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A
LETTER
TO A
BISHOP,
Concerning some
Important Discoveries
IN
PHILOSOPHY and THEOLOGY.



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MY LORD,



THEISM, Deism, and the whole Train of Opinions that attend what is commonly called Free-thinking, flow from a settled Disbelief and Contempt of Revelation.

This Disbelief is in a great measure owing to the want of a fair and unprejudiced Examination of the numerous and various Proofs and Evidences, that support the Truth and Authority of the Scriptures.

But it is chiefly grounded on a firm Persuasion, that human Understanding, is a sufficient Guide to Man, and the test and measure of all matters of Belief; so that we are at liberty, nay indeed bound, to reject whatever does not answer those Notions, which, by what we call Reasoning, we have fixed.

That modern Discoveries, the Fruit of Genius and Application only, have fixed and determined to a certainty the Laws and Causes of the principal Operations, and Phenomena of Nature, which were wholly unknown to the Antients, and mistaken by the Authors of the Books which are received as Revelation.

That therefore these Books, so far as they give accounts of Nature, contrary to Experience, and Demonstration resulting from it, are false; and consequently can, in no other point, pass for infallible.

That the Scriptures relate a great many marvellous, improbable, nay incredible Transactions, which do not seem to be directed to any purpose, suited to sovereign Wisdom and Goodness; and to contain a world of Institutions, Laws, Observances and Ceremonies, which to Freethinkers appear absurd, frivolous and ridiculous; unworthy the supposed Author, and improper to attain the proposed End.

When any apparent mistake in Natural Philosophy is objected to the Scriptures, the Answer commonly given is, in my opinion, stronger than the Objection, according to the views of the Disputants on either side; that these Things, being incidental only, are spoken *ad captum humanum*, and accommodated to the Understandings of those, to whom they were deliver'd; tho' I confess, it wou'd be a much more comfortable Answer, if it cou'd be said, and prov'd, that the Things objected to are true.

When Freethinkers ground themselves upon any improbable, or, as they will call it, incredible or absurd Relation, there is no answering them without bringing together, and laying before them, the whole Evidence that serves for supporting Revelation; which, when poised in the scale against all Objections of this kind that ever have been made, in my opinion, may certainly outweigh them: but, the misfortune is, the Objection glares, can be taken in by a very moderate Capacity, and requires no Learning, and but little Attention to comprehend it; whereas, without long Study, great Learning, close Attention, and a dispassionate and unprejudic'd Examination

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tion, the Evidence for Revelation cannot be collected and weighed. Whoever therefore lets in the Strength of the Objection, and, for want of Learning, or Attention (not to speak of natural Prejudices) either cannot, or will not give himself the trouble to collect and weigh the Proofs on the other side, must necessarily give it against Revelation, and fortify himself in his Incredulity.

And to this it is owing that all those, who, in this indolent and luxurious Age, pretend to Politeness, and aim at Knowledge, and the Reputation of Understanding and Science, without any Expence of Learning or Labour, and without any Interruption to their Pleasures or Pursuits, take up with Objections against Revelation, without the painful Examination of the Evidence that supports it; lock down with Contempt on Believers, as a parcel of prejudiced Enthusiasts, and inlist themselves with Freethinkers, as the honestest, wisest Set of Men living.

And when Men, carried by Pleasures, or sunk in Indolence, settle once upon these Notions, every Institution, Ordinance, or Ceremony appointed in Scripture, for which Christians cannot, or do not, assign an adequate Use or End, becomes fresh matter of objection, and tends to rivet and confirm Infidelity.

This facility of receiving and taking up with Objections, and the criminal Indolence and Neglect of those who do not give themselves the trouble to examine, with due care, the Merits of the Answer, has been long complain'd of, and lamented by all who wish well to Mankind, but hitherto in vain; something more than Argument must intervene to cool them in the pursuit of Pleasures, to rouse their Attention to their real Interest, and to determine

them to search with Care and Industry; before they will let in so much as a suspicion that their Objections are ill-founded; or those Objections must be overthrown by some other and shorter Mean than the complicated Evidence for the Authority of Revelation, else the Objectors will never give themselves the trouble to discover their mistakes.

Some time ago, as my Thoughts were employed in these disagreeable Reflections, a Set of Books were sent me by my Bookseller to look over; the Titles were odd, and provoked my Curiosity: *Moses's Principia, parts 1st and 2d; An Essay toward a Natural History of the Bible; Moses's---sine Principio: A new Account of the Confusion of Tongues, and the Names and Attributes of the Trinity of the Gentiles*; were inscribed at the Head of these several Tracts, all published successively, in different Years, from the Year 1724: And these are followed by another Work, that was publish'd very lately, entitled, *A Treatise of Power, Essential and Mechanical.*

Running over these Books cursorily, I readily perceiv'd the Author propos'd to prove that the Hebrew Scriptures had never been, and are not now, truly translated; or perfectly understood by those who pretend to be learned; that, rightly translated and understood, they comprise a perfect System of Natural Philosophy, as well as a compleat Body of Theology and Religion; that they no where assert any of those Hetrodoxes in Philosophy, which modern Observation shew to be such; but, on the contrary, teach and aver every thing that has been truly gather'd from Observations or Experiments, recent or antient; and propose, and explain mechanical Principles different from, nay in many things diametrically opposite to, those now receiv'd; by which all the various
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Operations in Nature are perform'd, and which tally with, and can be supported by, every Observation and Experiment that hath been truly taken or made : That the seeming Absurdities, with which the Scriptures are charged, either are not in the original, and are therefore owing to the Ignorance or perverse Design of the Translators; or are, when rightly understood, no Blemishes, but Beauties in the Revelation ; and that the many Institutions, Declarations and Observances, which appear frivolous to those who do not understand them, are the product of perfect Wisdom and Contrivance, necessary to explain and preserve the Religion inculcated in the Old Testament, and fit to prepare for that which afterwards was delivered in the New.

But though I easily gather'd this to be the Author's Proposal and Intention ; yet, upon looking into Particulars, I found the Proofs depended so much on the true Construction of the *Hebrew* Language, to which I was very much a Stranger ; and on an exact Knowledge of the Experiments and Observations that have been made on the Works of Nature, with which I am but very little acquainted ; that his Reasoning, almost every where, appear'd to me intricate and arbitrary ; and I was not without some Doubts that the Obscurity I complain'd of proceeded partly from Design, for Reasons that I cou'd not penetrate.

Finding, from my own Want of Knowledge, such Difficulty in examining the Proofs offer'd to support Propositions of such universal Import to Mankind, and which I wish'd so earnestly to discover to be conclusive and true ; I resorted to several learned Men of my Acquaintance, skill'd in the antient Language, on which the Author grounds himself ; and conver-

fant in the Observations and Experiments, on which the modern Philology of Nature is built, not doubting but they had consider'd, and fram'd a cer ain Judgment of his Works : But, to my great Surprise, tho' all of them had heard of, and seen some Part of those Tracts, yet not one of them had given himself the Trouble to examine them. They complain'd of the Intricacy and Abstruseness of the Author's Way of writing, and concluded him so, certainly, to be half-learn'd, visionary, and in the Wrong, because his Notions were contradictory to what they, by long Study, had adopted and made their own ; that they laid aside his Books without any farther Enquiry, as what did not deserve, or wou'd not answer the Trouble of an Examination.

Tho' I cou'd have relied on these Gentlemen's Judgment, if they had consider'd the Author's Opinions and Arguments with any Care ; yet finding that they had censur'd without Examination, and not being able to meet with any Person whatever, who had given himself the Trouble of canvassing with due Attention his Arguments, on a Matter of so general Concern ; I rubb'd up the little *Hebrew* I had, and address'd myself to a more careful Perusal of the Books ; not with any Hopes of being able finally to judge of the Certainty of his supposed Discoveries, but with a Design to collect the general Drift and Tendency of his Reasoning, to the End I might lay it before those whose are infinitely better able to judge than my self ; and who, from seeing scatter'd Hints brought together, might be invited to consider the Matter more seriously ; to condemn and refute any Thing that is false, and to approve, support and propagate every Thing that is true. For

I cannot help think it some Reproach to the Curiosity, as well as religious Zeal of the Clergy of this Nation, that Sentiments so new and surprizing, in Matters of Religion, shou'd have been stalking about for so many Years, without meeting with any Examination, Approbation, or Confutation.

To give your Lordship, then, from whose great Proficiency in the Eastern Learning, the only Foundation of Scripture-Knowledge; and your thorough Knowledge of natural Things from whence all Ideas of Beings and Things invisible are convey'd; your known Readiness to forward any Work in Favour of Religion; especially a Work of this Kind to establish the true Meaning of the Scriptures much wanted, I expect a Solution of my Doubts; an Account of these Things that have made the greatest Impression on me, in the Order in which I have been able to comprehend them.

The Author affirms (what I think most of the learned World, at present, agree in) that pointing in the *Hebrew* Writings is a modern Invention, some Centuries later than the Days of our Saviour, contriv'd alter the Language ceas'd to be commonly spoken by the *Jews*, to favour their own Constructions, and therefore of no Authority to determine the Sense of any Word, but for that Reason to be avoided.

That as the Understanding, so the proper and original Sense of many of the *Hebrew* Words us'd to express Matters of Importance in Philosophy and Theology, was, in some Degree, alter'd or lost, when the Children of *Israel* made Defections from the true Religion, before the *Babylonish* Captivity; so in the Dispersion that attended that Captivity, the pure *Hebrew* was altogether beat out of common

mon Usage, and the Knowledge of it remain'd only amongst the few that were learn'd, and attentive to the true Religion and Philosophy that was deliver'd by *Moses*, and the other inspired Writers.

That the *Greek* Translation, commonly called the *Septuagint*, being made long after the Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity, when the genuine Sense of the *Hebrew* Words was, in a great Measure, lost, is extremely imperfect; partly as the *Greek* Language is destitute of Words to convey the full and proper Meaning of the *Hebrew* Expressions; partly as the Translators might have been ignorant, and might have accommodated their Interpretation to their own Views, in Philosophy and Theology which were corrupted; and partly as they durst not (had their Understanding been better) translate, in some Points truly, for Fear of provoking the *Egyptians*, in whose Country they compos'd their Translation; and whose Gods, had they given a faithful Translation, they must to the last Degree vilify and affront.

That, nevertheless, this and other Translations so fully discover the Genius of the *Hebrew* Language, and so certainly translate Words, when employ'd about Matters that the Interpreters were under no Biass to render falsely, that a Key from thence may be made for construing, with Certainty, the whole *Hebrew* Scriptures.

The Author avers that the *Hebrew* Language (from which, it seems pretty certain, the *Phenician*, the *Chaldee*, the *Syriack*, the *Arabick*, the *Greek*, the *Latin*, and divers other Branches were deriv'd) was the original one; fram'd in *Paradise*, and with this particularity, that each Root is taken from some particular Beast, Bird, Plant, Flower, or some other sensible

sible Object, and employ'd to represent some very obvious Idea of Action or Condition rais'd by such sensible Object, from whence it is further carried to signify spiritual or mental Things, of which we can frame Ideas only by the Help of material or bodily Things.

