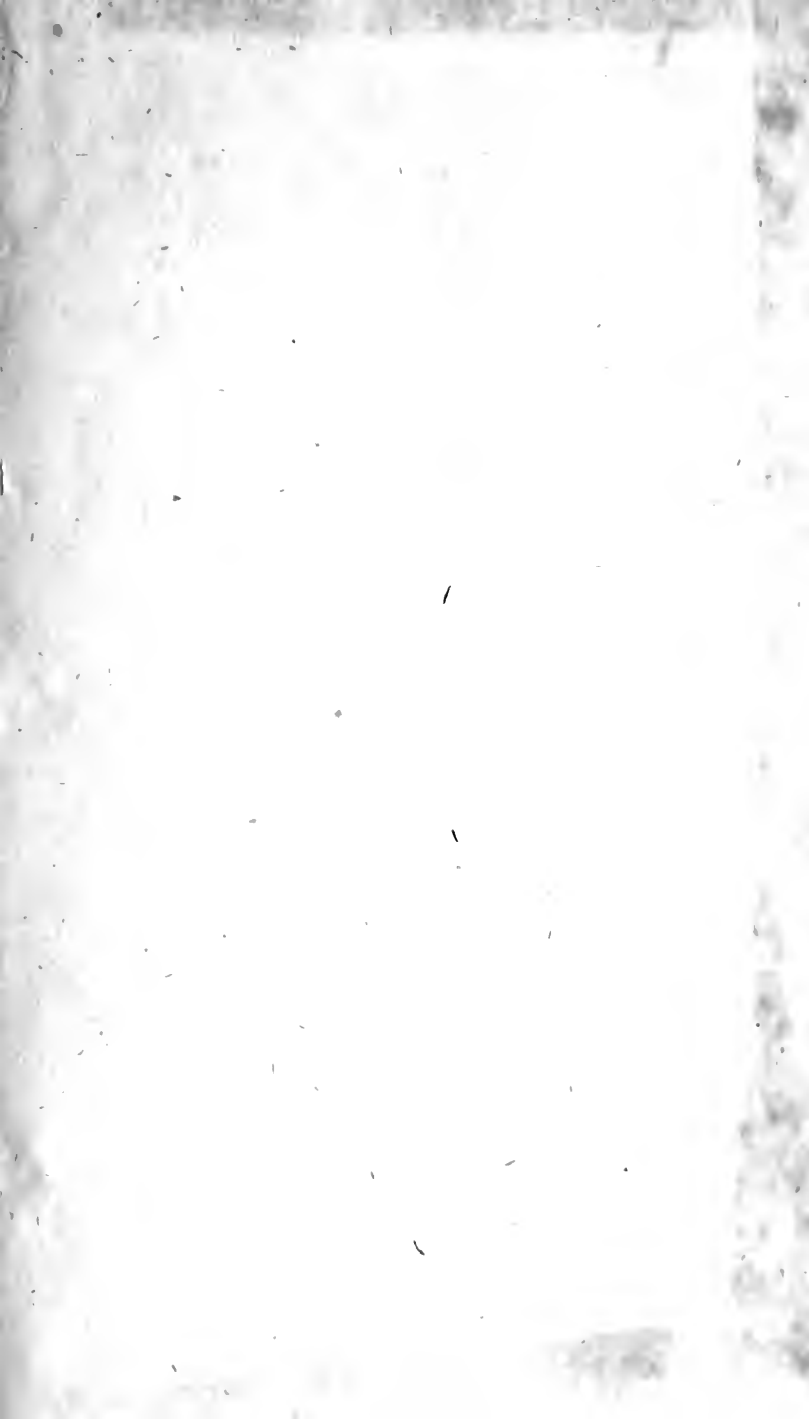






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# CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE  
STATE of the WORLD

With regard to the  
*THEORY of RELIGION,*  
IN THREE PARTS.

- I. Want of *Univerſality* in Natural and Reveled Religion, no juſt Objection againſt either.
- II. The Scheme of Divine Providence with regard to the *Time* and *Manner* of the ſeveral Diſpenſations of Reveled Religion, more eſpecially the *Chriſtian*.
- III. The Progreſs of Natural Religion and Science, or the continual Improvement of the *World in general*.

*Being the Subſtance of ſome Sermons preach'd  
before the Univerſity of CAMBRIDGE.*

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By EDMUND LAW, M. A.  
Archdeacon of *Carlisle*.

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T O

The Right Honourable

*H E N R Y*

Lord Viscount *Lonsdale*,

These Discourses

*Are most humbly Dedicated,*

In Testimony of that Veneration which  
is due to His LORDSHIP'S general  
Character,

A N D

As a Token of Gratitude for his par-  
ticular Favours to the Author.



# P R E F A C E.

*THE following Discourses are part of a much larger Design, tending to shew that Arts and Sciences, Natural and Reveled Religion, have upon the whole always been progressive, from the Creation of the World to the present Time; as also that they have been suited to each other, as well as to the Circumstances of Mankind, during each Period of this their Progression. A Theory which when fairly represented, I have been assured would give some satisfaction to many who being convinc'd of the Existence and Attributes of one supreme first Cause, yet are so unhappy as to entertain strong Prejudices against every kind of Revelation, chiefly on account of the Circumstances under which it was supposed to have been communicated, which they are unable to reconcile with the Course and Order of Divine Providence in all other respects; as well as to those who are equally at a loss in searching after any settled Order or Design in either of these Establishments: but yet if they could once persuade themselves in general that one of these proceeded in some sort of uniform Ratio and Analogy with the other, and that both were in a State of regular Progression,*  
would

## P R E F A C E.

would have *Patience* to wait a while in hopes of seeing their particular *Objections* gradually removed in each by the same *Rules*. I have formerly attempted to clear up some of the chief *Difficulties* that occur in our *Conceptions* of the *Deity* and his *Providence*, in some *Observations* on *ABp. King's Essay* on the *Origin* of *Evil*, and have since had the pleasure of seeing that *System* adopted by a late celebrated *Writer*, and esteem'd worthy of being adorn'd with all the *Graces* of *Poetry*. This is in some respects a *Continuation* of the same design: But being now in a great measure cut off from such *Books* as were necessary to complete it, I could only draw the *Plan*, and *Outlines*, and was forced to content myself with venturing this abroad in the present *Form*, (though very sensible that it is not the most inviting to *Readers* of the stamp I just now mention'd) rather than be at the pains of throwing it into one close continued *Treatise*; especially as I cannot think that my present stock of *Materials* would have been sufficient to have given that its due proportions, and several things must then have been retrench'd which this more popular *Form* admits. Some of these probably will seem *Repetitions*, and yet perhaps be excused, as they come in on different *Occasions*, and help to set the same *Thought* in different, and 'tis hoped not altogether disagreeable *Views*. When I consider

## P R E F A C E.

*sider the Temper of those Persons for whose use the following Papers chiefly are intended, I am encouraged to hope that none of my Brethren will easily take offence at the freedom I have been obliged to use in censuring some things which seem'd to be the greatest obstacles to this Progress of Religious Knowledge, as well as to hinder both ourselves and others from perceiving it : at least, that if such Censures must be deem'd a wounding of our present System, they will at the same time be look'd on as the faithful wounds of a Friend. Nor will it, I trust, be requisite to make any farther Apology for the Defects of the Performance which are but too natural on so very extensive a Subject in such hands. As it is, I hope it may prove sufficient to give general hints in each part of the Scheme propos'd, and thereby put some others on finishing what shall upon examination bear the test. If the Foundation itself should appear to be faulty, here is already too much built upon it ; since the Consequences of the whole are pretty obvious.*



I.

Want of *Universality*

IN

Natural and Reveled Religion

No just Objection against either.

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*Are not my Ways equal? Ezek. 18. 29.*

*Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also  
of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.*

Rom. 3. 29.

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ACTS xvii. 30.

*And the Times of this Ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent.*

THESE words contain a Declaration of God's gracious intent to reform Mankind by the coming of *Christ*, and at the same time intimate the preference due to His above any former Institution.

In the foregoing Verses the Apostle had been instructing the *Athenians* in the Nature of the true God, and his universal Providence. He shews them that there is one common Father and Governour of the world, who has made this Earth a fit habitation for the sons of men and distributed them all over the face of it; who has distinguished the Seasons and divided the Nations, and fix'd the bounds and periods of each in so regular and wise a manner as might lead all diligent observers of them to a knowledge of their Author, and put them upon seeking out some method of expressing their Devotion to him. Though here in fact, (as the Apostle intimates, v. 27.) they were all but like men groping in the dark, their notions of the Deity very imperfect and obscure, their wor-

ship highly absurd and irrational. This their Ignorance God was pleased for some time to *wink at*, (*υπεριδειν*) to overlook, disregard, or as it is in a parallel place, \* *He suffered them to walk in their own ways*, to wander in the several mazes they had brought themselves into, the various sects of Superstition and Idolatry into which they had fallen: but now he *commandeth all men every where to repent*; or rather publishes, (*παραγγελλει*) proclaims the Tidings of Salvation to all men upon the terms of Repentance; he offers a new Covenant to Mankind in general, from the benefits of which none are absolutely excluded who sincerely desire them. — *Tidings* which ought to be received by all, as they were by the first *Christians*, with Joy and Thankfulness. But how strangely has the face of things been altered, or rather the nature of them inverted since! When through the degeneracy of mankind the benefits of this Divine Institution become restrained to a few Nations, and even these are taught to despise it for that very reason which uses to make a benefit the more valuable, namely because it is restrained to themselves.

If, say the present Unbelievers, *God has made of one blood all Nations of men, and is no re-*

\* Acts 14. 16.

*specter of Persons*; and if he designs this Revelation for all men, as he must, if it be of so great use and advantage to them;— Why then is it not actually communicated to all?— Why did he so long, why does he still *wink at the Ignorance* of so many Nations and leave them without any means of coming to the Knowledge of his Truth? Can a God of infinite power and wisdom be disappointed in his aim? Or will the common Father of mankind confine his greatest mercies to so few of his Children?— And thus every Argument of the superior excellency of our Religion is made an objection to its Divine Authority, and what should be a particular motive of Gratitude for having received it, is turned into the strongest reason for rejecting it.

In my following Discourse I shall consider that part of this Objection which relates to the *Manner* of the *Christian* Dispensation, the other which more immediately affects the *Time* of its delivery must be reserved to a more full examination afterwards.

In answer therefore to this part of the foregoing difficulty I shall endeavour to prove in the first place,

I. That a *partial Communication* of Christianity can be no particular Objection to its Divine

Authority, since the Religion of Nature is on the same foot with it in this respect.

II. I propose to shew the Wisdom and Goodness of the Divine Conduct in the Dispensation of them both. And

III. The great Benefit of complying with the Terms of the Gospel, and the Inexcusableness of rejecting it.

I. I am to shew that a *partial Communication* of Christianity can be no particular objection to its Divine Authority, since the Religion of Nature is on the same foot with it in this respect.

As the all-wise Creator of the Universe has been pleased to frame different *Orders* of intellectual Beings, so he has made a considerable difference among those of the same order. In *Mankind* the case is very evident. We cannot but observe a vast disparity between both the *Abilities* and *Advantages* of some men and those of others; their *Tempers* of body and *Powers* of mind, and *Circumstances* in the world; their *Education*, *Opportunities* and *Ways of Life*; the *Station* they are in, or the *Government* they live under. — Now these are so many Talents which together make up our portion of *Reason*, and severally contribute to the

the forming our Understanding and improving our *Nature*. As these then are so very unequally distributed, 'tis plain that our Religious Notions, or our *Law of Nature*, must be very different and unequal also. The bounds of Duty will be as various as the degrees of Knowledge in every man, and likewise be enlarged in proportion to the gradual Improvement in the same man.

To speak therefore of one *fixt, immutable* and *universal* Law of Nature is framing an imaginary Scheme without the least foundation in the nature of things, directly contrary to the present order of the whole Creation: 'Tis making the same Rule suit Beings in all Circumstances, which is full as absurd as to prescribe the same food and physic to all Constitutions. — To stile this Religion of Nature absolutely *perfect*, or its Light *sufficient*, can only mean that every one may be as perfect here as God intended him to be, and able to do all that his Maker will require of him, or as much as is sufficient to excuse him from *punishment*; which is very true, but nothing to the purpose: for this kind of Perfection is far from implying an universal unchangeable Equality in the *Law of Nature*, or excluding greater Light, since it may be very consistent with that

diversity of Talents abovementioned, and those different degrees of Happiness and Perfection which are founded in and naturally consequent upon it. As therefore all the Gifts of Nature are distributed in this partial and unequal manner, How unreasonable is it to object against reveled Religion for its being conveyed in the very same manner! One who believed any thing of a God and his Providence would naturally suppose that if a Revelation were to be made at all, it would be made according to the same method which is observed in the Government of the natural and moral world; at least, he that allows this method to be consistent with the belief of a Deity in the one, cannot surely on that account reject the other. <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Mr. *Chubb* [Discourse on Miracles, p. 48, &c.] endeavours to invalidate this observation, by asserting, that the two Cases, are not parallel, because the one could not have been better constituted; which he thinks cannot be made appear concerning the other. But if we shew that the like or greater Inconveniences would flow from any other assignable way of conveying Revelation (which will be attempted in the following part of this Discourse) then we have as much reason to assert that it could not upon the whole have been conveyed in a better way, and consequently the objection drawn from its want of Universality will be of no more force than that from Inequality is in the common Course of Nature, and the two Cases will still be exactly parallel,

Thus

Thus much may be sufficient to shew that natural and reveled Religion are upon the same foot in point of *Universality*, and that the Objection holds equally against both. And I have been the more brief on this Head as it has been so fully discussed of late by very able writers.\*

II. I proceed therefore in the second place, to point out the Wisdom and Goodness of the Divine Conduct in the Dispensation of them both.

Ist. Of Natural Religion, which as we have seen, is proportionable to the different Abilities and Attainments of Mankind, as these are also to their different Stations and Conditions, both which we shall find exquisitely suited to the well-being of the World.

For in the first place, *Society* is requisite in order to supply the Conveniences, the Comforts and the Necessaries of Life, as well as to secure the quiet use and safe possession of them. To preserve Society, among such frail fallible Creatures, there is need of *Government*, which implies

\* See Dr. *Conybeare's*, Mr. *Foster's*, or S. *Browne's Defence of Revelation*, or Dr. *Denne's* Sermon on the Propagation of the Gospel, or more at large in Bp. *Butler's Analogy of Religion*, &c. pag. 181. 215. &c. Octavo.

different Stations and Conditions, as these again call for different Abilities and Qualifications. All, 'tis plain, cannot be Governours, nor enjoy the benefits which attend some Posts of Wealth and Power : the *many* have nothing left them but to obey, to execute the will of their Superiors, and undergo the Drudgeries of Life. \*

The same holds in the Body politic as in the natural, there must be many inferior and *more feeble Members*, which yet are *necessary*, *neither can the Head say to the Feet I have no need of you.* — But now, if all these different Members of the world had naturally the self-same sense and relish of things; if each man had originally and unchangeably the highest degree of Understanding and Acuteness, the greatest strength of Reason and fineness of Imagination that is to be met with in any of the Species, how very unequal and incongruous must this unavoidable diversity of Orders prove! How hard would be the case of them whose lot is to fill the worst and lowest Offices, and

\* “ Illi ergo omnes conditi sunt ut hæc opera præstent,  
 “ quibus in Civitate opus est; conditus est autem Vir  
 “ scientia præditus sui gratia: atque ita simul colitur  
 “ Terra, et reperitur Sapientia. Quam scite ergo dixit  
 “ ille, quisquis fuit, *Nisi essent stulti desolaretur Terra?*  
*Maimon. Porta Mos. p. 41.*

Eccl<sup>us</sup>. 38. 32. 34.



yet who find themselves as well qualified for, and as highly deserving too of the best ( since on this supposition, which leaves it so very little in any one's power to improve or benefit either himself or others, there could scarce be any real desert at all) as those that hold them, and who likewise cannot but be as deeply sensible of all that misery and hardship which arises from the want of them! The common Intellect and Apprehension of Man would be but ill placed in an *Ox* or *Ass*, nor would the genius and temper of some philosophic mind be any better suited to *him that driveth them and is occupied in all their labours.*

But this must necessarily be the state of things if all men were by nature furnished with all those rational or intellectual Accomplishments which adorn some few of them at present. Three parts in four of the world must be unfit for their particular Circumstances, and at odds with their Condition. How inconsistent also would it be in Nature to implant those various Senses, Appetites and Tastes in all men, which not one in a thousand would have power to gratify! That sublime degree of Reason and Reflection which could only prove its own tormentor! Not to mention what ill influence such a Scheme would have on Government  
itself;

itself; how difficult it must be to rule where every one has the same Strength and Skill; how hard to obey, when all have equal Abilities, and therefore (as they might think) an equal right to be their own Directors. In short, how much more wise and beneficial is the present Constitution of things! Where all is left to Mankind themselves, who have both the *forming* and *disposing* of each other; nay where men are at liberty in a great measure to frame their own Natures and Dispositions: where they have no inconvenient or pernicious Principle to lay to Nature's Charge, \* no properly innate *Notions* or implanted *Instincts*, † no truly natural *Appetite* or *Affection* to sway or byass them, except that universal Sense and strong Desire of *Happiness* which was absolutely necessary to their Preservation. <sup>b</sup> By these means we have at first only

\* See *Ibbot's Boyle's Lect.* 2d sett, serm. 5. p. 143. &c. or *A. Bp. King's Origin of Evil*, Note 38. p. 211. 2d Edit.

† See the Prelim. Dissert. to *King's Origin of Evil*, and rem. I. p. 87, 88. 2d Edit.

<sup>b</sup> To form some notion of this, let it be observed, that when the first foundation of a diversity of Sense and Intellect is once laid in a greater or less susceptibility of Pleasure or Pain, by a *Perception* of *Ideas* more acute or dull, more quick or slow, and a proportioned *Reflection* on them (which proportion, by the bye, between these two Powers [of perceiving and reflecting] is, I believe, in each person pretty

such Thoughts and Inclinations instilled into our Minds as are agreeable to, and for the most part do in fact arise from our Place and Circumstances in the World, and afterwards find room enough to refine, improve and enlarge our Faculties; to qualify ourselves for, as well as by a right Application of them to merit some superior Station whenever it shall become void. How regular and beautiful a Subordination must this produce! How fitly might the *whole Body thus knit together and compacted by that which every Joint supplieth, increase with the Increase of God*, would Man but enter into the same great Plan of exciting Industry and Labour and do what lies in his own power to promote it, *viz.* entail Benefits and Successes as the natural consequence of these, and endeavour to suit every one's Station to his respective Merit and

pretty exactly kept up as to the pitch of their Vivacity in both the abovenamed respects, i. e. the *Force* and *Time* of their successive Operations, or the *Momentum* and *Velocity* of their respective Objects)—from hence the whole Tribe of *Affections* &c. and the several Degrees in each, are very apparently deducible: supposing only this, I say, which seems to lie in the *original Stamina* of the Body, and is so far not to be accounted for, at least by me; which therefore, and which only, I should term *innate*, or strictly *natural*, since every thing besides, that is comprehended under the name of *Natural Appetite* &c. is properly so far from being such that it is evidently posterior

Abilities, *i. e.* deal with each person according to what *he is*, and observe those Rules which the great God of Nature has established! What

in the Order of Nature, and entirely grounded on the *Ideas* which themselves arise from hence, and whose *innateness* in all senses of that word is now generally given up: — supposing then this one foundation laid by Nature, a difference herein will be enough to constitute the Being more or less sensible or rational in general, and tend to make it more or less *passionate* or *mild*, eager or indolent &c. in whatsoever it applies itself to; but can this ever actually determine it to any one peculiar set of Objects, or have any tendency towards giving what we mean by a particular Genius, Taste, or Temper? That, and the whole Constitution of the Human Mind, or its predominant Qualities, seem to arise afterwards from the particular *Affociations* which we form ourselves or learn of others, as these grow gradually and even mechanically from the Circumstances we are in, or from those Objects that more immediately surround and strike us; provided that a suitable *Attention* and regard be paid to each as it presents itself. For that amidst all this Mechanic Apparatus we have such a distinct Faculty of *attending*, and determining the subordinate Powers in consequence thereof, as is stated at large by *A. B. King*, I must yet beg leave to suppose, till all these various Appearances which seem so much to require it (of which in the following note<sup>e</sup>.) are solved on other Principles, and then indeed this, which it must be owned contains something inexplicable, will be of course excluded. I may add here, that neither are those *Affociations* themselves, from whence some very ingenious Persons would deduce a total Mechanism, altogether *necessary*, nor we so far passive under them as to be left without a power of curbing  
and

Emulation must this raise, joined with the utmost care and caution, when each finds it in his power so much to improve and advance,

and correcting, breaking and eradicating, as well as of contracting them at first and afterwards confirming them: to assert this would be advancing a new Doctrine of *Habits* contrary to the general Sense and Language of Mankind.

Well then, allowing such a degree of Liberty, or active Power to be joined with the other passive Ingredients in our Composition, as such it must in some measure act independently on each of them and be capable of forming new *Associations* from its own proper Acts, which will extend to all the rest and influence them; and yet as it will also have some such sort of connection with them all as to be itself in some respect or other influenced by them reciprocally, or (which comes to the same thing) the *Mind* will be so far affected in and through them as to influence it, which we all daily feel. [else how come these parts of our Constitution to be constantly applied to with success for the determination of it? Why is Pain present or in prospect used to move a Man, or Arguments and Motives urged, if they are really Matters of indifference to his *Choice* and have no manner of effect upon it?] As this grows and gathers strength like all our other Faculties and is equally capable of being impaired and rectified again (*King*, Note X. p.406,407. 3d. edit.)—As it is limited and subject to its Laws not perhaps wholly different, though of a kind distinct, from those of the other Appetites. (however such as make it no less governable, *ibid.* c. 5. §. 5. sub. 4. p. 420, &c. with notes 70, p. 417. and 71, p. 422, 423.) and cannot go against these Appetites without manifest pain and misery to the person: *ib.* Not. N. p. 336, &c. — As it may be inclined both by them and

its

as well as to impair and debase his *Nature*, and thereby also change his *State*! what eagerness to excell some! what dread of falling below others! what provocation for all to make the best use of their *Faculties* and *Opportunities*! This amicable Contest, this perpetual Struggle must certainly make more for the good of the whole, than if all had been passive and absolutely fixed in any degree of Knowledge and

its own course of Operation, and will become daily more and more conformed to them by due regular exercise, which we likewise experience; — its Operations will become as much the Objects of Foreknowledge, nor will it be much less easy to account for either the Formation or *Increase* of any particular Turn of Mind in any given situation, than if all were performed in us necessarily, and at once. This Plan of Human Nature, which derives every thing from so few Principles, and yet makes room for that endless Variety conspicuous in it, might, I am sensible, be set in a good light and shewn to be free from some of the greatest Difficulties that must clog all others. In this view a just Uniformity is, by the Deity so far as he acts, always, and might be by us, preserved among all its constituent parts; our Talents suited to our Capacity of using them; our Sphere enlarged as that increases and regularly keeping pace with our Improvements; each Dispensation put upon a reasonable foot, and all Discoveries made in due proportion to our Qualifications for judging of them, and our Dispositions to apply them. Whereas the contrary Scheme of bringing all things to an original, equal and immediate Intuition, or of fixing every man to certain Impulses or Instincts, independent on his Station and Endeavours and intirely unimprovable by them; this

Perfection or limited unalterably to any State.

<sup>a</sup> Upon this Plan only could there be place for Hope or Fear, Reward or Punishment, the only proper means of governing free, rational Agents, and of conducting them to their supreme and truest Happiness, which seems entirely to consist in Agency, and which can only this way be excited. <sup>b</sup> This therefore is the method most agreeable to Wisdom and Goodness, and con-

this must be quite arbitrary, and in a great measure useless, and attended with all the inconsistencies and inconveniences already mentioned. Such would the Consequences be of that pretended *Universal Equability* in Natural Religion; nor is the levelling Scheme so much contended for in Revelation less absurd, as will appear below.

<sup>a</sup> See King's *Origin of Evil*, Note 19. p. 121, &c. and Note Y. p. 449, &c. We may add that the supposition of any such fixed unimprovable State of natural Good implies, strictly speaking, no less than the Subversion of of all Virtue or *Moral Good*, which is nothing but the chusing to communicate the former [See King, R. 1. p. 84, 85. 3d. Edit.] for which Communication there could be no place in such a State, nor consequently any room for any of those Ideas which are founded on it. Nor does this Scheme any better consult the Interest of our *Intellectual* accomplishments, which while it seems to be exalting them is at the bottom taking away their Use and Exercise; while it pretends to constitute an equality among Rational Agents is really destructive of both Rationality and Agency.

<sup>b</sup> See King, p. 241, 338, 350, 368, 379, 393, &c. with the following Note <sup>c</sup>.

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frequently most worthy of God. <sup>c</sup> Having thus far considered the partial Distribution of the Gifts of Nature and by consequence the Diversity of natural Religion, and offered some Hints towards explaining the Reasonableness and Necessity thereof, I proceed to shew the same concerning *Revelation*. If a Revelation were to be made at all (and I must here take it for granted that such a thing is neither impossible nor altogether unreasonable in itself) it must either be conveyed in the method we are told it was, namely, at first communicated to some few select Persons and by them divulg'd and gradually propagated to the rest of the World; <sup>d</sup> or secondly, every particular man

<sup>c</sup> See this described more at large in Bp. *Butler's Analogy*, p. 93, &c. 2d. Edit.

<sup>d</sup> Mr. *Chubb* (on Miracles, p. 68, &c.) objects to this first method, that hereby it would be in the power of a few men to deprive the rest of all the benefits of this Revelation. But is not that really the case in all the other Benefits of Nature and the ordinary Gifts of Providence? Are not most of the Blessings of Life communicated to us by the mediation and instrumentality of other men, who may be just and faithful in communicating them, or otherwise? and is it not oft in the power of a single person to deprive multitudes of Life itself or any of its comforts, of Liberty, Peace, Plenty, Arts, Improvements, &c. and is not all this unavoidable while men are allowed the free use of their natural Powers,



must have it by immediate Inspiration, and be at all times and in all cases influenced and directed to it internally; or thirdly, it must be published again and again, and fresh Miracles worked for the Conviction of each Unbeliever in every Age.

