Spirit differed from that constant spirit and frame of holiness and goodness dwelling in hallowed minds, that it was too quick, potent, and transporting a thing, and was a kind of vital form to that light of divine reason which they were perpetually possessed of. And therefore sometimes it runs out into a foresight or prediction of things to come, though it may be those previsions were less understood by the prophet himself; as (if it were needful) we might instance in some of David's prophecies, which seem to have been revealed to him not so much for himself (as the apostle speaks) as
for

for us. But it did not always spend itself in strains of devotion or dictates of virtue, wisdom, and prudence; and therefore (if I may take leave here to express my conjecture) I should think the ancient Jews called this degree "*Spiritus Sanctus*," not because it flows from the third person in the Trinity (which I doubt they thought not of in this business), but because of the near affinity and alliance it hath with that spirit of holiness and true goodness that always lodgeth in the breasts of good men. And this seems to be insinuated in an old proverbial speech of the Jewish masters, quoted by Maimonides in the fore-quoted place, "*Majestas divina habitat super eum, & loquitur per Spiritum Sanctum*." Though some think it might be so called as being the lowest degree of divine inspiration: for sometimes the ancientest monuments of Jewish learning call all prophecy by the name of "*Spiritus Sanctus*." So in Pirke R. Eliezer, c. 39. "R. Phineas inquit, requievit *Spiritus Sanctus* super Josephum ab ipsius juventute usque ad diem obitus ejus, atque direxit eum in omnem sapientiam, &c. The "Holy Spirit rested upon Joseph from his youth till the day of his death, and guided him into all wisdom, &c." Though it may be all that might be but an hagiographical spirit; for indeed the Jews are wont, as we shewed before, to distinguish Joseph's dreams from prophetic. But this "*Spiritus Sanctus*" in the same chapter (to put all out of doubt) is attributed to Isaiah and Ezekiel, which were known prophets; and chap. xxxiii. "R. Phineas ait, postquam omnes illi interfecti fuerant, viginti annis in Babel requievit *Spiritus Sanctus* super Ezechielem, & eduxit eum ex convalle dora, & ostendit ei multa ossa, &c." And among those five things that the Jews always supposed the second temple to be inferior to the first in, one was the want of the *רוח הקודש* "*Spiritus Sanctus*," or spirit of prophecy.

But we are here to consider this "*Spiritus Sanctus*" more strictly, and as we have formerly defined it out of Jewish antiquity. And here we shall first shew what books of the Old Testament were ascribed to this degree by the Jews. The Old Testament was by the Jews divided into *חידה נביאים וכתובים* "the law, the prophets, and the *ἀγιογرافα*." And this division is insinuated in Luke xxiv. 44. "And Jesus said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written concerning me in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms;" where by the Psalms may seem to be meant the Hagiographa; for the writers of these Hagiographa might be termed Psalmodists, for some reasons which we shall touch upon hereafter in this discourse. But to return; the Old Testament being anciently divided into these parts, it may not be amiss to consider the order of these parts as it is laid down by the Talmudical doctors in "*Gemara Bava Bathra*," c. 1. towards the end, *חנו רבנן סדרן של נביאים וכו'* "Our doctors have delivered unto us this order of the prophets, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the twelve Prophets,"

"the

"the first of which is Hosea," for so they understand those words in Hof. i. 2. *החלת רבר יהוה בחושן* "Deus imprimis locutus est per Hoseam." The same Gemarists go on to lay down the order of the *ἀποκρίματα* thus; Ruth, the book of Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, the Chronicles; and these the Jews did ascribe to the Ruach hakodesh. But why Daniel should be reckoned amongst the *כתובים*, and not amongst *נביאים* "the Prophets," I can see no reason, seeing the strain of it wholly argues the nature of the prophetical degree spending itself in dreams and visions, though those were joined with more obscurity (it being then the *crepusculum* of the prophetical day, which had long been upon the horizon of the Jewish church) than in the other prophets. And therefore whatever the latter Jews here urge, for thus ranking up Daniel's books with the other *כתובים*, yet, seeing they give us no traditional reason which their ancestors had for so doing, I should rather think it to have been first of all some fortuitous thing which gave an occasion to this after-mistake, as I think it is.

But to pass on; besides those books mentioned, there were some things else among the Jews usually attributed to this "Spiritus Sanctus:" and so Maimonides, in the forementioned place, tells us that Eldad and Medad, and all the high priests who asked counsel by Urim and Thummim, spake "per Spiritum Sanctum," so that it was a character enthusiastical whereby they gave judicial answers by looking upon the stones of the high priests breast-plate, to those that came to enquire of God by them. And so R. Bechai in Parash *תעור* speaks of "one of the degrees of the Holy Spirit which was "superior to Bath Kol. (i. e. filia vocis), and inferior to prophecy." *חיה מדרג למדרגות רוח הקודש למעלה מן ברת קול ולמטה מן הנבואה*. It will not be amiss, by a short digression, to shew what this Urim and Thummim was; and we may take it out of our former author R. Bechai, who for the substance agrees with the generality and best of the Jewish writers herein. It was, as he there tells us, done in this manner. The high priest stood before the ark, and he that came to enquire of the Urim and Thummim stood behind him, enquiring with a submissive voice, as if he had been at his private prayers, "Shall I do so, or so?" Then the high priest looked upon the letters which were engaven upon the stones of the breast-plate, and by the concurrence of an enthusiastical spirit of divination of his own (I may add thus much upon the former reasons to that which he there speaks) with some modes whereby those letters appeared, he shaped out his answer. But for those that were allowed to enquire at this oracle, they were none else but either the king or the whole congregation, as we are told in "Massec. Sotah," *אין שואלין אלא צבור או מלך*, "None may enquire of it but the "congregation of the people, or the king;" by which it seems it was a political oracle.

But

But to return to our argument in hand, viz. What pieces of divine writ are ascribed to the רוח הקודש, or "Spiritus Sanctus;" we must further know that the Jews were wont to reckon all those Psalms or Songs which we any where meet with in the Old Testament among the כתובים. For though they were penned by the prophets, yet because they were not the proper results of a "visum propheticum," therefore they were not "true prophecy;" for they have a common tradition, that the prophets did not always prophesy "eodem gradu," but sometime in a higher, sometime in a lower degree, as among others we are fully taught by Abarbanel, in Esay iv. upon occasion of that songs of Esay, יבא ער אחך "The same prophécies sometime in the form of the supreme prophetical degree, and sometime in a lower degree, או ברוח הקודש בלבד or by the Holy Spirit only." And thus having made his way, he tells us that common notion they had amongst them, "that all songs were dictated by this Spiritus Sanctus, שכל שירי שתמצא בדברי הנביאים ובו Every song that is found in the writings of the prophets, it was such a thing as was ordered or dictated by the pen-men themselves, together with the superintendency of the Holy Spirit: forasmuch as they received them not in that higher way which is called "Prophecy, as all visions were received, for all visions were perfect prophecy." But the author goes on further to declare his, and indeed the common opinion, concerning any such song, that it was not the proper work of God himself, but the work of the prophet's own spirit, ולכן אינה מפעל ה כי אם מפעל הנביא the prophet's own spirit. Yet we must suppose the prophet's Spirit enabled by the conjunction of divine help with it, as he puts in the caution, שילוח אליו רוח ועזר אלהים "the spirit of God and his divine assistance did still cleave unto the prophet, and was present with him." For, as he tells us, the prophets, being so much accustomed to divine visions as they were, might be able sometime "per vigiliam," without any prophetical vision, to speak excellently by the Holy Ghost, בופי המליאה והפלגת המשל "with very elegant language, and admirable similitudes." And this he there proves from hence, that these songs are commonly attributed to the prophet himself, and not to God, there being so much of the work of the prophet's own spirit in them, לכן יחסר החתוב חמיר אליהם לא לשם יתברך כי הנר אמר בשירת הים או ישור מושה וגו "Wherefore the Scripture commonly attributes these songs to the prophets themselves, and not unto God; and accordingly speaks of the song at the Red Sea," Exod. xv. Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song, "that is, Moses and the children of Israel did compose and order it." So in the song at Beer-Elm, "Then sang Israel this song," Numb. xxi. 17. So in Moses's song in the latter end of Deuteronomy, which was to be preserved as a memorial, the conclusion runs, "Set your

“ hearts upon all those words, אשר אנכי מעיר בכם היום, “ which I testify to you this day,” Deut. xxxii. 46. So all those Psalms which are supposed to have been composed by David are perpetually ascribed unto him, and the rest of them that were composed by others are in like manner ascribed unto them; whereas the prophetic strain is very different, always intitling God to it, and so is brought in with such kind of prologues [“ The word of the Lord”], or [“ The hand of the Lord”], or the like.

But enough of that: yet seeing we are fallen now upon the original author of these divine songs and hymns, it will not be amiss to take a little notice of the frequency of this Degree of Prophecy, which is by songs and hymns composed by an enthusiastical spirit, among the Jews. We find many of these prophets besides David, who were authors of sundry Psalms bound up together with his; for we must not think all are his: as after the 72d Psalm we have eleven together which are ascribed to Asaph, the 88th to Heman, the 89th to Ethan, some to Jeduthun, and very many are “ incerti authoris,” as it seems, being anonymous. Thus Kimchi, in his Preface to the Psalms, and the rest of the Hebrew Scholiasts, suppose divers authors to have come in for their particular songs in that book.

And these divine enthusiasts were commonly wont to compose their songs and hymns at the founding of some one musical instrument or other, as we find it often suggested in the Psalms. So Plutarch, lib. *περὶ τῆς μὴ χρεῖν ἑμμελεῖν ὡς τῇ Πυθίᾳ*, describes the dictate of the oracle anciently, *ὡς ἐν μέτρῳ καὶ ὄρχῳ, πλασμασί καὶ μίμναις ὀνομάτων, καὶ μετ’ αὐτῶν*, “ how that it was uttered in verse, “ in pomp of words, similitudes, and metaphors, at the sound of “ a pipe.” Thus we have Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, set forth in this prophetic preparation, xxv. 1. Moreover “ David and the “ Captain of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, “ and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with “ harps, &c.” Thus R. Sal. expounds the place, *בשהו מנגינים בבלי שירה הללו היו מתנבאים רוגמא באליעזר* “ When they “ played upon their musical instruments they prophesied, after “ the manner of Elifha, who said, ‘ Bring me a minstrel,’ 2 Kings iii. And in the fore-mentioned place ver. 3. upon those words [“ who “ prophesied with a harp”], he thus glosseth, *כשהו מנגינים בכינור מומרי הוראה ומומרי הלליות היה מתנבא:* “ As they sounded “ upon the harp the Psalms of praise and the Hallelujahs, Jeduthun “ their father prophesied.” And this sense of this place I think is much more genuine than that which a late author of our own would fasten upon it, viz. that this prophesying was nothing but singing of Psalms. For it is manifest that these prophets were not mere singers, but composers, and such as were truly called prophets or enthusiasts: so ver. 5. Heman is expressly called the King’s Seer; the like in 2 Chron. xxix. 30. and ch. xxxv. 15. of Asaph,

Asaph, Heman, and Juduthun, חֲזוּן הַמֶּלֶךְ upon which our former commentator glosseth thus, כֹּל אֶחָד וְאַחֵר הָיָה חוֹרֵה, “unusquisque eorum erat propheta.” It is true, the poets are anciently called “vates;” but that is no good argument why a singer should be called a prophet: for it is to be considered that a poet was a composer, and upon that account by the ancients called “vates,” or a prophet, and that because they generally thought all true poets were transported. So Plato, in his “Phædrus,” makes three kinds of fury, viz. enthusiastical, amatorious, and poetical. But of this matter we shall speak more under the next head, which we are in a manner unawares fallen upon, which is to enquire in general into the qualification of all kind of prophets.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the Dispositions antecedent and preparatory to Prophecy. That the qualifications which did fit a man for the Prophetical Spirit were such as these, viz. Inward piety, true wisdom, a pacate and serene temper of mind, and due cheerfulness of spirit; in opposition to vitiousness, mental crazedness and inconsistency, unsubdued passions, black melancholy, and dull sadness. This illustrated by several instances in Scripture. That Music was greatly advantageous to the Prophets and Holy men of God, &c. What is meant by Saul's Evil Spirit.

OUR next business is, to discourse of those several qualifications that were to render a man fit for the spirit of prophecy: for we must not think that any man might suddenly be made a prophet: this gift was not so fortuitously dispensed as to be communicated without any discrimination of persons. And this indeed all sorts of men have generally concluded upon; and therefore the old Heathens themselves, that only sought after a spirit of divinations, were wont in a solemn manner to prepare and fit themselves for receiving the influx thereof, as R. Albo hath truly observed, Maam. III. c. 8. חָיוּ הָאוֹמוֹת הַקּוֹדְמוֹת עוֹשִׂים צוּרוֹת וְכוּ “The ancient Gentiles “made themselves images, and offered prayers and frankincense to “the stars, that by this means they might draw down a spiritual “influence from some certain stars upon their image. For this “influence slides down from the body of the star upon the man “himself, who is also corporeal, and by this means he foretells what “shall come to pass.” And thus, as he further observes, the necromancers themselves were wont to use many solemn rites and ceremonies to call forth the souls of any dead men into themselves, whereby they might be able to presage future things. But to come more closely to our present argument.

The qualifications which the Jewish doctors suppose necessarily antecedent to render any one “habilem ad prophetandum” are “true probity and piety;” and this was the constant sense and

opinion of all of them universally, not excluding the vulgar themselves. Thus Abarbanel, in Præfat. in 12 Proph. חסירות מבאי לדור הקורש "Pietas inducit Spiritum Sanctum." The like we find in Maimonides, "More Nevochim," par. II. c. 32. who yet thinks this was not enough: and therefore he reckons up this as a vulgar error, which yet he says some of their doctors were carried away withal, "Quod Deus aliquem eligat & mittat, nullâ habitâ "ratione an sit sapiens, &c." "That God may chuse of men "whom he pleaseth, and send him, it matters not whether he be "wise and learned, or unlearned and unskilful, old or young, only "that this is required, that he be a virtuous, good, and honest man: "for hitherto there was never any that could say that God did cause "the Divine Majesty to dwell in a vitious person, unless he had first "reformed himself."

But Maimonides himself rather prefers the opinion of the wise sages and philosophers of the Heathens than of these vulgar masters, which required also some perfection in the nature of him that should be set apart for prophecy, augmented with study and industry; "Whence it cannot be that a man should go to-bed no prophet, "and rise the next day a prophet (as he there speaks), 'quemad- "modum homo qui inopinatò aliquid invenit." And a little after he adds, "Fatuos & hujus terræ filios quod attinet, non magis, nostro "judicio, prophetare possunt, quàm asinus aut rana."

These perfections then, which Maimonides requires as preparatory dispositions to render a man a prophet, are of three sorts, viz. 1. Acquisite or Rational; 2. Natural or Animal; lastly, Moral. And according to the difference of these he distinguisheth the degrees of prophecy, c. 36. "Has autem tres perfectiones, &c." "As to these three perfections which we have here comprized, "viz. the perfection of the rational faculty acquired by study, "the perfection of the imaginative faculty by birth, and the per- "fection of manners or virtuous qualities by purifying and free- "ing the heart and affections from all sensual pleasures, from all "pride, and from all foolish and pestilent desire of glory; as to these "I say, it is evident that they are differently, and not in the same "degree, participated by men: and according to such different mea- "sures of participation the degrees of the prophets are also to be "distinguished."

Thus Maimonides, who indeed in all this did but aim at this technical notion of his, that all prophecy is the proper result of these perfections, as a form arising out of them all as out of its elements compounded together. For it is plain that he thought there was a kind of prognostic virtue in souls themselves, which was in this manner to be excited; which was the opinion of some philosophers, among which Plutarch lays down his sense in this manner, according to the minds of many others; * Ἡ ψυχὴ τὴν μαντικὴν ἐκ ἐπικτᾶται δυνάμιν ἐκβάσσει τῷ σώματι ὥσπερ νέφες, ἀλλ' ἔχουσα καὶ νῦν, τυφλῆται δὲ διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ θνητὸν ἀνάμειξιν αὐτῆς καὶ σύνχυσιν,

* Lib. περὶ τῶν ἐκλεισσομένων χρηστηρίων.

“ The soul doth not then first of all attain a prophetic energy
 “ when it leaves the body as a cloud ; but it now hath it already ;
 “ only she is blind of this eye, because of her concretion with this
 “ mortal body.” This philosopher’s opinion Maimonides was more
 “ than prone to, however he would dissemble it, and therefore he
 speaks of an impotency to prophecy, supposing all those three qua-
 lifications named before, as of the suspension of the act of some
 natural faculty. So chap. xxxii. “ *Meo judicio res hinc se habet*
 “ *sicut in miraculis, &c.*” “ In my judgement,” saith he, “ the
 “ matter here is just so as it is in miracles, and bears proportion
 “ with them. For natural reason requires, that he who by his
 “ nature is apt to prophecy, and is diligently taught and instructed,
 “ and of fit age, that such a one should prophecy ; but he that
 “ notwithstanding cannot do so, is like to one that cannot move his
 “ hand, as Jeroboam, or one that cannot see, as those that could
 “ not see the tents of the King of Syria (as it is in the story of
 “ Elisha).” And again, chap. xxxvi. he further beats upon this
 “ string, “ *Si vir quidam ita comparatus fuerit, nullum dubium est,*
 “ *si facultas ejus imaginatrix (quæ in summo gradu perfectæ est,*
 “ *& influentiam ab intellectu secundum perfectionem suam specula-*
 “ *tivam accipit) laboraverit & in operatione fuerit, illum non nisi*
 “ *res divinas & admirandas apprehensurum, nihil præter Deum &*
 “ *ejus angelos visurum, nullius denique rei scientiam habiturum &*
 “ *curaturum, nisi earum quæ veræ sunt & quæ ad communem ho-*
 “ *minum spectant utilitatem.*” This opinion of Maimonides I
 find not any where entertained, but only by the author of the book
 Cozri. That which seems to have led him into this conceit was
 his mistaken sense (it may be) of some passages in the story of the
 kings that speak of “ the schools of the Prophets,” and the like, of
 which more hereafter.

But I know no reason sufficient to infer any such thing as the
 prophetic spirit from the highest improvement of natural or moral
 endowments. And I cannot but wonder how Maimonides could
 reconcile all this with the right notion of prophecy, which must
 of necessity include a divine inspiration, and therefore may freely
 be bestowed by God where and upon whom he pleaseth. Though
 indeed common reason will teach us, that it is not likely that God
 would extraordinarily inspire any men, and send them thus specially
 authorized by himself to declare his mind authentically to them,
 and dictate what his truth was, who were themselves vitious and of
 unhallowed lives ; and so indeed the Apostle Peter, 2 Epist. ch. i.
 tells us plainly, they were “ holy men of God who spake as they
 “ were moved by the Holy Ghost.” Neither is it probable that
 those who were any way of crazed minds, or who were inwardly of
 inconsistent tempers by reason of any perturbation, could be very
 fit for these serene impressions. A troubled fancy could no more
 receive these ideas of divine truth to be impressed upon it, and clearly
 reflect them to the understanding, than a cracked glass or troubled
 water can reflect sincerely any image to be made upon them. And

therefore the Hebrew doctors universally agree in this rule, "That the spirit of prophecy never rests upon any but a holy and wise man, one whose passions are allayed." So the Talmud Massech Sanhedrin, as it is quoted by R. Albo, Maam. III. c. 10. ובעל קומה (i. e.) "The spirit of prophecy never resides but upon a man of wisdom and fortitude, as also upon a rich and great man."

The two last qualifications in this rule Maimonides, in his "Fundamenta legis," hath left out, and indeed it is full enough without them. But those other two qualifications of wisdom and fortitude are constantly laid down by them in this argument. And so we find it ascribed to the author of this canon, who is said to be R. Jochanan, c. 4. "Gem. Nedar." אמר ר' יוחנן אין הקדש (i. e.) R. Jochanan says, "God doth not make his Schechina to reside upon any but a rich and humble man, a man of fortitude, all which we learn from the example of Moses our master." Where by fortitude they mean nothing else but that power whereby a good man subdues his animal part; for so, I suppose, I may safely translate that solution of theirs which I have sometime met with, and I think in "Pirke Avoth," מיניבור הכוכש יצר הרע "Who is the man of fortitude? It is he that subdues his figmentum malum," by which they meant nothing else but the sensual or animal part: of which more in another discourse. And thus they give us another rule as it were paraphrastical upon the former, which I find "Gem. Schab." c. 2. where, glancing at that contempt which the wise man in Ecclesiastes cast upon mirth and laughter, they distinguish of a twofold mirth, the one divine, the other mundane, and then sum up many of these mundane and terrene affections which this Holy Spirit will not reside with, לא שבינה שורה לא מתוך עצבות ולא מתוך עצלות "The divine presence, or 'Spiritus Sanctus,' doth not reside where there is grief and dull sadness, laughter, and lightness of behaviour, impertinent talk or idle discourse; but with due and innocuous cheerfulness it loves to reside, according to that which is written concerning Elisha, 'Bring me now a minstrel: and it came to pass when the minstrel played, the hand of the Lord was upon him,' 2 Kings iii." Where we see that temper of mind principally required by them is a free cheerfulness, in opposition to all griefs, anger, or any other sad and melancholy passions. So "Gem. Pefac." c. 6. כל אדם שהוא כועס אם חכם הוא חכמתו מסתלקת ממנו אם נביא הוא ובוואתו מסתלקת ממנו "Every man when he is in passion, if he be a wise man, his wisdom is taken from him; if a prophet, his prophecy."

The first part of this aphorism they there declare by the example of Moses, who they say prophesied not in the wilderness after the return of the spies that brought an ill report of the land of Canaan, by reason of his indignation against them: and the last part from the example of the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings iii. 15. of which more hereafter.

hereafter. Thus, in the book Zohar, wherein most of the ancient Jewish traditions are recorded, col. 408. **הא רחמינן קשביתא לא** ' Behold, we plainly see that the divine presence doth not reside with sadness, but with chearfulness: if there " be no chearfulness, it will not abide there; as it is written concerning Elisha, who said, ' Give me now a minstrel.' But from " whence learn we that the spirit of God will not reside with heaviness? From the example of Jacob, for that, all that while he " grieved for Joseph, the Shechinah or the Holy Spirit did forsake " him." For so they had also a common tradition, that Jacob prophesied not that time while his grief for the loss of his son Joseph remained with him. So L. Tosiphta, **אין שכינה שורה מתוך עאבות** " The spirit of prophecy dwells not with " sadness, but with chearfulness." I will not here dispute the punctualness of these traditions concerning Moses and Jacob, though I doubt not but the main scope of them is true, viz. that the spirit of prophecy used not to reside with any black or melancholy passions, but required a serene and pacate temper of mind, it being itself of a mild and gentle nature; as it was well observed concerning the Holy Ghost in another notion by Tertullian, in his " De Spectaculis," " Deus præcepit Spiritum Sanctum, utpote pro naturæ suæ " bono tenerum & delicatum, tranquillitate & lenitate, & quiete & " pace tractare; non furore, non bile, non irâ, non dolore in- " quietare."

Now according to this notion I think we have gained some light for the further understanding of some passages in Psalm li. which the Chaldee paraphrast and Hebrew commentators also understand of the spirit of prophecy which was taken from David in that time of his " sorrow and grief of mind," upon the reflection of his shameful miscarriage in the matter of Uriah; and this is called, ver. 12. **רוח נריבה** " a free spirit, or a spirit of alacrity and " liberty of mind, acting by generous and noble and free impulses upon it:" and, ver. 8. it paraphrased by joy and gladness, as being that temper of mind which is most liberally moved upon and acted; as likewise, ver. 12. a like periphrasis is used of it, " the " joy of God's salvation;" and, ver. 10. David thus prayeth for the restoration of it to him, and the establishing him in the firm possession of it, **ורוח נכון חרש** " Create in me a clean heart, O God, " **ורוח נכון חרש** and renew a fixed spirit within me." As if he had said, " thy Holy Spirit of prophecy dwells in no unhallowed minds, but " with purity and holiness; and when these are violated, that presently departs; the holy and the impure spirit cannot converse " together: therefore cleanse my heart of all pollution, that this " divine guest, being restored to me, may find a constant habitation within me." And thus both Rasi and Abenezra gloss on this place; but especially R. Kimchi, who pursues this sense very largely: and so before them the Talmudists had expounded it, " Gem.

“Joma,” c. 2. where they thus descant upon those words, ver. 11. “Take not thy Holy Spirit from me,” and tell us how David was punished by leprosy and double excommunication; one from this spirit, ששה חדשים נצטרע דויד ופרשו הימנו סנהדרון ונסתלקה which words I find most corruptly translated by Vorstius in his comment upon Maimonides’s “Fundamenta legis.” I should therefore thus render them in their native and genuine sense, “Per sex menses erat David leprosus (viz. propter peccatum in negotio Uriæ admissum), & separabant se ab eo viri synagogæ magnæ, atque ablata est ab eo Shechinah (i. e. spiritus propheticus). Primum constat ex Psalm. cxix. ubi dicitur, Revertantur ad me timentes te, & scientes testimonia tua:’ alterum ex Psalm. li. ubi dicitur, Fac revertatur ad me lætitia salutis tuæ.”

But it is now time to look a little into that place which the masters constantly refer to in this notion, viz. 1 Kings iii. where when the Kings of Israel and Judah and Edom in their distress for water, upon their warlike expedition against the king of Moab, came to Elifha to enquire of God by him, the prophet Elifha (ver. 14), seems to have been moved with indignation against the King of Israel, and so makes a very unwelcome address to him, “Surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehosaphat the King of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee”; and then it follows ver. 15. “But now bring me a minstrel: and it came to pass when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.” Which words are thus expounded by R. D. Kimchi, out of the Rabbines (with which R. S. Jarchi and R. L. Ben Gersom agree for the substance of his meaning) אמרו במדבר שנתחלק אליה וכו’ “Our doctors tells us, that from that day wherein his master Elijah was took up into heaven, the spirit of prophecy remained not with him for a certain time; for, for this cause he was very sorrowful, and the divine spirit doth not reside with heaviness.” Others say, that, by reason of the indignation he conceived against the king of Israel, he was “disquieted in his mind;” and touching this they say, “That whensoever a prophet is disturbed through anger or passion, the Holy Spirit forsakes him. From whence learn we this? From the example of Elifha, who said, Give me a minstrel.”

Thus we may by this time see the reason why musical instruments were so frequently used by the prophets, especially the Hagiographi; which indeed seems to be nothing else but that their minds might be thereby put into a more composed, liberal, and chearful temper, and so the better disposed and fitted for the transportation of the prophetic spirit. So we have heard before out of 1 Chron. ch. xxv. how Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, composed their rapt and divine poems at the sound of the choir-music of the temple. Another famous place we find for this purpose, 1 Sam. x. which place (as well as the former) hath been (I think) much mistaken and misinterpreted by some of singing; whereas certainly it cannot be meant of any thing less than divine poetry, and a composure

posure of hymns excited by a divine energy inwardly moving the mind. In that place Samuel having anointed Saul king of Israel, to assure him that it was so ordained of God, he tells him of some events that should occur to him a little after his departure from him; whereof this is one, that meeting with some prophets, he himself should find the impulses of a prophetic spirit also moving in him; ver. 5. These prophets are thus described, "After that, thou shalt come to the hill of God, &c. and it shall come to pass when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and an harp before them; and they shall prophesy. And the spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man." Where this music which they were accompanied with was to vibrate and compose their minds, as Kimchi comments upon the place, וּלְפָנֵיהֶם נָבֵל וְתוֹף וְחָלָל וְכִנּוֹר כִּי דוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ "And before them was a psaltery (or lute), and a tabret, and a pipe, and an harp: forasmuch as the Holy Spirit dwells no where but with alacrity and cheerfulness; and they prophesied, that is, as Jonath the Targumist expounds it, they praised God: as if he had said, 'Their prophecies were songs and praises to God, uttered by the Holy Ghost.'" Thus he.

Now as this divine spirit thus actuated free and cheerful souls, so the evil spirit actuated sad, melancholy minds, as we heard before, and as we may see in the example of Saul. And indeed that evil spirit which is said to have possessed him, seems to be nothing else originally but anguish and grief of mind, however wrought upon by some tempting insinuations of an evil spirit. And this sometime instigated him to prophecy after the fashion of such melancholy fury, 1 Sam. xviii. 10. "And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house;" which Jonathan renders by אֶשְׁתִּי בְּגוֹ בֵּיתָא "insanivit in medio domûs," or, as Kimchi expounds the paraphrast, חִירָה מְדַבֵּר דְּמַרֵּי שְׂטוּת "locutus est verba stultitiæ." So also R. Solomon upon the place expounds it to the same purpose.

So that according to the strain of all the Jewish scholiasts, by this evil spirit of Saul nothing else is here meant but a melancholy kind of madness, which made him prophesy or speak distractedly and inconsistently. To these we may add R. L. B. Gersom, חִירָה מְדַבֵּר בְּתוֹךְ הַבַּיִת רַבִּירִים מְבֻלְבָּלִים בְּסוּבַת רוּחַ סָדֵעַ "He spake in the midst of the house very confusedly, by reason of that evil spirit." Now as this evil spirit was indeed fundamentally, as I said, nothing else but a sour and distracted temper of mind arising from the terrene dregs of melancholy, grief, and malice, whereby Saul was at that time vexed; so the proper cure of it was the harmony and melody of David's music, which was there-
fore

fore made use of to compose his mind, and to allay these turbulent passions. And that was the reason (as I hope by this time it appears) why this music was so frequently used, viz. to compose the animal part, that, all kind of perturbations being dispelled, and a fine gentle *γαλήνη* or tranquillity ushered in, the soul might be the better disposed for the divine breathings of the prophetic spirit, which enter not at random into any sort of men. *Μόνον γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς ἐξ ἑστῆς ἡσυχίας, κρούμενον καὶ πληττόμενον ἀοράτως ἐπ' αὐτῆς*, as Philo hath well expressed it upon this occasion; these divine breathings enter only into those minds that were fitly disposed for them by moral and and acquireite qualifications.

C H A P. IX.

Of the Sons or Disciples of the Prophets. An account of several schools of prophetic education, as at Naioth in Rama, at Jerusalem, Bethel, Jericho, Gilgal, &c. Several passages in the Historical Books of Scripture pertinent to this argument explained.

AND therefore we find also frequently such passages in Scripture as strongly insinuate to us that anciently many were trained so up in a way of school discipline, that they might become “Can-
“didati prophetiæ,” and were as probationers of these degrees which none but God himself conferred upon them. Yet while they heard others prophesy, there was sometime an afflatus upon them also, their souls as it were sympathizing (like unisons in music) with the souls of those which were touched by the spirit. And this seems to be the meaning of that story, 1 Sam. xix. where all Saul’s messengers sent to Naioth in Rama to apprehend David (and at last he himself) are said to fall a-prophesying. For it is probable that the prophecies there spoken of were anthems divinely dictated, or doxologies with such elegant strains of devotion and fancy as might also excite and stir up the spirits of the auditors: as often we find that any admirable discourses, in which there is a chearful and free flowing forth of a rich fancy in an intelligible, and yet extraordinary, way, are apt to beget a symbolizing quality of mind in a stander-by.

And this notion we now drive is clearly suggested by the Jewish writers, who tell us that this Naioth in Rama was indeed a school of prophetic education, and so the Targum expounds the word Naioth, בית אולפנא “Domus doctrinæ,” i. e. “prophetiæ,” And R. Levi B. G. אמרו שהיה בית מדרש לנביאים אצל עיר לקהת הנביאים “Our masters say, That there was a school for the prophets near the city of Ramah, to which the prophets congregated:” and to the like purpose R. Solomon. And it is further insinuated that Samuel was the president of this school or college; as disciplining those young scholars, and training them up to those preparatory qualifications which might more dispose them for prophecy,

phesy, and also prophesying to them in sacred hymns, or otherwise, whereby their spirits might receive some tincture of a like kind. For so we find it ver. 20. "And when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied." Where the Chaldee Paraphrast translates נביאים or prophesying, by משבחין "praising God" with sacred hymns and hallelujahs, according to the common strain of the prophetical degree, which was called "Spiritus Sanctus." And so R. Kimchi and R. Levi B. G. here ascribe it לרוח הקודש "to the Holy Spirit." Among these prophets it is said "Samuel stood as appointed over them," that is, קאם מליף עלויהן "he stood as a teacher or master over them," as the Chaldee paraphrast reads it. But R. Levi B. G. strains a little higher, and perhaps too high, השפיע מן הרוח אשר עלו עליהן "He derived forth from himself, of his own prophetical spirit, by way of emanation, upon them." Though this kind of language be very suitable to the notions of those masters who will needs persuade us that almost all the prophets prophesied by virtue of some influence raying forth from the spirit of some other prophet into them; and Moses himself they make the common conduit through whom all prophetical influence was conveyed to the rest of the prophets. A conceit, I think, a little too nice and subtile to be understood.

But to return; upon this ground we have suggested, these disciples of the prophets are called בני הנביאים "Sons of the prophets;" and these are they which are meant, 1 Sam. x. 5. (the place we named before) in those words, הבל נביאים "a company of the prophets," that is, as the Targum renders it, סיעת ספריא "Cœtus scribarum," a company of scribes (for so these young scholars were anciently called); or if you please rather in Kimchi's language, סיעת ספריא רל תלמידים כי תלמידי חכמים "A company of scribes, that is, scholars: for the scholars of the wise men were called scribes: for they were the scholars of the greater prophets, and these scholars were called the sons of the prophets. Now the greater prophets which lived in that time from Eli to David were Samuel, Gad, Nathan, Asaph, Heman, and Jethuthun."

And thus we must understand the meaning of that question, ver. 12. "Who is their Father?" which gave occasion to that proverbial speech afterwards used commonly amongst the Jews ["Is Saul also among the prophets?"] used of one that was suddenly raised up to some dignity or perfection which by his education he was not fitted for. And therefore the Chaldee paraphrast minding the scope of the place renders מי איניהם "who is their Father," by מן רבבון "who is their master?" which Kimchi approves, and accordingly

accordingly expounds that proverb in this manner, בשהיה אדם שפל עלה במעלה היה אומר הגם שאול בנביאים "When any one was mounted from a low state to any dignity, they used to say, Is Saul also among the prophets?" But R. Solomon would rather keep the literal sense of those words, "Who is their father?" and therefore supposeth something more than we here contend for, viz. That prophecy was a kind of hereditary thing. For so he speaks, "Do not wonder for that he is called the Father of them," כי גבואה ירושה היא, that is, "for prophecy is an hereditary thing." But I think we may content ourselves with what our former authors have told us, to which we may add the testimony of R. Levi B. Gersom, who tells us that these prophets here spoken of were the scholars of Samuel, who trained them up to a degree of prophetical perfection, and so is called their father, שלמר אתם שמואל והביאם אל השלמות "because that Samuel instructed them and trained them up by his discipline to a degree of prophetical perfection."

Of these disciples we find very frequent mention in Scripture; so 2 Kings iv. we read of the sons or "disciples of the prophets in Gilgal." And chap. vi. Elifha is there brought in as their master, at whose command they were, and therefore they ask leave to enlarge their dwellings. And Elifha himself was trained up by Elijah, as his disciple; and therefore in 2 Kings iii. it was thought a reason good enough to prove that he was a prophet, for that he had been Elijah's disciple, and poured water upon his hands, as all the Jewish scholiasts observe. And 2 Kings ix. 1. Elifha sends one of these his ministring disciples to anoint Jehu to be king of Israel. And 1 Kings xx. 35. the young prophet there sent to reprove Ahab for sparing Ben-hadad king of Syria is called by the Chaldee paraphrast נבִיאֵי הַר מְבִנֵי הַלְמִירִי "one of the sons, the disciples of the prophets." And hence it was that Amos urgeth the extraordinariness of his commission from God, ch. vii. 14. "I was no prophet, nor was I a prophet's son, לא הוה מוכן לנבואה מפאת תלמידותו. He was not prepared for prophecy, or trained up so as to be fitted for a prophetical function by his discipleship," as Abarbanel glosseth upon the place. And therefore divine inspiration found him out of the ordinary road of prophets among his herds of cattle, and in an extraordinary way moved him to go to Bethel, there to declare God's judgements against king and people, even in the king's chapel. To conclude, in the New Testament, when John Baptist and our Saviour called disciples to attend upon them, and to learn divine oracles from them, it seems to have been no new thing, but that which was the common custom of the old prophets.

Now of these prophets there were several schools or colleges, as the Jews observe, in several cities, according as occasion was to employ them. So we read of "a college in Jerusalem," 2 Kings xxii. 14. where Huldah the prophetess lived, which is called מִשְׁנָה in

in the original, and by the Chaldee paraphrast translated בית אולפנא, "Domus doctrinæ;" by Kimchi כּנַת מִדְרַשׁ, "a school." So 2 Kings, ch. ii. and iv. we meet with divers places set down as those where the residence of those young prophets was, as Bethel and Jericho and Gilgal, &c. So Kimchi observes upon the place, "ומה שהיו בני הנביאים בבֵּתל וּבִירֵיחוֹ כֵּן הָיוּ בְּעִירֵי אֲחֵרוֹת וּבִי" As "the sons of the prophets were in Bethel and Jericho, so were there also of them in several other places. And the main reason why they were thus dispersed in many of the cities of Israel was this, that they might reprove the Israelites that were there: and their prophecy was wholly according to the exigency of those times; and therefore it was that their prophecy was not committed to writing." From hence some of the Jewish writers tell us of a certain אֶפְסֶסֶת of prophecy, one continually like an evening-star shining upon the conspicuous hemisphere, when another was set. Kimchi tells us of this mystical gloss upon those words, 1 Sam. iii. 3. "Ere the lamp of God went out," בְּרֹדֶשׁ אָמַר כִּי עַל אֶחָד נֵר הַנְּבוּאָה אָמוּ וְאָמְרוּ וּדְרַךְ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וּבֹא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עַד שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁקַע הָק בָּהּ שָׁמְשׁוֹ שֶׁל עֵרִיד אֶחָד מְזִידָה שָׁמְשׁוֹ שֶׁל עֵרִיד "This is spoken mystically concerning the light of prophecy, according to that saying amongst our doctors [the sun riseth and the sun setteth], that is, ere God makes the son of one righteous man to set, he makes the son of another righteous man to rise."

C H A P. X.

Of Bath Kol, i. e. Filia Vocis: That it succeeded in the room of Prophecy: That it was by the Jews counted the lowest degree of Revelation. What places in the New Testament are to be understood of it.

We should come now briefly to speak of the highest degree of Divine inspiration or prophecy taken in a general sense, which was the Mosaical. But, before we do that, it may not be amiss to take notice of the lowest degree of revelation among the Jews, which was inferior to all that which they call by the name of Prophecy: and this was their בַּת קוֹל, "Bath Kol, Filia vocis," which was nothing else but some voice which was heard as descending from heaven, directing them in any affair as occasion served: which kind of revelation might be made to one (as Maimonides, Par. II. c. 42. "More Nevochim," tells us) that was no way prepared for prophecy.

Of this "Filia vocis" we have mention made in one of the ancientest monuments of Jewish learning, which is Pirke R. Eliezer, c. 44. and elsewhere very frequently among the Jewish writers, as that which was a frequent thing after the ceasing of prophecy among the Jews; of which more afterward. Josephus, Archæol. lib. XIII. c. 18. tells a story of Hircanus the high-priest, how he heard this voice from heaven, which told him of the victory which his

his sons had got at Cyzicum against Antiochus the same day the battle was fought; and this (he says) while he was offering up incense in the temple, *τίνα τρόπον αὐτῷ τὸ θεῖον εἰς λόγους ἤλθε*, he was made partaker of a vocal converse with God, that is by a *בְּרַת קוֹל*.

This R. Isaac Angarenfis L. Cosri strongly urgeth against the Karrai or Scripturarii (a sort of Jews that reject all Talmudical traditions), that the grand doctors of the Jews received such traditions from the LXXII Senators, who were guided either by a *בְּרַת קוֹל*, or something answerable to it, in the truth of things, after all prophecy was ceased, Maam. III. § 41. *בִּי הִסְתַּהְרִי ין הִיוּ מִצְוִיִּים לְדַעַת* *זֶה פֶל הַחֲכָמֹת רַל שֶׁבֶן שְׁלֹא נִסְתַּלְקַת מֵהֶם גְּבוּאָה אוּ מִזֶּה שְׁעוֹמֵר קִבְּלוּ* *בְּמִקְוֵמוּ מִבְּרַת קוֹל וְזוֹלָת* (i. e.) “There is a tradition that the
“men of the great Sanhedrim were bound to be skilled in the
“knowledge of all sciences, and therefore it is much more necessary
“that prophecy should not be taken from them, or that which
“should supply its room, viz. the daughter of voice, and the like.” Thus he, according to the genius of Talmudical learning, is pleased to expound the place Esay ii. where it is said, that “a law shall go
“forth out of Zion,” of the consistorial decrees of the judges, rulers, and priests of the Jews, and the great senate of LXXII elders, whom he would needs persuade us to be guided infallibly by this *בְּרַת קוֹל*, or in some other way *בְּעוֹר אֱלֹהִי* by some divine virtue, power or assistance always communicated to them, as supposed at least that such an heroical spirit as that spirit of fortitude which belonged to the Judges and Kings of Israel, and is called the Spirit of God (as Maimonides, in “More Nevochim,” tells us), had perpetually cleaved to them.

But we shall here leave our author to his Judaical superstition, and take notice of two or three places in the New Testament which seem to be understood perfectly of this “Filia vocis,” which the constant tradition of the Jews assures us to have succeeded in the room of prophecy. The first is John xii. where this heavenly voice was conveyed to our Saviour as if it had been the noise of thunder, but was not well understood by all those that stood by, who therefore thought that either it thundered, or that it was a mighty voice of some angel that spake to him: ver. 28, 29. “Then
“came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified my
“name, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood
“by and heard it, said it thundered: others said that an angel spake
“to him.” So Matth. iii. 17. After our Saviour’s baptism, upon his coming out of the water, the Evangelist tells us, “that the
“heavens were opened, and that the spirit of God descended upon
“him in the shape of a dove, and lo, a voice from heaven, saying,
“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And last of all we meet with this kind of voice upon our Saviour’s transfiguration, Matth. xvii. 5, 8. which is there so described as coming out of a cloud, as if it had been loud like the noise of thunder,
“Behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice
“out

“ out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:” which voice, it is said, the three disciples that were then with him in the mount heard, as we are told in the following verse, and also 2 Pet. i. 17, 18. From whence we are fully informed, that it was this “ Filia vocis” we speak of which came for the apostles sakes that were with him, as “ a testimony of that glory and honour with which God magnified his Son; which apostles were not yet raised up to the degree of prophecy, but only made partakers of a voice inferior to it. The words are these, “ He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.” Now that this was that very בַּת קוֹל we speak of, which was inferior to prophecy, we may sufficiently learn from the next verse, “ We have also a more sure word of prophecy;” for indeed true prophecy was counted much more authentical than this בַּת קוֹל, as being a divine inspiration into the mind of the prophet; which this was not, but only a voice that moved their exterior senses; and by the mediation thereof informed their minds. And, thus we have done with this argument.

C H A P. XI.

Of the highest degree of Divine Inspiration; viz. the Mosaical. Four Differences between the Divine Revelations made to Moses, and to the rest of the Prophets. How the doctrine of men prophetically inspired is to approve itself by miracles, or by its reasonableness. The sympathy and agreeableness between an holy mind and divine truth.

WE now come briefly to enquire into the highest degree of divine inspiration, which was the Mosaical, that by which the law was given; and this we may best do by searching out the characteristic differences of Moses's inspiration from that which was technically called Prophecy. And these we shall take out of Maimonides's “ De Fund. Legis,” c. 7. where they are fully described according to the general strain of all the rabbinical doctrine delivered upon this argument.

The first is, that Moses was made partaker of these divine revelations *per vigiliam*, whereas God manifested himself to all the other prophets in a dream or vision when their senses were אֲפָרָה, מֵרֶשֶׁת הַפֶּשֶׁת, אוֹ יֵשׁ בֵּין גְּבוּרָתוֹ מִשְׁוֶה לְגְבוּרָתוֹ שֶׁאֵין כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים שֶׁכָּל הַנְּבִיאִים בְּדִלּוֹם אוֹ כִּמְרָאָה וּמִשְׁוֶה דְּבִיעוֹ רָאָה וְהוּא עַד וְעוֹמֵד “ What is the difference between the prophecy of Moses and the prophecy of all other prophets? All other prophets did prophecy in a dream or vision: but Moses our master when he was waking and standing, according to what is written,” (Numb. vii. 89.) And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him (i. e.

(i. e. God), then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him. By which place in Numbers, it appears he had free recourse to this heavenly oracle at any time. And therefore the Talmudists have a rule, משה רבינו ע"ה לא באה אליו מעולם נבואה בלילה "That Moses had never any prophecy in the night-time, i. e. in a dream or vision of the night," as the other prophets had.

The second difference is, that Moses prophesied without the mediation of any angelical power, by an influence derived immediately from God; whereas in all other prophecies (as we have shewed heretofore) some angel still appeared to the prophet, הנביאים על ידי מלאך וכו' כל "All prophets did prophecy by the help or ministry of an angel, and therefore they did see that which they saw in parables, or under some dark representation; but Moses prophesied without the ministry of an angel." This he proves from Numb. xii. 8. where God says of Moses, "I will speak with him mouth to mouth;" and so Exod. xxxiii. 11. "The Lord spake unto Moses face to face."

But we must not here so much adhere to that exposition which Maimonides and the rest of his countrymen give us of this place, as to forget what we are told in the New Testament concerning the ministry of angels which God used in giving the law itself: and so St. Stephen discourseth of it, Acts vii. 53; and St. Paul to the Galatians, ch. iii. tells us, "the law was given by the disposition of angels in the hands of a mediator," that is, Moses, the mediator then between God and the people. And therefore I should rather think the meaning of those words "face to face" to import the clearness and evidence of the intellectual light wherein God appeared to Moses, which was greater than any of the prophets were made partakers of. And therefore the old tradition goes of them, that they saw בספקלריא שאינה מאורה "in speculo non lucido," whereas Moses saw "in speculo lucido," ἐν δὲ αἰνιγματῶν, as Philo tells us (together with Maimonides) in his book, "Quis rerum divin. hæres sit;" that is, without any impressions or images of things in his imagination in an hieroglyphical way, as was wont to be in all dreams and visions; but by characterizing all immediately upon his understanding; though otherwise much of the law was indeed almost little more for the main scope and aim of it but an emblem or allegory.

But there may be yet a farther meaning of those words "face to face," and that is the friendly and amicable way whereby all divine revelations were made to Moses; for so it is added in the text, "as a man speaketh unto his friend."

And this is the third difference which Maimonides assigns, viz. כל הנביאים יראים ונבהלים ומתמוגגים "All the other prophets were afraid and troubled and fainted; but Moses was not so: for the Scripture saith, 'God spake to him as a man speaks to his friend;' that is to say, As a man is not afraid to hear the words of his friend, so was Moses able to understand the words of prophecy without any disturbance and astonishment of mind."

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The fourth and last difference is the liberty of Moses's spirit to prophecy at all times, as we heard before out of Numb. vii. 89. He might have recourse at any time to the sacred oracle (in the tabernacle) which spake from between the Cherubins : and so Maimonides lays down this difference, כל הנביאים אין מהנביאים, בכל עת שידעו "None of the prophets did prophecy at what time they would, save Moses, who was cloathed with the Holy Spirit when he would, and the spirit of prophecy did abide upon him : neither had he need to predispose his mind, or prepare himself for it, for he was always disposed and in readiness as a ministring angel ; and therefore could he prophesy at what time he would, according to that which was spoken in Numb. ix. 8. Tarry you here a little, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you." Thus Maimonides, who, I think, here somewhat hyperbolizeth, and scarce speaks consistently with the rest of the Hebrew masters. For we may remember what we heard before concerning the Talmudical tradition, that Moses's mind was indisposed for prophecy when he was transported with indignation against the spies ; though I think it is most probable that he had a greater liberty of prophesying than any other of the prophets had.

Now this clear distinct kind of inspiration made immediately upon an intellectual faculty in a familiar way, which we see was the "Gradus Mosaicus," was most fit and proper for laws to be administered in, which was excellently took notice of by Plutarch in that discourse of his, περὶ τῆς μὴ χρᾶν ἑρμείρα ὡς τῇ Πυθίαν, where he tells us the poetry that was usually interlaced with riddles and parables was taken away in his time, and a more familiar way of prophecy brought in ; though he by a Gentile superstition applies that to his Pythia ; Θεὸς ἀφελὼν τῶν χρησμῶν ἔπη καὶ γλώσσας καὶ περιφράσεις καὶ πλάφειαν, ἔτω διαλέγεσθαι παρασκεύασε ταῖς χρωμένοις, &c. "God hath now taken away from his oracles poetry, and the variety of dialect, and circumlocution, and obscurity ; and hath so ordered them to speak to those that consult them, as the laws do to the cities under their subjection, and kings to their people, and masters to their scholars, in the most intelligible and perswasive language." But by Plutarch's leave this character agrees neither to his Pythia, nor indeed to Moses himself (who put a veil upon his face in giving the law itself to the people), but to our Saviour alone, the dispenser of the true law of God inwardly to the souls of men ; and therein conversing with them, not so much προσώπῳ πρὸς πρόσωπον as ὡς πρὸς ὡς, not so much "face to face" as "mind to mind."

We have now seen what is this "Gradus propheticus Mosaicus," which indeed was necessary should be transcendent and extraordinary, because it was the basis of all future prophecy among the Jews ; for all the prophets mainly aim at that, to establish and confirm the law of Moses, as to the practical observation of it ; and therefore it was also so strongly manifested to the Israelites by signs

and miracles done in the sight of all the people, and his familiarity and acquaintance with heaven testified to them all, the divine voice being heard by them all at mount Sinai; which dispensation amounted at least to as much as a *בר קול* to the very lowest of the people. All which considerations put R. Phineas into such an admiration of this *מַעַמַּד הַר סִנַּי* or "Statio montis Sinai" (as the doctors are wont to call it), that he determines in Pirke Eliezer, "That all this generation that heard the voice of the holy blessed God, was worthy to be accounted as the ministring angels." But what that voice was which they heard, the latter Jews are scarce well agreed: but Maimonides, according to the most received opinion, "in More Nevochim," p. ii. c. 33. tells that they only heard those first words of the law distinctly, viz. "I am the Lord thy God," and, "Thou shalt have none other Gods, &c." and but only the sound of all the rest of the words in which the remainder of the law was given; and this, as he says, was "the great mystery of that station," so much spoken of by the Ancients.

And here by the way we may take notice, that that divine inspiration which is conveyed to any one man primarily benefits none but himself; and therefore many times, as Maimonides tells us, it rested in this private use, not profiting any else but those to whom it came. And the reason of this is manifest, for that an inspiration abstractly considered can only satisfy the mind of him to whom it is made, of its own authority and authenticity (as we have shewed before); and therefore that one man may know that another hath that doctrine revealed to him by a prophetic spirit which he delivers, he must also either be inspired, and so be "in gradu prophetico" in a true sense, or be confirmed in the belief of it by some miracle, whereby it may appear that God hath committed his truth to such an one, by giving him some signal power in altering the course of nature; which indeed was the way by which the prophets of old ordinarily confirmed their doctrine, when they delivered any thing new to the people; which course our Saviour himself and his disciples also took to confirm the truth of the Gospel; or else there must be so much reasonableness in the thing itself, as that by moral arguments it may be sufficient to beget a belief in the minds of sober and good men.

And I wish this last way of becoming acquainted with divine truth were better known amongst us; for when we have once attained to a true sanctified frame of mind, we have then attained to the end of all prophecy, and see all divine truth that tends to the salvation of our souls in the divine light, which always shines in the purity and holiness of the new creature, and so need no further miracle to confirm us in it. And indeed that God-like glory and majesty which appears in the naked simplicity of true goodness, will by its own connateness and sympathy with all saving truth friendly entertain and embrace it.

C H A P. XII.

When the Prophetical Spirit ceased in the Jewish church. The cessation of Prophecy noted as a famous Epocha by the Jews. The restoring of the Prophetical Spirit by Christ. Some passages to this purpose in the New Testament explained. When the Prophetical Spirit ceased in the Christian church. That it did not continue long, proved by several testimonies of the ancient writers.

THUS we have now done with all those sorts of prophecy which we find any mention of; and as a *coronis* to this discourse we shall further enquire a little “what period of time it was in which “this prophetical spirit ceased both in the Jewish and Christian “church.” In which business, because the cause of Scripture itself is in a manner silent, we must appeal to such histories as are like to be most authentical in this business.