He denies that any one Root in the whole Language conveys Ideas of a different Meaning; and affirms that one, and but one, leading Sense runs through all the Formation of the same Root; contrary to the establish'd Doctrine of the *Jews*, who by Variety of arbitrary Pointings, ascribe different, and contradictory Senses very often to a Word compos'd of the very same Letters; with Design, as our Author suggests, to darken the Sense of the Scriptures chiefly, if not altogether, in those Points, which contain the Knowledge of the Christian System, and the Religion of the Heathens.

After observing that there is not one Line of authentick *Hebrew*, left in the whole World, but what is compris'd in the Books of the Old Testament, our Author insists that there is one, and but one, certain Way of decyphering it, that is, by comparing every Word in all the various Combinations and Sentences in which it appears, and gathering from thence the leading or original Idea it was intended to raise; which is ever, from such Comparison, with Certainty to be collected.

He says, That tho' all the modern *Hebreicians* had the use of very accurate Concordances, that might have help'd them forward in this Investigation, yet their Progress was marr'd by the blind Respect they paid to the false or fraudulent Pointings of their Adversaries the *Jews*; and that he, shaking himself loose from those Fetters, has been
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able to settle the genuine Meaning of every important Word in the whole Old Testament.

And from the fix'd and perpetual Meaning of the Words so explain'd, he says he is able to shew that the Scriptures, however disguised and disfigured by the Translation, are written with the utmost Accuracy, Propriety, and Truth; that they contain a perfect System of natural Philosophy, and, upon that grafted, a compleat System of Theology, so far as Mankind is capable of receiving that sublime Knowledge, and unerring Rules for all religious Service and Belief.

Through the whole of his Works he attempts to define, and determine the true Sense of a great many Words us'd by *Moses* and the Prophets, in the Description of the Formation of the World, and the Preservation and Support of all the Operations that are carried on in it; he avers that the Descriptions, by them given in these Words, contain a mechanical Account of all the Powers, and of the Operations carried on in, and by this material System; and he insists that all the *Phenomena* in Nature can be accounted for by the Principles laid down by them.

But to give you as clear a View, as I am able, of the further Design of our Author; He supposes it will not be denied to him; that Man, a Compound of Soul and Body, cannot frame to himself, or compare Ideas, but such as are taken from sensible Objects: What Powers or Faculties the Soul might have, if detached from the Body, we cannot know; but as we are now made, we upon moderate Reflection discover, that the Soul of Man, in this State, has not Power to frame to itself, or to receive any Idea that does not come from the Senses, at least

least from some Feeling or Sensation communicated to it by, or through the Body.

The Sun, the Light, the Air, the Earth, the Body of Man we can frame Ideas of, as we can of the manner of their Acting, and being acted upon; but the Soul which perceives and compares those Ideas we can frame no manner of Idea of, nor of its manner of Acting, or being acted upon.

And we, who know that we have no Capacity to conceive any Idea of any Thing that does not affect our Senses, must conclude that our not perceiving is no Proof that there may not be Millions of different Beings and Substances round us, besides those that affect our Senses, of which, and of their Powers or Actions, we can know nothing.

As Man has not the least Idea of the Matter or Substance of his own Soul, or of its manner of Acting, or being acted upon; so he has no Capacity of Reasoning about it, by comparing it with Things perceiv'd: He cannot, for Example, compare it with Space, or Figure; he cannot say it is, or is not, comprehended within Limits of any Kind; he cannot say it moves, or does not move, or at all imagine how it is supported, or acts.

We perceive how a solid Body is moved by the impulse of another solid Body, or of a Fluid, and is continued in Motion so long as the Impulse lasts; and we can conceive how a Plant, or Animal may be supported, may grow, or decay, mechanically, by the Operation of different material Agents; but we can have no Conception how the Soul acts on itself, or on Matter, how it is acted upon, or how it is supported.

And being so much in the dark concerning the principal Part of our selves, the only knowing Thing
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in us, it is no Wonder we shou'd be incapable of framing any just Idea of that invisible spiritual Being, by which we, and every other created Thing, were made.

Our Author thinks that by the Light of Nature only, Men could not possibly have discover'd whether this material System, which, he says, is so framed as to be a self-moving Machine, existed from Eternity, and was the Cause and Support of itself, and of every Thing in it; or whether it was contrived, and the Parts of it put together by an higher Hand. But be that as it will, and were it even to be suppos'd that Man, by thorough Observation, and by a just Induction cou'd discover *a posteriori* the Existence of some eternal self-existent Cause, whose Work this Creation is; our Author seems to be well warranted, when he affirms that it is presumptuous in Man, because it is impossible, to frame such an Idea of this invisible Agent, from his own scanty Notions and Apprehensions, as shall be the Standard and Test, by which to try every Thing that is, or may be, in Question concerning the first Cause.

Man may, for Example, be in the Right to attribute all possible Perfections to this Being, but 'till he can determine what is absolute Perfection (taking in the Circle of all possible Beings, their Actions and Attributes) it is impossible for him with Justice to conclude, that because this or that seems to him to be Perfection, it therefore, according to the Measure which he conceives of it, belongs to the Author of Nature.

And tho' it shou'd be admitted that Man, by the Light of Nature, cou'd discover the Dependence of this created System, on a self-existent Creator, yet

yet it is certain he cannot frame to himself any Idea of that Being, his Nature, Substance, Powers, or Manner of Existing or Acting; and that if there is any Knowledge of such Things amongst Men, it must come from some other Source than that of Nature and Observation,

From this State of Man's Nature the Author infers one indispensable Necessity for Revelation; if God intended that Man shou'd know him, his Goodness, Power, Wisdom, and Mercy; shou'd make Returns of Gratitude, Love, Adoration, and Obedience; and shou'd conform himself to that Order, which by the divine Will was established: And that the Knowledge of every Thing that was to be known, and believ'd, was reveal'd, our Author insists will demonstrably be proved, when what is revealed, is understood and consider'd.

A Revelation therefore, our Author insists, was made by God to Man, at two different Periods; the first just after the Creation, and upon the Fall; the second in the Wilderness to the *Israelites*, and on various Occasions afterwards, by different Methods of Communication, not to mention the Appearances to the Patriarchs: To restore the Knowledge of the first Revelation, which had been pretty much lost, or misunderstood, and to fix and ascertain it by Writing (a Method, as the Author will have it, then first reveal'd) so as it shou'd never after be obliterated or left dubious.

To begin with the last. The first Thing that is met with in the Books of *Moses* is an Assertion that God created the Heavens and the Earth, which is followed by a particular Account of the Order and Manner of the Formation of all that was created, till the Work was perfected. After which, God

is said to have rested; and our Author asserts that it is also said, the perfect Machine, then left to its self, carried on all the Operations in this System, by certain known Laws of Mechanism, explain'd by *Moses*, and throughout the Scriptures by the other inspired Penmen.

The Sum of what our Author avers to be the Doctrine of the Scriptures, on this Head, is, that besides the differently formed Particles, of which this Earth, and the several Metals, Minerals, and other solid Substances in it, and in the other solid Orbs are composed, God at first created all that subtile Fluid which now is, and from the Creation has been, in the Condition of Fire, Light, or Air, and goes under the Name of the Heavens.

The Particles of this Fluid (which our Author calls Atoms) when they are single and uncompound-ed, are inconceivably minute, and so subtile as to pervade the Pores of all Substances whatever, whether solid, or fluid, without any great Difficulty or Resistance: When they are push'd forward in streight Lines by the Action of Fire, or are reflected or refracted in streight Lines, they produce Light, and are so call'd; but when the Interposition of any opaque Body hinders their Progress in streight Lines they pass, but cease to produce Light.

These Particles or Atoms which, when moving in streight Lines, produce Light; and if collected and put into another Sort of Motion, wou'd produce Heat and Fire, are, as our Author insists, when the Force impelling them ceases to act with vigour, and when their Motion is retarded, so made, that they are apt to adhere in small Masses or Grains, which the Author calls Spirit or Air; and is of the same Kind and Texture with that
Air,

Air, which we daily breathe, and which we feel in Wind when it blows.

The Sun, which our Author places at the Centre of this System, is an Orb included in a vast Collection of this subtile Matter in the Action of Fire, which continually melts down all the Air that is brought into it by the powerful Action of the Firmament or Expansion, hereafter to be explain'd, into the subtile Matter just mention'd; and with an immense Force sends forth, in perpetual Streams of Light, this same subtile Matter so melted down, to the Circumference of this System, which the Author says is bounded, as he avers the Space comprehended within it is absolutely full.

The Matter thus melted down at the Orb of the Sun into Light must, as every Thing is full, either stand still, or make its Way outwards to the Circumference, being forced by the Particles, which are concreted into Air at the utmost Extremities; and return towards the Sun, where the Fluid being most subtile gives least Resistance, and takes up the Place that the Light left.

And therefore this endless uninterrupted Flux of Matter from the Sun in Light, in Place of being an Expence that shou'd destroy that Orb (which our Author takes to be an insupportable Objection to Sir *Isaac Newton's* Scheme) is the very means of preserving it, and every Thing else in this System in its Action and Vigour, by pressing back perpetual Supplies of Air to be melted down into Light, and thereby produces a continual Circulation. These perpetual Fluxes or Tides of Matter outwards and inwards, in every Point, from the Centre to the Circumference mechanically, and necessarily, as our Author insists, produce that constant Gyration in

the Earth and the Planets round their own Centres, and round the Sun ; and he avers, tho' he has not yet thought fit to explain it, that the same Principle, with some Circumstances, arising from the Situation and Fluxes of Light coming from the other Orbs, will account also for the Motions of the Moon.

Besides the Rotation of the Orbs, the Author affirms that the adverse Motions of the Light pushing towards the Circumference, and the Air pushing towards the Centre with immense Force, forms a general Expansion (as he translates the Word render'd Firmament) which brings that Stress or Compression on all Bodies it meets with, that binds together Solids, keeps Fluids as they were, causes the Variation of Times and Seasons, the raising of Water, the Production of Vegetables and Animals, and in short produces all the Effects falsely ascrib'd to Gravity or Attraction ; continues Motion without the Assistance of the unmechanical Principle of Projection ; produces, supplies, and supports Vegetables, Fruits, and Animals ; in short produces almost all the Effects and Phenomena in Nature.

These are some of the Out-lines of our Author's Philosophy, very repugnant, indeed, to the Notions commonly receiv'd ; but the Authorities, by which he avers he can support them are two, and they are pretty considerable.

First, He says that *Moses* and the Prophets, who, by divine Authority, were to reveal and explain to Mankind how the Operations in this System were carried on, have in plain Terms said so. And

Secondly, He affirms that he can by comparing every true Observation and Experiment that have at any Time been made by the Royal Society, or its Members, or by any foreign Societies of learned Men ;

Men; and by a great many Observations and Experiments made by himself, to which the Curious have hitherto very little attended, with the System of Philosophy revealed in the Scriptures; shew that all the various Phenomena of Nature are to be accounted for mechanically thereby; and that the modern Systems, as well as all others not taken from the Scriptures, are false, absurd, and unmechanical.