In the Second of these methods the Inconveniences are very obvious: for First, This Influence, of what kind soever it be, must either be absolutely efficacious and irresistible, *i. e.* so strong as to subvert the natural Powers of Man, and take away his Freedom of thinking and acting, and consequently destroy all Virtue, Merit, Praise, Reward; *i. e.* all that is good and valuable in Religion: or else it would not be

Powers, which Mr. *Chubb* contends for? Men, he says, *are not to be over-ruled* in either the Publication or Reception of Religion; and if so, he has yet to explain how that is to be given so as not *to leave it in the power and pleasure of a few*, sooner or later to restrain and suppress, to disguise and corrupt it; and consequently *to prevent thousands and millions of others from sharing in the benefits thereof.* *ib.* p. 63. On a little farther consideration Mr. *Chubb* may probably find that in this Scheme [*i. e.* of Human Liberty] it must be impossible for any thing relating either to the Minds or outward Circumstances of Mankind to remain in a state of perfect Uniformity; and then he may be sensible too that the same Causes, which among other things that concern Mankind make their Religion unavoidably continue in this partial and unequal way, will

sufficient to answer the ends proposed, nor could it certainly and effectually secure the Interest and Salvation of Mankind. As an *Illumination* it must either be distinguishable from the present Effects of Reason and the ordinary Operations of the Divine Spirit, or not; if the former, this must be by striking us more forcibly, and working a more assured infallible Conviction

hold as strongly for its being originally given in the same way. Mr. *Chubb's* second Objection, that if Men could be supposed to be honest and faithful in the publication of a System of Reveled Religion, then there would be no occasion for such System, *ib.* seems to be worse founded than the other, since this Revelation notwithstanding all the Imperfections that attend its communication may still be the means of conveying such superior Benefits to those who do come to the knowledge of it, of making such Discoveries in the Nature both of God and Man, and of affording Motives for Man's attaining to such a degree of Virtue and true rational Happiness as all their Honesty, without such helps, could never raise the generality of them to. And whether the *sole* end of Revelation be to bring men to a higher pitch of happiness than they could otherwise attain or not: *ib.* p. 49. this Author never can prove but that this may be *one* of its great *ends*, and that this End is in fact obtained to as high a Degree as is consistent with his own Scheme of perfect Liberty; so that, in the last place, allowing God to *foresee* all the Consequences and Events attending such an Establishment, *ib.* p. 62. yet this Establishment so circumstanced may, notwithstanding any thing this Author has made out to the contrary, come from him.

in the Mind: but as much as is added to that, above what may arise from the present Constitution of things, just so much must be taken from the present Choice and Merit of believing, and the concomitant Delight and Satisfaction which we feel, and ought to feel, in giving our Assent to Truth. <sup>e</sup> Such Evidence must either supersede all Action and Enquiry of our own,

<sup>e</sup> See A. B. King's Origin, N. 19. p. 128, &c. 3d. Edit. compared with N. 58. p. 349. Whence it appears that though in some cases and respects the Assent be unavoidable and we merely passive in the Attainment of many useful parts of Knowledge, and which must be attended with some satisfaction in degree proportioned to the apprehension of that usefulness, and of a Kind perhaps very complex, as arising from variety of Causes accidentally associated; yet neither is the kind nor the degree of this Delight so intense and exquisite as that which usually accompanies those points which we work out ourselves, which we properly make *our own* by a free, fair investigation. These Truths though of no more importance in themselves or consequences than many others that are either forcibly obtruded on us or fortuitously thrown into our way, yet are attended with a sort of self approbation and complacency, which both accompanys the first Discovery, the transporting *εὐρηκα*, and will continue after it and bear Reflection; and which makes them infinitely exceed all others in our estimation. The same thing as it is come at in the one or the other of these ways is evidently not the same to us: which I can ascribe to nothing more than a consciousness that in the former case we have contributed somewhat to the acquisition of

and overbear the Judgement beyond possibility of Doubt, (which yet from the manner of our acquiring and associating Ideas and forming judgements is impossible to be conceived, without reversing the whole Frame of the human Mind; neither would that appear to be at all desirable, as we have seen above) it must I say, either be inconsistent with the exercise of our other most valuable Faculties, or it would come to the same thing with the present use of them, and prove alike capable of being equally neglected or opposed, corrupted or destroyed: it would have no other or higher Evidence than in some cases the common Principles of Reason have, nor could it lay any stronger Obligation on us to obey its Dictates. The same will be the case with it considered as an *Impulse*, or Impression on the Mind inciting it

it and to our own improvement by that acquisition; or an Idea of *Merit* constantly associated with this kind of Acquisitions, and which is perhaps the very strongest and the most agreeable of all our *Associations*. From whence also we may collect how necessary it is to the Happiness of Man that he should appear to himself to be *free* in the Exercise of the Faculties of his Mind as well as the Powers of his Body; to be in some degree active in the Attainment of his Knowledge as well as any other Attainments; and how far this will go towards proving him to be really so I leave to be considered. If he has any real Liberty, there

to follow each determination of the Judgement, and physically connecting Thought with Action; since this Connection, if much altered from that which is observable in the present State, or increased to any considerable Degree above that Harmony which now subsists among our natural Powers, would be attended with the very same Consequences. \* Farther, as all this must be transacted in a Man's own breast, and so long as it is limited as above, or he retains the least degree of Liberty, is capable of being stifled there, every one might and most probably would soon disregard it, as much as he does now the many good Thoughts, Motions and Suggestions, which arise daily in his Mind. Nor is there less likelihood of its being perverted to the worst of purposes, as Interest, Vice or Vanity might direct: — of its

there will be a good reason for annexing this double Pleasure to the exercise of it, both to excite him to Action in cases of Difficulty, and afterwards to justify him for engaging in such, and enable him to go through all the Toil and Hazard that attends them. If he has none, won't it be a little hard to point out either the Rise or Reasonableness of this so constant and so general a Delusion, and to account for such Ideas as those of Merit, Esteem, Reward, &c. which are entirely founded in it?

\* See Mr. *Hutcheson* on the Passions. p. 179, 200, &c. or *King's Essay*, N. 28, &c.

foon filling the World with rank *Enthusiasm* or the most wicked and absurd *Impostures*; and when it is once thus perverted, there seems to be no room for any remedy upon this Scheme; no means are left us to detect the Fraud or Folly of any religious pretences whatsoever, no method of rescuing Mankind from perpetual Delusion. †

† The ingenious Author of *Christianity not founded on Argument*, seems to adopt this second method of communicating a Religion to Mankind, and carries it so far as to supersede all other Means, Divine or Human, that have ever been made use of to support it in the World. He contends for a *constant and particular Revelation imparted separately and supernaturally to every Individual*, p. 112. This he terms *Inspiration and infused Evidence*, p. 58. *feeling and internal Sense*, ib. and *of a nature but little differing from that of Intuition*, p. 59. In short, it is what will dispatch the whole business of Religion at once without either *Time* or *Teaching*, p. 17. reading or reasoning, the use of our Understandings, or the Evidence of our Senses. — 'Tis hard to guess upon what Plan this Author would defend himself if he were pressed, but for the present he admits one general external Revelation to have been made and recorded [ though both upon his Principles must have been extremely unnecessary ] and yet labours to dissuade us from examining the Contents of it, and most inconsistently attempts to shew, as well from Reason as this very Revelation, that we ought not to employ our Reason at all either in the Proof or the Interpretation of it, or in any thing else relating to the Subject, p. 7, &c. A self-destructive Scheme! which were it really, as he would

Nor in the Third place, would less Inconveniences attend the frequent republication of Religion, and working new Miracles for the conviction of each particular person that might be supposed to want it; since these repeated Publications when grown common would in all probability be as little minded as the constant preaching of it is at present. Such a con-

would prove, laid down by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and in the *Nature of the thing* or from the *Practise of Mankind* ever so necessary, yet could not possibly be kept clear of the Consequences abovementioned, of which more hereafter. But that this is far from being the case may easily be shewn. That *Christ* and his *Apostles* both encourage and enjoin the exercise of Reason in Religious Matters is plain enough from these few Texts. *Matth.* 13. 19, 23. *Mark* 8. 17, 18. *Luke* 1. 4. 12. 57. *John* 5. 39. *Acts* 17. 11, 17. *Rom.* 10. 17. 11. 1. *1Cor.* 10. 15. 14. 29. *2Cor.* 13. 5. *1Tim.* 4. 13, 14, 15. *2Tim.* 3. 15. *1John* 4. 1. *1Pet.* 3. 15. Do such Texts as these suppose *Conviction to precede the Evidence?* p. 37. to which add *1Thess.* 5. 21. where *S. Paul* treating of *Spiritual Gifts* themselves exhorts his followers to *prove all things* [a hopeful Task! says our Author p. 76.] and *Rom.* 10. 2. where the same great *Apostle* is recommending *Zeal according to Knowledge*, though this Writer is pleased to tell us that *such Zeal will scarce ever deserve the name*; p. 25. However, to give this extraordinary Scheme of his a scriptural air, he lays hold on some passages of Scripture History [of which in their proper place] and draws in several detachd parts of stragling Texts about the Spirit of God, or such as found that way, which he applies to his point indiscriminately, whether they concern those ordi-

tinual series of Miracles would in time be no Miracles at all, they must lose all their force together with their Surprisingness and Novelty; nor could they leave any more lively or more lasting impressions on us than such as may be

ordinary Assistances and imperceptible Operations that may be expected from the Holy Ghost in every Age, or are confined to his extraordinary, miraculous Gifts, that were, we think, peculiar to the first publication of the Gospel, and produced those wonderful Effects which this Writer alludes to, and which he, with some modern Sectaries, seems still to claim upon that ever weak foundation of believing strongly that he has the same, without being able to bring any of the same Proofs in justification of such Belief. Though even here he ought to be reminded that most of these very supernatural Gifts were so far from exerting themselves independently on any natural Attainments, that they most commonly acted in conjunction with and were administered conformably to such, and were themselves improved by Labour, Diligence and Study, or impaired and quite extinguished by Neglect, [ See *Whitby* and others on *2Tim. i. 6.* ] that all of them were subject to the Will and Reason of those who possessed them, and to be by them carefully and prudently applied to the particular Exigences of the Church, and the most useful Purposes of *Edifying*, so as to constitute the whole a *Reasonable Service*. ‘ God when he makes the  
 ‘ Prophet does not unmake the Man. He leaves all his  
 ‘ Faculties in their natural state, to enable him to judge  
 ‘ of his Inspirations, whether they be of Divine Original  
 ‘ or no. When he illuminates the Mind with supernatural  
 ‘ Light he does not extinguish that which is natural. If  
 ‘ he would have us assent to the Truth of any Proposition  
 ‘ he



kept up by those standing Records and visible Memorials which now evidence to us the Truth of *Christianity*. Not to mention that both of the foregoing Schemes would in some measure put it out of the power even of God

‘ he either evidences that Truth by the usual Methods  
‘ of natural Reason, or else makes it known to be a  
‘ Truth which he would have us assent to by his  
‘ Authority, and convinces us that it is from him by some  
‘ Marks which Reason cannot be mistaken in. Reason  
‘ must be our last Judge and Guide in every thing.’  
*Lock on Entbusiasm*, A Chapter which I would beg leave  
to recommend to this ingenious Writer ; and when he  
shews us any of the same infallible *Marks* of Inspiration  
that were formerly exhibited, when he communicates  
some of that *infused Evidence* which he can make appear  
not to have been derived from other Sources, we may be  
obliged implicitly to follow his Directions ; but till then  
are, I humbly apprehend, at liberty to suppose that he  
himself is only *following his own Spirit and has seen nothing* ;  
and that all these *feelings* are no more than the Effects of  
his own warm Imagination. For that the *ordinary* Oper-  
ations of the Spirit do not suggest any thing of this kind,  
that they are never distinguishable from the natural work-  
ings of our own Minds, much less in any respect subver-  
sive of them ; that they are perfectly consistent with the  
most free use of all our rational Powers, which are the  
Gift of the same Author and given to be so used by us, and  
that these generally attend upon their regular Exercise  
and were designed rather to preserve, assist, improve, than  
to obstruct and supersede it, is I think now pretty well agreed.  
See *King’s Origin of Evil*, N. 71. p. 422, &c. 3d. Edit.

himself to bring about a Reformation in Religion when it was once corrupted (as it might easily be in both of them) since thereby the strongest and fittest of all means to procure Attention, Awe and Reverence, which we now

Nor can he shew that Reason thus assisted will be insufficient for the purposes of true Religion, or make out from the *Nature* of these two that they ought to have no Communication with each other. His first allegation, that Men by the exercise of their Reason do not, nor can be required to *think all alike*, will not come up to his point, as it is neither true nor necessary. 'Tis false in many matters both of Fact and Reason, on which all men that think at all think in one way, and he has yet to shew why the Essentials of the Christian Institution may not be included among such, I mean as they lie in the Bible, and so far as our assent is there explicitly required to them in one and the same precise determinate manner, on pain of forfeiting the Privileges of that Institution. These he will find to be very few and plain. But though he allows the whole of Christianity to be true and reasonable, yet he seems all along to beg the Question by supposing that it is of such a nature as is incapable of being made to appear so to each person so far as he is concerned to know either the substance of it, or its grounds. Hence all the formidable Objections against Reason's judging of the Gospel Truths, which yet hold equally in many other Truths of consequence in common Life, wherein the common People notwithstanding go on very well by the use of their natural Faculties, be they never so weak or so strongly beset with Doubts and Difficulties. His other Arguments against admitting Reason in religious Matters,

from

call supernatural Interposition, would soon become familiar, cheap and ineffectual to that end, as was hinted above. Besides, what Unity or Uniformity of public Worship, what Decency and Order could be preserved in such a State

from some particular Institutions and the general Practise of the World, are no better founded. That *Children* are introduced into the Christian Church by *Baptism* [which our Author seems to argue for and goes perhaps a little farther than he will be able to justify when he asserts it to be *the Ordinance of God himself*] and that they have early prepossessions in favour of Christianity [whereof he shews the great use and necessity, and wherein we most heartily join with him] does this render their Religion the less reasonable to them when they are capable of reasoning about it? Or are they strictly under any other Obligation, when they come to age, of taking it upon themselves, than what arises from their Conviction of the Reasonableness and Wisdom of so doing, from their being satisfied of its Truth and Divine Authority; and what they otherwise would have been under when thus much ever should come to their knowledge? Surely their being made to understand the *Christian* Religion first, by no means hinders their giving it a fair examination afterwards, so soon and so far as they become qualified for such Examination. Nay, if they understand it thoro'ly they will find that it requires examination from all its Professors in some degree or other, as appears sufficiently from those few Texts above. It does indeed insist upon a right *Belief* and a conformable *Practise* in all Persons to whom it has been fairly proposed: nor is this either so uncommon a thing, or inconsistent with what we maintain, supposing  
still

of things? If Men did ever *assemble themselves together*, (the Reasonableness and the Necessity whereof will be apparent so long as they are capable of having either their Memories refreshed, or their Affections raised by sensible

still its Truth and Credibility. Does any Lawgiver proclaim those exceptions to the general obligation of his Laws, which accidentally arise from the sole Incapacity of the Subject, and which common sense is always ready to suggest and willing to allow for without the least diminution of their Use and Obligatoriness? Or would it be any derogation from their Excellence and Authority; or any excuse for our not labouring to understand these Laws, that all men did not reason right about them?— Nor does our being to apply by *Prayer for the continuing steadfast in the Faith, shew the Design of God that Reason should not be at all employed on these occasions*; p. 11. any more than his *working in us both to will and do*, and our being taught to ask this of him, proves that we have no occasion to endeavour to *work out our own Salvation*. We do not pretend that Reason is itself sufficient either to discover all that may be of benefit in Religion, or engage us to observe and act up to what it is really able to discover, and therefore there is room enough for our soliciting the Grace of God as well to strengthen and support this very Faculty, as to bring others into due subjection to it; to lead us into the Truth, to make us love and seek it; to guard against every deviation from it, and enable us to resist the numberless Temptations to Vice, Ignorance and a criminal Unbelief. Nor lastly, would the Difficulties and Discouragements which Human Reason is too frequently laid under by the practice of the  
World,

Objects; — so long as they have either Memory or senses, *i. e.* so long as they continue to be Men) in such Assemblies *every one of them would have a Psalm, a Doctrine, a Tongue, a Revelation, an Interpretation* ; and what could

World, were that in truth so bad at present as this Author represents, wholly destroy its Influence in the point before us ; or prove any thing more than that its Province is too much invaded by those, be they *Parents, Tutors or Magistrates*, who either wilfully or unwarily impose these Difficulties, and who alone are answerable for giving any handle for such a Plea as he has grounded on them. If the two former constantly betray its Cause by narrowing the Minds of Youth, and shutting up the Avenues of Knowledge ; if they do not teach them carefully the Art of Reasoning, and lead them to a fair use of Reason on every Subject within their sphere and worthy their Enquiry ; or if the last intrench upon its Rights by interposing their Authority in the grand affair of Divine Worship, beyond barely keeping up the established Form and tolerating others ; If this were indeed the Case now, as I hope it is not, this Author, I conceive, should have shewn these Proceedings to be warrantable, e'er he went on in earnest to draw such a Consequence, as that the *whole Subject is absolutely out of Reason's Jurisdiction*. A Consequence which can tend only to revive *Celsus's* Calumny against the *Christian Cause*, Μη εξεταζεσθαι αλλα πισυσθαι, and recommend the no less absurd modern Maxim that *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion* ; which renders all that *Scripture* which was given by Inspiration a dead, usefess Letter, and represents that other *Candle of the Lord* as a false Light and dangerous, and such as by this  
Writer's

this produce but Tumult, Strife and an universal Confusion? This surely is not so *reasonable* a Service, nor so fit for *Edification* as the present; not quite so proper a Method to convey and preserve a System of Divine Truths in the World, as a regular, settled Instruction and Historic Faith, grounded on a standing, written\* Revelation, which holds these forth together with their Proofs to every one, and offers them to the view and examination of all Ages.

When some of these things are a little attended to, we may perhaps be convinced that either the same or as great Objections would lie against any other assignable Method of communicating a Religion to Mankind.

If then neither all men could be made equally wise and perfect, nor Religion be at once equally communicated to them all; if the present Laws of our Nature are the best that could be,<sup>3</sup> and as such ought to remain inviolate, and we be

Writer's *Motto* is insinuated to be a Curse upon us, rather than a Blessing. This Notion indeed he has kept to all along, whether seriously or otherwise he knows best, and concludes suitably enough to it with this piece of Advice to his young Academick, that he content himself with being as rational a Christian as his *Sister* or *Mother*, p. 114.

As to the Inconsistencies which this ingenious Writer labours to fix both upon that excellent Institution the

*Boy-*

left to the common Methods of informing ourselves in all natural as well as supernatural Truths, it will follow, in the last place, that Christianity could not have been propagated otherwise than in fact it is, namely, in a gradual, progressive, partial manner.

Let it be proclaimed at first never so far and wide, yet the reception and continuance of it must in a great measure, we see, depend on Mens own Dispositions both natural and moral. Some previous as well as concomitant Qualifications are requisite to the due exercise and influence of it as well in private Men, as public States and Communities: so that among a People sunk in Ignorance or Barbarity, where there is no kind of good Order or Government established, no regular Forms of Education instituted and observ'd; where there is an universal want of Discipline and a Dissoluteness of Manners, there *Christianity* cannot subsist.

*Boylean Lecture*, and those worthy persons who have with so much success accomplished its Design, I need only appeal to *Dr. Ibbot*, who, I think, stands absolutely clear of his Exceptions, and has as fully answered the End of its great and good Founder, as he has obviated this Author's whole Performance.

\* The advantages of this above *Oral Tradition* may be seen in *Tillotson*, V. 2. Fol. S. 73. p. 549. or *Le Clerc Harm.* 3 Dis. p. 615.

Miracles were indeed necessary to gain Attention and give Authority to it at first, but the perpetuity of them in any kind would (as we have seen) weaken that very Attention and destroy their own Authority. When therefore a Religion has once been sufficiently promulgated by Divine Authority, it must be committed to human means; and left to the conduct of that Nation or Society in which it is planted, and by their care be handed down to Posterity: it must be preserv'd and propagated in a natural way, and by the ordinary Course of Providence, or else there is no avoiding the ill consequences abovementioned, namely, perpetual Enthusiasm or Imposture. As a System of Divine Doctrines and Rules of Life it must be subject to the common Methods of Instruction, and taught as all other Science is. Youth of all kinds are to be principled and grounded in it, and some instructed in those other parts of Learning which may fit them for a due enquiry into its original Evidence; for understanding the true Nature, Ends, and Uses of it, and conveying the same knowledge down to future Ages. Some Orders of Men likewise must be set apart and authorized to explain and inculcate it, to defend its Doctrines as well as to inspect and to secure the practise of its Precepts.

From



From all which it appears that ignorant, uncivilized, slavish and brutish Nations, are as uncapable of duly receiving such an Institution, as they are of all those other Sciences, Arts, Improvements which polish and adorn the rest of Mankind, and make Life a Blessing.

Without some tolerable degree of Learning and Civility men don't seem qualified to reap the Benefits of the *Christian* Institution, and together with these they generally do receive it, the same human means serving to improve their Notions in Religion, which help to enlarge their Knowledge in all other Subjects, and at the same time directing them to, and in a natural way enabling them to arrive at the most perfect Dispensation of it. One of the chief Reasons commonly assigned for the *Fitness of the Time* of *Christ's* appearing in the World was the extent of Learning and Commerce through all the then known parts of it, \* which tended very much to open mens Minds, and qualify them to receive his Institution, as well as paved the way for a more general Communication of it; but as there were many at that time *not able to bear it*, so on the same account neither yet are they able, nor will they be, till *by reason of use*

\* This is more fully explained in the following Discourses, Part 2.

(as the Apostle speaks) *they have their Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil*: Till their rational Faculties be enlarged and improved, their natural Genius cultivated and refined; which seems in a good measure to constitute their respective *Fitness of Time*.<sup>a</sup>

And as barbarous and savage Nations are unable to hear the Truth; so vicious, debauched; immoral ones are in like manner incapable of

<sup>a</sup> That the *Chinese* in particular, from whom some have thought that the strongest Argument might be drawn against what is here suggested, and whose Learning and Education have been so much cried up, are very far from deserving so great a Character, see *Renaudot's Dissertation on their Learning. Ancient Accounts of India and China*, p. 200. *Terry's Voyage to the East Indies*, sect. 12. and 21. *Travels of several Missioners*, p. 180. &c. or *Millar's History of the Propagation of Christianity*, V. 2. p. 266, &c. or *Le Comte's Memoirs*, passim. I shall give one Instance from the last mentioned Author in a branch of Philosophy for which they have been oft particularly celebrated.

‘ All Nations have ever been astonished at *Eclipses* because they could not discover the Cause of them: there is nothing so extravagant as the several Reasons some have given for it; but one would wonder that the *Chinese*, who as to Astronomy may justly claim Seniority over all the World besides, have reasoned as absurdly on that point as the rest. They have fancied that in Heaven there is a prodigious great Dragon, who is a professed Enemy to the Sun and Moon, and ready at all times to eat them up. For this reason as soon as they perceive an Eclipse they all make a terrible rattling with Drums and Brass Kettles, till the Monster frightened

ned

bringing forth the Fruits thereof. If such a People did receive the true Religion, they would soon drop it again, as many Nations most undoubtedly have done; at least they would lose the Spirit, Life and Power of it, and then the bare Name and outward Form will not be worth enquiring after: nay much better would it be if these were always quitted too together with the other. *Christianity* cannot immediately

‘ ned at the Noise lets go his Prey. Persons of Quality,  
‘ who have read our Books, have for these several years  
‘ been undeceived: but the old Customs (especially if the  
‘ Sun loseth his Light) are still observed at *Pekin*, which,  
‘ as is usual, are both very superstitious and very ridiculous.  
‘ While the Astronomers are on the Towers to make  
‘ their Observations, the chief Mandarines belonging to  
‘ the *Lipou* fall on their knees in a Hall or Court of the  
‘ Palace, looking attentively that way, and frequently  
‘ bowing towards the Sun to express the pity they take  
‘ of him, or rather to the Dragon to beg him not to  
‘ molest the World, by depriving it of so necessary a  
‘ Planet.’ *Le Comte*, p. 76. Edit. 1738. comp. p. 93. &c.  
and Lett. 8. From their notorious Ignorance of, and by  
consequence, Contempt for the rest of the World and  
great averfeness to any Communication with it, till of  
very late years, we may easily account for this slow progress  
of theirs both in the Knowledge of Nature and Reveled  
Religion, notwithstanding their having had very considerable  
Means of improving both in their hands for some  
time; nor are they wanting in point of Genius, as may  
be seen in the same excellent Author. — But this will  
come in more properly under the 3d Part.

transform Mens Minds and totally change the general Temper and Complexion of any People ; but on the contrary it will thereby itself undergo considerable alteration, and its own Influence and Effect in a great measure depend thereon : With *the pure it will be pure*, and they that are otherwise will soon defile it; will either corrupt it with Fable and absurd Traditions, or turn it into Licentiousness and carnal Policy.

Thus did the Eastern Nations, and were overwhelmed with *Mabometanism*, \* and thus did a great part of *Africa*. To the like Causes, in all probability, as well as the Neglect and Misbehaviour of its Propagators and Professors, (which have been here but too remarkable <sup>b</sup>) is it

\* V. Part II.

<sup>b</sup> Of the former a large account may be seen in *Millar's* Hist. c. 8. p. 274. 284. 291. &c. and c. 9. p. 376. &c. Add Mr. *Warburton's* judicious observation at the end of Sect. 6. p. 306. &c. of *Div. Leg.* 2d Edit. As to the latter, we cannot but observe the great and general Prejudice which must prevail in both the *Indies* against all *Europeans* from the injurious treatment they have often received from us, as may be seen in almost every late account of Voyages &c. Numberless instances of this occur in *Salmon's* Modern History, particularly in the present State of the *Sunda Islands*, c. 4. Having described the extraordinary suspicion of the *Japonesse* whose goodness and humanity towards us were once as eminent as is their dread

owing that true Religion makes no greater progress in the East and West *Indies*. Though, it must be owned, great and good things have been done in it of late by *Societies* established for that purpose, and none perhaps have been more diligent and discreet than our own. But it were beyond the Limits of this Discourse to enquire into the State of every Heathen Country in order to see what probable reasons might be assigned for either their first rejecting or not still retaining *Christianity*. Perhaps it may be enough to have given these general Hints, which though they were all founded on mere Conjecture, yet till such an Hypothesis can be disproved from Fact, we ought rather to acquiesce in them than confidently arraign

dread at present of all *Christian Nations*, he concludes, 'But from whence can all this immoderate caution proceed unless from the ill usage they have met with from *Europeans*? Surely it sufficiently demonstrates what I have so often observed, that we did not find, but make these Nations barbarous; and if they have any thing shocking in their behaviour at this day, they learnt it from us, who instead of planting Christianity and improving their Morals, have in fact corrupted them.'

*Mod. Hist.* V. I. 4<sup>to</sup>. p. 226. Such Observations are I fear but too well grounded, and might be carried a great way towards accounting for the slow Progress of Christianity among such Nations as seem otherwise not ill qualified for the reception of it. Nor are the frequent Quarrels

Providence, and censure its Ways with Man in matters of the last importance. But I hope Arguments may be drawn from them sufficient to stop the mouths of our Adversaries, and silence each Gainfayer ; a more particular discussion of which will be the subject of some following Discourses. I shall only beg leave at present to add an Observation or two concerning a Diversity of Religion in general, and the case of those who cannot attain to the knowledge of the *Christian*.

And first, Though I see no reason to affirm with some, that God takes equal delight in the various kinds of Worship which come to be established in the World, and that a specific Difference in Religion is in itself and abstractly considered as acceptable to him as that diversity of Beings which he has made : on the contrary I think he has plainly discovered one most perfect Standard and requires all to approach as near it as they can ; and may be said to approve

among Christians themselves and their notorious ill usage of each other a less prejudice against their Profession, as is observed by the same Writer, p. 264. ‘ So extremely  
 ‘ jealous were the *Portuguese* of the *Indian* Trade that  
 ‘ even their Priests did not stick at the most treacherous  
 ‘ and barbarous methods to exclude all other Nations  
 ‘ from it, which must, no doubt give the *Indians* a very  
 ‘ great Opinion of the *Christian* Religion they pretended to  
 ‘ pro-

every approach to it, and prefer that to its opposite, in the same manner as he does every other excellence and improvement of the Human Mind, where he intends perpetual advancement, as we have seen; yet from what has been already said, thus much will appear, *viz.* That one of these is in some measure a necessary consequence of the other during the present Laws of Nature in the moral and intellectual World: a difference of Rank and Capacity among Men must needs produce an equal difference in their Religious Notions, as was shewn above; such difference therefore in degree of Perfection is made necessary by the Constitution of things and the general Dispensations of Providence; and what by the ordinary course of Divine Providence is to men in some circumstances rendered unavoidable, that the Divine Goodness will in these Circumstances most undoubtedly excuse and accept with all its Imperfections. \*

‘propagate; nor need we look for any other reason why  
‘*Christianity* does not gain ground in the East, though  
‘the *Indian* Princes have given the greatest encourage-  
‘ment to the Missionaries themselves upon account of  
‘their Skill in the Mathematics.’

\* See Dr. *Rymer's* General Representation of Reveled Religion. c. 6. 'Tis a Beauty in Providence to advance  
‘in the Dispensations of Religion; to propose various  
‘Per-

The same thing obtains remarkably in each particular System, even in those of *Christianity* itself, which to different Persons and in different Times and Places appears in a very different Light; though so much always every where lies level to all as is absolutely required of each, and so much also as will or might have a very considerable influence upon their Lives and Manners. And the same may in a great measure be affirm'd of *Modern Heathens*, the generality of whom still preserve in some degree the great fundamental Principles of one Supreme God, a Providence and Future State, as Authors of the best Credit have assured us. \*

2. As to the case of those People in general, we may consider that if they have fewer and less Advantages than others, their Natures and Capacities must likewise be inferior; to which their future State may be proportioned: God is not obliged to make all men equally perfect in the next world any more than in this; and if their Capacity be rendered less than that of an ordinary *Christian*, a lower

‘ Perfections in Piety and Virtue upon Earth, and answer ‘ them with respective Promotions in Heaven,’ p. 152.

\* A Collection of them may be seen in *Stackhouse’s* Body of Divinity Part 3. c. 8. S. 2. 3. p. 528. &c. or *Millar’s* Hist. of the Prop. of *Christianity*, c. 5. &c.



degree of Happiness may fill it. However, we need not be very solicitous about their Estate, much less cast any ungrateful imputation on the Governour of the World for not having dealt so bountifully with them as with ourselves; since we know that in all cases every one will at length be *accepted according to that he has, and not according to that he has not*; and that *to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required*. We know that all their Souls are in the hand of a most merciful Creator, *all whose ways are equal*, and who will most assuredly deal with every one according to what is just and right. But of this more hereafter.

I come in the last place briefly to observe the great Benefit of complying with the Terms of the Gospel, and the inexcusableness of rejecting it.