And first “for the period of time when it ceased in the Jewish,” I find our Christian writers differing. Justin Martyr would needs persuade us that it was not till the “Æra Christiana.” This he inculcates often in his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, οὐδέποτε ἐν τῷ γένει ὑμῶν ἐπαύσατο ἕτε προφήτης ἕτε ἄρχων, ἐξ ὅτε ἀρχὴν ἔλαβε, μέχρις ἔσθαι Ἰησοῦς Χριστός καὶ γέγονε καὶ ἔπαθεν, “There never ceased in “your nation either prophet or prince, till Jesus Christ was both “born and had suffered.” And so he often there tells us that John the Baptist was the last prophet of the Jewish church; which conceit he seems to have made so much of, as thinking to bring in our Saviour “lumine prophetico,” with the greater evidence of divine authority, as the promised Messiah into the world. But Clemens Alexandrinus hath much trulier, with the consent of all Jewish antiquity, resolved us, that all prophecy determined in Malachy, in his Strom. lib. I. where he numbers up all the prophets of the Jews, thirty-five in all, and Malachy as the last. Though, indeed, the Talmudists reckon up fifty-five prophets and prophetesses together, Gem. Mass. Megil. חנו רבנן ארבעים ושמונה נביאים ושבע נביאות “The Rabbins say that there were “48 prophets and 7 prophetesses that did prophesy to the “Israelites:” which after they had reckoned almost up, they tell us Malachy was the last of them, and that he was contemporary with Mordecai, Daniel, Haggai, Zacharie, and some others (whose prophecies are not extant), whom for their number sake they there reckon up, who all prophesied in the second year of Darius. But commonly they make only these three, Haggai, Zacharie, and Malachy, to be the last of the prophets, and so call them נביאים אחרונים. So Masséc Sotah, ch. last, where the Misnical doctors tell us, that from the time in which all the first prophets expired, the urim and thummim ceased; and the Gemarists say that they

are called נביאים ראשונים "the first prophets," לְאַפְקֵי מַחְגֵּי זָכְרֵיהֶם "in opposition to Haggai, Zacherie, and Malachy, which are the last." And so Maimonides and Bartenor tell us that the "prophetæ priores" were so called, because they prophesied in the times בֵּית הַדְּשִׁין of the first temple; and the "posteriores," because they prophesied in the time of the second temple: and when these later prophets died, then all prophecy expired, and there was left, as they say, only a "Bath Kol" to succeed some time in the room of it. So we are told "Gem. Sanhedrim,"

הָנוּ דְּבַנְן מִשְׁמַתּוֹ נְבִיאִים אַחֲרֹנִים הָנִי זָכְרֵיהֶם וּמִלֵּאכֵי נִינְהוּ נִסְתַּלְקָה רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְאַעֲפִי הָיוּ מִשְׁתַּמְשֵׁן בְּבֵית קוֹלָהּ "Our Rabbins say, that from that time the later prophets died, the Holy Spirit was taken away from Israel; nevertheless they enjoyed the Filia vocis:" and this is repeated Masec. Joma, c. i. Now all that time which the spirit of prophecy lasted among the Jews under the second temple, their chronology makes to be but forty years. So the author of the book Cosri, Maam. 3. § 39. (i. e.) "The continuance of prophecy under the time of the second temple was almost forty years." And this R. Jehuda's Scholiast confirms out of an Historico-cabbalistical Treatise of R. Abraham Ben Dior. and a little after he tells us, that after forty years their "sapientes" were called senators, אַחֲרֵי אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה הָמוֹן הַחֲכָמִים נִקְרָאִים אַנְשֵׁי הַגְּדוֹלָה "after forty years were passed, all the wise men were called the men of the great synagogue." And therefore the author of that book useth this æra of the cessation of prophecy; and so this is commonly noted as a famous epocha among all their chronologers, as the book Juchasin, the Seder Olam Zuta, as R. David Gantz hath summed them all up in his chronological history put forth lately by Vorstius. The like may be observed from 1 Maccab. ix. 27. and chap. iv. 46. and chap. xiv. 41.

This Cessation of prophecy determined as it were all that old dispensation wherein God hath manifested himself to the Jews under the law, that so that growing old and thus wearing away, they might expect that new dispensation of the Messiah which had been promised so long before, and which should again restore this prophetic spirit more abundantly: And so this interstitium of prophecy is insinuated by Joel ii. in those words concerning the later times; "In those days shall your sons and your daughters prophesy, &c." And so St. Peter, Acts ii. makes use of the place to take off that admiration with the Jews were possessed withal to see so plentiful an effusion of the prophetic spirit again: and therefore this spirit of prophecy is called the testimony of Jesus in the Apocalypse, ch. xix.

According to this notion we must understand that passage in John vii. 39. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." To which that in Ephes. iv. "He ascended up on high, and gave gifts unto men," plainly answers: as like-
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wife the answer which the Christians at Ephesus made to Paul, Acts xix. when he asked them whether they had received the Holy Ghost, "That they knew not whether there was a Holy Ghost," (that is) whether there were any extraordinary spirit, or spirit of prophecy restored again to the church or not, as hath been well observed of late by some learned men. But enough of this.

We come now briefly to dispatch the second enquiry viz. "What time the spirit of prophecy, which was again restored by our Saviour, ceased in the Christian church." It may be thought "that St. John was the last of Christian prophets, for that the Apocalypse is the latest dated of any book which is received into the canon of the New Testament. But I know no place of Scripture that intimates any such thing, as if the spirit of prophecy was so soon to expire. And, indeed, if we may believe the primitive fathers, it did not; though it overlived St. John's time but a little. Eusebius * tells us of one Quadratus, ὃν ἅμα ταῖς Φιλίππου θυγατράσι Προφητικῷ χαρίσματι λόγος ἔχει διατρέψαι, "who together with the daughters of Philip had the gift of prophecy. So the report was." This Quadratus, as he tells us, lived in Trajan's time, which was but at the beginning of the second century. And a little after, speaking of good men in that age, he adds, τῷ θεῷ πνεύματος εἰσέτι δι' αὐτῶν πλεῖσαι παραδόξοι δυνάμεις ἐνέργουν, "Many strange and admirable virtues of the divine spirit as yet shewed forth themselves by them." And the same author, lib. IV. § 18. tells us out of Justin Martyr, who lived in the middle of the second century, and then writ his apology for the Christians, that the gift of prophecy was still to be seen in the church, γράφει δὲ καὶ ὡς ὅτι μέχρι καὶ αὐτῶ χαρίσματα προφητικά διέλαμπεν ἐπὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας †. Yet not long afterward there is little or no remembrance of the prophetic spirit remaining in the church. Hence the Montanists are by some of the fathers proved to be no better than dissemblers when they pretended to the gift of prophecy, for that it was then ceased in the church. And so Eusebius tells us, lib. V. § 3. and withal that Montanus and his companions only took advantage of that virtue of working wonders which yet appeared (as was reported, though doubtfully) in some places, to make a semblance of the spirit of prophecy; τῶν δὲ ἀμφὶ Μουσανόν καὶ Ἀλκιβιάδην καὶ Θεόδωρον περὶ τὴν Φρυγίαν ἄρτι τότε πρῶτον τὴν περὶ τῶ προφητεύειν ἐπόληψιν παρὰ πολλοῖς ἐκφερομένων. Πλεῖσαι γὰρ οὖν καὶ ἄλλαι παραδόξοποιῶναι τῷ θεῷ χαρίσματι εἰσέτι τότε κατὰ διαφορὰς ἐκκλησίας ἐκτελέμεναι, πῶςιν παρὰ πολλοῖς τῷ κακίῳ περιφρεῖναι παρείχον, καὶ δὴ διαφωνίας ὑπαρχούσης περὶ τῶν δεδωμένων. "But then especially did Montanus, Alci- biades, and Theodotus, raise up in many an opinion that they prophesied: and this belief was so much the more increased con-

* Hist. Eccles. lib. III. § 37.

† Vide Justin. Martyr. in Dial. cum Tryphone Judæo, παρὰ ἡμῶν καὶ μέχρι νῦν προφητικά χαρίσματα εἰσιν.

“cerning their prophesying, for that as yet in several churches were wrought many miraculous and stupendous effects of the Holy Spirit; though yet there was no perfect agreement in their opinion about this.”

To conclude this (and to hasten to an end of this discourse of prophecy), there is, indeed, in antiquity more frequent mention of some miracles * wrought in the name of Christ; but less is said concerning the prophetical virtue, especially after the second century. That it was rare, and to be seen but sometimes, and more obscurely in some few Christians only who had attained to a good degree of self-purification, is intimated by that of Origen, in his 7th book against Celsus. Πλὴν καὶ νῦν ἔτι ἔχοντες ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι παρὰ ὀλίγοις, τὰς ψυχὰς τῇ λόγῳ καὶ ταῖς κατ’ αὐτὸν πράξεσι καθαροί.

C H A P. XIII.

Some Rules and Observations concerning Prophetical Writ in general.

WE should now shut up all this discourse about prophecy; only, before we conclude, it may not be amiss to add a few rules for the better understanding of prophetical writ in general.

I. The first (which yet we shall rather put under debate) is concerning the style and manner of languaging all pieces of prophecy; whether that was not peculiarly the work of the prophet himself; whether it does not seem that the prophetical spirit dictated the matter only or principally, yet did leave the words to the prophet himself. It may be considered that God made not use of idiots or fools to reveal his will by, but such whose intellectuals were entire and perfect; and that he imprinted such a clear copy of his truth upon them, as that it became their own sense, being digested fully into their understandings; so as they were able to deliver and represent it to others as truly as any can paint forth his own thoughts. If the matter and substance of things be once lively in the mind, “verba non invita sequentur,” and according as that matter operates upon the mind and phantasy, so will the phrase and language be in which it is expressed. And therefore I think to doubt whether the prophets might not mistake in representing the mind of God in their prophetical inspirations, except all their words had been also dictated to them, is to question whether they could speak sense as wise men, and tell their own thoughts and experiences truly or not. And indeed it seems most agreeable to the nature of all these prophetical visions and dreams we have discoursed of, wherein the nature of the enthusiasm consisted in a symbolical and hieroglyphical shaping forth of intelligible things in their imaginations, and enlightening the understanding of the prophets to discern the

* And that the gift of working miracles was ceased in his time, St. Chrysostom doth more than once affirm, τῆς δυνάμεως τῶν σημείων ἐν ἡμῖν ὑπολείπεται, lib. IV. De Sacerdotio, &c. The like is affirmed by St. Austin.

scope and meaning of these *visa* or *phantasmata*; that those words and phrases in which they were audibly expressed to the hearers afterwards or penned down, should be the prophet's own; for the matter was not (as seems evident from what hath been said) represented always by words, but by things. Though I know that sometime in these visions they had a voice speaking to them; yet it is not likely that voice should so dilate and comment so largely upon things, as it was fit the prophet should do when he repeated the same things to vulgar ears.

It may also further be considered that our Saviour and his apostles generally quote passages out of the Old Testament as they were translated by the LXX, and that where the LXX have not rendered them verbatim, but have much varied the manner of phrasing things from the original, as hath been abundantly observed by philologists; which it is not likely they would have done, had the original words been the very dictate of the spirit, for certainly they would seem not to need any such paraphrastical variations, as being of themselves full and clear enough; besides, herein they might seem to weaken the authenticalness of the divine oracles. And indeed hath not the swerving from this notion made some of late conceit (though erroneously) the translation of the LXX to be more authentical than the Hebrew, which they would needs persuade us had been corrupted by the Jews, our Saviour declining the phraseology thereof?

Besides, we find the prophets speaking every one of them in his own dialect; and such a variety of style and phraseology appears in their writings, as may argue them to have spoken according to their own proper genius; which is observed by the Jews themselves (who are most zealously, as is well known, devoted to the very letter of the text) in all the prophets except Moses, and that part of Moses only which contains the Decalogue. And hence we have that rule, Gem. Sanhedr. אין סגנון אחד עולה לשני נביאים ולא יתנבאו שניהם "The same form doth not ascend upon two prophets, neither do both of them prophesy in the same form." Which rule Cocceius confesseth he knows not the meaning of: but Abarbanel, who better understood the mind of his own compatriots, in his comment upon Jeremy, ch. xlix. gives us a full account of it, upon occasion of some phrases in that prophecy concerning Edom, parallel to what we find in Obadiah. From this congruency of the style in both he thus takes occasion to lay down our present notion as the sense of that former theorem, לא היו מנביאים באותו אופן כשהיה מנבא משה וכו': "The prophets did not prophesy in the same manner as Moses did: for he prophesied from God immediately, from whom he received not only the prophecy, but also the very words and phrases; and accordingly as he heard them, so he wrote them in the book of the law, in the very same words which he heard from God: but as for the rest of the prophets, they beheld in their visions the things them-

“ selves which God made known to them, and both declared and “ expressed them in their own phraseology.”

Thus we see he ascribes the phrase and style every where to the prophet himself, except only in the law, which he supposeth to have been dictated *totidem verbis*: which is probable enough, if he means the law strictly so taken, viz. for the Decalogue, as it is most likely he doth. And again a little after, *וְאֵלֶּיךָ הָעֵינִים וּמִצִּוּתָם הָיָה לֵבָבָם*: “ The things themselves “ they saw in prophecy, but they themselves did explain and in- “ terpret them in that dialect which was most familiar to them.” And this, as he there tells, was the reason why the same kind of phraseology occurred not among the prophets, according to the sense of the Talmudists maxim we mentioned. The like the Jewish scholiasts observe upon those false prophets who did all *uno ore* bid Ahab ascend up to Ramoth-Gilead and prosper, *וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשְׁכַּחְךָ* “ Unus idemque loquendi modus nunquam reperitur in duobus “ prophetis:” and therefore they made it an argument that these were false prophets, because they did “ idem canticum canere,” for they all said, “ Go up and prosper.” And thus the Heathenish philosopher Plutarch, in his *περὶ τῆ μὴ χρᾶν ἑμμελῆρα νῦν τὴν Πυθίαν*, thought likewise concerning his oracle, telling us, “ That all En- “ thusiasm is a mixture of two motions, the one is impressed upon “ the soul which is God’s organ, the other ariseth from it;” and therefore he says, *Ὁ μαθητικὸς ἐνθουσιασμὸς, ὥσπερ ὁ ἐρωτικὸς, χρῆται τῇ ὑποκειμένῃ δυνάμει καὶ κινεῖ τῶν δεξαμένων ἑκαστον καθ’ ὃ σέφκεν*, “ All prophetic Enthusiasm, like as also that which is amatorious, “ doth make use of the subject faculty, and moves every recipient “ according to its disposition and nature.” And thence he thus excuseth the rough and unpolished language in which the oracles were sometime delivered, most fitly to our purpose describing prophetic inspiration, *Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶ Θεῷ ἡ γῆρυς, ἐδὲ ὁ φθόγγος, ἐδὲ ἡ λέξις, ἐδὲ τὸ μέτρον, ἀλλὰ τῆς γυναικὸς: ἐκεῖνος δὲ μόνος τὰς φαντασίας παρίσχησι, καὶ φῶς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ποιεῖ πρὸς τὸ μέλλον: ὁ γὰρ ἐνθουσιασμός τοιούτων ἐστὶ*, “ For neither voice, nor sound, nor phrase, nor metre is from God, but from Pythia herself; God only suppeditates the phantasms, and kindles a light in the soul to signify future things: for all Enthusiasm is after this manner.” Hence was that old saying of Heraclius, *Ὁ ἀναξ, ὃ τὸ μαντεῖον ἐστὶ τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς, ἔτε λέγει, ἔτε κρύπτει, ἀλλὰ σημαίνει*, “ That the king, whose oracle is at Delphi, neither plainly expresses, nor conceals, but only obscurely intimates by signs.” But to conclude this first particular, I shall add by way of caution, we must not think that we can vary scripture-expression so securely with retaining the true meaning, except we likewise had as real an understanding of the sense itself as the prophets had, over whom God also did so far superintend in their copying forth his truth, as not to suffer them to swerve from his meaning. And so we have done with that particular.

2. In the next place, for the better understanding all propheticall writ, we must observe that there is sometimes a seeming inconsistency in things spoken of, if we shall come to examine them by the strict logical rules of method: we must not therefore in the matter of any propheticall vision look for a constant methodical contexture of things carried on in a perpetual coherence. The propheticall spirit doth not tie itself to these rules of art, or thus knit up its dictates systematically, fitly framing one piece or member into a combination with the rest, as it were with the joints and sinews of method; for this indeed would rather argue an human and artificial contrivance than any inspiration, which as it must beget a transportation in the mind, so it must spend itself in such abrupt kind of revelations as may argue indeed the prophet to have been inspired. And therefore Tully, lib. II. de Divinat. judiciously excepts against the authenticalness of those verses of the Sibyls which he met with in his time (and which were the same perhaps with those we now have) because of those acrosticks and some other things which argued an elaborate artifice, and an affected diligence of the writer, and so indeed “non furentis erant, sed adhibentis diligentiam,” as he speaks. “Lumen propheticum est lumen abruptum,” as was well noted anciently by the Jews. And therefore the masters of Jewish tradition have laid down this maxim, און מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה, “Non est prius & posterius in Lege.” We must not seek for any methodical concatenation of things in the law, or indeed in any other part of propheticall writ; it being a most usual thing with them many times *αἰρέας ἀρχῇ συνάπτειν*, to knit the beginning and end of time together. “Nescit tarda molimina spiritûs sancti gratia,” is true also of the grace or gift of prophecy. We find no curious transitions, nor true dependence many times of one thing upon another; but things of very different natures, and that were cast into periods of time secluded one from another by vast intervals, all couched together in the same vision; as Jerome hath observed in many places, and therefore tells us. “Non curæ fuit spiritui prophetali historiæ ordinem sequi.” And thus he takes notice in Daniel xi. 2. that whereas there were thirteen kings between Cyrus and Alexander the Great, the prophet speaks of but four, skipping over the rest, as if the other nine had filled up no part of the interval. The like he observes upon Jeremy xxi. 1. and elsewhere; as likewise sudden and abrupt introductions of persons, mutations of persons (*exits* and *intrats* upon this propheticall stage being made as it were in an invisible manner), and transitions from the voice of one person to another. The propheticall spirit though it make no noise and tumult in its motions, yet it is most quick, spanning as it were from the centre to the circumference; it moves most swiftly, though most gently. And thus Philo’s observation is true, Οὐδεὶς ἐννῶς μαλεῖται. There must be some kind of *Μανία* in all prophecy, as * Philo tells us, Ὅτε φῶς ἐπιλάμψει τὸ θεῖον, δύναι τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, “When divine light ariseth

* In his “Quis rerum Divinarum hæres sit.”

“ upon the horizon of the soul of man, his own human light sets :” it must at least hide itself as a lesser light, as it were by an Occafus Heliacus, under the beams of the greater, and be wholly subject to the irradiations and influences of it. *Διὰ τὸτο ἡ δύσις τῆ λογισμῶ καὶ τὸ περὶ αὐτὸν σκότος ἔκτασιν καὶ θεοφόρητον μανίαν ἐγέννησε,* as he goes on, “ Therefore the setting of a man’s own discursive faculty and the eclipsing thereof begets an ecstasis and a divine kind of Mania.”

3. The last rule we shall observe is, that no piece of prophecy is to be understood of the state of the world to come, or the “ mundus animarum :” for indeed it is altogether impossible to describe that, or to comprehend it in this life. And therefore all divine revelation in Scripture must concern some state in this world. And so we must understand all those places that treat of a new heaven and a new earth, and such like. And so we must understand the new Jerusalem mentioned in the New Testament, in that prophetic book of the Apocalypse, ch. xxi. And thus the Jews were wont universally to understand them, according to that maxim we now speak of ascribed to R. Jochanan, in “ Masséc. Berac.” c. 5. *כל הנביאים כולו לא ותבאו אלא לימורי המשיח אבל עולם הפא :* עין לא ראו : “ All the prophets prophesied to the days of the Messiah ; but as for the world to come, eye hath not seen it.” So they constantly expound that passage in Esay lxiv. 4. “ Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.” And according to this aphorism our Saviour seems to speak, when he says, “ All the prophets and the law prophesied until John,” Matth. xi. 13. *עד יוהנן,* i. e. they prophesied to or for that dispensation which was to begin with John, who lived in the time of the twilight as it were between the law and the gospel. They prophesied of those things which should be accomplished within the period of Gospel-dispensation which was ushered in by John.

E S S A Y

O N

The Teaching and Witness of the HOLY SPIRIT.

THE Christian religion being the last and most gracious dispensation of God to mankind, and yet not being without its enemies, among some few of the sober, (and who seem, at least, on all other occasions) capable, diligent, and fair enquirers; as well as among the vicious, the lazy, the knavish, and the incompetent; and the greatest witness to the truth of the Christian religion being the Holy Spirit; I have thought it might be of some service, to consider that evidence with all the attention and care I could.

I have chosen to do this the rather, because, whilst I think this teaching of the Spirit the greatest proof of the truth of the Christian religion; I at the same time see, that it runs so much through the beginning and end of the Gospels, particularly St. John's, and is so much insisted on in the Acts, and all the Epistles, that neither the scheme of the Christian religion itself, nor a great number of texts in the New Testament, can be understood, without carefully considering it.

The invisible God, the Creator of all things, who at first made man upright and happy, often conversed with him (whilst he kept his integrity) by the Word; by whom he made, and governs the world: as may be gathered from that short history, which Moses gives us, of the creation of our first parents. We have an account of God's conversing with them three or four times before the fall*. This was an honour, therefore, he often vouchsafed them, if the general opinion be true, of the short time they preserved their innocence. How much oftener God might vouchsafe them this high privilege, we do not exactly know; but that it had been often enough for Adam and Eve to be well acquainted with his voice, we may gather from these words: "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves among the trees of the garden: and the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself †."

But after our first parents had disobeyed God's express command, and thereby drawn on themselves a perpetual banishment from paradise, and rendered themselves, as well as their posterity, liable to

* Gen. i. 28—31. and ii. 15—20.

† Ibid. iii. 8—11.

death; God did not vouchsafe such frequent and immediate intercourse between himself and them, or any of their miserable race.

However, though God was pleased to withdraw this frequent and immediate intercourse, whereby mankind might have learnt from himself their duty, and his disposition to accept them in the discharge of it; yet he did not leave himself without a witness, having implanted in them the knowledge of good and evil; and having, as St. Paul elegantly expresses it, “made every man a law unto himself;” “the work of the law being written in their hearts; their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another *.”

And as God has thus placed a witness for himself in every man’s heart, suggesting to him what he ought to do; so has he not left himself without a witness, that he is disposed to accept those who endeavour to obey this law of their minds; not only by some degrees of forbearance, in “not executing sentence speedily on their evil works †;” and by suffering them long, because he is unwilling “that any should perish ‡:” but by “doing them good; giving them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, and filling their hearts with joy and gladness §:” and thereby, as well as by other methods, inviting them all to “seek the Lord, if happily they might feel (alluding to the darkness in which the Heathen world is represented in Scripture) after him: though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being ||.”

Thus far God has testified his will, and his gracious dispositions to all men since the fall; even to those whom “he winked at **;” (or acted as a man that winks, connives, and will not see); suffering them “to walk in their own ways ††;” without sending any special messengers to inform or reclaim them.

But to some, that is, to those who made the best use of these common discoveries of his will and goodness, God did not stop there; but manifested himself farther: more particularly to persons of the most exemplary piety: chiefly indeed by his Spirit, as he did to Enoch; whereby Enoch prophesied ‡‡. But sometimes by such appearances as he blessed our first parents with; by which Christ preached to the disobedient before the flood, who were the spirits in prison, (or who were held captive by the devil, through their own lusts and passions) by the instructions which he (the Lord) gave to Noah §§; whereby Noah, as St. Peter informs us, became “a preacher of righteousness |||.”

And though after the Spirit of God left striving with the old world, and testifying against them, the flood came, and swept them all away, but eight persons; yet God seemed afterwards, on the renewing the face of the earth, to converse with Noah again, as he

* Rom. ii. 14. 15.

§ Acts xiv. 15.

†† Ibid. xiv. 16.

||| 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20. 2 Pet. ii. 5.

† Eccles. viii. 11.

|| Ibid. xvii. 27, 28.

‡‡ Jude 14.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 9.

** Ibid. xvii. 30.

§§ Gen. vi. 7. 8-14.

did with our first parents after the creation *. And though on all his posterity's forsaking the worship of God, and falling into idolatry and vice, as they quickly did, God did not see fit to continue that immediate intercourse with them; yet did he single out Abraham, the father of the faithful, a man of eminent virtue, to communicate his will to, by dreams, visions, and messages; which he did not only send by inferior angels, but by the Lord himself; even him that was afterwards known as the angel of his presence or covenant. And after Abraham, he was pleased to vouchsafe some of these divine communications to Isaac and Jacob, and to their seed; till they, becoming a great people, had Moses for their teacher; who had not only the spirit of prophecy, but was one to whom God spake to face; making also his glory to pass before him.

After Moses had given so full a discovery of God's mind and will to them, there arose indeed in Israel no prophet like unto him: yet did God, on all great occasions, send them prophets from time to time, with "line upon line, precept upon precept; with "here a little and there a little;" encouraging them when they are faithful, and testifying against them by his Spirit in their mouths (as the Levites expressed it †), whenever they revolted from God, or brake his commandments.

And though God did not send any prophet to the idolatrous nations after the flood for more than two thousand years, winking at the times of their ignorance; yet Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who travelled up and down among them, and had such extraordinary providences attending them; and afterwards the Israelitish nation, which had such laws from heaven, such miraculous manifestations to them, and divine appearances in their favour, in leading them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and the wilderness; in the conquests of Canaan, and in the singular protection and felicity of that country; such particular and exemplary punishment for their vice and idolatry, in their captivities; and such uncommon restorations to their own country, on their repentance, according to plain predictions of the one and the other; were a standing witness for God, and a plain revelation to the whole world, that would but give themselves the trouble to enquire after these patriarchs, and this wonderful commonwealth, they being set by God as a light on a hill, on purpose to draw the eyes of all mankind upon them.

The Spirit, who strove no more with the bulk of mankind after the flood, seems also to have left the Jews for more than three hundred years after Malachi, their last prophet, on the finishing of the second temple: prophecy, and all the other glories of the first temple, disappearing under the second; to prepare them the more to expect the Lord, who was to come himself to fill this temple with his own glory; and thereby to make the despised glory of the second temple greater than the glory of the first ‡. This was, indeed, a period of the thickest darkness, like that which precedes

* Gen. ix. 1—13.

† Nehem. ix. 29, 30.

‡ Hag. ii. 7. 9. Mal. iii. 1.

the dawn of day. The Heathen world was sunk into the grossest polytheism, idolatry, and immorality; which they not only believed and practised, but wrought up into their highest acts of devotion. The Jews, who had the oracles of God, had notoriously corrupted them by their false glosses and traditions; which they had not only added to the law, but by them rendered the law itself of none effect: so that since the light that was in the world was darkness, how great must the darkness have been; and since the blind were leading the blind, what could have followed but that both should have fallen into the ditch, had not the day first dawned, and then the sun of righteousness himself arisen upon the world, and at last broke forth from the clouds that veiled his glory, and shone out with his full lustre, in the illuminations of the Holy Ghost? Wherefore, after so great an interval of prophecy, God was pleased to fill Zachary and Elizabeth with the Holy Ghost, and they prophesied *. And the virgin Mary, on whom the Holy Ghost came, brake forth into a sublime hymn †. Good old Simeon had the Holy Ghost likewise upon him: and Anna the prophetess ‡. And John Baptist was at last filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb §; from whence he became a greater prophet than any that went before him. For "among them that are born of women, there had not (at that time) been a greater than John; all the prophets and the law prophesying until him," and then in some sort ending: for he not only foretold the appearance of Jesus, the great prophet, darkly, and as a thing at a distance, as the law and the other prophets had done before him; as he himself did in some measure at the first ||; but had the honour to be his immediate forerunner, and prepare the way for him. For he exhorted men to repent of those vices which would hinder their receiving him; both by encouraging them to repent, from baptizing them into the faith of the doctrine of the remission of sins (which perhaps meant no more than a deliverance of those particular persons who should repent from the wrath coming upon the whole nation); and of Christ's being ready to appear: and by denouncing the utter extirpation of their nation, if they should continue impenitent. And besides, had at last the honour to introduce Jesus publickly to the people; and point him out to them, on a special revelation made from God to him, that that was he: saying unto them **, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world!"

He was that great prophet after whom all the other prophets first enquired: "Searching diligently what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ that was in them did signify, when it testified before his sufferings, and the glory that should follow ††." And

* Luke i. 62.

† Ibid i. 25. 46—56.

‡ Ibid. ii. 25, 26—36.

§ Ibid. i. 35.

|| John i. 31. 33. &c. N. B. In this John went farther than even Ezekiel had done; who, in the xviiith chapter, seems to speak only to the whole nation; see ver. 29—32.

** John i. 20.

†† 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.

to whom (after they had thus searched) “they all witnessed* ; of “whose days all of them from Samuel, as many as have spoken, “foretold † ; of whom ALL the scriptures testify ‡ ; and to whom “John himself came to bear witness §.” And no wonder ; since he who had appeared to our first parents in the garden, and to some of the patriarchs and prophets on many important occasions ; who had dwelt in the cloud of glory, and conducted the children of Israel through the Red-Sea and the wilderness ; filled the tabernacle, and then the temple, dwelling between the cherubims, from whence he gave answers in great conjunctures ; was now to be “Emanuel, “God with us, and to tabernacle among us : so that men were to “behold his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God, “full of grace and truth || :” and were likewise to hear him testify, in a familiar and human voice, what he knew and had seen ** ; or, as John Baptist says of him, “what he had seen and heard.” And though his testimony did not meet with the reception it ought, yet could they not help admiring the gracious words that came out of his mouth ; and acknowledging, that “never man spake as he “spake.”

And though this divine person was with God in the beginning ; the only begotten and well-beloved Son of God, lying in the bosom of the Father ; intimately acquainted with all his councils ; yet emptying himself of his glory, he humbled himself so far as that, like other prophets, he “taught the people by the Spirit of God,” all the days of his flesh. But with this difference, that he was not only full of the Holy Ghost, as they were, but had it without measure ††. By which he not only taught the people, but conducted himself, and wrought all his miracles in their sight : miracles which were wonderfully calculated to convince the Jews ; being very superior to what Moses had wrought, in their number, extent, and beneficence (admirably suited to the gracious design of his appearance), and the permanency of their effects ; as well as in the manner of working them ; doing them with a word, and by his own authority ; and in giving others a power to work them in his name.

Thus is our conscience, and God’s providence, God’s witness to all men : and thus is his Spirit in the mouths of the patriarchs and prophets ; especially in John Baptist ; but above all in Jesus Christ (to whom God gave the Spirit, not by measure) God’s great teacher and witness to his church and people, in the several ages of the world.

But though the Spirit of God taught and witnessed for God in all the revelations, prophecies, predictions, and miracles, that the patriarchs, the prophets, John Baptist, or even our blessed Lord himself, in his state of humiliation, did give and work ; yet was there a time to come, in which he was to do it in so superior a

* Acts x. 43.

|| Ibid. i. 4.

† Ibid. iii. 24.

** Ibid. iii. 11.

† John v. 39.

†† John iii. 34.

§ Ibid. i. 7.

degree, and so very different a manner, that John tells us, that the Holy Ghost was not then so much as given; nay, nor was not to be given, till Jesus was glorified*. The Holy Ghost was given without measure unto Jesus, as to a prophet, but it abode with him during his life time; he did not impart it to his disciples, during his ministry. Nor does he seem then to have had it so as to be able to impart it. He tells his disciples, just as he was going to leave them †, that “the Holy Ghost would not come till he departed; for he was to send him from the Father ‡, upon praying “the Father for it §.” And then it was that the spirit of truth was to be the chief teacher and witness for Jesus, as Jesus had been for the Father; or, as our Saviour says, that he should “testify of “him ||.” For our Saviour had taught his disciples such truths only as they could bear **. But the Spirit of Truth was to guide them into all truth; and was then likewise to take, not only of the Father’s, but things that would be made Christ’s (for then all things that the Father had would be made his; and the Spirit of God would be the Spirit of Christ); and shew those things unto them ††. He was then to be given to them, and to abide with them ††. It was not till after Christ’s resurrection that he first breathed on them, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost §§.” And then he did but prefigure the giving it. And even then he was so far from actually giving, that he could not give it, according to the settled order of things, till he was glorified; for Christ was to receive it not as a prophet, but as king of the church, “as the promise of his Father;” and then to shed it down on his disciples |||. Or, as the Psalmist says, “to ascend and receive gifts for men;” before he was to give those gifts to them ***. It is likewise expressly asserted by St. Paul, that “he ascended far above all heavens, that (to the intent that) he might fill all things: and (then) “he gave some apostles, some prophets and some evangelists, &c. “for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily: and “we (the Ephesians) are complete (or, as it should be rendered, “filled) in or by him: being by him filled with all the fulness of “God, till we come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness “of Christ.” For St. John tells us, that it was “out of his fulness that we received grace for, or in proportion to, his grace †††.” Christ was anointed †††, “with the oil of gladness, above his fellows §§§.” After which, the shedding down part of his unction on his disciples was the first act of that regal power to which he was advanced.

And the reason of our Saviour’s saying, in the present tense ||||, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” may well be presumed to be as a prophet, in the prophetic style, as a thing they should soon receive,

* John vii. 38, 39.

† Ibid. xvi. 7.

‡ Ibid. xiv. 16.

§ Ibid. xv. 26.

|| Ibid. xv. 26.

** Mark iv. 33.

John xvi. 12, 13.

†† Ibid. xvi. 14, 15—25. and xv. 26.

†† Ibid. iv. 16, 17.

§§ Ibid. xx. 22.

||| Ibid. xiv. 10. Acts i. 4. ii. 33.

*** Psal. lxxviii. 18. Eph. iv. 8.

††† John i. 16.

††† Acts iv. 27.

§§§ Heb. i. 9.

|||| John xx. 22.

as surely as he breathed upon them; and by a sound "as of a mighty rushing wind:" just as he says, "This is my body, which is broken for you. This is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed, &c." And as he likewise says, "Now is the son of man glorified *."

John Baptist, as a prophet, and greater than a prophet, was sent to bear witness to Christ, and bore it accordingly †: whence John is styled a witness ‡; and is said by his own disciples to have "borne witness to Christ §." The Father had also borne witness to him ||: and especially the Spirit, through which he did those mighty works he performed; and to all which he appeals **. Yet we find our Saviour appeals to this farther testimony of the Spirit; and says (as we shall in fact find), that infinitely greater effects should be produced by it in the world, than by the other testimonies I have mentioned. For he tells his disciples, "that the Spirit should convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment ††." And to this also St. John appeals, as to the greatest witness, saying ††, "It is the Spirit that beareth witness:" even beyond "the water and the blood;" which bear witness also §§: "because the Spirit is truth." And that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy |||:" or, "the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus;" or that which is the great witness to Jesus. As if it was so much the province of the Spirit to bear witness and give testimony, that no other witness or testimony was to be esteemed one, in comparison of his.

Since the law and the prophets all refer to the teaching and testimony of Jesus; and Jesus to the teaching and the witness of the Spirit; it must needs be of the highest consequence to the Christian religion; that this be rightly understood. I shall therefore explain what I mean by the teaching and the witness of the Spirit: I shall endeavour to shew the necessity there was for this teaching and witness of the Spirit, in the first settlement of Christianity. I shall farther prove, that the Spirit did so teach and witness in the first settlement of Christianity; and shall point out in what this superior teaching and witnessing did consist. I shall from thence shortly state, what was the consequence of reviling and blaspheming it; or what I take to be the sin against the Holy Ghost: and address myself in a few words to the Deists (who desire to be thought the only free-thinkers of the age), and to those who professedly write against them.

Our Saviour, by the Spirit, taught in the days of his flesh. The duties which he inculcated were, indeed, very plain; but many of the truths he taught, he taught in parables; and "without a parable spake he not unto them ***: as they were able to hear (or to bear) it," as Mark says †††. These are what related to his

* Ibid. xiii. 31.

§ Ibid. iii. 26.

†† Ibid. xvi. 8, 9.

*** Matt. xiii. 34.

† Ibid. i. 7, 8—27. 31—34.

|| Matt. iii. 17. and xvii. 5.

†† I John v. 6. §§ Ibid. ver. 8.

††† Mark iv. 33.

‡ John i. 6—8.

** John v. 32—37.

||| Rev. xix. 10.

kingdom; his administering it from the right-hand of God, by the Spirit; its speedy success, and great extent; the reasonableness and freedom of its precepts; the great apostacy and final consummation. And though he went farther with the disciples, expounding some of his parables privately unto them, as Mark also informs us *; and as he and the other evangelists inform us, in several other places: yet our Saviour told his disciples, just as he was going to leave them, that “he had many things to say unto them; but you cannot bear them now †.” For such were their prejudices, that by their influence they could as little bear them, as old bottles (old skins) could new wine; as our Saviour says of them on another occasion ‡. So that, just as he was going to leave them, he declares, concerning the mysteries of the kingdom of which he had been speaking: “These things have I spoken to you in proverbs: the time cometh when I shall no more speak to you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father §.” Nay, so strong were the prepossessions of his disciples, that they did not understand some of those things which our Saviour told them in the plainest terms; they being, by the means of their preconceptions, hid from them ||.

The people thought, that Jesus of Nazareth was not Christ, because Elias was not come. They thought he could not be the Messiah, because they imagined they knew his parents, that he was born at Nazareth, the meanest city in Galilee, the most despicable part of Palestine. They thought his appearance too mean and contemptible for the king of Israel, who, as they imagined, was to take temporal power, and deliver them from the yoke of the Romans, set up an universal monarchy, subduing the nations under them, and becoming their king and governor, to continue such for ever. And though Jesus set the disciples right as to one of those things, namely, about Elias; yet he never attempted to set them right as to some of them; nor was he understood as to what he said to set them right about others.

But when the Spirit of Truth was to come, he was to guide his apostles into all truth **; teach them all things ††; and bring all things to their remembrance. He was to give them such a clear knowledge of the truth, as to remove all objections which might arise from the false traditions of the elders; or from mistaking the design and meaning of the law and the prophets. And therefore the Spirit then taught them, that Jesus was not only of the seed of David, according to the flesh, but that he was declared to be “the Son of God with power, when he was raised from the dead ‡‡;” that he was raised to sit on David’s throne, being exalted by the right hand of God §§, and made Lord (or the way of access to the Father, and of all communications from him) and Christ; the

* Mark iv. 34.

† John xvi. 12.

‡ Matt. xix. 17.

§ John xvi. 25.

|| Luke ix. 45. xviii. 34.

** John xvi. 13.

†† Ibid. xv. 26.

‡‡ Rom. i. 3, 4.

§§ Acts ii. 30. 33.

anointed Prophet, High-priest, and king of his church*; and a Prince and a Saviour, to grant repentance and remission of sins, together with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and eternal life, which God gives by him to all that obey him †: or, as Peter expresses it ‡, that “he is Lord of all.” They now understood, that how mean soever he had appeared upon earth, by emptying himself of his glory; and becoming poor for our sakes: yet that God had glorified him; giving him a name above every name that is named in heaven and earth; that he was to continue vested with this power till all his foes were made his footstool; and that though he was to be so far from delivering the Jews from the yoke of the Romans, as to make the Romans the executioners of his vengeance on the Jewish nation, for rejecting him; yet that he was to be the author of eternal salvation to all them that believe; first making them to fight successfully against all the enemies of their souls, and making them more than conquerors at last, they being to reign for ever with him in glory. Thus by the Spirit was given unto them the word of wisdom§; whereby they were able to make others wise to salvation. Our Saviour, before his death, promised the apostles that he would give them (not only a mouth) but wisdom, which their adversaries should not be able to resist ||. And that this was one of the gifts of the Spirit, which qualified a man to be an apostle, we may learn from St. Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians: where, speaking of his Gospel, he says, “Whereof I am made a “minister according ‘to the gift of the grace of God given unto me “by the effectual working of his power**’; even the gift which “is given to every one according to the measure of Christ; ac- “cording to which Christ gave some apostles, &c. ††.” And Peter says, Paul wrote (of this Gospel) “according to the wisdom “given unto him ‡‡.” And what indisputably shews, that this word of wisdom was a gift of the Spirit, is an express assertion §§: where, speaking of the diversities of gifts |||, and enumerating several of them ***, the apostle says †††, “For to one is given by the “Spirit, the word of wisdom.” From its being placed first of all those high gifts which are here mentioned, it might fairly be supposed to be the gift which fitted a man to be an apostle. But it is farther confirmed by ver. 28. where pursuing the same exhortations which naturally arose from the diversities of gifts, and which it was necessary to give to prevent the strife and emulation occasioned by them; he says, “God hath set some in the church, first apo- “stles.” And, “Are all apostles ‡‡‡?” By which one may see, that apostles, the first and chief ministers of the Christian church, answer to the word of wisdom, the first and chief gift of the Spirit §§§. Thus was the gospel revealed to them, which they were to publish

* Ibid. ver. 3.

† Acts v. 31.

‡ Ibid. x. 36.

§ 1 Cor. xii. 8.

|| Luke xxi. 15.

** Eph. iii. 7.

†† Ibid. iv. 7—11.

‡‡ 2 Pet. iii. 15.

§§ 1 Cor. ii.

||| Ver. 4.

*** Ver. 8—11.

††† Ver. 8.

‡‡‡ 1 Cor. xii. 29.

§§§ Ibid. ver. 1. See the Table of Spiritual Gifts.

to the world; and which St. Paul, in this very epistle, calls "the wisdom of God." For speaking * of Christ crucified (or the Gospel of Christ crucified), which they preached, ("teaching every man in all wisdom †"), he says, "It was unto the Jews a stumbling-block, &c. but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ (or the Gospel of Christ), the power of God, and the wisdom of God:" and afterwards ‡ he calls it, the wisdom of God, and the hidden wisdom: and in his epistle to the Ephesians, the manifold wisdom of God: as Christ, the great Teacher of it, calls himself the wisdom of God §. That he speaks there of himself, is plain from the parallel place ||: "wherefore behold I send:" and in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are said to be contained **.

To such discoveries as were made by the word of wisdom, the ministration of Moses bears some proportion. St. Paul compares his own ministration, as an apostle, with that of Moses, throughout all the third chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians. Moses had the two tables of the law, and a pattern of all things, delivered him in the mount; as the apostles (at least St. Paul) received from the Lord what they delivered unto us. However, the preference of the apostolic ministry to that of Moses may be seen in several of the verses of that chapter.

By the Spirit also was given unto them the word of knowledge ††; whereby they were given to know what was the meaning of the law and the prophets; and of all the passages of the Old Testament; where the ministry that was kept from ages, but was then made manifest (by the Spirit then discovering it by the word of wisdom, and) by the scriptures of the prophets (namely, the writings of the highest prophets, or apostolical prophets; and, among others, this particular epistle, written by Paul, an apostolical prophet to the Romans), according to the commandment of the everlasting God, (was) made known to all nations for the obedience of faith ‡‡. By this word of knowledge, the hidden wisdom, which God had ordained before the world; which yet none of the princes of this world (or the Jewish rulers) knew (for, had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory), was revealed unto them, even by that Spirit which searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God §§. For the prophets, as St. Peter tells those to whom he wrote ||||, "searched what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; that not unto them, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you; with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look

* 1 Cor. i. 24.

† Col. i. 28.

‡ Ibid. ii. 6, 7.

§ Luke xi. 49.

|| Matt. xxiii. 34.

** Col. ii. 3.

†† 1 Cor. xii. 8.

‡‡ Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

§§ 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. 10. 12, 13.

|||| Pet. i. 11. 12.

"Intro."

“into.” This gift of knowledge was given them for the fuller confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion to the Jews, and for removing objections that might arise in their minds to it, from the mistaken apprehensions they had about the law and the prophets; particularly, from Christ’s dying, rising again, and being preached to the Gentiles. And to this end (but not to found Christianity, which they always do on facts) we see all their discourses to Jews, from the second chapter to the end of the Acts, are full of references to antitypes, prophecies, and predictions: so are likewise their discourses sometimes to the devout, but never to the idolatrous Gentiles. Though after the idolatrous Gentiles were converted to Christianity, and might then be supposed versed in the scriptures, their epistles are full of the same references, and particularly to such as Judaized. By this word of knowledge, the Spirit revealed to them divers future mysteries: namely, the great events relating to the spreading, corrupting, or restoring the Christian religion; as, that the Gospel should be preached to the devout Gentiles, without requiring any farther observance of the laws of Moses, than of those which related to the devout Gentiles; and that the Gospel should be preached to the idolatrous Gentiles, with an entire freedom from all those laws. It was likewise revealed to them, that the Jews should be cast off; that there should be great corruptions introduced into the Christian religion; but that at last there should be a recovery of the Jews, and a complete fulness of the Gentiles. So that by the word of knowledge, I understand the knowledge of the meaning of the law, and of the ancient prophets, and the knowledge of the great future events relating to the church; and I understand it thus, because I find the word of knowledge distinguished by St. Paul from the word of wisdom and prophecy, and all the other gifts of the Spirit, enumerated 1 Cor. xii. 8. and from revelation and prophecy, chap. xiv. 6. And I take revelation as it stands chap. xiv. 6. and as it relates to Paul, to signify the same thing with the word of wisdom (St. Paul’s wisdom, or Gospel, being communicated to him by revelation); and prophecy, there to signify the prediction of some lesser event; prophecy (that is, the higher prophecy), mysteries, and knowledge, seem to stand for the same thing*; and to be contradistinguished from prophecies†, that is, lower prophecies and tongues, as lower gifts of the Spirit. And it is on this account it is said that “knowledge will vanish away‡;” since there will not be any remaining mysteries, or any great event relating to the church, hid from us when the dispensations of God will be completed. What may farther shew this to be the meaning of knowledge is, that it is often spoken of as one of the highest gifts, and joined with wisdom, allowed to be the highest gift of all, and most peculiar to an apostle; which I think cannot be accounted for but from this notion, which I have given of it§. The word of knowledge is

* 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

† Ibid. ver. 8.

‡ Ibid.

§ See to this purpose 1 Cor. xiv. where revelation is ranked with knowledge: and revelation there stands for the revelation of the Gospel made to Paul; and so signifies the same with wisdom. See also Col. ii. 3. Rom. xi. 33. 2 Cor. xi. 6. xii. 8.

reckoned the second gift of the Spirit, of all those high spiritual gifts which are enumerated there; and seems to be the gift that made a man a prophet of the highest rank, by prophets being those ministers of the church which stand in the second place*, in a discourse that is but one continued exhortation about these gifts throughout the chapter †.

To such revelations as these, some of those which God made to Abraham, to Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and to some of the lesser prophets, concerning the great events that should happen to the people of the Jews, and concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, bear a considerable resemblance.

But as these two were the highest gifts of the Holy Ghost, and seem to have been given only to the apostles, I shall say no more of them here; but refer my reader for the rest to the second Essay; where I shall endeavour to consider every thing that was peculiar to an apostle.

But God did not only (by the gift of the word of wisdom, and of the word of knowledge) give some apostles to his church, and some more eminent prophets; to whom the revelations of matters of the greatest importance, and more extensive usefulness (I have just now mentioned) were made; but also prophets of an inferior order, which were more numerous in the church (but which were all called prophets, as having the Spirit, whose gifts continued to be called by the general name of prophetic gifts in the church down to the times of Irenæus ‡). The different sorts of prophesyings of these prophets may be ranked under these heads.

I. Prediction, or the foretelling of something future, but of less consequence: such as the dearth §; the binding of St. Paul at Jerusalem, foretold by Agabus ||; the Holy Ghost witnessing, that in every city bonds and afflictions abode Paul **; and Paul's foretelling, that neither the ship that carried him, nor any that were on board, should be lost ††. These were not unlike the particular discoveries which were made to Deborah ‡‡, to Eli §§, to the man of God |||, to Samuel ***, to Nathan †††, to the man of God †††, to Ahijah §§§, and to Elijah ||||. These prophets likewise foretold the fitness of persons for some peculiar service in the church. Thus as the prophets ministered to the Lord, and fasted in the church of Antioch, the Holy Ghost said by them, or which is the same thing, they said by the Holy Ghost, "Separate me Barnabas" and Paul for the work to which I have called them ****." Thus Timothy received the gift (or the gifts) of the Holy Ghost by (or according to) prophecy ††††. And Paul tells him, that "he had committed a charge unto him, according to the prophecies which" "went before of him ††††." And thus possibly it might be that

* Ibid. ver. 28, 29.

† See the Table of Spiritual Gifts.

‡ Iren. l. v. c. 6.

§ Acts xi. 28.

|| Acts xxi. 10, 11.

** Ibid. xx. 23.

†† Ibid. xxvii. 23, 24.

‡‡ Judg. iv. 7.

§§ 1 Sam. i. 17.

||| Ibid. ii. 27. ad fin.

*** Ibid. ix. 15.

††† 2 Sam. vii. 2.

†††† 1 Kings xiii. 1—32.

§§§ Ibid. xiv. 5—17.

|||| Ibid. xix. 15, 16.

**** Acts xiii. 1, 2.

††††† 1 Tim. iv. 14.

††††† Ibid. i. 18.

the Holy Ghost had made the elders of the Church of Ephesus overseers or Bishops (Ἐπισκόπους) of that flock*: though I think that not so likely to be the sense of the Holy Ghost's making them overseers, as that which I have given in the second Essay. Thus Moses understood that God had fitted Aholiab and Bezaleel, and other wise-hearted men, for the work of the tabernacle†. And thus Samuel knew which of the sons of Jesse should be the Lord's anointed‡.

On this occasion, I would step so far out of my way as to observe, that I do not find, that God revealed to the prophets the wickedness and malignity, that would arise in the hearts of some of those who were appointed to some ministry in the church. But as Christ himself, though he fully knew what was in man, chose one of the twelve who had a devil: so he suffered the church sometimes to appoint persons from whom great mischiefs should arise to it; as, particularly, Nicolas, one of the seven deacons (if the doctrines and sect of the Nicolaitans came from him, mentioned Rev. ii. 6. as many of the fathers thought with great probability); suffering them to come into stations of service in the church for its trial; that is, for the discovery of hypocrites, and the confirmation of those who were sincere.

2. The discernment of spirits: for this seems to be ascribed to the prophet §, and is reckoned as a gift of the Spirit, among other gifts||: and in the former of those places, St. Paul says, that if “they all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not (or an Heathen), or one unlearned (or ignorant), he is convinced (or discovered) of all. He is judged (or discerned) of all; and thus “are the secrets of his heart manifest; and so falling down on his “face, he will worship God; and report, that God is in you of a “truth**.” And in the epistle to the Hebrews we find, that the word of God (ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ) which is the word spoken by the revelation of Christ, or by the gifts of the Spirit, is, among other things, said to be “a discernor of the thoughts of the heart ††;” as it had been of old ††; and as it now was. We have a particular instance of this gift of discernment in Peter §§: the same may be observed in Elisha |||; and in Ahijah ***. And by this discernment of Spirits they were not only to judge of the Heathen, or the ignorant; or of the faith and hypocrisy of particular persons; but of the prophets too: for St. Paul says, “Let the prophets speak, “two or three, and let the rest judge (δαινιμέτωσαν) †††.” And he says, that “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets †††.” And likewise, that “the spiritual man (πνευμαλικός, “the man that hath the spirit) judgeth (ἀνακρίνει) all things §§§.”

* Acts xix. 20, 28.

† Exod. xxxv. 30. xxxvi. 1.

‡ 1 Sam. xvi.

§ 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

|| Ibid. xii. 10. ** 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

†† Heb. iv. 12.

†† Ibid. ver. 2.

§§ Acts v. iii. 9.

||| 2 Kings xiv 25, 26.

*** 1 Kings xiv. 15, 16.

††† 1 Cor. xiv. 29.

††† Ibid. ver. 32.

§§§ Ibid. xi. 5.

And he directs the Thessalonians, that they should not despise prophecies; but should prove all things (discerning between the true and false prophecies); and whilst they rejected that which is false, that they should hold fast that which is good*. And those to whom St. John writes, who had received an unction from the Holy One (that is, the internal unction, or gifts of the Spirit, which the external unction under the law represented) and knew all things†: and they on whom that anointing abode‡; (and, no doubt, the lower gift of prophecy among others, that being the gift which all the members of the church generally enjoyed in one kind or another), were not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits§: and as there were general rules given them to try the spirits by; as, that “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but “by the Spirit; and no man speaking by the Spirit calleth Christ “accursed||.” So if any person pretended to a new discovery, which, what was already known by them, did not enable them to judge of; they had reason to hope, that God would reveal even that unto them; and that they should, through the Spirit, know also whether that was of God. So Clement says, “that the apostles “did ordain the first fruits of such as believed, making trial “(δοκιμάσαντες) of them by the Spirit**;” the same word that is made use of 1 Thess. v. 20, and 1 John iv. 1.

I am inclined to think, that these two kinds of prophecy (at least the last) are what St. Paul calls a revelation, 1 Cor. xiv. 26, (as it stands distinguished from a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, and an interpretation), and which he ascribes there to this kind of prophet, as well as a psalm, a doctrine, and the rest, which I am now going to consider. For,

3. There seems to be yet a lower degree of prophecy than either of these: it appearing to me, that all the public performances in the church, by single persons, through the illumination of the Holy Ghost, were called prophecy: for so I apprehend St. Paul calls every such public action done in the church, by a single person, to edification, and exhortation, and comfort; in opposition to speaking any thing in the assembly in a tongue that was not understood††. And there seems to me to be these different actions of this kind, to which prophecy is applied in that chapter.

The first is a doctrine. And therefore to these prophets, or to those that prophesy in this sense, belongs a doctrine‡‡; which, perhaps, may be any truth about faith or manners; and in this sense these prophets would be the same thing with teachers; of which I shall say more presently. And because in this sense it would coincide with the gift of teaching, and for other reasons, it may much more probably mean an exhortation, or a forcible way of convincing men of what is wrong in their conduct, reproving them for it, ad-

* 1 Thess. v. 20, 21. † 1 John ii. 20. ‡ Ibid. ver. 27. § Ibid. iv. 1.
|| 1 Cor. xiii. 3. 1 John iv. 1—6. ** Epist. ad Cor. § 42. †† 1 Cor. xiv. 1—4.
‡‡ Ibid. ver. 26.

monishing them to amend it; and confirming and establishing them in what was right in it; and comforting them under any of the difficulties or afflictions they fell under for it, or in the practice of it. For we often find the first Christian prophets in the New Testament employed in all these ways. So Barnabas, who appears to have been a prophet before he was an apostle*, is said to have “exhorted the Grecians at Antioch, that with full purpose of heart “they should cleave unto the Lord†.” And so Judas and Silas, being prophets, exhorted the brethren at Antioch, with many words, and confirmed them‡. Thus St. Paul directs some among the Romans, who had the gift of exhortation, to wait on exhortation§; and he afterwards tells some of them, that he is persuaded, that they, “being full of goodness, and filled with all knowledge, are able to admonish one another¶.” And the Colossians were not only to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, but such as should admonish one another**. And the brethren in Thessalonica were to admonish him that obeyed not the epistle††. And the Ephesians were to reprove the unfruitful works of darkness, when committed by the children of the light‡‡. And they were to comfort one another, particularly the feeble-minded, as we may see, 1 Thess. iv. 18. and v. 11. 14. And this was even the business of the prophets under the Old Testament; who were sent to exhort, comfort, confirm, or reprove the people on several occasions.