It is because this looks highly improbable, if not impossible, to most Men, that an Examination of our Author's Notions are neglected; but as, in Proportion as it is improbable, it wou'd confirm the Scriptures, shou'd it be found true; I confess my Desire is the greater that the Men, qualified to judge, wou'd examine it.

As it is extremely new, so, at first Sight, it seems odd that our Author shou'd suppose it necessary for the Creator to give to Mankind a Course of Philosophy, so to speak; but to remove this Difficulty he reasons to this Effect.

The End to which a rational discerning Soul was given to Man, was, that by the Organs of the Body he might perceive the Beauty, the Order, the Harmony of Nature; and thence receive Ideas of the infinite Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of its Author, which shou'd lead to Admiration, Love, Duty, Dependance, Adoration, Acknowledgement, and a Desire of further Knowledge, and Vision of what in this World Man can take in by borrow'd Ideas only.

If the Mechanism of Nature had not been reveal'd to Man, he possibly never wou'd have discover'd it to any Certainty; at least, wou'd not have discover'd it, for Ages: And so long those Incentives

to Admiration, Love, Service, and Adoration wou'd have been wanting.

If the Mechanism cou'd have been understood, without the further Discovery that this self-moving Machine is no more than an inanimate Piece of Clock-work created, as well as put together, by the supreme, intelligent, beneficent Being, it might have led Man to place his Admiration and Worship on the Machine, in Place of him that made it, as the mistaken Part of Mankind always did.

And therefore if before Mankind cou'd know the Obligations he had to the supreme intelligent Being as his Redeemer, that is, before the Fall; the sole Light he cou'd view him in, to produce Admiration, Love, Duty, Service, and Desire of further Union, was that of the infinitely wise, powerful, and beneficent Creator, and Supporter; it seems necessary to conclude that those Discoveries, which he cou'd not make of himself, certainly were made to him.

And this the rather, that as Man was the last Piece formed of the Creation, and as even his Body was framed before the Soul, without which it cou'd not perceive, was breathed into it, he cou'd not have any Mean to know how, where, or by whom or what, this World and all its Tenants were produced; and, by the Nature of the Thing, cou'd not in many Ages, if at all, arrive at any Knowledge of what was certainly intended to be the Object of his Meditation, and the Cause of his Love, Duty, and Service.

Wherefore as it was necessary he should speedily be instructed, as our Author thinks, *Moses* has intimated to us that he was, in telling us that God was pleas'd to plant a Garden for him, which he

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was to cultivate and keep. Our Author observing that Gardens amongst the ancient Nations, and planted Groves were sacred, and Places of Worship; reflecting that it was but a poor Employment for the Chief of the Creation to cultivate a Garden, whilst the Earth, not being yet cursed, nor Man doom'd to hard Labour, might produce spontaneously Fruits fit for him, especially the Trees being of God's own planting; and observing that the Words translated *to till* and *to keep*, also properly signify *to worship* and *observe*; and taking in a great many other Circumstances, too numerous to be here recited, concludes that this Garden was planted and dressed in the Form of a Plan or Scheme, to shew the Situations, Motions, and Actions of the heavenly Bodies, and the Powers in this System picture-ways or hieroglyphically, for Man's comprehending or remembering more certainly the Positions, Motions, and Influences of the heavenly Bodies, and the Actions of Fire, Light, and Air, or, as our Author calls it Spirit, in Circulation; several of those Bodies, or of the Effects flowing from their Motions or Situations, and from the Circulation of Light and Air, might be represented by Trees of different Forms, or Growths; and the Circulation might itself be represented by some of those Trees, or perhaps by the Waters in *Eden*, which by the four Rivers were plentifully furnished.

And as the Author understands this Garden to have been for Instruction, and the Intent of *Moses's* recording that Circumstance to be, to let us know that Man was so instructed; so he lays a pretty deal of weight upon another matter, related in the same History, of God's bringing the several Ani-

mals before *Adam*, to the End he might give them proper Names.

As the Names *Adam* gave to Animals were expressive of the chief Talents or Instincts of those Animals, and afterwards in the *Hebrew* Language came generally to be Roots for Words to signify the Passions, Actions, or Inclinations which those Instincts or Talents rais'd the Ideas of; our Author concludes that God caus'd these Animals to exhibit to *Adam*, for his Information and Instruction, their several Qualities, Particularities, and Instincts, to help him forward in the Knowledge that was to be communicated to him.

Our Author then perceiving clearly, that a System of Natural Philosophy, or a Description of this Machine was published by *Moses*, when Revelation was, as he terms it, republished in writing; observing that there was full as much occasion, or rather more, for a Discovery of this System to *Adam*, before he had opportunities to make observations than afterwards; and discovering the true Sense and Meaning of those Intimations that *Moses* gives, concerning the Transactions in the Garden of *Eden*; concludes that *Adam* was by God instructed in the Knowledge of the Powers and Operations of this System, and of the Duty and Regard owing to the Author of it, as well of so much of the Nature, Powers, and Attributes of the Author and Creator of it, as the Children of *Israel* were acquainted with, by the Republication of Revelation by *Moses*, in writing.

As to the manner of this first Revelation, our Author, proceeding upon the Principles already mentioned, that Man is incapable of any Ideas but what are taken in by the Senses, concludes that
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God could not give to Man, whilst clogg'd with a Body, the true Idea of himself, or any otherwise represent himself than by referring for a Similitude to that thing in this material System, that bore the nearest Resemblance in Perfection, Power, Nature and Operation, and therefore he supposes, what he afterwards affirms he has prov'd; that, to give Man some Image or Likeness of himself, he pointed to the Machine by which this System is supported; the Heavens consisting of Matter in three different Conditions, Fire, Light, and Air or Spirit, as the Author calls it, which mutually support each other, and necessarily concur in the joint Action of that powerful Machine, by which every material thing is moved, supported and preserved; exhibiting thereby some Similitude, from whence an Idea might be taken of his Essence, Personality, Power, and Manner of Action.

As *Adam* gave Names to all living Creatures, and the use and intent of a Name is to raise, in the Hearer an Idea of the thing named; our Author supposes that every other Creature, that came within the cognizance of the first Man, had also a Name given to it; and insists that the Heavens, or the Machine, described as above, was by *Adam* call'd *The Names*, by way of eminence, to signify that they were the Representatives of the Deity, that from which the Idea of him was to be taken; *SHEM* in the *Hebrew* Language signifies Name, and he avers that *SHEMIM* is the Masculine plural of that Noun, and signifies properly Names; and by this he understands that the Heavens or *SHEMIM* were always thought of, and spoken of by those, who were rightly inform'd by Revelation, as the

Representation or material Object, expreffive of the Deity,

If Mankind was thus instructed in the Powers and Operations of Nature, the Lesson would not soon, or easily, wear out ; because every Observation, every Symptom in Nature would, day after day, justify it ; but the Fact that this Knowledge was revealed, might soon be forgotten by the succeeding Generations of Men, or be disbelieved, and with it the Knowledge of the invisible Author of all. Men who saw this Machine perfect and self-moving might doubt whether it had not self-existence in it ; and whether, as it was the immediate Cause and Producer of all their Comforts, it was not the only powerful Being to which they had any Obligations, and owed Duty and Service ; whence, by degrees, Worship might be misplaced, being transferred from the true invisible God to the visible Representation of him, in which all Power and Perfection might be lodged, by the Opinions of vain imaginary Men, who forgot or disregarded Revelation.

That this in fact was the case, that the early Deserters of the true God placed their Worship and Service on the Heavens, the Author proves at great length, and with great strength of Evidence, as a good deal of his Reasoning depends on it.

If the Scriptures are to be decisive in this point, it is put beyond doubt, by the many formal Declarations that the Crime of the Nations, and of the apostate *Israelites*, was their serving the Heavens, the Host of Heavens, the Queen of Heaven, as it is translated ; the Sun, Moon, and Stars ; and false Gods *Baal*, *Moloch*, &c. which our Author shews were Representations of some of the Powers
or

or Attributes of the Heavens; and by the many Miracles wrought to convince Mankind, that they misplaced their Worship, and that the invisible God had those Powers under his Command.

And were their Credit in any degree questionable, such Remains as we have of the ancient Heathen Worship wou'd shew with abundant Evidence, that 'till they lost the Knowledge of their Philosophy (which happen'd by Accidents largely describ'd by our Author) they continually retain'd the Powers or Attributes of the Heavens, for the Objects of their religious Service.

Our Author admits that the more modern Heathens (by these he means the Greeks and Romans, and their Successors in point of time) who had lost the Knowledge of Nature, lost also the Knowledge of the Object of their Worship, and the Sense of the very Names by which their Gods were called or distinguished; so that tho' they ador'd the Air, they knew not for what: But then he avers, that the Ancients (that is, all the Nations that preceded the Change of Language, by which Knowledge was retain'd) ador'd the Heavens, or some Powers in them, or Attributes of them.

To this end he has collected the Names of all the Gods of the Nations mention'd in Scripture, together with the Names or Titles of their Temples, in his Treatise of *the Names and Attributes of the Trinity of the Gentiles*, and has offer'd an Examination and Analysis of those Names, together with some Account of the Services paid to those suppos'd Deities, and the many Reproaches made by the Prophets to their Votaries and Worshippers; which, with great evidence seems to shew that these Gods
were

were indeed none other than the Heavens, or some suppos'd Powers in them.

The very general Adoration paid by the Ancients to the heavenly Bodies, the Worship of the Sun, of Fire, of Light, &c. that prevail'd in the earliest Times; the conjectural Philosophy of the late Heathens, the Greeks and Romans. which centred in Opinions, that by their *Jupiter, Apollo, &c.* was meant either the *Aether*, or the Sun, or the active Force of Nature in general, justifies to those who value such Authorities, our Author's Sentiments.

Our Author is out of humour with those, who fancy the Antients such Ideots as to have worshipp'd Brutes, Reptiles, Insects, or any inanimate things.

Let the Worship in *Egypt* be an Instance; the Respect they had to *Apis*, to a Bull or Cow was not at all paid to that Animal. All Mankind knows in Relation to *Egypt*, because their Monuments were better preserv'd than those of other Nations, that they wrote by Hieroglyphicks; that is, that they express'd their Ideas by representing the Figures of Animals, or of inanimate Things, of Circles, Triangles, &c. in such Series and Order, as to convey their Meaning; in so doing, they must fix upon some Things easily distinguish'd, to represent what cou'd not so easily be painted, or by Figure express'd. And if their Fancy led them to express the Fire at the Sun, by the Front or Head of a Bull or Heifer; the Respect shew'd to that Animal was evidently meant to the Fire at the Sun, and the *Egyptians* did not worship the Bull or Heifer but the Sun; no more than in their hieroglyphical Writing a Bull
or

or Serpent was meant, when the Figures of those Animals were represented.