The Benefit of the Christian Institution above all others appears, in that it naturally fits Men for an higher degree of Happiness, as well as entitles them to it by positive Covenant. It gives them more just and worthy Notions of the Divine Being, and the Relation they bear to him, and of the Duties which result from that Relation. It explains, improves, exalts all those Virtues and good Dispositions which are the natural *Foundation* of Happiness both in  
this

this world and the next. It directs us to add to our Faith *Virtue*, and to *Virtue Knowledge*, and to *Knowledge Temperance*, and to *Temperance Patience*, and to *Patience Godliness*, and to *Godliness Brotherly Kindness*, and to *Brotherly Kindness Charity*. It proposes to our Study *whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report*, and binds all these upon us with the strongest *Sanctions*; at once giving us the most ample *Instruction* in and incitement to the practise of our *Duty*, and moreover affording all necessary *Means of Grace* in order to prepare and train us up for *Glory*. And thus, as *St. Peter* says, *bath the Father given unto us all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness, through the knowledge of him that bath called us unto Glory and Virtue, — that at length we might be partakers of the DIVINE NATURE.*

The great Condition of this Covenant is expressed in the Text and many other parts of Scripture by *Repentance*: *Repentance from dead works and serving the living God*. This was the substance of our Saviour's preaching, and what the Apostles continually testified both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, namely *Repentance towards God*; \* that is a thorough Reformation of

\* ACTS 20. 21.

Mind and Temper, a renouncing of this World its Vanities and Vices, and an improvement in all those Graces and good Habits which are absolutely necessary to fit us for the Prefence of God, the Society of Angels and Spirits of just Men made perfect. How gracious a Design this! how reasonable, just and holy an Institution! How strongly must it recommend itself to every man's Judgement and Conscience, when once rightly understood! and what infinite reason have we to give continual thanks unto the Father who hath not only prepared for us an *Inheritance*, but likewise laboured to make us *meet* to be *Partakers* of it *among the Saints in Light!* and *how shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation?* How disingenuous and ungrateful must it be to refuse and put it from us! How dangerous to contemn and blaspheme it!

To conclude, May the Mercies of God in *Christ Jesus* engage every one of us in time to obey the Divine Precept in the Text; to shake off more especially all such Vices as the Heathens of old delighted in, and which betray too many now a days into the like State, and blind their Eyes, and harden their Hearts against all possible Conviction, namely, Pride, Covetousness and Sensuality. May we all comply with  
the

the Apostle's advice in *walking circumspectly towards them that are without*, since the reason assigned is in some respects of as great force at present, — *because the Days are evil*. As Infidelity still abounds and the Love of many waxeth cold, we who profess the Faith of *Christ* and think we have more perfect understanding of it, and are to communicate the same to others, we ought to contend so much the more earnestly for it, and labour to adorn the Doctrine of our Lord in all things. To our daily Prayers therefore let us add our constant Endeavours that the *Kingdom of God may come* on those who have not yet received it, and be restored in purity and perfection to such as have rejected it: and finally, let us beware lest in any of us be found *an evil Heart of Unbelief*; let us take care that we be not of those who either in Principle or Practise *draw back unto Perdition*; but of them that believe to the saving of the Soul.

## II.

### The Scheme of Providence,

With regard to

The *Time* and *Manner* of the several  
Dispensations of Reveled Religion.

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*Crescat igitur oportet, et multum vehementerque proficiat, tam singulorum quam omnium, tam unius hominis quam totius Ecclesiæ, ætatum ac seculorum gradibus, intelligentia, scientia, sapientia.* Vinc. Lirinens. Common. I. 28.



GAL. iv. 4.

*But when the Fulness of the Time was come, God sent forth his Son.*

**T**HE Coming of *Christ* in the Flesh is a Dispensation so full of Wisdom and Goodness, that in whatever view we consider it 'twill appear most worthy its Divine Author. The precise *Time* in which he was manifested, though it has been made the subject of more Cavils ancient and modern than any other Circumstance attending it, yet I doubt not but upon a fair examination may be discovered to bear the same Characters.

On this head the following Questions are usually asked. If the common Father of Mankind be infinite in Goodness, and the *Christian* Scheme be the only acceptable way of worshipping him and absolutely necessary to our Salvation, Why was it not communicated to the World much sooner? Why was this greatest of all Blessings kept back to the last,—to the *End of the World*, as it is called? \* Nay, 'if God 'always acts for the good of his Creatures, 'what reason can be assigned why he should

\* Heb. 9, 26.

‘not from the beginning have discovered such things as make for their good, but defer the doing of it till the time of *Tiberius*?’ \* — All the late Adversaries to *Christianity* lay the greatest weight on this Objection, and accordingly several Arguments have been offered to remove it; I shall select some of them, which seem the most conclusive, in my following Discourse, and add such farther Observations as may help to set the whole in a proper Light.

When the *Fulness of the Time* † was come — The Apostle in this Chapter is comparing the Ages of the World to the Life of a Man and its several Stages, as Infancy, Childhood, Youth, Maturity. If we reflect on this comparison we shall find it very just in general, and that the World itself, or the collective Body of Mankind, as well as each particular Member, has from very low beginnings proceeded by a regular gradation in all kinds of Knowledge, has been making slow advances towards Perfection in its several Periods, and received continual improvements from its Infancy to this very Day.<sup>a</sup> And

\* *Christianity as old, &c.* p. 196. 4<sup>to</sup>.

† Or the proper Season. v. *Tit.* 1. 3.

<sup>a</sup> For an explanation of this, see Dr. *Edwards's* Survey of all the Dispensations of Religion, &c. V. 1. p. 396. and V. 2. p. 615. — 21, &c. or Mr. *Worthington's* Essay on *Man's Redemption* c. 8. &c.

though



though in both cases this progress be sometimes interrupted, and the course of this World and its Inhabitants appear, like that of the Heavenly Bodies, to suffer some Retrogradations; yet we have reason to believe that these are such for the most part in appearance only, that this very Lett in like manner where it is real, makes way for a more rapid progress afterwards, which seems to bring matters into the same State upon the whole as if they had been all the while progressive. Farther, every one that looks into the History of the World must observe that the Minds of Men have all along been gradually opened by a Train of Events still improving upon and adding light to each other, as that of each individual is, by proceeding from the first Elements and Seeds of Science to more enlarged views and a still higher growth. Mankind are not, nor ever have been, capable of entering into the Depths of Knowledge at once, of receiving a whole System of Natural or Moral Truths together; but must be let into them by degrees, and have them communicated by little and little, as they are able to bear it. In this manner does every Art and Science make its way into the world: And though now and then an extraordinary Genius may arise and reach as it were some Ages beyond that in

which he lives, yet how few of his Contemporaries are able to follow him, or even understand what he delivers! The generality still go on step by step in gathering up and digesting some small portions of that vast stock of Knowledge which he pour'd out at once, and are for a long time in respect to him but mere Children. So that notwithstanding a few such extraordinary instances, I think, we may affirm in general, that from the very beginning of the world, Science, or all kinds of intellectual Accomplishments, have been found to make very slow, and pretty regular advances among the the bulk of Mankind; but that upon the whole, advancing they have been and are. This, I say, is generally so in fact, <sup>a</sup> and therefore will have place in religious, as well as all other Truths among men either taken collectively, or in each individual. Why the case is thus in both; why all are not adult at once both in Body and Mind, concerns not Revelation to account for, so much as the Religion of Nature, at least they are here, as in the former case, both on the same foot, and the same Principles may be applied to each of them. And though in this respect the Divine Dispensations seem to differ from Human Arts

<sup>a</sup> A more particular Proof of this will be given in the 3d Part.

and Sciences, that these are commonly the most rude and imperfect at first, and every part of them improving by repeated Tryals; whereas the others have all that purity and perfection at their Delivery which they are designed to have, and rather lose in many respects than get by length of time; yet will not this make any material difference on the whole.

To state this matter right, we ought to distinguish both between the Delivery of a Doctrine, and its general Reception in the world; which we know is always according to the Measure of the Recipients only, which must chiefly depend upon the State and Qualifications of the Age they live in: and also between the supernatural Assistance and extraordinary Impressions at its first publication, and the ordinary State in which it appears, and the usual progress it makes, as soon as ever these come to cease, and it is left to be continued by mere human means (as we have shewn before that it must be) when we shall find it partaking of the taste and temper of the Times through which it passes, and propagated in the same gradual, partial manner as all other parts of Science, all Human Acquisitions and Improvements are.

Let us proceed then to consider the several Dispensations of Religion in this light, and see whether each will not appear to have been delivered in its proper Time, and as soon as it became fully necessary; as also whether each was not as perfect as it could be supposed to have been, considering the season in which it was delivered, and every subsequent one an improvement on those that went before.

We will enquire First what provision God made for the Instruction of Mankind in the *Infancy* of the World, and whether it was expedient to send his Son upon their first Transgression.

Now we have reason to suppose that *Adam* during his state of Innocence held constant communication with the Deity,<sup>a</sup> from whence he received his information of things and was directed in the use of them.<sup>b</sup> And if he had been content to follow that Direction, he would undoubtedly have been secured from any pernicious Errors, and

<sup>a</sup> *Gen.* 2. 23, 24. compared with *Matth.* 19. 5. *Mark* 10. 7. and *1 Cor.* 6. 16. See Bp. *Bull* on the subject. *Disc.* p. 182, &c. Only let it be observ'd that what this learned Author, with some others, attributes to Divine *Inspiration*, in this case, seems to be more naturally accounted for from an express *Oral Revelation* made to *Adam*.

<sup>b</sup> *Gen.* 1. 28.—30. 2. 29. See the Authors referred to by *Patrick* on *Gen.* 2. 17.

supplied with all the Instruction and Assistance, which was necessary for him, and trained up by degrees to as thorough an acquaintance with the Nature of God and the things around him as was agreeable to his own Nature, and consistent with his State and Circumstances in the world. But upon his rejecting this Guide, and applying elsewhere for Knowledge, and setting up to be his own Director, \* that Communication might both with justice and wisdom be in a great measure withdrawn from him, and he left to the imperfect notice of his Senses, to learn the Nature of both Good and Evil, and the way to obtain the one and avoid the other, by a painful experience. † Yet was he not left wholly to himself in the affair of Religion, but directed to such a form of Worship as served to point out and perpetually remind him, both of the demerit of his Crime and the dreadful-ness of that Penalty which he had incurred, and also gave him some hopes of future Pardon,

\* That he intended nothing less than this by eating of the forbidden *Tree*, which was to him the trial of his Submission to, or his Rejection of the Divine Government, the *Test of Good and Evil*, may be seen in Mr. *Rutherford's* account of that Transaction, *Essay on Virtue*, c. 11. Note † p. 273. &c.

† See A. Bp. *King's* Sermon on the *Fall*.

and a final Acceptance with his Creator. All this seems to have been signified by the Institution of *Sacrifices*, setting before him all the Horrors of that Death which he had been sentenced to undergo, but which was hitherto suspended, and that of some other Creatures demanded in its room by way of ransom and expiation made to the Lord of Life. <sup>b</sup> This, together with the Promise of a future Deliverance in the *Seed of the Woman*, served for the present to afford some comfort to our first Parents under their heavy sentence, and to con-

<sup>b</sup> See *Revelation examined with Candour*, V. 1. p. 144, &c. or Dr. *Burnett's Boyle's Lect.* Fol. p. 517, &c. and the following Notes.

<sup>c</sup> What that was may be seen in *Hallet's Discourses*, V. 2. p. 276, &c. or at the beginning of *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity*.

<sup>d</sup> After all the Disputes about the Origin and Intent of *Sacrifices* as well before as under the *Mosaic Law* (when they are taken in the strict Sense and distinguished from all other Offerings that accompanied either Prayers or Thanks for particular Blessings) I am forced to refer them to Divine Appointment, and think we may conceive them to have been fixed both by way of positive *Mule* or *Forfeiture* [v. *Morality of Religion*, p. 35. *Abarbanel*. Exord. Com. in *Lev.* p. 313. *Le Clerc*. in *Lev.* p. 12 ] to render every breach of Duty burdensome and expensive to the Sinner; and likewise for a *Testimony* and *Symbolical Representation* of his Repentance and Confession of such breach: and lastly, as a *Federal Rite* denoting in a more especial manner the terms of that great Covenant Grant or Promise

vince them that their offended Maker was not wholly implacable; as well as to lead their Posterity to such Notions of Religion and kind of Worship, as should constantly reconcile them to the Deity, and remove the Guilt of their particular Offences, and also prepare them for the great *Attonement* to be offered in due time, which was to take off the whole of *Adam's* Curse.<sup>c</sup> and restore both him and his Posterity to that immortal Life which he had forfeited.<sup>d</sup> Nay raise them to a much higher degree of Happiness than he could be conceived to enjoy

mise whereby Man was to be delivered from the effects of the *first breach*, which as such was in each Dispensation thought proper to be particularly distinguished. All which Appointments, Grants or Covenants, may likewise be understood (not in their literal strict Sense, or as in themselves absolutely necessary, but) as so many Schemes of Government or convenient Methods of Divine Oeconomy, treating Mankind, (not like Philosophers, but) as the generality of them always were to be treated, and leading them gradually to as just and worthy Notions of God and themselves as they became capable of receiving. — But to ascribe such an Institution as this of sacrificing Animals wholly to the invention of Men, especially the Men of those times, seems very unnatural: of which more in the following Notes. — That this had actually such an effect upon the *Jews* as we last mentioned; that they were led to expect an *expiatory* Sacrifice from the *Messiah*, and commonly thought and spoke of him in that capacity, seems probable from *John's* account of *Christ* at his very first appearance. *Job.* 1. 29. and again v. 36.

in his Paradisaical State. ° And that this Rite with all its Circumstances was enjoined by God himself and explained to our first Parent is more than probable, even from the short account we have of those Times; since we find his two Sons bringing their Offerings to a certain place, \* and well apprised (by some visible tokens no doubt †) when they were accepted, as that of *Sacrifice* was rather than the other, and most likely accepted for that very reason because it had been appointed by God himself, and was perform'd agreeably to his Command. °

° See A. B. King's Note 81. p. 466, &c. 3d. Edit.

\* Gen. 4. 3, 4.

† Heb. 11. 4.

° See *Revelation examined*, v. 1. p. 134, &c. Bp. *Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy*, p. 73, &c. or *Rymer's Represent.* p. 30, &c. This one Article of the Distinction made between *Abel's* Offering and that of *Cain*, which according to the History was so notorious as to deject and irritate the latter, and which cannot I think be accounted for otherwise than by the Interposition of God, nor that remarkable Interposition solved on other Principles than *Cain's* presuming to omit the prescribed *Victim* (otherwise his Portion of the Fruits of the Ground might well appear to be as just and natural a Tribute of Devotion from one in his province, as some part of the Flock was from his Brother, as we have not the least intimation of any difference in the sincerity of their Dispositions whereon to ground the above Distinction between them) this, I say, seems a sufficient proof that Sacrifice was of Divine Institution, and is but ill resolved by *Spencer L. 3. c. 4. S. 2.* The same



The *Time* of their Worship seems likewise to have had the same origin, as well from God's blessing and sanctifying the Seventh day, † and the ancient method of reckoning by Weeks || [a method much more ancient than the observation of the seven *Planets* to which *Le Clerc* ascribes it. *Not. ad Grot. de Ver.* 1. 16. p. 42.] As from the earliest observance of that Sabbath in all Nations of the World, <sup>b</sup> without any ground in nature for such practise, or the least hint or probability of its arising from Human Invention. <sup>c</sup>

same thing is inferred with a good deal of probability from the mention of those *Coats of Skins which the Lord made for Adam and his Wife*, Gen. 3. 21. which seem most likely to have been of those Beasts that were offered in sacrifice, and might perhaps be in some measure of the same intendment with that Sacrifice; for the discovery of which rather difficult and disagreeable way of Worship one would think they should stand in need of God's particular direction, as much at least as for that other more easy and obvious one of clothing themselves. Concerning the use and propriety of this kind of clothing at that time, see *Leland's Answ. to Christianity as old*, &c. p. 503, &c.

† Gen. 2. 3. Exod. 16. 25, 26.

|| Gen. 8. 10, 12. 39. 27. Eccl<sup>us</sup>. 22. 12.

<sup>b</sup> *Joseph. contra. Ap. L. 2. Exod. 16. Philo de Op. Mund. Selden de Jur. N. L. 3. c. 10. 11. &c. Euseb. Evang. Præp. 13. 12. Grot. de Ver. L. 1. c. 16. comp. Univers. Hist. Note M. p. 602. and Allix's Reflections. B. 1. c. 7.*

<sup>c</sup> See *Rymer's Represent. of Reveled Religion*, c. 2. And the same may be said of *Tithes*. *Jenkin. V. 1. p. 102. Authors*

And that in those days they had frequent intercourse with the Deity, and were made sensible of his especial presence in some places, appears farther from his Discourse with *Cain* both

on each of these points may be seen in Dr. *Waterland's* first Charge, p. 41. &c. On Sacrifices in particular *Carpzov.* Introd. p. 118. and *Budde Hist. Eccl.* P. I. S. I. 30. \*\*. p. 115. The Distinction that we meet with afterwards [ *Gen.* 7. 28, &c. ] between clean and unclean Beasts, which manifestly relates to Sacrifice, shews likewise the continuance of that kind of Worship, and seems to prove that it was not owing to any human establishment, any more than this distinction itself could be. And that the Men of these, as well as after Ages, had both sufficient authority and instruction to use the Flesh of the former sort of Beasts for Food, as well as clothe themselves with their Skins, appears to me as plain as that the tending and taking care of such was their chief business and occupation. Nor can I comprehend what merit there could be at any time in their making *Offerings unto the Lord their God of that which cost them nothing*, of that which they could not eat; or how they came to distinguish [ which they did very early ] between *Fat* and *Lean*, between the *good choice pieces*, and others, unless they had tasted them themselves: though 'tis upon this chimerical supposition that the use of Animal Food was not included in the original Grant of absolute Dominion given to Mankind over all the Creatures [ some of which could be of no other service to them ] that the great *Grotius* and others founded their attempt to explain away all Animal Sacrifice before the Deluge. ‘ *Eædem pecudes, quæ ad esum, etiam ad sacrificia a Noacho adhibitæ; scil. mundæ quotquot erant* ‘ *Gen.* 8. 20. *Hic sacrificiorum usus cum Diluvio fit anti-*  
‘ *quior,*

before and after the Murther of his Brother, \* as also from *Cain's* Complaint of being hid from his *Face*, † and his going out from the *presence of the Lord*. ‡ Nor is it at all likely that *Adam*,

‘ quior, idem de pecudum esu nobis persuasum, contra  
 ‘ quam multi sentiunt. Neque enim *Abel* in sacrificium  
 ‘ id obtulisset Deo, quo vesci nefas credidisset, et frustra  
 ‘ pavisset agnos quibus non licuisset uti. Quin ipsa distinctio  
 ‘ animalium in munda et immunda docet alia permessa  
 ‘ fuisse, alia prohibita. Neque enim in animalibus natura  
 ‘ suâ quicquam immundum. Sed immundum id est ex lege,  
 ‘ cujus esus interdicitur. Itaque illud, *Gen. 1. 29. Vobis erit*  
 ‘ *in cibum*, non solum ad plantas referimus, sed etiam ad  
 ‘ Animalia, de quibus præcedenti versu actum fuerat.  
*Bochart. Hieroz.* p. 11. edit. 4. Comp. Bp. *Clayton's* Answ.  
 to Dr. *Delaney* in the blood-eating Controversy. — I am  
 extremely sorry to find here that I have been differing  
 from the ingenious Author of *Philemon to Hydaspes*, who  
 in his fifth Part is so far from allowing any kind of Sacri-  
 fice to be a Divine Institution, that he declares ‘ the general  
 ‘ Notion of the thing itself to be in every view of it so  
 ‘ glaring an Absurdity, that he is amazed that it should  
 ‘ ever enter into the head of any Rational Creature.’ p. 10.  
 As I have the greatest deference for the Character and  
 Sentiments of so very worthy and able a writer, I think  
 myself obliged to add a few words more in considering  
 some of the Reasons offered to support this Declaration.  
 First, ‘ The very Idea of a Divine Being implies in it such  
 ‘ a superior Excellency of Nature as to be wholly out of  
 ‘ the reach of our good Offices.’ He neither wants, nor  
 can receive Benefit from them. *ib.* Nor, Secondly, ‘ can  
 ‘ we suppose that the Gods should ever be pleased with  
 ‘ the mere waste of their own Productions,’ p. 13.  
 Thirdly,

\* *Gen. 4. 6, 9.* † *v. 14.* ‡ *v. 16.*

who seemed to be so well acquainted with the *Voice of God in the Garden* \* upon his Fall, should never have heard it there before on other occasions. In these times therefore God

Thirdly, 'It gives one a very degrading Idea of their Goodness to consider them as entering into a kind of Merchandize with Mankind in the matter of their Favours,' p. 14. and p. 20, 'The Demand of the Life of a perfectly innocent Creature to be offered up in Sacrifice to God could give but small encouragement to hope that God intended to favour a guilty one.'

But I cannot apprehend that such an Intercourse as was kept up between God and Mankind by the fore-mentioned Offerings must necessarily be taken in either the First or Third of these Views, since the like Intercourse is not always so understood even among Men, some of whom are too far exalted above others to receive any advantage from them, yet nevertheless expect some dutiful Acknowledgement of the Benefits which they confer on others, and require frequent Testimonies of their Love: and why should not we imagine a sincerely devout Sacrificer to the Deity able to interpret his Devotion in the same sense? or if led to a more gross interpretation of it, why may we not even suppose the Deity condescending in that case to set him right by some such kind expostulation as the following? *Will I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats? If I were hungry I would not tell thee; for the World is mine and the fulness thereof. Offer unto God Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the most High. And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* Nor does there seem to be any more *Merchandize* in any sort of Sacri-

\* *Gen.* 3. 8. 10.

was pleased to manifest himself to the *Senses* of men, and visibly conduct them by the *Angel* of his presence in all the chief concernments of Religion. And this *infant* state of the World

Sacrificial Offerings, than in those other of Vows, Prayers, Praises and Thanksgivings, which still make up an essential part of our Religion, from their relation to which the former always derived all their value, and were perhaps only a strong, lively manner of expressing them; nor probably more strong and explicit than might be necessary for the times; nor likely to convey any more degrading Ideas of the Divine Goodness [at least not more than were adapted to and unavoidable in the then low state of reasoning] than does the inward Tribute of *a broken and a contrite Heart*, which is still requisite on some occasions; as well as the outward publick profession of our dependance on the Deity, the *rendring to him the Calves of our Lips*, which when the understandings of Men were ripe for it, and they able to keep up a tolerable sense of Duty by these means, have of themselves been and are accepted by the same *gracious* Being in the room of the other, { *Hof. 14. 2. Heb. 13. 15.* } though these be founded equally on Human Weakness, and at a like distance from the excellency of the Divine Nature.

As to the *Consumption* of the Fruit of the Ground in Offerings, why might not men conceive that the same God who had given them all things richly to enjoy, might reasonably expect a return as it were of some part of them merely in token of Gratitude for the rest, as an exercise of their Faith, in a memorial of their Dependance on him for a continuance of them, and a pledge of their Obedience in applying each to the good purposes for which he had bestowed them? without the least dread of affronting  
him

must stand in need of his especial guidance and protection. They were not yet able (with *Moses* \*) to look up to him *who is invisible*, and perform a purely rational and spiritual

him by an implication that he either wanted something, or reaped Benefit by their Presents.

Nor need even such as had the most imperfect Notions of his Power and Bounty apprehend this to be any dangerous misapplication of these Gifts, on a persuasion that he had required it; though without some Tradition of that, *Socrates* himself [p. 10.] might perhaps justly doubt of the propriety and acceptableness of this kind of Worship: as he had the like scruples about *Prayer*. [*Plat. 2 Alcib.*]

But if ever these or any such Offerings were in fact required, and these or the like ends might be served by them [otherwise we should indeed have no room to believe they were] then will this be far from a mere *useless waste*, though the things offered be destroy'd: nor indeed can I see any material difference between a religious Dedication of such things and the Destruction of them; or how they could be presented to the Gods at all if they were still kept for the use of their Owners.

The case, I apprehend, will not be much different as to the *Life of an innocent Creature*; for if this Creature be considered as man's Property, why may not the Oblation of it be assigned by way of Composition, Mulet or Commutation for such Faults as he is sensible of, and serve as a significant representation and acknowledgement of such his sense, and be accepted by the offended Governour of the World in lieu of a more condign Punishment? by virtue of such assignment doing away his Guilt, and being a sufficient Ground of Encouragement for him to hope for a full restoration to the Divine Favour, without any

\* *Heb. 11. 27.*

Worship. They could have no very perfect Notions of his Nature and Providence; nor had they much leisure for Speculation and Refinement in these Subjects. They were all Tillers

any farther Import. Though if this should have yet a more distant and extensive view [as much removed perhaps from the comprehension of Mankind in those times, as some others, then very obvious ones, may possibly be now from us] it answers these ends for the present never the less, and is more like all other parts of the Divine Oeconomy, which serve for various purposes immediate and remote.—But if we admit these Uses, they will make it improper for this Rite to have been instituted *before the Fall*, which is another Objection, p. 22. And if they will warrant the supposition of its being instituted at all by God, it must be instituted with a *merciful Design*, and as such every dutiful compliance with it would be conceived in some respect to better the Condition of the Worshipper as far as he could carry his thoughts on that Condition, how dark soever his Notions might be as to the time and manner of completing it.

Upon the whole, I cannot help concluding it to be more probable in itself and more analogous to the general course of things that this so universal a Practise of sacrificing Animals, however odd and unaccountable it may seem to be in some respects at present, how much soever inferior to some modern Notions of the world and its all-perfect Governour, should owe its Origin to some Divine Appointment, be propagated every where by primitive Tradition, and afterwards [as in too many other cases] by a pretended Imitation and Improvement, but a real Misrepresentation and Abuse, receive such gradual Alteration, from the Authors of all Superstition and Vice, as at

of the Ground or Keepers of Cattle; employed sufficiently in cultivating and replenishing this New World, and through the Curse brought on it by their forefather forced with him to eat their bread in the sweat of their brow. We may suppose the generality of them to have been no better than *Anthropomorphites* in their Conceptions of the Divine Being, as many were found to be long after them in much more knowing Times, <sup>a</sup> and as perhaps a great part of the World yet are, by giving way to their Imagination, notwithstanding the clearest Reve-

length to arrive at that degree of Enormity which this ingenious Writer has so well described. And I submit it to his Candor whether the supposition of its coming from one who might have farther views in it than could appear at first sight, or be at once accomplished, be not as likely to remove his Difficulties, as attributing it wholly to the Invention of Men at a time when it is agreed between us that they were capable of inventing very little; and who, if they could see so far before them as to strike out such a Form of Worship, must we may think have likewise been apprised of some of the same Difficulties, which would always attend it. And lastly, whencesoever it did come, whether such a persuasion as this Gentleman entertains of its being fundamentally wrong, and in every light so glaring an Absurdity, be not as hard to reconcile with the Belief [ which I presume we are equally agreed in ] of God's express acceptance of the same on some occasions, his permission of it all along to his distinguish'd Favourites, and at last formally enjoining and establishing it



lations and plainest Arguments to the contrary. Frequent Apparitions then might be necessary to keep up a tolerable sense of Religion among them and secure obedience to the Divine Institutions; <sup>b</sup> and that the Almighty did not appear as frequently as was either necessary, or fit to answer this end cannot be concluded from the silence of those very short accounts we have in Sacred History, as was observ'd before.

Besides, *Adam* himself continued nine hundred and thirty years an eye witness of the Power and Providence of God, and could not

it with the minutest Circumstances; and this without any such intimation as is given in other cases of its being all merely a compliance with some of their own Customs or their Prejudices.

<sup>a</sup> *Laëtantius* is to prove that God has *Human Passions* —to prevent being misunderstood and to provide a proper Subject for these Passions he contends strongly for God's having a *Human Form*; no discreditable notion at that time in the Church.' *Warburton's Divine Legation*, B. 3. S. 4. p. 372. add *Locke* on Human Understanding, B. 1. c. 4. S. 16. and *Huetii Origeniana*, L. 2. Q. 1. S. 8. p. 30.