2dly, A Psalm; ver. 26, which is called, “singing with the “Spirit,” (ψάλλειν τῷ πνεύματι), ver. 15, 16. And this may either signify, the composing new poems, such as were composed by Moses, Deborah, David, Asaph, Heman, Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, &c. or the singing such poems as had been composed by others, with proper and extempore melody; or both. For as singing the praises of God in the Old Testament, by the Spirit of God, is called prophecy§§, so singing with the Spirit seems to comprehend both the poem and the tune, under the New; not only from the generality of the phrase, which leaves it open to be understood, either as to the matter or as to the music of the Psalm, or as to both of them, being dictated by the Spirit; but from Eph. v. 18. where the apostle directs the Ephesians not to be drunk with wine (as the Heathens were at their Bacchanalia) but to be filled with the Spirit. And that then, instead of giving vent to their mirth in the mad and excessive way in which the Heathens did it at their idolatrous feasts, they should express their joy by speaking to one another in psalms (those of David, which contain matter of instruction, as well as many others, &c.), hymns (such as only contain matter of praise), and spiritual songs, ᾠδαὶ πνευματικαί, songs of the Spirit, dictated by the Spirit (as the Χάρισμα πνευματικόν, is the spiritual gift, or gift of the spirit|||; and the Πνευματικὸς, which we translate spiri-

* Acts xiii. 1.

† Ibid. xi. 23.

‡ Ibid. xv. 32.

§ Rom. xii. 8.

|| Rom. xv. 14.

** Col. iii. 16.

†† 2 Thess. iii. 15.

‡‡ Eph. v. 3.

§§ 1 Sam. x. 5, 6. 9, 12.

||| Rom. i. 12.

tual man*, is the man that has some of the gifts of the Spirit), singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord. For though melody is not expressed in the original, it is fairly implied in ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες, or singing not only with their voice, but with their heart to the praise of the Lord. In singing psalms and hymns, perhaps, the Spirit dictated the tune only; in the songs of the Spirit, both the poem and the tune too. And perhaps this is the meaning of a text that seems to be like this †: “Let the word “ of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” (or in all that latitude of wisdom and knowledge in which we, the apostles of Christ, have taught it, according to the word of wisdom and knowledge communicated to us), “teaching and admonishing one another “ in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs” (ὧδαῖς πνευματικαῖς, songs of the Spirit); ἐν χάριτι ᾄδοντες, we translate it, singing with grace (which is very seldom, if ever, the sense of χάρις in scripture), but which I believe should be rendered, “with the gifts of the “ Spirit in your hearts to the Lord.” For that χάρις sometimes signifies that particular favour which is called χάρισμα, or the gift of the Holy Ghost, in the Scripture, is sufficiently plain, Acts iv. 33. Rom. xii. 3. 6. 1 Cor. i. 4, 5. 2 Cor. i. 12. 15. xii. 9. Gal. ii. 9. Eph. i. 3. 6. iii. 16. iv. 6. 1 Pet. iv. 10. Zech. xii. 10. Heb. x. 20. I apprehend ᾄδοντες ἐν χάριτι, is the same with ψάλλοντες τῷ πνεύματι ‡, and with the προσευχόμενοι ἐν πνεύματι §; and to understand the gift of the Spirit by χάρις here, is very agreeable to the phraseology of the Jews, who, when the Hebrews render *ehen*, grace, render it the spirit of prophecy. So Psal. xlv. 2. “Grace is “ poured into thy lips;” the Chaldee paraphrase is, “The Spirit “ of prophecy is given to thy lips.” And I find the ancients interpreted this very text in this sense, Ἀπὸ χαρίσματι διὰ τῆς ἀπὸ τῶ ἁγίου πνεύματος δοθείσης χάριτι. And I am apt to think that this is the meaning of χάρις in the prayer St. Paul makes for those whom he writes to in the beginning of all his epistles, except that to the Hebrews: he wishes the same to Timothy, who, though the son of a Jewess, yet having a Greek to his father, was begot by Paul in the uncircumcision of his flesh ||; and of which Peter makes mention at the beginning of both his, and interprets it somewhat fuller; praying, or wishing, that “grace and peace may “ be multiplied unto them:” that is to say, that these gifts which they, or some among them, had, might be increased and multiplied; either by an apostle’s coming among them to impart them; or by their sober, righteous, and godly conversation, and a right use of such gifts as they had, and in such a degree as they possessed them: for then, “to them who had should be given;” as, if they acted otherwise, “from them should be taken even that which they already had.” And this may serve to explain, why Paul and Peter

* 1 Cor. ii. 15. iii. 1. Gal. vi. 1.
§ Eph. vi. 8. || Acts xvi. 32.

† Col. iii. 16.

‡ 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

so constantly use this wish or prayer, whilst James, and John to the elect lady, do not. For Paul writing to idolatrous Gentiles, and Peter to devout ones, converted to the faith (see the second Essay), never fail to wish them those gifts of the Spirit which were the proof of their being become the sons or people of God; and then he wishes them peace with God, of which these gifts was a full proof they were admitted to, as well as the Jews (to whom justification and peace was first preached *): and that peace in their own minds and consciences which necessarily flowed from a sense of the other. If the reader shall be of opinion that I have thus established the sense of the word *χάρις*, in Col. iii. 16. to be the gift of psalmody, the construction of the place will be natural, and the sense just and easy; and will run thus: that when they sung psalms, hymns, and songs of the Spirit, by the assistance of that spiritual gift that enabled them to do it; they should not only sing with their voice, to please themselves or others; but with the warmest affections of their hearts to the praise of the Lord, from whom all these gifts and every other blessing came. Perhaps we have an instance of such a song of the Spirit, Acts xvi. 25. And perhaps blessing, or giving thanks with the Spirit †, was also a hymn of this sort; being, it may be, the hymn of blessing, and of giving thanks (*εὐλογίας καὶ εὐχαριστίας*), which was often dictated by the Spirit, when the bread and the cup of blessing were blessed; and which, the Spirit moving them to compose on that occasion, might perhaps afterwards be the reason of calling the bread and cup of blessing, the eucharist.

3. Another instance is prayer; which is called ‡, “Praying with the Spirit, and with understanding;” and praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit §; for the Spirit then helped their infirmities; for though they knew not what they should pray for as they ought, yet the Spirit itself sometimes makes intercession for them with groanings, which cannot be uttered ||; and praying in the Holy Ghost **. It was this gift of the Spirit, among other gifts of prophecy imparted to women in the church of Corinth, which gave rise to that question, whether a woman might not pray or prophesy in the church, with her head uncovered, as well as a man? The gifts of prayer and prophecy being common to the women as well as the men, the women thought these gifts gave them not only an equal right to pray or prophesy in the public assemblies as well as the men, but without their veil also. Though in this last they were mistaken; for the apostle orders, that they shall pray or prophesy with their veils on; or, because the gifts of the Spirit did not take away the subjection of the women, of which the veil was the token ††. In such a prayer, no doubt, the matter, the order, and the expressions of the prayer were dictated by the Spirit; such was the apostle’s prayer, Acts iv. 24—31; such likewise

* Acts x. 36.

† 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

‡ 1 Cor. xiv. 14, 15.

§ Eph. vi. 18.

|| Rom. viii. 26.

** Jude 19, 20.

†† 1 Cor. xi. 3—17. see Locke in loc.

perhaps was Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple *, the Levite's prayer †, and Daniel's ‡; not to mention others. The only difficulty here is, whether it can be brought under the head of prophesying. I think it may, for the reasons I have given, when I first entered upon that sort of prophesying, which relates to speaking in Christian assemblies, see p. 376. And though praying is distinguished from prophesying, 1 Cor. xi. 4, 5. as prophesying is there speaking directly to men, and praying is there addressing God; yet, in the xivth chapter, prophesying seems to me to include prayer; since every thing in that chapter seems to be included under prophesying, that, as I said before, is spoken in an assembly of Christians under the immediate influence of the Spirit; and is to the edification, exhortation, or comfort of the assembly, as the apostle speaks, ver. 2. and as prayer in a known tongue was. Accordingly prayer seems to me to be mentioned in this chapter, as one instance of prophesying, as singing is mentioned as another, ver. 14—18. and as a doctrine, a revelation, and an interpretation, are mentioned as others, ver. 26. and is opposed to praying, singing, teaching, exhorting, or uttering a revelation in an unknown tongue; in which a man might speak to God, or his own spirit or understanding; but was a Barbarian to the congregation, to whom he talked mysteries, or things not known or understood.

4. And for this reason I think interpretation of tongues, mentioned ver. 6. is included under prophesying in this xivth chapter; as an interpretation was turning that with readiness, beauty, and propriety, to the edification, exhortation, and comfort of the assembly; which in him who spoke in a tongue unknown to the assembly was only for ostentation, or conviction of unbelievers; or at best an act of some devotion to God, and for his own private edification. And the Holy Ghost distributed his gifts in such measure and proportion, that he who had the gift or knowledge of a tongue, was not always able to interpret it readily and elegantly, whilst another who stood by could; especially if the prayer or discourse that was to be interpreted was of any considerable length, in which case the interpreter must be assisted with great judgement and a strong memory: for which reason the apostle directs, that in case any one spoke in the church in an unknown tongue, that he should pray that he might interpret; or, at least, if he could not, that others who had that gift should interpret for him. The gift of the Hebrew tongue was, perhaps that which some of the Corinthians, who had the gift of tongues in the church of Corinth, chiefly used, it being the tongue in which the Old Testament was written. For which reason, if there was an interpreter, that is, one who could turn it readily and elegantly into Greek, it might be very properly used in the Corinthian church; as it had been in the Jewish assemblies in Ezra's time; when yet the people, after seventy years captivity, had refused it. But if no interpreter was by, he

* 1 Kings viii. 12—62.

† Nehem. ix. 6—38.

‡ Dan. ix. 4—20.

who could speak that tongue, or any other unknown to the church, was to keep silence *. I understand the gift of interpreting to be, the ability to interpret an unknown tongue with readiness and elegance; because it cannot be supposed otherwise a gift different from the gift of tongues itself. For no man that speaks a tongue which he understands himself, but can, in some sort, interpret it to him that does not understand it; though he may not be able to do it with propriety and beauty. And that he who had the gift of the tongue understood it himself, appears from ver. 4, for, says the apostle, "he that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself;" see also ver. 11, 12. 28.

But there were not only apostles, and prophets of the higher and lower orders in the church, but teachers †: and pastors and teachers are said to be among those to whom Christ gave gifts; or whom he filled and qualified for their work, after he had ascended up on high ‡.

I take pastors and teachers § (or doctors, as the word διδάσκαλος is rendered, Acts xiii. 1.) to mean the same thing; and that one is but a metaphorical name to denote the same ministry, which the other does in its natural signification. For the very character of a pastor after God's own heart, is to feed his people with knowledge and understanding ||. For which reason teachers are here set but as exegetical, to shew us more fully the meaning of pastors. And for that reason pastors are omitted in 1 Cor. xii. 28, and Rom. xii. 7. (which may be considered as parallel places), and teachers only mentioned. And I believe it will be very difficult to find any sense of pastors, agreeable to Scripture, distinct from teachers, that will be at the same time also distinct from apostles, prophets, evangelists, and other spiritual men mentioned in Scripture.

Now as far as the Spirit's teaching pastors or teachers may be supposed different from the illumination of the apostles, to whom was given the word of wisdom and knowledge; it must either consist in a lower degree of the knowledge of the Christian scheme; or else, which I should rather think, in giving them a very clear view and full assurance of it (in which sense Mr. Locke understands faith, *πιστις*, in his paraphrase and notes on 1 Cor. xii. 9.), and a peculiar aptness to teach others, what they thus knew themselves: and so may perhaps be only teaching the true method and art of teaching; and enabling them to use it, in delivering what they had learnt of the Christian scheme from the apostles and others, with the assurance that became doctors and teachers; and perhaps it is this gift that St. Paul refers to, when he tells Timothy, that if any man among the Ephesians (some of whom had received this grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ **), he must, among other qualifications, be a διδασκάλος, apt or fit (by this gift) to teach ††. And I the rather incline, I confess, to this opinion, that the gift

* 1 Cor. xiv. 27, 28.

§ Ibid. ver. 12.

† 1 Cor. xii. 28.

|| Jer. iii. 15.

** Eph. iv. 7.

‡ Eph. iv. 10, 11.

†† 1 Tim. iii. 2.

of teaching was only an aptness to teach others, because the evangelists, who are ranked before pastors and teachers *, do not seem to have had any revelation of doctrines, much less of the whole scheme of the Christian doctrine made to them; but to have received their knowledge from others; namely, the apostles. For Timothy was to hold fast the form of sound words which he had heard of Paul †; and to continue in the things which he had learned, and had been assured of (from) knowing of whom he had learned them ‡: and the things which he had heard of Paul before many witnesses, he was to commit to faithful men, who should be able to teach others §.

To others the Spirit taught the use of tongues and languages, that they might be able to teach people of different nations ||, and convince unbelievers; or, as St. Paul expresses it, to be for a sign to them **. And these were either more or fewer, as the Spirit saw fit. For Paul tells the Corinthians, that he spake with more tongues than them all ††. This was a gift which none of the prophets under the Old Testament ever had any thing that resembled; but was entirely reserved for Christians under the New. By this gift the ruins of the world were repaired, and its face renewed.

When mankind was of one speech, instead of using it to communicate their thoughts to one another for the glory of God (who had so lately, in his just judgement, destroyed the world), and for their own mutual benefit; they made it subservient to the very worst designs, both against God and themselves. A tower was to be built to encourage them in their wickedness, and protect them against the future judgements of heaven; if it was not to be an high place for worship to false gods. Since they did not care to retain God in their thoughts, he gave them up to their own inventions. He confounded their language, probably by giving them different tongues: first to defeat their vain attempt; and then, by the loss of that language, in which the knowledge of the true God was preserved (in the family of Shem), to give the world up to the worship of idols. By this gift of tongues, God calls back the nations from their idolatry (in which he had suffered them to continue for the space of two thousand years), to the knowledge of himself, as the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, as the only mediator between God and man: speaking in their own language to every creature under heaven. And thus by the Spirit he renews them in knowledge after his own image; creates them again in righteousness and true holiness; and begets them to a lively hope, as the reward of their obedience to his call.

Helps and governments are likewise mentioned among the other gifts and distributions of the Spirit ‡‡; and seem to imply an illumination, from which they acted. By helps may be understood deacons. For ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι, whence the word helps (ἀντιλήψεις)

* Eph. iv. 11.

† 2 Tim. i. 13.

‡ Ibid. iii. 14.

§ 1b d. ii. 2. See the second Essay.

|| Acts ii. 4.

** 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

†† Ibid. ver. 18.

‡‡ 1 Cor. xii. 28.

comes, signifies to take care of, or assist others. And deacons were first instituted, both to help the apostles, in easing them of the care of distributing to the poor; and to help the poor, by applying themselves more particularly to their relief; which the apostles found they could not do, without omitting the more material parts of their work *. What favours this opinion too is, that the apostles proposed to the multitude of the disciples, to chuse men into that office, that, among other qualifications, were full of the Holy Ghost. And, if I mistake not, we find the gift fitting Christians for this sort of ministry, mentioned among some of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, Rom. xii. 7. "Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering," εἴτε διακονίαν, ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ. If it had been rendered, "serving, let us wait on our serving," as it might; it would perhaps have carried the reader at first sight back to the institution of deacons †, where the apostles propose that office, because it was not fit for them to leave the word of God, and serve tables, διακονεῖν τραπέζαις. Or if διακονία shall be thought a more general word here, and to signify any ministry in the church, as some take it to be; or the ministry of an evangelist in particular, as Dr. Whitby thinks ‡; an evangelist having a ministry ascribed to him in Scripture (as Eph. iv. 11, 12. and 2 Tim. iv. 5. and ver. 11. if Mark shall be thought an evangelist in the same sense that Timothy was); he will at the same time be apt perhaps to think, as Dr. Whitby does, that the gifts of the Holy Ghost, fitting a man for the office of a deacon, are referred to, ver. 8. "He that giveth (that is, out of the fund of the church), let him do it with simplicity" (or liberality), as (ἐν ἀπλότητι) should be rendered, and is accordingly rendered, 2 Cor. viii. 2. and in other places. And he that sheweth mercy (that is, to the sick, impotent, strangers, or orphans, persons in greater distress than the poor), with cheerfulness. And so St. Peter, speaking of several gifts of the Holy Ghost, says yet more unexceptionably to our purpose §, "If any man minister (as a deacon, εἰ τις διακονεῖ), let him do it as of the ability (or with the gifts of prudence) that God giveth." For having just before spoken of charity and hospitality ||, or ministering, or assisting others out of what was their own, he here speaks of ministering to others with ability out of the fund of the church. Now I suppose that it was the more necessary, that the deacons at that time should not only have some gifts of the Holy Ghost, but be full of them; that so none might thrust themselves among the Christians, purely to partake of the community of goods that was then among them; and that no person, amidst that vast multitude of disciples, under a pretence of the largeness or the wants of their families, might have a greater share out of that fund of the church, than was proper for their case; and might at the same time have that which was sufficient for it. This latter case gave occasion to the

* Acts vi. 2, 3.

§ 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

† Ibid. ver. 2.

|| 1 Pet. iv. 8, 9.

‡ See Dr. Whitby in loc.

appointing deacons: they being appointed upon a complaint of the Grecians against the Hebrews, that their widows were neglected in the daily distributions *. And perhaps there would have been a great many of the poorer sort, that would have joined themselves to the church, before the deacons were appointed, purely to partake of the community of goods, and live in an idle slothful way, had it not been for the dread that fell upon them on finding Ananias and Sapphira struck dead by Peter, for a cheat, about this community of goods; though something different in its kind. And this seems to me to be hinted by St. Luke †, on the occasion of the death of Ananias and Sapphira: for he says, “fear came upon the church, and upon as many as heard these things.” But of the rest (or of those that were not of the church), though they magnified them, or had a high reverence or awe of persons that could strike such offenders dead; yet durst they not (for that very reason) join themselves to them, only in order to partake of that community.

Perhaps too by helps may be understood those who used to be the messengers sent by the churches to the apostles, or to other churches; or it may be the apostles messengers to the churches, on the several messages they had to send to them, or enquiries they had to make about them; and who were consequently great and necessary helps to them in this part of their work; as they also were to the churches where they were sent; and who consequently wanted great degrees of prudence in managing that work. St. Paul used Mark, Luke, Timothy, Erastus (who are said to be two of them that ministered unto him ‡), Titus, Epaphroditus, Silas or Silvanus, Sosthenes, Epaphras, Onesimus, Tychicus, Crescent, and others, on such occasions. And some of these he seems to call the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ §. Epaphroditus is expressly called the messenger of the Philippians by St. Paul, in his epistle to that church ||. But though these perhaps may be called helps, from their assisting the apostles and the churches, in going on their errands respectively; yet I see no foundation to suppose helps to have been deacons; or to suppose the business of helps, in this sense of the word, any part of the office of a deacon; that office having been appointed purely for the care of the poor: and the characters given of a deacon, 1 Tim. iii. 8—14. belonging to them as such.

I am likewise inclined to think, that evangelists may be some of these helps in the last sense of this word (if helps in this last sense of the word were not all of them evangelists), whose business it was to set in order the things that were wanting, or left undone by the apostles: for which purpose Paul sent Timothy to the Thessalonians **, where Paul had been once; and for which purpose he also sent Titus in Crete ††, where Paul had been then once also; and Timothy at Ephesus ‡‡, where Paul had been twice. And Timothy and Titus were to set those unfinished things in order; not by a revelation made to themselves, but according to the form

* Acts vi. 1, 2, 3.

† Acts v. 11, 12.

‡ Ibid. xiii. 1, 2.

§ 2 Cor. viii. 23.

|| Phil. ii. 25.

** 1 Thess. iii. 2.

†† 1 Tit. i. 5.

‡‡ 1 Tim. i. 2.

of sound words they had heard from the apostles *; that is, the directions given them when the apostles left or sent them †; or that the apostles sent them by letter afterwards; of which we have two remarkable instances in St. Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus. I apprehend this to have been the work and duty of an evangelist, and not the converting Heathens, founding churches, or teaching them: for we are not built on the foundation of the evangelists, but of the apostles and prophets. Apostles and prophets, indeed, are foundation-stones in the temple of God; but evangelists are no more than pillars in it ‡. Evangelists are therefore placed after apostles and prophets, though before teachers; their work being to finish and perfect that in many churches, with power and authority, which the teacher was to do in one way, but in one church. And as those seem to me to be mistaken, who think the evangelists were sent to found churches; so I think those more so, who imagine that they, or any of them that attended St. Paul (for we do not know when Philip became an evangelist, or how he acted as such); or that Timothy and Titus in particular were settled bishops, or presbyters in any church, or over any number of churches, in Asia or Crete; since the fixing them any where is inconsistent with their travelling about with the apostles, and being sent by them every where, as occasion required. And they were so sent by them, not only before they presided over these churches, but afterwards. For St. Paul sends for Timothy to come to him to Rome, in his last imprisonment §, after he is supposed to be bishop of Ephesus. Nor was Timothy then at Ephesus. For he says to Timothy, "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus ||;" which he could not say to Timothy, if Timothy had been at Ephesus at that time: he would rather have said, "Tychicus have I sent to thee;" as he says on a like occasion to Titus: "When I shall send Artemas or Tychicus to thee, be diligent to come unto me unto Nicopolis **." And he also says ††, "And how much he (Onesiphorus) ministered "unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest." Besides, if Timothy had been bishop of Ephesus, would Paul have besought him to have staid there, as he says he did ‡‡? He would rather have charged him to have staid there, if we could suppose Timothy's backwardness to do his known duty had wanted any spur; which, indeed, is not to be supposed of so diligent a minister of the church of God. Farther; Paul had Titus with him at Ephesus, after Titus is supposed to have been bishop of Crete; as may be gathered from 2 Tim. iv. 10. though he was just at that time departed (in all probability sent by St. Paul) not to Crete, but to Dalmatia, (ibid.) which was a great many hundred miles the other way.

* 2 Tim. i. 13. iii. 14. ii. 2.

† 1 Tim. i. 3. Tit. i. 5.

‡ 1 Tim. iii. 15.—I must refer the reader to Dr. Clarke's Sermon on Mal. xvi. 18. for a true explication of the text. It would be too great a digression to go into the particular consideration of it here.

§ 2 Tim. iv. 21.

|| Ibid. ver. 12.

** Tit. iii. 12.

†† 2 Tim. i. 18.

‡‡ 1 Tim. i. 3.

And as to governments, which perhaps is called ruling, or he that rules (ὁ προϊστάμενος *): and the persons who had this gift, the rulers and christian elders (προεστώτες †); and those who are over you (προϊστάμενοι ‡); and the guides (ἡγούμενοι §): it may seem to be the illumination of their minds by the Spirit, with prudence to propose proper methods to the several churches, for their better conduct and management on all occasions; and the Christians themselves, with prudence to see, that what was so proposed was right, and with humility to comply with it: or, at least, a great assistance of the Spirit to their thoughts, debates, and consultations on such occasions. An eminent instance of which we have in the case of appointing the deacons; the apostles proposing it from wise reasons, that they should be chosen (an instance of prudence that perhaps will be thought superior to a parcel of illiterate fishermen), and the church immediately falling in with it, without the least debate or contention; and, no doubt of it, chusing men peculiarly fit for the purpose. This seems to be plainly hinted, ver. 5. inasmuch as some of those who are appointed deacons are Grecians (as appears from the termination of their names, and particularly Nicolas, who is said to be a proselyte of Antioch), to give the greater assurance and satisfaction to the complainants, who were Grecians, that their complaints should be redressed; though the apostles do not seem to have proposed that to the multitude, as one of the qualifications of the persons they should chuse. And to this perhaps may all the directions also be referred, that St. Paul gives to the churches to whom he writes, for their conduct and management; and their compliance with those directions, particularly his directions to the Corinthians about praying and prophesying with the head covered or uncovered, and about the preference and exercise of the gifts of the Holy Ghost: and on some of those advices he appeals to them: “If any man among you think himself a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge, that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord ¶.” And perhaps this may help us to explain those texts, which speak of counting the elders that rule well worthy of double honour **; knowing them which are over you in the Lord (προϊστάμενος ὑμῶν), and to esteem them highly in love ††; and of remembering or obeying (which word, however, is not always the sense of the Greek word σέβασθε) them that have the rule over you (τοῖς ἡγούμενοις), and submitting yourselves ‡‡; as the younger are to submit (or pay respect and deference) to the elder; or, as we are all to be subject one to another; or to be clothed with humility. All which texts perhaps mean no more than that they should be of a yielding temper; and that, when prudent methods were proposed to them, they should be ready to fall in with them, where the prudence of those methods

* Rom. xii. 8. † 1 Tim. v. 17. ‡ 1 Thess. v. 12. § Heb. xiii. 17.
 ¶ 1 Cor. xiv. 37. ** 1 Tim. v. 17. †† 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. ‡‡ Heb. xiii. 7. 17.

plainly appeared; and not to thwart them from a perverse, sour, and untractable spirit. This, at least, we may be pretty sure of, that the *προϊστάμενοι ἐν Κυρίῳ* *, which we translate “those that are over you in the Lord,” does not signify any fixed ministers, rectors, or Bishops; since we find no trace of any in that church; either in the address of the epistle, 1 Thess. i. 1. as there is in that to the Philippians, chap. i. 1. nor in the salutation, 1 Thess. v. 26. And since we find the brethren are charged to do those things which must be supposed to have been the office of the bishop, rector, or presbyter, if there had been any such; namely, “to warn the unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak; to withdraw from a disorderly brother, and to note or mark him, and yet to admonish him †.” So that the very admonishing which was performed by those that were over them, and for which they were to esteem them highly in love, was but what the brethren could do; and therefore can here only signify some gift of the Holy Ghost, by which the brethren who had this gift in this church performed some of the ministrations in it, as we have seen already they did in other churches, and shall see, by and by, they did in almost all of them; and therefore the *προϊστάμενοι* must here denote some who had some or other of those gifts, and perhaps those of ruling, in the sense I have explained it. The same may perhaps be said of the *ηγούμενοι* ‡.

I cannot but have a very mean opinion of writers who will put on the appearance of assurance and certainty, that they may carry the guise of perfect knowledge and judgement to the bulk of their readers, in points where they are far from being at that certainty which they affect so much to be thought to have: and every one must have a much worse opinion of those who give themselves this air only to serve party or private views. The first proceeds from a degree of pride, to which human nature is more easily carried; whilst the second arises from a degree of dishonesty, that has been contracted by lower acts of it, repeated from time to time, till it is grown habitual, and ends in venturing on this high injury to mankind. The first moral virtues of a writer are to divest himself of these enormous passions; to search for truth alone, and to propose it to his reader, with that degree of evidence and certainty, or of doubt and difficulty, which it has in his own mind. Considering himself as accountable to God, for misleading any man by the superiority of his talents; and as accountable to his reader, for the insolence of endeavouring to impose on him, by means of any real or imagined advantage he has over him. If these virtues were practised by every writer, we should receive more profit from the best, and less hurt from the worst, than we now reap from either of them; and writing would then be in the best state that this state of imperfection will allow. Upon these considerations, I think myself bound to acquaint my reader, that though what I have writ on the two last gifts of the Spirit, namely, helps and *κεκρήσεις* (which our translators render govern-

* 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

† Ibid. v. 14.

‡ Heb. xiii. 7. 17.

ments), may seem plausible to him, as it has to me; yet that I am under a good deal of uncertainty about them. I think myself bound to give him this notice, that so he may use a more than ordinary care and attention whilst he considers what I have said on those two heads. I will express the state of my thoughts about them as fully as I can, in order to give him the best assistance I am able in forming his own.

The words helps and governments (*ἀντιλήψεις καὶ κυβερνήσεις*) occurring in no other place but 1 Cor. xii. 28. and there without much connection: and the words *προϊστάμενοι, προσεῳδῆτες, ἡγούμενοι* (which may be thought words of the same import with governments, and have been generally understood so), but seldom, and not always in one sense; and these last occurring with little more connection than the two first; and being all of them words of a pretty general and indetermined meaning, I have interpreted all of them agreeably to what I thought the state of things in the apostolic age, as they are hinted here and there in Scripture, required; and to facts, which I found in the acts and epistles of the apostles, corresponding to that state of things.

The state of the church wanted gifts of the Holy Ghost, to qualify deacons, messengers, evangelists, and rulers or advisers, for those functions and services; as well as gifts to fit teachers, inferior prophets, speakers of languages, or interpreters, for theirs; and it is plain in Scripture, that some had gifts of the Spirit to qualify them for the former, as well as the latter of these functions, in the church. Thus far I am clear in my opinion. I confess too I imagined it pretty natural, that in 1 Cor. xii. where the gifts of the Spirit seemed at first to me to be enumerated, those which qualified persons to be deacons, evangelists, and rulers, should be mentioned as well as others. At least, I thought these words would give me occasion to consider those gifts which it was necessary for me to consider, if I would answer my design, and consider every one of them that occurs in Scripture. For these reasons, therefore, I chose to treat of these gifts of the Spirit, as if they were couched under the words, helps and governments. I likewise chose to consider *κυβερνήσεις* in the sense our version gives it, to shew how far a scheme to support power, in some in the church, over the body of the rest of the church, can be carried from Scripture with any fair appearance from this word, or words in Scripture that may be thought to support this sense of that word, even by those who have the greatest temptations to carry it the farthest. And in these views what I have said on these two heads, I have said with the greatest candor, as things appear to me; and have carried them as far as the necessity of things, from the state the church was then in, or corresponding facts in Scripture, will bear, according to the best of my apprehension. And if this sense I have given of *κυβερνήσεις* (governments) shall be thought to be the true one, from the grounds of interpretation which I have mentioned, as inducing me to treat of it in that sense; I must observe, that this gift, as here understood,

stood, to signify the skill of proposing proper expedients, and offering proper instructions or advice to the body of the several churches, on occasions that occurred, seems to have been chiefly, if not solely, given to the apostles; or, at least, that I do not find any instance of this gift being exercised by any but the apostles, either immediately, or by the means of others, to whom the apostles gave directions, by virtue of this gift.

But I must acquaint my reader, that, notwithstanding all I have said, I cannot think this a certain way of interpretation. For it is very possible to find out a scripture scheme, which may suit a general indeterminate word in Scripture, and yet not to be the precise meaning of that word, as used in that particular place. To fix that, we must always be able to shew, that the idea, which we annex to that word, is that which was present to the mind of the sacred writer, when he used it in the place that is under our consideration. It would be happy for us, if the interpreters of Scripture would always consider this. The Scripture would not be so often expounded from what is called the analogy of faith (too commonly the system of the interpreter, taken up from the schemes of divines, and not from Scripture), but from the context; which will not easily suffer a man to be deceived, where it can be traced, if it be carefully attended to; and where it cannot, it will do us no harm to be very modest. And though this method will give interpreters a great deal more trouble, and make less shew; it will, however, be infinitely more useful to those they instruct, and will serve to keep up that hesitation in themselves that becomes learned men in doubtful cases, as much as assurance does in those which are clear and plain.

Now if I cast my eye to the context of the place where these words are used, I should be led, perhaps, to understand them otherwise than I have done, notwithstanding all I have said to support the sense I have taken them in. The apostle begins the xiith chapter of the 1st epistle to the Corinthians, as he does several others in that epistle, in a manner that shews it is an answer to some question they had put to him: "Now as concerning spiritual gifts," it should be rendered, "men," (*πνευμαλικῶν*), as it is translated chap. ii. 15. xiv. 37. It is very probable that the question might be, which of such and such spiritual men, or of men endued with such and such spiritual gifts, were to be preferable in their assemblies. The apostle seems to answer the question by ranking them in the order he does: but he at the same time reproves their strife and emulation about them; and cautions them against it, by asserting, that they are all from one Spirit, one Lord, and one God, ver. 4, 5, 6. by letting them know that these gifts are given for edification, and not for ostentation and shew, ver. 7. 15; and afterwards by putting them in mind, that their church, by the Spirit, was made one body, ver. 13; and that, as there was no schism in the natural body, on account of members that were more or less honourable; but all rejoiced in the functions of all, whether

of greater or less honour, ver. 14—27; so ought it to be in the church, where there was a diversity of higher and lower gifts, yet all were for the use of the body of Christ, ver. 27—30. Now as this is the occasion on which St. Paul enumerates several gifts of the Spirit in the 8th, 9th, and 10th verses, and on which he continues the thread of his discourse to the end of the chapter; methinks it can scarcely be supposed, that he would mention any gift in the 28th and 29th verses, which he had not enumerated in the 8th, 9th, and 10th verses, that relate to deacons, evangelists, or rulers. I should likewise think, that St. Paul would observe pretty nearly the same order, when he comes to repeat them in the same chapter, and in the very same argument, three times. Now helps and governments are the sixth and seventh gifts in his second list, if I may be allowed to call it so, ver. 28. And the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth gifts in his first list are, prophecy, discernment of spirits, divers kind of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. None of these will suit the gifts of deacons, evangelists, or rulers: and the four last gifts in the third list, ver. 29. are workers of miracles, gifts of healing, speakers with tongues, and interpreters; which will not suit deacons, evangelists, and rulers, any better than the four last gifts in the first list do. In this view, what is most likely to be the meaning of these two words will be, the inferior prophets, and discerners of spirits. And it cannot be denied, that he who assisted the public assemblies with the gifts of lower prophecy, was not (as things then stood) an help, in the strictest acceptance of the word: since public devotions, such as exhorting, praying, singing in the Spirit, and judging of those performances (so necessary for their edification in some cases), could not have been performed in many churches without them (perhaps scarce in any), as we shall see more fully under the second head. And Lightfoot shews, that *νεβερνήσεις* (considering how it is used by the Septuagint in the places where it occurs) may signify discerners of spirits. And then, indeed, these three lists of gifts will agree; as may be seen in the following

T A B L E.

1 Cor. xii. ver. 8, 9, 10.

Λόγια

1. Δόγμα σοφίας^a, the word of wisdom.

2. Δόγμα γνώσεως^b, the word of knowledge.

3. Πίστις, faith.

4. Χάρisma ιαμάτων, the gifts of healing^d.

5. Ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, the working of miracles^e.

6. Προφητεία^f, prophecy.

7. Διακρίσεις πνευμάτων^g, discerning of spirits.

8. Γένη γλωσσῶν, divers kinds of tongues.

9. Ἑρμηνεία γλωσσῶν, the interpretation of tongues.

ver. 28.

ὅς μὲν ἔθελο

1. Πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, apostles.

2. Δεύτερον προφῆτας, prophets.

3. Τρίτον διδασκάλους, teachers.

4. Ἐπειτα δυνάμεις, miracles.

5. Εἴτα χάρισμα ιαμάτων, healing.

6. Ἀλλήλῃς^h, helps.

7. Κυβερνήσειςⁱ, governments.

8. Γένη γλωσσῶν, ^k diversities of tongues.

7. Διερμηνεύσεις, interpreters.

ver. 29, 30.

μη πάσας

1. Ἀποστόλους, apostles.

2. Προφῆται, prophets; that is, such prophets as were at the same time apostles.

3. Διδασκαλοί, teachers.

4. Δυνάμεις, workers of miracles.

5. Χάρισμα ιαμάτων, healing.

6. Γλώσσαις λαλῶντες^l, speakers of tongues.

^a That λόγος σοφίας signifies the knowledge that was the peculiar gift of an apostle, see the second Essay.

^b That λόγος γνώσεως signifies the knowledge peculiar to the highest rank of prophets, see the second Essay.

^c By πῆστις, Mr. Locke here understands such a full persuasion of the truths which the teacher taught, as enabled him to speak with the assurance and authority that became a teacher or a doctor. (Locke in loc). And that faith stands for a firm persuasion or assurance,

may be seen in many other places; see 1 Cor. xiii. 2. Matt. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. Luke xvii. 6. Rom. xiv. 22, 23. James v. 15.

^d Gifts of healing, ver. 30. may signify the gifts that were beneficial to mens bodies, as teaching was to their minds; and might, perhaps, be exercised on the illuminating prayer of faith. The reason of the gift of healing being given may have been, 1. That it had been sometimes given to prophets under the Old Testament. 2. That it was necessary to cure the different temper

temper inflicted by the power of the apostles in the exercise of discipline in the church.

^e Working of miracles being distinguished here from the gifts of healing, may signify something that implies a greater power; as raising the dead; laying strans; turning water into wine; feeding multitudes with a small quantity of provisions, &c. These two gifts are evidently transposed in the three lists.

^f By *προφητεία* here may be understood, that lower sort of prophecy of which St. Paul chiefly treats, 1 Cor. xiv. and which I have considered as branched out into lower revelations, exhorting, praying, and singing in the Spirit. Though I apprehend the same word, namely, *προφητεία*, Rom. xii. 6. and Eph. iv. 11. means the higher sort of prophecy; it standing there before the gift of teaching; whereas here it is placed after it.

^g As prophecy takes in lower revelations, exhortation, praying, and singing in the Spirit: so perhaps *διακρίσεις πνευμάτων* may signify the particular gift which those had who were most able to judge, whether those several performances proceeded from the Spirit or no; see 1 Cor. xiv. 29. where the apostle says, "Let the prophets speak, two or three at a time, and let the others judge" (or discern), *διακρίτωσαν*. Where judging, or discerning, follows prophesying, as *διακρίσεις πνευμάτων* follows *προφητεία* here; see also 1 Cor. ii. 15. where the spiritual man is said to judge, or discern, even the things revealed by the higher prophets.

^h *ἐν βέλους*, in the second list (helps) may answer to prophecy; inasmuch as those who had the gift of lower prophecy were the persons that chiefly assisted, or helped the Christians in the public devotions.

ⁱ *κρίσεις* stands here, as I suppose, for discerners or triers of spirits.

^k Perhaps the apostle makes *γένη γλωσσῶν*, in the second list, answer both to tongues and to the interpretation of tongues in the first.

^l And perhaps *γλώσσας λαλῶντες*, in the third list, may comprehend prophecy, discernment of spirits, and the gift of tongues in the first list; inasmuch as these were generally the subjects those spoke of who had the gift of tongues. For we may always observe, throughout the history of the Acts, that those who had the gift of tongues prophesied, or spoke, the wonderful things of God, or magnified God: and St. Paul, in the xvth chapter, seems to intimate, that at least many of those who had the gift of tongues, could prophesy, in the sense I have explained it; because he bids them prophesy rather than use the gift of tongues. St. Mark uses the gift of tongues even in something a larger sense than this; and puts it for all the illumination which was ever uttered by the gift of tongues, Mark xvi. 17. as is plain from his not mentioning any other gift of illumination there. St. Paul places this gift last, except the interpretation of tongues, because it was of the least use and benefit in the church, 1 Cor. xiv. 19—23; and in order to beat down the folly of the Corinthians, who prided themselves so extravagantly in it.

And

And I should apprehend, lower prophets, and discerners of spirits, were what St. Paul designed by these two words; the rather, because as in the rest the lists agree pretty well, so I should think that they ought to be interpreted in such a manner as to shew they agree in these two also: for it would be very odd to find the five first gifts and the last the same in all the lists, and to find the sixth, seventh, and eighth to differ. And I should yet still incline to this last sense of these words the more, because then there will be no gift mentioned, in these three parts of the chapter, but what belonged either to their great apostle, or was common to several members of that church; which is what one would expect on this occasion: and perhaps that is the reason why he speaks of these gifts, and not of some others; and why particularly he does not speak of such as fitted men to be deacons, exangelists, and rulers. It may be they had no deacons or rulers among them; perhaps no evangelists had as yet been sent to them: or it may be, the gifts that fitted a man for a deacon or ruler being not the gifts they valued, as not being for ostentation or shew; and that of an evangelist not belonging to any one in that church; those were not the gifts they had any contest about; and therefore St. Paul said nothing about them. On the other hand, it is likely that the reason why he mentions some of those gifts, as the gift of healing and miracles, which are averred to be gifts of the Spirit, though they were wrought by the Spirit, is, that these were some of those gifts which the Corinthians had strife and emulation about. For it was not any ways pertinent to his design, to persuade them against a schism or contention about gifts, concerning which they did not contend; but against a schism and contention concerning those gifts about which their passions were the strongest. For we are to consider St. Paul as writing an epistle to men who had these gifts of the Holy Ghost, and as writing to them in this place not to contend with one another about them; and not as writing a treatise of these gifts, to inform those who had not those gifts what they were.

And as to *ἀνιλάψεις* (helps) in particular, I must confess, it would be somewhat extraordinary if it should signify evangelists; because then evangelists, who appear, in the nature of their office, and by the place St. Paul assigns them, Eph. iv. 11. to be the third rank of ministers in the church, would here stand the lowest except two: and governments also, a gift of great consequence to the church, as it signifies prudence to propose or advise on emergencies, would come the last but one, and stand after the gifts of healing.

And that I may likewise speak my mind freely about the other words used in scripture, which have been generally thought to be of the same signification with governments, and which I have therefore brought to support that rendering of the word *κυβερνήσεις* which our translators have given it, namely, *προϊστάμενοι*, *προεστώτες*, *ηγούμενοι*; I must own, that though these words may be brought to support our rendering of the word *κυβερνήσεις* by the word governments,

ments, agréably to facts that we find in other places of scripture, and to the general sense of *κερνήσεις*, abstracted from its context; yet these words have much less force with me to that purpose when I consider them distinctly in the several places where they occur.

Thus to begin with *ὁ προϊσάμενος*, Rom. xii. 8. when St. Paul had spoke of the gifts of prophecy, ministry, teaching, and exhortation, ver. 6, 7. and in part of the 8th verse, he adds, "He that giveth (*ὁ μελαδιδδς*) let him do it with simplicity (*ἐν ἀπλότητι*)" or liberality: he that ruleth (*ὁ προϊσάμενος*) with diligence (*ἐν σπουδῇ*), with care and diligence. He that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness." Perhaps by the words "he that giveth" (*ὁ μελαδιδδς*) is meant, him that is able to give; and St. Paul says, "let him do it (*ἐν ἀπλότητι*) with liberality." For that *ἐν ἀπλότητι* signifies with liberality, may be seen by the word being used in that sense, Prov. xi. 25. 2 Cor. viii. 2. ix. 11, 13. James i. 5. After St. Paul had given directions about giving with liberality, then he adds *ὁ προϊσάμενος*, which should be rendered, "he that receiveth" or entertaineth strangers, or he that is set, or sets himself, over that business, let him do it (*ἐν σπουδῇ*) with care and diligence." And afterwards follows, "he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness," that is, he that sheweth mercy to objects in distress, who want assistance more than the poor, or strangers, or even poor strangers; such as widows, orphans, prisoners, sick or impotent; let him do it with cheerfulness. And then the connection and the sense of the place will stand thus: as I have told you, ver. 6, 7. and in part of the 8th, how you should exercise the gifts of the Spirit in the church, for the good of men's minds; so let me now tell you how to use other gifts of God's providence to the good of men's bodies. Let him whose business it is to give to the poor out of the fund of the church give with liberality: let him who has an house, or is set, or sets himself, over the business of receiving strangers, be diligently careful of them (this was the more needful since inns were not then common: for which reason, those who travelled, carried or led about a sister with them, to provide some of those conveniences for them which inns now furnish travellers with*: as our Saviour had done, who had women that followed him, and ministered unto him †). And let him whose business it is, by his advice or otherwise, to assist the distressed higher objects of mercy (than poor or strangers), do it with cheerfulness. I am inclined to think, that the last injunctions belong to those who had some office or ministry in the church, rather than to private Christians. My reason for being of this opinion is, that they immediately follow injunctions to those who had gifts by which they performed a ministry in the church, and immediately precede the directions given to all Christians, ver. 9. ad fin. Amongst which there is a particular precept to distribute to the necessity of the saints; and to use hospitality, ver. 12. Now unless ver. 8. relates to those who had

* 2 Cor. ix. 2.

† Luke viii. 2, 3. Matth. xxvii. 55.

a ministry in the church, and ver. 12. to private Christians, we must suppose St. Paul to repeat the same precepts in the compass of a few lines: which, as it would be far from being a beauty, I am not willing to impute to so good a writer: but supposing ver. 8. to relate to those who had a ministry in the church; and ver. 12. with the other verses from the 8th to the end of the chapter, to private Christians, then there is no repetition ver. 12. but a distinct precept given.

And what makes very much for this interpretation of ὁ προϊστάμενος in this place is, that the duty of receiving and assisting strangers was a duty of great importance, as things then stood in the church. This appears not only from the commendations that St. John gives Gaius on account of his practising it in so distinguished a manner, 3 John 5. but from St. Paul's giving it as one of the distinguishing characters of a bishop, and of a widow indeed, 1 Tim. iii. 2. y. 10. Tit. i. 8. and from his insisting so much on it, Heb. xiii. 2. and particularly also in relation to Phebe, in this very epistle, chap. xvi. 2. for he writes to the believing Romans, to "receive her, and assist her in every thing that she had need;" for he adds, "she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also." And what is highly to this purpose is, that the word we translate succourer is *προσάτις*, which is a feminine word of the same original and signification with ὁ προϊστάμενος. And therefore the words *προσάτις πολλῶν ἐγενήθη, καὶ αὐτὴ ἐμὲ*, might be rendered thus, for she has "received into her house many, and me also." We have a place in St. Peter that seems parallel to this, but in the inverted order, 1 Pet. iv. 9. 11. "Use hospitality without grudging;" which I think relates to all Christians: and then ver. 10. "If any man minister as a deacon (*εἰ τις διακονεῖ*), let him do it as of the ability which God giveth." Thus not only the connection, but the very usage of the kindred word to ὁ προϊστάμενος, and in this very epistle, leads us to the sense that I have just now given it*. And I cannot but remark, that St. Paul's thoughts seem to have run very much in the same channel, in the place I just now quoted from the Hebrews, chap. xiii. 12, 13. only enlarging or confining his views a little, in the first and third particular. For in that place he recommends brotherly love, ver. 1, 2. receiving or lodging strangers, ver. 2, and 3. shewing mercy to some in distress, namely, prisoners and persons in adversity, ver 3. which therefore I cannot but consider as a truly parallel place to this, that is, as a place where the apostle is expressing almost the same thoughts to the Hebrews, and in the same order, as he does to the Romans. And how much stress was then laid on this duty of hospitality, or of receiving strangers, we may more fully learn from the epistle of Clement (Paul's contemporary, Philip. iv. 3.) to the Corinthians. The former part of his epistle is full of injunctions to this duty, or high characters of it, and commendation, or reproofs of them about it †. And can it well be imagined, that when St. Paul was

* See Vitringa de Synag. l. ii. c. 3.

† § 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

persuading the Romans to relieve the poor, and to shew mercy to the miserable, he should forget the duty of receiving strangers; a duty of the same class, so necessary in those times, so much insisted on in other places of Scripture; and particularly by himself in several of his epistles, and more especially in that to the Hebrews, and in this very epistle, chap. xvi. ver. 2. ? And would it not be an order of ranging thoughts unusual with St. Paul, or with any good writer, to make the sense of ὁ προϊστάμενος here, “he that ruleth?” for what has ruling to do between the liberal charity of the rich (or the able) to the poor, and the chearful mercy of all that can express it towards the miserable? especially after he seems to have finished what he had to say on the spiritual gifts before he mentions the duty that precedes this, namely, the duty of giving to the poor, and is entered upon a set of duties of quite another kind.

And as to those whom the Thessalonians are directed to know, as labouring among them, and being over them in the Lord, καὶ προϊστάμενος ὑμῶν ἐν Κυρίῳ *; I should rather think, that there it means presiding: by which I understand some act, directing the management of the gifts of the Spirit in public assemblies. Agreeable to which St. Paul says to the Corinthians †, that “the spirits of the prophets are subjects to the prophets:” or the spirits of some prophets are subject to other prophets: and, as is most natural to think, the more full meaning of the place to be, that the spirits of the prophets who prophesied are, when duly regulated, subject to such prophets as preside. The Thessalonians had a plentiful measure of spiritual gifts. This we know, because St. Paul had converted them, Acts xvii. 4. 1. Theff. i. 5. And we shall shew afterwards, that the apostles conferred some of these gifts wherever they came. This is plain too from chap. i. ver. 5. and from the 19th, 20th, and 21st verses of this chapter. For they were not to quench the (gift of the) Spirit; they were not to despise prophesyings; but were to prove (them all) all things; or try them, separating the true from the false; holding fast the former, and rejecting the latter. Now where several members of the church had these gifts, they were apt to put the public assemblies into confusion by the exercise of them, and to have strife and emulation among themselves; as we see was the case among the Corinthians ‡; all speaking together, and all speaking in unknown tongues: whereas the apostles direct, that no man should speak in an unknown tongue without interpreting; that they should speak one by one; that whilst one spake, the rest should sit still and judge; and afterwards say what was revealed to any other of them; but still one after another; and that the spirits of the prophets (who prophesied) should be subject to the prophets (who presided.) Now perhaps there were some among the Thessalonians that had the gift of presiding well, and knew how to direct who should speak first, who should afterwards judge, who should prophesy next, who should pray, and sing

* 1 Theff. v. 12.

† 1 Cor. xiv. 32.

‡ Ibid. chap. xiv.

in the Spirit; and when, and how, they should exercise these several gifts with the greatest propriety, order, decency, and most to edification. There was such a sort of presiding in the synagogue, as may be seen in Vitringa de Synag. lib. iii. c. 9. p. 728. and Reland's Antiq. Sac. Hebr. And it seems to me, that such a sort of presiding was highly useful in the first state of Christians, where many had a right to speak in the church. It must have been absolutely necessary, to prevent the greatest confusion, where the spirit of humility, deference, and condescension did not prevail. And such a sort of proceeding seems to me to be the most likely meaning of the word in this place; since, as there were many of the brethren in this church of Thessalonica, who had those gifts which they exercised in the church, so it is allowed by those who are most disposed to think otherwise, that there were not any others who officiated in the assemblies in that city, as I observed before. And this word being taken from the Jews, whose usages were well understood at Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue* (in which there was, without doubt, such a presiding, as well as in other synagogues), it was possibly from thence used here by St. Paul, without explaining it; whereas one would not imagine it would have been used in this general sense, if it had not been in analogy to a custom, and an use of the word, borrowed from that custom, well known at that time in the world. Agreeably whereto St. Luke acquaints us, that when Paul and Barnabas came to the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia, the rulers (or presidents) of the synagogue say, "if ye have any word of exhortation, say on †:" that is, they point to them to speak. Such a kind of chairman, or president, we find, is necessary in all assemblies, where several have a right to speak; and therefore constantly used in them. And it being a place of difficulty and dignity, the most prudent, knowing, and judicious men, or at least those that are first in rank, are always chosen for it. From whence it is, that we always find all assemblies well or ill regulated, according as the chairman, or president, does his part, and according to the deference that is paid to his authority. For this reason the apostle bids them "know those that are over them in the Lord," as doing a most useful work. And then adds, "and be at peace among yourselves ‡." The meaning of which perhaps is, that knowing the deference that is due to them that preside, and having a just esteem for them that discharge this office among them, was a proper way to be at peace among themselves; and to avoid all that strife and emulation they might otherwise have, about the exercise and preference of these gifts in their public assemblies. And since a due discharge of the office of presiding requires great skill, judgement, and application; and the regular or irregular proceedings of all assemblies depend very much upon it; it may perhaps be for that very reason that St. Paul tells Timothy, that the elders who rule well, καλῶς προεστώτες ὡς ἐσεβότεροι, that is, who preside well (namely, in the church of Ephesus, where the members had some of these gifts

* Acts xviii. 1.

† Ibid. xiii. 15.

‡ 1 Thess. v. 13.

of the Spirit, as we shall prove hereafter) are worthy of double honour, or a double stipend; especially if, besides presiding well, they also laboured in the word and doctrine*; that is, carefully and diligently exercised the gift of teaching.

And as to the ἡγούμενοι, Heb. xiii. 7. 17. I am very apt to think that St. Paul, writing that epistle to the Hebrews at Jerusalem, denotes some of the apostles by this term. He seems to refer to such of them as had been among them, and were now dead or absent; for he says, *remember them*; and remember them which *have spoken*. This is the more probable, because this epistle was written late, about the year 63. I the rather think this, because apostles, and apostles alone, originally, and in the highest sense, spoke the word of God; and are generally, if not only, said so to do †, because their faith the believing Hebrews were to follow; and from their doctrine they were not to depart, ver. 9. For as our Saviour said to them, “He that receiveth you, receiveth me ‡; and as my Father sent me, so send I you §.” And as St. Paul says, “He that despiseth” (namely, the foregoing commandments from ver. 2.) “despiseth not man, but God, who has given us” (namely apostles) “his holy Spirit ||.” And whereas, ver. 17th of this 13th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul says, “Obey them that have the rule over you, τοῖς ἡγούμενοις ὑμῶν” and submit yourselves, for they “watch for your souls;” I am apt to think, that it relates to some of the apostles, who survived, and were then at Jerusalem. For the apostles did not only (like St. Paul) sometimes speak by permission; but generally of *commandment* from the Lord **. Those *commandments* St. Paul particularly gave by the Lord Jesus ††. And St. Peter says ‡‡, “I write unto you, that ye may be mindful of the—*commandments* of us the apostles of our Lord and Saviour.” These commandments the believers were to obey, not only when the apostles were present, but absent §§. And if any one obeyed not the word or commandment of their epistle, they were to be noted, avoided, and admonished |||. I remember no place where any minister of the church is said to have a commandment of the Lord, but the apostles; or where obedience is required to any commandments, but what came from the apostles. They, indeed, had the power of binding and loosing: and Christ said, “He that heareth you, heareth me.” It was through their word that all were to believe ***. And it was by them that the word of the Gospel went forth, and that form of doctrine which all men were to obey. And perhaps the reason why St. Paul directs the Hebrews, in the close of this epistle, to remember the dead, or absent apostles, who had been their guides, ver. 17. and to obey the living ones now residing at Jerusalem, and watching over their souls, ver. 7. might be, to free himself from any imputation of going too far out of his pro-

* 1 Tim. v. 17. † See the Second Essay. ‡ Matth. x. 40. § John xx. 21.

|| 1 Thess. iv. 8. ** 1 Cor. vii. 6. 10. †† 1 Thess. iv. 2. 2 Thess. iii. 6. 10.