Our Author goes through a great many Mistakes of the Moderns in this Particular, which are dishonourable to the Understandings of the Antients, and amongst these takes Notice particularly of one, *viz.* the Reproach to the *Egyptians*, that they worshipp'd an Onion; and indeed the Scripture upbraids the *Israelites* with their lusting after the Onions of *Egypt*.

But our Author says the Moderns will cease to abuse the Antients on this score, when they take the trouble to cut up the common Onion, and to satisfy their own Eyes that it consists of seven different Spheres, or *Involucra*, one within another, in the way that the Antients understood the seven Spheres in this System, and was therefore more proper than any other thing, that can be thought of, to represent the Solar System in their hieroglyphical Writings, and religious Representation.

He takes notice, that from the hieroglyphical Representation of the Heavens, or, perhaps, of Fire amongst the *Egyptians* by *Apis*, the *Israelites* Calf of Gold in the Wilderness, and the brace of Calves of *Jeroboam*, who had his Education in *Egypt*, sprang: not that the *Israelites* at first, or *Jeroboam* afterwards, dreamed of any Powers or Vertues in those Calves; but that they imagin'd, they put themselves thereby under the Protection of the Heavens, of which they took that Idol to be the approved Emblem.

To all their hieroglyphical Representations of their Deity, he observes they added a Crown, by way of Ornament or Distinction (as for much the same Reason, tho' in another respect, which he elsewhere

where explains, they did to their Priests;) this Crown was a Circle of Gold, the most precious Metal; from which arose, quite round the Circumference, Plates of Gold, formed like Pyramids, imitating Rays of Light; and in the Intervals, between those shining Rays, Spaces of the same pyramidal Form, but pointed inwards, to represent, as our Author says, the Irradiation or Flux of the Light outwards from the Sun, and the Pressure or Return of the Air or Spirit inwards, by which he insists this Machine is supported.

And in a great many more of their Ornaments and Emblems, he finds evident Traces of what their Service and Religion pointed at, to wit, a Recognition of the Powers in the Heavens, as that from whence all their Blessings flowed, and on which all their Dependance was settled.

As this mistaking, which, in effect, is denying the true God, was evidently the Crime of those Heathens, who were contemporary with the *Israelitish* State; so, our Author thinks, it was the Offence of the Antediluvian World, for which Men merited to be cut off all but one Family. His Reasons for so thinking are numerous, but what to me appears the strongest, is drawn from the Punishment, which was, as our Author insists, the controuling the settled Operations of the Powers that were suppos'd to be Independent and Omnipotent. The destroying the Earth, and with it rebellious Man, the Reforming the Earth after that Dissolution, and preserving those Persons, by whom it was to be Re-peopled, from the general Ruin, to be Witnesses for God of the Power by him exerted, and to instruct their Posterity in the Service of that Being, by whom they were preserv'd.

Our Author talks of destroying the Earth, which, he says, is in formal Words affirm'd by *Moses*; he speaks of forcing up the Waters of the Abyss through Apertures, which, he says, were left for a Communication with the Waters above; dissolving the Shell, reforming it with new Apertures and Fissures, and sending back those Waters again through Cracks and Fissures in the Shell of Stone, that environ'd the Abyss, to their former Residence; he speaks also of great quantities of Terrestrial Matter carried down through those Fissures and Openings along with the Waters into the Abyss; that Matter formed at the Centre of the hollow Sphere into a solid Orb, like to a Kernel floating in the Waters, and very many effects in the Motion of the Waters, and of this Earth to be accounted for by that Collection of Waters, and this floating Orb; all which, he asserts, are to be gather'd from what the Scripture reveals, and will account mechanically for the many various Appearances, which hitherto have been only guess'd at, from Schemes founded on false and impossible Principles.

As an instance of the Perfection of the natural Knowledge that is to be met with in the Scriptures, and of the Absurdity of those, who charge the Writers of them with Ignorance; he avers, that the Loadstone and its Effects are frequently, at least six times, directly spoken of; that the Reason and Cause of the mysterious Phenomena of Magnetism are clearly to be gather'd from the reveal'd Philosophy.

And however Freethinkers may make the story of the Flood an Objection to the Veracity of the Scriptures, and may laugh at the Account, which our Author gives of it from the sacred Writers; he as-

affirms, that as he has had the Curiosity to make Collections of most of the different Sorts of Things, and each of the same Sort differently form'd, underground, and numerous Observations on the Situation of Things in the Bowels of the Earth; he can, by evidence to the Eye, convince any rational Man, that the Account he gives of the Destruction at the Flood, and Reformation of the Earth, from the Scriptures, is graphically true.

Noah and his Family, who had remain'd in dutiful Allegiance to the invisible God, were, doubtless, by this powerful piece of Vengeance over the rebellious World, convinced of the Supremacy of the Deity over his Rival the Heavens, whose Power they had seen suspended and baffled; and their Posterity continued dutiful 'till the time of building the Tower of *Babel*, when Nature and Imagination began to work again.

All Translations have made a very odd spot of work of this piece of History. They have suppos'd it says that, before this accident, all Men spoke the same Language; that, afraid of another Deluge, they set about building a Tower, whose top shou'd reach to the Heavens; that they did this to get them a Name; and that God became so jealous of this Attempt, that it was worth his while to work a very extraordinary Miracle, to confound their Language, so as one cou'd not understand what the other said; and to disperse them over the face of the Earth; and from this notable Event the Birth of many Languages, and the first Peopling of many Nations is sought.

Our Author, who insists that a perfect Knowledge of the Hebrew Language will deliver the Scripture from

from many Absurdities, with which it is by the Translations saddled, says;

In the *first* place, the Text does not bear that all the Earth was of one Language, or that their Language was confounded. It says indeed, that all the Earth was of one [SHAPHAH] Lip; and afterwards that God said he wou'd confound their Lip.

Now our Author observes what, upon comparing all the Texts, holds very truly, that the Hebrews had two Words of nearly the same Signification to those, that did not advert to the Distinction; LESHUN, which signifies Tongue, and *Shaphab*, which signifies Lip: But which, in the Propriety of their Expression, they never confounded; using *Leshun*, perpetually to signify Language, and *Shaphab* to signify religious Service, or Confession, and never to signify Language. All therefore the Text says is; that, before the Building of *Babel*, the whole Earth had one and the same Religious Service or Confession; and that, upon that Attempt, the new Confession, which the Projectors of this Building intended to set up, was to be confounded, which begun in the Dispersion of the Undertakers.

In the *next* place, the Translators render the Text as if it said, *Let us build us a Tower, whose top shall reach to the Heavens, that we may make us a Name, lest we be dispers'd, &c.* And surely, besides other Improprieties in this suppos'd Design, it must appear a very ridiculous Project to build a Tower, that shou'd defend against Destruction by a Flood, in so very low a Ground as the Valley of *Shinar*; or from Dispersion, which want of Provision would force them to. But our Author observes that the Hebrew Text says nothing of reaching to the Heavens;

vens ; that Word is a meer Supplement from the Translators Fancy, who were ignorant that the Word render'd *Tower* signifies *Temple*, and therefore did not perceive the obvious Meaning of the whole, which is, that these wicked Men, who liv'd in a Country where, 'till then, there was no difference of Religion, the whole Earth being of one Confession, apostatised to the Service and Worship of the Heavens ; and encouraged one another to build a City and Temple, the top whereof shou'd be sacred to the Heavens ; and that God, to check this early Relapse into the Religion of their Antediluvian Forefathers, thought fit to confound, not their Language, but their Confession or Liturgy, that is, to make them differ about the Manner and Form of the intended Service and Worship, which had the effect, at that time, of marring their irreligious Project ; of making them fall out amongst themselves, of making them desist from their Enterprize.

Taking the thing thus, and supposing these Men mistook the Heavens for a Deity, there was sense in their building a Temple, and on it an Altar to that Being that cou'd, according to their Supposition, prevent their Destruction and Dispersion ; and it was well and mercifully done, on the part of God, to make them differ about their intended Service, and thereby to fall out amongst themselves, and relinquish the Undertaking. But, translating the Text as our Expositors have done, a most absurd and impracticable Attempt is suppos'd to call upon the Interposition of the Deity, in a very unnecessary Miracle, which, at the same time, our Author avers, appears not to have been wrought ; because the same Scriptures shew the whole Earth was of
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one Language, tho' not of one Lip or religious Confession, for several Ages after.

As our Author has deliver'd the Scriptures, by his Acquaintance with *Hebrew*, from this notorious Absurdity, with which the Ignorance of the Translators had stain'd it; he, on an Infinity almost of other Occasions, interposes to set their false Interpretations to Rights. According to his Construction of the Language, it is no where in the Text said, that the Earth stands still, and that the Sun goes round it; but on the contrary it is, on every proper Occasion, inculcated that the Sun stands still, fixed, and that the Earth runs round.

After the Flood God did not put the *Rainbow* first in the Cloud, as a Sign to Man; but he constituted, or gave (which is the *Hebrew* Word) that Bow, which naturally was in the Cloud, as a Memorial of his Promise not to destroy the Earth again by Water.

And in Multitudes of other Cases our Author brings, as he says, from the genuine Construction of the Text, a very commodious Sense; where the Translation is, not to say worse, hardly intelligible.

As our Author's general Proposition, that the mechanical Powers in the Heavens was the Deity set up by the Heathen, against the God of Nature and of *Israel*, is a Key to the Understanding a vast Number of Expressions; Expostulations, and Claims used throughout by the Writers of the Scriptures, which pass'd unheeded, or were thought trivial, and accommodated to the mistaken Notions of ignorant Men heretofore; so the same Position, as he manages it, is of very great Service in shewing the Propriety and perfect Intention and Use of very many Miracles, miraculous Appearances, and religious

ligious Institutions, which no Man hitherto has pretended to shew the adequate Reason, Use, or Occasion for.

If the Religion of the rebellious Heathen was to ascribe all Power to the Machine of the Heavens, in the Conditions of Fire, Light, and Air or Spirit, but principally in that of Fire, on the acting whereof all the rest seemed to depend: Then it was proper for the Deity, when a new Revelation and religious Oeconomy was to be established in the Family of *Abraham*, to pass between the Parts of the Creatures, appointed to be divided, in the Appearance of Fire, Light, and Smoke.

It was proper to shew his Superiority over the Gods of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, by punishing them, who worshipp'd Fire, by Fire sent from Heaven: It was proper when *Moses* was to be sent upon his Mission, to appear to him in the Bush in the Form of Fire.