<sup>b</sup> Και γαρ εικος εν αρχη τε κοσμου επι πλειον βεβοηθηθη και την ανθρωπων φυσιν, εως, προκοπης γενομενης εις συνεσι και τας λοιπας αρετας, και την ευρεσι των τεχνων, δυναθωσι και καθ' εαυτης ζην, & χρηζοντες αι επιτροπευουτων και οικονομων αυτης μετα παραδοξην επιφανειας των υπηρετημενων τω θεο βεβληματι. *Orig. cont. Cels.* p. 216. Edit. Cant.

but reflect on those remarkable instances of both exerted at the beginning of his own Life,<sup>a</sup> and must have acquainted the rest of Mankind with all those Truths relating to the Deity that were implied in the Creation of Man and his first situation in the World \* as well as his present state of Punishment and prospect of a future Redemption, which were exhibited together, and doubtless explained to him, upon his Fall. He was all that while a living Monument both of the Justice and Mercy of God; of his extreme hatred and abhorrence of Sin, as well as his great Love and long suffering toward the Sinner. He was very sensible how Sin enter'd into the World and could not but apprise his Children of its Author, and at the same time inform them of the Unity of God and his Dominion over the *Evil* one, and assure them of his being the Supreme Governour and Judge of all. For so much, I think, might easily be gathered from that Transaction in Paradise in whatsoever sense we understand it; not to mention that the Garden of *Eden*, the great scene of this Transgression, might perhaps

<sup>a</sup> See *Allix's Reflections*, B. I. c. 8. &c.

\* How he was able always to convince the World that he was the first Man, see *Cumberland de Leg. Patriarch.* p. 409, 410.

still be visible. <sup>b</sup> This would produce a tolerable Idea of the Divine Being and afford sufficient motives to obey him. And accordingly we find the effects of it in the righteous Family of *Seth*, who began to *call upon the Name of the Lord*,\* or as that Text is better render'd in the Margin, to *call themselves by the Name of the Lord*.<sup>c</sup> They soon distinguished themselves from the Posterity of *Cain*, and for their extraordinary Piety were entitled the People or *Sons of God*. Of them sometime after sprang a person so very eminent for Goodness and Devotion as to be exempted from *Adam's* Sentence and the common lot of his Sons: who after he had walked with God three hundred years and *prophefied* to his Brethren,\* and forewarn'd them of the approaching Judgement, was *translated* that he should not see Death. † This very remarkable Event must make the World about him sensible of the good Providence of God inspecting and rewarding his faithful Servants, and one would think it should induce

<sup>b</sup> *Allix's Reflex.* p. 53. and 62.

\* *Gen.* 4. 26.

<sup>c</sup> See *Shuckford*, V. I. p. 42, &c. *Van Dale Orig. et Progr. Idol.* c. 2. *Stillingfleet Iren.* c. 3. p. 73. 4<sup>to</sup>.

\* *Jude* 14.

† *Heb.* 11. 5. comp. *Eccl<sup>as</sup>*. 44. 14. and Mr. *Arnold* upon *Wisdom*, 4. 10.

them to look up to a better state than the present, where all such might hope at length to see and enjoy their Maker. To *Adam* himself, if he was then alive (as the *Samaritan* account makes him to be above forty years after) to *Adam* it must be a lively and affecting instance of what he might have enjoyed had he kept his Innocence, as well as an earnest of the promised Victory over the Evil one; and a strong ground of confidence that he and the rest of his Posterity should not be left entirely in their present state, but sometime or other be restored to the favour of their Maker and behold his presence in Bliss and Immortality. <sup>a</sup> At the same time lived *Lamech* another Prophet, who was contemporary both with *Adam* and *Noah*, and well acquainted with the Counsels of God, as appear'd from his foretelling that that part of the Curse which related to the Barrenness of the Earth would be taken off, as it was, in his

<sup>a</sup> See Bp. *Bull's* Discourses, V. 1. p. 343. V. 2. p. 585, &c. Mr. *Worthington* argues farther that this Translation of *Enoch* 'was moreover an intimation to Mankind that if  
' they overcame the Depravity of their Nature as he did,  
' they should be delivered from the ill consequences of it  
' as he was; the chiefest of which was Death, temporal  
' and eternal, both which he avoided;' and this ingenious Author supposes him to be a Type of many others being able to do the very same, *Essay* p. 72, &c.

Son's days. <sup>a</sup> At length, when by the unlawful mixture of the two Families of *Cain* and *Seth*, the latter also was corrupted, and the whole World became full of *unbounded Lust* and impurity,\* of Rapine and Violence; † when those *Giants* in wickedness ‡ had filled the Earth with Tyranny, Injustice and Oppression, and the whole race of Men were grown entirely *carnal* || and abandoned; God, whose Spirit had been hitherto *striving* with them, was at length obliged even in mercy to themselves, as well as their Posterity, to cut them off, after having raised up another Prophet, <sup>b</sup> to give them frequent warning of their Fate, and allowed them a hundred and twenty years for Repentance. §

Thus ample provision did God make for the Instruction and Improvement of the World for the first sixteen hundred years; namely by

<sup>a</sup> *Gen.* 5. 29. see Bp. *Sherlock's Use and Intent.* p. 89, &c.

\* *Gen.* 6. 2. † *v.* 11. ‡ *v.* 4. || *v.* 3.

<sup>b</sup> *Pet.* 3. 19. *Heb.* 11. 7. *Noah* the Eighth, a Preacher of Righteousness, (*2 Pet.* 2. 5.) or as some more justly render it *the eighth Preacher.* [see *Jenkin*, V. I. p. 46. and *Pool* in loc. N. 4.] For he was neither the Eighth *Person* in descent from *Adam*, nor does his being *one* of the Eighth Persons in the Ark seem to be a construction either very natural or pertinent. Add *Pearson on the Creed*, Part 2. p. 115. 2d Edit,

§ *Gen.* 6. 3.

frequent *Appearances*, as we have seen ; by the *Spirit of Prophecy*, which is by some supposed to have been hereditary in the Heads of Families in those times ;<sup>a</sup> and by uninterrupted *Tradition* : there being but two Generations from *Adam* to *Noah* ; so that we cannot imagine that the Knowledge and true Worship of God during that time could be entirely lost in any part of the World. But we are to remember that the World was still but in its state of *Childhood*, which it most aptly resembled in those extraordinary Aids and Supports afforded it ; in the repeated instances of that paternal care and tenderness with which the Creator watched over it : and I have been the more particular in examining from whence it might derive its Notices of God and Religion, and how far these could possibly extend, in order to obviate some Mistakes which are commonly made in the History of those Times, by setting out wrong, and supposing the first Man to have been once superior to all his Posterity<sup>b</sup> both in natural Abilities and actual Knowledge, because more innocent than they ; and imagining the primitive Religion more perfect, because it was more naked, plain and simple than that in after times ;

<sup>a</sup> See *Jurieu Crit. Hist.* V. I. p. 34.

<sup>b</sup> *Vid. Gen. Dict.* Art. *Adam*, p. 228, &c.

by which means we are forced to make the State of the World often go backwards, to rise and fall again, and be filled with Breaks and Inequalities ; instead of observing that regular, even Progress which will appear in all parts of the Divine Oeconomy.

To proceed. After the *Deluge* God is pleased to converse a fresh and make another more clear and extensive Covenant with Mankind in the person of *Noah*, who was a new instance both of his Power, Justice and Goodness, and whose Family had been sufficiently convinced of his supreme Dominion over the Earth and Heavens ; of his utter abhorrence of Sin, and his determin'd will not to let it go unpunished. Nor could they or their Children for some time want any other Argument to enforce Obedience, Fear and Worship. <sup>a</sup> The Knowledge of mankind therefore after the Flood must for a considerable time be better than ever it was before, and it might safely be propagated by Tradition, and did not stand in need of any farther Revelation. But when by degrees they had corrupted this Tradition in the most essential parts, especially with relation to the Object of their Worship, and instead of one supreme God had set up several Orders of inferior ones, and worship'd all the

<sup>s</sup> See *Allix*, B. I. c. 13,

Host of Heaven, (as they began to do in the time of *Peleg* the fifth from *Noah*) and at the same time were uniting under one Head and forming an *universal Empire*, and erecting a Monument to preserve and perpetuate this their Union; in order to prevent their being all corrupted at once God saw it necessary to *come down*,<sup>a</sup> and disperse them into several distinct Colonies by dividing them into so many *Languages*, [or causing that *Discord* amongst them<sup>b</sup>] which made their future intercourse impracticable, and thereby render'd it impossible for any one species of Idolatry to be universally established; may gave a considerable check to the progress of false Worship in general, which had most probably been introduced by the Rulers<sup>c</sup> of those times; and for which reason their People then might be driven from them to hinder its being imposed, as God's own People were afterwards dispersed every where to cure it. After the *Dispersion* particular Revelations were in all probability vouchsafed where-

<sup>a</sup> *Gen.* 11. 5. 7. see *Le Clerc* upon the place.

<sup>b</sup> *Pf.* 55. 9. *Le Clerc* *ibid.* Add *1 Cor.* 1. 10. and *Vitringa Observ. Sacr.* L. 1. c. 9. §. 6, &c. *Shuckford*, B. 3. V. 1. p. 146. or *Huchinson on the Confusion of Tongues*.

<sup>c</sup> See *Shuckford*, V. 1. B. 5. p. 353, &c. The same Author gives a probable *reason* for this, V. 2. B. 9. p. 457, &c.



ever men were capable of improving by them and disposed to regard them. We find *Peleg* had his Name prophetically given from that *Dispersion* which was to happen in his days; \* and not only his Father *Eber*, but all the Heads of Families mentioned in the eleventh of *Genesis*, from *Noah* to *Abraham*, are with some reason supposed to have had the Spirit of Prophecy on many occasions. However *Noah* was undoubtedly both Priest and Prophet, and living till *Abraham* was near sixty years old, might well be able to keep up a tolerable sense of Religion in the World, which was then but very thinly inhabited. <sup>a</sup> His religious Son *Shem* likewise was living so long as *Jacob's* time, and could not but be a great means of continuing the Faith and Worship of the true God among his *Descendants*. <sup>b</sup> But notwithstanding a few righteous men and some remains of true Religion, Idolatry with its perpetual attendants

\* *Gen.* 10. 25.

<sup>a</sup> *Gen.* 13. 9. v. Part 3. p. 108. note <sup>a</sup> and *Newton Chron.* p. 185. — 6. The *Ark* itself, a certain Monument of the Deluge, continued several Ages after *Abraham*, and preserv'd the memory of it even among Pagans. v. *Lucian de Dea Syra. Allix Reflex.* p. 68. *Joseph. Ant.* L. 1. c. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Concerning the Notices of Religion in the world about this time, see *Allix*, B. 1. c. 14.

Vice and Superstition <sup>c</sup> had in a little time so far prevailed among the Sons of *Noah*, as to make it highly expedient for God as well to shorten the lives of men, <sup>d</sup> as to withdraw his Presence from the generality, who had made themselves unfit for such Communication, and to single out some particular People to bear his Name and be his more immediate Servants, and thereby preserve his Worship pure in some part of the World amidst the various corruptions that were going to overspread it. With this view *Abraham* is called, who had been driven out of an Idolatrous Nation, in all probability for opposing and refusing to comply with its Idolatry, <sup>e</sup> and after many remarkable trials of his Faith and Constancy admitted to a particular intimacy and *Friendship* with his Maker. God enters into a peculiar Covenant with him and

<sup>c</sup> The attendants and effects of Idolatry are well described by the Author of *Wisdom*, c. 14. 23.—29. *So that there reigned in all men without exception Blood, Manslaughter, Theft and Diffimulation, Corruption, Unfaithfulness, Tumults, Perjury.* 25. *Disquieting of good men, Forgetfulness of good turns, defiling of Souls, changing of kind, disorder in Marriages, Adultery and Shameless Uncleaness,* 26. add c. 12. 4, 5, 6. v. *Arnold in loc.*

<sup>d</sup> Concerning this great Change in the Divine Oeconomy, see Part 3.

<sup>e</sup> *Maim. M. Nev.* p. 421. see *Chandler Vind. O. T.* Part 2. p. 474. *Judith* 5. 8. *Shuckford*, V. 1. B. 5. p. 269.

engages

engages to be his present Guide, Protector and Defender, and to bestow not only all temporal Benefits on him and on his Seed, <sup>a</sup> but to make some of them the means of conveying a Blessing of a higher kind to all the Nations of the Earth, who should in an extraordinary manner be *blessed through him*. *Abraham* no doubt was fix'd upon for his singular Piety and trust in God, and entitled to these high Privileges by his extraordinary Virtues, for whose sake (or rather for the sake of encouraging and rewarding of which Virtues) the same Privileges were continued to a part of his Posterity, though far less worthy of them. But we cannot think that it was so much on his own account that he was thus distinguished; or that *for his sake only* \* Faith is said to be imputed to him for Righteousness; but rather for the common Benefit of Mankind was all this done, and in order to make him an instrument in the hand of Providence (and a fit one he was) to convey the same Faith and Fear of God to all the

<sup>a</sup> That the original Promise (*Gen.* 12. 7. 13. 14, 15. 18, &c.) was made to *Abraham's* Seed in general, though the especial Covenant was restrained to a part of them, see Remarks on part of the 3d Vol. of the *Moral Philosopher*, p. 89. 90.

\* *Rom.* 4. 24.

Nations round him. And accordingly we find him greatly favour'd and distinguished among the neighbouring Princes, and *Kings reprov'd for his sake*, who are acquainted with his Prophetic Character and desire his intercession with God. † History tells us of his conversing on the subject of Religion with the most learned *Egyptians*,<sup>b</sup> and being very highly esteemed by them, from whom probably they afterwards derived the Rite of Circumcision, among other Institutes of Religion.<sup>c</sup> We are informed that his Name was had in the greatest veneration all over the East ; that the *Magians, Sabians,*

† *Gen.* 12. 17. and 20. 7.

<sup>b</sup> *Josephus* L. 1. c. 9. contr. *Apion.* passim. *Damasce.* in *Euseb.* Præp. Evang. L. 9. c. 18.

<sup>c</sup> *Shuckford*, B. 5. p. 322, &c. and B. 7. p. 132, &c. Others derive it from *Joseph.* *Univers. Hist.* V. 1. p. 527. note R. and p. 453. note U. add *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 97. *Grot. Ep.* 327. Others suppose it introduced by *Ishmael*, [*Rev. Exam.* V. 2. p. 190<sup>l</sup>] or his Posterity the *Shepherds*, as is made very probable by the Ingenious Author of *Remarks* on part of the 3d Vol. of the *Moral Philosopher* p. 59, &c.

<sup>d</sup> *Prideaux*, Part 1. B. 4. p. 225. *Comp. Hide de Rel. Vet. Pers.* c. 2. and 3. and *Univers. Hist.* passim. 'Tis remarkable that the *Lacedemonians* retained the memory of him for above 1600 years, and under their King *Areus* claimed kindred with the *Jews*, as being of the Stock of *Abraham*. 1 *Maccab.* 12. 21, &c. *Joseph. Ant.* L. 12. 5. [see *Dr. Waterland's* Postscript to *Scrip. Vind.* Part 2. p. 142. or *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 53. and 90. How this might come

come

*Persians* and *Indians* all gloried in him as the great Reformer of their Religion. <sup>d</sup> And as he was let into the various Counsels of the Almighty and taught to reason and reflect upon them; as he was fully apprised of his just Judgement in the miraculous overthrow of the five \* wicked Cities, with the particular Circumstances of it, † as well as his most gracious intent of providing a Redeemer for all Mankind, and rejoiced to see his Day, ‡ and saw it; 'tis very probable that he and his Family would propagate these Doctrines, together with their Consequences, wheresoever they went. <sup>a</sup>

come about, see *Stillingfleet Or.* S. B. 3. c. 4. or *Shuckford*, B. 10. p. 51. ] nor is it unlikely that from the *Abramans*, or Sons of *Abraham*, the *Brachmans* might descend and derive their Name. *Newt. Chron.* p. 351. 'Tis likewise observ'd that the *Persians* adhered so strictly to the Religion of *Abraham* as to keep clear of the most gross Idolatry all along, as is at large proved in the *Universal History*, V. 2. add *General Dict.* V. 6: p. 343. other Testimonies of Heathen Historians on this point are collected by the Author of *Revelation examined with Candor*, V. 2. p. 217.

\* *Wisd.* 10 6. † *Gen.* 18.

‡ *Job.* 8. 56. *πυλαλισσατο* *gestiebat* long'd earnestly. see *Warburton's* ingenious Comment on this Text. *Div. Leg.* V. 2. p. 592, &c.

<sup>a</sup> See Dr. *Burnet's Boyle's Lect.* p. 536. Fol. ' God  
' called *Abraham* out of his own Country and made him  
' travel from place to place, to make him thereby famous  
' in

But though the Deity was pleased to manifest himself in a more frequent and familiar manner to *Abraham*, yet were not the rest of the world quite overlooked. There were no doubt many other shining lights and eminent Professors of the true Religion, who like *Lot* in the midst of *Sodom*, were as eminently preserv'd and supported in it; we see *Laban* and *Bethuel* acknowledging the *Lord* || and the former of them favour'd with a Vision; § nor was the Spirit of Prophecy, or Divine Revelation, wholly confined to *Abraham*, or to his Family. In *Canaan* we meet with *Melchizedeck*, King and Priest of the most High God; <sup>b</sup> who is acquainted with the Blessing promised to *Abraham*, and confirms it to him, and to whom the Patriarch himself pays Homage. In *Arabia* we find *Job* and his three Friends, all of Regal Dignity, <sup>c</sup> entering into the deepest points of

<sup>c</sup> in the world, and to invite men by that means to inquire after his Profession, his Hopes, and his Religion'. *Allix Reflex.* B. 2. c. 12. add *Rev. examined*, V. 2. Diff. 6. and *Worthington's Essay*, p. 125, &c.

|| *Gen.* 24. 31, 50. § *Gen.* 31. 24. †

<sup>b</sup> Most probably the Patriarch *Shem* himself. vid. *Cumberland de Leg. Patriarch.* p. 428, &c. *Bedford Scrip. Chron.* p. 318. The same opinion is maintain'd by many other Authors mentioned by *Calmet*. *Dict.* V. 2. p. 177.

<sup>c</sup> *Tobit* 2. 16. vulg. Lat. — *Job insultabant Reges.*

Divinity, and agreed about the Unity, Omnipotence and Spirituality of God, the Justice of his Providence, and other Fundamentals of Religion; as also mentioning a Divine Inspiration as no very uncommon thing. \* *Eliphaz* had his Visions and Revelations † as well as *Job*, though in a lower degree; <sup>a</sup> and the latter expresses his belief of a *Resurrection* and a general *Judgement* in much stronger and clearer Terms, than are elsewhere to be met with near his time, if according to the Seventy, he was the fifth from *Abraham*, <sup>b</sup> or according to others, contemporary either with him, or *Isaac*. <sup>c</sup> Though in truth it is not very easy to settle either the Date of that piece, or the Import of several expressions in it. Some look upon it as a *Jewish* Parable or allegorical Drama, and bring it down as low as the Captivity, nor are they without their reasons. <sup>d</sup> However, all seem

\* *Gen.* 32. 8. 33. 15. † *c.* 4. 12, 15, 16.

<sup>a</sup> See *Patrick* Append. to Paraphr. on *Job*. p. 59.

† *C.* 19.

<sup>b</sup> See *Calmet's* Dictionary.

<sup>c</sup> *Jurieu. Crit. Hist.* V. 1. p. 18. *Shuckford*, B. 7. p. 136. *&c. Univers. Hist.* p. 482. *Selden de Jur. Nat. &c.* L. 7. c. 11.

<sup>d</sup> See some of them in the *Five Letters* on Inspiration, p. 99. and *Le Clerc* on *Job*. 1, 6. 23, 12. 26, 12. 38, 3. 42, 7. But this is put beyond all doubt by the incomparable

to agree that whoever was the Author of it, it is built upon a real Character, and that decorum kept up as to suit most of the Notions in it to the Patriarchal Times.

To proceed: In *Chaldea* we meet with *Balaam* a true Prophet, <sup>e</sup> yet one who from his own personal merit had no particular pretensions to the Word of God, since he so notoriously loved and followed *the Wages of Unrighteousness*, and at length justly perished among the idolatrous *Midianites*, \* having taught them to seduce and corrupt those whom he knew to be the chosen People of God. † Considering, I say, the Character of this Person,

rable Author of *Div. Leg.* B. 6. S. 2. p. 543, &c. who has given us a beautiful account of this whole book and cleared up all the Difficulties in it which used so much to perplex Interpreters, and particularly makes it appear that the words in Question can relate only to a temporal Deliverance, nor indeed would the other sense of them well agree with any of the times which have been fix'd on for the writing of this Book.

<sup>e</sup> See *Patrick* Append. to Paraphr. on *Job.* p. 60.

\* *Numb.* 31. 8.

† *Numb.* 24. 9. and 31. 16. *Mic.* 6. 5. *Rev.* 2. 14.

<sup>f</sup> Whatever might have been his behaviour before, it was certainly very bad in the whole of this affair, during which he had the fullest Revelations, and yet was always either directly disobeying or endeavouring to defeat the intent of them, as may be seen in *Bp. Butler's* excellent Sermon on that subject, and *Dr. Shuckford's* Connection.



he seems to have had no particular Title to the Gift of Prophecy, † and therefore we may suppose that in those days it was not so uncommon a favour, but might be conferred on many others likewise in other parts of the world, ‡ whose History is not delivered down to us: and upon the whole, it seems probable that as *in every Nation those who feared God and worked Righteousness were accepted of him,* \* so he was pleased also to manifest himself where-ever men were disposed to make a proper use of that Manifestation, and in such manner and degree as would best answer the ends of his good Providence, and most effectually promote the

\* *Acts* 10. 35.

nection. *B. 12. p. 314, &c.* As to the particular *manner* of these Revelations we may I think suppose them to have been all made in Vision, Dream or *Trance* [ as our Translators have interpreted one hereafter mentioned ] though from the narration it is as difficult here as in some other parts of Scripture to distinguish between real Fact in the most literal sense, and visionary, symbolical Representations, such as occur in *Job*, c. 1. v. 6, - 12. *1 Kings*, c. 22. v. 19. - 23, &c. *Zechariah* 1. 2. and perhaps *Gen.* 32. 2, 24. vid. *Theodoret*. That of the *Angel* meeting *Balaam* in the way seems to be thus explained by himself. *Numb.* 24. 3, 4. (when rightly rendered) where he alludes to the very Circumstance of his eyes being shut for some time c. 22. 31. Nor does it seem very probable that he who was said to be in the retinue of the Princes of *Moab*.

Interest of Religion. Not to insist upon the numberless Traditions of supernatural appearances and the common Belief of them all over the world; <sup>h</sup> which notion can hardly be supposed to have arisen at first without foundation, though numberless Impositions (which yet are Imitations of something real), have indeed rendered all reports of that kind for these many Ages very suspicious.

But to proceed. When for the reasons above-mentioned, and perhaps many others, it had pleased God to adopt *Abraham* and part of his Posterity in a peculiar manner and to establish his Covenant with them, \* we find all possible care and condescension used to train them up by degrees in suitable notions of their Creator; a frequent Correspondence held with them,

*Numb.* 22. 21. should at any time be so far separated from them in the way as to give room for such a remarkable Transaction without the knowledge of any of them, as by the account it appears to be. ‘Ita dico, in negotio  
 ‘ *Bileami*, totum illud quod in via ei contigisse dicitur,  
 ‘ et quomodo asina loquuta fuerit, in visione Prophetica  
 ‘ factum esse, quia in fine Historiæ explicatur quod *Angelus*  
 ‘ *Dei* loquutus fuerit.’ *Maimon. Mor. Nevoch.* P. 2. c. 42.  
 To the same purpose *R. Levi Ben Gersom.* and *Philo* seems to be of the same opinion, by his omission of this Circumstance, as is observed by *Dr. Shuckford*, B. 12. p. 315.  
 Add *Memoirs of Lit.* for April 1710. p. 14, &c. *Leibnitz*

and fresh Promises daily given to strengthen and confirm their Faith, to fix and preserve their Dependence on the God of Heaven. He reveles himself to *Isaac* and *Rebecca* and foretells the Condition of their two Sons, † renews the Promise made to *Abraham*, ‡ and blesses his son *Isaac*, miraculously increases his substance, and soon makes him the envy of the neighbouring Princes. || He converses in the same manner with *Jacob* and repeats the same Promise; § gives him the right of Primogeniture, and engages to be with him and keep him in all places whither he should go.\* This he confirms by many extraordinary Blessings and frequent appearances, † vouchsafing to talk with him face to face, ‡ to bestow all kinds of Riches on him, and strike the Terror

endeavours to prove the same in his History of *Balaam*. *Gen. Diſt.* v. 6. p. 678. Which I think is pretty clear in his case, though some of those others abovementioned may perhaps belong to that Species of Revelation by *Action* which Mr. *Warburton* explains at large, *Div. Leg.* B. 4. S. 4. and B. 6. S. 5.

‡ See *Judg.* 7. 13, &c. and Notes below.

h See *Patrick* on *Numb.* 22. 9. Append. to *Job.* 60, &c. *Huet. Quæst. Alnetan.* c. 2. N. 1. 2. *Shuckford*, B. 1. p. 47.

\* *Rom.* 9. 5. † *Gen.* 25. 22, 23. ‡ *Gen.* 26. 24.

|| *Gen.* 12. 13, 14. § *Gen.* 28. 13, 14. \* v. 15.

† *Gen.* 32. 1. 35. 1, -9. ‡ c. 32. 29.

of him into all the Cities round about.\* And yet we find all this little enough to keep up even in *Jacob* a tolerable sense of Duty and Dependence on his God: (as is observed by an ingenious writer.<sup>a</sup>) After the first Vision he is surpris'd and hesitates, and seems to make a kind of stipulation with his Maker. *If, says he, God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Father's House in peace, then shall the Lord be my God: †* that is, if he will preserve and prosper me in my undertakings, he shall be my God rather than any other, and upon that Condition only. And it appears not to have been till after many such Revelations, Blessings and Deliverances, and being reminded of this Promise, ‡ that he set himself in earnest to reform the Religion of his own Family by driving out all strange Gods. || *Then Jacob said unto his Household and to all that were with him, Put away the strange Gods that are among you and be clean, and change your Garments, and let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an Altar unto God who answered me*

\* Gen. 35. 5.

<sup>a</sup> *Welsted. Scheme of Providence*, p. 51, &c.

† Gen. 28. 21, 22. ‡ c. 35. 1. || c. 35. 2, 3.

*in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.*<sup>b</sup>

Thus was God obliged to treat even with the *Patriarchs* themselves by way of positive *Covenant* and exprefs Compact; to promise to be their God if they would be his People; to give them a portion of present temporal Blessings as introductory to and an earnest of future spiritual ones, and engage them in his service by immediate Rewards, till they could be led on to higher views, and were prepared by the bringing in of a better Hope to draw nigh unto him. And we may observe what care was always taken to suit the several Dispensations to the state of the World, and introduce each as soon as it was wanted, and in such a way as was most necessary to correct Disorders and reform Abuses as they rose, and thereby keep up a Face of Religion and gradually increase the Substance of it: in the same manner as Providence always took care to impart to Mankind so much Knowledge of the World,

<sup>b</sup> The Idolatry here mentioned may perhaps be thought chiefly to relate to the *Shechemite Women* in *Jacob's Household*, *Gen.* 34. 29. See *Shuckford*, B. 7. p. 164. However, that he himself had yet but very imperfect notions of the Deity, particularly of his *Omnipresence*, is observed by *Le Clerc* on *Gen.* 28. 16. and to the same purpose *Cyrill. Alex.* L. 4. p. 115. there cited.

the ways of cultivating it and Arts of living, as was requisite to make Life a Blessing to them; though their Knowledge of both kinds was neither of so refined a Nature nor so high a degree as it must grow to by the experience and Improvements of after Ages. Mankind were scarcely got out of their *Childhood* yet, with regard to what may be called the *Theory of Religion*; and notwithstanding there might always be some extraordinary Persons who had a more enlarged prospect of things and entertained more worthy sentiments of the Divine Providence, such as *Enoch, Noah, Abraham* and the like; yet these were far superior to the Times in which they lived, and we have reason to think that the generality, both in this and some later Ages, extended their Views no farther than the present Life and its Conveniences: <sup>a</sup> and though from the confused Remains of ancient Tradition they acknowledged some Power above them, and frequently applied thither for direction in their Affairs; yet

<sup>a</sup> This seems to have been the case even with *Abraham* himself for some time, who upon having this extraordinary promise made to him by God in a Vision, *Gen. 15. 1. I am thy shield and thy exceeding great Reward*; rises no higher in his answer than only to request an heir for his Substance. *v. 2. 3. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt*

it was in the petty Affairs of this World only, and their Belief and Worship were accordingly. How many of these Superiour Powers there might be, or how far their Influence might reach they knew not: uncertain whether there was one supreme Governour of the whole World, or many coordinate Powers presiding over each Country \* or Climate or particular Place; † Gods of the *Hills* and of the *Valleys*, as they were termed in after times. ‡ They thought the more of these they could engage in their Interest the better, and therefore wherever they came, like the *Samaritans*, they sought the manner of *the God of the Land*, and served him together with their own Gods. || Thus was the World running apace into Idolatry, and ready to lose the very notion of the true God and his Worship, had he not been pleased to interpose and take effectual care to preserve them in some one Nation, to be kept apart from the common Contagion, and made as it were the Repository of true Religion

*wilt thou give me seeing I go childless, and the Steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed; and lo, one born in my house is mine heir.*

\* 2 Kings 18. 34, 35. † See Numb. 23. 13, 27.