‡‡ 2 Pet. iii. 2. §§ Phil. ii. 12. ||| 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15. *** John xvii. 20.

vince, who was the apostle of the Gentiles only. And as he had not only written to the Hebrews, but written very freely, of the insufficiency and meanness of the Jewish law (though not in the character of an apostle, as I shall observe more fully in the third Essay); that he might not seem to invade the province of the apostles of the circumcision, much less oppose them (who had only received the right hand of fellowship, as an apostle of the heathen *); he here bids the Hebrews remember their apostles, who were dead or absent, and who had spoken the word of the Lord; and obey those that were present, and watched for their souls: and immediately adds, ver. 18, 19. "Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience." As if he had said, "Obey the apostles of the circumcision, and pray for me the apostle of the Gentiles; and the rather, that I may be restored to you the sooner, and bring the alms of the Gentile-Christians to you;" which he had brought from Asia, Macedonia, and Greece, before; and probably now designed to bring from Italy and Spain; according to the agreement between him and Barnabas, and the three great apostles of the circumcision †.

I wish I have not tired my reader on this subject. But as it is of some importance, and is wrapped up in a great deal of obscurity, I thought it proper to treat it in this manner. The reader will now better judge, in which of these senses he is to understand helps, or helpers, and *κυβερνήσεις*, which we translate governments; as well as the other words in the New Testament brought to support that rendering of the word *κυβερνήσεις*. If he understands all these words in the first sense I have given them, I believe it is in a sense agreeable to other places of Scripture; if he understands them in the last, I apprehend he will be much more like to understand them in the precise sense which they have in each of those places where they stand. If the connection was clear and full, there is not the least doubt but we ought to understand them in this last sense only; but as the connection is somewhat doubtful, and cannot be proved, but from many considerations laid together, I think it becomes me to express the uncertainty I do about them, till I receive more light than I have been able to get at present. All that I have further to add about them is, that if the reader concurs with me in the last sense of helps and *κυβερνήσεις*, I must then desire him to consider what I have said about helps and *κυβερνήσεις* (as standing, as it does in our version, for governments) in the first place, from page 159—161. only as an occasion taken by me to explain those gifts of the Spirit, which fitted men to be deacons, messengers, evangelists, and advisers; and not to consider them as the proper meaning of *ἀντιλήψεις* and *κυβερνήσεις*. And that he will forgive me, if some degree of uncertainty, and a greater degree of modesty, in a case where it may become me to yield as far to it as I would in any of

* Gal. ii.

† Ibid. ver. 10.

the like nature, has made me run into a method that may at first seem somewhat perplexed and embarrassed.

Thus I have explained the gift of wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, teaching, helps, and governments, in the several senses and acceptations in which I have considered them. And to these instances may the teaching of the Spirit be reduced. I shall now consider some things that relate in general to them all.

In the first place, I apprehend, this teaching consisted in a sudden illumination of the mind, by which it was furnished in an instant with some or all of those kinds of knowledge; which perhaps a man of the best parts could not have acquired by the hardest study in the course of a long life. And some of them such as could not be acquired by any art or study whatsoever (as the word of knowledge, and several of the gifts of lower prophecy), which continued with those to whom they were imparted, as a fund of that learning and knowledge communicated to them; and which consequently they could use as there was occasion. Upon which account I suppose it was, that the cloven tongues sat, or rested, or continued for some time upon them*; namely, to shew the permanency of the gift, and that it should be ready for their use on all proper occasions: as “the Spirit abode upon our Saviour at his baptism †,” to denote the same thing. A like expression is used of the Seventy, at their first appointment for judgement and government; for it is said, “That when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, “and did not cease ‡.” Upon this account too the receiving these gifts is called, the being enlightened and illuminated, as well as being made partakers of the Holy Ghost §. St. Paul says, that “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath “shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the “glory of God in the law of Jesus Christ ||.” And he prays for the Ephesians **, that “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus “Christ might give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in “the knowledge of him; the eyes of their understanding being en- “lightened, &c.” And that the enlightening he prays for is the gift of the Holy Ghost, does not only appear from the words, but from what immediately precedes ††; that “after they had believed, “they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of “our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased posses- “sion.” And the fathers, from the beginning of Christianity, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, call this illumination, and speak of it as conferred at baptism; the gifts of the Spirit being generally conferred by the apostles after baptism. And this illumination not being mere inspiration, strictly so called; nor a bare discovery of some particular matter, as the prophets under the Old Testament generally had communicated to them by a dream, or a vision, or a rapture, or a revelation; but a fund of general

* Acts ii. 2.

§ Heb. vi. 4. x. 26, 32.

†† Ibid. ver. 14.

† John i. 32.

|| 2 Cor. iv. 6.

‡ Numb. xi. 25.

** Eph. i. 17, 18.

knowledge of things pertaining to the kingdom of God, given to them, and that was ready to be used by them for the benefit of others, whom they were instructing and edifying continually; and even fresh gifts (namely, of prophecy), always ready to be communicated when they were necessary; our Saviour tells the people *, that "he that believes on him, as the Scripture hath said †, out of "his belly should flow rivers of living water." Which, as the Evangelist adds, he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not glorified. In this sense it is that Christ promises, that "the Spirit should abide with them for ever; or not depart "from them ‡." And that St. Paul speaks of the Corinthians, as being "the temple of God §, by the Spirit's dwelling in them ||; "and are built together an habitation of God through the Spirit **." By which means the Father and Christ, according to the promise of the latter, come and take up their abode with believers ††. It is by the help of this notion alone, that we can understand a reasoning often touched upon by St. Paul in his Epistles, that the Spirit was not given by or under the law; and that therefore those who were under the law were carnal, like Ishmael, who was only Abraham's son according to the flesh. Yet the prophets had the Spirit of Christ under the law. But the Spirit under the Old Testament is considered but as an extrinsic principle, sometimes, but yet very rarely, impressing the imagination of a few, or the organs of their speech. Now and then the phrase, "the Spirit of the Lord came "upon them" occurs. Whereas the Gospel gave the blessing of the Spirit an internal and quickening principle to numbers, which was constantly to abide with them; by the efficacy of whose abiding light and knowledge they were to be governed in their whole conduct. The first time I find the phrase used of "giving or not "giving the Spirit," is John vii. 39. "The Spirit was not yet "given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." And soon after our Saviour says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever," John xiv. 16. which texts, I think, cannot be explained but by carrying along with us, in our minds, the precise notion of a gift. And that this was a fund of science communicated to them by the Holy Ghost, seems to be further intimated, not only in its being called an illumination, and an enlightening, but a gift; namely, of wisdom, knowledge, teaching, exhortation, tongues, and their interpretation. For when the word *gift* is applied to knowledge, it seems to carry in its notion the vesting that knowledge in the party on whom it was bestowed, as a property to be used as that party thought fit, for the benefit of those for whom it was given. I apprehend that it is for this reason they were first denominated "gifts," Psalm lxxxviii. 18. where our Saviour is described as a mighty

* John vii. 38.

§ 1 Cor. iii. 17.

†† John xiv. 23.

† Isai. lviii. 11.

|| Ibid. ver. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 16.

‡ John xiv. 16, 17.

** Eph. ii. 22.

conqueror ascending triumphantly into heaven, receiving gifts of God for his people, and loading them with those his benefits. "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, &c." And because these were gifts bestowed and given to men, and that they who received them were thereby possessed of the knowledge or illumination which they brought along with them; therefore it was, that whilst they enjoyed them, they could use that knowledge, just as men do knowledge that is acquired by natural means: that is to say, that it was altogether as much in their power to use it, or not to use it; or, in some degree, to abuse it, as men may the knowledge they acquire by study and application: or, in other words, that they either might not employ it, or employ it solely for the benefit of mankind; or for pride and vain-glory: as accordingly we see was the case of the Corinthians in particular. For St. Paul supposes, that the motions of the Spirit were not ungovernable*: as was the case of the Deopleni among the Heathens. This ungovernable fury was esteemed a certain sign of possession, when it appeared among the false apostles and prophets†. The Corinthians used these gifts for the gratification of their own vanity‡. And that there were the like faults among the Ephesians, we may gather from St. Paul's pressing exhortation to humility, peace, and unity, where he speaks of these gifts, Eph. iv. 1—11. and particularly by his setting Christ's example before them, ver. 9, 10. who, he says, descended into the grave, or was abased, before he ascended into heaven, and was exalted to the right-hand of power, to receive these gifts, and to fill his church with them. But though from these considerations, I apprehend, the Pneumatici could use these gifts of illumination or knowledge, or not use them, as they could any other knowledge; yet that was not the case as to the other gifts of the Spirit; which had been given under the ministry or dispensation of Jesus, as well as now under the ministry or dispensation of the Spirit; or which did not consist in illumination. They were under the direction of the Spirit, as to time and other circumstances; and were but singular and particular vouchsafements. For we find that St. Paul could not always use the gift of healing (which was in some sense now a gift of the Spirit, see p. 407, &c.); or else he would not have prescribed wine to Timothy, for his stomach's sake§; nor have left Trophimus at Miletum sick||. And though I formerly apprehended, that the gifts of illumination were in some measure under the direction of the Spirit, as to the time and manner of their exercise, as well as the gifts of healing, miracles, &c. yet I have, for the reasons just now given, altered my opinion in that particular. And though St. Luke informs us, that at the first effusion of the Holy Ghost, "they all spake with tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance;" which led me into my former notion: yet I am very apt to think, on turning it again

* 1 Cor. xiv. 29—34.

§ 2 Tim. v. 23.

† See Jer. l. i. c. 12.

|| Ibid. iv. 20.

I 1 Cor. xii. 13.

in my thoughts, that it means no more, than that each man spake in that tongue that the Spirit had given him the knowledge of.

Thus we see why these high vouchsafements are called "gifts." It is much more obvious, how they came to be called "the gifts of God *;" "the gift of Christ †." And Psal. lxxxviii. 18. is quoted and applied by Paul to these "gifts," Eph. iv. 7, 8. And most frequently, "the gifts of the Holy Ghost;" the Holy Ghost being the immediate author of them. They are perhaps also called "the heavenly things," Eph. i. 3. where ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, it may be, signifies "heavenly things," or gifts of the Spirit of a celestial kind, such as wisdom and prudence, ver. 8. perhaps to distinguish from the gifts of healing and miracles, which are of a more earthly kind. It is still more expressly called, "the heavenly gift ‡." And they are called heavenly things, or gifts, not only as from their nature, but, perhaps, as Christ received them in heaven from the Father, but shed them down from thence, at his sitting at the right-hand of God. For St. Luke acquaints us, that when they were first imparted, there came a sound from heaven, and it filled the house. And there appeared cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Ghost. And as his heavenly kingdom was to be propagated by them, our Saviour had first called these gifts "the heavenly things," τὰ ἐπουράνια, in his discourse with Nicodemus, John iii. 12. the sense of which place seems to me to be this: if you, a master, or teacher, in Israel, do not understand the nature of such an earthly thing, or custom of the kingdom, established over the Jewish nation, as being born of baptism, practised every day in the initiation of proselytes; how will you understand such heavenly things, as the intimation of my disciples, by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and fire from heaven, if I should proceed farther on that subject? That this is the sense of "earthly and heavenly things," appears more fully from ver. 31. 34; compared with ver. 25, 26. By which it is plain, that John the Baptist owns himself to be of the earth, and his baptism earthly: but that Christ is from heaven, and his baptism by the Spirit heavenly, because he had not the Spirit by measure.

St. Paul seems to reduce all these gifts under two heads §, knowledge and utterance. To knowledge belongs the word of wisdom, the understanding the prophets, the knowledge of mysteries (or of great future events), the discerning of spirits, the pointing out proper ministers to the church, abilities for several sorts of public performances in it; prudence to distribute to the necessities of the saints; to go on the errands of the apostles and churches; and both to advise on several occasions, and also to know that they ought to comply with such advice; the skill to preside over the management of public worship, and the knowledge of tongues, and their interpretation. And to utterance belongs a fluency of speech

* Acts viii. 20. xi. 17.

§ 1 Cor. i. 5.

† Eph. iv. 7.

‡ Heb. vi. 4.

about any of these, from fully possessing the matter they talked about, and the language they talked in; a readiness of memory, by the Spirit's bringing all things to their minds that were pertinent to the subject; and such different degrees of courage and resolution as were suited to their several stations and offices; from the assurance of a farther revelation from God, when necessary, and of God's assistance and gracious acceptance of their labours and endeavours, whether they succeed in them or no. Thus we see * that, on the descent of the Holy Ghost, they gave immediate proof of their knowledge and ability in utterance; all of them speaking, in a vast variety of tongues, the wonderful things of God. According to the prophecy of the Prophet Joel †, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and their sons and daughters shall prophesy: and on my servants, and on my handmaids, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy." So likewise we find Peter lift up his voice and say, &c. ‡ speaking with all readiness and boldness, and shewing his great knowledge in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and in the Christian-scheme, addressing himself in the like strain to the people, Acts iii. 12. to the end of the chapter: speaking to the rulers, Acts iv. 8—20. v. 29—33. with as much resolution and eloquence as he had done before to the people: and we read a prayer, Acts iv. 24—31. in a very elevated strain, highly suitable to the occasion on which it was made, and no ways inferior to these discourses. We may also observe, with how much force, eloquence, and courage, Stephen addresses the council §. So likewise Paul, as soon as he was filled with the Holy Ghost ||, immediately preaches Christ in the synagogue, that he is the Son of God **; and increasing the more in strength, confounding the Jews ††; and spake boldly, disputing against the Grecians ‡‡. When the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and his family, they spake with tongues, and magnified God §§. We may see an instance of the authority with which Peter rebukes Simon Magus, on his notorious impiety |||; and with which Paul, being full of the Holy Ghost, reprimands Elymas, on his endeavouring to pervert the Roman pro-consul from the right ways of the Lord ***. And lastly, when the Holy Ghost came on the twelve disciples of John Baptist at Ephesus †††, St. Luke informs us, that "they spake with tongues and prophesied." And because they were first by utterance to impart all the wisdom and knowledge they had to the world (for the word was first spoken, and not written); therefore it was that the Holy Ghost came down upon them in tongues; as it came in cloven tongues, to shew the multiplicity of tongues they were to speak; and in cloven tongues, like as of fire, to shew the light and knowledge that was imparted, the zeal and activity of those who had these gifts, in imparting light and know-

* Acts ii. 11.

§ Ibid. vii.

†† Ver. 29.

*** Ibid. xiii. 9.

† Joel ii. 28, 29.

|| Ibid. ix. 17.

§§ Acts x. 46.

††† Ibid. ix. 1—8.

** Ver. 21.

‡ Acts ii. 14, 24—31.

†† Ver. 22.

||| Ibid. viii. 20—24.

ledge to others; and the great efficacy of the gifts themselves, and of that Spirit by which they spake; by the means of which the words they spake were “not to be a dead sound, but a quickening “spirit.”

St. Paul summing up the gifts of the Holy Ghost under the heads of knowledge and utterance, both which consist in an illumination of the mind, enriching the minds of those that had them with what was proper to be known by them, and a readiness to utter it; it is visible, that in this account I must exclude the gifts of miracles, healing, and casting out of the devils, because they did not proceed from any illumination, or fund of knowledge; but from the immediate power of God, invoked by him who had the faith of miracles, or a full persuasion that God would work a miracle, on his invocation or prayer, for the confirmation of the truth. And to shew, that there is a foundation for distinguishing the working of miracles, healing diseases, and casting out devils, from the gifts of the Holy Ghost, I would offer these considerations:

1. That dealing and disposing were performed by the Apostles and the Seventy in our Saviour’s life-time, according to the commission he gave them, Matth. x. 8. Luke x. 9. Mark vi. 7—14. by a power derived immediately from him, as is plain from the words of these texts; see also Luke x. 17. but not by “the power “of the Spirit;” by which St. Paul afterwards says, “he performed “mighty signs and wonders from Jerusalem to Illyricum*,” which plainly follows from what I have proved before; that the Holy Ghost was not, nor could not be given (according to the settled order of things) till our Saviour’s ascension.

2. Though the disciples healed diseases, or cast out devils, or wrought miracles by the Spirit after Christ’s ascension; and they are therefore once said to be gifts given by the Spirit †: inasmuch as the faith of these was then wrought by the Spirit; yet these not being works peculiar to the dispensation of the Spirit, but common to that dispensation, with the ministry or dispensation of Christ, in whose name they had been wrought before the giving of the Spirit to believers; they are never called, “the Holy Spirit, or the Holy “Ghost, or the gifts or distributions of the Spirit, or of the Holy “Ghost,” either by St. Luke in the Acts (the only book that gives the history of the Holy Ghost), or by any other writer of the New Testament, but always τέρατα, σημεῖα, δυνάμεις; wonders, signs, and powers: whereas the gifts or illumination, such as prophecy and speaking with tongues, are constantly styled so by them; often χάρις, χάρισμα, and sometimes φάσμα; and μερισμοί.

3. In some places where the Scripture speaks of these works together, it puts a manifest difference between them. Thus St. Paul says, that “God bore witness to the doctrine which the Apostles “preached, “by signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts “(μερισμοί), distribution of the Holy Ghost,” Heb. ii. 4. And Gal. iii. 5. he says, “He that ministereth to you the Spirit, and

* Rom. xv. 19.

† 1 Cor. xii. 4—10.

“worketh miracles among you:” plainly distinguishing the working of miracles from the Spirit.

But though I apprehend all the gifts of the Holy Ghost in their strict acceptation, or the gifts that were peculiar to the dispensation of the Spirit, consisted in illumination; yet I apprehend that that illumination was of two kinds. The one was an illumination of such a nature, as conveyed a system of knowledge, an art or skill, at once to the mind; so as to make the mind possess it, as it does a system of knowledge, an art or skill acquired by study or practice. And the other was an illumination in a particular instance, *pro re nata*, and that only served the present purpose or occasion. Like the imparting a particular fact, discourse, poem, tune, &c. to the mind, so as to possess it of it first, and then, from possessing the person of it, to enable him to utter it. Which will still distinguish this class of gifts from mere inspiration; such as the prophets (often, if not always) had under the Old Testament, whose mouths were (often, if not always) but the organs of the Spirit, pronouncing what the Spirit dictated, and even without understanding at all times the meaning of what they said. The former kind of illumination is general and extensive; the latter occasional and confined. To the former class belong the gift of wisdom, knowledge, of an evangelist, of a teacher, of a president or ruler, of a deacon, of tongues, of the interpretation of tongues, and of utterance. And to the latter class perhaps belong prediction, discernment of spirits; exhortation, in all its branches of admonition, conviction, reproof, confirmation, and comfort; psalms or hymns, prayer, and the seeing things at a distance; though it is possible, that exhortation, prayer, and psalmody, might be conveyed as an art, as well as that of teaching. Perhaps the gift of knowledge, wisdom, of an evangelist, of a teacher, of a ruler, and of a deacon, were only imparted to such as bore more stated offices in the church. Perhaps the second class of gifts (except the last, which seems to have been peculiar to St. Paul) were imparted to all believers. And I suppose the gift of tongues, interpretation, and utterance, were common both to stated officers and private Christians.

Now this gift, illumination, or enlightening, was communicated two different ways, either immediately by the Spirit's falling on them, or by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles. When this illumination came immediately, it seems to have been accompanied with the symbol of “cloven tongues, as of fire, sitting on each of them*,” that is, in little flames, which resembled tongues; as flame in the Hebrew is called “a tongue of fire†.” And which the apostle Peter says that Christ had poured out; that which, says he “ye see and hear.” And from coming in, that symbol is said to fall on them‡; agreeably to John Baptist's prediction§: “I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”

* Acts ii. 3.

† Isa. vi. 24.

‡ Acts x. 44. xi. 15.

§ Matth. iii. 11.

And this prediction is in the same manner recorded by St. Mark *, and St. Luke †. It may not be altogether improper to take notice, on this occasion, that Christ, who thus baptized his apostles and first disciples, had been most probably baptized in the very same manner himself. Peter says ‡, that “Jesus was anointed with the “Holy Ghost, and with power;” which, any one may see, by the place it holds in Peter’s narration, signifies Christ’s baptism. Anointed with the Holy Ghost is therefore the same thing with baptized with the Holy Ghost; and being baptized with the Holy Ghost, in all other instances, signifies being baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, as we shall see presently; and probably, therefore, signifies the same in the case of our Saviour. That he was baptized with the Holy Ghost, after John Baptist had baptized him with water, or that the Holy Ghost descended on him after he came out of the water, all the Evangelists relate §. The Gospels, indeed, make no mention of fire, or of any glory, yet it is most likely that it was a glory; in which the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, and with the hovering motion of a dove, and rested upon him. Justin Martyr says, that it came from the apostles, that the fire came upon Christ as he went into the water, and that the Holy Ghost came upon him as he came out of the water ||. By which means perhaps it was, that John Baptist knew Jesus when he went into the water, as it is plain he did, from his forbidding him, saying, “I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me **?” Though we are told, that John knew him not; at least, knew not that he was the person that was to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire (which, perhaps, is the meaning of St. John in this passage of his gospel); but by the sign that God had given him, “that on whomsoever he should see the Spirit descending, he “it was that should baptize with the holy Ghost ††.” Which, according to the account of the Evangelists, did not happen till after he came out of the water. This is the account given in the gospel of the Ebionites or Nazarenes, καὶ εὐθὺς περιέλαμψε τὸν τόπον φῶς μέγα· ὃν ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰωάννης λέγει αὐτῷ, Σὺ τίς εἶ, Κύριε. But whether Jesus himself was baptized with fire or no, yet he foretold what should happen to his disciples, just before his ascension, as John Baptist had done before. Acts i. 4, 5. “And being assembled together with them, commanded them, that they should not “depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, “which,” saith he, “ye have heard of me. For John truly “baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the “Holy Ghost, not many days hence.” And when Peter found, that the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and his family ‡‡; or, as he says in another place §§, that “the Holy Ghost fell on “them as he did on us (that is, us apostles and our company) at “the beginning (that is, with cloven tongues like as of fire), “putting no difference between them and us |||; then that

* Mark i. 8. † Luke iii. 16. ‡ Acts x. 38. § Matth. iii. 16. Mark i. 10. Luke iii. 21. John i. 32—35. || Dial. cum Tryph. p. 31. ** Matth. iii. 14. †† John i. 31. 33. ‡‡ Acts x. 44. §§ Ibid. xi. 15. ||| Ibid. xv. 9.

„ he remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, John „ indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the „ Holy Ghost *.” By comparing these texts, and particularly Matth. iii. 11. Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16. together, it is sufficiently plain, that “baptizing with the Holy Ghost,” and “baptizing with the Holy Ghost and with fire,” are expressions of the same import and signification; which it is of use on this occasion to observe, and will be on others. It is likewise called, “the pouring out of the Holy Ghost,” alluding to the plentiful effusion of it foretold in Joel, “I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, saith the Lord,” Joel ii. 28. And the reason of the phraseology in Joel is the allusion to the plenty that Joel had just before told the people that God would send them, by means of the former and latter rain, ver. 23. and to the Spirit’s being represented under the symbol of water in other prophets, as Isa. xlv. 3. xxxv. 7. lv. 1. xii. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. John vii. 37—40. It is perhaps from the same reason, that it is called the shedding forth of the Holy Ghost †; or, perhaps, rather in allusion to the plentiful unction we have from the Holy One, who was himself “the Anointed, being anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power ‡; or with the oil of gladness above his fellows §.” I am the more apt to think that the shedding forth of the Holy Ghost refers to this unction, because St. Peter, in the very next verse, plainly refers to the cxth Psalm, where God is represented as swearing to Christ, that he will constitute, or that he had constituted, him an High-priest (which was done by pouring oil on him, and anointing him more plentifully than the other-priests ||; which denoted the inward unction or fitness for his office) for ever after the order of Melchizedek **. On the whole, I apprehend, that nobody was said to have the Holy Ghost fall (which denotes his coming down in some visible emblem, as fire), he poured forth, or shed down, on him, or to be “baptized with the Holy Ghost;” but he on whom the Holy Ghost fell immediately, and which I apprehend was always attended with this symbol of cloven tongues, like as of fire. Every text favours this notion but 1 Cor. xii. 13. and that does not seem to be much against it.

Those who had this singular honour and high privilege seem to have had a greater illumination (perhaps in kind as well as degree) than those to whom it was imparted by laying on of the hands of the apostles. For those who were baptized with the Holy Ghost, or on whom the Holy Ghost fell, was poured forth, or shed down, are said, in the Acts, to be “filled with the Holy Ghost;” which, though it does not signify a complete endowment with all gifts, or a full revelation of every thing they were ever to have revealed to them; for it is probable they received farther endowments; and it is certain they received farther revelations from time to time (as we

* Acts xi. 15, 16.

|| Lev. xxi. 10.

† Ibid. ii. 23.

‡ Ibid. x. 38.

§ Heb. i. 9.

** See Bishop Patrick’s Comment on Exod. xxix. 7.

see in the case of the hundred and twenty, Acts iv. 23. 29—32, 33; in the case of Peter, who received a revelation to preach to the devout, and of Paul, who received a revelation to preach to the idolatrous Gentiles); yet signifies a large and plentiful effusion of gifts, sufficient for what they were then to do; and such a great effusion or communication of them, as they could not contain within themselves, but which would overflow, and break out plentifully and powerfully, for the unspeakable benefit of others. Thus we find, “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost*,” and began to speak “with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” So Acts iv. 31. where the Holy Ghost seems to have fallen on them a second time (for, it is said, the place was shaken, most probably, by the sound from heaven of a mighty rushing wind, much stronger, perhaps, than the gentler breeze which filled all the house, Acts ii. 2.) they are all said to be “filled with the Holy Ghost,” and “to speak the word with boldness, and to give witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power,” ver. 33. And this, I believe, is what Clement means in his epistle, § 42. by the fulness of the Holy Spirit that he says the apostles went abroad with, publishing that the kingdom of God was at hand. The seven deacons were all “full of the Holy Ghost” before they were chosen†. That was immediately after Christ’s ascension; and therefore we have the greatest reason to conclude, that they were all of the hundred and twenty on whom the Holy Ghost descended: since the disciples would probably chuse some of the most eminent of the first Christians to this office, on the apostles directing them to select from among them “seven men of honest repute, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, for this office.” Barnabas is likewise said to be “full of the Holy Ghost‡;” and that he was one of the hundred and twenty, I have endeavoured to prove in a former Essay. And since we find, that the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and his family, without the laying on of Peter’s hands, and before baptism; since St. Luke also says, that the Holy Ghost was *poured out* on Cornelius and his family, the word used Acts ii. 17; and farther, that the Holy Ghost *fell* on them: and since Peter likewise declares, “he fell on them as he did ‘on us at the beginning §; putting no difference between them and us,’ and purifying their hearts;” alluding still to the symbol of fire: we ought to conclude, that Cornelius and his family were filled with the Holy Ghost, as well as the hundred and twenty; especially since we see it had the like effects on them as on the hundred and twenty. For as they spake in different tongues “the wonderful things of God ||;” so Cornelius and his family immediately “spake with tongues, and magnified God;” or spake of those great and wonderful things of God by which his name is magnified**. And it seems but highly congruous, that wherever God saw fit, for great and important reasons, to communicate the gifts of the Spirit immediately, and without the interven-

* Acts ii. 4.

|| Ibid. ii. 11.

† Ibid. vi. 3.

** Ibid. x. 46.

‡ Ibid. xi. 24.

§ Ibid. xi. 15. xv. 8.

tion of men, that it should be in a more plentiful manner than where he was pleased to impart them by others. And it seems to me still more probable, that when the author of the Acts says, that any one is "full of, or filled with the Holy Ghost," he denotes, the Holy Ghost falling immediately on those who are said to be full of, or filled with it; because these phrases are used in the New Testament on the reviving of prophecy, after it had ceased about three hundred years; when it came on the prophets without the laying on of hands: for the Holy Ghost coming on Zachary, Elizabeth, and John Baptist, they are all said to be full of, or filled with, the Holy Ghost*. And our Saviour was filled with the Spirit, receiving it not by measure.

This descent, or pouring out of the Holy Ghost, was reserved by God for some great and necessary occasions of more than ordinary importance and consequence to the whole church. The Spirit seems to me to have been poured out in this manner but five times. The first was on the hundred and twenty, or the apostles and their company: and these received the first fruits of the Spirit; or the choicest gifts of the Spirit, and in the highest degree; though, no doubt, the apostles the choicest and the highest of all. In which sense I apprehend St. Paul is to be understood, when he says †, "And not only they" (that is, the new creature, or the new creation, or Christians in general), "but we" (that is, we apostles) "who received the first fruits of the Spirit," even we, notwithstanding these "superior gifts we have received, whereby we are the "most fully assured that we are heirs of God, and shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption (or the grave), into the "glorious liberty of the sons of God; even we groan" (under our present suffering), "waiting" (or while we wait) "for the adoption, "namely, the redemption of our body." And that the first fruits signify the choicest portion of that of which they were the first fruits, may be seen 1 Cor. xv. 20. 23. Rom. xvi. 5. 1 Cor. i. 15. 16. James i. 18. Now the apostles, and the rest of the hundred and twenty, received these high communications of the Spirit, that they themselves might be thereby fully assured of the exaltation of Christ to the right-hand of God, or to all power. This is the use St. Peter makes of it, Acts ii. 23. for he says, that "Christ being by "the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father "the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this, which ye "see and hear." The Holy Ghost likewise descended on the hundred and twenty, in order to qualify some of them, namely, the apostles, to testify and prove this great truth, together with the other great facts of Christianity; teach the whole scheme; foretell the greater events of it; and qualify others for other services in the church. By this means giving some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, and others ministers of the church. And that the Holy Ghost came upon all the apostles and their company, seems evident from this, that it is said, "they were

* Luk. i. 15. 41. 67.

† Rom. viii. 13.

“all with one accord in one place,” when the Holy Ghost fell upon them*. Who can *they* here mean but the hundred and twenty men and women in the former chapter, who “continued with one accord in supplication and prayer,” Acts i. 13, 14. to whom Peter spoke, ver. 15—23. who appointed two for the apostleship, from which Judas fell, ver. 23. who prayed, ver. 24, 25. and gave forth their lots, ver. ult. Who but they on whom the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled, that foretold, that “the Spirit should be poured out on daughters as well as sons, and on handmaids as well as servants,” ver. 17, 18. and who therefore are represented under the description of “the eleven, and them that were with them,” Luke xxiv. 33. and are called, the apostles “company,” chap. iv. 23. being those who, chap. i. 21. are said to have “accompanied with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them; and who, being again assembled together, were all filled with the Holy Ghost,” chap. iv. 31. and “they who were all scattered abroad,” Acts viii. 1.

This seems to have been the second time that the Spirit was poured out on them: as kings under the Old Testament seem sometimes to have had an “anointing with fresh oil” from above; or a new supply of gifts to fit them for their high office†. And this second descent of the Spirit appears to me to have been to encourage them, on their first being brought before the council or the Sanhedrim, and threatened by them‡. Which perhaps God saw necessary to support them (who had till a little before kept in their upper room for fear of the Jews), under the first shock of being forbid to preach the gospel by the highest court of civil and ecclesiastical judicature among the Jews; and which every Jew used to have in the utmost reverence. And, therefore, as they pray for boldness, notwithstanding the threatening of the council; so it is added, after this descent of the Holy Ghost, that “God answered their prayers; and that they spake the word with boldness §.” They also pray, that notwithstanding the “threatenings of the council, God would stretch forth his hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Jesus.” And perhaps the Spirit now descended on them all, not only to fill them all with courage, but to give them all the faith of miracles in a higher degree; or at least some of them as had not received these gifts before: as he had filled all of them with the gifts of knowledge and utterance before, namely, Acts ii. for as St. Luke observed on the first descent, that they spake in many tongues the wonderful things of God; so he observes, that, on this descent of the Holy Ghost, they spake the word with boldness; and adds, that “with great power gave the apostles witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and that grace was now upon them all,” ver. 33. I have already explained the meaning of grace. And St. Luke in the next chapter likewise takes notice, not only of their striking Ananias and Sapphira dead; but of the many signs and wonders wrought by the apostles; and of the

* Acts ii. 1.

† See Psal. xcii. 10.

‡ Acts. iv. 21. 31.

§ Ibid. ver. 31.
great

great conversions which those signs and wonders produced *. And as he had observed, on the first descent of the Spirit, that many wonders and signs were done by the apostles †; so now having observed, on this second descent, that the apostles did not only most powerfully attest the resurrection of Christ, but that “great grace,” or a great portion of the gifts of the Spirit, “was upon them all ‡;” he adds §, that “Stephen” (who was not an apostle) “did great wonders and miracles among the people; and was filled with such wisdom, and other gifts of the Spirit, that those who disputed with him were not able to resist.”

The third time was on Saul, who, we must conclude, from Acts ix. 17. was filled with the Holy Ghost, and is expressly said to “be full of it ||.” The Holy Ghost descended on him, as I suppose, to qualify him the better to be a teacher and a prophet, and afterwards the apostle of the Gentiles; to remove any objections that might be raised to his apostleship, if the Holy Ghost had not fallen on him, as it did on the rest of the apostles; and that he might not in this respect, any more than in any other, be “a whit behind the chiefest of them.” But I refer my reader to the Second Essay [in the “Miscellanea Sacra”], for the proof of this assertion.

The fourth was to confirm it to be the will of God, that the proselytes of the gate, though deemed so unclean by the Jews as not to be fit to be conversed with, should be taken into a full participation of all the blessings of the Gospel, without any farther conformity to any of the other laws of Moses, than those they were obliged to submit to as proselytes of the gate. And to this end it was, that I conceive the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and his family, whilst the word was preaching to them; and before they had so much as professed their belief of it, or had been baptized into it: the Holy Ghost thus himself leading the way to their being received into, and owned by, the church. This is the use that Peter makes of it to the Jews that were with him. For he says **, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” And he makes the like use of this great circumstance to the Jews at Jerusalem, who expostulated so warmly with him on his going in unto this family of the uncircumcised. For says he ††, “And as I began to speak (before I had concluded my discourse, and much more before I could hear their confession of faith, or baptize them, if I had so intended), the Holy Ghost fell on them, as it did on us at the beginning. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gifts as he did unto us, what was I, that I could withstand God?” And we see this immediately silenced them, notwithstanding their first contention with him about it ‡‡. For on hearing that the Holy Ghost fell upon them in this manner, “they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also unto the Gentiles granted

* Acts v. 1—16.

|| Acts xiii. 9.

† Ibid. ii. 43.

** Ibid. x. 45, 47.

‡ Ibid. iv. 33.

†† Ibid. xi. 15.

§ Ibid. vi. 8, 9, 10.

‡‡ Ibid. ver. 2.

“repentance

“repentance unto life*.” And when this Spirit of bigotry arose again in some that believed, who were of the Pharisees; first at Antioch †, and afterwards at Jerusalem ‡; and they strenuously insisted, that the proselytes of the gate, converted to Christianity, should be subject to all the laws of Moses; the Holy Ghost falling down on Cornelius and his family, who were not subject to all those laws, carries the debate and the decree in favour of the proselytes of the gate; and the assembly declare them to be free from any of those laws, but the four then mentioned; to which they were subject, as proselytes of the gate §. Peter particularly says of this descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, that “the Holy Ghost bore them witness that he had purified their hearts by faith;” how unclean soever we have been used to think them, for want of an entire obedience to all the laws of Moses ||.

The fifth and last time that the Holy Ghost, as I imagine, fell on any without the intervention of hands, was on the first harvest of idolatrous Gentiles that were converted to the Christian faith; which was at Antioch in Pisidia. An account of which we have Acts xiii. 16—50. For it is said of them, ver. 52. that “they were filled with the Holy Ghost.” Which I apprehend to be a phraseology in the Acts, denoting the descent of the Holy Ghost without the intervention of hands, as in the instances, and for the reasons, I have already given. And I am the rather inclined to think, that this expression denotes the immediate descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, because St. Paul seems to have an eye to it in the beginning of his discourse in this chapter, ver. 14, 15. where he speaks of John’s baptism, and, as it seems to me, in contradistinction to Christ’s baptizing with the Holy Ghost and with fire, though he does not quote the passage quite out. This part of his discourse runs thus: “Of David’s seed hath God—raised a Saviour. When John had first preached, before his coming, the baptism of repentance unto all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But behold there cometh One after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose,” ver. 24, 25. And the words, “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire,” though not express, are, as I apprehend, to be understood. This, indeed, was the assembly that met in the synagogue the first sabbath-day: and though it chiefly consisted of Jews and religious proselytes, or proselytes of the gate, as appears ver. 16. 42. yet there seem to have been some idolatrous Gentiles among them, as one would be led to think, by their being distinguished from the Jews and religious proselytes, ver. 42. compared with ver. 43. They do not seem to be fully convinced this sabbath-day, but desire to hear farther from them on the next, when they, and great multitudes of other nations, Gentiles, believed; and then probably were filled with the Holy Ghost.

* Ver. 18.

† Acts xv. 1.

‡ Ver. 5.

§ Ver. 7—12. 28.

|| See the Essay on this decree in the “Miscellanea Sacra,”

If any should except to the proof I bring to the Holy Ghost's descending on the idolatrous Gentiles, from the expression used Acts xiii. 52. that "they were filled with the Holy Ghost;" and should alledge, against the arguments deduced from that expression, that "Saul was filled with the Holy Ghost*," who has been generally thought to have received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of Ananias's hands; and if what may be collected to the contrary from what I have urged, or what I shall further urge against it in the Second Essay, shall not fully satisfy any one; I desire it may be considered, that as this is the only instance where it can possibly be pretended that any one is filled with the Holy Ghost by the intervention of man's hands; so there are in this case many things that render it perfectly singular. For, on the supposition that Ananias imparted the Holy Ghost to Saul,

1. Ananias, who was but a disciple, imparts it, and imparts it by laying on of his hands; though it is allowed, that none but apostles had that privilege in any other case, as we shall see more fully by and by.

2. He imparts it to Saul, who is designed to be an apostle; and the only one, on whom the Holy Ghost did not descend without the intervention of hands. And on this supposition,

3. Ananias had a particular commission from Christ to go and lay his hands on Saul † (though, as I think, only to give him sight), and Saul had a vision that Ananias was to come and lay his hands on him. This therefore is a case so particular, that no conclusion can be justly drawn from it: nor can it be inferred, that because Saul was filled with the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands of Ananias (if that was the case, as I think it was not), that therefore, where others are said to be filled with the Holy Ghost, that that phrase does not signify the Holy Ghost's falling on them without the laying on of hands.

But I do not only conclude, that the Holy Ghost fell on the first harvest of heathen converts, as it did on the apostles and their company, on Saul, and on Cornelius and his family, from the expression used concerning them, that "they were filled with the Holy Ghost;" but*from the circumstance of their case, compared with that of the first fruits of the profelyted Gentiles converted to Christianity. For let it be considered, that Cornelius was a sincere worshipper of the true God, gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway‡; and it is by far the most reasonable to suppose that his family, and so the friends he called together, were devout Gentiles too: and that they were careful in abstaining from things offered to idols, from fornication, from things strangled, and from blood; abstinences which were very agreeable to the Jews. And yet, if God saw it necessary to pour out the Holy Ghost on persons so religious and devout, and so compliant with the Jews in certain points thought to be of great consequence, in order perhaps

* Acts ix. 17. xiii. 9.

† Acts ix. 11.

Acts x. 2.

to persuade Peter himself that he ought to baptize them, though he had the vision of the sheet to put him upon doing it, and had found Cornelius had had a vision which corresponded with that of the sheet: nor does it seem as necessary for the Holy Ghost to have descended on the first Heathen converts, who were idolaters, working all unrighteousness and lasciviousness with greediness, to satisfy Paul that he was to baptize them; especially since there seem to have been some marks of backwardness in Paul to go to the idolatrous Gentiles, as well as in Peter to go to the proselytes of the gate; as I have observed in the preface. Farther, if the immediate descent of the Holy Ghost was necessary to bear witness to Cornelius and his family, holy and devout persons, and not so offensive to the Jews as idolaters were, that God had “purified” “their hearts by faith;” was it not as necessary to bear witness to those abominable idolaters that he had purified theirs? And was it not as necessary to justify Paul in conversing with these, and admitting them to all the privileges of the Gospel, whilst he declared them free from any obedience to any one of the laws of Moses; as it was to justify Peter for admitting the others (who were allowed to live in their country, and worship at their temple, and in their synagogues) to the privileges of the Gospel, on continuing to submit to the observance of some of them? And perhaps the giving the account of this immediate descent of the Holy Ghost, without any laying on of hands, on these first converts at Antioch and Pisidia, is the reason why St. Luke uses that expression concerning Paul and Barnabas’s relation, of what had passed in their peregrination, to the church of Antioch in Syria, at their return to that church, that they rehearsed “all that God had done with them,” (μετ’ αὐτῶν). Whereas, otherwise it had been more natural to say *by* them (δ’ αὐτῶν).

I am the more confirmed in my opinion, that the Holy Ghost fell upon the idolatrous Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia, as well as on the first fruits of the proselyted Gentiles at Cæsarea, from observing that he did not fall on the Samaritans*: but was given to them by the laying on of hands†. The Samaritans of these times were the descendants of those of the twelve tribes who remained when the body of the people were carried captive into Assyria; of some that returned of the Heathens from Cuthah; of apostate Jews, who, with Sanballat, first built a temple at Mount Gerizim, in opposition to the temple at Jerusalem; of many of the discontented Jews, who resorted to them‡. These all worshipped the God of Israel, had the Pentateuch for the rule of their worship, but worshipped at Mount Gerizim instead of Jerusalem. These Samaritan Jews therefore our Saviour preached to§, as well as to the Jews of Jerusalem and of Judæa, though he said, “he was not” “sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel||;” and was, as

* Acts viii. 16.

† Ver. 17.

‡ See Joseph. Antiq. l. ix. c. 14. l. xi. c. 8.

§ John v.

|| Matt. xv. 24.

St. Paul says, "the Minister of the circumcision *." And as some went to different parts in the first dispersion, some as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word "to the Jews only †" (the direction for teaching not being then understood to extend farther); so Philip goes and preaches at Samaria ‡, without any particular commission from God for that purpose. Nor is he at all questioned about it, as Peter afterwards was, for going unto Cornelius §. But on the apostles hearing of his success, they immediately send down Peter and John to impart the Holy Ghost to them, without any hesitation or debate. So that it is plain, the Samaritans were considered as Jews by Christ; by his apostles, and by the first preachers of the word. And so our Saviour foretells they should; saying, that the apostles "should be his witnesses in Jerusalem, and Judæa, and Samaria" (though when he foretells their going to the Gentiles it is in darker terms), namely, "and to the uttermost parts of the earth ||." It seems very probable to me, that such of the Samaritans as believed in Christ, declared their resolution to quit the worship at Mount Gerizim, and to adhere for the future to the worship at Jerusalem. I think those cannot be well supposed to do otherwise, considering it is plain from John iv. 19—27. that the Samaritans expected that, when the Messiah came, he would determine the great question between them and the other Jews; and at the same time knew the full decision that Jesus gave in favour of the other Jews; and if the Samaritans did on their believing make such a declaration, there was then no difference between them and the strictest Jews; and nothing that could make the least hesitation, whether they should be readily received into the church. But, however this matter was, it is certain, that for some of the foregoing reasons, if not for this, or for some others not so fully known to us, there was no difficulty made, either in going or sending to the Samaritans, or in receiving them into the church. Now as God in nature does nothing in vain, but proportions every thing in just number, weight, and measure; so does he also in the operations of the Spirit in the new creation. It being therefore well understood, that the Samaritans were to be considered as Jews, there was no particular revelation or commission given to preach to them; nor was it necessary for the Holy Ghost to fall on them, to justify Philip in preaching to them, or the apostles in receiving them into the Christian church. And therefore here things go on in their ordinary course, and the Spirit is imparted to them by the laying on of hands. But where a special commission is necessary to direct any of the apostles to go and preach to men, who were not admitted to converse (or even live among the Jews, when they could help it **), there the Holy Ghost seems to have fallen upon them, to justify the messenger he had sent on that errand (as Peter to the proselyted, and Paul to the idolatrous Gentiles), to bear witness to the persons he had sent

* Rom. xv. 8.

† Acts xi. 19.

‡ Ibid. chap. viii.

§ Ibid. xii. 2, 3.

|| Ibid. i. 8.

** Selden de Jur. L.

them to, and to silence all the opposition and clamour that might be made against these messengers, or the persons sent to on that account. And perhaps it is this immediate descent of the Holy Ghost on these Gentiles, that St. Paul refers to *, when he says, “that he was the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles (or perhaps the first fruits of the idolatrous Gentiles) might be acceptable; being sanctified by the Holy Ghost (alluding perhaps to ‘the oil that was to be poured on the first fruits,’ Isaiah lxvi. 20.)” as Peter says, “The Holy Ghost bore witness, that he had purified Cornelius’s and his family’s hearts by faith,” (who were the first fruits of the devout Gentiles); alluding perhaps to the symbol of fire, in which it is most likely it fell upon them; or perhaps to the notion of baptism in general, which is called purification †, or it may be to both. And these first fruits of the devout and idolatrous Gentiles being thus declared clean and holy, the whole lump was declared so too; as St. Paul argues in a like case, Rom. xi. 16. from whence perhaps it is, that St. Paul speaks sometimes in his Epistles to the believing Gentiles among the Romans and the Colossians, where he had not then been, in a strain as if they had all the Spirit; for the first fruits under the law consecrated the whole harvest; though not in so high a degree as those first fruits themselves were by which the harvest was consecrated.

These seem to me to have been the several and the only instances of the pouring out of the Spirit. But the time of the first and greatest of these effusions deserves our particular attention. It was ten days after Christ’s ascension, Acts i. 3. compared with Acts xi. 1. Far be it from me to pretend to give any other account of this celestial transaction than that the Scriptures lead me to: and though I cannot pretend, from what has occurred to me on my reading them, to account why ten days precisely are allotted to it; yet I think there are plain hints why this effusion was not made immediately after Christ was parted from the apostles. Those hints I will mention with the modesty that becomes so great an occasion, and submit them to the judgement of the diligent and candid readers of the Bible. After Christ had finished all the work that God had given him to do, had shewed himself alive to the apostles after his passion, and had given them the commandments which he saw necessary at that time for their conduct, he is wafted up from the ground, gradually mounts the air in their sight, till a cloud of glory received him out of it. Thus, after his conquering death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, he ascends in triumph in “the chariots of God, which are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels;” as Jehovah descended on Mount Sinai at the giving of the law †. In them he ascends far above the heavens, “leading captivity captive:” when first entering the holy of holies for us, he was seated on “the throne at the

* Rom. xv. 16.

† John iii. 25.

‡ Psalm lxxviii. 17, 18.

"right-hand of the Majesty on high; far exalted above all principality and power, and had a name given him above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject to him." Nor did any thing remain "that was not put under his feet, until the consummation of all things, Him only excepted who placed them in this subjection to him." He is then anointed with "the oil of gladness," or with the Holy Ghost, "above his fellows," as the king and head of his church †: or "filled with all fullness, receiving the promise of the Father, even gifts for men, that out of his fullness he might fill all things, and we might receive grace for grace." To such a solemnity as this, ten days were appointed: at the end of which, after he had thus entered into the most holy place, was seated on his throne, was fitted for all mediatorial power, and invested with it; he, out of his royal bounty, gives gifts unto men, and blesses them with all spiritual blessings from "the heavenly places ‡; fitting some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the church;" by their ministry of the word of reconciliation, "he ruled in the midst of his enemies," subduing them immediately from the "womb of the morning, by this the rod of his strength, or power; and making them a willing people in this the day of his power §:" who, in token of their ready subjection to his just authority, pay him the homage which was proper to recognize him as the Lord and heir of all things; and offer their professions for the support of his kingdoms, by relieving the necessities of the ministers, and of those needy subjects of which it was chiefly composed. This consideration of the time of the first and greatest effusion of the Holy Ghost may help us to explain what St. John says ||, that "the Holy Ghost was not given because Jesus was not glorified." Thus much may be observed in general about the time of this effusion. But St. Luke, having pointed out another circumstance of time relating to it, very particularly informs us, that it was "when the feast of Pentecost was fully come**." Now the reason why God seems to have chosen that time for this great event was to shew, that, as in Christ's suffering at the feast of passover, Christ was our true passover, so that the giving of the Spirit was that which was prefigured by the feast of Pentecost; as it is most probable he was born at the feast of tabernacles, to point out to us, that the word, or the brightness of the Father's glory, "was come to dwell (or tabernacle) among us ††." The feast of Pentecost was appointed to be the morrow after seven weeks from the passover ‡‡, that is, fifty days. The reason of this was to commemorate the giving of the law at Mount Sinai; it being precisely fifty days from

* Phil. ii. 9. 12.

† Heb. i. 3. 9.

‡ Eph. i. 3.

§ Psal. cx. 2, 3.

|| John vii. 39.

** Acts ii. 1.

†† John i. 14.

‡‡ Lev. xv. 16.

Deut. xvi. 9.

the night that the children of Israel observed the first passover to God's giving the law there*. Whence all the Jewish writers conclude, that this feast was instituted in commemoration of giving the law; which Maimonides says was the great reason of bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt†. Thus it was likewise fifty days after Christ our passover was sacrificed for us (who rested in his grave on the sabbath, and by rising, on the first day of the week, when the sheaf, or the first-fruits of the barley-harvest, was offered unto the Lord, became the first-fruits of those who slept); it was, I say, from that day fifty days, that the Holy Ghost was shed down on the Apostles and their company; to teach them first the laws and doctrines of Christ, or the things of the kingdom of Christ, and then to enable them to publish them to others, from Mount Sion, or Jerusalem (the place that God had appointed for his worship, and from whence Christ's sceptre was to go forth to Jews and Gentiles ‡), who had been ignominiously crucified there fifty days before. At this feast the first-fruits of wheat-harvest were to be offered to God in two loaves, which were for the use of the priests§. And on those loaves, as on all the meat-offerings, oil was poured. After which they began to gather in their wheat-harvest, and complete it. Thus likewise the apostles, having "themselves received the first-fruits of the Spirit," gathered in that day three thousand souls, whom they presented, or offered up unto God, and unto the Lamb, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, as a kind of first-fruits of his creatures, or his new creatures, or as the first-fruits of the Jewish-Christian church. And then, agreeably to the feasting and rejoicing at all those feasts, and particularly this of Pentecost ||, all the first Christians continued daily in the temple; "and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, as well as singleness of heart; praising God also, as well as having favour with the people **." And the apostles proceeded farther in their great harvest. Thus was this day well suited to the dignity of the event, as well as to confirm the truth of the Christian religion, and to furnish several moral instructions to those who consider this circumstance of time with the attention it deserves.

And as to the feast of Pentecost being fully come, it carries in it, as Dr. Lightfoot learnedly observes, a manifest reference to the institution of Pentecost; which was to be on the morrow after the sabbath, or after the seventh sabbath from the passover; which makes the fifty days complete, and was called, "the day of the first fruits ††," namely, of wheat harvest. But as the Jews reckoned their days evening and morning, this fiftieth day began Saturday-evening, but was not fully come, or completed, till the first day of the week, when the Holy Ghost fell on them in the morning ‡‡.

When the Holy Ghost did not descend, but was communicated by the laying on of hands; it is called, "the giving and receiving the

* See Bishop Patrick's Com. on Exod. xix. 1.

† Psal. cx. ii. Luke xxiv. 47.

‡ Deut. xvi. 11.

†† Acts ii. 15.

** Acts ii. 46, 47.

† Mor. Nev.

§ Exod. xii. 12. xxiii. 16. Lev. xxiii. 17.

‡‡ Numb. xxviii. 26.

“ Holy Ghost *, and the ministering of the Spirit †, and imparting “ spiritual gifts ‡.”

I cannot tell whether the consideration of these two different ways, by which the Holy Ghost came on believers, either immediately, and in the symbol of cloven tongues as of fire, or by the laying on of hands, will not help us through a difficulty that occurs, Heb. vi. 2. where the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, are reckoned among the first principles of Christianity. May not the sense of that place be this; namely, the meaning of the doctrine of baptisms be the baptism of water by which all believers, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire be the baptism by which the first disciples among the Jews, and the first converts among the devout and idolatrous Gentiles, were initiated? and the meaning of the laying on of hands, signify the conferring these gifts on believers, who had not received them immediately (by the Holy Ghost’s coming down upon them with fire) by the laying on of the hands of the apostles? and so both these doctrines be the first principles of Christianity, inasmuch as baptisms are the first entrance into it, and the laying on of hands the great evidence of it; as faith and repentance are the substance of it, and as a resurrection to eternal judgement is the great motive to induce mankind to embrace it?

The most remarkable things which seem to attend the conferring the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, are,

1. That none but apostles could confer it. But I shall do no more than mention this here; referring the reader to the second Essay, to which this head more properly belongs.

2. The next thing remarkable in the conferring of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the apostles hands is, that they seem to have communicated it to none but believers (I mean believers unto righteousness), and to all believers where they came: whereas the Holy Ghost fell down but on a few, and very rarely.

That the apostles gave it to none but believers, appears from hence; that they always conferred it after baptism, when with the mouth “ confession was made of what they believed in their heart; “ making the answers of a good conscience.” So we find it was, Acts ii. 38—42. viii. 12—18. xix. 5—8. And Acts ii. 38. Peter tells the Jews, in answer to their question, “ What shall we do? “ Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus “ Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of “ the Holy Ghost.” And because the Spirit was always imparted after baptism (the case of Cornelius only excepted), therefore are believers said to be “ baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether “ Jews or Gentiles, bond or free §.” And hence came the ancients to talk of the illumination conferred at baptism, as I have already mentioned on another occasion. From hence it is that St. Paul places the washing of regeneration, and of the renewing of the Holy

* Acts xviii. 15, 17, 18, 19.

† Gal. iii. 5.

‡ Rom. i. 11.

§ 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

Ghost, together (ἅπτορον τῆς παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνανανώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου *). And Acts ii. 32. Peter and the other apostles tell the council, that “they are Christ’s witnesses, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom he hath given to them that obey him.” And St. Paul tells the Galatians, that it is because “they are sons, that God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts †.” And because “Simon Magus’s heart was not right with God, but that he was in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity; therefore he had neither part nor lot in that matter ‡.” And St. Jude joins mens being sensual, and not having the Spirit, together §.