It was proper, when the Contest was between the Priests of *Baal* and the Prophet *Elisha*, and when the formal Trial was to be, whether *Baal* or *Jehovah* was the true God, by this Test, whether the Offering of the one or of the other shou'd be first consum'd by Fire sent from Heaven; it was proper, I say, on that Case, for *Jehovah* to give Proof of his Power, by sending down Fire, and consuming the Sacrifice, Water, &c. And

Not to mention a great many other Instances, when the Captains of Fifty were successively sent out by the King of *Israel*, who then fell in with the Worship of the Heavens, in Defiance of the true God, to bring *Elijah* to him a Prisoner; it was proper to punish their Presumption, and to manifest the Power of *Jehovah* over the Heavens, to

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consume those Captains by Fire sent from Heaven.

And tho' the many Miracles wrought in *Egypt*, and in the Wilderness, to which, for Evidence of the Power and Supremacy of *Jehovah*, there are many References and Appeals made by the later Writers of the Scriptures, seem to our modern Wisemen, who think that God might have done the Business a much shorter Way, very unnecessary and superfluous, and as such are disbeliev'd : Yet our Author apprehends they were absolutely necessary to the Design of *Jehovah*, and of the utmost Importance to Mankind, for settling the Point in Dispute, between the Followers of the true, and those of the false God.

The Intent of these various Miracles, our Author says, was, in the Face and Seeing of the most powerful and populous, the most learned, the most superstitiously addicted Nation then in the World to the Service of the Heavens, to shew the Power of *Jehovah* over their pretended Gods in all their Attributes and Powers, and over their Priests; and, in so doing, to convict that People, and all that shou'd hear of those Transactions, and still remain in the same Error; and to convince the People that he was about to separate to himself so fully of his Authority, that they shou'd never (bearing these Things in Mind) apostatise.

For these Ends, after the Magicians or Priests of the fictitious Gods were foiled, *Jehovah* permitted *Pharaoh* to harden his Heart, or to resist; until by repeated Miracles he had, to the Sight of all Men, asserted his Superiority over his Rivals, in controuling all the Actions and Powers, for which they were falsely thought Gods, and making them afflict their Votaries. The Sun and Light were turn'd into a

palpable Darknefs, for three Days. The Air wa turn'd pestilential; the very Dust of the Earth wa turn'd noxious; the River, which was emblematically sacred, in whose Waters they purify'd themselves, and on whose Banks they worshipp'd, was turn'd into Blood; the Wind brought Locusts to destroy the Votaries of the Wind. All these Plagues, and many more, which our Author explains the Propriety of at length in his *Essay towards a natural History of the Bible*, were so directed as to leave the *Israelites* unhurt, Witnesses of the Superiority of their God, of the Obedience of the Heavens, and of the Distraction and Folly of those, who worshipp'd them.

Hitherto Miracles have been look'd upon, generally, by Mankind as so many prodigious, unnatural, and therefore wonderful Events, surpassing the Power of Man to compass; brought about by Divine Power, to vouch the Mission of the Person, by whose Hands they were wrought, and to gain Credit to what he shou'd reveal, or deliver. But, if our Author is to be followed, they are to be consider'd as tending to an higher Purpose, and are so many Manifestations of the Power of the true God; to gain Credit to himself in Contradiction to the pretended Powers of the Heavens, that were set up in Opposition. And are so sort'd and chosen, as best to prove that there is no inherent essential Powers in the Machine, the Heavens; but that all inherent and essential Powers is in *Jehovah* alone; whose Servants, at his Command, could alter or suspend the Course of Nature.

It was, according to our Author, to confirm the Children of *Israel* in this Faith, that the Wind (in *Hebrew* the Spirit) separated the Waters of the
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Red Sea, and made them, contrary to the ordinary Course of Nature, stand on either Side in Heaps. That by *Moses*, *Jehovah* shew'd, in miniature, the same Power that was exercis'd in destroying the Earth at the Flood, by cracking the *Strata* of Stone, and making a Spring of Water gush out of a Rock, upon the Touch of a Rod. That the God of the Nations, in the Appearance of Fire, Light, and Cloud, or Spirit, which the Author says (as shall be hereafter explain'd) was the Emblem of the true God, was forced to attend, to lead, and to protect the Camp of *Israel*. That the Air was made to rain down Food upon the Armies of *Jehovah*. And that *Jehovah* was pleas'd miraculously, and at an appointed Time, to shew himself in the Appearance of Fire on *Sinai*, and from thence to deliver the Law, and offer a Covenant to the *Israelites*.

If all the Things shall be understood to be done to settle the Contest, and establish the Authority of *Jehovah* over the Heavens, his Rivals at that Time, and all other pretended Deities that thereafter might, by the Madness or Ignorance of Men, be set up :

Then the Scope and Intent of the Law, given in the ten Commandments, will be better understood ; and the Meaning of the religious Oeconomy, Ceremonies, and Services, that thereafter were established, will be more fully comprehended.

The first four Commands, by the Confession of every body, are intended to assert and inculcate the Sovereignty of the Deity, and the seclusive Title to Service, that is in *Jehovah*, the Creator and Preserver of all things ; in contradiction to all other pretended Gods, whose Service is prohibited and guarded against in the most express Manner ; Pro-

hibitions that do not seem necessary to be authoris'd and introduced with so much Pomp, and by so many Miracles, if the Worship of a Stock or a Stone, a red Heifer or a Calf, taken in themselves, and not consider'd as the Representation of that Being (the Heavens) in which all material Power in this System was known to reside, had been the only thing to be dreaded.

The other Commands are generally call'd the moral Law, and it is commonly thought that they were intended for a System of social Law, as they seem to prohibite Trespases against Society.

But in this our Author differs, and says, that when Men are satisfied, as they may easily be from Scripture and from History, that the Worshippers of the Heavens call'd their Gods their Fathers and Mothers, and worshipp'd them as such; that they held it a religious and acceptable service to immolate human Sacrifices, nay to offer their First-born to Fire; that they held it lawful, nay pleasing to some of their Gods, to steal and rob for Sacrifice. That Prostitution of their Wives and Daughters, in honour of their Gods, was a flagrant Part of their Religion, &c. The Reasons for giving these Commands, commonly call'd moral, will appear to be the same; as for giving the rest, to wit, to settle and establish the Worship of the true, though invisible God, and to restrain from the Worship of the Heavens, and the chief Abominations practis'd in that Worship.

As to the moral or social Law, according to our Author, it was not the immediate view or purpose of God, in the Law given from the Mount, to establish or explain it. The Competition for Superiority with the false God, the Heavens, was the point

point to be settled; and the Abominations of the prophane Worship of that fictitious God were to be prohibited, and eradicated out of the service of the Children of *Israel*.

The social Law requir'd no Publication, no Authority from *Jehovah* by Miracles to confirm it; except in those Points in which the absurd service of the Heathens had encroach'd upon it. It was no question amongst the Heathens, no more than it was amongst the Children of *Abraham*, whether it was unlawful to kill, or to commit Adultery on any other Occasion, except for the Honour of their pretended Deities in religious Service; and therefore, according to our Author, there was no occasion for settling those social Duties, excepting so far as the Mistakes in Worship made it necessary.

As the principal View of the Decalogue, and all the Pomp and Train of Miracles, with which it was introduced, was to settle the Superiority of *Jehovah* over his Rivals, the Heavens, so our Author observes, that all the Memorials of these Miracles, the Services, Feasts, Sabbaths, Rites of Sacrifice, Ceremonies, the Tabernacle, the Temple, their Ornaments and Furniture, the Institution of Priesthood, with the Ordinances relating thereto, the the Priests Garments, &c. were intended to commemorate, to acknowledge, and for ever to keep in view the evidence of the Superiority then settled; and to explain by Emblems, a sort of Language then well understood, the Nature, Residence, and Manner of acting of God, in opposition to that of his Rivals; and his merciful Disposition and Purpose towards his Creatures, all which the Author has in a great Measure explain'd, and applied in a

very new and surprizing Manner, and promises, on a proper Occasion, fully to explain and shew the Application of the rest.

Tho' a System of Philosophy, Religion, and religious Service was thus reveal'd in writing by the Hand of *Moses* in the Wilderness, as our Author affirms; yet he is far from thinking that the World was left without Information, or Direction in these Matters, 'till this time; on the contrary he asserts, that the Instruction and Law, given by *Moses*, was no more than a Republication in writing of that Law, originally given to *Adam* before, and upon the Fall.

From the Goodness, the Wisdom, and the Justice of God; from the Necessities of the new-made Creature Man, and from the Hints, above mentioned, of God's planting a Garden in *Eden*, and bringing all living Creatures before *Adam*; our Author concludes, that Nature, its Operations, and Dependance on *Jehovah*, was fully explain'd to the first Man; and thence his Duty, as well as chief Good, discover'd to him, in admiring, adoring, and, with Love and Gratitude, serving the Author of his Being.

Whether any, and what Services, by way of acknowledgment, were at this time requir'd of *Adam*, does not appear; but it does appear that he was prohibited, under the Penalty of Death, from eating of the Fruit of a certain Tree in the middle of the Garden, which is call'd *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*.

Our Author supposes that this Tree, said to stand in the middle of the Garden, was in the Plan of that Garden intended to represent the Sun in the Centre of this System, which keeps it all a going; and

and that the Prohibition to eat the Fruit of it, emblematically forewarned *Adam* from trusting to its support in any Thing, but what, as a Machine without Knowledge, it was appointed to do; and he suspects that this very forbidden Fruit was the *Malum Persicum*, famed amongst the Heathens; in *Greece* afterwards, taken to be the Laurel, sacred to *Apollo* the God of Wisdom, and which was suppos'd capable of giving Knowledge and Wisdom.

He observes that this Command was first broken by *Eve*, who had it but at second hand from *Adam*, and who did not know the Natures, and several Qualities and Capacities of brute Creatures, as *Adam* did, at the Instigation of the Devil, by a Serpent, who as a bait propos'd Improvement in Knowledge; a very laudable Motive, had not the Method of gaining it been prohibited.

He imagines that *Adam* was not deceiv'd as *Eve* was; but that, seeing her lost, his Passion for her made him desperately resolve to share the same Fortune with her, and to be join'd with her in the Crime, and the Punishment. And that this was the Reason why, when their Eyes were open'd, they not only became asham'd of their Crime, but at the Sight of those Parts, which rais'd in each mutual Desires; the Violence of which induc'd Woman to seduce Man into a Participation of her Guilt, and induc'd Man to yield to Ruin and Death, rather than be divided from her.

Those, who are delighted with searching into the Origin and Usage of Words, will not be disagreeably entertain'd by a Reflection or two our Author makes, on this Occasion. He says that *AVEN*, which properly signifies the Act of Cohabitation with Woman, is in the Hebrew Language made
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the Root for Iniquity or Wickedness. And that **PETAH**, which principally signifies that part of the Body that *Eve* is suppos'd to have hid, in the same Language is made expressive of seducing, overpersuading, deceiving.

And our Author thinks that to keep up the Memory of this Crime, and of the principal Motive that induced Man to fall into it; as also to be a Caveat against being carried too far by that Motive on future Occasions, Circumcision was instituted; which took place amongst the Nations before *Abraham's* Days, and was reviv'd only in his Family; and re-enacted in the Law of *Moses*, as several other ancient Institutions were.