‡ 1 Kings 20. 23. 28. vid. Calmet. || 2 Kings 17. 33.

and

and a Channel to convey it to the rest of Mankind as soon and in as high a degree as they should become capable of receiving it. To this purpose he makes way for the removal of *Jacob* and his Family to one of the most improved and polish'd parts of the World at that time, and introduces them into it in so advantageous a manner as to give them opportunity of imparting somewhat of the true Religion with advantage to the most considerable Families in it, and without any danger of sharing their Corruptions. They are placed by themselves upon the Borders of *Egypt*, were they multiply exceedingly, yet by their very occupation\* are still kept a separate People, and afterwards rendered more averse to the Manners and Religion of their Neighbours by a long and a severe Oppression. Which though it might at first perhaps have chiefly been occasioned by their Opposition to Idolatry, † yet became very necessary both to keep up that Opposition, and to inure them to Restraint and Government; and that it might have the effects intended, but not proceed so far as to reduce them to an entire subjection and conformity to that more potent Nation, through a despair of

\* See *Gen.* 46. 33, 34.

† See *Mr. Chandler* Vind. of O. T. p. 487.



any Deliverance, the precise time of this their Trial was foretold to *Abraham* \* and as soon as it had been accomplished, and they had cryed for help to their God, † they are brought back in as wonderful a way as they had been sent thither; which also was foretold to *Jacob*, ‡ and repeated by *Joseph*, || all the Circumstances whereof are at large related in their History: And, I must add, with all those Characters of Truth and Consistency which might have been shewn ( were this a place for it ) 'to receive new confirmation from every such attempt to burlesque and expose it as is made by a late profligate Writer. <sup>a</sup> The God of *Israel* having at length magnified himself over the *Egyptians* and their Gods, <sup>b</sup> by a series of the most astonishing Miracles, and rescued his People from them in such a manner as must strike the utmost surprize and terror into the whole Land, and spread his name much farther by means of the many Strangers that used to travel thither <sup>c</sup> in order to be acquainted with the History of that famous

\* *Acts* 7. 6. † *Exod.* 2. 23. ‡ *Gen.* 46. 4. and 48. 21.

|| *Gen.* 50. 24, 25.

<sup>a</sup> *Moral Philosopher.* Introd. to v. 3.

<sup>b</sup> *Exod.* 12. 12. *Numb.* 33. 4. 2 *Sam.* 7. 23.

<sup>c</sup> See the notes below, with Mr. *Chandler's* Vind. of the Hist. of the O. T. Part 2. p. 464. &c. and p. 499.

Nation,

Nation, from whom the greatest part of the world derived their Policy and Religion: <sup>d</sup> having thus, I say, made his Name great among the Heathen, as well as work'd so conspicuous a Deliverance for his chosen People as might, one would think, have been sufficient to engage them for ever in his service, he proceeds to instruct and exercise them for some time in the Wilderness; he exhorts and intreats them to their Duty, and warns them against all the Vices of the People round about; gives them Statutes and Judgements more righteous \* than those of any other Nation, and such as were to be a model to the rest of the world; <sup>e</sup> sends his *Angel before them to keep them in the way*, † takes upon himself the civil Government of them, <sup>f</sup> and by his presence guides, guards, directs them in all their undertakings. He conducts them through the neighbouring Nations with repeated Signs and Wonders, <sup>a</sup> and continues

<sup>d</sup> Vid. *Diod. Sic. L. 1. Herodot. L. 2. c. 43, &c.*

\* *Nehem. 9. 13.*

<sup>e</sup> V. *Joseph. contr. Ap. Selden de Jur. Gent. &c. passim.*

† *Exod. 23. 20.*

<sup>f</sup> The Necessity for this is well explain'd by Mr. *Warburton. Div. Leg. B. 5. S. 2. p. 366.—374, &c.*

<sup>a</sup> *Numb. 14. 14. They have heard that thou, Lord, art among this People, that thou, Lord, art seen face to face, and that thy Cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them by day time in a Pillar of a Cloud, and in a Pillar*

to try and discipline them till they were at length tolerably well attach'd to his Government and establish'd in his worship; till they were fit to possess the promis'd Land, and till the present Inhabitants were ripe for Destruction. \* At their entrance into it he gives them more such Ordinances<sup>b</sup> both of a ceremonial and moral kind as were best suited to their Temper and Circumstances, and adapted every way to prevent the Dangers and correct the Irregularities which they were constantly liable to,<sup>c</sup>

of Fire by night; v. 15. — *The Nations have heard the fame of thee.* add *Deut.* 2. 25. *Josh.* 2. 10. *1 Sam.* 4. 8. 6. 6. which places, by the bye, furnish us with an Answer to that Objection of the *Moral Philosopher*, V. 3. p. 183. that 'had God given any such — Authority to the *Israelites* as is hereafter mention'd — he would have let the People of *Palestine* know it, and in some authentic way or other assured them, that he had given away their Country to Strangers and Foreigners; and that if they did not leave the Land and give up all their natural lawful Possessions, Rights and Properties peaceably and without opposition, they must be all cut to pieces, Men, Women, and Children': though this was not the truth of the case, of which more below.

\* *Gen.* 15. 16.

<sup>b</sup> *Deut.* 1. 3. 5. 27. 31. *Nehem.* 9. 14.

<sup>c</sup> See Dr. Burnet's *Boyle's Lect.* p. 541. Fol. and the excellent Author of *Div. Leg.* V. 2. B. 4. S. 6. 'It seems not to have been God's intention at first to lay upon them such numbers of Ceremonies; for it was only after  
' the

as well as to prefigure <sup>d</sup> and by degrees prepare them for a more perfect Dispensation under the *Messiah*. The moral part breath'd nothing but Equity and Benevolence; it dissuaded them from all kinds of Cruelty and Oppression by reminding them of their late heavy Sufferings, and inculcated the greatest Humanity both toward each other, toward Strangers, Servants, Enemies, and even the Beasts of the field. <sup>e</sup> The Ceremonial parts were solemn and splendid, <sup>f</sup> apt to engage and fix the attention of a People whose heart was *gross*; fitted to inspire

<sup>c</sup> the commission of the Sin of the Golden Calf, that God  
<sup>c</sup> laid on them that heavy and troublesome yoke, on pur-  
<sup>c</sup> pose to employ all their time and so keep them from  
<sup>c</sup> falling into Idolatry again'. *Allix Reflex.* p. 203. *Comp. Spencer de Leg. Heb.* L. I. c. 4. S. 4. *Burnet de Fid. et Off.* p. 17. from *Jer.* 7. 22. 23. [on the other side see *Shuckford*, V. 3. p. 151. ] If this be a true account of the *Jewish* Institution, then though it really was, what it is term'd, a *Yoke of Bondage*, yet nevertheless it might well be imposed by God himself, as being the fittest thing for the People to whom, and the times in which it was deliver'd, and consequently not unworthy of having God for its Author, as a loose modern Writer wou'd insinuate, *Moral Philosopher*, V. I. p. 51, &c.

<sup>d</sup> See Dr. *Burnett. Boyle's Lect.* Fol. 547. or Dr. *Berriman*, Sermon. 23.

<sup>e</sup> *Exod.* 22. 21. - 27. and 23. 5, 6, 9, - 12. *Deut.* 5. 14. 10. 18. 14. 21. 16. 11. and 22. 1. - 4. 6, 7. 23. 7. 24. 10, &c. 25. 1. - 4. 26. 12. 27. 19. *Lev.* 14. 9, 10. 19. 23. - 37. and 25.

them with an awful Reverence, and withdraw their Affections from the Pomp and Pageantry of Idol Worship, which had so very surprisngly bewitch'd the world about that time. It was fill'd with operose, magnificent Rites to keep them duly employ'd and attach'd to it, and so far mix'd and incorporated with their civil Polity that the same things were Duties of Religion and Acts of State, and the Service of God became the constant Business as well as Entertainment of their Lives; and serv'd them instead of all other Entertainments. <sup>a</sup> Nor was

35.-38. see *Univ. Hist.* p.675. and 685. *Leland's Answ. to Christianity as old &c.* V. 2. p.447 &c. *Le Clerc on Gen.8.* 9. 10. *Philo. de Charitate. Joseph. contr. Ap. L.* 2.

<sup>f</sup> See Mr. *Welfted's* Scheme of Prov. p. 70, &c. or Agreement of Customs between the *East-Indians* and *Jews*, Art. 3. p.23.

<sup>a</sup> See *Universal Hist.* p.694. and *Welfted*, p.72, &c. or *Edwards's Survey*, V. 1. p.242, 255, &c. or *Limborch Amic. Collat.* p.317. We may add, that the Ceremonial part itself might have a moral view, representing several Duties to them in that emblematical and Parabolic way which was well known and commonly made use of in those times. See Instances in *Dr. Burnet Boyle's Lect.* p.542. Fol. Other Rites were instituted in *Commemoration* of great and signal Events, extraordinary acts of Providence towards their Nation; the keeping up a constant Remembrance of which could not but be of great use for preserving the Love and Worship of God amongst them, awakening their Gratitude and engaging their dutiful

this Institution wholly confined to the *Jews*. The Law itself was given to Strangers,<sup>b</sup> and those that accompanied them from *Egypt*; the *Covenant* was made with all the *Gentiles* that should hereafter become Profelytes to their Religion; <sup>c</sup> and sufficient care was taken to communicate it to them, as we shall see presently. And though the Children of *Israël* were to have no Commerce with the *Seven Nations*, but were commanded to destroy them and possess themselves of their Country on their refusing to submit to their terms, and rejecting offers of Peace: <sup>d</sup> yet to prevent their imagining themselves the only Favourites of Heaven, and learning to despise and hate the rest of Mankind (as they were but too apt to do, and which to a People under their circumstances was in

ful Obedience, *Leland's Div. Auth. of the O. and N. T.* asserted against the *Moral Philosopher*, p. 50. Nor were the public *Festivals*, in which they were all obliged to meet at one place, of less use to them, by keeping them united together in one Body Politic. see *Le Clerc* on *Exod.* 23. 14.

<sup>b</sup> *Deut.* 29. 11. 31. 12. *Josh.* 8. 33. 35. *Exod.* 12. 19. 49.

<sup>c</sup> *Deut.* 29. 14, 15. *Neither with you only do I make this Covenant and this Oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord, and also with him that is not here with us this day.* see *Lev.* 24. 22. and *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 60 - 65. or *Worthington's* Essay, p. 130.

<sup>d</sup> *Deut.* 20. 10, &c. *Josh.* 2. 12. and 11. 19, 20. and 16. 10. and 17. 13. see *Univ. Hist.* p. 531. 532. Note I.

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some measure unavoidable ) they were told at the same time that it was for the incorrigible wickedness of those Nations <sup>e</sup> (who of all others had been favour'd with the greatest means of information, *viz.* from the Examples of so many eminent men placed amongst them, and from the Judgements of God so remarkably set before them. <sup>f</sup> ) that the Lord had driven them out, as he would do *them* also if they followed their steps : \* that if any of these remain'd long unsubdued they would infallibly prove a snare to them, † and that therefore as well for their own security, as in execution of the Divine Vengeance, they were obliged to extirpate them, at least the present Generation ; <sup>g</sup> or to destroy their *National Polity* ; <sup>h</sup> and at the same time were sufficiently warn'd to avoid their Crimes. They were likewise often reminded of their

*Edwards's Survey*, p. 355, &c. *Patrick on Ex.* 23. 32. *Shuckford's Connection*, V. 3. B. 12. p. 433, &c. *Selden de Fur. N. L.* 6. c. 14.

<sup>e</sup> *Lev.* 18. 24, 25. and 20. 23. see *Leland against Christianity as old* &c. V. 2. p. 429, &c.

<sup>f</sup> See *Jenkin* V. 1. p. 56, 57. and 77. 78.

\* *Deut.* 8. 19, 20. † *Ex.* 34. 12. *Josh.* 23. 13.

<sup>g</sup> *Josh.* 16. 10. *Judg.* 1. 25. 28. 35. 1 *Kings* 9. 20, 21. 2 *Sam.* 11. 12. 2 *Chron.* 8. 7, 8. see *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 71, 72.

<sup>h</sup> See *Dr. Sykes's Connexion of Nat. and Rev. Rel.* c. 13. p. 332, &c.

own Preverfeness and Ingratitude, \* and assured that it was not for their own fakes that they were thus distinguish'd, for they had always been a stiffnecked and rebellious People; † but in regard to the Promise made to their Forefathers, and on account of the superior Wickedness of these Nations; ‡<sup>b</sup> that the great intent of God was to raise up and separate a People which should manifest his Power to the Heathen, and make his Name known throughout the earth; \* which were to be a *Kingdom of Priests*, † Preachers of Righteousness and Publishers of true Religion all over the World: † that this design had taken place before they were born, and would be carried on either by

\* *Deut.* 9. † *ib.* 9. 6, 7 &c. ‡ *ib.* 5.

<sup>b</sup> That this was such as justly deserv'd exemplary punishment from the supreme Governour of the World, and that it might with equal Justice be inflicted by such persons as receiv'd an exprefs, clear commission from him for that purpose, is shewn at large in Mr. *Lowman's* dissertation on the Civil Government of the *Hebrews*, c. 1. p. 13, &c. and c. 12. p. 221, &c. or *S. Browne*, p. 366. &c. Concerning the great Propriety of punishing them by the Sword of the *Israelites*, rather than any other way, both for the better Admonition of the *Israelites* themselves and of their Heathen Neighbours, and how much the credit of the Gods of every Nation depended on the Fate of War,

\* *Ezek.* 36. 22, 23.

† *Ex.* 19. 6.



their Obedience or their Disobedience, who were to be Examples to all others both of the Goodness and Severity of God. † And accordingly in the remainder of their History, both under their *Judges* and *Kings*, we find them frequently rebelling, and as frequently punish'd for it; as soon as they repent, they are restored; when they relapse they are again chastised; † all along alternately sinning and suffering, immediate and visible Judgements attending each revolt, either Oppression in their own, or Slavery in foreign Countries, till the last great Captivity in *Babylon* seems to have quite cured them of their favourite predominant Vice *Idolatry*, to which they had been before so unaccountably

War, see *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 72. *Lowman*, ib. p. 228, &c. *Univers. Hist.* p. 893. Note T. *ad fin.* *Jackson's* Remarks on *Christianity as old* &c. p. 51. many instances of this occur as low as *Constantine*, to which purpose we have a remarkable Speech of *Licinius* in *Euseb. de Vit. Const.* c. 5. To which we may add, that as the People in those times did not in the least dispute the Reality of each others Deities, no kind of Miracles but such as imply'd superior Power could induce any of them to quit their own for other Objects of religious Worship. comp. 1 *Kings* 20. 23.-28. 2 *Kings* 18. 34, &c.

° See Dr. *Waterland's* first Charge, p. 50, &c.

† *Deut.* 30. &c. *Rom.* 11. 22.

‡ *Judg.* 3. 8. 12. 42. 6. 1. 13. 1. 1 *Sam.* 12. 9, 10, &c.

addicted. <sup>e</sup> But all this while the rest of the world reap almost the same Benefit by them, whether they keep their Law and prosper, or disobey it and are in distress. One would naturally suppose that they must partake of the Improvements of the *Jews* Religion in some degree, as well as these partook of their Corruptions; and this appears to be the case in fact; and as it has been observ'd of *Greece*, that when it was subdued by the *Romans*, itself subdued

<sup>e</sup> *Le Clerc* attempts to give some account of this in his Note on 2 *Kings* 21. 11. 'I can account for it (says an ingenious Writer \*) upon no other consideration, but that of the exceeding great Temptations there are in all Religions that are a mere mixture of *Civil Policy* and *Priest-Craft*, dress'd up with all the Artifices of external Pomp, Splendor and Amusement, and made agreeable to the corrupt and vicious Inclinations of Men. Such no doubt was the *Heathen Worship*, to which that of the *Golden Calf* bore too near a resemblance both in its Original and Progress. And when we turn our thoughts to those Ages and Nations of the World that are call'd *Christian* [and supposed to be under far happier advantages of Light and Knowledge than ever the *Jewish Church* was] and observe to what extravagances both of Notions and Practises, the *Romish Communion* hath for so long a time, and by the like means influenc'd the Majority of the Nations around, it will I conceive much abate the wonder arising from this matter consider'd in relation to the Church of *Israel*.' The parallel

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\* *Pyle* Pref. to *Paraph. on the O. T.* Vol. 4.

its Conquerors, soften'd their savage Temper and refined their Manners; and afterwards of the *Romans* themselves, that wherever they conquer'd, they civilized the World: so may it with much greater justice be said of the *Jeros* that they improved and reform'd the Religion of every People who were either brought under subjection to them, or into whose hands they fell: who were witness'es of the Power and Justice of their God, either in

instance abovemention'd affords likewise a good Illustration of the *Degree* of their Corruption. For that this Crime of the *Israelites* did not consist in their absolute Rejection of the true God, but only in joining the Worship of other Gods, and taking them into Communion with him, is made plain by another able Writer. ' So ' strong was this universal Prejudice of *Intercommunity* ' that all the Provisions of the Law could not keep those ' People from running into the Error. For their frequent ' Defections into Idolatry till after the *Babylonish* Capti- ' vity, was no other than the joining foreign Worship to ' that of the God of *Israel*. It is a vulgar Error to imagine ' they consisted in renouncing the Religion deliver'd to ' them by *Moses*, as a false one; they all along held it ' to be true; but deluded by the Prejudice of this *Inter-* ' *community*, they were apt to regard the God of *Israel* ' only as a local, tutelary Deity, this we shew at ' large hereafter.' *Divine Legation*, B. 2. S. 6. p. 277. This he has done effectually in B. 5. S. 2. See also *Jurieu* Crit. Hist. V. 2. Part 3. c. 9. and *Mede's* Apostacy of latter times, c. 10. p. 651.

distinguishing them by rewards for their adhering to him, or as remarkably punishing them for deserting him; and who seem to be well acquainted with the Intent of these his dispensations, <sup>a</sup> especially when they were made the Instruments thereof. <sup>b</sup> Thus by the various Revolutions in their Government and frequent change of their Condition, they spread the Knowledge of their History and Religion far and near; more especially by the total Dispersion of the Ten Tribes and the great Captivity of *Judah* under the *Assyrians* and *Babylonians*; when by their cleaving more stedfastly to God

<sup>a</sup> This may be gather'd from the case of the Men of *Jericho* in particular who were fully inform'd of the several Miracles work'd in favour of the *Israelites*. *Josh.* 2. 9, 10. and who must have had sufficient warning of God's design therein either from common Fame, or more probably, by express Revelation, for despising of which they are term'd *disobedient* by *St. Peter* 1. 3. 20. comp. *Heb.* 11. 31. See *Shuckford*, V. 3. B. 12. p. 403, &c. And that the same thing might be done afterwards in many other Instances [ as in the following Note ] by their own Prophets, who were sent to the Nations on that very account, is no less probable; as may be seen in the Notes a little below, which gives a farther answer to the *Moral Philosopher's* Objection mention'd p. 96. N. a.

<sup>b</sup> *Jer.* 50. 7. *All that found them have devoured them, and their Adversaries said we offend not because they have sinned against the Lord, the habitation of Justice, even the Lord, the hope of their Fathers. The Lord thy God,* (says

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and refusing to comply with the Idolatrous Worship of the Empire, they were distinguish'd by many extraordinary Interpositions of Providence, and had several Royal Proclamations and public Decrees made in their favour, which bore testimony to the supreme Power, Wisdom and Justice of their God; as in the successive Reigns of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Nabonadius* or *Belshazzar*, and *Darius the Mede*; as also of *Cyrus*, *Cambyses* or *Abasuerus*, *Darius Hystaspis*, *Xerxes*, *Abasuerus* the second, or *Artaxerxes*,<sup>a</sup> many of which Princes found themselves described before in the *Jewish Prophecies*, some of them

*Nebuzar-adon* to *Jeremiah*) hath pronounced this Evil upon this place. Now the Lord hath brought it and done according as he hath said, because ye have sinned against the Lord and have not obeyed his Voice, therefore this thing is come upon you. Jer. 40. 2, 3. Am I now come up without the Lord against this Place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, go up against this Land to destroy it, says *Rab-shakeb*. 2 Kings 18. 25. *Isaiah* 36. 10. and to the same purpose *Pharaoh-Necho* 2 Chron. 35. 21. which seems to be the most probable sense of both these places notwithstanding *Dr. Prideaux's* Objections, V. 1. p. 24, and 54. 8 edit. see *Le Clerc* on 2 Kings 18. 22. and 2. Chron. supra. comp. *Judith* 5. 17, &c.

<sup>a</sup> Dan. 3. 28. 4. 1, 2, &c. 6. 25, &c. 2 Chron. 36. 23. 1 Esdras 1. 27. 2. 3. 8. 8, &c. Ezra. 1. 3. 6. 9. 6. 12. 7. 13. Nehem. 2. 7, &c. Esther. 9. 32. and 10. Conf. *Joseph. contr.* Ap. L. 1. et Ant. L. 11. c. 1. et 5. add *Univerf. Hist.* V. 2. p. 208. Note. M.

very expressly, one by name. After these *Alexander* comes to *Jerusalem*, consults the Prophecies of *Daniel*, and offers Sacrifice to the most High, <sup>b</sup> and many of the *Jews* list in his Troops. <sup>c</sup> After his death *Ptolemy* making himself master of *Judea* carries above a hundred thousand *Jews* into *Egypt*, disperses them through every Province, employs the chief of them in his Army and Garrisons, plants great numbers in *Cyrene* and *Libya*, <sup>d</sup> and gives many more extraordinary Privileges in *Alexandria*. <sup>e</sup> His Son *Philadelphus* procured a Translation of their Law into *Greek*, the then most universal Language, which was, as it were, a new Publication of their Religion, <sup>f</sup> and for which the *Alexandrian Jews* formerly kept a solemn day of rejoicing: <sup>g</sup> (though afterwards it was turn'd into a Fast, when they found what great use

<sup>b</sup> *Josephus*, L. II. c. 8. *Prideaux*, Part I. B. 7. p. 487. *Univerf. Hist.* V. 3. p. 345, &c. though others question it. see *Moyle's Works*, V. 2. Lett. 4, and 6.

<sup>c</sup> *Joseph.* L. II. c. ult.

<sup>d</sup> *Prid.* Part I. B. 8. p. 526. *Joseph.* Ant. L. 12. c. 1.

<sup>e</sup> *Prid.* ib. p. 541, - 2.

<sup>f</sup> When the World having been united under one great Empire was in the best manner prepared to receive it. See *Allix* p. 11. Concerning the ends and uses which this Translation serv'd, see *Allix* Part 2. p. 161. a more accurate account of compiling it may be seen in *Prid.* V. 2. p. 34, &c. 8Ed.

had been made of that Version by the *Christians*.) His Successor *Euergetes* offer'd Sacrifices and gave thanks to the God of *Israel* for all his Victories, having seen the Prophecies of *Daniel* concerning them, and been convinc'd that he owed them only to that God whose Prophet had so fully predicted them.<sup>h</sup> *Ptolemy Philometor* had a Comment on the five Books of *Moses* dedicated to him by his Preceptor,<sup>i</sup> and permitted *Onias* the High Priest to build a Temple in his Kingdom after the Model of that at *Jerusalem*, and to perform the same Worship in it;<sup>k</sup> whereby the Prophecy of *Isaiab* was fulfill'd,\* that *there should be an Altar unto the Lord in the midst of the Land of Egypt*,<sup>l</sup> and by this means his Name became as well known there as in *Judea* itself, that Temple continuing for above three hundred

<sup>g</sup> *Philo vit. Mos. L. 3. comp. Basnage, B. 6. c. 5. S. 11.*

<sup>h</sup> *Prid. Part 2. B. 2. p. 82. Joseph. contr. Ap. L. 2.*

<sup>i</sup> *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. L. 7. c. ult. &c. Prid. Part. 2. B. 1. p. 29. Euseb. Præp. Evang. L. 13. c. 12. Clem. Alex. Strom. L. 1. and 5.*

<sup>k</sup> *Prid. B. 1. p. 264.*

<sup>l</sup> *Is. 19. 19.*

<sup>1</sup> By this Prophecy the *Jews* thought themselves authorized in building a Temple in *Egypt*, though it was a thing otherwise forbidden by their Law. *Allix, p. 163.*

and forty years. \* When at length *Judea* was reduced to a *Roman* Province this People and their Religion became no less known all over that vast Empire. That they were very remarkably preserv'd and prosper'd under it for some time, is particularly noted in its History.<sup>m</sup> We find great Privileges granted them by *Julius Cæsar*,<sup>n</sup> and *Augustus*, *Tiberius*, *Vitellius* all sending Victims to be offer'd at the Temple of *Jerusalem*.<sup>o</sup> And thus did the four great

\* *Jenkin*, V. I. p. 92. *Josephus* says 333 years. *De Bell. Jud.* L. 7. c. 30.

<sup>m</sup> 'They are a sort of men, says *D. Cassius*, who though they have been often diminished, yet have so far encreas'd, that they have been too hard for the power of the *Roman* Laws, and almost arriv'd to the Confidence and Liberty of making Laws for the rest of the World.' So *Dr. Edwards* [Survey p. 561.] renders the following words *και εστι και παρα τοις Ρωμαιοις το γενος τβτο, κολλουθεν μεν πολλακις, αυξηθεν δε επι πλειστον, ωσε και ες παρρησιαν της νομισεως εκνικησαι.* Est id genus hominum (*Judæorum*) apud Romanos etiam: atque tametsi sæpenumero immunitum fuerit, ita tamen auctum est, ut *legum quoque potestatem vicerit.* L. 37. p. 41. D. ed. *H. Steph.* The Historian probably means no more than that they prevail'd so far against the *Romans* as to live by their own Laws, or preserve the free exercise of their Religion, which they did every where [see *Biscoe's Boyle's Lect.* c. 6. S. 6. Not. a. p. 180.] and which was an indulgence not only peculiar to them, but pretty extraordinary in itself, considering their declared opposition to all other Establishments, and general odium which they incurr'd  
some-



ſucceſſive Monarchies ſeverally contribute towards propagating the Knowledge of the true God in the World; thus as the laſt of his Prophets had foretold, † *from the riſing of the ſun even unto the going down of the ſame, was his Name Great among the Gentiles.* ‡ And though the *Jews* were never able at once to convert a whole Nation to their Church, and make it the eſtabliſhed Religion of the Country, yet they gain'd every where numerous *Proſelytes* P

fometimes by their abuſing of their own. ſee p. 109. Not.S.

<sup>n</sup> *Joſeph. contr. Ap. 2. Id. Ant. L. 16. c. 10, &c.*

<sup>o</sup> *Jenkin V. 1. p. 86. Allix. B. 2. c. 25.* The ſame thing had been often done before, particularly by *Antiochus* the great [ *Joſeph. Ant. L. 12. c. 3.* ] and under *Seleucus*, ‘ when (as is obſerv’d by the Authors of *Univ. Hiſt. V. 4. p. 45.*) the *Jews* were in ſuch high eſteem that Sovereign Princes courted their friendſhip, and made magnificent Preſents to the Temple; and *Seleucus* furniſh’d out of his own Treafury all the expences of it.’ *2 Macc. 3. 3.* — So far were they from being always that little inconſiderable Nation which ſome repreſent. See *Dr. Waterland’s* firſt Charge, p. 28.