That the communication of the Spirit, some way or other, was to be very general, appears from the ancient prophecies of this matter. David speaks of Christ’s scattering his gifts, and loading us with his benefits ||. And Isaiah, foretelling various circumstances of the Messiah’s kingdom **, adds ††, “And all thy children shall be taught of God.” Which our Saviour applies to himself ‡‡, who was to teach the world by the Holy Spirit. Jeremiah also, prophesying of these days, says, “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them out of the land of Egypt. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest of them, saith the Lord §§.” The promise is here very general; “all, all from the least to the greatest, shall be so taught of God as to want little assistance from others.” Which St. Paul refers to his times, Heb. viii. 8—12. and perhaps alluding to it, 2 Cor. iii. 3. The words of Joel are likewise as extensive; for he says, “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh |||. And thus John Baptist speaks in a manner to give us to understand, that Christ’s baptism by the Holy Ghost and fire should be as extensive as his by water. All this shews, that the communication of the Spirit was to be very general and diffusive, some way or other: How far it was communicated immediately, we have seen already. And that it was given, or ministered, by the apostles, “to all believers where they came,” who had not received it before, may appear from the following instances. Peter conferred the Holy Ghost on the three thousand souls that were added to the church at the feast of Pentecost. For when they, being pricked to the heart by his discourse, say, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter answers, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the re-

* Tit. iii. 5. † Gal. iv. 4. ‡ Acts viii. 23. § Jude 19. John
xiv. 17. 21. 23. † John iii. 24. iv. 4. 6. 13. ||| Psal. lxxviii. 18, 19. ** Isa. liii. 4, 5.
†† Ibid. liv. 13. ‡‡ John v. 46. §§ Jer. xxi. 31—35. || Joel ii. 28.

“mission of your sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost. For the promise (that is, of the Holy Ghost, particularly called the promise of the Father, Luke xxiv. 40. Gal. i. 4.) is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*.” Nothing can be more express to this purpose. And it is said †, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized,” and no doubt received the promise thereupon, that is, the gift of the Holy Ghost. For St. Luke adds, “And the same day there were added to them (who had the gift of the Holy Ghost) about three thousand souls.” And Peter speaks of the Holy Ghost, or the gift of the Holy Ghost, “as given by God to them (or to all them) that obey him ‡.” And that the gift of the Holy Ghost is here spoken of, seems plain from this; that the Holy Ghost is here spoken of as a witness of Christ’s resurrection and exaltation at the right-hand of God: which we learn this gift was brought as the great proof of by Peter §; for he says, “Therefore being by the right-hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.” And what could be a stronger proof that he was ascended on high, than that he gave these gifts unto men? as St. Paul says, Eph. iv. 8, 9, 10, 11. As soon as the Samaritans were converted by Philip, and were baptized ||, the apostles send down Peter and John, as a thing of course, to lay their hands on them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: “And they prayed for them, and laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost **.” And St. Luke’s remark, that before the apostles coming down to Samaria, “the Holy Ghost had as yet fallen upon none of them,” seems to intimate, that the Holy Ghost had hitherto been imparted to all believers, which is the more probable, because hitherto all the converts had been made at Jerusalem, where the apostles were at hand to impart it. When Paul comes to Derbe and Lystra ††, he imparts the gifts of the Holy Ghost to Timothy. That he imparted them to Timothy, is plain from St. Paul’s own assertion, 2 Tim. i. 6, 7, and of this I shall have occasion to speak more fully afterwards; and that he imparted them then is highly probable, because Paul would then have him to go forth with him, and employed him very soon after in assisting him to convert the Thessalonians (as may be gathered from 1 Thess. i. 1. 5. iii. 2.); if he did not employ him in the ministry before, namely, in Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and other parts of Macedonia. When St. Paul comes to Ephesus, and finds certain disciples there, he asks them, as a question of course, and that he constantly asked of all disciples he did not know, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost?” and on finding they had not, as a thing of course, and constantly practised, “he first baptizes them in the name of the Lord Jesus, and then lays his hands on them, and the Holy Ghost came upon them ‡‡.”

* Acts ii. 38, 39.

† Ver. 41.

‡ Ibid. v. 32.

§ Ibid. ii. 33.

|| Acts viii. 12.

** Ibid. ver. 34—38.

†† Ibid. xvi. 8.

‡‡ Ibid. xix. 1—8.

And I think that which must put this matter out of all doubt is, that it appears, that St. Paul had imparted the Holy Ghost to those Christians where he had been; as is plain in the case of the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and the Thessalonians.

All the members of the church of Corinth seem to have had it in a very plentiful manner. This seems to be implied in what St. Paul says, 1 Cor. xii. 7. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to "every man to profit withal." This is expressly asserted by Clement, in his Epistle, § 2. And I think it may be inferred from several passages in St. Paul's epistles to them: since we find that "they spake with tongues," they prayed, they interpreted, they prophesied; or, in St. Paul's phrase, they "blessed with the Spirit *; they had a doctrine; they had a tongue; they had a revelation; they had an interpretation †." Insomuch that he says, "That the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them, by their being enriched in all utterance, and all knowledge ‡; so that they came behind in no gift ||; and were not inferior to any of the other churches **." This plainly shews, that these gifts were at least frequent in the other churches. There is another text in this epistle which is as fully to this purpose, with the addition of such a supplement as seems necessary to make the same complete, and which some of the versions have accordingly made, namely, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. when, after St. Paul had given several directions about the due exercise of the gifts of the Spirit, he enforces them by saying, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace (as I teach, or as the practice is), in all the churches of the saints ††." For with this necessary supplement to the sense, the implication is obvious, that he had given like directions, or that there was a like practice, to what he now taught them, concerning the exercise of these gifts of the Spirit, in all the other churches of the saints. St. Paul tells them, that "he who anointed them is God;" that is, "had given the Spirit of prophecy ††; who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit §§;" that is, who had given them this earnest of the Spirit by him, "as an able minister of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit |||; approving himself to them as the minister of God, in much patience—long suffering—and the Holy Ghost ***." That these gifts were very common in this church, where St. Paul had continued so long, appears from this, that he proves each of these churches to be but one body, because they had but one spirit; and that though that Spirit gave different gifts, yet they were all for the use of that one body. Just as there is but one soul and one body, though there are several members fitted for the different services of that one body, and directed to those services by one soul †††. From hence he likewise demonstrates the duty of love

* 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

† Ver. 26.

‡ Ibid. i. 5, 6.

|| Ver. 7.

** 2 Cor. xii. 12.

†† See Mill, & De Beausobre & L'Enfant, in loc.

‡‡ 2 Cor. i. 21.

§§ Ver. 21.

||| Ibid. iii. 6.

*** Ibid. vi. 4—7.

††† See 1 Cor. xii.

Eph. iv. 3, 4. 7. 12, 13, 15, 16,

and esteem they owe to each other, since as the meanest member performed some useful and necessary, though different office to the body, by some gift of this one Spirit, and was therefore taken care of by the body; so there was not the meanest member in the church, but having some gift of the Spirit, rendered some considerable service to the church *. From this place, as well as others, we may by the way observe, that these gifts were to be exercised in the assemblies of Christians. There at least they were exercised with the greatest variety, and frequently to the greatest profit. Our Saviour had promised, that “where two or three” “were gathered together, he would be in the midst of them †.” This was a great incitement to love and unity, and a very strong reason why they should not forsake the assembling themselves together, as St. Paul tells the Hebrews the manner of some of them was: “but exhort one another” (παρακαλέετε) ‡; which, we have before observed, was one of the gifts of the Spirit. The same thing appears from such epistles to those other churches as have come to our hands. St. Paul asks the Galatians §, “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or the hearing of faith?” And proves the truth of the Gospel to them by this, that “they (or the Gentiles) had received the promise of the Spirit through faith ||;” and tells them, that “because they are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts **; and that through this Spirit they did wait for the hope of righteousness by faith ††.” And finally in the last chapter says, “Brethren, if any man is overtaken of a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted ‡‡.” He blesses “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us Gentiles (to whom the epistle intitled to the Ephesians was writ), with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ §§: with all spiritual blessings, ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ,” might be rendered, “with all blessings of the Spirit.” St. Paul styles the gifts of the Holy Ghost εὐλογία εὐαγγελίου, “the blessings of the gospel |||.” And that that signifies the gifts of the Holy Ghost, may appear from comparing Rom. i. 11. where he says, I long to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift, χάρισμα τὸ πνευματικόν, the same with the εὐλογία εὐαγγελίου here. And that the promise of the Spirit is styled by this apostle εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ, “the blessing of Abraham,” Gal. iii. 14. The calling the gifts of the Spirit, spiritual blessings, the blessings of the Gospel, the blessing of Abraham, may probably be in allusion to Isa. xlv. 2, 3. “Fear not, Jacob my servant, and Israel whom I have chosen; for I will put my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thy children (καὶ τὰς εὐλογίας μου).” These spiritual blessings are said to be ἐν τοῖς

* 1 Cor. xii. 13—26.

† Matt. xviii. 20.

‡ Heb. v. 25.

§ Gal. iii. 2.

|| Ibid. iii. 14.

** Ibid. iv. 6.

†† Ibid. v. 5.

‡‡ Ibid. vi. 1.

§§ Eph. i. 3.

||| Rom. xv. 29.

πνευματις, in heavenly places (as it should be rendered); and the reason why they are said to be in heavenly things, may be seen above. He tells the Ephesians *, that after they believed, they “ were sealed with the Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance;” and says, “ that they also became the habitation of God through the Spirit †.” He speaks very fully of these gifts, and the different persons to whom they were given ‡, and says, “ But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. And farther St. Paul enjoins the Ephesians, “ not to grieve the Spirit, by which they were sealed unto the day of redemption:” and alluding to the votaries of Bacchus, who used to fill themselves with wine at the Bacchanalia, he says, “ Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (ὕμναις πνευματικαῖς, songs of the Spirit ||.)” He gives the like advice to the Colossians; and they were to “ admonish one another in psalms and hymns and songs of the Spirit, and to sing by the help of this gift in their hearts to the Lord **.” Paul beseeches the Philippians by “ the consolation in Christ, the comfort of love, and the fellowship of the Spirit;” that is, by any of the gifts of the Spirit that were common to them and him ††. He tells the Thessalonians, that “ the Gospel came not to them in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost ††; and that they received it with joy in the Holy Ghost §§.” And chap. v. 19. he has these remarkable words, not unlike those, Eph. iv. 30. (alluding perhaps to the symbol of fire, in which the Holy Ghost descended): “ quench not the Spirit: despise not prophecying.” St. Paul speaks of these gifts conferred by the laying on of hands, as one of the first and fundamental principles of Christianity, Heb. vi. 1, 2. this being the great evidence of the truth of it, as has been just observed: he shews them the danger of disbelieving or disobeying Christianity, from this consideration, that the Gospel was confirmed by divers gifts (or distributions) of the Holy Ghost |||. “ If, says he, those who have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, shall fall away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance ***: and that there remaineth nothing but a fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation, to such as have done despite unto (or reproached) the Spirit of grace †††.” And because he had not been at Rome when he wrote his Epistle to the Romans †††, he tells them, “ that he longs to see them, that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift, to the end they may be established (or confirmed in their faith by seeing such gifts, not only among those that had them, but had received them elsewhere; but im-

* Eph. i. 13, 14.

† Ibid. ii. 22.

‡ Ibid. iv. 7—13.

|| Ibid. v. 18, 19.

** Col. iii. 16.

†† Phil. ii. 1.

††† 1 Thess. i. 5.

§§ Ver. 6.

||| Heb. xi. 4.

*** Ibid. vi. 4, 5, 6.

††† Ibid. x. 26—29.

††† Rom. i. 10, 11. xiv. 19.

“mediately conferred on them by him the preacher of this gospel, in which they believed); that is, as he adds, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me*: for he says, he is sure. when he comes, he shall come to them in the fullness of the blessing of Christ†.” And though the generality of the believing Romans had not the gifts of the Holy Ghost, no apostle having been among them at the time that Paul writ to them (they having been probably converted by some of those who might be dispersed on some of the persecutions); yet some among them had these gifts, as appears from Rom. xii. 3—8. Perhaps it might be those who converted them; and who had received those gifts from some of the apostles elsewhere. The same may be said of the Laodiceans, in case the epistle commonly called the Epistle to the Ephesians was really written to the Laodiceans, as I suppose it was‡.

Peter plainly refers to these gifts §: for he says, “that it was revealed to the prophets of old, that not unto themselves, but unto them of this age, they did minister the things that were reported unto them by them that preached the gospel unto them, *with* (or *by*) the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.” And he afterwards gives this exhortation (which supposes these gifts to have been very common ||): “As every man hath received the gift (*χαρισμα*), even so minister the same as faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God: if any man minister (as a deacon, *ἐν τῇ διακονῇ*), let him do it as of the ability (or with the gifts of prudence) that God giveth.” And that Peter imparted these gifts to the believing Jews, as well as to these devout Gentiles to whom he writes, may be confirmed by Paul’s testimony; who says, that He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same wrought effectually in me towards the Gentiles **,”

St. John tells all those he writes to, 1 John ii. 20. to shew them in how little danger they were of being deceived under the fairest pretences, that “they had an unction (a prophetic unction or spirit), from the Holy One (Christ, called the Holy One, whose Spirit the Holy Ghost was, and which he sent down); and ye know all things, that is, all things necessary to be known.” And afterwards he says, “This anointing, which you have received of him, abideth in you, and ye have no need that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie,” ver. 27. And he adds, “Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us his Holy Spirit,” chap. iv. 13. And chap. v. 10. asserts, that “he that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself, that is, the Spirit, which he saith beareth witness,” ver. 6. And

* Rom. i. 11, 12.

† Ibid. xv. 29.

‡ See the Abstract.

§ 1 Pet. i. 12.

|| Ibid. iv. 10, 11.

** Gal. ii. 8.

chap. vi. 7. "For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood."

St. Jude speaks of sensual men, who separated themselves from the Christians, as the only kind of men "who have not the Spirit *." And directs all those he writes to, that, "building themselves up in their most holy faith, they should pray in the Holy Ghost †," which is what St. Paul calls, "praying with the Spirit ‡."

And St. James does not only speak of "the prayer of faith (by which, the anointing with oil in the name of the Lord, the elders shall heal the sick); but of the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous, as we translate it (or the inwrought, or inspired prayer of the righteous, as it would be better rendered, *δευσις δικαίῳ ἐνεργουμένη*), which availeth much §." And speaks of it not as a thing peculiar to some few righteous, but common among them.

All which quotations are but agreeable to what our Saviour told the Jews ||, on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, which was the day of an holy convocation, or of a great congregation of the people, when it was the custom of the people to fetch water from Siloam (which St. John says signifies the soul **), some of which they drank with loud acclamations and hosannahs (or save-now ††); and some of which they brought for a drink-offering to God, both as a commemoration of the rock that flowed and followed them through the wilderness, to relieve their thirst; and also as an offering, with prayers for rain against the following seed-time; when Jesus, observing this solemnity, stood in a convenient place, and, alluding to this rite, cried (aloud) saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink (if any man earnestly desire the spiritual water of wise instruction, which, to the souls of all those that pant after it, is a greater refreshment than water is to a thirsty body; let him but be my disciple, and he shall have it). And then adds (nay, he shall not only have it to quench his own thirst, but to communicate to others). He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters. Which, the Evangelist adds (who wrote this Gospel after the accomplishment of this prediction), he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe in him should receive." They that believe, is here an expression of the same force, as all they that believe; for here is no distinction or limitation made. Our Saviour's doing this at the feast of tabernacles is the more remarkable, because the Jews called the days of the Messiah the feast of tabernacles; and this was the last day of those feasts that preceded our Lord's death, and consequently that preceded the mission of the Holy Ghost; and it is also very observable, that the Jews thought this water a type of the Spirit. And St. Mark speaks in the same

* Jude 19.

† Ver. 20.

‡ 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

§ James v. 14, 15.

|| John xxvii. 37.

** Ibid. ix. 7.

†† Psal. cxviii. 25.

general terms when he relates *, that after our Saviour had given his commission to the apostles, to go and preach the Gospel to every creature; he added, "And these signs shall follow (not only you apostles, in confirmation of the truth of what ye shall preach, pursuant to my command, but) them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with tongues, &c." And so likewise our Saviour says †, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father."

When I lay all these facts together, and see that where the apostles had been they always conferred the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and that the members of those churches where they had not been were the only members of churches that seem not to have had them; I can scarce forbear thinking, that this general communication of the Holy Ghost is what John the Baptist referred to, when he told the Jews, that "he indeed baptized with water, but that Christ would baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire ‡." Which seems to import at least thus much, that as he (John) a witness to Jesus, baptized all that came to him, that believed the kingdom of heaven was at hand, with water; so the apostles, the chosen witnesses of Christ's resurrection, being first baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire immediately from heaven, should baptize with the Holy Ghost all believers that should come to them, and that had not been first baptized with it in the same immediate manner as themselves (as the rest of the hundred and twenty, Saul, and the first fruits of the devout and idolatrous Gentiles, were). And so our Saviour tells the apostles after his resurrection §: "For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, not many days hence." And that ye here is not restrained to the apostles, we learn from the quotation Peter makes of this prediction of our Saviour, and his application of it to the Holy Ghost's descending on Cornelius and his house ||; and to this also I think Paul refers **, though he does not quote the passage quite out. And may not our Saviour also refer to this in his conversation with Nicodemus, John iii. 5. who comes to him privately, when he tells him (in answer to that which must be supposed to be Nicodemus's question, ver. 7. I see you are a teacher come from God by your miracles; but pray what is the sum of the doctrine you come to teach?) when he tells him, that "if a man is not born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Which perhaps is to say, that "a man cannot become a subject of the kingdom that he was going to set up, by private instruction, without being openly initiated, and making a public profession: and that that would not only be by baptism with water, which was an actual and public declaration of a change of opinion and manners, and when with the mouth

* Mark xv. 16, 17.

† John xiv. 12.

‡ Luke iii. 10.

§ Acts i. 5.

‡ Ibid. xi. 16.

** Ibid. xiii. 35.

“ confession was to be made; but also by baptism with the Holy Ghost, when his kingdom was actually come, after his ascension, when men would be brought to speak the great things of God, as the Spirit should give them utterance;” which baptism would be, as I just now said, either immediately, as in the case of those on whom the Holy Ghost came without the intervention of hands; or by the intervention of the hands of some on whom the Holy Ghost had so descended. The expression being general, the occasion on which it is spoke, and some passages in the conversation, point this way. For that the general notion that is always included in baptism is initiation, I believe will appear beyond doubt, to him that considers it in any of the three kinds of it mentioned in Scripture; in that of water, in this of the Holy Ghost and fire particularly; and most clearly of all in that which our Saviour mentions Matth. xx. 22—24. and Luke xii. 50. For I think baptism cannot possibly be understood, in those two last places, in any other sense than the sufferings by which Jesus was to be initiated into his kingdom, and the fulness of power he was to receive upon his going through them. It may be of some use too here to observe, that though John Baptist and Jesus, speaking, in the places just now quoted, of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, before it happened, and before it was explained, speak of it in such general expressions as comprehend both the immediate communication of the Holy Ghost from heaven, and the conferring it by the apostles; yet when the predictions of John Baptist and our Saviour about this baptism were fully explained by the event, then the distinction that was made between them plainly appears; and particularly Heb. vi. 2. which I considered whilst I treated of the immediate descent of the Holy Ghost on the first Christians among the Jews, and among the devout and idolatrous Gentiles. Nor is this the single instance of general expressions used by our Saviour, which afterwards came to be more distinct and specific.

If, after all this, any one should be of opinion, that the apostles did not confer these gifts on all the believers where they came; I desire he would let me know, by what rule he can prove, or even suggest with any probability, that the apostles governed themselves in conferring these gifts on some where they came, and not on others. They who imagine, that the apostles conferred the Holy Ghost only on the bishops, presbyters, and deacons; or on pastors, teachers, and elders, as a distinct order of men from the brethren or believers; do not read the Scriptures with that freedom from the prepossession of modern systems, or modern practice, which becomes the disciples of Christ; much less with that knowledge of the state of things in the times of the apostles, which they must have who will make themselves masters of them. He who reads them without prejudice, and with this previous preparation, will undoubtedly see, that there were many churches without any such orders of men in them. This is owned now by those who contend the most

fiercely

fiercely for such orders*: and they will see too, that these gifts were conferred on too many to allow them to suppose, that all on whom they were conferred were of the clergy; unless they will make them all of the clergy, and scarce leave them any laymen to exercise them on.

Thus it seems to me, that the gifts of the Holy Ghost were ordinarily conferred by the laying on of the hands of the apostles; and that the apostles laid them on all believers where they came, and on no others. But it appears to me, at the same time, that whenever the gifts of the Holy Ghost were conferred by the laying on of their hands, they were conferred in a lower degree: for we do not find, that any of those, to whom the apostles imparted the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands, are ever said to be full of the Holy Ghost. They only, as we observed before, seem to have this expression used of them, on whom we either know, or have great reason to think, the Holy Ghost fell without the intervention of hands. And no wonder, that where the apostles laid their hands, there should not be so plentiful a communication of the Spirit; since where they laid on their hands, it was only to confirm particular persons or churches in the faith of the Gospel: whereas the Holy Ghost always descended to confirm some things that were to be of universal instruction and importance; or confer gifts on persons that were to be of the greatest use and service to the whole Christian church: as will appear upon the least reflection on the only instances which occur of his immediate descent.

However, though the gifts conferred by the apostles were conferred in a lower degree than when the Holy Ghost fell on them; yet I am apt to think, that whenever the apostles conferred such gifts of the Holy Ghost as they could impart, they always prayed that those to whom they were going to impart them might receive them. Our Saviour, who told his disciples, that their heavenly Father would give them the Holy Spirit, adds, that “it should be “on their asking it †.” It is very observable, that the Holy Ghost did not descend on our Saviour till after his praying, on coming out of the water ‡. And it is expressly related of Peter and John, that “when they had prayed, they laid their hands on the Samaritans, and gave them the Holy Ghost §.” And though it is not mentioned in any other case, yet I am strongly inclined to believe, that prayer always preceded; to shew that this great gift came from God, and was dispensed according to his will. And I the rather incline to this, from the laying on of hands, which always accompanied the conferring these gifts; that being a ceremony which always attended solemn blessing and prayer; or, if you please, a solemn prayer for a blessing; as I shall prove in the third Essay. St. Austin, to this purpose, speaking of the apostles imparting the Holy Ghost to the Samaritans, says, “Orabant quippe ut veniret

* See Mr. Dodwell, de Jur. Laic. Sacerd. and Dr. Whitby, on the Cor. and Theff.

† Luke xii. 13.

‡ Ibid. iii. 21.

§ Acts viii. 15.

“ in eos (spiritus sanctus) quibus manus imponebant; non ipsi eum dabant *.”

There is one thing more concerning these gifts, which very well deserves our notice, namely, that whether they were poured out by God immediately, or imparted by the laying on of the hands of the apostles; yet they were not all distributed to one, nor were they distributed in such measure as the apostles would, or as the Christians desired to have them; but differing in kind and degree, according to such proportion as God saw fit to give to the several members of the church, for the use and service of the whole body †; “ for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ; that so speaking the truth in love, they might grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying itself in love ‡.” Thus St. Paul tells the Corinthians, all had not the word of wisdom, nor all the word of knowledge; all did not prophesy, nor had all the ability to teach, to exhort, to sing psalms, to pray, to interpret; all were not helps or governments: but “ God gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,” according to his own good pleasure; to shew, that all these diversities of gifts were not distributed by the will of man, “ but by the same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” So also the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews informs us, that “ God bore witness to the apostles by signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts (distributions, *μερισμοῖς*) of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will §.” Whereby it was still farther proved beyond all exception, that the power was not of man, but of God.

There were soon false Christs. Did Christ send forth true apostles and prophets? There soon arose false prophets and apostles. Did they lay claim to a superior Spirit? So did the false apostles too. They, and the Heretics that succeeded them, vented strange extravagances about the Spirit, which they pretended to have superior to the prophets, and very different from one another, as Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Theodoret, and Epiphanius, inform us. Hence come the phrases of “ not believing every Spirit,” and of “ trying the spirits ||;” and of “ the Spirit of Christ, and of antichrist **: the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error ††.”

This is what I have to offer to explain the teaching of the Holy Ghost. All that I shall say to explain what I mean by the Holy Ghost's witnessing, is, that whenever those who were thus enlightened used the knowledge communicated to them in its various instances and degrees, the Holy Ghost witnessed to the truth of

* August. de Trin. lib. xv, cap. 26.

† Eph. iv. 12, 15, 16.

†† Ver. 6.

§ Heb. ii. 4.

† Rom. xii. 16. 1 Cor. xii.

|| 1 John iv. 1.

** Ver. 3

Christianity; or gave a proof of the great articles of it, on which all the rest were founded; namely, "that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, was risen, and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to grant repentance and remission of sins; since he, according to the predictions of this matter, having received the promise of the Father, had sent down these gifts which men saw and heard*."

But though the principal business of the Spirit's witnessing was to prove the truth of the great facts of the Christian religion, yet it was to serve another end also; namely, to comfort those who had it with the assurance of God's pardon and acceptance. This seems to follow from the very nature of the thing; and to be fairly implied in what Peter says to the Jews, Acts ii. (on their being pricked in the heart by his sharp reproof, and by perceiving the great guilt that was upon them, in having "slain Jesus of Nazareth, whom God had so highly approved, crying out, in the utmost distress, to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?) Repent and be baptized—and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (the pledge of the pardon of this sin, which will draw down God's heavy vengeance on the whole nation, if they do not repent of it); for the promise is to you, &c." And, indeed, if this had not been implied in saying, "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," it could have given them but little consolation under their distress, how much soever it might have witnessed to the truth of the great facts which the apostles testified. But on their understanding what was to be inferred, in relation to themselves, from their receiving this gift, they "gladly received the word, ver. 41. and eat their meat with gladness, as well as singleness of heart; praising God," ver. 46, 47.

When the Holy Ghost was given to the Gentiles, it witnessed the same thing to them. And as there was a greater necessity for the Spirit's witnessing this with respect to them than to the Jews, it is not barely implied, but strongly insisted on, in relation to them. "Israel was God's son, his first-born †: to him pertained the adoption ‡." The Israelites were the sons of Abraham according to the flesh, and to them therefore belonged the covenants and the promises; and of them, "as concerning the flesh, Christ came; preaching to them, that they should repent and believe on him." So that, if they received him, there was no doubt but they would "become the Sons of God, being born not of flesh and blood, or of the will of man, but of God §." And that consequently they would inherit the spiritual promises, and certainly enter into the rest that remained for the true Israelites. But the Gentiles had forsaken their heavenly Father, and left his family; and had spent their portion in riotous living: they were afar off, strangers from the covenants of promise, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. God had indeed foretold by the pro-

* Acts ii. 33. ver. 31, 32.

§ John i. 12, 13.

† Exod. iv. 22.

‡ Rom. ix. 4.

phets, that they should be called in under the Messiah. But the precise time when, and the manner how they should be called, was not revealed. Nor was it understood, that they were to be called into the church without first becoming Jews; or that then they were to be admitted to equal privileges with the Jews. They might perhaps have some doubt of this themselves; and, like the prodigal, have only hopes to be as one of the hired servants. But whatever they thought, this was one of the most radicated notions of the Jews; who could scarce by any means be brought to think, that the Gentiles were to be received into the family and household of God on any terms whatsoever, and were generally very highly incensed at the very thoughts of it. They counted them all, even the devout men among them, unclean; and not so much as fit to be conversed with*. Therefore God found it necessary, on their first conversion, "to bear them witness, by the Holy Ghost, that he had purified their hearts by faith†; which astonished as many of the circumcision as went with Peter to Cornelius; who took it, that the promise of the Spirit was theirs, and their childrens, and the Jews that were afar off; but little imagined, what they now saw, that on the Gentiles also should be poured out the gifts of the Holy Ghost. And thus the Spirit witnessed with their spirits, that they also were the children of God; and the spiritual seed of faithful Abraham; on whom the great blessing of the Spirit was to come‡." And so it also was among such of the Romans as had it§; and could not but shew the rest who had it not (no apostle having been then among them), that the Gentiles were as capable of receiving it as the Jews, since great numbers of the Gentiles had received it; and therefore they might also, especially since he told them, "that when he should come unto them, he should come to them in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel, and impart some spiritual gift to them, where-by they might be farther established." This was in them the Spirit of adoption||; a full proof that they were sons (since the Spirit was only promised to the seed or children of Israel**; that is, the spiritual seed of Israel; such who like him had power with God, and could prevail; and since they had the Spirit of God their Father, and the Spirit of Christ Jesus his son, their great elder Brother); and assured them of the love of God, which was thus "shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost††." And as it gave them full confidence towards God, enabling them to call him Abba Father‡‡; so it likewise was a full demonstration, that if "they were sons, they were heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. It was in them the earnest of their inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession§§;" or in fewer words, "the earnest of the Spirit," as it is called in other places|||; and which, for the same reason, under another metaphor,

* Acts xi. 3.

† Ibid. xv. 8, 9.

‡ Gal. iii. 14.

§ Rom. v. 11.

|| Gal. iv. 5—8.

** Iai. xlv. 2, 3.

†† Rom. v. 5.

‡‡ Ibid. viii. 25.

§§ Eph. i. 14.

||| 2 Cor. i. 22. v. 5.

is called, "the seal of the Spirit *; in whom also, after ye believed, "ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (the Spirit being the promise of the Father, Isa. xlv. 4. Joel ii. 28. and so called Acts i. 4. ii. 33—39. referring to Luke xxiv. 49. and to John xiv. 26. and xv. 26. where Christ promises the Spirit as the Person that was to supply his absence; as he also does chap. xiv.) ; and ver. 30. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed "unto the day of redemption." This shews us the reason why this witness, earnest, and seal of the Spirit, is never used in relation to the Jewish, but always to the Gentile believers, particularly by Paul their great apostle (as appears by the Epistles themselves, in which this witness, earnest, and seal of the Spirit, are mentioned; and the manifest context of those parts of the Epistles where these passages occur); in order to satisfy them, as well as the Jewish believers, in the fullest manner that they (Gentiles) who were sometimes afar off, were now brought near, and "were all become "the children of God in Christ Jesus †," and admitted to equal privileges with the Jewish believers, without any of the works of the law: which point he labours, and couches under several beautiful metaphors, in several of his Epistles to the Gentile believers.

It is very much to our present purpose, and will farther explain and prove what I have said on the witness of the Spirit in the sense I am now considering it, to observe, that as the gifts of the Holy Ghost were only given to true believers, so they might be excited and stirred up, or increased in them; or else Paul's advice to the Ephesians, "to be filled with the Spirit ‡, and to Timothy, to stir "up the gift that was in him §," would have been given in vain. The way by which the Ephesians were to be filled with it, St. Paul plainly hints in the verses immediately preceding, was "to have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but to re- "prove them; to be vigilant and circumspect; to redeem the "time; not to be unwise, but understanding the will of the Lord ||" And that Timothy might stir up the gift that was in him, he was to be bold and courageous in preaching the Gospel, notwithstanding the persecutions which attended it **; or, as St. Paul says in the parallel place †† (where he bids Timothy "not neglect the "gift that was given him"), he was to "give attendance to read- "ing, to exhortation, to doctrine, to meditation; to give himself "wholly up to his work, and to take heed to himself, and to his "doctrine." In a word, the way to excite or increase these gifts was to be holy and useful, to employ them faithfully and diligently for the service of the church; and then "to him that had should "be given." So Philip and Barnabas, who were full of the Holy Ghost, were good men, and full of faith also ‡‡. On the other hand, a man might neglect the Spirit, and grieve it, and at last entirely quench it. He might neglect the gifts of the Spirit, by not

* Eph. i. 13.

† Gal. iii. 26.

‡ Eph. v. 18.

§ 2 Tim. i. 6.

|| 2 Tim. i. 11—19.

** Ibid. ver. 6. 8.

†† 1 Tim. iv. 14.

‡‡ Acts vi. 3. 5. xi. 25.

being eminently holy and useful; by being proud of these gifts, using them for ostentation, and despising others. He might grieve the Spirit by any of the vices which St. Paul dehorts the Ephesians from *; or by any other vices whatsoever; till at last, by forsaking the way of truth and righteousness, he might entirely resist, do despite to, or quench and extinguish it. I have already observed, that it is highly probable, that the phrase of “not quenching the Spirit” (τὸ πνεῦμα μὴ σβέννυτε) alludes to the cloven tongues as of fire, in which the Holy Ghost descended †; and in which I apprehend it always fell, where it fell without the laying on of hands. I cannot but observe here, that the word we translate “stir up the gift,” 2 Tim. i. 6. 8. ἀναζωπυρεῖν, has evidently the same allusion, signifying to stir or blow up fire, as the other word, σβέννυτε, signifies to put it out.

The second thing I undertook, was to shew “the necessity of this teaching and witnessing of the Spirit in the first settlement of the Christian religion.” Now what St. Paul asserts of some of the greatest of these gifts, will be found to be true of all of them, at the first settlement of Christianity (on a close inspection of them), that they were all very properly and necessarily given “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying itself in love,” Eph. iv. 12—17. For that St. Paul speaks in this place of the several gifts of the Holy Ghost, and not of the several ministers of the church; or, if you will, not of the officers of the church, but of the gifts that filled them, or fitted and qualified them for their work or office, is plain from the context; which speaks of gifts from ver. 7; repeats the same thing, ver. 8. 10; where St. Paul also says, that “he that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that (there receiving the fulness of power) he might fill all things (or all his members) with the proper measure of the gift of Christ. And he then gave gifts, which fitted some of these members of his body to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.” And that these are distinct gifts only, but not distinct officers, is evident from this farther consideration, that the same persons were sometimes apo-

* Eph. iv. 25—32.

† Acts ii. 2.

files, prophets, and teachers; as particularly may be seen in Paul and Barnabas, who were both of them reckoned among the prophets and teachers in the church of Antioch, when the Spirit said, "Separate me them to the work (that is, of apostles of the Gentiles) to which I have called them*."

Now as Moses, who was king in Jeshurun, and who had the Spirit of wisdom, found it necessary to appoint the princes of the twelve tribes captains of thousands, captains of hundreds and fifties, of the children of Israel; so Christ, as the king of his church, after the conquest he obtained over death, and him that had the power of death, by his being declared at the resurrection the Son of God, or Heir of all things; and having, at his triumphant ascension into heaven, and his solemn investiture into all power, by sitting down at the right-hand of God, all authority put into his hands; gives these gifts to qualify apostles (who were compared to the princes of the twelve tribes †), prophets, evangelists, teachers, &c. to publish, spread, and confirm his kingdom in the world. And that each of these gifts in particular was highly necessary and useful to found and build up the Christian church at first, will be evident from considering the circumstances of things then, and how these gifts were suited to them. Let us, therefore, abstracting entirely from the present state of things in the church, put ourselves exactly in the circumstances of those times.

To do this, we must suppose twelve illiterate fishermen, and others, in all a company of men and women of about an hundred and twenty, who, from the opinion they had of Jesus of Nazareth, as the great Prophet, and temporal King of the Jews, became his disciples, from a well-disposed temper of mind; but who had yet scarce learnt any thing from him, concerning the true design of his coming into the world, on account of the strong prejudices and preconceptions they laboured under; and they also expected, that he would restore the kingdom to Israel, not only before his death, but after his resurrection; though willing to wait his time for it. We must then consider them in the condition they were when they saw their great Lord and Master leave them; and were told by angels, that he was not to return to them any more. And what inclination can we imagine must they have had to go and witness his resurrection, or his being taken up out of their sight, to the Jews? All that we can expect from them is, to find them, as we do ‡, "assembled together in their upper room, where they used to meet (soon after Christ's resurrection), with the doors shut, for fear of the Jews §," in order to converse with one another. But can we expect that they should go and testify this to their countrymen, in hopes to persuade them of the truth of it? those, who were so far from believing on him in his life-time, as to have put him to death; who had hired men to say, that, when the guards slept about his sepulchre, his disciples had stolen him away! and

* Acts xiii. 1, 2.

† Matt. xix. 28.

‡ Acts i. 13.

§ John xx. 19.

were fully determined to pursue them as cheats and deceivers? This was what our Saviour himself did not expect from them. All that he required was, that they should become his witnesses, after they “had received power by the Holy Ghost’s coming upon them * :” or, as he expresses it in another place, after they had received “a mouth and wisdom from him, which their adversaries should not be able to gain say or resist †.”

They seem therefore to have kept still together in their upper room, till (according to the sign our Saviour had given them of the Holy Ghost, “by breathing on them ‡), they heard the sound “from heaven, not of a mighty rushing or violent wind, but as “of a mighty rushing wind, filling all the house;” or a gentle breeze (such as our Saviour had prefigured by breathing on them; which was to prefigure to them, that their sound or voice, though gentle, should yet be strong and powerful enough to go through the world, and that nothing should be able to stop the course of it), and immediately find that the Holy Ghost falls on them. Whereupon Peter stands up with the eleven, and lifts up his voice (speaking with courage and energy), and says unto the whole multitude that was come together §, “Ye men of Judæa, and all ye “that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken “to my words ||. And then also with many other words did he “testify to them” the miracles Christ wrought in his life-time **, his resurrection ††, his ascension, and shedding down, and their receiving of, the Holy Ghost ‡‡. Thus indeed Peter on receiving the Holy Ghost speaks to the Jews. But can it be imagined he would ever have thought it his duty to go to the proselytes of the gate, and testify to them? Or would Paul have thought it his, to go and testify to the idolatrous Gentiles? Or would either of them have had the courage to do it, if they had not had an express revelation and instruction so to do?

But what success could have attended the boldest and clearest testimony to the truth of these facts, if the apostles had not been furnished with other gifts of the Spirit? The multitude had heard our Saviour, seen his miracles, felt the benefit of his cures; and yet, “who believed his report, and to whom was the arm of the Lord “revealed!” The Jews, to whom they were to testify these facts, were highly prejudiced against the witnesses and their testimony. The witnesses were illiterate men, all of them of Galilee, that despised part of Palestine §§, and the chiefest of them fishermen there. The manifest tendency of their testimony was, that the Gospel of Christ was to do that which the law could not do, in that it was weak. The Jews knew that God spake by Moses: they were bigoted to his law to the highest degree. As it came from God, it had been long continued among them, and was suited to their low and carnal apprehensions of things. They were likewise

* Acts i. 8.

† Luke xxi. 15.

‡ John xx. 22.

§ Acts ii. 6.

|| Ver. 14.

** Ver. 22.

†† Ver. 24.

‡‡ Ver. 33.

§§ Acts ii. 7.

impatiently desirous of being released from the Roman yoke by a temporal deliverer; and either disbelievers of a future state, and immoderately set on the pleasures and honours of this life, or fond of the interpretations and traditions of the elders, which were agreeable to their immoral and superstitious dispositions. The Gentile world had been long settled in idolatry and polytheism; which not only allowed, but sanctified those lusts, to which human nature is most addicted; gluttony, drunkenness, and all kind of impurity; and which do not bring all those great inconveniences directly and immediately on societies, that, without much reflection, might have served to awaken them, and restrain them from them; as the diabolical vices (or inhuman piety, as the incomparable Mr. Hales calls it) do. To make such men as these hearken and attend, there must be something new and uncommon to strike them. Nothing could do that like hearing the ignorant and illiterate speak to people of fifteen or sixteen different countries in their own language in perfection. And besides, when they went to the idolatrous Gentiles, they must speak in their respective tongues, or they could not be understood.

But when they spoke, and were attended to, they were not only to testify to Jews and Gentiles the great facts of Christianity, that Jesus of Nazareth, who was dead, was risen again, and ascended (he having appeared to them often, and conversed with them after his resurrection; and they having seen him ascend gradually, so as that they could not be mistaken, till a cloud of glory took him out of their sight; and having also received these gifts from him after his ascension). But they were to prove, that their testimony, concerning these facts, was true. What could prove this so fully as these gifts of the Holy Ghost? As we shall see more clearly under the fourth head; where we shall consider the superiority of the witness of the Spirit to all the other witnesses of the truth of the Christian religion.

But if they had, by these gifts of the Holy Ghost, convinced the Jews and Gentiles of the truth of these facts, they had then indeed persuaded them to be Christians; but that must have been the utmost they could have done, if they had not received "the word of wisdom," as well as the other gifts of the Holy Ghost; and thereby have been able not only to have witnessed to these facts of Christianity, but to have taught the whole Christian scheme, in its full extent and latitude (shewing, that "Jesus of Nazareth was raised up to sit on David's throne, by being made Lord and Christ *"); and to have proved it to the Jews by pertinent quotations out of the Old Testament; as Peter does in his discourse. But how could they have done this, if the Holy Ghost had not also given them "the word of knowledge," any more than they could have taught the Christian scheme without "the word of wisdom?" For whatever our Saviour had said to them in his life-time, or during the forty days he abode with them after his resurrection; it is

* Acts ii, 30. 36.

plain they did not understand the nature of his spiritual kingdom, or the meaning of the prophecies which related to it; since, after all that conversation, they asked him, "Whether he would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel *?" And our Saviour thought them yet so incapable of bearing his instructions about the true nature of his kingdom, that he does not see fit fully to correct their mistake; but gives them an answer that might yet leave them some room to expect it. For whilst he gently reproves them for going so far as to ask, whether "he would *at that time* restore the kingdom to Israel?" (or it was not for them to know the times and the seasons, "which the Father had put in his own power). And whilst he gently leads them into some farther notions about his kingdom, by insinuating to them, that was to be introduced by their witnessing: yet he uses words, that might not quite preclude all their hopes of a temporal kingdom, though they were such as might lead them to think, it was to be begun by their witnessing to him. For he tells them, that "they should receive power after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them †." So that if the Holy Ghost had not, after our Saviour's ascension, given them the word of wisdom and knowledge, they would have had little more to say, than to give their witness to the great facts of Christianity: whereas they were not only to lay the foundation, and bring men to the truth, by witnessing to those facts; but they were to "build up believers in their most holy faith:" they were not only to plant, but to water; and make Christians "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; so as that they might be able to comprehend with all saints, what was the height, the depth, the length, and the breadth of the love of God in Christ Jesus the Lord: and become fruitful in every good word and work." They were not only to teach this doctrine, and confirm it to the Jews, by places of the Old Testament; but it was necessary that they should be able to remove all the scruples which might arise in the minds of the well-disposed, by mistaking the true sense and meaning of the law and the prophets. And therefore they were farther, by the word of knowledge, fully to understand all the mysteries hid in them. They were also to be able to oppose gainsayers, especially when they would endeavour to pervert the well-disposed from the right ways of the Lord. And as the Jews dealt much in allegory, perhaps God saw fit, that some of the disciples should have a skill communicated to them, to turn those allegories against the Jewish, and in favour of the Christian religion. And how was it possible for ignorant men, in a great measure uninstructed by Jesus whilst he was on earth, to have done all this without previous instructions; and long preparations of art and learning (and which could not in many instances have at all availed), but by the teaching of the Holy Ghost? would any of the apostles, who were all Jews, and full of Jewish prejudices, ever have preached the Gospel to the devout Gentiles, whom they thought it even unlawful for them to go to, if Christ had not com-

* Acts i. 6.

† Ibid. i. 8.

manded Peter to think those no longer common whom he had cleansed? or would Paul have gone to the idolatrous Gentiles, if Christ had not ordered him to depart far away to them, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto God?"

As there were but twelve apostles of the circumcision, and their company; and afterwards two apostles of the uncircumcision; how could the Christians have been built up in their most holy faith, if God had not pointed out by the Prophets some persons for stations of eminent and extensive usefulness in the church, especially considering its tender state; its numerous members; their more numerous weaknesses and infirmities; and its yet more numerous enemies; and the great care and prudence that was necessary, on all these accounts, to direct those who had such stations of general and extensive service in it?

And how necessary was an ability to try the spirits, when the revelations of the Spirit were not completed, and they furnished with but few, if any, of them in writing, by which they might try others; and when there were so many seducers and deceivers, false prophets, false apostles, and false brethren, already lying in wait to draw them aside with pretended revelations, with all signs and lying wonders; and when the devil was to transform himself into an angel of light, so as, if it were possible, to deceive the very elect?

When they were made Christians, and well instructed in the kingdom of God, they were to assemble themselves together for public worship. In all such assemblies, there must be discourses, prayers, and praises, by singing hymns, &c. And it was particularly necessary, that some who had learned the Christian scheme from the apostles, might continually instruct the first Christians in it; and that, considering the peculiar difficulties they had to encounter, from the customs of the whole world about them lying in wickedness, and the persecutions they felt and apprehended, some should stir them up to perseverance in their profession; often support their spirits, whilst they continued stedfast; and reprove and admonish those who were fallen. But who was then sufficient for these things, among illiterate men, without the Gospels, Acts, or Epistles in their hands, and prepared by no art or learning, or previous practice? and without any liturgies, homilies, psalms, and hymns, set to tune and metre, which have since obtained, if those could be supposed to have answered these purposes? What strange confusion, disorder, and indecency, must there have been in public worship, if the Spirit had not, by his gifts, made some of these unlearned men apt to teach what they had learnt from the apostles; others apt to exhort, to reprove, to comfort, to admonish? if others had not been enabled to pray, and sing by the Spirit, and others to interpret, in case the Spirit moved any one, for wise reasons, to perform any of these actions in an assembly in an unknown tongue?

And what confusion must there have been in an assembly, among a great number who had these gifts of the Spirit, if there

had not been some persons to preside, and direct who should exercise them, and in what manner and order they should do it?

Let any one but consider the state of the clergy at the Reformation, though they were men that had been educated in schools and universities, and had had leisure and opportunity for reading, conversation, and reflection; and but think with themselves, what their public performances in Christian congregations would have been, if they had not had liturgies, and homilies, and psalms in tune and metre; and they will easily see in what disorder and confusion public worship must have been among the first Christians, whose apostles were fishermen, had it not been for these gifts of the Spirit.

What irregularities must there be supposed, not only in the performance itself, and in the ordering of public worship, but in conducting all matters that relate to an assembly of men and women, where there was no sort of coercive power, but among those where the apostles were present, or could be sent to, and that in such multitudes as were suddenly converted; if some persons had not been inspired with prudence, among a body raw and unexperienced in all arts of government, and unacquainted with the passions of mankind, to propose proper methods on every occasion? And if the body itself had not been endued with prudence, to judge them to be expedient, and with humility to comply?

What would become of the poor of some of those great assemblies, notwithstanding the community of goods, unless the Holy Ghost had filled some of the first disciples with wisdom to distribute out of that community such allotments as might be sufficient for the necessities of the saints, might be equal among them, and free from any complaint of partiality or neglect? for this required a degree of knowledge and prudence vastly superior, not only to men unacquainted with the great business of the world, but to those the most practised in it.

What could have become of the several churches, unless the apostles had had persons inspired with great prudence in that age, to send to make enquiries of the conduct of those churches where they could not stay themselves, to make reports to them, and to settle fully what they themselves had not time to finish and complete, on receiving such fresh directions from the apostles, from time to time, as the case of those churches respectively required?

And what would have become of the churches on particular and extraordinary occasions, without some of these particular and extraordinary gifts? What, for instance, would have become of all the Christians in Judæa on the dearth, if Agabus had not foretold it, that so the Christians at Antioch might contribute the more liberally to their support, and thereby at the same time lay a foundation for a better union between the Jewish and Gentile Christians? Or what would have become of the community of goods, if Peter had not discerned and punished the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira, and thereby prevented the people from joining themselves to the

the first Christians, only in order to partake of that community?

Finally, as the first Christians stumbled extremely at several things which afforded dark and gloomy prospects: particularly the grievous persecutions they underwent; the corruptions they saw creeping into the church by some of its own members, by God's ancient people the Jews rejecting the Gospel, and being cast off by God for it, from all which they might apprehend its speedy and total destruction; and the mistakes they made about some of the apostolical predictions; what doubts and despondency might hereupon have arisen in their minds; and how might these have been improved by the seducers, to make them apostatize; if it had not been revealed to the apostles, and by them to the church, that the kingdom of Christ was to continue in spite of all opposition; that he was to reign till all his foes were made his footstool; or till he should deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and God should be ALL in ALL? that, indeed the Jews should be destroyed and dispersed; that grievous offences, heresies, and corruptions, should take place; that there should yet be a worse state of the church, when the civil power should no longer let or hinder it; and when such power should get in the church, as would bring idolatry and vice into, and make them a distinguishing part of it; and yet that the church should recover from this corrupt state in a great degree; and that at last the Jews should be restored to God's favour, and the fulness of the Gentiles should be brought in, and all Israel should be saved?

Add to all this, that as each of these gifts was necessary to lay the first foundations of Christianity; or to build up Christians in their most holy faith: to establish them fully therein; to support and comfort them under a great many melancholy appearances; to manage their devotions and affairs; to relieve their necessities; and to be attentive to the concerns not only of one or two assemblies, but of all the churches; and especially on some extraordinary occasions; so each of these was a great confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion.

It will by no means become the limited capacities of mortal men, to say, that Christ, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," could not have taken other methods to instruct his disciples, and propagate his truth in the world. Nor can it be imagined, that he could not have found means in particular to have communicated all necessary degrees of knowledge to his disciples, whilst he had been upon earth. And what were all his reasons for not taking that method, or for taking any other, or this in particular, can perhaps be only understood fully by beings of superior capacities to ours. Perhaps the reasons of this conduct may have too great a compass for our short and narrow views; or perhaps, at another time, all this scene, or at least a much greater part of it, as well as other beautiful and amazing discoveries, may open themselves to us, by God's blessing on our more diligent and impartial enquiries; or, at least, when we arrive at the land of
light

light and vision, and shall "see as we are seen." But the scriptures when they are carefully considered, seem to lead us into these reasons of our Saviour's not teaching his disciples the nature of his kingdom whilst he was upon earth, but by the Spirit, after he was gone to heaven:

1. That, during the three years he conversed with them on earth, they were not able to bear his full instructions, without being shocked, and made very uneasy by them, on account of their narrow and shallow minds, and which were in a manner wholly filled with Jewish prejudices. Truth was therefore to be let into them by such degrees as they could easily receive. And whilst they preserved a teachable temper, their great Master bore with all their ignorance and weakness; herein at the same time becoming such an example of tenderness, gentleness, patience and prudence, as was highly fit for them who were to be the teachers of the world to copy after.

2. That from the doubts they had about our Saviour's resurrection (arising from the ignorance in which he left them, and the prejudices they still had about the nature of his kingdom, and the true design of his coming into the world), their testimony might carry the greater force along with it.

3. That by letting all this light in upon them at once, soon after he had left them, he might entirely comfort them under his absence (which must needs have given the greatest shock to them, and the greatest check to their proceeding in their work), and so remove the great obstruction that his death must have given, whensoever it had happened, to the spreading the Gospel, and thereby open a free course for it.

4. That now they were prepared to receive his instructions, he might, by the Spirit, so fill their whole souls with the full knowledge of them, as to give the apostles the highest satisfaction about their truth and expediency; and to dispose them, with the greatest industry, zeal, and boldness, to bear all fatigues, and run all hazards, in publishing those instructions to the world.

5. That all the matters of fact, which they were to testify, might be finished; and so their testimony might become complete at once; and that the proof, which was to be given to the truth of their testimony by the Spirit, might relate to all the matters they were to testify; which it could not do, till Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, had taken place.

6. That, by their assurance, boldness, and activity, but especially by this amazing concurrence of spiritual and intellectual prodigies, beautifully suited to evidence the last dispensation of light and knowledge, they might overbear all the resistance that should arise from the ignorance, prejudice, and lusts of men; and from the worldly powers that should oppose them in the testimony they gave of the great facts they attested, and the doctrines they built upon them.

7. That this success might attend Christ's state of the exaltation to the right hand of power, and be the first act of his royalty, to which

which it was suited with the greatest beauty and proportion ; whereas it would have been altogether unsuitable to his state of humiliation, and inconsistent with the whole design, and every circumstance of it.

8. That, by the amazing success that attended their teaching and testimony, a fresh and convincing proof of the truth of Christianity might be furnished to the following ages of the church. I flatter myself, that these reflections will meet with the approbation of those who have considered human nature, what I have offered in this Essay, and several hints in Scripture, untouched perhaps, or unpursued by me.

The third thing I undertook was to prove, “ that the Spirit did “ thus teach and witness in the first settlement of the Christian religion.” But I have been forced to anticipate myself in a very great measure on this head: since every text which I have brought to explain the teaching and the witness of the Spirit, or to shew that the Spirit fell down in those five instances I have mentioned, and that the apostles conferred it wherever they came, and that these gifts were used by those who had them, is a full proof that there was such a teaching, and such a witnessing of the Spirit. Yet as that proof may be set in a stronger light, and as some farther evidence may be brought, that the Spirit thus taught and witnessed ; I will endeavour to lay it all together, in order to obviate all cavils and objections that may be made against it: it being so capital a point in the Christian religion. David foretells *, in the prophetic style, “ Thou hast ascended on high ; thou hast received gifts for “ men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell “ among them.” Isaiah also, speaking of Jacob and Israel, says, “ I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the “ dry ground ; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing on thy offspring † :” and afterwards, “ And all thy children “ shall be taught of God ‡.” Jeremiah also prophesies of the days of the Gospel § : “ Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will “ make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the “ house of Judah : not according to the covenant that I made with “ their fathers, in the day I took them by the hand to bring them “ out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord) : but this shall be “ the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those “ days, saith the Lord : I will put my law in their inward parts, “ and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall “ be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his “ neighbour, and every man his brother ; saying, Know the Lord : “ for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord ; for I will forgive their iniquity, “ and will remember their sin no more.” Joel likewise prophesies || :

* Psal. lxxviii. 18, 19.

§ Jer. xxxi. 31—35.

† Isa. xlv. 2, 3.

|| Joel ii. 28, 29.

‡ Ibid. liv. 13.

“ And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my
 “ Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall
 “ prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men
 “ shall see visions: and also upon the servants, and upon the hand-
 “ maids, in those days will I pour out my Spirit.”