Our Author insists, that Man cou'd not have sustain'd his Life any considerable time after the Fall, tho' God had not been pleas'd by any Act to inflict Death upon him. The Consciousness of the Displeasure of God, the Remembrance of Felicity lost, and the Apprehensions of the just Vengeance of the offended Deity, must have produc'd strange Distractions in the Mind of unhappy *Adam*; that he liv'd then, is a Demonstration that he receiv'd some Comfort, some Hint of the Possibility of a Reconciliation; and that he actually had Promises that comforted him, the Scriptures in formal Words reveal. *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Head of the Serpent.*

Tho' the Account of this Promise, and those Hopes of Peace, is very short, yet our Author thinks that, at this time, a proper and intelligible Account was given to Man, of the Manner and Means of his Reconciliation, and Restitution to the Protection of God; and that Rites, Observances, and Services were instituted, to keep in mind, and

and acknowledge the Sovereignty of the Creator; the Crime of Man, and his Forfeiture; and the Promise and Means of Peace and Salvation.

The Foundations of his Opinion, besides what is already said, are in general: That from the Scripture it appears, before the Publication of the Law in *Sinai*, Believers and Unbelievers were in the Practice and Possession of many, or most of those Rites and Institutions, which must have depended on some antecedent Authority, that was common to all. And by the universal Consent of all prophane Authors it appears, that, after the *Æra of Moses*, the same Institutions and Observances had taken place over all the known World; tho' no Body supposes they ow'd their Origin to the Laws of a Nation, that the rest of the World held in Dislike and Contempt.

To instance in a few; offering Sacrifice, and that by Fire, was in use before the written Law; *Abel* offer'd; *Noah* sacrific'd; *Abraham* and his Contemporaries did so; *Job* practis'd it; it was us'd by *Balaam*; it was practis'd for Thanksgiving; for Atonement; for binding Covenants: At the same time it is obvious, that naturally it had no Tendency to either of those Ends; and, as it was universal, must needs owe its Beginning to an Institution, that was authoritative over all.

That Sacrifice was held propitiatory among the Heathens cannot be denied by any, that is conversant in their Writings; their Histories, their Poems are full of it; and, if there cou'd remain any doubt, *Balaam's* repeated Attempts to placate the Deity, and the over-warm Zeal of those, who gave the Fruit of their Body for the Sin of their
Soul;

Soul; who sacrificed their First-born to *Moloch*; to atone for themselves, their Family, and People, and to procure his Favour and Protection, are absolute Proofs.

Our Author, on this Subject, takes notice, that God is said to have cloath'd our first Parents with the Skins of Beasts, that Part of the Offering, that by the written Law appears to have fallen to the Priest's Share; and thence concludes that the Beasts, from which those Skins were taken, had been sacrificed.

Another Instance is in First-fruits, which appear amongst all the Heathen to have been offer'd, as an Acknowledgment to their several Deities. The Practice is as old as the Days of *Cain* and *Abel*, who cannot be suppos'd to have begun it without Institution for their Authority.

A third Instance is in the Institution of Priesthood, or giving to the First-born, or Eldest of the Family, a Right to approach the Altar, and to offer Sacrifice, which in the *Jewish* Dispensation was changed from the First-born to the Family of *Levi*. If the Priest was, in one Consideration, a Representation of the same Person, that the Sacrifice represented in another, it is reasonable to conclude, that the Institution of Priesthood, and of Sacrifice, bore the same Date.

From the Expression, *Gen. iv. 3.* our Author collects, That there were appointed Times; perhaps new Moons, and settled Feasts from the Beginning, for Sacrifice, Service, and Acknowledgment.

And from *Moses's* Account of the Creation, and what followed it, nothing was more clear, than that the Rest of the Sabbath was from the Beginning

Beginning appointed, for preserving a perpetual Memorial of the Creation, compleated by *Jehovah*; and for yielding to Man a fit Opportunity, free from Labour, Toil, and Care, to contemplate the high and beneficent Attributes of God in his Works; and to dispose the Mind to Acknowledgment, Duty, Love, Praise, and Adoration, the only Tribute that is truly suited to the Nature of that perfect Being; and the only Exercise that seems proper for qualifying Man to desire, and to enjoy a nearer Union with God.

As our Author finds, in the written Law, several particular Sorts of Wood, distinguish'd by their Uses in the Tabernacle; and several Sorts of Boughs and Branches of Trees, appointed to be carried and used in the Feast of Tabernacles; he concludes, That those Trees were in the Days of *Adam*, so to speak, consecrated as Emblems or Memorials of particular Persons, Actions, or Things, that they were to represent.

A Garden was planted in *Eden*; and I have hinted at the Use, for which our Author thinks it was dressed there. The Patriarchs, particularly *Abraham*, sacrificed under Oaks, nay planted Oaks, for the End of Sacrifice and religious Service under them. The Ancients planted Gardens, Groves, &c. upon religious Accounts, and very likely held particular Trees in Respect, as representing particular Powers or Actions.

The Oak, which is in *Hebrew* *ELAH*, our Author says, was appointed the Memorial of a Covenant confirm'd by Oath.

The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, represented the Powers in this System. The Fruit of the last, as our Author says, with Boughs of the first;

first; Branches of the Palm-tree, and Twigs of several other Trees, were to be held in the Hands of the Children of *Israel* at the Feast of Tabernacles, their grand Festivity for Mirth and Rejoycing; and he insists, that the carrying those several Boughs and Fruits had a religious, emblematical Meaning, then very well understood; as it was the only Way, before Writing, of communicating Knowledge; and as intelligible, very near, as Writing was afterwards. Because these Emblems were then so fully understood, the Meaning of them is not by *Moses* explain'd; but our Author seems to think it possible still to decypher and explain them; only thus much he apprehends is plain from the Reflection made, that the Use of those several Sort of Trees being prescribed, without any Explication of the Reason or Purpose, these Purposes must have been universally known at the Time, and the Trees themselves must have been constituted Emblems, as early as the planting the first Garden

As Hieroglyphicks, or Emblems, were the first Method of conveying and continuing Knowledge, which was succeeded by the more perfect Invention of Writing; and as all religious Service was originally perform'd, in an emblematical Way, which carried the Mind from the Emblem, Type, or emblematical or typical Act, to the Person or Thing represented; our Author thinks, that after Writing was invented, for the more certain Preservation of divine Knowledge, the Services were still continued, and perform'd in the old Way, and Types and Emblems were of the same Use and Effect as ever; hence Sacrifice, &c. were continued; and at the same Time that God described the Powers

Powers of this System; as dependant upon himself, in Writing; he caus'd the same Sort of Account of them to be represent'd, and hung up hieroglyphically in the Tabernacle, and afterwards in the Temple. The Lamp in the Temple, the Pillars, and their Ornaments before the Porch, our Author insists, were an hieroglyphical Description of the Powers of this System, of the Deities the Heathens ador'd, which *Jehovah* willed to be nail'd up in the Place of the Residence of his Presence, to bear in Mind their Inferiority and Dependance on him; and that they were to be consider'd in no other View than as Emblems of himself; and his Servants.

As our Author, by this new and very surprizing Manner of Interpretation, gives Light to an infinite Number of Institutions, Prohibitions, Declarations, Claims and Services; so by accurately examining the Force and Propriety of the original Language, and comparing it with the Institutions and Services, when rightly understood, he thinks he has made a World of very important Discoveries

Various are the Gueses that have been made by learned Men, concerning the Sense and Meaning of the Word *JEHOVAH*, the ineffable Name of God, as the *Jews* call it; our Author has fix'd on that Construction, which makes it the Essence existing; that Essence or Substance, which has Being in its self necessarily, without Dependance upon any other, and in Distinction to all other Essence or Substance whatever. *IAH* signifies the Essence, by Eminence; and (if I reach the Author's Meaning, which seems to be wholly new, and uncommon on this Article) by the Addition of the
other

other Word **HOVAH**, signifying actual Being with Powers and Faculties, gives an Idea of that sufficient all perfect Being, that has Existence in its self, or by the Necessity of its own Nature exists. Something like to this, ingenious Moderns have struck out by the Light of Nature, as they say, for the Idea of the sovereign Being; and it will be no great Reproach to their Notion, if it falls in with the Sentiment contain'd in the Name given by God to himself in the Scripture; nor a slight Confirmation of the Accuracy and Perfection of the Scripture, if, when it is fairly examin'd, it is found to express Sentiments so just, so lofty, and so difficult, if at all possible, to be come at by the Light of Nature only,

EL is another Name, which the Scripture gives to the Deity; it commonly is translated *the strong*, or *powerful*, *fortis*. But our Author insists, that it signifies properly, the Irradiator. An Idea borrowed from that Irradiation or Emission of Light and Influence from the Sun to move, support, and preserve, in Being and Action, every thing in this material System; from whence it is applied to the Deity, to express something of that inconceivable Power, Influence, and Manner of Acting, by which the Deity acts uncontrollably, where it is not locally present. As the Author from Scripture avers the proper Residence of God, is without this System, so that, by this Name, that Irradiation, which, according to our Author's Philosophy, is in a great measure the Supporter of Nature, is attributed to *Jehovah*; and such a Power of Irradiation in a spiritual Sense, as we see perform'd by the Sun in a material Way, is ascribed to the invisible God.

To confirm this Sentiment, and indeed a very considerable Branch of our Author's Scheme, he observes that the Word HALLELU-JAH, which is the Burden of almost all the Psalms of Praise and Thanksgiving, the first Word frequently and the last; and which is translated sometimes, *Praise ye the Lord*, sometimes is transcribed, without translating, *Hallelujah*, signifies properly and undoubtedly Irradiation to *Jah*, or ascribe ye Irradiation to the Essence. Now if the utmost Honour the believing *Jews* could express for their God, in their most devout and thankful Praises, was to ascribe Irradiation to his Essence; it, on the one Hand, renders our Author's Opinion of the Sense of *El* very probable; and on the other Hand, very strongly proves, that the Scripture Ideas of the Deity, and of its Powers and Action were borrowed from visible Operations of the Sun, the Light and Air, and their Actions in the Heavens in all this Material System.

There is still another Name for God, the most commonly used of any in Scripture, and on the true Sense of which our Author builds a great deal; it is ELOHIM, always translated *Deus* or God.

All the World, *Jews* and Christians, agree that this Word is plural; seldom, not once in five hundred times to be met with singular; almost always (a few Instances excepted) join'd with Nouns and Verbs in the singular Number.

From this Word, which the modern *Jews*, and after them, Christians have translated *Deus*, in the singular Number, when the true God is meant; but *Dii*, in the Plural, when it is apply'd to the Gods of the Nations; several learned Men have drawn Arguments for the Trinity, and have taken it to be a full Proof, at least, of the Plurality of Persons. But as these Men did not

assert, or undertake to prove, that the Scriptures were wrote with perfect Accuracy, and were forced to admit a great many things to be written, that they could not strictly and philosophically justify; and as they pretended to fix no certain Origin or Sense for the Word, from the Meaning whereof their Argument cou'd be examin'd or justify'd, these Opinions made no great way to induce Men to think, that the Doctrine of the Trinity was founded in the Old Testament.