† *Mal. 1. 11.*

‡ *Comp. If. 45. 6.*

<sup>p</sup> Of this number in all probability were *Jethro* and his Family among the *Midianites*. [ *Ex 18. 11.* ] *Naaman* and his Servants among the *Syrians* [ *2 Kings 5. 17.* ] *Araunab* the *Jebusite* [ *2 Sam. 24. 23.* ] *Hiram* King of *Tyre* [ *1 Kings 5. 7. 2 Chron. 2. 12.* ] the Queen of *Sheba*, *Egypt* and *Ethiopia* [ *1 Kings. 10. 9. Joſeph. Ant. 8. 2. Univ. Hiſt. p. 801-2. Note S.* ] In *Solomon’s* time there were found  
above

to their Law and many more to the belief of One supreme God, ( which was as much as was then required <sup>a</sup> ) and thereby prepared the minds of men for a more perfect Dispensation: <sup>r</sup> and might have done this with a great deal better success, had they acted more conformably to the genius of their own Institution, and not treated all others with so much pride and ill nature as often render'd themselves odious and contemptible to them, especially in the latter Ages of their Government. <sup>s</sup> Though this perhaps was in some measure a natural consequence of that seemingly *unsociable* spirit so necessary in them to prevent an entire intercommunion with the Idolatrous Religions round them; and

above an hundred and fifty three thousand Strangers or Profelytes in the Land [ *2 Chron.* 2. 17. ] without reckoning Women and Children, [ *ib.* v. 18. ] and in other Lands very probably might there be as many, by the miraculous conversion of *Nebuchadnezzar* [ *Dan.* 3. 28, 29, 4. 34, &c. ] and the other Princes abovemention'd. [ *Esther* 8. 17. ] to which we may add *Josephus's* remarkable account of the *Adiabedian* Queen and her Son [ *Ant.* 26. 2. ] In our Saviour's time we read of devout men, or *Profelytes*, of every nation under Heaven. [ *Acts* 2. 5. ] Besides the Eunuch of *Ethiopia*, there were *Parthians* and *Medes* and *Elamites* ( or *Persians* ) and dwellers in *Mesopotamia*, *Cap-padocia*, *Pontus* and *Asia*, *Phrygia* and *Pamphylia*, *Egypt* and *Libya*; *Cretes* and *Arabians* and Strangers of *Rom.* [ *ib.* 9. 10, 11. ] see *Jenkin* V. I. p. 93. or *Lardner's* *Credib.* of *G. Hist.* B. I. c. 3. S. 5.

might

might be greatly aggravated by others on their at length persisting in a settled aversion to those Rites which they had suffer'd so much for conforming to. Besides, the Jewish Prophets were often dispatch'd to Foreign Countries to acquaint them with the Counsels of the Most High, and to make them *know the Lord.* <sup>t</sup> *Jeremiab* was ordain'd a Prophet unto the Nations, <sup>u</sup> who together with *Isaiab* and *Ezekiel* prophesied to most of them. *Daniel* particularly describes the fate of the Four Monarchies, as was observ'd above. *Amos* proclaims the Judgements of God on *Syria*, *Tyre*, *Edom*, *Moab* and *Ammon*. *Obadiab* is sent to the *Idumeans*; *Jonab* to the People of *Niniveb*, the Metropolis

<sup>q</sup> See Dr. *Waterland's* first Charge, p. 54.

<sup>r</sup> ' It does not appear that any of the most refined  
 ' Philosophers, those men of admired knowledge and  
 ' genius, ever converted so much as a single Person or  
 ' Village from their Idolatrous Superstitions; on the con-  
 ' trary, they all meanly submitted and conformed to the  
 ' Idolatry established in their respective Countries, and  
 ' exhorted others to do so too. Whereas the *Jews* were  
 ' instrumental to turn many from Idolatry and to spread  
 ' the knowledge of the true God far and wide, in many  
 ' parts of the *Roman Empire*, *Babylonia*, *Persia*, &c.  
*Leland's* answ. to the *Moral Philosopher*, p. 57.

<sup>s</sup> V. *Juvenal*. S. 14. l. 100 - 103 - 4. *Tac. Hist.* 5. 5.

<sup>t</sup> *Ezek.* 25. 7. 17, &c. passim.

<sup>u</sup> 1. 5. comp. c. 27. and 1 *Esdras* 1. 28. 47.

of the *Assyrians*, who straightway believe and repent at his preaching; which shews (as is observ'd by a learned writer <sup>x</sup>) that God was kind to them as well as to the *Jews*, and that they had his Will in some measure discover'd to them before; otherwise they would not have been so capable of understanding the Divine Message when it came to them, and of behaving themselves suitably to it. <sup>y</sup> In like manner *Nabum* describes the final Destruction of *Niniveh*, and *Zephaniab* proclaims the Divine vengeance on the neighbouring Countries of the *Philistines*, of *Moab*, and *Ammon*, as well as *Ethiopia* and *Assyria*. <sup>z</sup> And accordingly their Prophets are occasionally sought and honour'd by many of the greatest Princes, who were thereby induced to acknowledge, fear and reverence the God of Heaven, though they did not entirely conform to his Will. Thus *Elisha* is applied to by the Kings of *Syria*, \* *Jeremiah* protected by

<sup>z</sup> *Edwards's survey*, &c. p. 296.

<sup>y</sup> *V. Buddei Parerg.* p. 426.

<sup>z</sup> ' One needs only read their Books to see that the  
' Prophets not only foretold obscure matters, or what  
' particularly concern'd their State; but also things of a  
' more splendid Nature; the Overthrow of Cities, of  
' Kingdoms; the Destruction of whole Nations, the de-  
' struction of their own City, with its reestablishment.

\* *2 Kings* c. 5. and 8.

the King of *Babylon*, † *Daniel* honour'd and advanced by the successive Rulers of the *Chaldeans*, *Medes* and *Persians*, as observ'd above.

And thus did this famous People every way serve to propagate the Knowledge and Fear of the One true God in almost every Nation, either by their Prosperity or Adversity, their Conquests or Captivitys,<sup>a</sup> their Separation from the rest of the Nations, or their Dispersion among them; both by the Laws that were given them, and by the Prophets which at various times were rais'd up in the midst of them, proclaiming the Power and Justice of the Universal Governour of the World, and foretelling his disposal both of them, and the neighbouring States, together with the reasons of it.\* Thus were Mankind far from being rejected by their Maker during this state of *Nonage*, though he had his peculiar residence among the *Jews*, and was their visible Guardian and

‘ Matters which would render their Books very illustrious, and which would cause them to be read, not only by the *Jews*, but also by the neighbour Nations, the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Assyrians*, *Persians*, *Egyptians*’ &c. *Allix Reflex. B. 2. p. 41.*

† *Jer. 39. 11. 40. 1.*

<sup>a</sup> *Victi victoribus leges dederunt*, says *Seneca* of this People. *Aug. de Civ. D. L. 6. c. 11.*

\* See the Texts in p. 103. Note 2.

Director. The exprefs Terms of his Covenant indeed belong'd to them ( which as it confifted in temporal things he was often obliged to interpoſe in order to make good the Performance of it, <sup>b</sup> and which on that very account could not be a more perfect one ; <sup>c</sup> the real Benefits thereof, the Heavenly *Canaan*, of which the firſt may be conceiv'd as only a Shadow, extended to *the People of every Nation that feared God and worked Righteouſneſs*; and he might fix his reſidence in *Jewry*, as being

<sup>b</sup> See *Bp. Sherlock* Diſc. 5. p. 150.

<sup>c</sup> *V. Crellii* Orat. 2. Quare nec *Mofes* nec Philoſophi perfectam virtutem preſcribere potuerint. ‘ Perfectionem  
 ‘ ſanctitatis ideo Populo *Hebræo* preſcribere et ad illam  
 ‘ ſequendam eundem acrioribus ſtimulis incitare *Mofes*  
 ‘ Dei nomine non potuit, quod felicitatem ac mercedem,  
 ‘ ob quas Pietas colenda eſſet, terrenæ Reipublicæ otio,  
 ‘ et eorum tantum bonorum affluentia terminaret, quæ  
 ‘ ad corporis paſtum ſpectant, quorumque uſus hujus vitæ  
 ‘ circumſcribitur cancellis, ita requirente iſtius Populi  
 ‘ infantia: quin etiam illam Rempublicam in qua pietatis  
 ‘ ſuæ fructum Gens *Iſraelitica* deberet capere, armis et  
 ‘ parare et tueri juberet. Unde ſi totam præceptorum  
 ‘ *Mofaicorum* rationem ad iſta tempora accommodatam  
 ‘ conſideres, animadvertes eam iſti pietatis præmio ap-  
 ‘ prime fuiſſe conſentaneam.’ &c. *Crell.* Eth. Chriſt.  
 p. 443, &c. Op. Tom. 4. ‘ As they were to continue  
 ‘ ſeparate from others for the preſervation of the true  
 ‘ Religion, they ſtood in need of Temporal Promiſes  
 ‘ that they might have no Temptation for Temporal  
 ‘ Gain

the midst of the Nations, <sup>d</sup> in order to dispense the rays of his Light more equally and advantageously among them, to whom his chosen People probably were design'd to bear a due proportion, as some understand these words of *Deuter. 32. 8.* *He set the bounds of the People according to the number of the People of Israel.* <sup>a</sup> We are apt to conceive the Deity as partial in his favours to this People, and at the same time think that they deserv'd them the least of all People, both which Notions perhaps are en-

‘ Gain to fall away into the Gentile Superstitions. For  
 ‘ since the Heathen ow'd all their Worldly Successes to  
 ‘ the Worship of their Idols and false Gods, there was  
 ‘ a necessity, in proportion, that the God of *Israel* should  
 ‘ shew himself as gracious to his Votaries, as the false  
 ‘ Gods were supposed to be to theirs; and therefore it's  
 ‘ so far from being a Derogation to this Law that it  
 ‘ abounds so much with the promises of Temporal Bless-  
 ‘ ings, that it is a particular Instance of the Wisdom of  
 ‘ it; such Promises being not only most likely to work  
 ‘ upon that stupid lowminded People, but suited also to  
 ‘ their particular Circumstances and Occasions, as they  
 ‘ were to be kept separate from other Nations.’ Dr. *T. Burnett.* *Boyle's Lect.* p. 543. Fol.

<sup>a</sup> *Ezeck. 5. 5. 38. 5.* vid. *Reland Palæst.* L. I. c. 10. and the *Life of David* Vol. 2. p. 92.

<sup>a</sup> See *Jenkin* V. I. p. 49. That the *Jews* were spread over all the World about *Christ's* time, as it is said *Acts* 2. 5. vid. *Joseph.* B. I. c. 16. *Philo.* Legat. ad Caj. id. in *Flacc.* *Lardner's* Credib. B. I. c. 3. or *Basnage's* Hist. B. 6.

tirely groundless. Their favours, we have seen, were rather favours to the whole World, and they only Instruments in the hand of God to hold forth this Light to all around them, whereof other Nations were sure to reap the benefit in due time, whether they themselves stood faithful to their trust, or fell for violating it.<sup>b</sup> Nor perhaps were they worse than any other Nation would have been in the like Circumstances. The *Canaanites*, we know, behaved worse under all their early advantages and repeated means of improvement, as observ'd above ; \* nor could their Descendents the *Carthaginians* deserve any better Character : nor did the more polite and learned Nations *Greek* and *Roman* afterwards advance above the same gross errors in religious worship. <sup>c</sup> Nay whether the *Hebrews* were not in some respects more particularly fit to have the *Oracles of God* committed to them has been queried by such as observe their former exactness in settling their History, in distinguishing their Genealogies and preserving all their Records ; their great tenaciousness of Ancient Rites and Customs ; and their extraor-

<sup>b</sup> See *Welfted* p. 77.

\* p. 107.

<sup>c</sup> See this Observation explain'd in *Floury's Manners of the Israelites* c. 21.



dinary Zeal in making Profelytes.<sup>d</sup> And though we may allow them to have been in general extreamly stupid and perverse, yet if we look over their History with any tolerable degree of Candour, we must be convinc'd that they were very different from the account given of them by some unfair modern Writers.<sup>e</sup> But the more weak and sottish this People were of themselves, the better was God's great end answer'd in distinguishing himself and his Revelations by them; the less they did or could do in their own defence, the more illustrious was that very extraordinary Providence which protected them, as is observ'd by an able Writer.<sup>f</sup> And the less capable they were of inventing the great things contained in their Books, the more apparently did these point out another Author, and prove more incontestibly that they had such communicated to them from above.<sup>g</sup> However, they were in the hands of God, a certain means of bringing men by

<sup>d</sup> *Jenkin* V. 1. p. 91. 93. *I. A. Danzii Cura Hebræorum in conquirendis Profelytis.*

<sup>e</sup> See the *Moral Philosopher* p. 255, &c. V. 1. with *Leland's Answer*. V. 1. p. 207. and *Werthington's Essay* p. 105, 106.

<sup>f</sup> *Div. Leg. B. 5. S. 2. p. 362.*

<sup>g</sup> See *Mr. Seed's Discourses* V. 2. Sermon. 7. p. 204.

degrees to the knowledge of the Truth. They were his *Witnesses*, as He himself terms them,\* *that he was God*. The first production and original state of Mankind, the History of the World and its Government manifested by frequent Interpositions and express Predictions of the most remarkable Events, was necessary to be known and well remember'd: Memoirs of this therefore were to be kept somewhere, and in such a manner as to be of use to all Ages. And this the *Jews* effected, being dispers'd among all Nations, and yet still kept a distinct People; by which means these great Truths were both preserved pure and propagated to most parts of the World. Their Law was a *Schoolmaster* † to teach them the rudiments of Religion who were to instruct and improve others; it was added to the Promise, or to the Religion of the *Patriarchs*,<sup>a</sup> *because of Transgressions*, ‡ to convict them of Guilt and convince them of the necessity of laying hold on those Terms of Grace which were to be offer'd in due time. Their whole Institution was a State of Discipline and *Bondage under the Elements of this World*, || a sort of servile con-

\* *Isaiab* 43. 10. 12. † *Gal.* 3. 24.

<sup>a</sup> *Div. Leg.* B. 5. S. 1. p. 361.

‡ *ib.* 3. 9. || *ib.* 4. 3.

finement and Tutelary regimen, conducting them by present, temporal rewards and earthly prospects; affording only a dark, distant intimation of better things, and introducing these in figurative representations, by Sacrifices, Types and Emblems; till they as well as the rest of the World were got out of their *Minority*, able to walk by a more Perfect Rule, and fit to enter on and make a proper use of their *Inheritance*; till the *Fulness of the Time* was come: which is the next great Period we are to consider.

From the foregoing account it appears that God made such ample provision for the instruction of Mankind by the various Dispensations of his Providence and Revelations of his Will at sundry times and in divers manners, that the mission of his Son was not wanted for some time; neither would his coming have been so seasonable or so fitting till after those other methods had been tried. It was proper that the *Householder* should first send his several Servants to see after the state of his *Vineyard*, and reap the fruits of his early care and Culture in their seasons: \* that lower Institutions should precede and pave the way for this last and highest of all.

\* *Matth.* 21. 33. *Jer.* 7. 25.

The *Patriarchs* had standing memorials of God's presence and protection, as well as frequent and familiar Converse with him, assuring them of his Favour and thereby inviting and alluring them to his Service: The *Law* was given to his peculiar People by *Angels*,\* in all the appearances of pomp and terror, to astonish and awe them into obedience; the *Prophets* were sent to denounce variety of Judgements against their Disobedience; to threaten them with the severest Plagues on their Apostacy, as well as to promise them proportionable Blessings upon their return to their Duty; and by both means to prepare them for, and gradually open to them the prospect of that great, universal Blessing, the end and Completion of all his Promises, — MESSIAH; in whom were laid up *the sure mercies of David*; mercies of a much higher nature than any of those which they were then expecting; who should procure for them a far more noble and extensive Kingdom than they had ever dreamt of, should make them brethren and fellow-citizens with all the world here, and fellow-heirs to a more valuable Inheritance in the

\* *Acts* 7. 53. *Gal.* 3. 19. *Heb.* 2. 2.

World to come.<sup>a</sup> Who notwithstanding their blindness and perverseness and many Transgressions, should certainly deliver them from all their Adversities, and finally restore them and all Mankind to the favour and full Enjoyment of their God.

The Doctrines he taught contain a System of the most agreeable and important Truths (though not deliver'd in any Systematic,<sup>b</sup> artful method, or adapted in any respect to vicious Palates) giving us the most worthy, amiable notions of the Deity, and affording the

<sup>a</sup> During these Circumstances — God was pleas'd that  
 ' a Lawgiver should be born among the *Jews* of another  
 ' nature than he whom they expected, and infinitely more  
 ' useful to them. Instead of a temporal King who might  
 ' have increas'd their Power and Renown, but would not  
 ' have lessen'd their Ignorance nor their Vices, God sent  
 ' them a King worthy of Him, who taught them how  
 ' they ought to live here to be eternally happy after this  
 ' Life: and shew'd them that instead of being members  
 ' of a little Common-wealth and enemies to the rest of  
 ' Mankind, they ought to look upon the whole World  
 ' as their native Country, and all men as their fellow-  
 ' citizens: a Thought worthy of those who already pro-  
 ' fess'd to believe that all men are equally the Work of  
 ' God.' *Le Clerc* on the Causes of Incredulity, p. 267.

<sup>b</sup> That there is less ground to suspect them of Imposture on this account, and that they are thereby of much greater use, See *Leland's Answer to Christianity as old, &c.* V. 2. p. 166, &c. and p. 245, 246.

strongest Motives to love and obey him, the greatest incitement to resemble our Blessed Saviour himself in Goodness, Holiness, and every Virtue of the Heavenly Life.

The Benefits he conferr'd were the rescuing us from the power, and redeeming us from the penalty of Sin ; repairing the breach made in our Nature by the first *Adam*, and restoring to us the lost Communion with our Maker ; not indeed in the same open, visible manner as at first, which is neither necessary for, nor suitable to these Ages of the World ; but by the more secret, silent influences of his Holy *Spirit*, which are equally efficacious <sup>a</sup> if duly attended to and improved ; enabling us to attain unto all that Perfection which he requires or we are capable of in the present state, and thereby entitling us to some higher Degree of Happiness and Glory in another. By his own Blood he cancels the original *Covenant*, <sup>b</sup> and purchases a new one full of Grace and Mercy ; freeing us from the whole of *Adam's* Curse, *viz.* *Death*, or utter *Extinction* ; <sup>c</sup> and finally assuring us of a complete Victory over both that and

<sup>a</sup> See *Wollaston*, p. 106. or *A.Bp. King*, p. 425. 3Ed.

<sup>b</sup> In what sense *Covenants* are understood was hinted above, p. 29. Not. <sup>d</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> See Not. <sup>c</sup> p. 29.

*Hell*\* by the Gift of *eternal Life* and Happiness. This is the true import of the Christian Institution, and in this sense it must appear to be indeed a *Gospel*, or *good Tidings of great joy to ALL People*:<sup>d</sup> which therefore ought to be reserv'd till Mankind were able to comprehend and duly resent so great a Blessing; till they were fit to make the proper use of such a Scheme of infinite Goodness and Philanthropy. As nothing greater could come after this, and this was to be offered but once for all (otherwise, as the Apostle says, † *Christ must often have suffered since the foundation of the World*, often in every Country, and as often in vain, his offers of Salvation by their cheapness slighted, his Sufferings disregarded) as no farther manifestation, I say, of God's Will could be made to Man either in terms more full and express, or in a way more kind and condescending; it was fit that all suitable provisions should be made for the reception and continuance of it in the World, all proper preparations us'd to fix and ascertain its Evidence, as well as to explain its Worth, and make men sensible of its

\* *Rev.* 20. 14.

<sup>d</sup> In what respects Christianity exceeded all former Institutions may be seen at large in *Edwards's Survey*, p. 313,-323. The effects which it will some time *certainly* produce

are

† *Hcb.* 9. 26.

true Use and Neceſſity. To this purpoſe the *Jews* were to be train'd up to the expectation of it by a ſeries of Prophecies foretelling the Time, Place and every Circumſtance of the *Meſſiah's* Advent, and deſcribing the Nature of his Kingdom: their Law was to continue till it had effectually guarded them from all kinds of Idolatry and ſecured their dependence on the one ſupreme God; till they had attain'd to ſuch rational notions of his Nature and Providence as qualify'd them for a more pure and perfect way of worſhipping him, and enabled them to communicate it to the reſt of the World. The *Gentiles* were to have ſufficient experience both of the Weakneſs of their

are well deſcribed by Mr. *Worthington* in his *Effay on Man's Redemption*, c. 11. &c. who ſuppoſes that they will be attainable even *in this Life* and has taken a great deal of pains to prove it. The ſubſtance of his Scheme is thus laid down, p. 253. — ‘ My perſwaſion is, that our Redemption by Chriſt will, when it hath its perfect Work, be productive of all thoſe great and happy effects—  
 ‘ That the Human Nature ſhall, before the end of the  
 ‘ Goſpel Age and conſummation of all things be deliver'd  
 ‘ from Sin, Sorrow and Sickneſs, and all the other Miſeries  
 ‘ and Evils of this Life, proceeding from the Fall of our  
 ‘ firſt Parents, and in the end from Death itſelf; without  
 ‘ taſting of which it ſhall be tranſlated from an earthly  
 ‘ Paradise, which it ſhall once more enjoy, to an Hea-  
 ‘ venly one, which it ſhall enjoy for ever. And moreover  
 ‘ that



Understanding in searching after God, and the infirmity of their Nature in not acting up to what they might and did discover; sufficient to make them wish and hope for some Heavenly Guide (to inform them how they came into their present state of Ignorance and Imperfection, and how and when they should be able to get out of it,) which in fact the wisest of them did, as particularly appears from two remarkable Instances in *Socrates's* Discourse upon *Prayer* and *Sacrifice*,<sup>e</sup> and in *Aristotle's* declaration just before his Death [if the account of it be genuine] concerning the reasonableness of believing that the Gods should come down from Heaven to instruct and relieve Mankind.<sup>f</sup>

‘ that all the Disorders of Nature in general shall be rectified, and that there shall be a Redemption of the whole Creation to its first State, as well as of Man, the Lord of it.’ How far this differs from the Hypothesis of *Burnet*, or *Asgil's Argument*, may be seen in the same place.

<sup>e</sup> See *Plato's* second *Alcibiades* near the end. More passages to the same purpose are collected by *Dr. Clarke*, *Evidences*. Prop. 7. and *Dr. Young* *Dissert.* V. 1.

<sup>f</sup> *Auctor de Pomo* [de quo v. *Fabric.* *Bibl. Gr.* Tom.2. L.3. p.166.] *Cæli. Rhod. Ant.* L.17.36. [see *Bayle's Dict.* Art. *Aristotle*, Note Q.] *Stanley Vit. Philos.* concerning the Tradition of his having convers'd with a *Jew*, see *Gen. Dict.* V. 2. p.267.

Thus

Thus was the Conscioufness of their Defects requisite in the Heathens to prepare them for, and dispose them to embrace a Remedy when it should be offer'd; and the *Jewish* Oeconomy was equally requisite to fit *them* for administering this Remedy; the one made its value better understood, the other render'd its Evidence more incontestable throughout all Ages. No stronger Testimony than that of Prophecy could be given to confirm its truth, nor any greater Token of its Usefulness than that which appear'd in the miserable State of the Heathen World without it; both highly contributed to procure *Christianity* its due regard and esteem in the World; but neither of them could have taken place had it been from the beginning, as the Objection \* supposes. We see then in general that some time must have preceded the Publication of the Gospel; and we ought to consider that if it were delay'd a while longer than we can particularly account for, yet as much as that Period may seem to have lost, so much we of these latter Ages manifestly get by the delay; 'tis so much nearer to us, and thereby its Light and Evidence more clear at present, its Heat and Influence proportionably stronger;

\* p. 25.

all which we have occasion enough for already : and well is it for us that it came so late, if all its Evidence decrease so fast by length of time, as these very same Objectors would insinuate.<sup>a</sup> And how do we know but that it might be deliver'd about the middle Age of the World, and by that means be nearest to the several Generations, and the most just proportion kept between the length of time during which *Christ's* future Advent was to be foretold and expected, and that in which his past appearance is to be acknowledg'd and commemorated? We are hasty and short-sighted, our views limited to a few years and we become impatient at seeing any of them pass over before the whole Plot is unravel'd, and would have all brought on the Stage at once : but it is far otherwise with the great God, to whom a thousand years are as one day ; who has an immensely large progressive Scheme consisting of many underparts and intermediate steps, all placed in their proper Periods, and each rising upon the past, and the whole conducted in that regular, gentle manner which is best suited to the moral Government of a World of intelligent free

<sup>a</sup> *Christianity as old*, c. 12. p. 163, 8<sup>vo</sup>. from *Craig*. of which see *Dr. Rotheram's Dissertation*. *Edinb.* 1743.

Agents, and most becoming a Being of infinite Wisdom and Goodness.

But to be more particular. The Period in which our Saviour came into the world may be conceiv'd to be the *Fullness of Time* and fittest for such a Dispensation on the following accounts. First, as it appear'd to want it most: Secondly, as it was the most able to receive and propagate it: and Thirdly, as it was the best qualify'd to examine its Evidence, confirm its Truth, and convey it down to future Ages.

First, it wanted it most, and that in regard to both its *Morals* and *Religion*: 1. That Age stood in the greatest need of a Reformation in its *Morals*, as it appears to have been the most wicked and abandon'd of any upon record. As to the *Jews*, we are told that both their Magistracy and Ministry were then corrupted to the last degree, their Laws against the worst of Villains never executed\* their most sacred Offices, not excepting that of the High Priesthood, set to sale, the Temple turn'd into a place of Merchandise, their Priests made of the lowest of the People, and devoted wholly to Interest and the lowest kinds of Traffick; the

\* The low State of their Sanhedrim about that time, may be seen at large in *Lightfoot* Op. Lat. V. 2. p. 370, 671, &c.

whole Nation split into Sects and Factions, hating and persecuting and devouring one another. <sup>a</sup>

In short, the account which their own Historian gives of them not long after this time will be sufficient to determine the point before us, who concludes it with this Declaration; That if the *Romans* had delay'd taking vengeance on them, he believes their City must either have been swallow'd up by an Earthquake or Deluge, or destroy'd by Fire from Heaven, as *Sodom* was, since it produced a much more impious Generation. <sup>b</sup> — But this remarkable Wickedness of the *Jews* will be consider'd in another respect hereafter. — Nor were the *Gentiles* less corrupt, or even capable of ever being more so; nor does it seem possible to conceive Human Nature to be sunk lower in all kinds of Vice and Sensuality, than they were at that time (notwithstanding all

<sup>a</sup> See *Lightfoot*, Op. Lat. V. 2. p. 148. 272, &c. *Edwards's* Survey, V. 1. p. 389, &c. *Lardner's* Credibility of the G. Hist. B. 1. c. 5. *Benson's* Hist. of planting the *Christian Rel.* V. 2. p. 234, &c. *Le Clerc.* Proleg. ad Hist. Eccl. Sect. 1. 2. *Basnage* B. 1. c. 5, &c. *Whitby's* Necessity, &c. of the *Christian Rev.* c. 2. Nor is this at all surprizing, since the reigning Party among them were at that time *Sadducees.* *Joseph.* Ant. 18. 2. add *Wall's* Note on *Acts* 5. 17.

<sup>b</sup> *Josephus*, B. I. L. 16. c. 16.

their

their Improvements in other respects) as may sufficiently appear from the Description given of them by *St. Paul* \* whose witness is true, and most abundantly confirm'd by their own Writers. <sup>a</sup>

But Secondly. The World at that time more especially wanted a Reformation in Religion, and was grown weary of all former Institutions. The *Jewish* Law had fully answer'd its

\* *Rom.* I. 21. &c.