John Baptist, Christ's forerunner, being sent to by the Sanhedrim, to know if he was the Messiah; “ confessed and denied not: but confessed, I am not the Christ, but his forerunner.” But withal told them, “ that Christ was standing among them;” and the next day said to them, “ Behold the Lamb of God!” pointing to him. “ And he bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending on him like a dove; and it abode upon him: and I knew him not. But he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost:” giving this as the distinguishing character of the Messiah*; which probably is as if John Baptist said, “ I knew not that he was to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. But he that sent me to baptize with water, said unto me, Him that thou shalt see baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, he it is who is to baptize others with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”

The material part of this record the three other evangelists give us. For Matthew says of John Baptist †, “ I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” And Mark says of him ‡, “ I indeed have baptized you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.” And Luke says §, “ John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Here is then John Baptist, a prophet, and greater than all the prophets, recorded by all the evangelists, to have declared, when he was asked by a competent authority, whether he was the Messiah, in prejudice to himself, that he was not; but that Jesus was, and that God had revealed it to him, that he was the Messiah, who was to be anointed with the Holy Ghost, by a certain sign which he saw happen to Jesus; and that he was the person who was to “ baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Our Saviour himself (that they should have a full proof that the Son of man came down from heaven, by having a full proof afterwards that he was ascended to heaven, whence he came ||; namely, as he adds, “ It is the Spirit that quickeneth”), before he left the world, tells the people, that “ he that believeth on him, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;” which, says St. John, “ he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, after he was glorified.” And Jesus tells his

* John i. 20. 29. 32, 33.

§ Luke iii. 16.

† Matth. iii. 11.

|| John vi. 33—63.

‡ Mark. i. 1. 8.

disciples just before he left the world*, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father.” And †, “If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” And says ‡, “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you: but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” “But § when the Comforter is come, who is the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.” Our Saviour adds ||, “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but, if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement. Of sin, because they believe not on me. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more. Of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now: howbeit, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath shall be mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

Mark likewise tells us, that Christ assured his disciples after his resurrection**, that among other signs that should follow them that believed in his name, they should “speak with tongues.” Mark mentions no other gift of the Holy Ghost, that being the most shining gift, or the greatest sign, and the most adapted to convince unbelievers, though not the most edifying to the church; as St. Paul fully determines the case ††; being, as he expressly says, for “a sign to them that believe not.” And speaking with tongues may fairly include “the great things of God” they were to teach (or the illumination of their minds), as well as the strange tongues in which they were to utter them. And St. John says, that “Jesus breathed on them, and said, Receive the Holy Ghost;” that is, “As I prefigure my death and resurrection to you by proper signs and tokens; so I do now the gift of the Holy Ghost, by my breathing on you.” By breathing into man’s nostrils man becomes a

* John xiv. 12.

† Ver. 16, 17.

‡ John xiv. 25, 26.

§ Ibid. xv. 26.

|| Ibid. xvi. 7—15.

** Mark xvi. 17.

†† 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

living soul. By my thus breathing on you, I promise you the Holy Ghost, which shall come on you with the sound as of a mighty rushing wind *, the very first token we read of a divine presence †. And you may be assured, that ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, as ye are that you now receive my breath. Or, as St. Luke says more particularly ‡, “Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you (not indeed just now, though you may be as fully assured of it as if I now did it); but (it will be very soon, and therefore) tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye are endued with power from on high.” And Luke informs us §, that our Saviour, just before his ascension, ordered them, “that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me ||. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.” And accordingly St. Mark says, “they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with the signs following **.”

And St. Luke also informs us more particularly, that St. Peter said, on the very occasion of the Holy Ghost's being poured out upon them, “that Christ being exalted at the right-hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye see and hear ††.” Peter, and the rest of the apostles, placed the whole stress of Christianity here ‡‡; for, speaking of Christ's resurrection and exaltation, he says, “And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” When he answers the objections of the Jews to his going in to Cornelius and his family, he declares, “that the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning, that is, with cloven tongues, as of fire, and gave them the like gifts as he did unto us. Then, said he, I remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost §§.”

And as these passages make very strongly for my purpose, from the historical books of the New Testament; so I must add to all the other quotations I made from the Epistles (to somewhat a different purpose, but which are also applicable to this), that of St. Paul to Timothy |||: “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance to stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.” That the gift of God signifies the gift of the Holy Ghost, I think, appears from the phrase itself, which, in the seventeen places it is used in Scripture, signifies always a gift; in all the places but one, a gift of God; and in all but six, the gift of the Holy Ghost. And that it here signifies the gift of the Holy Ghost, farther appears by St. Paul's saying it was in Timothy, by the laying on of his (Paul's)

* Acts ii. 2.

† Gen. iii. 8.

‡ Luke xxxiv. 49.

§ Acts i. 4, 5, 8.

|| John xiv. 16. xv. 26. xvi. 7. Luke xxiv. 49.

** Mark xvi. 20.

†† Acts ii. 33.

‡‡ Ibid. v. 30—33.

§§ Ibid. xi. 15—18.

||| 2 Tim. i. 6.

hands. For as it does not appear in Scripture, that any other gift was given by the laying on of an apostle's hands; so it appears, that this was always imparted by them *. It farther appears to be the gift of the Holy Ghost, from the word which we translate "stir up:" which, as I have shewn before, signifies to blow or stir up fire, in allusion to the symbol of fire, in which the Holy Ghost at first descended. And we know that Timothy had some of these gifts of the Holy Ghost because he was an evangelist †; and evangelists were fitted for that office by gifts of the Holy Ghost ‡: and that Timothy in particular had those gifts, St. Paul seems to imply plainly in these words §, "That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us." Which good thing, as it is distinct from the form of sound words mentioned in the preceding verse, must needs mean the gifts of an evangelist. And it is very remarkable in this place, that St. Paul writes to Timothy, to put him in remembrance of something he had told him before; and asserts, that this gift of God, which Paul had (before, as well as now) exhorted him (Timothy) to stir up, was in him by the laying on of his (Paul's) hands.

I must likewise desire the reader to observe, that this exhortation to Timothy, and all the other exhortations relating to these gifts, in the other epistles, to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians; as well as in the epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude (all which I have before quoted); imply an appeal to those churches they wrote to, for the truth of their assertion, that they had these gifts: which makes the evidence much stronger than the bare assertion in history could possibly do.

And it must yet add greater strength to this evidence, that Paul reproves the Romans, the Corinthians, the Ephesians, and the Galatians (though the two latter more gently than the two former) for their pride and conceit about these gifts; which caused contentions and parties among them; as is evident, Rom. xii. 3—6. 1 Cor. xii. 4—26. Eph. iv. 1—7. Gal. iv. 15. *ad fin.* And one way by which he endeavours to fasten his reproof on the Corinthians for the pride and other irregularities that attended the exercise of these gifts, and to give greater force to his exhortations to them, is by appealing to them themselves, whether "he did not speak with more tongues than them all ||?" To fix his reproof and exhortation the better, he likewise appeals to them, whether it was not better to prophesy, or to use the gifts which were for edification, than that of tongues, which was more for shew; and in which they prided themselves so much. Since if they prophesied, and there came into their assemblies an ignorant man, or a heathen (an unbeliever), he was "convinced of all, and judged (or discern-
ed) of all: and the secrets of his heart were made manifest; and

* See the Second Essay.

† 2 Tim. iv. 5.

‡ Eph. iv. 7—17.

§ 2 Tim. i. 14.

|| 1 Cor. xiv. 18—22.

“ so falling down on his face, he worshipped God, and reported
 “ that God was in them of a truth *.” Now can it be imagined,
 that any man, in an epistle to a society where there were heats and
 parties, would not only exhort to a right use of these gifts, and give
 them rules for that purpose; but reprove them for their pride, conceit,
 and other irregularities about them; and assert such things of
 his own gifts and of theirs, when he, and the several parties in that
 church, must needs know that there were no such gifts in any of them?

But what yet adds the greatest strength to this evidence is, that
 some of these reproofs and exhortations were written to churches
 where there were not only parties, but where a great (if not the
 greater) part of the church was drawn off from his gospel to another;
 or at least from their regard to his apostolical authority, to the Jewish
 false apostles; preferring their licentious doctrines to the strictness
 and purity he required. This was evidently the case of the Galatians,
 but especially of the Corinthians. None that have read his first
 epistle to that church with the least care can doubt it. The Epistle
 turns upon it, and is full of it. Now St. Paul puts the truth of his
 apostolical character, and of his gospel, upon this single evidence †: “ O foolish Galatians, who
 “ hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth,
 “ before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth
 “ crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye
 “ the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye
 “ so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the
 “ flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.
 “ He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles
 “ among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of
 “ faith?” And afterwards adds, that there could be no reason to seek
 justification by the law, which only brought a curse; since Christ being
 made a curse, the blessing of Abraham was come on them through Jesus
 Christ, “ they receiving the promise of the Spirit through faith ‡;” and
 adds farther, that it was the most unreasonable thing imaginable in
 them to be subject to the law of Moses, or to endeavour to be sons in
 minority under tutors; since they had the fullest proof, that they
 were sons at full age through Christ, by God’s having sent “ the
 “ Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father §.”

When St. Paul acknowledges those infirmities, on account of which
 the Corinthians seem to have been wrought upon to have despised him;
 his weakness, his fear, his trembling, his speech without eloquence,
 and his preaching without philosophy; the things which they admired
 in their Apollos (their false teacher or apostle); what does he set in
 opposition to these his own imperfections, and the eloquence and
 wisdom of their Apollos, but “ the demonstration of the Spirit, and
 of power,” in which he came to them ||? that is, the gifts of the Spirit,
 in which he says they were

* Ver xxiv. 25.

† Gal. iii. 1—5.

‡ Ibid. iii. 10—15.

§ Ibid. iv. 1—10.

|| 1 Cor. ii. 1—5.

enriched, and by which the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them *; and in those signs, wonders, and mighty deeds, which he says he wrought among them †; and by which, “through the power of the Spirit of God,” he tells the Romans, “he had preached the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem unto Illyricum ‡.” And § he expressly says (having his eye still to this false apostle, this deceitful worker, transforming himself into an apostle; “this minister of Satan ||”), “If he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached; or if ye receive another spirit (from him) which ye have not received (from me), or another gospel (from him) which ye have not received (from me), ye might well bear with him: whereas **, though he had been but rude in speech, yet not in knowledge (of the gospel); but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you (by the manifestation of the Spirit) in all things.” When he is asserting his privilege, the non-claim of which the Corinthians seem to turn upon him, as a confession that he was not an apostle, as other apostles and Cephas were; who, agreeably to their character, used those privileges ††: upon what does he put the proof of his apostleship, but these gifts of the Spirit (in which the members of this church abounded, so as to come behind in no gift ‡‡)? “If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal (or the undoubted proof of the truth) of my apostleship are ye in the Lord §§.” In what were they such an undoubted proof of the truth of his apostleship, but in these gifts of the Spirit, in which they were not inferior to, but enriched beyond, other churches? In nothing else could they be said to excel. They were so wanting in obedience to the apostle, in love to one another, as well as in most of the other Christian virtues, that we find St. Paul is forced to take more pains with this church; to use greater precautions with them, to exercise and threaten more of his apostolical power among them, than to all the others put together. This appears in his second epistle to this church; where he says, that he is jealous lest this rival apostle should seduce them, and corrupt their minds from the simplicity which is in Christ. And what does he offer, to preserve them from being beguiled by his subtilty? Is it not an appeal to them whether he preached any other Jesus than he did? or whether they had received another “Spirit from him which they had not received first from himself |||?” If he had not these apostolical powers, which he calls “his rod,” would he have ventured to have said, in this second epistle, just before he was coming to them (threatening the rival apostle and his faction)? “For though we walk after the flesh, we do not war after the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, to the pulling down of strong holds), casting down imaginations, and every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God,

* Ibid. i. 5, 6, 7.

† 2 Cor. xii. 12.

‡ Rom. xv. 19.

§ 2 Cor. xi. 4.

|| Ver. 2, 3. compared with ver. 13 15.

** Ver. 6.

†† 1 Cor. ix.

‡‡ Ibid. i. 5, 6, 7.

§§ Ver. 2.

||| 2 Cor. xi. 2. 5.

“ And having a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your
 “ obedience is fulfilled: For though I should boast somewhat
 “ more of our authority—I should not be ashamed: that I may
 “ not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. For his letters,
 “ say they, are weighty and powerful, but his body is weak, and
 “ his speech contemptible. Let such an one think this, that such as
 “ we are in worldly letters when we are absent, such will we also
 “ be indeed when present *.” Just as he had declared in his first
 epistle, “ that though some were puffed up, as if he would not come
 “ among them, yet he would come shortly, if the Lord would;
 “ and would know not their speech, but their power †.” And af-
 terwards asserts, in his second epistle, “ that truly the signs of an
 “ apostle were wrought among them (by him), in signs and won-
 “ ders, and mighty deeds ‡:” and proceeds to denounce to those
 who had sinned, and did not repent, that “ when he came among
 “ them he would not spare §.” Now can it be conceived, that St.
 Paul would put the proof of the truth of his gospel, and of his
 apostolical character, upon gifts of the Holy Ghost conferred upon
 them by him; and that in a dispute between him and a false apostle,
 rivalling him in that church, by indulging their vices, and by other
 wicked and deceitful arts; when there were no such gifts among
 them? Such a supposition is the greatest absurdity imaginable.
 But if it was possible to suppose that St. Paul, in saying all this of
 himself, “ had boasted of things beyond his measure,” though he
 most expressly declares that he does not ||: yet, if it was but boast-
 ing and vain-glory, what effect could it produce but contempt and
 indignation? Let us see then how his first epistle affected them.
 He was very solicitous to know how it was received. He goes from
 Ephesus to Troas, “ where a door was opened to him of the
 “ Lord;” yet had he no rest in his spirit there, because he did not
 find Titus, whom he had sent to know their present temper. He
 therefore leaves Troas, and all his prospect of immediate success to
 go to Macedonia, in quest of Titus **. Titus there acquaints
 him with the effects his epistle had produced in them; namely,
 “ mourning, a fervent mind towards him, a sorrow to repentance
 “ that wrought in them carefulness, a clearing of themselves, an
 “ indignation, a fear, a vehement desire, a zeal, a revenge ††:” and
 that they had received him with “ obedience, trembling, and fear.
 “ So that God, who comforteth them that are cast down, comforted
 “ him by the consolation wherewith Titus was comforted in them;
 “ and made him to triumph in Christ on their account ‡‡.” And
 hereupon he informs them, that though hitherto he had not come
 to them, “ that so he might spare them,” notwithstanding his
 frequent purposes to come §§: Yet now, finding the greater part
 of the opposite faction brought to a joint and becoming temper, he

* 2 Cor. x. 3—12.

|| Ibid. x. 13.

‡‡ Ibid. 13, 14.

† 1 Cor. iv. 19.

** See the Abstract.

§§ Ibid. i. 23.

† Cor. xii. 12.

§ Ibid. xiii. 2.

†† 2 Cor. xii. 6—12.

will certainly and instantly be with them *, and would not spare those who continued impenitent. St. Paul did actually go there immediately †. Is there then that determined enemy to Christianity who will venture to assert, that any man in his senses would have said these things of the Corinthians to themselves, in a second epistle, just after he had been with them, and just before he designed to go to them, and actually went, if he was not convinced that they knew all this to be true ! St. Paul's having said these things in the manner he has said them, is equivalent to the Corinthians having said them in a letter to him.

I have dwelt the longer on this evidence, because I am aware that it may be said, that all the evidence I have brought for this teaching and witnessing of the Spirit is from parties. But I think, when what I have offered to obviate that exception is duly considered, the evidence I have brought, though party evidence, is, according to all the rules of evidence, stronger than the evidence of unbelieving Jews or Heathens ; if any such evidence could have been produced : though I think that cannot be expected. For if Jews or Heathens, on going into the assemblies of Christians, where these gifts seem to have been only exercised, had been convinced by this demonstration of the Spirit, they had become parties. And if, through malignity, which must have then been the case, they would not own their conviction, or stifle it ; we cannot expect they would do any thing to give testimony against themselves. And whatever may be said of the other apostles, yet it ought to be observed, that the evidence of St. Paul is the evidence of one that had been the most furious adversary, becoming a party from what he saw, that overbore all the prejudice and interest that lay in the way of his believing the facts and doctrines of the Christian religion. The evidence therefore that I have given, as it is in itself most surprisingly strong, so it seems to me the best, perhaps the only evidence, that the nature of the thing can admit.

It must likewise add great strength to this evidence, that the places where the Holy Ghost descended, or that we read of its being imparted, or exercised, were cities remarkable for being the capitals of countries, for being large and populous, the residence of governors, or the seat of trade and learning ; and where consequently there was like to be the greatest opposition, from the envy of Jewish bigots, or heathen philosophers, deeply tainted with ritual or hypothetical knowledge ; and where there was likewise consequently, on all these accounts, the greatest opportunity to examine into the truth, as well as to spread the news of this great event in the world. Such were Jerusalem, Samaria, Cæsarea, Damascus, Antioch in Pisidia, Thessalonica, Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth, Rome. And at the first of these places, where the Spirit first descended, it was, in all probability, in the temple ; and when there were there vast numbers of persons of all parts of the Roman empire present.

* 2 Cor. xiii. 1, 2.

† See the Abstract.

Nor does it add less to the weight of this evidence, that these gifts continued so long in the church. For that they continued to about the year 96, we learn from Rev. i. 12. where John calls the revelation he received about future events, “the testimony of Jesus Christ;” and from chap. xix. 10. where St. John acquaints us from the angel who was sent to John (and who appears to have been one of John’s fellow-servants, and of his brethren that had the testimony of Jesus: or, as the angel says more expressly, chap. xxii. 8, 9. “One of his brethren the prophets”), that “the testimony of Jesus (then) was the Spirit of prophecy.” And there cannot be much doubt of these gifts lasting as much longer as the oldest of those lived to whom St. John imparted them. Clement speaks of a plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost upon all the Corinthians, in his Epistle to them, Πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου ἔγχυσις ἐπὶ πάντας *. Ignatius salutes the church of Smyrna, ἐλεημένον ἐν παντὶ χαρίσματι. And again, ἀνυσέρητον ἔσαν πάντες χαρίσματι. Justin Martyr mentions these gifts of the Spirit then exercised, βαλὼν ἰσχυρὰ ἰατρικὰ πρόγνωσιν διδασκαλίαν. And Irenæus, speaking of the prophetic gifts, mentions the gift of tongues, and the discernment of spirits. After that these did not last longer, seems to have been the case in fact, since Irenæus, who died about the year 190, in a very old age, speaks of his having seen these gifts, but says nothing of his own having them †. And this agrees with what Origen says, that there were (ἵχνη) some footsteps, or traces of prophecy, in his time. And Eusebius intimates the entire cessation of them in his days ‡. But perhaps the gift of miracles, of dispossessing devils, and of healing diseases, and the other gifts which were not peculiar to the dispensation of the Spirit, might last longer than the gifts of illumination; they seem at least to have lasted longer, if we may credit the account of the fathers, as Tertullian §, Origen ||, Lactantius, Chrysostom, and Austin, own them ceased in their time, or very rare **.

These gifts were likewise exercised every first day of the week, to be sure in many, if not in all the churches of these places, during all this time. Irenæus speaks of these gifts in his time as so common, that he says, “Ubi enim ecclesia, ibi & spiritus Dei; & ubi spiritus Dei, illic ecclesia & omnis gratia ††.”

Now in things done frequently, for a long time, and in the most public places of the greatest cities of several countries, there is the least room for trick or collusion that can be conceived.

* § 2. see § 49. see Hermas, Book iii. § 11. Justin, Dial. cum Tryph. p. 256. A. p. 308. B. and 315. Iren. l. ii. c. 57. and l. v. c. 6.

† See Dodwell’s Dissert. on Iren. l. v. c. 6.

‡ Brokesby, p. 95.

§ Tertul. ad Scap. c. iv. Apol. c. xxiii. Orig. contr. Cels. l. i. p. 7. 20. l. vii. p. 334. 376. 53. Orig. de Orat. part. ii. n. 11.

|| Brokesby, p. 154.

** Chrysost. in 1 Cor. λογ. 5. Ethic. λογ. 28. in 1 Tim. λογ. 1. Ethic. in 1 Cor. λογ. 28. in Col. λογ. 4. August. de ver. Rel. c. xxv. n. 47. De util. credend. c. 16. in Psal. cxxx. n. 6. Vide Dodw. Diss. in Iren. Diss. ii. p. 205.

†† Iren. l. iii. c. 40.

Now put all this together, with the several places I have quoted, to explain the teaching and witnessing of the Spirit, and it will stand thus. Joel prophesies of this great event. John Baptist, against his own interest, and in diminution of his credit and authority, foretells this by a special revelation from God, as the distinguishing character of the Messiah. This, in effect, the four evangelists relate. Our Saviour foretells it in the course of his ministry to the people, says John; and to his disciples just before his death, say Mark, Luke, and John; and over and over in his discourses with them. He repeats it to them after his resurrection, and just before his ascension, says St. Luke and St. John. St. Luke says, he foretold the place and time when it should come on them; and ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, nor begin to testify till they received it; which should be soon after he had received the promise of the Father. St. Luke relates to us accordingly, that it did come upon them, agreeably to John Baptist's and our Saviour's prediction, with cloven tongues, like as of fire; illuminated their minds with knowledge, and enabled them to communicate that knowledge in all languages with great freedom and boldness: asserts, that it came down on the first converts from among the proselytes of the gate: and, as I think, fairly hints, or rather asserts (considering the phraseology he uses, and the force of that phraseology in the Acts), that it also fell on the first converts from among the Heathen; and his expressions are such from whence we may fairly infer, that the apostles conferred it on all Christians, where they came, by the laying on of their hands. St. Paul either fully expresses, or hints the same, in all his epistles: as James, Peter, John, and Jude do, in theirs; and in the manner I have observed. Finally, that these gifts were exercised by vast numbers, differently, frequently, and publicly, in a great many great cities of great countries (as Judæa, Syria, Asia, Macedonia, Greece, and Italy), and for a long track of time. And when all this is considered, I think nothing in Christianity will appear more fully proved, nor any fact in antiquity near so well.

The fourth thing that I have undertaken to shew is, "In what this superior teaching and witnessing of the Spirit consists." This will be best understood, by comparing the Spirit of prophecy under the Old Testament, and a little before, at, and after our Saviour's birth, and during his life, with these gifts after his ascension. For it would not be to my present purpose, to consider some other gifts of the Spirit under the Old Testament: such as the faith of miracles, the Spirit of wisdom, judgement, government, strength, valour, or the like; by which "they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteoussness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens *." But as to a comparison between the

* Heb. xi. 33, 34.

prophetic gifts, it will stand thus. It was but now and then that God communicated himself to a patriarch or a prophet under the Old Testament. When God made such a communication, it was to send him on a particular message. The word of the Lord came now and then to the prophets, and the Spirit of the Lord came now and then upon them. There were great intervals at some times, when the Jews, as they complain, were without any prophet; and when the word of the Lord was scarce; and at last the world was without a prophet above three hundred years, namely, between Malachi, Zacharias, and Elizabeth. There was seldom above one eminent prophet at a time; though I think we once read of seventy-two *: and it was yet more seldom, that two eminent prophets prophesied at the same time. The prophets that prophesied were often sons of prophets, or bred up in the schools of the prophets. When God gave answers by the urim and thummim, it was only in cases that concerned the whole nation of the Jews. The prophets were not always under inspiration: nor did they know when they should be. We have instances of this in Samuel †, Nathan ‡, Elifha §; they had but particular revelations; and those they had were either of less consequence, or so obscure that they oftentimes did not understand them themselves: we see this particularly in the case of Daniel ||. So that not unto themselves, or their own age, but unto us did they minister. They never pretended to make prophets, or communicate their gifts to others; unless in the case of Joshua, who was full of the Spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him **. But in the case of the seventy ††, Moses was so far from communicating the Spirit, that “God took “of his (Moses’s) spirit, and gave it unto, or put it upon them, “and then they prophesied.”

It is true, that Moses had the two tables of the law, and a plan of all things relating to the tabernacle, delivered him in the Mount; God not speaking to him in dreams and visions, and now and then, as he did to other prophets, but frequently, and “face to “face.” But the two tables contained but ten commandments: nor could those commandments, or the plan of things delivered, or what God said to Moses afterwards, in consequence of the two tables, or the plan delivered him in the Mount, make those who lived under that dispensation perfect. We find also, on the revival of prophecy, just before, or at, our Saviour’s appearing in the world, a few instances of persons having revelations by the Holy Ghost. Thus the Holy Ghost was on Simeon (and it was revealed to him, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ); and perhaps on Anna the prophetess: and thus Zachary and Elizabeth are filled with the Holy Ghost: and it may be, Mary also: and each of them brake forth into hymns. John Baptist, who was full of the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb,

* Numb. x. 25, 26.

§ 2 Kings iii. 15.

†† Numb. xi. 17—25.

† 1 Sam. iii. 3—11.

|| Dan. xii. 8, 9.

‡ 2 Sam. vii. 1—18.

** Deut. xxxiv. 9.

baptized men into the faith of the doctrine of the remission of sins upon repentance; thereby preparing men for the Messiah, foretelling his immediate appearance, and introducing him to the world. The apostles and disciples in our Saviour's life-time were taught by him, who had the Spirit without measure; yet it was but as they could bear it; but the Spirit solely rested upon, or abode with him. Their integrity recommended them to their great Master. They were willing to follow him whithersoever he went: and having been sent by him, preached the plain doctrine of repentance, healed diseases, and cast out devils: but they were not only unacquainted with the great design of his coming into the world, but entirely mistook it*.

But after our Saviour's ascension all the Lord's people became prophets; and they were all taught of God: God pouring out of his Spirit at once, and in an instant upon all flesh. They had the Holy Ghost to rest upon, abide with, and inhabit them, as the Schekinah did in the temple; not imparting to them a revelation, an inspiration now and then, but being in them as a spring, or rivers of living water: endowing some of them with the knowledge of the truths of the greatest comprehension and importance, giving them the understanding of all prophecies, and the revelation of the deepest mysteries; enabling them to discern the spirits of others; to foretell particular events for the good of the church; to teach, to exhort, to warn, to rebuke, to admonish, to pray, to compose, and sing hymns and psalms, to preside, and advise the church in all emergencies, and to judge when they ought to comply with such advice; and to assist the apostles in the most prudent manner, in some of the lower and more distant parts of their work: and, what is yet a greater proof than all the rest, enabling fourteen of these (that is, the twelve, with Paul and Barnabas) by the laying on of their hands and prayer, to confer some of these gifts on all the believers where they themselves came: and who thereupon exercised such gifts as they had, and in such degrees as they had them, in public assemblies; as the apostles did their superior gifts in a degree peculiar to themselves. Thus the word of God, which came now and then to the ancient prophets, and even to the last and greatest of them, John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness †, “dwelt richly (not only in apostles, prophets, evangelists, &c. but) in all Christians in all wisdom, enabling them “to teach, admonish, and exhort one another, when they assembled themselves together ‡.”

This comparison between the state of prophecy under the Old and New Testament after the ascension of Christ, which I have made to shew wherein the superior teaching of the Spirit did consist; will also shew wherein the superiority of the witness of the Spirit, to all other testimonies given to Christ, did consist. Our Saviour, in the days of his flesh, went about working miracles,

* See the second Essay.

† Luke iii. 2.

‡ Col. iii. 16. Heb. x. 25.

curing diseases, and casting out devils. Yet might it be said by malice and perverseness (perhaps, by mere scepticism, in some given to doubt) that they did not know the power of nature, and therefore could not judge of a miracle; that they did not know what secrets there might be for the speedy and instantaneous cure of diseases; and that they could not tell, whether those few were really dead that were said to be raised: and the blasphemy against the Son went so far as to say, that he cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils; and possibly some taught, that his cures of diseases, as well as his dispossessing of devils, was by charms and spells, and magical arts, used almost universally in medicine in that age of the world*: and as for the working of miracles, curing of diseases, and casting out of devils, the Heathen priests and exorcists pretended to them, and many of the Jews pretended to some of them. And our Saviour, as well as his apostles, foretold, that there should be false Christs and false prophets; and that they should work such signs and wonders as, if it were possible, would seduce the very elect; and that Satan should come among those who received not the truth in the love of it, “with all power, signs, and lying wonders †.” Nay, even as to Christ’s resurrection, a wicked imagination might perhaps strain itself so far as to find out some cavils and exceptions to it, fully proved as it stands to us by a great number of unexceptionable witnesses, were it not confirmed by this great event. But this quite blunts and deadens all the workings of the most active and sublimated malice. For is there any secret art, trick, flight, or power, or was any such thing ever pretended to since the world began; by which the knowledge of things of the greatest compass, use, and consequence, can be infused into the minds of vast numbers of illiterate men and women in an instant; and power given to some of them to communicate some of these gifts, but different ones, to all those believers to whom they came, without distinction, by the laying on of their hands?

If all this illumination, in the several kinds and degrees in which it was communicated to vast multitudes, had nothing in it more than the miracles wrought by our Saviour and his apostles in his life-time, and was of the same rank and class with them; yet inasmuch as it was in many instances of it, and in the great numbers to which it was communicated, entirely new, and of various kinds (none of the prophets, John Baptist, or the apostles, in the life-time of our Saviour, having ever had it), it was the more likely to produce much greater effects than any of the other.

But I cannot but think, that these gifts were of a different kind from the gift or power of working all other miracles.

A miracle in the theological sense of the word is, as a great philosopher and a very learned divine (to whom the cause of religion is highly indebted on many accounts) defines, it “A work effected in a manner unusual, or different from the common and re-

* See Acts xix. 19, 20.

† Matt. xxiv. 24. 2 Thess. ii. 8, 9, 10.

“gular method of providence, by the interposition either of God
 “himself, or of some intelligent agent superior to man, for the
 “proof or evidence of some particular doctrine, or in attestation
 “to the authority of some particular person. And if a miracle so
 “worked be not opposed by some plainly superior power, nor
 “be brought to attest a doctrine either contradictory in itself, or
 “vicious in its consequences (a doctrine of which kind no mi-
 “racles in the world can be sufficient to prove), then the doctrine
 “so attested must necessarily be looked upon as divine, and the
 “worker of the miracle entertained as having infallibly a commis-
 “sion from God *.”

He very justly observes, that there is no miracle recorded in Scripture, which necessarily bespeaks the immediate power of God to be interposed, or that exceeds the power of angels to effect †. Let it be considered then, whether this illumination could proceed from any angel, or from any but God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit?

According to the account the Scriptures give us, the angels could not convey this knowledge to the minds of men; it being the knowledge of things hid in the deep counsel of God from them: the angels being represented as desiring to look into these things ‡: and these things being revealed to the churches, to the intent, that “by them might be made known unto the principalities and
 “powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God §.” And therefore St. Paul asserts, that God had revealed these things to them by his Holy Spirit, from this argument, “that as no
 “man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man,
 “which is in him: even so the things of God knoweth no man
 “~~else~~, no person), but the Spirit of God ||; even that Spirit
 “which searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God: which
 “Spirit, he says, they (that is, the apostles) had received, that they
 “might know the things that were freely given them of God, even
 “that Spirit which was the promise of the Father **, and proceeded
 “from him ††.”

Perhaps there is no mind capable of containing all that knowledge which the apostles, or at least that some of them had, so as to have it always ready for their use. Such knowledge as they had of the perfections of God, of the nature of man, of his duty, and what conduceth to his honour and felicity; of all the dispensations of God to the several ages; not only of that by Christ, but by Moses and the prophets; and the full meaning of the types, allegories, and allusions of the Old Testament; prudence to manage and order assemblies; skill to address themselves to mankind, according to their different genius and capacity; with the knowledge of a great many different languages; of which we have fifteen

* Dr. Clarke's Evidence of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 229.

† P. 119. 220. 222.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 12.

§ Eph. iii. 10.

|| 1 Cor. ii. 11.

** Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4—9.

†† John xv. 26.

or sixteen reckoned up *. In which gift the Corinthians excelled; and in which yet Paul says he excelled them ("speaking with "more tongues than them all †"); and possessing all these languages in such perfection, as to be able to speak them with readiness and propriety on all proper occasions. If the mind shall not be thought capable of containing all this knowledge at once, without its capacities being enlarged; can we suppose an angel, by his natural powers, capable of enlarging them? or any being, but the Father of spirits, who first created them, either by a mediate or an immediate exertion of his own divine power?

Or if it should be thought, that the minds of the apostles and others were capable of containing all this knowledge, without any enlargement of their natural powers; yet can it be thought, that they were capable of receiving all this knowledge in an instant, without any such enlargement? How long does the most comprehensive genius, at the greatest ripeness of age, require to take in any one art, science, or language, from the master that possesses or teaches it in the greatest perfection? Let any man consult the operations of his own mind, the experience and the history of the human understanding; and then settle the account. Moses, who was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, was forty days in taking the pattern from God himself in the Mount; and that pattern was only of the tabernacle, its furniture and attendants. Is it to be imagined then, that the apostles and others (*ἀνθρώποι ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται*), "unlearned and ignorant men ‡," were capable of having so many arts, divine sciences, and tongues imparted to them in an instant, by any but Him that "calls the things that "are not as though they were." Supposing it easy to conceive, how an angel may, by his natural powers, drive fish to a hook, or into a net; how he may bring fresh loaves and fishes to feed a multitude; how he may support a man walking on the water, or waft a body up into the air; how he may raise or lay winds; how he may inflict or cure diseases, or it may be raise a dead body to life: it may be as easy for an angel to support a man walking on the water, as for a man to keep a stone from falling by his hand: and so in other instances; notwithstanding that all these are great miracles; yet can any one conceive that an angel, by his natural powers, can enlarge the capacities of the mind so as to make it take in as much knowledge in an instant, as a man of the best parts must be an age in learning, by slow degrees, with the utmost intention of his mind (on the supposition that his mind is able at once to contain it), and to have it all ready for his use on every occasion?

If therefore it shall be thought, that other miracles might be wrought by angels, this extensive and instantaneous illumination could be effected by none but God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit; it is a work exceeding all others that were wrought in confirma-

* Acts ii, 9—12.

† 1 Cor. xiv. 18.

‡ Acts iv. 13.

tion of the Christian religion, in kind as well as degree; and will shew (farther than any thing I have yet said, not only why the gifts of the Holy Ghost are distinguished from miracles in the New Testament, but) wherein the superiority of this teaching and witness of the Spirit did consist; and account more fully for the much greater effects it produced than were wrought by Christ or his apostles in his life-time.

Some of these considerations that I have just now mentioned may perhaps account for the superiority of the Spirit's testimony to all others. But that in fact it was always considered as superior, both by Christ and the apostles, may not only be collected from what I have been obliged to say on other heads, and from texts that I have already quoted, but from these that follow. Our Saviour expressly asserts, that he that believes on him "shall not only do the works that he did, but greater; because, as he adds, he goes to the Father," that is to receive those gifts, and shed them down: gifts which would admirably suit his exaltation to the right-hand of God; and the design of enlarging his kingdom, when he was exalted to his throne. When the Holy Ghost therefore was poured forth, Peter does not only explain what it was *, but offers to communicate it to them all, on their believing; as the greatest proof that could be given, that the gifts they had were what Christ, on his exaltation, had shed down. And this communication by the laying on of hands, reaching much farther than the immediate baptism by the Holy Ghost and fire, and being consequently so much a greater proof of Christianity; the laying on of hands is considered as one of the first principles of Christianity †; namely, its evidence; whilst baptism, that is, by water and fire, are only considered as the methods of the first entrance into it. And it is on the account of this superiority of the witness that the Spirit gives to Christ, to the attestation that even God the Father saw fit to give to him whilst he was upon earth, that St. Peter (after he had been speaking of the voice that came from that excellent glory, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:" and after saying, "And we heard this voice which came from heaven, when we were with him in the holy Mount"), adds: "And we have (or have received) a more sure word of prophecy;" for so I think it should be rendered: *Καὶ ταύτην τὴν φωνὴν ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν—καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιώτερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον.*

"We (that is, we apostles, we who heard the voice when we were with him in the holy Mount; and the rest of the apostles, who are witnesses of all that Jesus did and taught, till the day he ascended into heaven, as well as we) have received a word of prophecy (that is, the word of wisdom, and knowledge, and "prophecy," which we apostles have received from the Spirit of prophecy, whose office is to shew things to come ‡, by which we

* Acts ii. 15--39.

† Heb. vi. 1, 2.

‡ John xvi. 19.

speak a word from the Lord, as all former prophets did, and as we do the word of the Gospel, or the word of faith*; by which we become not only the foundation on which you and all Christians are built as apostles, but as prophets too†: and who “as prophets, “ reveal the ministry, which was kept secret since the world began, “ by our scriptures, according to the commandment of the everlasting God to all nations for the obedience of faith‡”), more sure than the voice we heard in the holy Mount. For though that is no fable, but a fact delivered to you by us, who heard it, and saw the glory, or Schekinah, that attended it; on which account we must be more sure of it than we can possibly be of any Old Testament prophecies; and you must be so too, since it is the testimony of us the witnesses of the Lord (greater than any of the prophets) and fully confirmed to you: yet neither can we nor you, in the nature of the thing, possibly be so sure of it, as we and you are of an illumination in all the wisdom of the Gospel, and knowledge of all mysteries, and the gifts of prophecy, which we received in an instant at the feast of Pentecost; and some of which gifts we have communicated to all believers where we have come, and particularly to some of yourselves§; and have still the power to communicate; whereunto ye (to whom I write) do well that ye take heed, as to a light that shineth in a dark place (this world, which is said to be darkness||, and would be so, had not Jesus by himself and his Spirit enlightened it); and where we yet see but through a glass darkly**, in comparison of that clear light which will break in upon us, when (but therefore take heed to this light, as the best you will have until) the day dawn (or until the day of the Lord††, or the day of judgement, dawn in the morning of the resurrection), and till the morning-star (φωσφορος) arise in your hearts (or till Christ shall give you the morning-star to irradiate your hearts‡‡: when you will no more want this apostolic word of prophecy, which, though the best you will have here, and which therefore ye ought carefully to attend to, yet will be then of no use to you: “For when that “ which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done “ away§§”). Knowing this first (for you ought to observe, that no prophecy of the scripture, neither of the Old or New Testament, is private interpretation (ιδίαις επιβολαίς, of mens own suggestion): “For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: “but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy “Ghost.” And you can less imagine that prophecy is of private suggestion now, who have been so fully acquainted that we kept in our upper room, unwilling to testify the facts of Christianity, and unable to teach its doctrines, till the Holy Ghost came upon us in an instant, at the feast of Pentecost (and suggested to us what we then taught, who were altogether unlearned before; and moved us

* See the Second Essay.

† Eph. ii. 20.

‡ Rom. xvi. 25, 26. See the

Second Essay.

§ 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

|| John i. 5.

** 1 Cor. xii. 12.

†† Ibid. iii. 10.

‡‡ Rev. ii. 28.

§§ 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

by the courage he gave us, to testify, as well as preach to the world); and who, at least some among you, feel likewise some of these motions yourselves, in the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which you have received *.

So that upon the whole, I apprehend the sense of this place, and the context, is this: "I write this epistle to you, to recall to your memories what I have taught you; and the rather, because I am suddenly to leave you. Which things are not only the account I gave you of the transfiguration of Christ, which three of the apostles most certainly saw, and the attestation the voice of the Father gave him, and which we most certainly heard; but that clearer knowledge of Christianity, and that greater proof of it which we gave you, in the doctrine we taught from the suggestions of the Spirit; and the farther proof we gave to the truth of it from the other gifts of the Spirit which we have, and impart; to which you ought carefully to attend, as to the greatest discovery, and the most fully proved to you, that you will ever receive in this imperfect state; or till you come to that land of light and vision, where you shall not want even apostolic prophecy; but shall see as you are seen, and know as you are known. But till that time take the most careful heed to the doctrines you have learnt from us. For be assured, that nothing said by us, as from the Spirit of prophecy, is of private suggestion. That was not the case in the prophets under the Old Testament: and you have far better proof that that is not the case of us the apostles and prophets under the New †."

I hope the reader will forgive me for dwelling so long on this text, since it is a very difficult one, and has of late been turned to an unhappy purpose; and since the interpretation I have given of it is, for aught I know, entirely new. I submit it therefore to the judgement of others. I think, however, till I am set right, that this sense of it makes the apostles reasoning appear very pertinent and strong, and agreeable to the strain of the New Testament. Whereas if the sense of it be what has been generally given it, referring to Old Testament prophecy, I cannot understand the apostle's reasoning, or see how it is subservient to his purpose, or suited to the dispensation of the Spirit. Nor can I see how to obviate that unhappy use that has been made of it, and to which I think the common interpretation pretty naturally leads. If the New Testament Greek will allow us to interpret *βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον*, only *sure*, and not *more sure*, as an ingenious discourse lately seems to insinuate; yet I think the argument of the apostle here requires that we should render it, as our translators have done, "a more sure word of prophecy." Besides that, if this difficulty were out of the way, there are several others remaining (as I think

* 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

† The reader may see a greater chasm, and that must be filled up with a much larger supplement, Luke xvii. 7. See Dr. Clarke's Paraphrase.

will appear to those that consider what I have offered), which I see no other interpretation that will remove.

On the whole, I defy any man to make any cavil or exception to this witness of the Spirit, that may not be made to any thing. And he that will say, that this is not sufficient evidence of the truth of a revelation, must say that revelation can have no evidence. So that it is as impossible to convince them, as St. Paul says it is to renew them again to repentance, who have “been enlightened, and “who have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost—if they shall fall away *.”

And therefore, on this occasion, I cannot but agree with the learned Dr. Whitby, thus far at least, that the highest instance of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was attributing these gifts of the Holy Ghost, in those that saw and heard them, to trick, delusion, or diabolical arts. This seems to be that instance of it which our Saviour says “shall not be forgiven in the world to come,” or in the new age, the kingdom of the Messiah, and the dispensation of the Spirit †. And that the reason why it could not be forgiven was, that it arose from such an incurable wickedness and perverseness of mind, as would not suffer any evidence to convince them of the truth of that dispensation, which was the only dispensation that expressly promised that all manner of sin, and all manner of blasphemy, should be forgiven, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. I say it was a perverseness that would not suffer any evidence to convince them (not even this testimony of the Spirit, confirming the resurrection, ascension, and exaltation of Christ); or, if they were convinced, yet carried them, instead of owning this undeniable testimony, to vilify and blaspheme it ‡. But though this was the greatest instance of this incurable wickedness and perverseness, yet wherever it shewed itself by blasphemy against any work done by the Spirit of God, even during our Saviour’s life, it was the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; of which if the Pharisees were evidently guilty §, yet men might be guilty of it in our Saviour’s time, since our Saviour says on that occasion, that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost “shall not be forgiven in this world “(or the age in which he spoke, which was the times of the law), “any more than in the world to come” (or the age that succeeded it, namely, the kingdom of the Messiah, or the dispensation of the Spirit): and our Saviour probably spoke as a prophet, when he said, that “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost should not be forgiven” those Pharisees, on whose occasion he spoke it; as knowing that it would be the greatest evidence that should ever in the course of God’s providence be offered to them: as he says, “Ye are “none of my sheep: ye shall die in your sins ¶.”

* Heb. vi. 4, 5.

† Matt. xii. 32.

‡ See his Appendix to the xiith chapter of St. Matthew, in his Paraphrase and Comment on the New Testament, p. 251.

§ Matt. xii 31, 32.

¶ John x: 26. viii. 21. 24.

We have seen more attacks against the facts and doctrines of Christianity in our age, than perhaps there have been in any. It is what must be expected where there is liberty for free enquiry. But, instead of doing our religion any harm, it will, as all objections do to truth, of this or any other kind, make them stand the stronger. It has a natural tendency to put us all on studying the religion of Christ better, and on dropping every thing that we have twined and twisted, and as it were incorporated with it, that so we may hold his religion itself the faster, and be less liable to have it wrested from us. It is therefore highly for the honour of the Christian religion, and of the state of the church of England, that no weapons are likely to be drawn against those who have attacked it, but the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. This mild usage of the enemies of Christianity (which is however what is but in justice due to them) will make it more indispensably incumbent on those of them who are not at the same time enemies to all virtue, to consider Christianity, not as laid down in the systems of its professors, but in the Scriptures; not in the spirit of cavilling and pride, but of judgement and candor: and then see whether it does not consist of a scheme of doctrines every way fit for a rational creature to entertain; of precepts tending to make every man as happy in himself, and as useful and agreeable to others, as this state of things will admit; as giving proper encouragements to the practice of these precepts, by condescending to assure guilty men, in a method the most suited to remove all their bodings and suspicions, that their past sins shall be pardoned on repentance; that they shall be powerfully assisted to practise the precepts of religion better for the future, if they will do all that is in their own power towards it: that they shall be supported under all difficulties and trials, and eternally rewarded for their self-denials and sufferings with manly gratifications, and inconceivable glory in the life to come. And that all this is evidenced by the resurrection and ascension of Christ (testified by eye and ear-witnesses, who were far from being forward to believe or attest it); and likewise by his exaltation at the right-hand of God, or to all power; testified, together with his resurrection and ascension, by the Holy Ghost, or these gifts of the Holy Ghost given to these witnesses in a superior degree, and to others in a less, in an instant; according to our Saviour's precise prediction, and with the peculiar circumstances which have been mentioned: and then let them consider who act the most rationally, they who believe such a religion on this evidence, or they who disbelieve it purely because the connection the New Testament is said to have with some parts of the Old cannot now be made out so as to be free from all exceptions.

This testimony of the apostles, and of the Spirit, is the impregnable rock on which Christianity is built, and whose foundations cannot be shaken. For the truth of this religion is founded on facts; namely, the resurrection and ascension of Christ attested by eye and ear-witnesses, and (together with his exaltation) attested by

other facts; namely, the gifts of the Spirit, which prove the truth of the first beyond all possibility of exception: and the truth of these last facts is proved by the best and only evidence they are capable of. And as this proof is a proof of a very few plain facts, and the evidence of these facts clear and easy, it must be allowed to be a proof of the Christian religion, level to the meanest capacity. It is no wonder therefore that this should be the proof on which the apostles always established it in all their discourses to Jews or devout Gentiles, according to the account we have of those discourses in the Acts; though, after they had founded it there, they often brought in ancient prophecy to confirm and illustrate it, or perhaps to remove objections that might be thought to arise from thence against it. And as they fixed Christianity on this foundation to the Jews and devout Gentiles (though they bring prophecy afterwards in aid), so they rest the proof of Christianity solely on this evidence when they speak to idolatrous Gentiles, as indeed it was absolutely necessary they should, since the idolatrous Gentiles must have had it proved to them by these facts, or not at all; for very few of them had the books of the Old Testament in their hands, were at all acquainted with them, or had any opinion of them. And the way the apostles took, to prove the truth of Christianity to Gentiles as well as Jews, must be the proof on which it ought always to be rested; and that which they superadd to the Jews must therefore only be considered as an additional argument to another, by which Christianity had been fully and unexceptionably proved before. Circumstantial evidence will corroborate positive evidence; though positive evidence should be first given, where it is to be had.

If it be said, that our Saviour appeals to prophecy as well as to John Baptist's testimony, the voice from heaven, and the miracles he wrought, and that we cannot rest the cause of Christianity more safely than where he rested it; I answer, that our Saviour could not use any other proof during his life-time, because the apostles could not testify the great facts of his resurrection and ascension till they were facts, and he was gone to the Father; nor were they to witness them till the Spirit came on them to witness to the truth of their testimony. But our Saviour plainly foretold, that this was the testimony which would be greater than any that was given in his life-time, and which would be effectual; when he says*, "That he" (the Comforter) "shall reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgement. Of sin, because they believe not on me" (of the truth of whose mission they will then have such undoubted proof); "of righteousness" (or of the righteousness and justice of my cause), "because I go to my Father" (and shall be exalted at his right-hand, when) "ye see me no more" (but shall not perish as a deceiver); "of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged;" or, because I shall destroy the power.

* John xvi. 8.

of the devil, and propagate my kingdom with wonderful success, by the power and efficacy of the Spirit.

When I lay all this together, I cannot but wish that the method which in itself appears alone capable of convincing the idolatrous Gentiles; which appears founded on the plainest facts, and the most fully attested, which our Saviour referred to; which the apostles constantly, and sometimes solely, used; and which would alone render men unpardonable, if they rejected it; should be the way used of addressing those who disbelieve, or pretend to disbelieve, Christianity now for want of evidence. When Christianity is thus established, the more clearly we can make ancient prophecy appear to have been accomplished in Jesus of Nazareth, the greater service we shall do to Christianity: especially to confirm the belief of it in the minds of the learned and of the well-disposed. But I heartily wish, that if the other method be tried, and Christianity be so built on prophecy as to allow that, if it can be built on it, it is well established; and if it cannot be built on it, it must be overturned; we may find, that, instead of proving the truth of it to the vulgar, it does not leave them in some doubt about it; and that, instead of forcing the unbelievers out of their fastnesses, it does not enable them to cover themselves the more from those attacks, that must otherwise soon make them appear desperate, or oblige them to yield. Such long deductions as must go to make out this from prophecy now, founded on a great deal of critical learning, does not seem likely to be taken in by the ignorant, or to leave no room for cavilling to men of learning, and disposed to doubt.

On the other hand, can any thing be built more on a rock, or become more visible to the most short-sighted, than Christianity? If it be proved that Jesus of Nazareth wrought the miracles he did; that he was dead (which St. John, who was present, fully testifies *); and that he rose again from the dead, according to his own prediction; that angels declared him to be risen accordingly; that he conversed forty days with his disciples after his resurrection; declared himself to John to be "him that was dead and is alive;" that he was seen by his apostles gradually mounting the air, till a cloud of glory took him out of their sight; that they received a message from angels, that he was gone up into heaven; and that, according to John Baptist's prediction, before our Saviour's appearing publicly in the world, and our Saviour's frequent predictions before and after his resurrection, that he would send the Holy Ghost upon his apostles, who were his chosen witnesses, and who were ordered to stay at Jerusalem expecting it, and to begin to witness after they received it; that they then received it, and immediately began, and from that time continued, to witness his miracles, resurrection, and ascension, and to teach the scheme of the Christian religion; and that God bore witness to the truth of their testimony, and of the word which they taught, "with signs and

* John xix. 34.

“ wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost” (distributed in proportion), according to his own will, and in the manner the Scripture shews, and with the frequency in those places, and for that tract of time, as we have proved : and Jesus must appear to the meanest understanding to be “ the sent of God,” and the apostles must likewise appear to be the ministers or “ the sent of Christ,” beyond all possibility of exception : he must then also be submitted to as the Teacher and the King of God’s people ; and all that the apostles, his ministers, have taught or commanded us from him, or from his Spirit, must be received with faith and obedience, though we could not shew one Old Testament prophecy to relate to him. This is “ the power and demonstration of the Spirit,” in which, St. Paul tells the Corinthians and Thessalonians *, “ the word came to “ them ;” and is that by which it must yet force its way to those who either do not know or do not believe it.

To conclude : thus was God, or the Son of God (after that he had been manifest in the flesh), “ justified in the Spirit † :” and thus, I believe, will wisdom be now justified of her children ; since, besides all the other advantages which this evidence of Christianity has been already said to have beyond others, it seems to have these likewise : that it appears from this Essay to be interwoven with the whole history of Christianity from Matthew to the Revelation ; that it enables us to explain many texts, which have hitherto occasioned great difficulty ; and that upon trial it will be found to help us to solve several hard problems in the Christian religion, and to give the Deists a fair answer to some objections which they bring against it, from its wanting some evidence, which they pretend they have reason to expect.

* 1 Cor. ii. 4. 1 Thess. i. 5.

† 1 Tim. i. 5.



ESSAY ON INSPIRATION,

Occasioned by 1 TIM. v. 23.

THE APOSTOLIC INSPIRATION was the highest, under the New Testament; and may be called [Gradus apostolicus] the apostolic degree: as the Jews used to call that which Moses had under the Old Testament [Gradus Mosaicus] the Mosaic degree.

Many of the difficulties and objections, which have been raised, concerning inspiration, appear to me to have been very much owing to the mistaken accounts, given by some of the friends to revelation. But that which I take to be the genuine account doth not only appear, at first view, easy and natural; but the most unexceptionable also, upon examination; viz. As Moses retained, in his head, the perfect and entire idea of "the pattern, shewn him, in the Mount; according to which model, he was to make all things;" so the apostles, and they alone, had, in their heads, the full and complete scheme of whatever they were to preach, or write, concerning the Christian doctrine; and according to that model they were to found and erect the Christian church.

I do not mean that they had, any of them, the whole scheme of the Christian revelation, in its utmost extent, fully communicated unto them, at once. No; the contrary of this is plain and evident. For, on the famous day of Pentecost, the twelve apostles of the circumcision do not appear to have received any more than the revelation of that gospel which they were to preach to Jews only. They none of them had then (no, nor till several years after) the particular revelation, concerning their going to the devout Gentiles, much less what gospel they were to preach to them.—And it was still a longer time before the particular revelation was communicated to the apostles of the uncircumcision, concerning their going among the idolatrous Gentiles, or what gospel they were to preach among them.—And finally, different apostles, both of the circumcision and uncircumcision, had (besides the general scheme) different revelations communicated unto them.—But what I would say is, that they had, by immediate revelation, the whole scheme of what they were to preach to the Jews, before they addressed themselves to the Jews; and the whole scheme of what they were to preach to the devout or idolatrous Gentiles, before ever they addressed themselves to devout or idolatrous Gentiles; and that they retained in their minds constantly the complete idea of the whole scheme, after the whole scheme was communicated to them.—In this sense, "the spirit was in them, and abode with them; taught them all things, or brought all things to their remembrance;" according to our Lord's express promise,

John xiv. 16, 17; 26. From this constant fund of knowledge, they were enabled clearly to determine (as far as any case required) what was, or what was not, the Christian doctrine.

This "revelation of the whole scheme of the religion of Jesus" is what I take St. Paul to have understood by "the word of wisdom," 1 Cor. xii. 8. as it there standeth first in the order of spiritual gifts, and answereth to the apostles, ver. 28, 29. who are ranged the first in the order of those that had such gifts. Accordingly, St. Paul (speaking of his own preaching the gospel) saith, "We speak wisdom, and the wisdom of God, &c." 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7. And St. Peter saith, "that his beloved brother, Paul, wrote his Epistles according to the wisdom given unto him," 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. However, I do not insist so much upon the name, as upon the thing itself.—That the apostles had such an extensive revelation, and they alone, appeareth abundantly from the Acts and Epistles. And, accordingly, the words, or commandments, of the apostles, are spoken of, Tit. i. 5. 2 Pet. iii. 2. Jude, ver. 17. but we never read of the commandments of prophets, or evangelists.