But as our Author insists, that every Word of the sacred Book is written with the utmost Accuracy, Truth, and Perfection; if that Proposition is made good, what he says for the Word *Elohim*, for evidence of the Plurality of Persons in the Deity, must have great weight.

Notwithstanding an Infinity of guesses made by those, who pretend to be learned in the Hebrew Language, none ever hit on any thing that carried a Sense, in the least degree, satisfactory; our Author has fix'd on the Word *ELAH*, an Oath or Adjuration (so translated perpetually by the *Jews*, wherever it occurs in the Scriptures, whether as Verb or Noun, except where it is intended to signify the Deity, and then they take care to hide that Meaning) as the Root from which it is derived. And affirms, that by the Genius of the Language *ELOHIM* signifies, in the Plural, *Adjuratores*, Persons bound by Oath or Covenant; referring this Name to that Engagement, which the divine Persons are suppos'd to have enter'd into, for the Preservation and Salvation of Man, called the Covenant; and averring, that it is expressive of that Relation, in which that Oath or Covenant, put God to Man.

He insists, that as this was the original Light, in which, after the Fall, God was willing to be known to Man, for his Comfort, and for encouraging

raging him in his Duty, all the apostate Heathens, who relinquish'd the true *Elohim*, and resorted to their Rivals the Heavens for Protection, detain'd, nevertheless, this comfortable Appellation, apply'd it to the Heavens; and as they sacrificed with the utmost Zeal and Seriousness to them, look'd upon them as their *Elohim*; all-powerful Beings, in covenant with them, for their Good here and hereafter, and expected certainly from their hands Protection and Performance of their suppos'd Covenants: Hence by innumerable places in scripture it appears, that they look'd upon themselves as bound never to relinquish their *Elohim*; and verily believ'd that their *Elohim*, in their turn, were bound never to desert them.

It is remarkable, that of the many Names, which the Deity has in Scripture, this is the only one, which concerns the Salvation of Man, that the Heathens carry'd off with them to apply to their false Gods; for whom they coined other additional, or distinguishing Names, without number, according to their different Humours, and the different Powers and Attributes of the Heavens, for which they worshipp'd them. But still, with all these, they mix'd the Character or Appellation of *Elohim*, as what express'd their Connection with, and relation to them.

And if this term shall be allow'd to mean Persons bound by Oath or Covenant, then it will fit Kings or Governours, who were under such Ties and Engagements to the People, and to them it is sometimes apply'd in Scripture.

At whatever Time the Jews thought fit first to translate this Word singular, it is certain the Heathens retain'd it in the plural Sense; and the Jews, when translating that Word apply'd to the Heathen Gods, render it plural.

Our Author observes, that the Word *Elohim* is generally join'd with Verbs and Nouns in the singular Number; yet sometimes the Words join'd with it, determine the Sense so flatly to be plural, that, without Impropriety, such as is nowhere to be met with in the sacred Book, the Persons, or Things spoken of, must necessarily be plural.

In the Consultation that is represented to have been had by the *Elohim*, for the Formation of Man, in the first of *Genesis*, *The Elohim said, Let us make Man in our Image, according to our Similitudes.*

And *Genesis* iii. 22. after Man had eaten of the forbidden Fruit, the *Elohim* says, *Behold Man is become like one of us*; the Meaning of the Expression, and in what Sense Man was become like one of the *Elohim*, our Author, on another Occasion, endeavours to explain; But from these, and such like flat Declarations of more Persons than one in the *Elohim*, he infers it is beyond doubt, that the Word is intentionally us'd plural.

On this Subject he makes great use of the Representatives of the *Elohim*, the *Shemim*, the Names, the Powers in the Machine, the Heavens being plural; and those Powers being, according to his Apprehension, just three, Fire, Light, and Spirit or Air; and if it is suppos'd, that these three Powers support all the Motions and Actions in this Machine, and that the Machine was given for a Representation of the Deity, its Nature, Manner of Existence, Powers and Actions by it self; it is very difficult to call in doubt our Author's Conclusion, that the one Substance of the Heavens, acting in three Conditions, or with distinct Powers, is expressive of the one Essence and Personality of the *Elohim*.

And,

And, indeed, to do our Author's Argument Justice, supposing the receiv'd Opinion of a Trinity in the Deity, were to be illustrated, or represented, by the Similitude of any visible, or conceivable Object; it must be confess'd, that the Wit of Man has not hitherto suggested any thing so fit, to throw Light upon that high Mystery, as this suppos'd Machine; if the Author can make it good, that Nature is actually supported by the Agency of Matter in those three Conditions of Fire, Light, and Spirit or Air. The Unity of the Machine, the Co operation or joint Action of all the three Powers; Light the Issue of Fire, and yet coeval with it, returning Spirit or Air to maintain the joint Action, and by it every thing, is so exquisite a Picture of what hitherto has been thought to surpass all Imagination, that if the Author can maintain that his Machine works by these Powers, very few will doubt of the Truth of what it was intended to represent.

That the Deity and the several Persons in it are, in numberless Expressions of Scripture, uniformly represented by the Machine, and by these three Powers in it, applying the Idea of Fire to the first; the Idea of Light to the second; and of Air or Spirit to the third, the Author endeavours to prove by a world of Quotations.

He does not forget the frequent Appearances of the Deity, in the form of Fire, often attended with Light, and Air or Cloud; he takes notice of the many Descriptions of the first Person as terrible; a jealous God; the Avenger of Sin; a flaming, a consuming, a devouring Fire to the Workers of Iniquity: and has collected a List of the various Temples that the Heathens had, to the Sun, to Fire, or to the Heavens, under that Head or Attribute.

With respect to Light, he produces numerou Passages, where Light, represented or spoken of, seems properly applicable to that Person; who was to be the Light of the Nations, who was represented by Irradiation; and, perhaps, prais'd or prayed for in the Expression *Hallelujah*; and who declar'd formally of himself, that he was the Light.

And, on this Subject, our Author has one very uncommon Reflection, as almost all his are; he says the Word COHEN, translated *Priest*, and to which no one has pretended to affix a determin'd meaning, signifies properly an Intercessor; and in evidence of this, he has produced several Texts, and particularly two, where the Children of *David* are said to be his COHENIM, meaning Intercessors with him, it not being possible they cou'd be Priests, since they were not of the Tribe of *Levi*.

After establishing that the Word render'd Priest, signifies Intercessor; he proceeds to observe, that the High Priest was only such; and employed in offering Sacrifice, as the Representative of him, concerning whom *Jehovah* swore, that he was a Priest, or Intercessor for ever, after the Order of *Melchizedeck*.

And then, to make that Type or Representati-on more entire, our Author observes that the High Priest, in Office, was to wear Garments made by divine Direction, emblematical in every particular of his Office; but more especially in that they were to be of white, that is Linnen, and Gold, and Purple, and Scarlet, by that Collecti-on of Colours expressing Light, the Badge or Re- presentation of the second Person of the Deity.

This, as well as the Crown that the Priest wore, expressing Irradiations, as before mention'd, our Author thinks was certainly understood at the Time

Time of the Institution, and by Believers down all the Days of our Saviour; and had it been generally then understood, the Nation would not have rejected the Light. But as the Jewish People universally apostatis'd, lost their Knowledge with their Faith, and had the Remains of it, almost altogether extinguish'd in the Captivity; they had leisure to frame Notions of their Messiah, different from what the Scriptures exhibited; and in the Constructions of the Scriptures, which they did not understand, they imposed on themselves, and on all that trusted them.

To the Light, our Author shews, there were several Temples amongst the Heathens.

Touching the third Person, our Author produces several Texts, where he is formally spoken of under the Description of *RUACH, Ventus, Flatus, Spiritus*, the Spirit of *Jehovah*. And from the Heathens Religion and Opinions he observes, that they imputed all their Advices, from their Gods, to the Spirit, to some material Inspiration or Inflation; all their Sybils, the Priestesses that deliver'd their Oracles, were suppos'd, in effect, to be blown up, and inflated by some Spirit or Wind. And it may be consider'd, whether it is of any consequence, and of what, that they deliver'd their Answers from Tripodes.

But not to pursue, at any greater length, the numerous and the various Authorities that our Author bring together to support his Argument, it merits Reflection, that when our Saviour speaks of himself, as the Light; and when he and his Apostles deliver the Doctrine of the Trinity in the New Testament, they speak of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, without any Apology or Explication, as a Matter very well known and understood by such as understood the Scriptures;

a thing, which it seems altogether impossible they cou'd have fallen into, if they had not known that such, as really knew the Scriptures, understood them; as our Saviour says, on other Occasions, *Matthew xi. 15.* *Hēthai ha th Ears to hear, let bim hear.*

As our Author has push'd his Argument for the Trinity very far, from the Notion of Fire, Light, and Spirit, so he lays great weight on another Argument, not altogether unlike to that, drawn from the appearance of the Cherubim, set up at the Expulsion of *Adam* from Paradise, and from the Description of that Representation or Appearance, drawn from the first and tenth Chapters of the Prophecies of *Ezekiel*.

From the Visions of *Ezekiel* he collects, that the Form of the Cherubim was one Figure, with four Heads or Faces; the Face of an Ox, the Face of a Lyon, the Face of a Man, and the Face of an Eagle.

Had there been no more join'd but the Faces of the Ox, the Lyon, and the Eagle, as the Author can prove that the Ox represented Fire, the Lyon Light, and the Eagle Spirit or Air, there cou'd be no doubt, he says, that this wou'd have been a proper Representation of the Trinity in the Heavens; and, by consequence, of the invisible Trinity by them represented.

But as the Face of a Man was added; join'd, as the Prophet takes notice, to the Face of the Lyon, the Representative of Light, the second Person, our Author insists that this appearance exhibited to Man, for his Comfort, just when for his Sin he was expell'd Paradise, and sentenc'd to hard Labour, represented the Trinity, with the Man Christ Jesus join'd to the second Person, and was the most compleat Emblematical Representation

tion of what our Author supposes God reveal'd to Adam, when he told him, that *the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Head of the Serpent.*

Again, this Representation in the Cherubim was a thing so well known and understood by the Antients, tho' we have description of it but in *Ezekiel's* Vision, that when the Lord commanded it to be made for the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the Workmen made it at once, without wanting a Pattern; and our Author lays no small weight on it, that Figures of these Cherubims (and he says he can shew why there were two of them) were, besides the Ark of the Testimony, and the Mercy-Seat, the only Furniture of the most Holy Place; into which none but the Representative of the great Intercessor durst ever enter; and that but once a year, cloath'd with the Emblems of his Office, and being sanctified by Blood.

As our Author is indefatigably industrious in his search after the true Meaning of Emblems, Institutions, and Services; he is no less so, in settling the Meaning of Words, hitherto mistaken, or unknown. I shall give you but one Instance.