<sup>a</sup> Some account of them may be seen in *Millar's* Hist. of the Propag. c. 5. p. 54, &c. and the Bp. of *London's* 2 Past. Lett. 4, 5, &c. or *Buddei* Eccl. Apost. c. 1. §. 3. ' *Ecce Romana* Respublica, quod non ego primus dico, ' sed auctores eorum unde hæc mercede didicimus tanto ' ante dixerunt, ante Christi adventum, paulatim mutata, ' et ex pulcherrima atque optima, pessima atque flagitiosissima facta est. Ecce ante Christi adventum post delectam *Carthaginem*, majorum mores non paulatim ut ' antea, sed torrentis modo præcipitati; adeo juvenus ' luxu atque avaritia corrupta est.' *Augustin.* de C. D. L. 2. c. 19. et Id. ib. c. 21. Conf. *Sallust.* B. C. *Patere.* L. 2. c. 1. *Senec. Ep.* 7. et de *Ira*, L. 2. c. 8, &c. cum *Sueton. Tacit. Petr. Arb.* passim. ' Si Ethnicorum mores ' paulo ante *Christum* et paulo post intueamur, quæ fuit ' doctissima ætas, pessimos et sceleratissimos fuisse comperiemus, ut docent qui eorum temporum historiam conscripserunt. *Bella Civilia* temporibus *Marii*, et *Sullæ*, ' status Reipub. *Rom.* perturbatissimus, qui proxime sequentus est: *bella iterum Civilia Cæs.* et *Pomp.* tum ' etiam *Triumvir.* Principatus ipse *Aug.* et multo magis ' *Tib.*

end, and almost ceased of itself ; the Ceremonial part of their Oeconomy began rather to be a Yoke of Servitude and an unnecessary Burden to them ; the Moral was in a great measure lost in their loose Casuistry and vacated by their Traditions. <sup>b</sup> The sense of the Prophetic Writings had been darkened and debased by their corrupt Glosses, and the Key of true Knowledge at that time taken away by those very Persons

‘ *Tib. Calig. Ncr. et Dom. ne ulterius pergam, cloacæ*  
 ‘ *fuerunt flagitiorum et scelerum apud Romanos, qui tamen*  
 ‘ *Græcos passim quasi se deteriores describunt. Sall. Cic:*  
 ‘ *Sen. Tac. Suet. aliique cum nobis hodie leguntur, etiam-*  
 ‘ *num indignationem in improbos illius ævi homines nobis*  
 ‘ *movent : ne proferam Pers. et Juven. Poetas Satiricos,*  
 ‘ *qui forte modum excessisse, in castigandis moribus sui*  
 ‘ *ævi possent. Itaque pravæ religionis effectus sistere*  
 ‘ *non potuit Philosophia, et paucorum contra torrentem*  
 ‘ *nitentium conatus irriti fuere.’ Cleric. Proleg. Eccl. Hist.*  
 S. 2. c. 1. 20. add *Whitby’s Necessity of the Christian*  
*Rev. c. 8.*

<sup>b</sup> Eorum tum Religio, quantumvis Scripturas regulam suam pronunciarent, Traditionibus omnis generis præcipuè nitebatur ; quas non tantum Scripturis præferebant, sed iisdem omnem Scripturis Authoritatem derogabant. *Marc. 7. 7. - 9. Tenuerunt Dominum cum illis contraxisse fædus juxta legem Traditionis. Baal Turim in Gen. 1. 3. Tenebant Scriptam Legem deficere comparatam Legi non scriptæ. Tanch. Fol. Legemque scriptam ob mercedem doceri posse, non item non scriptam. Maim. in Thalm. Torah. Perck. 1. Lightfoot Op. Lat. V. 1. p. 517. Vide plura Testimonia ibid. V. 2. p. 31.*

that should have open'd the Scriptures and imparted it to them. Philosophy had shewn its utmost force in the great Masters of *Athens* and *Rome*, and was able to afford just Light enough to discover its own Errors and Defects, and to refer them to a better Guide, as we have seen above. Its Votaries having been long tossed to and fro among the variety of Systems which human Wit had invented, were at last left in absolute Uncertainty, unable to decide amongst them, and influenc'd by nothing more than some dark Hints of ancient Tradition, <sup>c</sup> and

<sup>c</sup> This appears to have always been the case in most of the best things which they deliver on the most important Subjects, as may be easily discern'd by the abrupt manner in which they commonly retail such Sentiments, by their seldom reasoning on them long consistently, (I speak of their Writers in general) or being able to pursue their natural Consequences; from whence methinks any indifferent Person wou'd conclude that they had never traced such out by their own Reason, nor were the original Discoverers of them; at least I could not help concluding so from hence; as well as from their frequent citing of *Tradition* and some *sacred Records* for them, and appealing to what they have *heard* upon such Subjects. I might have set down numberless expressions that confirm the observation, though I do'nt doubt but the same thing has been observ'd by many others: However I shall point out some remarkable Passages from *Plato* to this purpose.

*Philebus.* Οἱ μὲν παλαιοὶ κρείττους ἡμῶν καὶ ἐγγυτέρω

ἴστω



and that became one of its most flourishing Sects which professed to doubt of every thing : and accordingly we find the great Ornament of this Sect *Cicero* declaring on some of the most important Points that it was impossible to determine on which side lay (not the Certainty, for that they did not pretend to discover, but)

Ἰσθον οἰκνντες ταυτην φημην παρεδωσαν. Id. Ep. 7. Πειθεσθαι δε ἔτως αἰει χρη παλαιοις τε και ἱεροῖς λόγοις, οἱ δε μνηνουσιν ημιν αθανατου ψυχην εἶναι, δικαστας τε ἰσχειν, και τινειν τας μεγαίστας τεμωρίας, οταν τις απαλλαχθῆ τῷ σώματος. *Gorgias*. Ταυτ' εἰσιν ὡ Καλλικλεις, α εγω ακηκως πιστευω αληθη εἶναι, και εκ τουτων των λογων τοιουδε λογιζομαι συμβαινειν. Ο θανατῶ κ.τ.λ. *Phaedo*. Παλαιῶ μὲν εν εἰσι τις ο λογῶ αυτῶ ε μεμνημεθα, ως εἰσιν ευθενδε αφικομεναι [αι ψυχαι] και παλιυ γε δευρο αφικνννται, και γιγνννται εκ των τεθνεωτων. Id. ib. Αδε και λεγεται μεγαίστα ωφελειν η βλαπτειν του τελευτησσαντα ευθως εν αρχη της εκεισε πορειας. λεγεται δε ἔτως, ως αρα τελευτησσαντα εκαστον ο εκαστῶ δαιμων οσπερ ζωυτα εἰληχει ἔτῶ αγειν επιχειρει εἰς δη τινα τοπων, οἱ δει τῶ συλλεγνντας διαδικασαμενῶ εἰς αδε πορευεσθαι κ.τ.λ. ib. Πολλοι δε εἰσι και θαυμαστοι της γης τοποι, και αυτη ἔτε οια, ἔτε οση υπο των περι γης εἰωθωτων λεγειν, ως εγω υπο τινος πεπυσμαι. Και ο Σιμμιας, πως ταυτα, εφη, λεγεις ὡ Σωκρατες ; περι γαρ τοι της γης και αυτος πολλα δη ακηκα. κ.τ.λ. *Apol. Socr.* Εἰ δε αυ οἶον αποδημησαι εἰσιν ο θανατῶ ευθενδε εἰς αλλον τοπον, και αληθη εἰσι τα λεγομενα κ.τ.λ. ib. Τατε γαρ αλλα ευδαιμονεστεροι εἰσιν οἱ εκει των ευθαδε και ηδη του λοιπον χρονου αθανατοι εἰσι, εἰπερ γε τα λεγομενα αληθη εἰσιν. *Phaedrus*. Τῆτε τοι ενεκα χρη, παντας τῶ λογῶ ανω και κατω μελαστρεφουλα, επισκοπειν εἰ τις πῆ ραων και βραχυτερα φαινεται επ'

even the greatest Probability, <sup>a</sup> and concluding that in all such Cases 'tis much easier for him

αὐτὴν οὐδ' ἔστιν ἵνα μὴ μάτην πολλὴν ἀπίη καὶ τραχείαν, ἔξου ὀλίγην τε καὶ λειαν. Ἀλλὰ εἰ τίνα πῶς βῆθειαν ἔχεις, ἐπακῆκως Ἄυσια ἢ τίνος ἀλλὰ πείρω λέγειν ἀναμιμνησκο-  
μεν. ἰβ. Ἀκοῦν γ' ἔχω λέγειν τῶν πρότερον. τοδ' ἀληθες αὐτοὶ ἴσασι. Id. in *Τιμῶ*. Ἐγὼ φράσω, παλαιοῦ ἀκῆκως λόγον, οὐ νεκ ἀνδρ'. Id. de Rep. 10 fin. Καὶ ἔτος, ὦ Γλαυκῶν, μυθοῖς ἐσῶθη, καὶ ἐκ ἀπώλετο. Καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀν σώσειεν, ἀν πειθώμεθα αὐτῶ.

<sup>a</sup> Harum sententiarum quæ vera sit Deus aliquis viderit; quæ verisimillima magna quæstio est *Tusc. Q. L. I. S. II. V. Cleric. Proleg. ad Hist. Eccl. S. 2. c. 6. de Academicis.*

<sup>b</sup> *De Nat. Deor. L. I. c. 32.* Utinam tam facile Vera invenire possem quam falsa convincere. Id. ap. *Lact. L. 2: c. 3.* Notwithstanding all the fine things which he had said about the *Immortality of the Soul*, in which point he seems to the most sanguine and positive of any, yet in his *Epistles* (where he is the most likely to speak his real thoughts) we find him oft giving it all up and having recourse only to the miserable Comfort of *Insensibility*. L. 5. Ep. ult. Ut hoc saltem in maximis malis boni consequamur ut *Mortem*, quam etiam beati contemnere debeamus, propterea quod *nullum sensum esset habitura*, nunc sic affecti, non modo contemnere debeamus, sed etiam optare. L. 6. Ep. 3. Sed hæc consolatio levis est, illa gravior, qua te, uti spero, ego certe utor. Nec enim dum ero angar ulla re, cum omni vacem culpa; et si non ero, *sensu omni carebo*. id. Ep. 4. Deinde quod mihi ad consolationem commune tecum est, si jam vocer ad exitum vitæ, non ab ea *Repub. avellar* qua carendum esse doleam, præsertim *cum id sine ullo sensu futurum sit*. Id. ib. Sed cum plus in metuendo mali sit quam in ipso illo quod timetur, defino;

to say what is not his opinion, than what is.<sup>b</sup>  
They began then to be sensible that Human

præsertim cum impendat in quo non modo Dolor nullus, *verum finis etiam Doloris futurus sit.* More passages to the same purpose are collected and illustrated by Mr. *Warburton*. Div. Leg. p. 387, &c. 2 Ed. And among the several Apologies which the ingenious Author of his Life has offer'd for them this probably will be esteem'd the most natural; that even here *in a melancholy hour Doubts and Difficulties* may be supposed to have got the ascendancy over *Cicero*, V. 2. p. 561. 4<sup>to</sup>. In truth, he seems to have been often in the state of mind which he so well describes *Tusc. Q. L. I. S. II. M.*—Evolvè diligenter ejus [*Platonis*] eum librum, qui est de animo: amplius quod desideres nihil erit. A. Feci mehercule, et quidem sæpius; sed nescio quomodo, dum lego, assentior: cum posui librum, et mecum ipse de immortalitate animorum cæpi cogitare, assensio omnis illa elabatur. That he had great doubts of a Providence is fully shewn by the learned Author of *Ep. ad C. Middleton*, p. 74. Not. h. That he both recommended *Suicide* as the best refuge in affliction, and had frequent thoughts of putting it in practice, is no less clearly proved by the same judicious writer, p. 76, 77, 78. And though he himself declares upon occasion that he was with difficulty withheld from it by the advice of *Atticus* and the intreaty of his Friends: *ibid.* yet it appears too plainly that this was not owing at last either to the strength of his Judgement or his Resolution; to any prudential Considerations respecting the State, himself, or his Relations, so much as to the same notorious want of Courage, which disabled this great Man from bearing his Misfortunes decently, and which must equally deter him from attempting to end them together with his Life.

Reason was of itself a very insufficient Director,<sup>c</sup> and grew weary of the common Delusions from pretended Revelation. Oracles, Omens, Portents were generally exploded;<sup>d</sup> the old Fables of *Elyfian* Fields and *Pluto's* Kingdom were grown ridiculous, and given over to Poets and Painters, as the same Author informs us.<sup>e</sup> Another very learned Writer of the same time tells us that they had near three hundred Opinions about the *Chief Good* and ultimate *End* of Action;<sup>f</sup> that the Objects of their Devotion amounted to thirty thousand,<sup>g</sup> that there were no less than three hundred *Jupiters*, or supreme Gods among them,<sup>h</sup> in short, that they had multiplied Deities to such a degree, and modell'd their Worship in such a manner that he and others of the wiser sort were ashamed of them;<sup>i</sup> not to mention that the prevalence of

<sup>c</sup> Omnis cognitio multis est obstructa Difficultatibus, eaque est et in ipsis rebus obscuritas et in judiciis nostris infirmitas, ut non sine causa et doctissimi et antiquissimi invenire se posse quod cuperent diffisi sint. *Cic. Acad.* 2. 3. Mihi autem non modo ad sapientiam cæci videmur, sed ad ea ipsa quæ aliqua ex parte cerni videantur, habetes et obtusi. *Id. ap. Laëtant.* L. 3. c. 14. Nescio quis nos teneat error et miserabilis ignoratio veri. *Id. ib.* More Testimonies to the same purpose may be seen in *Bp. Leng's Boyle's Lect.* S. 12. p. 119, 110. Fol. and *Dr. Campbell's necessity of Revelation.*

the *Epicurean* Philosophy had render'd both in a great measure insignificant. <sup>k</sup> So great want had they of a thorough Reformation in Matters of Religion.

Secondly. That Age was also the fittest to receive such a Benefit, as well as to propagate it in the World. At the same time that the *Jewish* Oeconomy waxed old and was ready to vanish away, it had serv'd to build up a better House; had rais'd their Minds above itself and fitted them for a more perfect Institution; and when the eye of Reason in the Gentile World had most of all discover'd its own dimness, and could do little more than shew the Darknes that surrounded them, it then in the best manner prepared them to receive and rejoice in a greater Light. The many fine Lectures which had been at several times deliver'd to the *Jews*

<sup>d</sup> *Cic.* de *Divin.* passim.

<sup>e</sup> *Tusc. Quest.* L. 1. S. 10, 11.

<sup>f</sup> *Varro* ap. *Augustin.* de C. D. L. 19. c. 1.

<sup>g</sup> *Augustin.* de *Cecil. Deif.* 4. 5, 6. *Jurieu.* Crit. Hist. V. 2. p. 13. When the Philosopher *Bruxillus* made his dying speech to the Senate they had Two hundred and eighty thousand. *Misson's Travels*, Part 2. p. 10.

<sup>h</sup> *Tertull.* *Apol.* c. 14.

<sup>i</sup> See *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 338. and *Sartorius* de *Hypocrisi Gentilium circa Cultum Deorum.*

<sup>k</sup> See *Le Clerc's Causes of Incredulity*, p. 266.

by those *Tutors* and *Governours* under whom God had placed them ; by *Moses*, *Joshua*, *Samuel*, *David*, *Solomon*, and the subsequent *Prophets*, though all of them in fact found insufficient to direct their Conduct, and most of them to a great degree then defeated and perverted, as is observ'd above ; yet we must allow that towards the End of this Dispensation they began in general to be better understood than formerly ; upon the erecting of Synagogues after the *Babylonish* Captivity<sup>1</sup> they were more frequently read and inculcated, and under their Persecutions in the time of the *Maccabees* more thoroughly studied and regarded ; and lastly, by their numerous Schools and Academies which flourish'd in the most corrupt parts of their Government.<sup>m</sup> Learning of all kinds had spread itself among them, and got so good footing, as to render them the most capable of

<sup>1</sup> Vid. *Buddei* Hist. Eccl. V. T. V. 2. p. 976. *Vitringa* de Synagoga, L. 1. Par. 2. c. 12. p. 413. or *Patrick* on *2 Chron.* 36. 15. Who assigns this as one chief Cause of their keeping so clear of Idolatry ever after, when they had neither Prophets nor Miracles among them. add *Prid.* V. 1. p. 389.

<sup>m</sup> See *Vitringa* Obs. Sacr. L. 6. c. 14. S. 8, 9. Some of their own Authors say there were near four hundred Synagogues in *Jerusalem* itself, as many Academies, and the same number of Schools : some reckon four hundred and eighty. *Budd.* Eccl. Hist. V. 2. Par. 2. Sect. 7. §. 17. p. 966,

discerning these Corruptions and recovering themselves from the Errors and Abuses above-mention'd when they were once freely pointed out to them and opposed; so that notwithstanding the prevailing Iniquity, which made these in that respect the worst of Times, their Minds had yet been so far cultivated as to be able to receive the Promised Seed; at least much more so, than they had been at any time assignable before. The same thing had been done to the Heathen in a good measure, and from the same source by their great Lawgivers and Philosophers, who got most of their best Notions from travelling into *Egypt*, *Chaldea* and *Phœnicia* themselves, or from conversing with those who did; such were *Minos*, *Lycurgus*, *Solon*, *Numa*; of whom this has been shewn particularly by learned Men: <sup>n</sup> Such was *Zoroaster* in the East, by some supposed to have

p. 966, &c. *Lightfoot* Op. V. 2. p. 140. and 197. That they assembled in these *Synagogues* three times a week. v. *ibid.* p. 280. comp. *Univerf. Hist.* B. 2. c. 1. p. 26. Not. Q.

<sup>n</sup> *Gale's* Court of the Gent. Part. 1. B. 3. c. 9, &c. *Dr. Waterland's* 1. Charge p. 17. 25. *Univerf. Hist.* V. 1. p. 487. V. 3. p. 330. Not. F. *Clem. Alex.* Strom. passim. The same is acknowledg'd by the *Greeks* themselves. Vid. *Diad. Sic.* ap. *Euseb. Ev. Præp.* L. 10. p. 480, &c. Ed. *Morell. Diog. Laert.* Proem. pr. cum *Casaub.* et al. in loc. Add *Young's* Differt. V. 1. c. ult.

been

been Servant to *Ezra* ° by others to *Daniel*, ¶ and such was *Pythagoras* his Disciple. ¶ The same end was pursued by *Socrates* and his Disciples, who prepared the way for a more perfect Reformation by labouring to bring men to the knowledge of one supreme God and the study of natural Religion, by teaching them *Humility*, and giving them hopes of an Instructor from Heaven, as was observ'd above. The same thing was a doing about the same time by that celebrated *Socrates* of the *Chinese* (as he is call'd) *Confucius*. †, The same Design was carried on by that remarkable Dispersion of the *Jews* among all Nations, as observ'd likewise; by the communication of their Sacred Books, which had been long ago translated into the most common Language, and many Copies of which were in their hands and ready to be

° *Hyde Rel. V. P. c. 24. p. 314.*

¶ *Prid. Connect. V. 1. p. 331. Hyde Rel. Vet. Perf. p. 314.* He is supposed to have been sometimes endow'd with the Spirit of Prophecy like *Balaam*, *Id. ib. c. 31. p. 382, &c.* What ground there is to believe that he clearly foretold the coming of *Christ*, may be seen in *Univerf. Hist. V. 2. p. 218.* Another Prophecy to the same purpose occurs in p. 222. *Not. R. Prideaux* and *Moyle* agree in supposing that there must have been two Persons of that Name, in order to reconcile the *Greek* and *Persian* accounts. [*Moyle's Works V. 2. p. 63. and 75.*] Others reckon fix. vid. *Cl. Buddci Eccl. Hist. Tom. 1.*



examin'd :<sup>s</sup> When at the same time they were both qualify'd and disposed to examine them by the increase of general Learning and Philosophy, which must help greatly to improve and polish them, notwithstanding all its Imperfections abovemention'd; the very discovery of which Imperfections was likewise no inconsiderable argument of its Improvement. They had time to digest the Precepts and Instructions of their own Sages, as well as to become acquainted with the History of the *Jews*. Superstition of all kinds gradually wore off, and Arts and Sciences succeeded, which naturally excite and enliven the Genius of any People, and open a free Communication with others; and these were then in great perfection, as is too notorious to need particular proof. Nor can what is here said be thought to be at all incon-

p. 349, &c. What resemblance there is between his History and that of *Moses* may be seen in *Huet. Dem. Evang. Prop. 4. c. 5.* concerning his Writings vid. *Fabric. Biblioth. Gr. L. 1. c. 36. p. 242, &c.*

<sup>a</sup> *Prid. V. 1. p. 213. Univerf. Hist. V. 2. p. 236. Not. Z, &c.*

<sup>r</sup> Vid. *Burnet Arch. Ph. p. 20.* He is supposed to have been acquainted with the *Jewish* Religion. See *Young's Differt. V. 1. p. 293.*

<sup>s</sup> Vid. *Walton. Appar. B. Polyglott. S. 9. Par. 3. or Allix, B. 2. c. 25. or Univerf. Hist. V. 4. B. 2. c. 1. p. 40.*

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sistent with that remarkable Degeneracy and Corruption mention'd under the former Head, if we reflect how often in common Cases the same Persons who as to Abilities and Genius are the most capable of apprehending and applying any Instruction, and in that sense best disposed to receive it, are yet in another sense, *i. e.* in point of Ingenuity and Inclination as little disposed to admit some branches of it, ( or who in Understanding may be arrived at very great perfection, when there Morals are at a crisis in the other extreme ) on which account they want it still the more, and such a juncture may be a very proper one to administer it and lay a good foundation for their improvement in both these respects.

Thus were Mankind in general train'd up and ripe for a new Dispensation, as well inclined to attend to something of that kind, as able in a good measure to perceive and reap the Benefit of it when it should be offer'd ; their Curiosity was rais'd and their Capacity suited to any religious Enquiries ; nor was it at *Athens* only that they spent their time in *telling or bearing some new thing*. Science and Literature had made considerable progress westward, and every where Men's Minds were enlarg'd together with their Commerce. And thus all things

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conspired to bring the World toward a State of MATURITY; and at the same time the Circumstances of it were such as remarkably contributed to spread all kinds of Knowledge in the most expeditious and effectual manner. All this while the *Roman Empire* had been growing up to that vast extent which it reach'd under *Augustus*, and had united the several Governments under one Head, and settled it- self in a general Tranquility: it had carried its Language and Arts almost as far as its Arms; had open'd a Correspondence and establish'd a Commerce between all the then known parts of the World, from whence Intelligence was quickly convey'd to *Rome* and Orders dispatch'd from thence. <sup>a</sup> *Judea* the place where the *Sun of Righteousness* was to arise had just been reduced to a *Roman Province* <sup>b</sup> whereby regular accounts were taken of all remarkable Transactions in it by the *Roman Governours* <sup>c</sup> and

<sup>a</sup> The Institution of *Posts* among the *Romans* is generally attributed to *Augustus*; though we read of them long before on some occasions among the *Persians*. *Herodot.* 8.98. *Xen. Cyrop.* l. 8. *Esther*, 3. 13. and 8. 10. v. *Brisson de R. P.* p. 147.

<sup>b</sup> See *Lardner's Credib.* of the G. H. B. l. c. 10. S. 10.

<sup>c</sup> See an Account of their *Acta* in *Pearson* on the Creed, Art. 4. fin.

Appeals lay from thence to *Cæſar* : and by this means the fame of an extraordinary Teacher of a new Religion would ſoon be publiſh'd over all the civiliz'd parts of the World, and its Profeſſors be better enabled to advance and defend it, and propagate it more ſucceſſfully than could have been expected under any other Conſtitution of the World before that Time. If true, it muſt by theſe means ſoon gain ground and appear to be ſo ; if falſe, as ſoon be ſilenc'd and confuted.

For, Thirdly, this Age was the beſt qualify'd to examine the evidence of ſuch a Revelation, to confirm its truth and convey it down to Poſterity. It was in compariſon of thoſe before, a learned, curious and inquiſitive Age, as we have ſeen, and therefore like to be more cautious and ſceptical in a thing of this nature, not ſo eaſy to be impoſed upon or apt to run into every religious Project. There were Men every where ready to confute and expoſe the *Chriſtian* Inſtitution had it contain'd any thing either falſe or frivolous, abſurd or immoral ; if it had conſiſted of either Enthuſiaſm or Impoſture, or a mixture of each. At that time the many Sects and Factions in the World had whetted themſelves by Contention, and were perpetual ſpies upon each other, ſo that no conſiderably new Religion could

could gain ground among them without being thoroughly sifted by the adverse Parties. The *Pharisees* and *Saducees*, the *Stoics* and *Epicureans* were subtle and perverse Disputers, and all of them eager enough to oppose the *Christians*. The world had then also sufficient Knowledge of the Powers of Nature to be able to judge of *Miracles*, and distinguish them from any uncommon appearance or effect of Art. *Prophecy* had been for some time withdrawn from the *Jews*, which must make them at first more shy and suspicious of any new Pretences to Inspiration. <sup>a</sup> *Oracles* began to cease among the *Gentiles*, by being despised and generally neglected, *Divination* of all kinds was brought into contempt : and though they were

<sup>a</sup> We may add, that the ceasing of this, as well as of Miracles, for a time would likewise be a means of raising greater Surprise among the *Jews* upon the revival of both, and of procuring more attention and regard to the Person who should appear really to have the Gift of them again. ' Gifts granted to the Disciples of our Saviour which none had been partakers of since the time of *Malachi* ; ' God having so order'd it that the Desires of the *Jews* ' might be the more enflamed for the *Messiah's* Coming ; ' as also that upon his coming he might the more easily ' be discerned.' *Allix. Reflex. Part 4. p. 272.* How far Revelation ceas'd from the time of *Malachi* ; and what Reasons are assignable for it, may be seen in *Vitringa. Observ. Sac. L. 5. c. 6, - 14.*

sufficiently desirous of some better Light in Matters of Religion than what their own Reason and Philosophy afforded them, as was observ'd above; yet from the many False Lights which had been already held forth, and which had only serv'd to mislead and bewilder them, they rather began to despair of finding any true one. Tired out with wandering through the mazes of Error and Uncertainty, the wisest of them gave up all such pretended Guides, and and look'd upon the whole Story of Revelation as a Cheat. Thus men were sufficiently guarded against any new Imposition though never so well supported by Learning, Wit and Policy. Nor would they sure be less averse to one that came without all these: to one appearing in such a form and with such recommendations as the *Christian* Scheme; so destitute of aid from Human Wisdom and Subtilty; so seemingly below what they had hitherto been entertain'd with; stript of all that Pomp and Ornament which attended the *Jewish* Institution, that Art and Eloquence which adorn'd each System of Philosophy; consisting of a few plain Rules of Life, and these so strictly pure and perfect as equally to strike at the corrupt *Scribe* and haughty *Philosopher*: and therefore such as must needs be to the one a *Stumbling Block* and  
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to the other *Foolishness*; deliver'd for the most part, occasionally without Art or Method, in the most simple, unaffected manner, by mean, obscure persons, in full opposition to all the reigning Passions, Prejudices and Interests of the learned and great: under all these and the like disadvantages, which are well known to have attended the *Christian Religion* in its Infancy, if at such a Time and in such Circumstances it was able to support itself and make its way in the world, and still be all an Imposition both upon the Senses and the Reason of Mankind, in what a strange Situation must Mankind have been, in both of these respects! How different from what they have ever been before or since! How will the Men who are so apt to stumble and strain at each little Difficulty which attends the present Scheme in common with all others, be able to get over this great unparallel'd one of such an Imposition [were it one indeed] prevailing so far and in such a manner as this did? Or rather have they not from hence some reasons to allow of its pretensions? some room to admire with us how sure must its foundation be! how strong the outward Proofs of its Divine Authority! how great its inward force and efficacy! This to a fair Enquirer, who will weigh the case with any

tolerable impartiality, should now afford the same conviction that it did of old, and shew it to be nothing less than the *Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*. Each of these Obstacles to its reception gives the strongest attestation to it when once approved of and embraced; and all together must, when duly attended to, gain it the highest esteem, and be a standing evidence both of its Truth and Excellence; a sufficient answer to all Suspicions that can be rais'd from the prevalence of any Fable or Imposture in any other Age; from what may have been introduced in a manner directly contrary to this, by other kinds of Persons, and in very different Times; by Craft, Policy or Persecution, in days of Bigotry, Blindness and Superstition. 'Tis an observation frequently insinuated by such as are no Friends to Revelation, that there are certain Seasons when any thing will pass upon the World under the Notion of Religion: <sup>a</sup> which has no doubt a good deal of truth in it with regard to the general belief of things marvellous and extraordinary: But from all that is gone before I think it sufficiently appears that this Age was

<sup>a</sup> *Voltaire's Letters*, L. 7. To the same purpose (if I mistake not) are some parts in the *Life of Homer* 1 Edit. and several passages in *Bayle's Dict.* and the *Characteristicks*.  
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by no means such; that it can neither be charg'd with Ignorance nor Credulity; that it cannot be suspected of any extraordinary Disposition to receive such a Doctrine as that of *Christianity*, and from such hands, were it not manifestly true and of Divine Authority: and that therefore the examination into the Grounds thereof at its first propagation, and the full Conviction which each Party must have had before it would be able to gain admittance with them, might fairly serve for all succeeding Generations, and must be allow'd to add one of the strongest confirmations to it.