The apostles had their commission and revelation from our Lord Jesus Christ, Matt. x. 40. John xvii. 6, 7, 8; 14. 26. and xx. 21. 1 Cor. vii. 10. and xi. 23. and xv. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 1—7. Gal. i. 1. 11, 12. Phil. ii. 12. Heb. xiii. 7, 8, 9.

Though the evangelists and prophets had some of the inferior gifts of the Spirit, yet it was what they had received from the apostles, that they were to teach, themselves; and to commit to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also. 1 Tim. i. 18. and iii. 14, 15. and iv. 11. and v. 7. and vi. 2. 13, 14, 17, 20. 2 Tim. i. 13. and ii. 2. and iii. 14. Tit. i. 13, &c. and ii. 1, &c. and iii. 1. &c. 14.

The Old Testament prophets were not under a constant divine inspiration (unless we except Moses during the time in which he was erecting "all things, according to the pattern shewn him in "the Mount"). But the apostles had this fund of illumination constantly residing within them, from the time of its being communicated, to the end of their lives. Matth. xxviii. 20. John xiv. 16, 17. 26.

Christian prophets, as being of an order inferior to the apostles, were neither under constant inspiration, nor had they, at any time, any more than particular revelations, relating to particular cases. But the apostles were constantly inspired with the whole scheme or the Christian revelation. And from them it flowed, like "rivers of living water."

The Holy Spirit was (as I apprehend) poured out upon all the hundred and twenty, the apostles and their company, mentioned, Acts i. 15. But (though all proceeded from the same spirit) different persons had different gifts, according to the good pleasure of that spirit of wisdom and knowledge, 1 Cor. xii. 11. Our Lord, "when he ascended on high," gave some gifts peculiar to apostles, others to qualify men to be prophets, or evangelists, &c. Eph. iv. 8. 11.

Agreeable

Agreeable to the account now given, we find that evangelists and prophets did not go, immediately, upon the first famous effusion of the holy spirit, and preach in the courts of the temple; but Peter lifted up his voice, as he stood with the other eleven apostles, Acts ii. 14. And, by the wise and good providence of God, the Christians were permitted to continue, about a year, at Jerusalem, before the persecutions arose and dispersed them. By which means many of them had an opportunity to learn the scheme of the Christian doctrine from the apostles; which they alone had received from our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was, at first, entirely arbitrary what word should stand for any particular idea. But, as common use hath affixed certain ideas to certain words, we ought to give notice of it, when we use any word in a larger or more restricted sense than that in which it is generally understood. Though, therefore, that alone hath been commonly called "inspired scripture," which was written by inspiration; yet we here extend that phrase to such books as were reviewed and approved (as well as to those which were written) by inspiration. And the reader may take notice, that, in what followeth, the words, [authentic, canonical, infallible, and inspired scripture], are used promiscuously, and as synonymous terms: though, according to the scripture phraseology, inspiration is ascribed to the Old Testament prophets [2 Tim. iii. 16.]: and illumination to the apostles, and New Testament prophets [Eph. i. 18. Heb. vi. 4.]

But what I would chiefly have observed is, that the books of the New Testament derive their infallibility from their being written, taught, reviewed, or approved of, by some of the apostles, who alone had this fund of knowledge constantly residing in them.—And, accordingly, we are told, by the ancients, that St. Mark, the companion of St. Peter and St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul, wrote their histories from what they knew themselves, or had learned from others. But that, before St. Mark's gospel was published, St. Peter is expressly said to have confirmed it, "by his authority" (ἀποκαλύψαντος αὐτῷ τὸ πνεῦμα), the spirit having revealed it to "him *), that it might thence-forward be read in the churches." [Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. II. c. 15.]

Jerome

* Valefius hath, indeed, translated these words, as, they signified "that St. Peter was, by a revelation, acquainted with the fact, viz. that St. Mark had wrote such a gospel." But surely, there was no occasion for a revelation, to acquaint him with a fact, of which St. Mark, and the Christians at Rome, could easily have informed him, and which they had no reason to conceal from him.

Besides; the sense given by Valefius is contradictory to the account which Eusebius hath given us elsewhere, from the hypotyposes, ascribed to Clemens Alexandrinus, [vid. Euseb. H. E. l. VI. c. 14.] viz. that St. Peter (was so far from wanting a revelation, to acquaint him of the fact, after St. Mark had written his gospel, that he) "knew the Christians at Rome had requested of St. Mark to write such a gospel; and that he neither hindered, nor incited him to it."

These two accounts, in Eusebius, have been looked upon as contradicting one another. Valefius would reconcile them, by supposing that St. Peter privately approved of it, but not publicly. But this solution seems neither to reconcile them, nor to be consistent with other testimonies from the ancients.

Jerome (Lib. de vir. Illustr. c. 8.) faith to the same purpose, viz. "That Mark—wrote a short gospel from what he had heard of Peter, at the request of the brethren at Rome, which when Peter knew, he approved, and published it in the churches, commanding this reading of it, by his own authority." Hence, very probably, it came to pass, that Mark was called, by several of the fathers, "The interpreter of Peter." [Vid. Euseb. H. E. l. III. c. 39. and Origen. in Matt. laudat. ab Euseb. l. VI. c. 25. and Iren. adv. Hæres. l. III. c. 1; 11. Euseb. H. E. l. V. c. 8.] And that the gospel of St. Mark went, sometimes, by the name of the gospel of St. Peter. [Vid. Justin. M. Dial. cum Trypho. Jud. p. 333. edit. Paris. 1636. p. 365, Thirlbii, &c.] The words, referred to, are, Καὶ τὸ εἰπεῖν μετωνομαίνειν αὐτὸν Πέτρον ἕνα τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ γεγράφθαι ἐν τοῖς ἀποκηρυκτούμασιν αὐτῷ, γεγεννημένον καὶ τῷτο, μετὰ τῷ καὶ ἄλλως δύο ἀδελφῆς υἱὸς Ζεβεδαίου ὄντας, μετωνομαίνειν ὀνόματι τῷ Βοανεργῆς, ὁ ἐστὶν υἱὸς βροντῆς, &c. "It is said that he surnamed one of his apostles, Peter; and this fact is recorded in his [i. e. Peter's] commentaries, or gospel; and, moreover, that two other brethren, the sons of Zebedee, he surnamed Boanerges, i. e. the sons of thunder, &c." Now, though our Lord's giving Simon the surname of Peter is mentioned, Luke vi. 14. yet this intire quotation is mentioned no where but Mark iii. 16, 17. From whence we may infer, that Justin Martyr had seen the gospel according to St. Mark, and ascribed it to St. Peter, as his gospel.

Whereas they appear to me to be easily reconciled, by only supposing, "That St. Peter knew of St. Mark's design, before-hand; that, till he had wrote the gospel, the apostle did not interpose; but that, after St. Mark had finished, St. Peter, by revelation, revised and confirmed it, and recommended it, by his own authority, to be publicly read in the churches."

We certainly ought to do all we can, fairly and reasonab'y, to keep up the credit of the facts, recorded by the ancients; and to take heed (when we charge them with contradicting themselves, or one another) that the contradiction proceed not from our own mistakes, rather than from their writings. However, in the case before us, there could scarcely be, originally, any contradiction: because (as Eusebius himself has intimated) it is one and the same account, mentioned twice, but in different words, and taken from the sixth book of the hypotoposes (or institutions) of Clemens of Alexandria. Though, perhaps, Clemens his words are more fully and exactly recited in the latter place.

The words, in the two places referred to, run thus [Eusebii H. E. lib. II. c. 15.]—*Γινόντα δὲ τὸ παραθεῖναι φασὶ τὸν ἀπόστολον, ἀποκαλύψαντι αὐτῷ τὴν πνεύματος, ἡσθῆναι τῇ τῶν ἀνδρῶν προθυμίᾳ κυεῖναι τὴν γραφὴν εἰς ἐνλευξιν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.* And, [H. E. l. VI. c. 14.] *Τὸ δὲ κατὰ Μάρκον, sc. Evangel. ταύτην ἐσχηκέναι τὴν οἰκονομίαν, τῷ Πέτρῳ δημοσίᾳ ἐν Ῥώμῃ κηρύξαντι τὸν λόγον, καὶ πνεύματι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐξεπρόβηκε τὰς παρόντας πολλὰς ὕλας παρακαλεῖσαι τὸν Μάρκον, ὡς ἂν ἀκολουθήσαντα αὐτῷ πύριονθεν καὶ μεμνημένον τῶν λεχθέντων, ἀναγράφαι τὰ εἰρημένα, ποιήσαντα δὲ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, μετὰδῶναι τοῖς δεομένοις αὐτῷ, ἐπερὶ ἐπιγνοῖα τὸν Πέτρον πρότερον μὴτε καλύσαι, μὴτε πρότερον φάσθαι.* As these two must be looked upon as parallel places, or the same story related twice, I propose it as a query, whether ἀποκαλύψαντος αὐτῷ τῷ πνεύματος, in the former place, and πνεύματι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐξεπρόβηκε, in the latter, may not refer to the same thing, and intimate that St. Peter had the whole scheme of the gospel, by revelation, from the spirit, which enabled him both to preach and to confirm St. Mark's gospel. [See Dr. Lardner's Credibility, &c. Part. II. vol. II. p. 477. second edition.] Or, if we understand it, as Valesius seems to do, in his note on the latter of these two places, "that Peter, according to a divine revelation, confirmed the gospel, which Mark, at the request of the brethren at Rome, had written;"—then, there will be one circumstance mentioned, in the former place, which is not taken notice of in the latter;—which is frequent, in all historians, and does not imply any inconsistency, or contradiction.

For

For that, by the memoirs, or commentaries, of the apostles, he meant the gospels, appeareth evidently from his own words, [Apolog. I. p. 96. Thirlb. p. 98, Paris.] οἱ γὰρ ἀπόστολοι ἐν τοῖς γενομένοις ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἀπομνημονεύμασιν, ἃ καλεῖται ἐυαγγέλια, ἕτως παρέδωκαν, &c. "For the apostles, in the commentaries, written "by them, which are called gospels, &c." And from Tertullian [adversus Marcion. l. IV. c. 5.] whose words are, "Evangelium, "quod Marcus edidit, Petri affirmetur, cujus interpretes Marcus. "The gospel, which Mark published, may be affirmed to be Peter's, "whose interpreter Mark was."

And that St. Luke wrote not by immediate inspiration, appeareth from what he himself saith, in his introduction, Luke i. 1—4. viz. That, "inasmuch as many had taken in hand to set forth, "in order, a declaration of those things which were surely be- "lieved (or done) among them; as they, that were eye-witnesses "and ministers of the word from the beginning had delivered "unto them, IT SEEMED GOOD UNTO HIM, ALSO, having taken "care to inform himself exactly of every thing from the first, to "write a faithful account;" which he inscribed to Theophilus, and afterwards published to the world. And,

With this, the accounts of the Fathers do exactly agree. Irenæus [adv. Hæres. l. III. c. 14.] says, "Ea, quæ ab iis (scil. apostolis) "didicerat, tradidit nobis." "Those things, which Luke had "learned of the apostles, he hath delivered unto us." And Jerome, [de vir. Illustr. c. 7.] "Lucam, non solum ab apostolo Paulo didicisse evangelium, qui cum Domino in carne non fuerat, sed a cæteris apostolis, &c." "Luke learned his gospel, not only of "Paul, who had not conversed with our Lord in the flesh, but of the "other apostles, &c." And Irenæus, [L. III. c. 1. & laudat. ab Euseb. H. E. l. V. c. 8.] Καὶ Λευκῶς, δὲ, ὁ ἀκόλουθος Πάυλου, τὸ ὑπ' ἐκείνου κηρυσσόμενον ἐυαγγέλιον ἐν βιβλίῳ κατέθετο. "Luke, the follower "of Paul, hath wrote, in a book, the gospel, which was preached "by him, [Paul]." And that St. Luke's history was confirmed by, and rested upon, St. Paul's authority, see Tertullian [adv. Marcion. l. IV. c. 5.], who saith, "Lucæ digestum Paulo ascribere "solent." "Luke's history is usually ascribed to Paul." And Origen saith, that the "gospel according to Luke was commended "by Paul." τὸ κατὰ Λευκᾶν, τὸ ὑπὸ Πάυλου ἐπαινέμενον, ἐυαγγέλιον. [Vid. Euseb. H. E. l. VI. c. 25. with which compare what is said by Eusebius, ibid. l. III. c. 4.] But this testimony from Origen is so commonly understood to refer to Rom. ii. 16. 2 Tim. ii. 8. or to 2 Cor. viii. 18. that I lay no great stress upon it, as having plenty of other testimonies. Though, I confess, I can see nothing in the words of Origen, as cited by Eusebius, which necessarily restrict them to such a signification as that in which they are commonly understood.

As the gospel according to St. Mark was approved by St. Peter; and that of St. Luke, by St. Paul; who were both of them inspired,

or had the apostolic illumination; so we are informed, that, when the three former gospels [viz. those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke] were become very public, St. John, another “inspired apostle, saw, “and approved them, and confirmed the truth of them by his own “testimony.” [Euseb. H. E. l. III. c. 24.] And Jerome [de vir. Illustr. p. 102.] saith, to the same purpose, “Quod cum legisset “(scil. Johannes) Matthæi, Marci, & Lucæ volumina, probaverit “quidem textum historiæ, & vera eos dixisse firmaverit.”—“When “he [John] had read the volumes of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, “he approved of the history, and confirmed the truth of what they “had said.” Two, therefore, of the gospels were written by apostles themselves; and the other two, by their companions; but revised by two or three apostles; and recommended to the churches, by their authority; or, as Tertullian [L. IV. c. 2, & 5. contra Marcion.] saith of Mark and Luke, that they writ, or published, their gospels, “non soli, sed cum apostolis,” “not alone, but with the apostles.”

But it may be inquired, “How, then, must we account for the “inspiration of the Acts of the Apostles? For that book was written by St. Luke, as well as the gospel that goeth under his name; “and he was not an apostle, but an evangelist only!”

To which I answer, that, allowing the quotation from Origen to be nothing to our purpose (though it will be allowed me, that by the gospel, is sometimes meant the whole New Testament), the other testimonies, produced from the ancients, may be very justly thought to include the Acts of the Apostles, as well as the Gospel. And, indeed, it appeareth probable that St. Luke wrote them both in one book, and only divided it into two parts; as we commonly do, with histories and other single volumes. [Vid. Millii prolegom. 112. 121.]

The transition, Acts i. 1. agreeth with this account. For the Acts are δευτέρου λόγου, “the second part of his book, or treatise;” of which he calleth his gospel, τὸν πρώτον λόγον, “the first part,” Acts i. 1. The latter is inscribed to Theophilus, as well as the former. And (which is very remarkable) there is not the author’s name prefixed to the Acts of the Apostles, as there is to St. Luke’s gospel (and yet the author of the Acts is not disputed, as the author of the epistle to the Hebrews hath been; because he hath not prefixed his name): for, when they were one continued book, and St. Luke’s name prefixed at the beginning, there was no occasion to repeat it before the second part of his book.

We have, indeed, separated St. Luke’s Gospel, and the Acts, by putting St. John’s gospel between them. But the reason of that is, that we may have the four gospels placed together. And St. John’s is put the last, as having been written long after the other three.

To this account do also agree the testimonies, cited above, from Irenæus, Tertullian, and Jerome. For they do not call it his gospel: but “those things, which he [Luke] had learned from the apostles, “—and particularly from Paul, he hath set down in a book:” [it is not said, in his gospel]. And Tertullian calleth that book, “his

“his digest.” All which expressions may include the Acts of the apostles, as well as St. Luke’s gospel. Nay; they must include the Acts; if the expressions are taken in their full latitude. For he learned several things, set down in the Acts, from the apostles; such as our Lord’s ascension, the pouring down of the Holy Spirit, &c. and, particularly, the doctrine, which St. Paul preached to the idolatrous Gentiles, he learned from that apostle himself; whose convert (as well as companion) I apprehend St. Luke to have been. And,

Which is an argument of still greater weight, the time of the publishing the Gospel and the Acts rendereth it highly probable, “that St. Luke published them both in one book.” For the Acts could not be finished till about the year of our Lord 63, of Nero 9, because the history reacheth down as low as that. And that is about the time, when the Gospel according to St. Luke is reckoned to have been published, as well as the Acts of the apostles. [See Millii prolegom. 112. 121. Mr. Jones’s Canon, &c. vol. III. p. 114, 115, and 158.]

It has, indeed, been thought that they were written after St. Paul’s and St. Luke’s departure from Rome: but there is no reason to suppose that. No; from the books themselves, the contrary is more probable. For the history of the Acts concludeth with St. Paul’s preaching at Rome, two years, in his own hired house; but saith nothing of his departure from thence. The apostle, therefore, might, after that, tarry at Rome, long enough to revise what of St. Luke’s history he had not revised before. And, perhaps, all, but the two last verses in the Acts, was written and revised, long before he left his own hired house there. For the preceding verses bring the history down only to St. Paul’s first coming to Rome.

And, if St. Luke’s history was finished before St. Paul left Rome, it is easy and reasonable to suppose, that there the apostle saw it, and approved of it; that, thereupon, the churches received it, as authentic and canonical scripture; and that the Fathers used, and quoted, it as such, whether they mentioned it as one book, or two; that, hence, they sometimes ascribed it to St. Paul himself, as it was what he had taught, and approved of. Nay; and, if St. Luke published his Gospel and the Acts both in one volume (which seems not altogether improbable), then we may reasonably conclude, that St. John revised the Acts also, and confirmed that history by his authority, when he revised and confirmed the three gospels. I lay no great stress upon Jerome’s calling what St. John revised [Lucæ volumen, Luke’s volume], and not his gospel; but upon the reasonableness and probability of the thing itself.

And, as St. Luke’s writings rested upon the authority of one or two of the apostles, Eusebius speaketh very justly; when he (alluding to St. Luke’s being a physician) saith [H. E. l. III. c. 4.], “That Luke was intimately acquainted with the apostles, and
“hath

“hath left us in two divinely-inspired books the doctrines of curing souls, &c.” If he mean, that they were revised, and approved of, by inspired persons; otherwise he would contradict St. Luke himself, who saith, Luke i. 1. that “it seemed good to him to write, according to the information, which he had received from others, &c.” Nay; as Eusebius immediately subjoineth this declaration of St. Luke; and, a little after, takes notice that the ancients ascribed St. Luke’s gospel to St. Paul; it should seem that Eusebius apprehended, that St. Luke’s writings derived their authority from the testimony of an apostle; and, therefore, might be called “books divinely inspired.”

Upon the whole; the inspiration, or canonicalness, of any book of the New Testament, is not to be deduced merely from any internal marks, or characters; but is a fact, with which we have no other way of coming acquainted, but by the testimonies of the ancients. And, if they (who had a fair and sufficient opportunity to know that fact) acknowledged any book to have been written by an apostle, approved by him, or confirmed by his authority,—we ought to receive it as canonical; unless, by some evident, internal marks, it could be made appear, that it was not authentic, nor could possibly have been written, or approved, by an apostle. Now,

As to the history of the Acts of the Apostles, it is found in all the catalogues of the books of the New Testament, which the fathers have left us. It is quoted, as Scripture, in the writings of the primitive Christians: it was read, as Scripture, in the primitive churches; and is found among the books of the New Testament, in the ancient MSS. and versions, and particularly in the Syriac version, which is, by some, reckoned the most ancient. So that the fact (of its being canonical) is sufficiently attested. And there are no internal marks, or characters, to induce us to exclude it; but, on the contrary, many, which may induce us to receive and esteem it.

All the other books of the New Testament were written by apostles: and, consequently, they are all inspired and canonical. For,

As to the apostles themselves, whenever they spoke or wrote concerning Christianity, that fund of revelation kept them right. But they were reasonable creatures, as well as inspired apostles: and, therefore, could speak, or write, about common affairs; as men, that have the use of their reason, without any inspiration, can easily do. St. Paul therefore, without any inspiration, could give such a direction as this to Timothy, viz. “to mix a little wine with the water which he drank;” or, “to take care of his health;” because he was a very useful and pious young man; or desire Timothy (as he doth, 2 Tim. iv. 13.) “to bring along with him the cloak,” [or bag to carry books in, *φελόνην*] which he had left at Troas, with Carpus; and the books; but especially the parchments; or desire Philemon to provide him a lodging, at Colosse, Philem.

Philem. ver. 22. or acquaint Timothy, that Erastus abode at Corinth; but that he had left Trophimus sick at Miletus. 2 Tim. iv. 20. [See F. Simon's critical history of the New Testament. Part. II. p. 61. 73. 78, &c.]

Nay, in truth, this account of the matter is not mine, but St. Paul's, 1 Cor. vii. 10. "This" (says he) "the Lord commandeth; and not I." And, ver. 12. "But to the rest speak I; not the Lord." And, again, ver. 25. "Now, concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord, but I give my opinion, &c. γνώμην δὲ δίδωμι, &c." And we find, Acts xvi. 6. that, when he designed to have preached in Asia, he was forbidden by the Holy Spirit. And, ver. 7. he attempted to go into Bithynia, but the spirit would not permit him. So that, in the apostles, there were two principles of action [reason and revelation]; one of which directed them, in common affairs; and the other, in matters relating to the Christian doctrine. Hence it came to pass, that the apostles in things relating to common life, or their own private designs and actions, were mistaken, as well as other men. Acts xxiii. 3. 5. Rom. xv. 24. 28. 1 Cor. xvi. 5, 6. 8. 2 Cor. i. 15--18.

I will only add, that what St. Paul saith, 1 Cor. vii. 40. ought not to be understood, as if he had been dubious whether he himself was inspired. For, in saying, "I think I have the spirit of God," he spoke ironically to the Corinthians, who had pretended to call his inspiration in question, after he had given them so many and such unquestionable proofs of it. But, that he himself should question it, when he could work miracles, speak so many languages, had such a vast illumination, could exercise so many spiritual gifts, and impart such gifts and powers to others—was certainly impossible; and what no thinking person can suppose.

Corollary I. As the apostles had the whole scheme of the Christian doctrine, by revelation, from our Lord Jesus Christ; and completed that scheme, which was begun by the ancient prophets:—how very justly are we said to have been "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone?" [Eph. ii. 20.] And how beautiful and just was the vision, that was seen by St. John, one of the apostles of the circumcision, [Rev. xxi. 14.] which represented the foundations of the wall of the new Jerusalem as twelve; on which were inscribed the names of the twelve apostles of the lamb?

Not only the primitive Christians, but Christians of all ages and places, have received all that they have known, of the scheme of the Christian doctrine, from the apostles. They were the persons, who were illuminated by our Lord Jesus Christ, and who have enlightened the earth.

Corol. II. As the writings of the New Testament contain the only account of the Christian religion, that is inspired and infallible; let us make that, and that alone, the RULE AND STANDARD OF OUR FAITH AND PRACTICE. For all other accounts of the Christian revelation are uninspired and fallible.

When

When corruptions have crept in, either as to faith, or practice, let us reduce things to that primitive standard, as the just method for a thorough reformation. And, when the prevailing doctrine and practice are agreeable to the Scripture, let us still adhere to that standard, that the purity of such a reformation may continue.

Corol. III. May not what hath been said shew us the reason, why some points of less importance are minutely determined in the writings of the apostles (and especially in their epistles), whilst other things of equal importance are not particularly determined?

They taught the essential and absolutely necessary doctrines of Christianity to all the churches and Christians, wherever they came; but they determined the things of less importance [*“pro re natâ”*] *“as occasions offered.”* [For instance], to guard against the seductions of false apostles, or to satisfy scrupulous consciences, or to decide the controversies of their day. But what was not then controverted, or where there were no scruples, or dangers—there they did not descend to every minute particular; but have left us to determine many smaller things, and less important points, by applying the general rules, which they have left us; or by arguing from the particulars, which they have determined; as far as the cases can be fairly shewn to be parallel.

Corol. IV. By this account of inspiration, we take away the very ground and foundation of one of the strongest objections of the anti-revelationists; who allege, *“that Christians have ascribed that to inspiration which any man might say, or do, as well without it; and that we reflect upon the divine wisdom, when we have recourse to supernatural power, where there is no occasion for it. It is the beauty of providence, that it doth not interpose but in extraordinary cases. And why, then, should recourse be had to inspiration, where inspiration is unnecessary?”*

“Nec Deus interfit, nisi, &c.”

Whereas; by the account that hath been given, such things only are ascribed to inspiration as (all circumstances considered) required inspiration; and such things to human reason, as human reason alone was capable of: I hope, therefore, that both the friends and enemies to revelation will carefully and impartially consider, *“Whether the solution here offered be well-grounded, or no?”* For I would be understood to propose it as a query, which may deserve a careful examination.

Corol. V. The disputes, which have been raised, about the time of settling the canon of the New Testament, will hence appear to be groundless and of little moment.

As soon as any book, or epistle, was known to have been written by any of the apostles, approved by them, or confirmed by their authority, it was immediately acknowledged to be canonical. The knowledge of this fact came more early to some churches, and later to others. They, that lived when and where any book was

written, or published, must know it immediately; and from thence it spread gradually. But the book was inspired, as it came from the apostles. And that did not depend upon the authoritative confirmation of fathers or councils, of that or any succeeding age. [Vid. Clerici Hist. Eccles. p. 520, &c.]

Corol. VI. Hence it will follow, that not only the spurious books, ascribed to the apostles, are to be rejected; but even the genuine and valuable productions of the apostolic fathers are to be excluded the canon of sacred scripture; as they want this apostolic sanction.

As to the former part of this observation, it was evidently the rule, which the ancients went by. For the epistle to the Hebrews, the epistle of St. James, the second epistle of St. Peter, the second and third epistles of St. John, the epistle of St. Jude, and the Revelation, were excluded the canon,—only by such as thought they were not written by the apostles. Whereas; such, as thought them genuine, received them as canonical*. And,

If the epistle ascribed to Barnabas were genuine, it ought (according to this account) to be received into the canon of the New Testament: because he was an apostle. [Acts xiii. 2. and xiv. 14. 1 Cor. ix. 1, &c. Gal. ii. 9.] But, though I allow that epistle to be of great antiquity; and to have been written, after the destruction of Jerusalem, by a primitive Christian, probably, of the name of Barnabas; yet I am very well satisfied that it is not, now, commonly ascribed to the right author; nor could, possibly, be an epistle of Barnabas the apostle, especially as we now have it †.

And, unless we follow the guidance of this clue (so as also to “exclude from the canon all,” even the genuine, “writings of the “apostolic fathers, which want this apostolic sanction”), what reason can we give for receiving the writings of St. Luke into the canon; and excluding Hermas; and (especially) that golden remnant of Clemens his first epistle to the Corinthians? For, as to the last, it hath all the marks of pure and genuine antiquity; is allowed to have been written by a companion of St. Paul, whom that apostle hath mentioned with great honour, Phil. iv. 3. and to have been written before some of the books of the New Testament itself. For my own part, I cannot see any sufficient internal marks, for which it ought to be excluded; and apprehend, that it was excluded, merely for want of the apostolic attestation.

Thus I have briefly gone through what I reckon the just account of inspiration, as it relateth to the New Testament. How far it

* Vide Millii prolegom. 203, &c.

† “Eusebius (Hist. Eccles. l. III. c. 25.) places that, which is called the epistle of “Barnabas, ἐν τοῖς ὁμοῖς, by which he cannot, possibly, mean less than that it was of “ambiguous and contested authority.” [Vid. Vales. & Bevereg. Cod. can. l. II. c. 9. Pearson. Vindic. Ignat. r. 8. Dr. Jortin’s Discourses, p. 203. See also Abp. Laud’s Letter to Menard, &c. in the first volume of Le-Clerc’s edition of the Apostolic Fathers, at the beginning; Dr. Lardner’s Credibility, &c. Part II. vol. 1, p. 27. Mr. Jones’s Canon, &c. vol. II. c. 38, 39.]

will agree to the Old Testament also, I leave to men of leisure and learning to consider.

I was willing to do my best, to clear up a matter of such great importance; not only as every man hath a right to publish his own sentiments at any time; but as this subject hath, of late, been rudely handled by the enemies of the most reasonable, virtuous, and benevolent religion; and the friends to revelation have, many of them (as I apprehend) ascribed too much to inspiration; though some, on the other hand, have ascribed too little.

E S S A Y

CONCERNING

The UNITY of SENSE; to shew that no text of Scripture has more than one single sense.

IN all other authors besides the Scriptures, before we sit down to read and study them, we expect to find in them one single, determinate sense and meaning of the words; from which we may be satisfied that we have attained to their meaning, and understand what they intended to say.

Exod. xxi. 8. Moses is speaking of an Hebrew's selling his daughter, for a maid-servant, to another Hebrew, and supposing that other Hebrew to marry her; and upon that he says, "If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed." The reading which we follow is in the margin of the Hebrew Bible. But, in the text according to the Hebrew, it is, ["that he do not betroth her"]. The learned commentator Mr. Ainsworth says, "That Moses, hearing it of God, did, by his spirit, write both [these readings]. And the margin is that which, in the Hebrew, is noted to be read. The Hebrew doctors [in Talmud. Bab. in Nedarim, c. 4. fol. 37. b.] say, The words read, and not written; and written, and not read; were the tradition of Moses, from [mount] Sinai:" i. e. as the Hebrew scholion on the place noteth, "So Moses received in Sinai, and delivered to Israel."

Lev. xi. 21. There is a description of the things which were clean, and might be eaten by the Jews; and the text says ["such as have not legs"]; in the margin of the Hebrew Bible, it is ["such as have legs"]. The same learned commentator says, "Thus both readings were written by Moses." Lev. xxv. 30. The Hebrew, in the text, reads, ["The house, that is in the city, which hath not a wall"]. In the margin of the Hebrew Bible, it is, ["the house, that is in the city, which hath a wall"]. Where Mr. Ainsworth again contendeth "that the text is not corrupted, though we follow the marginal reading."

The Papists have contended for the very same thing; and would have two different readings, in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, or the Greek of the New Testament, to support two senses; as if they were, both of them, the true sense of the text. [Vid. Spanhem. Chamier. contract. p. 236]. But does not this appear very strange, that contradictory senses of a text should be both true: and that

these different readings, with contrary significations, should both proceed from God, or from the spirit of God?

Some of the Jewish rabbies have said "that the Scripture hath seventy-two faces." By which they mean that it may be interpreted many ways. For, under that expression, they comprehend those allegorical senses, which are as many as there are idle, fanciful rabbies to invent them. However, it is a common saying, not only among the Karaites, but also among the more judicious rabbies, "that the Scripture does not go beyond the literal sense," which the learned Aben Ezra professes always to embrace, scorning the seventy-two faces, or the allegorical and cabbalistic senses, which most of the Jews in the East superstitiously observe. [See Father Simon's Critical History of the Old Testament, b. III. chap. 8. or part 3d. p. 47. and his Animadversions on Vossius's Oracles of the Sibyls, p. 283. Glassii philolog. sacr. l. II. p. 259.]

Augustin affirms, "that the same place of Scripture may be differently explained; and that the providence of God hath given those many several senses to the holy Scriptures." [See Father Simon's Critical History of the Old Testament, b. III. c. 8. p. 47.]

The following lines in Homer have been interpreted four different ways. [Vid. Hom. II. Δ. 306, 367.]

Ὅς δὲ κ' ἄνθρωπος ἀπὸ ὧν ὀχέων ἑτέρ' ἄρμαθ' ἵκηται,
Ἔρχεται ὀρεξάσθω ἐπειὴ πολλὸν φέρτερον ἔσται.

Upon which passage, Mr. Pope's note is, 'The words in the original are capable of four different significations, as Eustathius observes. The first is, that whoever, in fighting upon his chariot, shall win a chariot from his enemy, he shall continue to fight, and not retire from the engagement to secure his prize. The second is, that, if any one be thrown out of his chariot, he, who happens to be nearest, shall hold forth his javelin, to help him up into his own own. The third is, directly contrary to the last, that, if any one be cast from his chariot, and would mount up into another man's, that other shall push him back with his javelin, and not admit him, for fear of interrupting the combat. The fourth is followed in the translation, as seeming much the most natural; viz. that every one should be left to govern his own chariot; and the other, who is admitted, fight only the javelin. The reason of this advice appears, by the speech of Pandarus to Æneas, in the next book. Æneas, having taken him up in his chariot, to go against Diomedes, compliments him with the choice either to fight or to manage the reins, which was esteemed an office of honour. To this Pandarus answers, that it is more proper for Æneas to guide his own horses, lest they, not feeling their accustomed master, should be ungovernable, and bring them into danger. Upon occasion of the various and contrary significations of which these words are said to be capable, and which Eustathius and Madam Dacier profess to admire as an excellence, Monsieur de la Motte, in his late discourse upon Homer, very justly animadverts,

verts, “ that, if this be true, it is a grievous fault in Homer. For
 “ what can be more absurd than to imagine, that the orders given
 “ in a battle should be delivered in such ambiguous terms, as to
 “ be capable of many meanings? These double interpretations must
 “ proceed, not from any design in the author, but purely from the
 “ ignorance of the moderns in the Greek tongue, it being impossi-
 “ ble for any one to possess the dead languages to such a degree, as
 “ to be certain of all the graces and negligences; or to know pre-
 “ cisely how far the licences and boldnesses of expression were happy
 “ or forced. But critics, to be thought learned, attribute to the
 “ poet all the random senses that amuse them; and imagine they see,
 “ in a single word, a whole heap of things, which no modern lan-
 “ guage can express; so are oftentimes charmed with nothing but
 “ the confusion of their own ideas.”

Dr. Clarke, in his note upon these two lines of Homer, hath, with great judgement, and with that critical skill in which he so much excelled, endeavoured to support that which Mr. Pope mentions as the third sense. But he agrees with Mr. Pope in condemning Eustathius and Madam Dacier, for applauding this ambiguity, in Homer, as profound and excellent; and says, ‘ The ambiguity ought
 ‘ by no means to be ascribed to the poet, but unto us, who are now
 ‘ less skilled in the Greek language; for the constant and peculiar
 ‘ excellence of Homer’s eloquence is so great a perspicuity in his
 ‘ most laboured and beautiful verses, as no one ever attained in
 ‘ writing of prose.’

There is such another ambiguous passage in Homer [Il. E. 150.], which has been interpreted in three or four different senses. Eustathius has there again commended the ambiguity. But Dr. Clarke has made the same judicious remarks upon that, as upon the passage already considered.

Now, how exactly applicable are these things to the observations of some divines? who, when they meet with a passage of Scripture which is of more difficult interpretation, and which has been interpreted in divers senses, are ready to cry out (with Eustathius and Madam Dacier), “ Oh, the depth! oh, the fulness!” whereas (with Monsieur de la Motte) it might be answered, “ If this be
 “ true, it is a grievous fault. For what can be more absurd than
 “ to imagine ‘ that the doctrines, or rules of practice, which relate
 “ to men’s everlasting salvation,’ should be delivered in such am-
 “ biguous terms as to be capable of many meanings? These
 “ double interpretations must proceed, not from any design in the
 “ author, but from the ignorance of the moderns in the Hebrew
 “ or Greek tongue; it being impossible for any one to possess
 “ the dead languages in such a degree, as to be certain of all the
 “ graces or negligences, or to know precisely how far the licences
 “ or boldness of expression were happy or forced. But some di-
 “ vines, to be thought learned, attribute to the Scriptures all the
 “ random senses that amuse them; and imagine they see, in a single
 “ word or sentence, a whole heap of things, which no modern

“ language can exprefs : and fo are oftentimes charmed with no-
 “ thing but the confufion of their own ideas.”

S E C T. II.

IT is well known that feveral of the fathers interpreted the Scripture in a myftical fenfe, and were fond of that method of interpretation. Origen was very famous for this. Dr. Lightfoot [vol. I. of his Works, p. 373.] is clear in it, that the fathers took this method of interpreting Scripture from the Jews; and that feems to be at prefent the moft common opinion of learned men among the Chriftians. But fome, nevertheless, fuppofe that they rather took it from the more learned Heathens. ‘ And, fince there is now extant
 ‘ but very little interpretation of Scripture, in the way of commentary, among the fathers, till the days of Origen, who has
 ‘ been juftly ftyled “ The father of the myftical interpreters,” as
 ‘ being moft eminent in that art, and who was much copied after
 ‘ by many other fathers, we fhall now confider whence Origen derived that method of interpretation. The beft account which we
 ‘ have of this matter is that given by Photius, the great critic of the
 ‘ ancients, who affures us, that Philo the Jew taught the way of allegorizing Scripture to the Chriftians. [Vid. Phot. Cod. 105.] Now,
 ‘ it is well known that Clemens of Alexandria, who cultivated this
 ‘ myftical art in all his writings, was the mafter of Origen. And,
 ‘ therefore, Origen is reasonably prefumed to have learned it more
 ‘ immediately from him. And Clemens himfelf certainly derived
 ‘ it from Philo; whom he not only imitates, but tranfcribes very
 ‘ largely; as very plainly appears in the fifth book of his Stromata,
 ‘ and indeed elfewhere. But, though Philo was the great pattern
 ‘ of the myftical writers among the fathers, yet there is reafon to
 ‘ believe that this way of expounding Scripture was of greater antiquity than Philo himfelf. [Vid. Philo. Jud. de vita contemplat.
 ‘ five de Therapeutis, p. 193. Parif. 1640. and Eufeb. H. E. lib. II.
 ‘ c. 17.]. In Philo’s account Eufebius acquiefces, that the Effenes,
 ‘ or Therapeutæ, of Alexandria, had feveral very ancient books of
 ‘ their predeceffors, or founders, full of allegorical interpretations of
 ‘ Scripture.’

Le-Clerk [in his life of Clemens of Alexandria, Englifh edition, p. 53, &c. & Hiftor. Ecclef. p. 24, &c.] thinks that ‘ allegories
 ‘ arofe among the Heathens; and that their philofophers invented
 ‘ them, to render plaufible their fables, or ancient hiftories of their
 ‘ gods; which, underftood literally, appeared to be very grofs and
 ‘ ridiculous: and that, when the Jews got acquainted with the
 ‘ Greeks, they admired and copied after their method of explaining
 ‘ religion; and made ufe of it with refpect to the Scriptures of the
 ‘ Old Testament; which they by this means wretchedly abufed.
 ‘ Clemens of Alexandria [Stromat. l. V.] intimates that that which
 ‘ chiefly induced him to believe that the Holy Scripture is full
 ‘ of allegories is, becaufe the Ægyptians and Greeks were wont

‘ to represent the secrets of their philosophy under some emblems and fables.’

Bishop Smallbroke says, ‘ The other account of the original of mystical interpretations of Scripture in the Christian church, or at least of the greater progress and improvement of it, is that which was anciently assigned by Porphyry, and he himself a celebrated allegorist. That philosopher [as cited by Eusebius, H. E. l. VI. c. 19.] asserts, that Origen was conversant in the writings of Chæmon the stoic [who explained the Egyptian hieroglyphics]; and of Cornutus [a stoic too, who adapted the Greek mythology to the knowledge of nature]; from whom he learned the art of allegorizing the Scripture, agreeably to the custom of the Greeks in explaining their mysteries. And to these he might have added the names of Plato, Numenius the Pythagorean, and several other mystical writers, whom Origen seemed to have studied much on this very occasion. This is in some measure confessed by Jerome [Epist. ad Magnum], when he tells us, “ that Origen, in his ten books of Stromata, confirmed all the doctrines of our religion, out of Plato, Aristotle, Numenius, and Cornutus.” And, indeed, most of these writers, with others of a like nature, are mentioned in Origen’s commentaries, and in his treatise against Celsus, as authors that he was intimately acquainted with, and who may, therefore, be supposed to have had some influence on his mystical expositions of Scripture, which bear some resemblance to those that were used by themselves. It is very obvious that Origen indulged Platonic notions to an excessive degree. Cornutus and some other explainers of the Greek mythology (out of great numbers of ancient authors on that subject which have entirely perished) are extant at this day. And these seem in several respects to have been imitated by Origen, in his application of their art of mystical exposition to the interpretation of the Scriptures themselves. So that it is by no means improbable, that Origen copied after both Jewish and Gentile writers, of the mystical kind, in allegorizing the Scriptures. And no wonder that there was such a coincidence of the two assigned originals of the mystical exposition of Scripture in a person who, by his vast (but irregular) wit, was peculiarly suited to the nature of mystical expositions; and, by his uncommon learning, knew so well how to support the most lively, though frequently ill-grounded, imaginations. And it need not be here observed that the example of so great a genius, as that of Origen, was imitated much by many of the fathers.

‘ Origen’s fondness for mystical interpretations led him sometimes to speak of the literal sense of scripture in a very degrading manner, and with too great contempt. But he did not absolutely deny the reality of the literal sense, though he gave the preference to the mystical.’ [See Bishop Smallbroke’s answer to Mr. Wollston, vol. I. p. 93, &c. Glaffii Phil. sacra, p. 255]. Origen did sometimes plead for a threefold sense of Scripture; and so did Jerome. Nay, Augustin pleaded for a fourfold sense of Scripture. [Vid. Glaffii.

Philolog. l. II. p. 255, 256. 270.]. These manifold senses tended to confound the understandings of the common people, made them doubt whether the Scriptures had any fixed and certain meaning at all, and made them more cold and indifferent about finding out and retaining the one true sense; which alone deserves any regard.

The two most learned and celebrated fathers, who imitated Origen, and ran into the mystical interpretation of Scripture, were Jerome and Augustin. But what their sentiments of this method of interpretation were, in their more judicious and riper years, will plainly appear from what follows. Bishop Patrick, in the preface to his Paraphrase on the Psalms, says, ‘I have forborne a great many mystical and allegorical senses of the words, and rather adhered to the literal meaning, though accounted trivial and vulgar by many men, who had rather indulge to their own fancies, than be at the pains of making a diligent inquiry after the truth. For, whatsoever is pretended, it is not the easiness and meanness of the literal sense, which hath made it to be despised, and been the cause of allegorizing the Scriptures, but the great difficulty and labour that is required to the finding of it out in many places. St. Jerome and St. Augustin confess as much, who spent their younger years in mystical interpretations, as more easy studies; but, when they grew old, applied themselves to historical explanations; which St. Jerome (in his preface to the prophet Obadiah) confesses he did not understand, when he wrote upon that book in his youth; and, in plain terms, ingenuously acknowledges those mystical interpretations were the work *puerilis ingenii*, of his childish wit: at which he blushed and hanged down his head, even when others cried them up to the skies. But the historical explications (which he then set out) were the work *maturæ senectutis*, of his mature age; when he had at least profited thus far, as to know, with Socrates, that he was ignorant. In short; he begins that preface with the words of the apostle, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but, when I became a man, I put away childish things;” and hopes this would excuse him for interpreting that prophet allegorically, in the heat of his youth, whose history he did not know.

St. Austin acknowledges as much [in his first vol. of retracts, chap. 18.]; which I will not transcribe, but only set down the words of Martin Bucer, one of the first reformers, upon the sixth of St. Matthew, where he says, “That it would be worth a great deal to the church, if, forsaking allegories, and other frivolous devices, which are not only empty, but derogate very much from the majesty of the doctrine of Christ, we would all, simply and soberly, prosecute that which our Lord intended to say to us.”

What Arnobius has said, concerning the uncertainty and small authority of the allegorical interpretations of the pagan mythology, will hold as strongly against the allegorical interpretation of Scripture,

ture. ‘ But whence is it evident to you, when you explain these
 ‘ allegories, that, in your interpretations of them, you have the same
 ‘ sentiments, that the writers of history, relating to them, had
 ‘ in their own thoughts, and which they did not express in the
 ‘ words suitable to their proper sense, but to figurative significations?
 ‘ —Another mystical writer may fancy a more probable and in-
 ‘ genius sense than yourselves. A third may discover another
 ‘ meaning. And a fourth, a different one from all three. And,
 ‘ according to the qualifications of the several interpreters, every
 ‘ thing may be explained, with an infinite number of pretended ex-
 ‘ positions. For, when all allegories are taken from things dark
 ‘ and concealed, and do not aim at any certain end, who can im-
 ‘ moveably fix one’s opinion of the thing itself, which is treated of?
 ‘ Every one is at liberty to affirm his own conjectures to have been
 ‘ originally designed. And, if this be the case of allegories, how
 ‘ can you draw any thing certain from what is in itself uncertain;
 ‘ and assign to it any one unalterable signification, when an infinite
 ‘ variety of expositions may be equally drawn from it?’ [Vid. Arnob.
 adv. gent. lib. V. p. 181. edit. Lugdun. Bat.].

Maimonides [More Nevoch. p. 473. Bas. 1629.] gives us the
 opinion of the Jewish rabbies concerning allegorical interpretations
 of Scripture. ‘ Our rabbies are wont, as it is well known to those
 ‘ that are acquainted with their usual practice, to be mightily de-
 ‘ lighted with allegories, and to use them frequently; not that they
 ‘ are of opinion that the allegorical interpretation is the true sense of
 ‘ Scripture; but that it has somewhat ænigmatical in it, that is plea-
 ‘ sant and entertaining.’ [See Bishop Smallbroke’s answer to Mr.
 Woolston, vol. I. p. 121, &c.].

S E C T. III.

THE Cocceians, which are a numerous party in Holland, con-
 tend for a mystical interpretation of every part of scripture. And
 many of our divines have too much given into this. Even the
 learned and judicious Dr. Clarke has given double senses of several
 passages in the four gospels. I will mention an instance or two.
 Matth. xx. 1, &c. He contends for the double sense of the parable
 of the labourers, who were hired into the vineyard at different hours
 of the day, who all at last received equal wages. Which is just
 and true, when applied to the Gentiles, who were admitted to the
 privileges of the professed people of God, many ages after the Jews;
 and yet were set upon a level with them, as to the privileges of the
 Messiah’s kingdom. But it does not seem, by any means, just,
 when applied to men who repent at different parts of life. For,
 if one man keep the commandments of God for twenty or thirty
 years; and another keep them, with the same care and diligence,
 only for the last ten years of his life; this man cannot be intitled
 to an equal reward with the former; neither will God at last make
 them equal. For he will render unto every man exactly according

to their deeds. Again; this parable is not to be applied to men's receiving their different rewards at the day of judgement; in as much as some are represented as murmuring that other should be made equal with them. For, at the day of judgement, there will be no mourning among the righteous; but every mouth will be stopped, and every mind fully satisfied, by the reasonableness of the divine proceedings in that day.

Dr. Clarke's applying the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, ver. 6, &c. both to "the destruction of Jerusalem," and to "the day of judgement," shall be taken notice of hereafter. I omit many other instances of double senses, in Clarke's paraphrase and notes on the four gospels.—But I look upon such double interpretations as the principal blemish in that excellent work. Indeed, if the Dr. had given two senses of any text, only where he was dubious, and left it to his reader to judge which of them was the true sense of the place, I should have had no objection. But his expressing two senses of the same passage, and contending for both of them as the true sense of the place, is what I apprehend to be liable to very great and just exception.

The celebrated Mr. Locke, who has shewn us the way how to study the epistles, and, in his admirable preface, has quoted a passage from the learned and judicious Mr. Selden, to shew that no text of Scripture has more than one meaning, which is fixed and limited by the connection;—yet that same Mr. Locke was so far carried away with the torrent, as, in some few instances, to contend for double senses of one and the same text. 2 Cor. iii. 6. St. Paul, having had occasion to mention the recommendatory letters, which the false apostle had procured in his own favour, written with ink; he then rises higher, and speaks of the two tables of stone, on which were engraven, by the finger of God, the ten commandments, a summary or principal part of the law of Moses. But he prefers, to both of them, the gospel, written or engraven upon the hearts of the Corinthians by his ministry; written, not with ink, but by the Spirit of God, who illuminated the apostle with the plan of the gospel-revelation, and enabled him to work miracles, as a proof of his divine mission.—These things led St. Paul to call the laws of Moses, "the letter;" and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, "the spirit." And he declares, that though, without inspiration and miracles, the apostles could not have been sufficient of themselves to have found out the gospel, or to have spread it as they did; though they could never have thought of such a thing of themselves; yet their sufficiency was of God, who made them able ministers of the New Testament, or covenant; "not of the letter," or law of Moses; "but of the spirit," or gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For the letter killeth;" the law of Moses condemneth all offenders to death, without mercy. "But the spirit giveth life;" the gospel promises immortal life to all sincere penitents, and habitually holy persons. [See ver. 7, 8, 9.]

Now,

Now, though this appears to be the just interpretation of that text, and exactly agreeable to Mr. Locke's second note on ver. 6. and to his note on ver. 9. yet his first note on ver. 6. runs thus, " [Not of letter, but of the spirit.]. By expressing himself, as he does here, St. Paul may be understood to intimate that the New Testament, or covenant, was also, though obscurely, held forth in the law. For he says, he is constituted a minister of the spirit, or spiritual meaning of the law, which was Christ (as he tells us himself, ver. 17.), and giveth life; whilst 'the letter killeth.' But both letter and spirit must be understood of the same thing; viz. the letter of the law, and the spirit of the law. And in fact we find St. Paul truly a minister of the spirit of the law, especially in his epistle to the Hebrews; where he shews what a spiritual sense ran through the Mosaical institution and writings."

Now from hence it appears that Mr. Locke was of opinion, that the law of Moses, besides the literal sense, had a spiritual meaning which could not be discerned without inspiration. Whereas, by "the letter," is not meant the letter of the law of Moses, or of the gospel of Christ; nor by "the spirit," the spirit of the law, or the spiritual meaning, either of the law or the gospel. But, by "the letter," is meant the Mosaic constitution, or the law of Moses; a summary of which was originally written upon two tables of stone. And, by "the spirit," is meant the gospel; which was originally revealed and confirmed by the spirit. And what St. Paul had been saying led him to make use of these terms.

Mr. Locke has again had recourse to a double sense of Scripture, in the allegory, Gal. iv. 21, &c. which shall be considered hereafter.

I do not mention such instances, from Dr. Clarke or Mr. Locke, from any dislike I have to those two excellent persons, whose names and memories I very highly reverence. But, when such great names can be alledged to patronize what is apprehended to be wrong, no reverence for their names and memories should hinder us from contending for what we apprehend to be true and right.

S E C T. IV.

THERE are several sorts of persons, who would be pleased with double senses, and glad to have the truth and authority of them established and confirmed.

(1.) All mystical divines and enthusiasts plead for double, or manifold, senses of the holy Scripture; and greatly delight in texts that are more difficult, and consequently more flexible; because they can more easily bend such texts to their humours or fancies, inclinations or wishes; and prove, or establish, doctrines by them, which could otherwise never be proved, or established.

Of the ancient cant, we have a remarkable example in the account which Irenæus gives of the Valentinian heretics, and their Æons; who also informs us of the art, as well as the subject, of their cant [Lib. I. c. 1.]. He tells us, they applied the
 ' parables

‘ parables of our Saviour, the discourses of the prophets, and the sayings of the apostles, to quite other purposes, than they, who first used them, ever intended them. And this those Heretics did by changing and transposing the passages of Scripture, till the words bore the sense which they imposed upon them.

‘ This Irenæus compares to the practice of one, who should dissolve the comely picture of a king, made in bugle-work, and, out of the same strings of bugles, should frame the picture of an ill-favoured dog or fox; and, after such a change, should pretend this new shape is the original picture of the king which the artist made; and impose that belief upon the ignorant and foolish. After the same manner, did the Valentinians deliver their fables and errors in the words, phrases, and parables of Scripture.

‘ This artifice, as he says again [p. 56.], is like theirs, who should take any subject that occurs, and describe it in verses borrowed out of Homer, and should pretend that this is part of a poem of his. As he gives an example in one, who represents Hercules, as sent by Euristheus unto Cerberus, in such verses as he there sets down, out of the Iliad and Odyssey.

‘ We have a fuller instance of this in Alexander Ross his Virgilius Evangelizans, or the history of our Lord Jesus Christ described in the words and verses of Virgil. By the same kind of application, that Ross made Virgil an evangelist, George Fox and others have made St. Paul, and the rest of the writers of the New Testament, Quakers. And, by the same art, any one author may be made to deliver the doctrine of another. Aristotle may be taught in the words of Moses: and the religion of the Jews may be represented in the words of Aristotle.

‘ But this is so gross an notorious an abuse of Scripture, as no serious Christian can judge excuseable or tolerable.’ [See Dr. Jeffery’s Collections of Tracts, vol. I. p. 342, &c.]

(2.) The Papists contend for many senses of holy Scripture; because that would help them greatly in the proof of a number of their peculiar tenets. From hence they could infer the obscurity of the holy Scripture, and term it “a nose of wax,” that might be turned any way: and unsensed letters, which have in themselves no meaning, but may have a meaning put upon them, just as the church of Rome sees proper. [See Archbishop Tillotson’s Rule of faith, part II. § 2. and elsewhere. Glassii Philog. sacr. lib. II. p. 254.]. Hence they would infer the necessity of a living, visible, infallible judge of controversies; and that the Scriptures should be taken out of the hands of the common people, who are incapable of understanding them, and in great danger of perverting them. Hence they would prove many things, which could not be otherwise proved; such as the power of the keys, the infallibility of the church, purgatory, transubstantiation, communion in one kind, auricular confession, extreme unction, &c. &c. &c. [Vid. Spanhem. Chamier. contract. lib. XVI. c. 10. p. 605.]. Whoever has a mind to see the popish arguments for double or more senses of Scripture,

Scripture, with the answers of the Protestants, may consult Spanheim's *Chamier. contract.* p. 237, &c.

(3.) The Jews are highly delighted with manifold senses of Scripture. There has, indeed, been among them a sect, called Karaites, who were for a literal and just interpretation of Scripture. But that has ever been an unpopular sect, and hated by the Rabbies, and by the Jews in general.