The Word *BERITH*, which we always translate *Covenant*, *Fædus*, occurs in several Texts; and is generally coupled with such Words, as cannot suffer a Man to believe that *Covenant*, *Fædus*, is its original Signification.

The Blood of the Covenant; the Messenger of the Covenant; I have given thee for a Covenant of the Nations, &c. are Expressions that will hardly go down; and what we translate *making a Covenant*, *KARAT BERITH* most certainly signifies *to kill, or cut off Berith*; which shews to Conviction that *Berith* must, at least originally, have had another Sense than is now in the Translation given it.

Our

Our Author, searching to be satisfy'd in this Difficulty, finds two Texts, where the very same Letters that compose *Berith*, but differently pointed by the Jews, is truly translated *Soap* [*Borith*, as they point it] *Fullonum*; and this Word, again, confessedly deriv'd from *BARAR*, which signifies *to cleanse, to purify*.

If then, says our Author, *Berith* is taken from the Idea of purifying, it must and may, from the Genius of the Language, carry the Sense of Purifier, Purification throughout.

And if it is so understood, then all the Texts, in which it occurs, will be intelligible, and determin'd to that important Sense, in which they were written.

I have given thee for a Purifier to the Nations; the Blood of the Purifier; the Messenger of the Purifier; will all directly refer to the great Sacrifice, the Purification to which our Divines, without observing the Rules of Construction, and by very hardy Figures, apply them.

And *Karat Berith* will signify, in its proper and primary Sense, to cut off a, or the Purifier, and not to cut off a Covenant.

Our Author affirms, that in the Usage of the Hebrew Tongue, nothing is more certain, or frequent, than that the Type or Emblem gets and bears the Name of the thing typified and represented, or principally meant; wherefore if Christ was the Purifier, the *Berith* promis'd, every Creature, whose Blood was shed, as representing him, in Sacrifice, might have had the Name of *Berith*. And when such a Creature was kill'd or cut off, as an Emblem, it was true that *Berith* was cut off or kill'd.

And as Man, entering into Covenant, that is, accepting of Terms offer'd by God for his Purification,

cation, in token of his Acceptance, was to kill, and shed the Blood of a Type of the great Purifier; which Blood, tho' but of the Lamb, a Type, was deem'd holy, and capable of sanctifying and purifying the Altar, the Tabernacle, the Priest, and every thing that it touch'd. The same symbolical Act was repeated for confirming Pactions; Covenants, or Agreements between Men; a typical *Berith* was cut out; and over Sacrifice Men confirm'd Covenants, and accepted of the Terms propos'd by each other, as they testified their Engagements to God, and their Faith that he was bound to them, by the same typical Representation.

Nor will this Construction appear strange to those, who reflect that, in the Latin Tongue, *precutere, icere, and ferire Fœdus*, are the Terms us'd for making a Covenant or Alliance; in respect to which, the Etymologists satisfy themselves with saying, that slaying some Animal in Sacrifice, being a Solemnity that attended all Alliances; at the making whereof, the Parties were willing to intimate, by the Death of the Victim, the Punishment they thus consented to be bound to, if they violat'd the Agreement; the Words *ferire Fœdus* were brought to be expressive of the End or Purpose, for which such Animals were slain at Treaties and Alliances; and they suppose that *jædus* may have been the antient Tuscan Word for *Hædus, a Kid*.

But if they will depart from suppositions, without any proof, and mount a little higher in their Antiquity; if they will admit, what our Author thinks he has prov'd, that all the religious Services of the Heathens were taken from the Institutions and Appointments in the Service of the living God; tho' by length of Time, change of Language, and Imaginations; when Men, having lost true

Know-

Knowledge, began to imagine, they were misap-
ply'd; and in part, alter'd: They will find Reason
to believe that, even amongst the Heathens, Sacri-
fice, as the highest and most important Act of
their Religious Worship, was adhibited to Co-
venants, as an Appeal to their Deities; and put-
ting all they expected, from that Symbol of their
Religion, on the Issue of their faithful Perfor-
mance of their Engagements.

In the Hebrew Language, the same Word
ASHEM signifies *Sin*, and a *Sin Offering*, a Kid,
Lamb, or any other thing offer'd for Sin; and
the Heathens made it a Name or Attribute of
one of their *Elobim*.

It does not appear, so far as I know, that *Fædus*,
in the antient Tuscan, was written for *Hædus*;
but it does appear, that the Latin has an Ad-
jective of the same Letters *Fædus, a, um*, which
signifies *vile, unclean, abominable, and polluted*.
Now if with them, at the first Formation of their
Language, an Offering for Sin or Pollution cou'd
be call'd Sin or Pollution, as in Hebrew a Kid or
Lamb offer'd for ASHEM is call'd *Ashem*; I see no
Reason to doubt, that every Offering for Sin or
Pollution might be call'd *Fædus, or Fædum*, in the
Sense of the Word Adjective: and therefore *ferire*
Fædus, in its proper and primitive Sense, was to
kill, or sacrifice a Sin Offering.

But be this as it will, our Author discovers
several Temples, amongst the Heathens, to *Berith*,
and to *Baal Berith*, by which he says is meant
the Lord, the Purifier, the early Heathens having
by no Means lost the Idea, or the Expectation of
a Purification.

And he says that Salt, a necessary Ingredient
in all Sacrifice, was adhibited and requir'd in
this view only, as an Emblem of Purification;
Salt being one of the most powerful Purifiers
known

known; and of approved use in purging and purifying most Sorts of Metals from their Earth, and base Dross that closely adheres to them.

When Freethinkers object to the Evidence, drawn from Prophecies and prophetical Institutions, for supporting the Christian Religion, that it is ambiguous and uncertain; the Prophecies being dark and obscure, capable often of a double Meaning; and the Institutions being Figurative and Typical, applicable only, *ex post facto*, by a comparison of the Figures with the Events; and therefore not fit to communicate, with any certainty, to those to whom the Revelation was made, the Knowledge of the Event, which they were to expect, and in which they were to believe: The common Answer is, that we are not, from our narrow Views, and with our dim Lights, to examine and to find fault with the Disposition of the infinitely-wise Being, purely, because we cannot assign Reasons, that to us seem adequate, for the Conduct he has been pleas'd to hold; that it has pleas'd God to convey such Intimations of the then future Advent of the Messiah to the *Israelites*, in the Law, and by the Prophets, as were, when the Event perfigur'd happen'd, full and distinct proof, that Jesus was the Person intended; and the System of Religion, deliver'd by him, the future Law and Faith to which all Mankind was to be subject; and that, these things being admitted, it is presumptuous to enquire why the Deity, in infinite Wisdom, thought fit to convey this Knowledge, and these Intimations in Prophecies and Institutions, which, at the Beginning, and before the Advent of our Saviour, were wrapt up designedly in Mystery and Figures. And some People even venture to guess at probable Causes, for the delivering and keeping this Knowledge in this Manner, 'till after our Saviour's Pas-

God. But

But, if our Author's Scheme for interpreting the Scriptures is true, the whole Objection falls at once to the Ground ; because these Emblems and Figures, as well as many Expressions call'd figurative, tho' dark, obscure, and uncertain to us (who have lost the Knowledge of the Language, as well as of the Emblems) yet were not so to them, to whom the Revelation was made ; and who, by those Emblems, and by that Language, understood as clearly what was foretold to happen, at the distance of many Centuries, and therefore as distinctly believ'd in it ; as we, at the distance of many Ages after the Event, upon the Relation in a Language we understand, know and believe that Jesus actually came, and fulfilled the Will of God, and the Predictions concerning him.

And, if this be so, it will be easily understood, why the Faith of *Abraham* and others, who preceded the Days of our Saviour, is so highly commended by *St. Paul*.

If the *Israelites*, to whom the Law was deliver'd, understood the Language, the Institutions, the Emblems, as our Author does, they certainly must have known that, in due time, God intended to send a Messiah to the World, under the suffering Character that Jesus bore ; and they must have believ'd it wou'd be so, because of the Marks of Divinity attending the Revelation, which they were Eye witnesses to. The Language, in which we are told of that Event after it happen'd, is no more precise and distinct than that formerly used was to them ; and if we have not seen the Miracles with our own Eyes, we see those Prophecies deliver'd to them ; and have authentic Records of the Completion of them ; which does no more than

than put us on a Level with them, in point of Evidence, or cause of Belief.

They, indeed, at the Publication of the Law cou'd not tell (so far as we see) how many Ages or Years, the Event was distant ; as we, who have come after it, can. But when the Advent became nearer, and when the Impression of the first Revelation became fainter, in the Days of *Daniel*, they were brought more upon a Level with us, even in that respect ; and were told, to a Day, when they were to look for the Completion of their Hopes.

It is not to be denied that this Revelation, however clear in its self, became obscure, before the coming of the Messiah ; the Means, by which this was brought about, our Author has explain'd ; and very noble Ends may be assign'd, for which it may have been permitted to be so, by the divine Wisdom and Goodness ; without impeaching the certainty of the Proof of the Christian Religion from Prophecies and Prophetick Institutions ; and without suffering the divine Goodness to lie under the Imputation that wou'd attend the Supposition, that the Revelation of God was not full, and compleat to Mankind, and did not instruct them sufficiently for their Conduct, their Faith, and their Comfort.

I have selected these few hints from amidst an Infinity of other very various Observations and Discoveries which the Author has, without seeming very solicitous about what is call'd Method or Order, brought together. And I have ranged them in such Order, as seem'd to me the most proper to let you easily into the Author's Sentiments, so far as I understand them.

If YOUR LORDSHIP will judge of them airly, and after due Examination, you must enquire

quire after them in the Original; where you will find many Proofs and Arguments that my Measure of Searching does not sufficiently come up to, employ'd for illustrating each Particular, besides what I have cursorily stated in these Pages.

I have lost my Labour, if YOUR LORDSHIP does not think these Matters highly worth looking into; and, from your Learning and Candor, I promise my self that if you do, those, who are in the same low Rank of Learning with me, will have great Obligations to you for letting them know how they are to form their Judgment upon Matters, that seem to concern them and Mankind so much.

In the Treatise last publish'd *Of Power Essential and Mechanical*, our Author, amongst other very curious and surprizing things, undertakes to confute Sir J. N.'s Principles of Gravity, Attraction, Infinite Vacuity, and Projection, which he says, are not only unmechanical, but contradictory to the Nature and Idea of material Substances, and impossible and absurd. And he pretends to prove, by different Editions of Sir J.'s Works, and from different Passages in them, that he has at different Times varied and changed his own Opinions; and, in effect, as our Author calls it, given up his own Principles, which are untenable. In this last Treatise our Author mixes, with his Reflections against Sir J. and the late Dr. C., a degree of Bitterness and Severity that must be disagreeable to many, and which nothing can excuse, but a Zeal for the Honour of Religion, which in him seems to be very strong and sincere.

I am, MY LORD,

YOUR LORDSHIP's

Most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