The Rabbies (as has been already observed) assert "that the Scripture has seventy-two faces." And the Rabbies are the popular, learned men among the Jews, who are had in the highest esteem and veneration. The Jews, therefore, cannot but be pleased to see Christians imitating their Rabbies. And, indeed, I know of nothing that could so effectually cover the Jews from the attacks of Christians, or harden them in their infidelity, as the giving into double interpretations. For a Jew might argue thus with a Christian, who allows double senses. "Suppose your Messiah has come, and fulfilled the prophecies in one sense; the Messiah, whom we expect, may come, and fulfill those very prophecies in another sense. And why may not we, Jews, take the sense of the prophecies which we like best; as well as you, Christians, take the sense of them which you like best, especially as you yourselves allow that the prophecies are fairly capable of more senses than one?"

I do not know what solid reply such a Christian could make to a Jew, who should argue in that manner. Nay, if another Messiah should come, and answer the present opinion and expectation of most of the Jews; yet such, as would not receive him, might argue in the same way for the coming of another:—and so on without end.

(4.) The enemies of revelation are glad to see Christians pleading for double senses; because it affords the greatest advantage to them and their cause. What a poor figure would Mr. Collins's two books make, if the prophecies were interpreted in their one, true, and proper signification; and all the mystical, double, senses of them were denied, and rejected by Christians! What indecent rhodomontade would Mr. Woolston's discourses on our Lord's miracles appear to be, if you take away the mystical, allegorical interpretations, and explain them in their just and literal meaning! Whenever the author of "Christianity as old as the creation" is pinched with the reasonableness of the literal sense of Scripture, he has recourse to a mystical, allegorical interpretation; and then, to support that, he, in a very ridiculous manner, cries out, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The author of "Christianity not founded in argument" would presently be struck dumb, if you denied double senses; and would not allow him to fix his own fanciful, and even contradictory, interpretations upon texts of Scripture at his pleasure. And all the little dealers in infidelity fly to this refuge, when the one, true, sense of Scripture is so apparently reasonable and excellent, that they have nothing to object against it.

Considering these things, methinks it is high time for Christians in general to be upon their guard, and not give way to double interpretations:

terpretations; which would gratify their enemies, and render it more difficult to defend the Christian revelation.

Words, without a fixed meaning, convey no doctrine; and in effect contain no revelation at all. Antecedent to one's opening the Bible, if one was told that it was a revelation from God, one would expect that the doctrines essential to salvation should be expressed clearly; because men are concerned to understand and believe them: that the rules of practice, or the precepts of an holy life, should have a single and determinate meaning; because men are concerned to understand and practise them. For, if their sense were dubious, the practice formed upon them could not be steady and uniform. The promises should be clear and express; because they are to influence men as motives to obedience; and the threatenings should be intelligible, and their meaning fixed, because they are to deter men from sin and disobedience. The rules of divine worship ought to be express and determinate, and the language of our worship clear and intelligible; otherwise, we might as well worship in an unknown tongue. For all divine worship ought to be entirely in subordination to moral virtue, or true holiness. And it cannot influence God in our favour, unless it influence us to an holy temper and life. But what has no certain meaning cannot be expected to edify us, or to have any good and proper influence upon us.—The sacred history should be plain and intelligible; because it relates the most interesting events, events of public concern, and great importance to mankind.

We justly condemn the answers of the Heathen oracles, as riddles, dark and obscure, vague and indeterminate, capable of being turned many ways, without certainly knowing which sense was intended, or in what way they are to be understood. But divine prophecies should be intelligible, and have one determinate meaning; that it may be known when and how they are accomplished.—We admire it as an excellence in Homer, and other celebrated writers of antiquity, that their meaning is expressed clearly; and may not we expect, when God speaks to men, that his meaning should be expressed in as clear and determinate a manner?

In one word, if the Scriptures are not to be interpreted, like the best ancient authors, in their one, true, and genuine meaning, the common people will be led to doubt, whether or no the Scriptures have any certain meaning at all. They will be for ever at a loss what to believe, and what to practise, upon what to ground their comfort here, and their hope of everlasting salvation hereafter.

By all that has been said, I would not be understood to intimate, that all texts are to be interpreted alike. No! general expressions must contain a number of particulars under them; though particular expressions must be confined and limited to particular cases. All texts are not to be interpreted in the literal sense; nor all texts in the allegorical or figurative sense.—What I contend for is, that every text has only one meaning; which when we have found, we need enquire no further. Literal passages ought to be interpreted literally; figurative passages, figuratively. Historical narrations are

to be understood historically: and allegorical passages ought to be interpreted allegorically. In parables, the fact is nothing, but as it illustrates, or inculcates, the moral, or application. In figurative, or allegorical, passages, the thing alluded to; in the figure, or allegory, is only to enliven or illustrate what is said. And he would act as unreasonable a part, who would interpret figurative expressions literally; as he, who would interpret literal expressions figuratively. The obvious and grammatical, or the rhetorical and figurative, sense of the words, the time and place, the character and situation of the speaker or writer, and the relation which any passage has to his main view, or to the connection, will, in most cases, lead an interpreter easily to distinguish history from parable or allegory, and literal representations from such as are mystical or figurative. And the judgement of a true critic, or faithful interpreter of holy Scripture, will very much appear therein. But fancy and imagination are boundless; and no rules nor limits can be set to them.

S E C T. V.

THE prophecies have been thought to favour double senses the most of any part of holy Scripture. But, perhaps, upon examination, they do not really require or admit of such an interpretation. Dr. Sykes [in his Connection between natural and revealed Religion] has a whole chapter, to shew that the ancient prophecies contained only one single sense. And that chapter I would recommend to the reader's perusal.

Some particular passages I would now consider.

(1.) If the second and sixteenth Psalms can be shewn quite throughout to agree to king David; then they ought to be interpreted of him. But if (as some judicious persons have thought) there be in them some expressions, which are not applicable to king David, then they should be interpreted wholly concerning the Messiah; to whom they do in every part very well agree.

(2.) The seventy-second Psalm has generally been applied to king Solomon, but some have thought that it was a prophecy of the Messiah; and that there are, in it, passages which were not applicable to king Solomon. If so; then I apprehend the Psalm ought not to be applied to him at all. For, if the interpretation will not go through, that very circumstance seems to be a plain proof that the interpreter has set out wrong. Some of the ancient Jews were of opinion, that several things, in this Psalm, belong more properly to the Messiah than to Solomon. And Theodoret, in his interpretation, supposes that king David, in this Psalm, prophesies of nothing else but the Messiah; and that he hath no respect to Solomon. The passages, which could not belong to king Solomon and his subjects, are such as these, [ver. 5. "They shall fear him, as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations." Ver. 7. "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endures." Ver. 11. "Yea all kings

“ kings shall bow down before him, all nations shall serve him.”
 Ver. 17. “ His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued, as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: “ All nations shall call him blessed.]”

As to the passages, which have been thought inconsistent with the Psalm's being a prophecy of the Messiah, “ Ver. 1. He is called “ [a King, and the king's son]”. But was not our Lord a king? and “ the son of him, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords?” Or, by “ the king,” some may understand David himself; and, by “ the king's son,” his great descendent, the Messiah. [See Matth. ii. 1. and xxii. 42. Mark xi. 10. Though the Chaldee interpreteth “ the king” to be Christ. And several, that interpret the Psalm of Solomon, suppose that he is called both “ the king” and “ the king's son.” Ver. 15. “ Prayer, also, shall be made for him continually; “ and daily shall he be praised.” The former part of this verse has been thought to be an objection against interpreting the psalm of the Messiah. Some, indeed, have understood it of praying before, or to, him. But is not prayer made for him continually; when his disciples daily pray, “ Thy kingdom come.” “ May the kingdom of the Messiah be set up, where it is not; and have more influence, where it is already set up!” Is not this praying for the Messiah? or for the enlargement and success of his kingdom; which is, in this psalm, so beautifully described, as a kingdom of truth and righteousness? The latter part of the verse [“ daily shall “ he be praised”] is most applicable to the Messiah, our blessed Lord and Saviour. And I do not see any thing in that psalm, but what exactly suits his great and glorious character.

(3.) The famous prophecy, *Isai. vii. 14.* quoted by St. Matthew [ch. i. 22, 23.], has been thought to contain a double sense. Or else, St. Matthew's application of it (as it is supposed) cannot be vindicated. It has been said, “ that Isaiah spoke the words, not of “ the Messiah, but of his own child; whose birth of a young “ woman was given as a sign, that Jerusalem should be delivered, “ before the child should be able to speak plain. The prophecy, “ then, being literally fulfilled in the prophet's days, it is forced “ and unnatural to fix a figurative, which is another, interpretation, “ upon the text.”

But this objection will appear to have no foundation, when it is considered that the prophecy was originally and literally intended for our Saviour's miraculous birth; and literally accomplished in that remarkable event: and that there are in reality two predictions or prophecies delivered in that chapter; viz. one concerning “ the “ house of David,” which should not be then destroyed (as king Ahaz and his people were afraid); but continue till the Messiah came, who should be born of a virgin. And the other prophecy was, that king Ahaz's two enemies should, in a few years, be destroyed; and unable to molest him, or his kingdom, any more.

Ahaz, king of Judah, was then in the utmost distraction at the invasion which threatened Jerusalem, his capital city, from the two neighbouring

neighbouring and confederate kings of Syria and Israel. To comfort him in this conjuncture, Isaiah is sent of God, with a message to king Ahaz, to let him know that their counsels and attempts should prove ineffectual.

Isai. viii. 18. The prophet himself informs us, "Behold I, and the children, whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel, from the Lord of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion." And accordingly he is ordered [Isai. vii. 3.] "to go and meet king Ahaz in such a place; and to take with him Shear-jashub, his son." And, when the prophet came up to the king, carrying his little boy in his arms, or leading him in his hand, for a sign, as God had commanded him, he found the king and his nobles viewing the walls of the city under the utmost dejection. "For his heart was moved, and the heart of his people," at the rumour of the confederacy, "as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind," [Ver. 2.]. And the prophet would have comforted them with the divine message which he brought. To that end, he compared the two hostile kings to two firebrands, who should smoke, but never burn; and foretold the speedy fate of their kingdoms. But king Ahaz and his nobles seem to have paid little regard to the divine message. Then the prophet spoke again to the king, and offered him the choice of any sign, in the depth beneath, or in the height above. But king Ahaz, in a sullen humour, refused to ask any sign. And he and his counsellors despised the prophet, and distrusted God. Since then king Ahaz himself refused to ask any sign, and the house of David was so greatly moved and affected, God, by the prophet, said, "Hear ye now, O house of David, I will give you a sign, 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son; and shall call his name Immanuel,' that is, God with us. The line of David, therefore, shall not be cut off, till this remarkable event happen, and the Messiah be born, in a miraculous manner, and of a pure virgin."

Now this is a literal prediction, and was exactly accomplished, some hundred years after, in the person of our blessed Lord; the only person, to whom such a prophecy can be literally applied. And this prophecy is addressed, in the plural number, to the house of David.

The following is a distinct prophecy, addressed to king Ahaz, in the singular number; and has a particular regard to him and to his danger at that time. The prophet Isaiah, pointing (most probably) to his son, Shear-jashub, whom God had commanded him to bring along with him, and constituted a sign unto Israel;—pointing (I say) to his own son, who was present, though very young, he said, "Butter and honey shall he eat; that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good: [that is, this child shall partake of the peace and undisturbed plenty of the land]. Surely; before this child [הנער *hanachar*] shall know how to refuse evil, and choose what is good, the land, which thou, O Ahaz, abhorrest, shall be forsaken of both her kings. In other words, a year or two's time shall deliver you from all your fears."

Here

Here then are two distinct promises or prophecies. Both of them literal; and both of them in due time literally accomplished.

To shew that the prophet's own son was, most probably, in the latter prophecy, intended and pointed at; let it be observed, (1.) That here is the *He* emphatic, or demonstrative, prefixed to the word Nachar: and it is said [Hanachar, This child]. (2.) As much must be supposed, in the interpretation of other passages of Scripture, as that of the prophet's laying his hand upon his son, or pointing to him; or shewing, by some action at the time of speaking, that he meant his own son. So, when our blessed Lord declared "that one of his own disciples would betray him;" Peter beckoned to John, to ask who it was? Then John, leaning near the bosom of Jesus, and speaking softly to him, said, "Lord, which of us is it?" Jesus replied, softly and so as St. John alone might hear, "He it is, to whom I shall give the sop, when I have dipped it." And presently, dipping the sop, he gave it openly to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon [John xiii. 21, &c.]. So again; when our Lord had driven the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and cleansed that holy place, the Jews were displeased, and said, "What sign do you shew, that you do these things? What proof do you give of a prophetic, or extraordinary, mission; that you take upon you to do such extraordinary things?" By way of answer, our Lord is commonly and justly supposed to have pointed to his own body; or to have laid his hand in a solemn manner upon his breast, to intimate that he was speaking of his own body; though, in allusion to the temple, which he had just cleansed, he calls it this temple;—using such an action (I say) our Lord answered, "Destroy this temple; and, in three days, I will raise it up again." [John ii. 13, &c.]. (3.) Unless you suppose that Isaiah laid his hand upon his own little son, or pointed to him, when he spoke to the king, the divine order for taking his son along with him [ver. 3.], will have no meaning; but be an idle and superfluous circumstance in the history of these remarkable prophecies.

After I had fixed upon this interpretation of the two prophecies, Isai. vii. 14, &c. I found that Bishop Chandler had mentioned it, and said some very proper things in support of it. And [in his Defence of Christianity, p. 329.] he hath this marginal note. "Since I writ this, I find the most learned Archbishop Usher, in his annual [A. M. 3262] to be in the same opinion; viz. that the prophet spoke of two children. And, when he passed from Emanuel to Shear-jashub, he demonstrated him with his finger. Malvenda, also an interpreter of the first rank, applies what Isaiah has said [ver. 15, 16.] to Shear-jashub."

Bishop Chandler goes on in the following manner: "The original word Alma, as learned men have proved, signifies constantly a virgin untainted by man*. The Greek translators before Christ,

* "Alma, non solum puella, vel virgo, sed cum *ἐκκρυπτα* virgo abscondita dicitur & secreta, quæ nunquam virorum patuerit aspectibus; sed magnâ parentum diligentia custodita fuerit. Lingua quoque Ponicâ, quæ de Hebræorum fontibus emanare dicitur, propriè virgo alma appellatur." [Hieron. comment. in Is. lib. 111. c. 7. F. Simon's Critical Hist. of the New Testament, Part II. p. 43]

“ who were not interested in the controversy, and who knew better
 “ the signification of Hebrew words than any Jew since their last
 “ dispersion, render *alma* so in this place. And the prophet must dis-
 “ appoint his hearers exceedingly, after so pompous an introduction,
 “ and so important a name, to mean no more at last, by a virgin’s
 “ conceiving, than that a young woman should be with child.

“ What! doth Isaiah offer Ahaz a miracle in the heavens, or on
 “ the grave? And, when he seems to tell them that God, of his
 “ own motion, would do a greater work than they could ask, does
 “ he sink to a sign, that nature produces every day? Is that to be
 “ called a wonder (an uncommon, surprizing, supernatural event),
 “ which happens constantly, by the ordinary laws of generation?
 “ How little doth such a birth come up to the solemn preparation,
 “ which Isaiah uses, to raise their expectation of some great mat-
 “ ter? ‘Hear ye, O house of David;—behold the Lord himself will
 “ give you a sign,’ worthy of himself. Well, what is it? ‘Why,
 “ a young married woman shall be with child!’—Their patience
 “ would not have lasted to have heard him out. They must have
 “ thought that he came to insult their misery, rather than to com-
 “ fort them under it.

“ From considering, therefore, the occasion and the importance
 “ of the message, the weight and the force of the words in which
 “ it was delivered, they and we ought to understand that the birth
 “ here foretold did not relate to an ordinary child. St. Matthew,
 “ after Jesus was so born of a virgin, had good reason for writing,
 “ that then this [remarkable] prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled.”

(4.) Some may suppose that another instance of double senses
 may be found, Matth. ii. 15. Jesus fled into Egypt, “until the
 “ death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by
 “ the prophet, saying, ‘Out of Egypt have I called my son.’” Which
 words are found, Hos. xi. 1. but there relate evidently to the nation
 of Israel, and are not a prediction of what was to come, but an
 historical account of what was past long ago. ‘When Israel was
 ‘a child, then I loved him, and “called my son out of Egypt;”
 ‘—they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven
 ‘images, &c.’ Now, it may be thought by some that “calling our
 “Saviour out of Egypt” was the mystical, spiritual meaning of
 these words, intended by the prophet Hosea, or by the Spirit of
 God which inspired him; though the literal sense referred to the
 nation of Israel.

But, if they are no prophecy in Hosea, St. Matthew’s quoting
 the words cannot make them a prophecy. Nor is there any reason
 to think that St. Matthew understood them as a prediction.

Whoever is acquainted with the Jewish phraseology, or manner of
 quotation, knows very well, that they sometimes declared “such or
 “such a saying to be fulfilled,” when the words were mere accom-
 modations, or could properly express their meaning. It is true;
 that manner of speaking sounds oddly in our language. But we must
 remember that they did not write in English; and that every nation

has its own idioms, phrases, and forms of expression. [See Dr. Sykes's Essay upon the truth of the Christian Religion, p. 206, &c.]

There were four ways, in which the Jews used this or the like expression ["such a prophet's words, or such and such texts of Scripture, are fulfilled"]. (1.) They sometimes meant by it, that the prediction of a prophet was literally accomplished. (2.) That the cases were parallel, or a similar event happened; or that there was a remarkable agreement, in several circumstances, between former and later things. (3.) That a general rule, or saying, was applicable to a particular case. Just as we say, upon several occasions, "The old proverb is made good," Or, "the old saying is verified." (4.) The Jews often used such expressions, when they meant no more than "that the words of Holy Scripture, or of some ancient prophet, might be aptly accommodated to the case in hand; or were very proper to express their present meaning." Passages from Jewish authors might be alledged to confirm this. And the rule for us to examine any such text by is plain and obvious. "Go to the place referred to. Examine it according to the rules of grammar or rhetoric, and as it stands in connection. From thence we may gather its original meaning in the Old Testament; and easily see how it is quoted in the New Testament."

From such an examination it plainly appears, that the words of Hosea, as quoted by St. Matthew, are a mere accommodation; and alledged only to express the present event. And there can be no reason mentioned why St. Matthew, who was a Jew, might not express himself in their usual forms.—But that need not lead us into any difficulty; nor is this passage any proof of a double sense of Holy Scripture. The expression had but one sense in Hosea; and it has only one sense, as made use of, by the evangelist St. Matthew.

(5.) Our Lord's celebrated prophecy [Matth. xxiv. 1—35.] does not relate to the day of judgement; but to the destruction of Jerusalem; and to that alone.

The reason why it has been supposed that our Lord is there speaking, at all, of the day of judgement, is what is said, ver. 27—31: "that the sun shall be darkened, and the moon not give her light, and the stars fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken. Then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. And they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

"The coming of the son of man" does, indeed, very often signify his coming to the judgement of the last day. But, by "the coming of the Lord" is, in some texts of Scripture, meant his coming to inflict any great and remarkable judgement, either immediately, or by any of his creatures [see on James v. 8.]. And "his com-

ing,

“ing, in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory,” is a plain allusion to Dan. vii. 13, 14. which bishop Chandler judiciously applies to our Saviour’s receiving the investiture in his new dignity at the hands of God, or the entering upon the exercise of his universal and everlasting kingdom. ‘Clouds are a known symbol of heaven, and of divine power and majesty. And the ascribing this symbol to one like the son of man is a declaration of “the supreme magnificence, and authority, which God shall give that son of man, the Messiah:” faith that eminent Jew, Saadiah Gaon.’ [See Bishop Chandler’s Defence of Christianity, p. 128, &c. Pearson on the Creed, Art. 7. p. 293. Mr. Lowman on Rev. i. 7.]. Sir Isaac Newton likewise [in his Chapter of the Prophetic Language] says, ‘The heavens, and the things therein, signify thrones and dignities.—And riding on the clouds is put for reigning over much people.’ Our Saviour, therefore, in prophetic language, foretells that all power should be given unto him, both in heaven and upon earth; and, when destruction was coming upon his enemies and murderers, then should all the tribes of the land mourn, and see evident signs of Jesus’s being invested with great power and glory; which he would make use of, to take vengeance on his enemies, and to deliver his own people out of their distresses.

It may be further observed, that at the last judgement the stars shall not literally fall from heaven, nor the general conflagration reach beyond this globe and its atmosphere. Dr. Clarke has very well paraphrased ver. 29. “For, immediately after these fatal wars, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the whole Jewish polity, government, laws, and religion, shall be utterly destroyed.” And Sir Isaac Newton, in his chapter of the prophetic language, confirms Dr. Clarke’s interpretation. For he says, that, ‘in sacred prophecy, the darkening, smiting, or setting of the sun, moon, and stars, is put for the ceasing of a kingdom, or for the desolation thereof, proportional to the darkness. Darkening the sun, turning the moon into blood, and falling of the stars, for the same.’

Ver. 30, 31. “And then it will become evident, that Jesus was the true and only Messiah. And then shall all the tribes of the land [of Israel] lament and mourn, and be forced to acknowledge the power, and glory, and majesty, of Christ, who will send forth his apostles into the world, who (as it were with the sound of a trumpet) shall gather into one body all those that believe and obey his gospel from all the nations of the earth.”

If Dr. Clake had stopped here, I apprehend that his interpretation would have been just. But he then proceeds to apply the same passages to the day of judgement, notwithstanding our Saviour’s express declaration, “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things are fulfilled.” As if he had said, “All that goes before relates to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the desolation, which is coming upon the nation of the Jews. I have

“no regard, in all that I have hitherto said, to the general judgment of mankind at the last day; but to events which shall all come to pass before this generation shall pass away.”

To take away the force of this argument, some have supposed that *γενεά* signifies not *an age*, but *a nation*. [See Mr. Joseph Mede's Works, p. 752. Brenni amica disputat. cum Jud. p. 90.]: And that, here, it denotes “the Jewish nation, which should not perish till all these things were fulfilled.” But *γενεά* signifies *an age*, in very many places of the *Septuagint*. So “one generation” signifies “one age.” Psal. cix. 13. Eccles. i. 4. Isai. xxxiv. 17. “Another generation” signifies “another age,” or “the children that should rise up after them.” Deut. xxix. 22. Jud. ii. 10. Psal. xlviii. 13. and lxxviii. 4. 6. and cii. 18. and cxlv. 4. “From generation to generation” signifies “from age to age.” Isa. li. 8. Lam. v. 19. Dan. iv. 34. Joel iii. 20. “All the generation” signifies “all the men of that age.” Numb. xxxii. 13. Deut. ii. 14. “The fourth generation” signifies “the fourth race, or succession of men, from the time then present.” Gen. xv. 16. Job xlii. 16. “The tenth generation” signifies “the tenth age, or race of men, from the time then spoken of.” Deut. xxiii. 3. “A thousand generations” signifies “one thousand ages.” Psal. cv. 8. “Many generations” signifies “many ages,” Psal. lxi. 6. Isai. lviii. 12. and lx. 15. Joel ii. 2. “All generations” signifies “every age.” Psal. xlv. 17. and xlix. 11. and lxxxv. 5. and lxxxix. 1. and xc. 1. and c. 5. and cii. 12. 24. and cvi. 31. and cxix. 90. and cxxxv. 13. and cxlvi. 10. And “this generation” signifies “this age,” or “this present race of men.” Gen. vii. 5.—More such authorities might be collected from the Seventy.

In the New Testament, “a generation” signifies “one age.” Matth. i. 17. Luke i. 48. 50. Acts xiii. 36. and xiv. 16. and xv. 21. Eph. iii. 5. Col. i. 26. And “this generation” signifies “this age.” Matth. xi. 16. and xii. 41, 42. 45. and xxiii. 36. Mark viii. 12. 38. Luke vii. 31. and xi. 29, 30, 31, 32. 50, 51. and xvii. 25.—More such authorities might be collected from the New Testament. Now, why should not *γενεά* [*a generation*] be taken in its usual signification in this place; especially as, in that sense, it contains a plain answer to the question of the disciples? But, if it be interpreted of the Jewish nation, it is no answer at all.

Our Lord had just been talking with some of his disciples concerning the demolishing of the buildings of the temple, which were strong and magnificent. And they asked him, “When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”

It is possible that the disciples might think that these events would come to pass at or near the same period of time. But, though they might be confused in their notions concerning the time, and imagine that these events would happen together, or very soon after one another, our Lord appears to me to have considered them as

two questions, and to have answered them separately and distinctly. Ver. 4—35. he answers the first question, viz. “When shall these things be? i. e. When shall the temple be destroyed, so that one stone shall not be left upon another? When shall such a desolation come?” To that our Lord answers, by setting before them several of the signs and tokens of its approach; and by describing the desolation itself. And then adds, “This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than any of my words fail of being accomplished.” But what answer to that question would it be to say, “The Jews shall continue a distinct people down to the day of judgement, or to the end of the world?” Or, according to Mr. Mede, “The nation of the Jews shall not perish till all these things be fulfilled?” What answer (I say) would that be to the question put by the disciples? or how would such a declaration connect with the preceding or following context?

Ver. 32, &c. Our Saviour intimates, that some of his disciples should live to see the signs and forerunners of that desolation, which was coming upon the Jews. And accordingly he says, “Now learn a parable from the fig-tree. When its branch is yet tender, and it putteth forth leaves, then you know that summer is near. So also ye, when ye shall see all these things, know ye that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.”

Now, what connection has the Jews continuing a distinct people throughout all ages with the signs and forerunners of that amazing desolation? or with the rest of our Saviour’s discourse in that place?

Ver. 36, &c. Our Saviour proceeds to answer their other question, viz. “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” And his answer, with respect to the time of his second coming, and of the world, is, “But of that day, and hour, knoweth no person, no not the angels, but my father only.” Dr. Clarke’s note upon this 36th verse is, “It is an extraordinary ingenious conjecture of Grotius, to make [*ἡμέρα ἐκείνη*, *that day*] here opposed to [*ταῦτα πάντα*, *all these things*], ver. 34. So that the sense may be, *ταῦτα πάντα*, *the destruction of Jerusalem* shall be presently. But *ἡμέρα ἐκείνη*, *the last day of judgement*, is known to none.”

Indeed, I would propose it as a much more just division, that the 25th chapter of St. Matthew’s gospel should begin at what is now the 36th verse of the 24th chapter. For that would preserve a proper connection with what is at present the beginning of the 25th chapter; in which it is said, *τότε*, “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, &c.” And yet no period of time is assigned when that shall be. Whereas, if, from Matth. xxiv. 36, &c. our Lord is speaking of the day of judgement, and of

the end of the world, it may very properly be said, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, &c."

Upon the whole: our Saviour's discourse [Matth. xxiv. 1—35.] relates to what was to come to pass, "during that generation." And, therefore, must relate to "the destruction of Jerusalem" only, and cannot relate to "the day of judgement, and to the end of the world." In the former sense, it was fully accomplished; and does not now remain to be accomplished.

(6.) By raising Lazarus so publicly from the dead, Jesus increased the number of his disciples [John xi. 46, &c.]. This alarmed the chief priests and Pharisees, who thereupon held a council, and deliberated what they should do. "For (said they) if we let him go on thus, all the nation will believe on him; and, taking him for the Messiah, they will set him up for their king. Upon which the Romans will come and take from us our country; and that share of power and government which still remains among us." And yet, on the other hand, if they had rashly apprehended Jesus, and put him to death; and it had, after all, appeared that he was an innocent person, that also might have proved of dangerous consequence.

Upon hearing them debate thus, and observing that they seemed at a loss to know what to resolve upon, Caiaphas, who was one of the council, and also high priest that year, standing up, said, "You know nothing at all; nor consider, that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people; and that the whole nation perish not."

Concerning which speech of Caiaphas, the evangelist adds, "This spake he, not of himself; but, being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. And not for that nation only; but that he should also gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad. Then, from that day forward, they took counsel together to put him to death."

Now this speech is alledged as a passage which contains a double sense, and requires a twofold interpretation. But in whose design were the words intended to convey a double meaning? If we regard the intention of Caiaphas, it is plain he designed to say, "that one man had better suffer death, whether he was innocent or no, than that the whole nation of the Jews should perish."—The Holy Spirit prophesied by the mouth of wicked Balaam; and by the mouth of the false prophet, who deceived Jadon, and led him to transgress the divine command, which occasioned his being slain by a lion. And the same spirit of truth and power could easily cause Caiaphas to pronounce a prophecy in words whose just meaning and propriety, and full extent and comprehension, he did not understand. Accordingly, the Spirit of God had but one single meaning to the words, viz. "that Jesus should die as a sacrifice for the people; i. e. for the nation of the Jews; and not for that nation only, but for all mankind. And that he might gather together,

“together, out of all the nations of the earth, the dispersed servants of God, into one holy church, united under one head, which is Christ Jesus; and joined together in one holy communion and fellowship; in the profession and practice of one faith and worship.”—So that, in Caiaphas’s intention, the words had but one signification. And, in the intention of the Holy Spirit, they had but one signification. And the intention of the Spirit is mentioned by the evangelist; otherwise we should not have known that that meaning was to be affixed to the words.

(7.) I will mention another passage; which, though not a prophecy, yet has been thought to contain a double sense. The passage is, Deut. xxv. 4. “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox, when he treadeth out the corn.” Which St. Paul applies thus [1 Cor. ix. 8, &c.] to prove that ministers ought to be supported by those to whom they preach the gospel. “Say I these things as a man? [Do I argue thus, from the principles of mere natural reason only?] Doth not the law say these things also? [Yes, it doth, in effect, say so]. For, in the law of Moses, it is written, ‘Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox, that treadeth out the corn.’ Now, doth it not say this chiefly for our sakes? For our sakes it was certainly written, that he, who plougheth, should plough in hope; and that he, who thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope.” From hence it has been inferred that this, which the apostle hath mentioned, was the allegorical sense of what Moses had said. And that, besides giving a law about oxen, Moses intended thereby to intimate “that they, who preach the gospel, should live by the gospel.” But what occasion is there for that, when the apostle’s argument is good without it? If the ox, which treadeth out the corn, is ordered to be unmuzzled, that he may eat of that, about which he labours; *a fortiori*, the ministers of the gospel of Christ should not be denied a support from that about which they labour.” Thus the law of Moses afforded St. Paul an argument to his present purpose. And it is a very good one. But it does not appear, that Moses, in that law, had any regard to the securing a maintenance for those who preach the gospel of Christ.

(8.) Gal. iv. 21, &c. St. Paul, having related the history of Abraham’s having Ishmael, by Hagar; and Isaac, by Sarah; adds, as in our translation, ver. 24. [“Which things are an allegory”]. Mr. Locke’s paraphrase of these words, is, “These things have an allegorical meaning.” Whereby it is intimated, ‘that, besides the literal sense, the Mosaic history of Abraham and his family had also a spiritual, mystical, or allegorical meaning; or that, in the intention of Moses, or of the Spirit of God which inspired Moses, the same passage in that history had two meanings; the one, a plain, obvious, and literal meaning; the other, an hidden, obscure, mystical, or allegorical meaning: that God originally intended, that, by these two women, Sarah and Hagar, should be prefigured the two covenants; viz. that of the law of Moses, and

‘ that of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that, in the ‘ secret meaning of the Mosaic history, he had intimated as much.’

Whereas St. Paul was far from saying or intending any such thing; as the learned author of the Dissertation, annexed to Mr. Pierce’s paraphrase and notes on Philippians, has made abundantly appear. The sum and substance of what is there said is, “ The “ proper translation of the words, ver. 24. *Ἀτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα*, “ is, ‘ which things are allegorized;’ that is, the history of Moses, “ concerning Abraham and his family, is ‘ allegorized’ by the prophet [Isa. liv. 1.]. And, in the prophet’s allegorical discourse, “ the two women, Sarah and Hagar, represent the two covenants, or “ the two dispensations, of the law of Moses, and the gospel of our “ Lord Jesus Christ.”

Now, what occasion is there to suppose a double sense in that part of the Mosaic history? We may take a passage out of Rapin’s History of England; and allegorize that, if we please. But that would not by any means prove that Rapin himself, besides the literal, historical sense of such a passage, intended also that allegorical meaning; or, besides the literal sense, comprehended the use and signification to which we apply his words.

In the book of Moses, called Genesis, the historical, literal sense, of the account of Abraham and his family, is the one, true sense. In Isaiah’s allegory, the one true sense is the allegorical sense. That allegorical sense has St. Paul quoted from the prophet. And, therefore, the one true sense of the words, as used by St. Paul, is not the historical or literal, but the allegorical sense.

S E C T. VI.

Objections, with their Answers.

Object. I. “ HAVE not divines, and other writers, in all ages of “ the church, used the words of Scripture by way of allusion or accommodation; turned history into allegory; and often used texts “ at their pleasure in a very different sense from that of their primary “ signification? And would you condemn so general a practice? have “ authors keep rigidly to the one true sense? take away all the ornaments of style, and spoil so much fine writing? How soon would “ the orator be struck dumb? What a poor figure would the man “ of elocution make, if your one, true sense must always be found “ out, and strictly kept to, throughout the whole discourse, founded “ on any particular text of Scripture?”

Answer. I should be sorry to offend the orator, or strike the man of eloquence dumb. But I am considering what is required in a commentator. And it seems to be his business to find out the one, true sense of Holy Scripture; and to set it before his reader in as clear a light as he can. However, it might not be amiss for preachers to attend a little more to the one, true sense of Holy Scripture than is frequently done. And that it would not spoil their

their eloquence, but increase and exalt it, was the opinion of one who will be allowed to be a very good judge. [See the archbishop of Cambray's Dialogues on Eloquence, English edition, p. 158.]. 'It mangles the Scripture to shew it to Christians only in separate passages. And, however great the beauty of such passages may be, it can never be fully perceived, unless one knows the connection of them. For every thing in Scripture is connected. And this coherence is the most great and wonderful to be seen in the sacred writings. For want of a due knowledge of it, preachers mistake those beautiful passages, and put upon them what sense they please. They content themselves with some ingenious interpretation; which, being arbitrary, has no force to persuade men, and to reform their manners.'

P. 159. 'I would have them at least not think it enough to join together a few passages of Scripture that have no real connection. I would have them explain the principles and the series of the Christian doctrine; and take the spirit, the style, and the figures, of it: that all their discourses may serve to give the people a right understanding and true relish of God's word, 'there needs no more to make preachers eloquent.' For, by doing this, they would imitate the best models of antient eloquence.'

And again, p. 161. 'It is here that our preachers are most defective. Most of their fine sermons contain only philosophical reasonings. Sometimes they preposterously quote the Scripture, only for the sake of decency or ornament. And it is not regarded as the word of God, but as the invention of man.' Thus far the eloquent Monsieur Fenelon, archbishop of Cambray.

Let me further add, that the true eloquence of a preacher is to make the people wise unto salvation; that the one, true sense of Holy Scripture will do more towards this, than all the eloquence of Tully or Demosthenes without it; and that, however fine allusions, accommodations, allegories, and figures of rhetoric, may be, yet they can only serve to embellish and illustrate the truth. They cannot prove any thing. That must be done by the one, true sense of the various texts alledged. And can be done no other way. And, when they have done that, I have no objection to their making use of allusions, accommodations, or allegories, in order to embellish their discourses, or illustrate the truth, provided they do not insist upon them as the original and true meaning of such passages of sacred Scripture.

Object. II. "Several texts of Scripture are difficult; and it is dubious which is the true sense: must you not there allow of double senses?"

Answer. When a difficult text is considered, and the person, who attempts to explain it, is dubious which is the true interpretation, he may very rationally give all the senses which carry any appearance of probability, with the reasons for each interpretation, and leave it to his readers, or hearers, to judge which is the true sense. But, in that case, there is but one true sense. And his not being able to ascertain

ascertain what that is can be no proof of the text's being originally intended to have more significations than one.

Object. III. "Do not you allow of types and shadows? or that persons and actions, under the Old Testament, were types of Jesus Christ, or of something under the Christian dispensation? And, if you allow of types, you must allow of double senses in some texts; or that some passages of Scripture, besides their immediate and direct meaning, had also a further, i. e. a mystical or typical signification."

Answer. I acknowledge that God was the author of both dispensations, viz. "the law of Moses," and "the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:" that, before he put either of them in execution, he had the plan of both clear in his own mind; that in several things there is a resemblance between them; and that God not only foresaw that resemblance, but also intended it; that, wherever the law or the prophets have declared, that the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic constitution were intended to point out a moral obligation, or to prefigure the Messiah, or something in the Christian dispensation, there that moral intention, or prophetic prefiguration, is the one, true sense of the text. But, where neither the law, nor the prophets, have pointed out such an intention, there the resemblance between the two dispensations could not be discovered till the events, which bear a resemblance to former things, were come to pass. Then, indeed, such a similitude would illustrate such events; intimate that the two dispensations had one and the same author; and facilitate the spread of Christianity among the Jews. But discerning that resemblance between the two dispensations must arise from having them both before us, and comparing the one with the other; and not from the double sense of any text of Scripture in the Old Testament or in the New.

As to types, in the common acceptation of that word, there were several under the Old Testament. [See *Isai.* xx. 1, &c. *Jer.* xiii. 1. &c. and xviii. 1, &c. and xix. 1, &c. and xxiv. 1, &c. and xxvii. 1, &c. and xxviii. 10, &c. and li. 63, 64. *Ezek.* ii. 8, &c. and iii. 1, &c. and iv. 1, &c. and v. 1, &c. and vii. 23. and xii. 1—20. and xxxvii. 1, &c. *Hos.* i. 2, &c. and iii. 1, &c. *Zach.* xi. 7, &c.]. In this sense also our Saviour's cursing the barren fig-tree was typical of the destruction of the nation of the Jews, who had leaves, but no fruit, made a great shew and profession of religion, without bringing forth the fruits of holiness and righteousness. [*Matth.* xxi. 18, &c. *Mark* xi. 12, &c. with which compare *Luke* xiii. 6, &c.]. And so was Agabus's taking up St. Paul's girdle, to bind his own hands and feet, in order to foretell that the apostle should be so bound at Jerusalem. [*Acts* xxi. 10, &c.]. In all these cases, it is evident that the design was, by such persons, things, or actions, to prefigure such and such future events. And the typical sense there is the one, true sense of the place; as any one may see by examining the several passages with any tolerable care and attention.

Object.

Object, IV. "Are not many passages in the New Testament taken from the Old Testament, and used in a quite different sense from what they have as they stand in the original writing? And must not these be called double senses of the words of sacred Scripture?"

Answer. It is acknowledged that our Lord, and his apostles and evangelists, have taken several passages from the Old Testament; and used them in a very different sense from what they have as connected with the place from whence they were taken. But that will not prove a double sense of the words. I may quote a passage from Homer or Virgil, Herodotus or Livy, to express my present meaning, and in quite another sense from what it has in those ancient authors. But that will not prove that those ancient authors intended their words should be understood in two senses. In the original intention, they had only one meaning. In my accommodation of them, they had only one meaning. And, though the same words may have different ideas affixed to them, and be used by successive speakers or writers in various senses; yet that does not prove that, in the original intention, they had more than one signification.

Object, V. "Is not the epistle to the Hebrews a strong proof of double senses? And has not the author of it abundantly shewn, that in the spiritual meaning of the law of Moses was contained the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?"

Answer. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews has argued very justly; as will plainly appear, when the design of his writing is attended to, and his argument clearly understood.—The Hebrew Christians were in danger of apostatizing from the gospel, and of returning to the Jewish religion again. And they were induced to that change, partly out of fear of persecution from the unbelieving Jews, and partly by the subtle arguments which they alledged. Besides proper arguments to support them under persecution, or the prospect of it, the apostle answers the arguments of the unbelieving Jews, and that very solidly, q. d. 'You prefer the law of Moses as more excellent than the gospel of Christ. But let us compare them together, and see wherein they resemble one another, and wherein they differ. And from such a comparison it will appear, that, in both respects, the gospel has the advantage. And will you go back from a better dispensation to a worse? Was the law given by angels? The gospel was given by our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head of the angels, and to whom they are all in subjection. Was Moses, the servant of God, the great Jewish lawgiver? A greater and more excellent person, Jesus, the son of God, is the great Christian lawgiver. Did Joshua give the people of Israel rest, after they had passed through the wilderness; and settle them in the land of Canaan? That was not the final rest; for king David spoke of another rest long after; even the final rest of God's people, which Jesus will give us in the heavenly Canaan, and which is perfect, and durable. There remaineth, therefore, that everlasting rest for the people of God.—Had the Jews a succession

‘ succession of mortal men for their high priests? Jesus Christ is
 ‘ our great high priest, and is not succeeded by any, but has an un-
 ‘ changeable priesthood; a priesthood which resembles not that
 ‘ of Aaron, but of Melchizedec, who was both king and priest of
 ‘ the most high God, who is not represented as coming of any
 ‘ priestly descent, nor as succeeded by any priestly line. In like
 ‘ manner, Jesus Christ is actually both king and priest, not descend-
 ‘ ed from any priestly line, nor has he any successor in his high office
 ‘ and dignity.

‘ Have the Jews had a tabernacle, or temple, in which their
 ‘ priests used to minister? Jesus Christ is gone into the holy of
 ‘ holies; and is a minister of the true, the heavenly, tabernacle, or
 ‘ temple. The law had only the shadow, the rough draught, or
 ‘ imperfect delineation, of good things to come. The gospel has
 ‘ the substance, and contains those very good things themselves.
 ‘ Did the Jews offer the sacrifices of bulls and goats? Jesus Christ
 ‘ has offered himself as a sacrifice; and, by that one offering, has
 ‘ perfected for ever those that are sanctified.—In short, wherein-
 ‘ soever the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ resemble one ano-
 ‘ ther, there the gospel has the preference: whereinssoever they dif-
 ‘ fer; there also the gospel is more excellent. And would any wise
 ‘ man go from a more excellent dispensation, to one that was evi-
 ‘ dently much less excellent?’

All this must be allowed to be very just reasoning. But wherein does it favour double senses, or double interpretations, of Holy Scripture?

Object. VI. “What! would you limit the wisdom and power of
 “ God? When God speaks to men, he can take in a large com-
 “ pass; and can easily comprehend more in one sentence, or one
 “ word, than short-sighted, mortal men can do in a whole volume
 “ of the most profound, elaborate, or comprehensive writing!”

Answer. The matter now in debate is not what God can do, but what he has done. Whatever God can do; whenever he has made a revelation to men, he has always seen fit to reveal his mind and will in such a familiar, condescending manner, as to use words and phrases in the sense in which they were commonly used at the time, and in the place, where such a revelation was first given. And, indeed, if he had done otherwise, men could not have understood him. And revelation not understood would be no revelation at all.

But this objection may be turned just the other way; and it may be said to them that make it, “What! would you limit the wisdom
 “ and power of God? When God speaks to men, will you repre-
 “ sent him as speaking with the obscurity or equivocation of an
 “ Heathen oracle? Cannot he speak the language of any age or
 “ country in so clear and intelligible a manner as to have one cer-
 “ tain and determinate meaning, so that his words may be under-
 “ stood, and his will complied with? Will you allow Homer or
 “ Herodotus, Xenophon or Livy, to express themselves clearly and
 “ distinctly?”

“ distinctly ? And cannot the wisdom and power of God equal, or
 “ excell, the most plain and intelligible of all the writers of anti-
 “ quity ? What method, therefore, can now be taken to interpret
 “ any passage of Scripture ; but to consult the original ; to examine
 “ it according to the rules of grammar, rhetoric, and close atten-
 “ tion to the age and country, customs and language, of that time
 “ and place ; the character of the speaker, or writer, and of the
 “ persons addressed to, or spoken of ; and the scope and connection
 “ of the whole discourse ?

“ When God speaks to men, he certainly knows how to speak to
 “ their apprehensions. And such is his goodness, that one may
 “ reasonably expect that he will do so.”

Object. VII. “ Do not you too much confine the sense of the
 “ sacred writings ? and suppose the design and meaning of the
 “ apostles to be less general than it seems to have been ? Or, in
 “ other words, do you imagine that the apostolic epistles were
 “ written only for the use of the churches, or persons, to whom
 “ they were addressed, or to whom they were first sent ? Or how far
 “ do they concern Christians in all ages and countries whatever ?”

Answer. I look upon this to be a question of very great moment,
 and which deserves a most careful consideration.

All the books of the New Testament (except the Revelation of
 St. John) seem at first view to have been merely occasional writings ;
 designed for some particular persons, or churches, or, at the most,
 for some particular countries.

The Revelation of St. John, indeed, does not seem to have
 been an occasional writing. For that apostle was, by the divine com-
 mand, ordered to write in a book what was then revealed to him.
 And, I am sorry to say it, many Christians have exceedingly slighted
 that book ; notwithstanding the express order which the apostle had
 to write it ; and the divine declaration at the beginning of that
 book [Rev. i. 3.] ; “ Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear,
 “ the words of this prophecy ; and keep [‘ or observe’] the things
 “ which are written therein ;” and the solemn execration, denounced
 at the end of the book, against those who shall add to it, or diminish
 from it [Rev. xxii. 18, 19.]. The difficulty of some parts of that
 book may have discouraged many from studying of it. And others
 may perhaps have been induced to slight it, from the prophane and
 petulant observation of a divine of a four wit in the last age ; who
 has been pleased to call it “ a mysterious, extraordinary book ;
 “ which perhaps the more it is studied, the less it is understood ;
 “ as generally finding a man crackt, or making him so.” [See
 South’s Sermons, vol. II. p. 467.]. Surely, a most indecent way
 of speaking of any part of sacred Scripture !

St. Matthew’s gospel is said to have been written for the use of
 the Jewish Christians, more especially in Judæa ; to leave among
 them, when the apostles were going to preach among the Gentiles.
 The gospel of St. Mark was written at the request of the brethren
 at Rome ; and more immediately for their use and benefit. St.

Luke’s

Luké's gospel, and the Acts of the apostles, seem to have been the first and second part of the same book, inscribed to Theophilus, and perhaps written, at his request, to inform him of the first beginnings of Christianity, and of the progress which it had made. And Theophilus is thought by some to have been governor of a province in Greece; or some great man whom St. Luke had converted to the Christian faith.

St. John's gospel was written at the request of the Christians at Ephesus; and as a supplement to the other three gospels. And the several epistles were evidently written to particular churches, or persons, as occasions then required, and more peculiarly suited to their circumstances.—So far were the books of the New Testament occasional writings.

But, if St. Matthew's gospel was written in Hebrew, for the use of the Hebrew Christians (as some suppose), it must have been translated for the use of the Hellenist, and Gentile, Christians. And the present Greek does not carry any marks of a translation. St. Matthew, therefore, might possibly publish it both in Hebrew and Greek. But, however these things be, as it was published in Greek, it must have been designed for the benefit of Christians in general. And, if the brethren of Rome requested it of St. Mark to write his gospel, and had it first, others had it afterwards. And it became of public benefit to the Christians in general; for whose benefit it was calculated, as well as that of St. Matthew's.—St. Luke's inscribing his gospel and the Acts of the apostles to Theophilus might possibly be no more than our dedicating a book to some person of eminence; when the book is, nevertheless, intended for the use of the public.—St. John's writing his gospel at the request of the brethren at Ephesus, and that as a supplement to the other three gospels, is a plain proof that the other three gospels were then common among the churches, and well known to the Christians; that St. John's gospel was intended to be as public; and, finally, that the primitive Christians were not indifferent about what their Lord had said and done, but had an ardent desire to know as much as they could with certainty of the doctrine, life, actions, and sufferings, of that dear and eminent person.

The apostolic epistles were not circular letters, addressed to the Christian church, or to all Christians at large; but were, undoubtedly, written upon some particular occasions; and addressed to some particular churches or persons. But they, nevertheless, spread into other churches; and were valued and read by other Christians. St. Paul expressly ordered some of his epistles to be read publicly; and that not only in the churches to which they were written; but also in other churches.—St. Peter had read the epistles of his beloved brother Paul; not only those written to some of the churches in Asia minor, but to other churches also.—It was, doubtless, with a view to their being known and distinguished from any epistles, which might be forged under his name, that St. Paul wrote the salutation with his own hand, at the end of all his epistles.

The Jews, in our Saviour's time, are said "to have had Moses and the prophets." May not we as justly be said "to have the evangelists and apostles," in having their writings so common among us? Christians in former ages had these sacred writings in the highest veneration; read them privately in their families and closets; and publicly in their churches; spread them far and wide through the earth; and handed them down to us as a public treasure, designed for the benefit of Christians in all ages and nations.

In the essay on inspiration annexed to 1 Timothy, I have observed that the apostles had the whole scheme of the Christian doctrine by divine illumination; and constantly retained it during the remaining part of their lives. What, therefore, they preached or wrote concerning the Christian doctrine may be depended upon; whatever was the occasion of their so preaching or writing. If Jesus Christ and his apostles had not first preached and worked miracles, met with such opposition or success, acted or suffered, as they did, the sacred historians could not have had the facts which they have recorded in their writings; nor the Christian religion have been attended with that illustrious evidence, which now appears in the books of the New Testament. Besides, there are not wanting some hints of their epistles being designed for general use. For instance: the first epistle to the Corinthians is directed, not only to the Christians in Corinth, but "unto all, who, in every place, invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours." And there is no question, but that every one of their epistles were intended to be of as extensive benefit as they were capable of.

The four Gospels and the Acts of the apostles seem to contain all the essential parts of the Christian religion. But the epistles contain things useful, and of very great moment. The excellent laws, which Solon gave the Athenians, contained the substance of all their laws: but yet the Athenians found it proper to add many particular laws, as elucidations of Solon's general rules.—The laws of the twelve tables at Rome contained, in a narrow compass, the substance of the Roman law: but they found it requisite to add many particular laws to illustrate and explain those of the twelve tables.—The ten commandments contained the sum and substance of the Mosaic law: but yet God saw fit to add many particular precepts, to explain and enforce the observation of the ten commandments.—And, finally, "the law of Moses" contained the rules of the Jewish religion and government; but yet God saw fit, by the prophets, from time to time, to give that nation many particular precepts for enforcing, explaining, and illustrating the law of Moses.—In like manner; the four Gospels and the Acts of the apostles contain a summary of the Christian doctrine and precepts. They direct us to believe in God; and in Jesus Christ, as the Messiah and Saviour of the world. They inculcate the necessity of repentance, where men have done amiss; and of prevailing holiness in all. But they do not always apply these general directions to particular cases so minutely and circumstantially as do the apostles in their epistles.

The four Gospels give an account of the ministry of John Baptist, and of our Lord, of the twelve apostles and of the seventy disciples; with what they said and did as preparatory to the setting up the kingdom of the Messiah in the world. The Acts of the apostles contain the history of erecting the gospel-kingdom. In the Epistles; several things are cleared up, which are but briefly hinted in the Gospels and Acts of the apostles. They were written by different persons at various times and upon different occasions; and yet they all agree in the doctrines and precepts; and confirm the main facts, viz. that Jesus died and rose again, ascended into heaven; and poured out the spirit; and thereby imparted the knowledge of the gospel unto mankind; and many miraculous powers in attestation to the Christian doctrine.

It might be expected that the religions, which had been long in possession, would obstruct the progress of the gospel; and that the votaries of each would have their peculiar objections. Accordingly, we find in the epistles that the Jews and Heathens did actually make such objections; and we see also in what manner the apostles have answered them; and that the nature of the gospel and its evidences were such, and so glorious, that it speedily made its way against various and powerful opposition. The first professors, and more especially the first preachers, of the gospel, might expect persecution from several quarters. The Acts of the apostles, and their Epistles, inform us that they were actually persecuted; and let us know how they behaved, and what supported them under such hardships and indignities.

By having Christianity set in such different lights; and the objections of those who first opposed it so clearly and fully answered; we are enabled much better to understand Christianity in its great extent and glorious evidence; to clear up such difficulties, as would otherwise have been insuperable, and to defend it against all its adversaries.

By shewing what pure Christianity was at the beginning, we are able much more clearly to point out what it ought now to be, and what are the corruptions of it in later ages; and we have thereby the proper means, in our hands, of shewing which way a reformation might be effected. And, when and where Christianity is professed in its purity, by having the authentic and original records of it in its primitive glory and perfection, we can the better maintain the purity of it, and prevent future corruptions.

Some, indeed, have applied passages in the Epistles to Christians of all ages, which were designed only for some Christians, and in some particular cases: but that is one of the abuses of Holy Scripture, against which we are here guarding mankind. What might be a proper rule, to persons indued with miraculous powers, can be no rule to us who have no such powers. And yet even such passages are of service now-a-days; as they are a clear proof that, in the primitive church, there were such powers; and consequently the most glorious evidence attended Christianity, when it first made its appearance

appearance in the world. Epistles, written to churches, where the apostles had many and bitter enemies; and which contain appeals to such churches, that such spiritual gifts and miraculous powers had been communicated by them, and did then subsist and abound; contain arguments of a peculiar kind in favour of the truth of the Christian religion. For, if there had been, among their converts, no such spiritual gifts and miraculous powers, their enemies would not have failed to have insulted them, and triumphed over them: and Christianity must, in a short time, have sunk, as a most notorious imposture. [See my Reasonableness of the Christian Religion, &c. p. 128, &c.]

It has been already observed that the apostolic epistles were not circular letters, nor catholic epistles, originally written to all Christians; and equally suited to the cases and circumstances of all Christian churches, at all times and in all places. The general doctrines and precepts do, indeed, equally concern all Christians. And the apostolic epistles, which were written to particular churches, or persons, and exactly adapted to their case, are fairly applicable to the cases of all churches and of all Christians, as far as their cases are like those of the persons, or churches, to which they were originally addressed. — This is not confining their meaning; nor extending it, as I apprehend, beyond what the apostles designed; or beyond the intention of that sacred spirit, by which they were guided and directed in all that they spoke or wrote, relating to the doctrine of the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The CONCLUSION.

To conclude: It appears to me that a critical interpreter of holy Scripture should set out with this, as a first principle; viz. “That no text of Scripture has more than one meaning.” *That one true sense* he should endeavour to find out, as he would find out the sense of Homer, or any other ancient writer. When he has found out that sense, he ought to acquiesce in it. And so ought his readers too; unless, by the just rules of interpretation, they can shew that he has mistaken the passage; and that another is the one, just, true, and critical sense of the place.

END OF VOL. IV.