Lastly, this Age was the best qualify'd to hand it down to Posterity. As it was an inquisitive and discerning one, so it was no less letter'd and historical. The *Augustan* Age is remarkable to this day for the number of its Writers. There is none better known, scarcely any of which so full and particular accounts are given. The *Roman* Empire had been just settled, and the minds of its chief Members turn'd from Arms and Action, to Works of Genius and Speculation; fond of celebrating its Conquests and recording its Glory they gave themselves up to the Study of Eloquence and good Writing. Their Chronology had been lately reform'd and adjutt'd; exact Reviews

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were taken of the most distant Provinces; the Number, Names, Employments, Quality, Estates of their Inhabitants register'd,<sup>a</sup> and all remarkable Acts and Occurrences transmitted to *Rome* the Capital of the World. In such a State of affairs no great Event could lie conceal'd or be long call'd in question: At such a time therefore was it not proper to introduce this new surprising Scene upon the Stage of the World, whereby its *Æra* must be fix'd beyond all future Controversy? Had *Christ* come in an obscure or fabulous Age, by this time we might perhaps have doubted whether ever there was any such Person; at least whether any thing relating to him could be well depended on. It was by no means fit that a thing of this Consequence should be done in a Corner, and left to vulgar report and uncertain Tradition, to be soon dropt again, or blended and disguis'd with Fiction and Romance: This therefore commenc'd in an Age of the World when the Copiousness and Certainty of its History serv'd both to spread it more universally, and preserve it more securely; *when many took in hand to set forth in order a Declaration of those things which were most surely believ'd among them,* whereby we have more ample and

<sup>a</sup> See *Lardner's Credibility*, B. 2. c. 1. S. 2.

authentic Memoirs of Church History than could ever have been expected before that Period; <sup>b</sup> and whereby the Time when, the Place where, and Persons under whom the most material Occurrences happen'd, were ascertained and confirm'd by Writers of different Nations and Professions; by *Romans, Jews and Greeks.*

These several Circumstances conspire to bring the Mission of *Christ* very near the Time in which he came. There is one more which seems to fix it precisely to that, at least will shew that it could not be sooner, consistently with the common course of Providence, and moral Government of the World; admitting likewise the particular Scheme already specify'd, *viz.* of his descending from the *Jews*; I mean the circumstance of their then being in subjection to the *Roman* Government so far as to have the Power of Life and Death in most cases taken from them <sup>c</sup>

<sup>b</sup> This is to be understood with an Exception to the thirty years between *Nero* and *Trajan*, to which time all the common complaint of Want of Ecclesiastical Writers ought I think to be limited. The cause of this is assign'd by *Vitringa* *Observ. Sacr.* L. 4. c. 7. S. 9. p. 904. &c.

<sup>c</sup> *John* 18. 31. How far this was so, see *Lardner's* *Credibility* B. 1. c. 2. S. 5. par. 7. p. 49, &c. 2 Edit. The particular instance of *St. Stephen's* Murder which is brought to prove the contrary by the Authors of *Univerf. Hist.* [v. 4. p. 236. Not. R.] does not seem sufficient for that

By all that we know of that Generation we have reason to believe that if they had been at liberty, they would certainly have cut him off as soon as ever he appear'd to correct their gross Errors and to reprove their many abuses in Religion, to disappoint all their fond Hopes of temporal Grandeur, Wealth and Power, and humble their spiritual Pride by reducing them to a level with all such as feared God of every Nation under Heaven. And accordingly when they saw that he was not a *Messiah* for their purpose, <sup>a</sup> we find them immediately resolv'd to seize and dispatch him, as they would undoubtedly have done, if they had had sufficient Power: but being in a great measure

purpose, but rather looks like an *Act* of the *Zealots*, though his Trial was begun regularly; [see *Basnage*, B. 5. c. 2. S. 8.] and the Case of *St. Paul* mention'd in the same Book [N. O. p. 257.] seems to shew, not that they pretended to an *executive* Power in his time, but that even their *Judicial* one was then interrupted to prevent the like outrages. This point seems to be pretty exactly stated in *Millar's* Ch. Hist. c. 7. p. 536. comp. *Basnage* *ibid.* S. 7. One would think their own judgment of the thing might be infer'd from *Hieros. Sanhedr.* fol. 18. col. 1. *Traditio est quadraginta annos ante excidium Templi ablatum fuisse jus vitæ et mortis.* et *ib.* fol. 242. *Quadraginta annis ante vastatum Templum ablata sunt Judicia capitalia ab ISRAELE.* Though *Dr. Lightfoot* is of a different opinion, and produces several instances in confirmation of it, [op. Lat. v. 2. p. 371.] it must be confess'd that the learned *Mr. Biscoe*  
[Boyle's

deprived of it, they were obliged to have recourse to Stratagem, continually laying wait for something to accuse him of to the *Romans*; tempting him, and trying all methods to draw him into any Act which might be construed Treason or Disaffection to their Government: on which account also we find him behaving with so much caution and reserve before them; keeping in private as much as was possible and consistent with the End for which he came; <sup>b</sup> charging his Disciples not to make him known, <sup>c</sup> preventing his being proclaim'd the *Messiah*, <sup>d</sup> and declining any direct Answer when question'd about it, <sup>e</sup> till he had finished the Work

[ *Boyle's Lect.* c. 6. ] has made it very probable that the *Jewish* Magistrates had often even in those times the Power of inflicting capital Punishments allowed them; but yet he allows that they were often prevented by the *Roman* Governours; [ *ib.* p. 225. ] 'tis plain their State was about that Time in great Confusion, and it appears that they durst not exert such a Power upon the occasion above-mentioned, nor in their Circumstances could at last have compassed our Saviour's Death in any regular judicial way without application to a *Roman* Governour, which comes to pretty near the same thing with respect to the main part of the present Argument.

<sup>a</sup> How soon their Rulers perceiv'd this, and what a different conduct it produced at first in them and that of the common People toward him, see in Mr. *Lardner's* Credibility, V. I. p. 288, &c.

<sup>b</sup> *Luke* 5. 16. *Joh.* 7. 1. 11. 54.      <sup>c</sup> *Matt.* 12. 16.

<sup>d</sup> *Mark* 3. 12. *Luke* 4. 41.      <sup>e</sup> *Joh.* 10. 24. 11. 4, &c.

of his Ministry, and fulfill'd every thing in the Scriptures concerning him.<sup>a</sup> No former Age of the *Jews* probably was wicked enough to have withstood so many evident Proofs of his being the true *Messiah*, to have rejected him and been his Betrayers and Murderers, and thereby to have accomplished the Prophecies and executed the good purpose of God in sending his Son to die for all the World: this Generation was so thoroughly such † as to have done it with too much fury and precipitancy, unless restrain'd by a superior Power: which

<sup>a</sup> See *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 487, &c. Fol. 3 Edit. [or *Lardner's Credibility*, B. 1. c. 5. p. 286.] where may be found a full answer to the *Moral Philosopher's* Observations on this Subject, V. 3. p. 189. Who concludes as usual with a very false account of the Matter, viz. that 'our Saviour all along, from first to last' [witness *Mat.* 26. 64. *Mar.* 14. 62. *Luke* 22. 70. *Joh.* 18. 37.] disclaim'd the Messiahship among them' i. e. the *Jews*. Comp. *Whitby* on *Matt.* 9. 30, The same account serves also to confute the Observation made upon these Passages by the Author of *Christianity not founded on Argument*, who from thence infers that our Lord could have no such meaning as to convince by his *Miraculous Works*, p. 48. no such Intention as to prove his own Truth and Character by these Instances of his Power, ib. in full contradiction to those many other Passages where he expressly appeals to the same Works as direct Proofs of his Divine Commission: *Matt.* 11. 4, 5, 21. *Joh.* 5. 36. 10. 25, 38. 14. 11. 15. 24, &c. See Dr. from

† Vid. *Lightfoot. Op. Lat.* 317. 325. &c.

makes their Subjection to the *Roman* Government in this respect also to constitute the **FULNESS OF TIME**, and affords a Circumstance particularly requisite and suitable to the coming of *Christ*. And though this very remarkable Wickedness of the *Jews* in some measure counterballanc'd all their other Qualifications for attending to the *Christ* when he came, and debarr'd the generality of them from the Benefits of his Coming; yet it concurr'd equally to carry on the same Design of

*Randolph's* Answ. p. 169, 170, &c. The same is likewise a reply to this Author's Objection against the Truth of Christianity from *Christ's* not opening his Commission before the *Jewish* Rulers, [ *ibid.* p. 48. &c. ] as far as he has represented the case truly: for which see *Mr. Benson's* Answ. Part 3. Dial. 3. p. 196, &c. The same Observation may be apply'd with no less force against our Saviour's doing the like before the *Roman* Governours, which stuck so much with *Woolston*, [ *exact Fitness.* Pref. &c. ] to which we may add, that his addressing himself in form at any time to either of these must in all probability have been turn'd to a great Objection against the Truth of his Mission in after Ages whether they had, or had not receiv'd him; the first would have been wholly attributed to State Policy; the latter might have been urg'd as implying some extraordinary Defect in his Credentials. see *Benson*, *ib.* p. 216, &c. So that had the whole been conducted in a way different from what it was, the case would, as far as now appears, have been no better for those times in which it was transacted, and much worse for all future ones,

Providence for the common good of the World: even the Vice and Folly of them who were led to reject him contributed to the advantage and improvement of those who had so much Virtue and Wisdom left as to receive him; which great numbers of them did, <sup>a</sup> notwithstanding the vile Policy of their Rulers: and this soon brought on that very thing which they were seeking to avoid by it, <sup>b</sup> the Dissolution of their State, it having now fully answered the Ends it was design'd for as a Body Politic, and its Remains serving to better purposes in bearing everywhere such evident Marks of the Divine Displeasure as could not but be taken notice of, together with the Causes of their Punishment. And thus did the *Fall* of *Israel* become *the Riches of the World*, and rise of a new greater Dispensation, communicated to all Nations and by this means most effectually confirm'd in every succeeding Generation: <sup>c</sup> of which below.

<sup>a</sup> V. *Jenkin*, V. 2. c. 32. p. 497.

<sup>b</sup> *Job*. 11. 48.

<sup>c</sup> 'Had the *Jews* been all converted by JESUS CHRIST, we should only have had doubtful witnesses; and had they been quite destroy'd, we should have had none at all'. *Paschall's Thoughts*, p. 121. comp. p. 89. 90.



Thus have we consider'd some of the most remarkable Circumstances attending the Age of CHRIST's Advent, which when they are taken together make it appear to be the *Fulness of the Time*, and fittest for such a Dispensation. I have omitted some Topics commonly made use of in this Argument, such as that of an *Universal Peace* at that time, and the great *Expectation* of the *Messiah* among the *Jews*; since the one appears to be false <sup>d</sup> at least 'twas foreign to his Birth <sup>e</sup> any otherwise than as a good Means for conveying the Tidings of it more easily and safely through the World, (in which sense it was included under the Settlement of the *Roman Empire*, but that is not the sense in which it is usually insisted on) the other was not gratify'd in the manner in which they did then expect him, but a quite different one; which therefore, so far as it was a wrong one, though it help'd to raise their attention to JESUS CHRIST at first, yet might be said to tend as much afterwards to deaden and disappoint it. We may

<sup>d</sup> See *Mason's Jani Templum referatum*, with *Buddeus* on the same Subject; or *Basnage Hist. Polit. Eccl. V. 1.* p. 114. That the *Jews* had never less Peace among themselves than at that time may be seen in *Josephus, Philo* or *Univerf. Hist. V. 4. c. 11.* p. 196, &c.

<sup>e</sup> See *Woolston's exact Fitness, &c.* p. 91.

add, that though the *Jews* had sufficient ground for expecting such a Person from their Prophetic Writings, and this expectation of theirs in general be a good Argument against them now to prove in what sense their Forefathers did interpret some of these Writings; yet was this Expectation in itself ( more especially perverted as it then was ) so far from being any particular qualification of the time, at least any Circumstance proper to confirm the Truth and Credibility of his Mission, that it might as well be supposed to have a contrary effect, in giving a handle to Impostors, as we find it actually did to two *Thudasès*, to *Simeon Athronges*, *Judas of Galilee*, *Simon Magus*, *Dositheus*,<sup>a</sup> and afterwards *Barcochebas* and many others.<sup>b</sup> Nor have I urg'd the *general notion* which prevail'd over most of the *World* of some *great Prince* that then was to appear; since this (were it never so consistent with *Christ's* real Character) can only prove that there was some Prophecy or other which might be so interpreted as to give occasion to that Rumour, and the Objection

<sup>a</sup> V. *Origin contra Cels.* L. 1. et 6. et *Calmet.* Diçt.

<sup>b</sup> V. *Josepb.* B. I. L. 2. c. 2. &c. A List of them may be seen in *Kidder's Dem.* Part 3. p. 167, &c. Fol. or *Wagenfeil's Confutation of R. Lipman's Carm. Memor.* p. 233. &c.

returns with equal force against its being prefixed to that time by any Prophecy: the Difficulty is still the same, why had it not a more early date in Prophecy, which might have rais'd a proportionably more early expectation? — But this has been already accounted for.

Upon the whole, we may observe that from the beginning of the world, Mankind have always had sufficient Means of being instructed in Religion, and that the several Dispensations have all along been suited to their respective Circumstances and Capacities, as far as can be learnt from those very brief accounts that are left us of their History; from which 'tis also probable that if we had more full ones, we should see this more clearly. In the INFANT State of the World Mankind were led as it were by the hand in matters of Religion, directed by visible Appearances on every occasion; fed with a present Portion of this World's Goods and cherished with temporal Prospects. The Doctrines of Religion and Modes of Worship were few and plain, agreeable to their imperfect Notions of things, and suited to their Simplicity of Manners; \* and when these were once taught and instituted among some principal Heads of Families, they might through the longevity of

\* See Part 3.

Men in those Days be easily held and handed down by Tradition. When Mankind had multiplied and were dispers'd over all the face of the Earth, and *traditional Religion* ( notwithstanding the frequent revivals of it by particular Revelations) began to be corrupted and defaced, and as soon as a better way of preserving and propagating the Notices of it was discover'd <sup>a</sup> *viz.* by the Invention, or perhaps Revelation of Letters, <sup>b</sup> God is pleas'd to afford more clear and ample ones; he singles out a Person particularly eminent for Faith and Obedience; takes him under his immediate protection by way of positive Covenant; communicates himself expressly to him, and makes him a means of discovering that Knowledge to other Nations, and reforming the Religion of every Country

<sup>a</sup> See Dr. *Conybeare's* Def. of Rev. Rel. p. 404, &c.

<sup>b</sup> *Gale* [ Court of the Gent. P. I. B. I. c. 10. S. 4. ] brings many Testimonies both from *Heathen* and *Christian* Writers to prove that *Moses* was the Inventor of Letters. See also Gen. Dict. V. 6. p. 417. G. I. *Vossius* Aristarch. 1. 9. and an *Essay upon Literature*, proving that the two Tables written by the Finger of God in Mount Sinai was the first Writing in the World. Lond. 1726. from which Author it appears how much Letters must have contributed to prevent the increase of Idolatry, at least the advancing Men into the Number of Gods, by preserving a more particular account of all their Actions. comp. *Univerf. Hist.* p. 720. N. T. and *Daubuz* on the Revelation,

into which he was sent. The same Favours are continued to some of his Posterity and with the same design; they are removed to and fro, and every where miraculously preserved, blest'd and multiplied; are united under a *Theocracy* and have a *written Law* given them, consisting of the most perfect Rules of Life that their then State and Temper would admit of, and containing a Body of Precepts opposite in most parts to the Superstitious and Idolatrous practises of the People round them: they are instructed with a History of the original State of the World, and all past Dispensations of Religion in it, together with Predictions of the future, more especially of that great one under the *Messiah*, who was to descend from them, and whom they were taught to expect by

lation, Prelim. Disc. p. 2, &c. which last Writer shews that it was as necessary then to give the *Israelites* Letters to supply the use of their Symbols, and take off their inclination to symbolical Idolatry, as it was afterwards to communicate the Art of *Printing* in order to correct a no less gross Idolatry in the *Christian* World by transmitting all useful Knowledge much more easily and universally than could have ever been done before by Writing, ib. p. 12. Many Proofs of God's having communicated the Art of Alphabetical Writing first to *Moses*, as well as reasons for that Conduct, have lately been set forth by Mr. *Worthington*, Essay c. 8. which we may expect to see supported with variety of Learning by Dr. *Winder*.

numberless preparatory Types and Figures, all tending to point him out more fully to them, and pave the way for his Reception. They become a mighty Nation, are distinguish'd by extraordinary Deliverances, Successes and Victories under their several Governours; the fame of them and of their God's spreads far and wide. To keep them duly attach'd to his Worship he raises up a succession of Prophets who cease not to warn, exhort and urge them to their Duty, and to reprove and correct them for their repeated Breaches of it; to remind them of their Dependence on that God who had already done so great things for them, and to assure them of still greater upon their Obedience, as also to threaten them with the severest Punishments on their Defection: which always came to pass accordingly, and were dispens'd in so very visible and exemplary a manner as could not but strike surprize and terror into all the Nations round them, and plainly enough discover'd him to be not only a God of the *Jews*, but the supreme Governour of the World, and Lord of Heaven and Earth: which was the principal End of all; and to effect which their Prophets are often sent to foretell the Fate of the neighbouring Kingdoms and to acquaint them with the Knowledge of the most High.

This

This is the great Design which was still carrying on, and which his own People, though they perversely oppose and frequently endeavour to cross it; are yet obliged to execute whether they will or no, and equally promote it by their Successes and their Sufferings. They were to be like so much Leaven in the Mass of Mankind, and when they were once thoroughly prepared themselves he disperses them among all Nations to diffuse the same Spirit and contribute to the Improvement and Reformation of others; and 'tis observable that the same long *Captivity* which cured most of them of their great proneness to Idolatry, serv'd also to distribute them over most parts of the World, and together with them the Knowledge and Worship of the one true God. <sup>a</sup> When at length

<sup>a</sup> It has been observ'd that the *Jews* were removed to *Babylon* when that Empire was in its most flourishing State and most frequented by Philosophers [ *Young's Hist. Diff.* V. 1. p. 292. ] and Legislators, who travel'd thither from all parts and thereby in a good measure became acquainted with the *Jewish* History, as many of them are supposed to have been. [ see the Authors above in Not. n. ] And 'tis well known that at the end of this *Captivity* the greatest part of them and those of the greatest eminence staid behind and settled in *Chaldea*, *Affyria* and other eastern Provinces, notwithstanding several Decrees granted by the Kings of *Persia* for their return, [ *Prid.* Part 1. B. 3. p. 136, &c. *Univerf. Hist.* B. 2. c. 1. p. 5. ] from whence

the *Jews* had attain'd to some tolerable sense of Religion, and were so well attach'd to it, and confirm'd in their Hopes of the *Messiah*, as to be fit to communicate the same to the *Gentiles*, to whom they were by this time sufficiently known; and these also by what they had heard of the *Jewish* Prophets and seen of their sacred Books, together with their own Improvements in Philosophy, were able to receive and relish a more perfect Institution; when both *Jew* and *Gentile* had been prepared to expect a new Revelation; when they began to want it most, and were most sensible of their Wants, and therefore like to be the most disposed to accept and apply the proper Remedy: and when the State of the World was such as most of all favour'd the Communication and

'tis probable that some of their Descendants spread so far as the *East-Indies*, where their Posterity continue to this day, as appears from the Accounts of many modern Travellers. We have a remarkable Passage to this purpose related by Dr. *Bundy* in the Preface to his Translation of *Lamy's Apparatus Biblicus*, as follows. 'The Rev. Mr. *Long*  
' lately return'd from *Fort St. George* in the *East-Indies*,  
' assures me and gives me leave to declare it to the World  
' from him, that the *Gentous* (a People in the East, who  
' from their Customs and other Circumstances are by the  
' most judicious believ'd to be the Descendants of those of  
' the *Jewish* Ten Tribes who never return'd from the  
' *Babylonish* Captivity) have a Temple at *Chillembrum*  
' near



help'd to secure the Continuance of it ; when the dark, fabulous Ages were well over, and succeeded by one remarkably learned and historical : when Arts and Sciences and Commerce had extended themselves, together with the *Roman* Empire and Language, over most parts of the World, and thereby open'd a way for any new Discovery, and enabled Mankind in general with ease and expedition to search into and thoroughly examine it ; and more particularly, when that part of the World which was to be the scene of all this, had just been reduced to a *Roman* Province and thereby exact accounts were taken of its State and Inhabitants, so that the Person who was to work this great Reformation in Religion there could not long be hid from the rest of the World ; when the

‘ near *Porto Novo* on the Coast of *Coromandel*, which they  
 ‘ call *Zuliman's* Temple, which they resort to with the  
 ‘ same Devotion as the *Jews* formerly did to that at  
 ‘ *Jerusalem*, and that it is divided into Courts in the same  
 ‘ manner as *Pere Lamy's* is, and is built much after the  
 ‘ same Plan which is there given.’ An Account of *Jews*  
 and *Jewish* Customs discover'd in *China*, *Bengal*, and  
*Madagascar*, as also in *Africa* and *America* both North  
 and South, may be seen in the Authors referr'd to by  
*Jenkin*, V. 1. c. 2. p. 104, &c. and many more in *Fabricius*,  
*Lux. Evang.* from c. 32. to 50. or *Basnage's* Hist. B. 6.  
 and 7. where we have an ample account of their being  
 spread over all the four Quarters of the World.

Government of it had likewise been put under such a form as was extremely suitable and even necessary to the due exercise and full execution of his Ministry : in this Period of the World *Christ* came ; nor could he, as far as we can see, have come so opportunely at any other. Whoever attentively considers these several Circumstances, though he may not perhaps allow every one of them, yet he will, I believe, find something so remarkable in many, especially in that extraordinary Coincidence of so many, as to induce him to think that there might be very good reason for deferring this Dispensation to so late a Period. And though I am very far from imagining this to be the whole of the case, or supposing that we can discover all the Reasons of it, yet I trust enow have been already pointed out to justify the Divine Conduct in this respect : at least I hope we may be allow'd to say, that there is something in them.

And thus it appears that God has all along acted equally for the good of Mankind in Matters of Religion, though in very different manners according to their different Circumstances and Capacities ; that his several Dispensations have been gradually open'd so as regularly to rise out of and improve upon each other ; and that the State of Knowledge and Perfection in the  
World

World has hitherto been perpetually *increasing*.

The very same Method might be shewn to be continued under *Christianity* itself, if it were not too much beyond the subject of this Discourse. It was in its *Infancy* in *Christ's* time, who communicated the things of it to his Disciples by little and little, as they were able to bear them; <sup>a</sup> beginning with the plainest and most obvious; laying the foundation and first Principles of the Doctrine during his Ministry and Conversation with them after his Resurrection, <sup>b</sup> and leaving the more full opening of it till the Descent of the *Holy Ghost*; <sup>c</sup> which likewise led them gradually into its several Truths. For some time the Apostles themselves were ignorant of *Christ's* true Office and the Nature of his Kingdom. They could not conceive that he was to suffer and die for the whole World, <sup>d</sup> they expected nothing but a temporal Prince, <sup>e</sup> and thought that his Kingdom was to be confined to a

<sup>a</sup> *Mark* 4. 33. *Joh.* 16. 12.

<sup>b</sup> *Acts* 1. 3. *Luke* 24. 27, - 44.

<sup>c</sup> As to the Fact, see the Bp. of London's 3<sup>d</sup> Pastoral Let. S. 3. 4, and 6. for the Reasons of it, see Misc. Sacr. Ess. I. p. 157, &c.

<sup>d</sup> *Matth.* 16. 22. *Luke* 18. 31. 34.

<sup>e</sup> *Matt.* 20, 21. &c.

remnant of the *Jews*.<sup>f</sup> Even after the Descent of the Holy Ghost St. *Peter* wants a particular Revelation to convince him that the Gentiles were likewise to be admitted :<sup>g</sup> the Disciples with him are astonished that on *them* also was poured out the Gift of the *Holy Ghost*,<sup>h</sup> and others of the Brethren *contend* with him about it,<sup>i</sup> and afterwards prevail upon him to dissemble it ;<sup>k</sup> Many yet insisted on the point of *Circumcision*,<sup>l</sup> and most of them concluded that *Christianity* and the World itself would speedily come to an end.<sup>m</sup> And though a much larger and more comprehensive view of the whole Scheme was given by *Christ* himself, after his Ascension, to St. *Paul*<sup>n</sup> that chosen Vessel, who was endow'd with greater Accomplishments and a larger stock of Learning, and who labour'd more abundantly than they all,<sup>o</sup>

<sup>f</sup> *Acts* 1.6. and c. 10. The use of this may be seen in Div. Leg. V. 2. B. 4. S. 6. p. 319, &c.

<sup>g</sup> *Acts* 10.6, &c. 11.5, &c. <sup>h</sup> *Acts* 10.45.

<sup>i</sup> *Acts* 11.2. <sup>k</sup> *Gal.* 2.11. 13.

<sup>l</sup> *Acts* 15. 1, 5.

<sup>m</sup> See *Burnet*. de Stat. Mort. et Ref. c. 7. p. 145, &c.

<sup>n</sup> *Gal.* 1. 16, &c. See Misc. Sacr. Eff. 2. p. 40, &c. and *Lock's* Synops. to his Comment on *Ephes*.

<sup>o</sup> *1 Cor.* 15. 10.

<sup>p</sup> Comp. *Rom.* 13. 11. *1 Cor.* 1. 7. and 15. 51. *2 Cor.* 5. 2, 3, 4. and *1 Thes.* 4. 15, 16, 17. with *Grotius* and *Wall's*

yet perhaps it may be question'd whether he also was not suffer'd to continue under the same error, or left in some degree of uncertainty about it, for some time. <sup>p</sup>

In this respect the *Christian* Institution may be said to have been but in its *Childhood* even under the Apostles. We find it for some time mix'd with *Judaism* <sup>q</sup> and subject to carnal Ordinances: the Apostles of the Circumcision seem not yet to have any distinct knowledge of the general freedom from the Ceremonial Law; <sup>r</sup> *St. Paul* is forced to conceal his Preaching to the Gentiles for several years, <sup>s</sup> a distinction of Days, <sup>t</sup> of Meats and Drinks <sup>u</sup> and other legal Ceremonies <sup>w</sup> are observ'd, to gratify the *Jewish* Converts, and avoid giving offence to the weaker Brethren; they are obliged to comply with such in the Toleration of many things

note on the last place. add *Grot.* Append. ad Comm. de Antichristo, Tom. 4. p. 475. *Lowth* on Inspir. p. 255. 2 Edit. or *Benson's* Append. to Paraphr. on *1. Tim.* 5. 23, &c.

<sup>q</sup> See *Edwards's* Survey, p. 598, &c.

<sup>r</sup> *Acts* 21. 26. see *Benson's* Hist. of the first Planting, V. 2. p. 209.

<sup>s</sup> *Gal.* 2. 2. see Pref. to Misc. Sacr. p. 15. 26, &c.

<sup>t</sup> *Acts* 13. 14. 16. 13. *Coloss.* 2. 16.

<sup>u</sup> *Rom.* 14. 3. *1 Cor.* 8. 13.

<sup>w</sup> *Acts* 16. 3.

burdensome to the Flesh and unprofitable as pertaining to the Conscience; and the observance of some is judg'd necessary to be enjoin'd to certain *Profelytes* by a public Decree.<sup>x</sup> The many Miracles and extraordinary *Gifts* of the Spirit which attended the Church at that time were no less evident signs of its Weakness, which stood in need of all these Interpositions, (as one well observes)<sup>a</sup> than the frequent appearance of *Angels* was under the former Administrations: Whereas afterwards in its more confirm'd and settled State, these *Helps*<sup>b</sup> became unnecessary, the natural and ordinary Evidence, the regular and stated Methods of Instruction being abundantly sufficient. The same Observation might be confirm'd from the frequent misapplication of these very Gifts, so as to occasion tumults and confusion in the public Assembly (with reverence I speak it) even in the midst of that

<sup>x</sup> *Acts* 15. 28, 29. See *Benson's Hist. of Planting Christianity*, V. 2. p. 56. where the best account seems to be given of that Decree from the 17 and 18 of *Levit.* See also *Misc. Sacr. Ess.* 4.

<sup>a</sup> *Edwards's Survey*, p. 600, 606, &c. add *Hicks's Spirit of Enthusiasm exorcised*, p. 27, - 30. The particular occasion there was for each may be seen in *Misc. Sacr. Ess.* 1, p. 153, &c.

<sup>b</sup> *1 Cor.* 12. 28.

<sup>c</sup> *1 Cor.* 14. see *Div. Leg.* V. 2. B. 4. S. 6. p. 320.

plentiful effusion of the Spirit, <sup>c</sup> infomuch that they sometimes *came together not for the better, but for the worse.* <sup>d</sup> Even in those days the *Mystery of Iniquity* began to work, <sup>e</sup> many Factions and Schisms arose, many Tares were sown together with the good Seed, and often sprang up with it and choaked it. No sooner had *Christianity* got well rid of the Yoke of the *Jewish Law*, than it was corrupted with *Jewish Fables* <sup>f</sup> and Traditions. The *Gentile Converts* were sometime in laying aside their old Errors and Superstitions <sup>g</sup> and afterwards introduced an impure mixture of their *Philosophy*; <sup>h</sup> this soon produced innumerable Sects and monstrous *Heresies*, which take up the greatest part of the History of those times. <sup>i</sup> Instead of attending to the plain popular sense of Scripture, they fly to fanciful Allegories, <sup>k</sup> raise multitudes of Mysteries, and maintain continual *opposition*

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. 11, 17.    <sup>e</sup> 2 Theff. 2. 7.

<sup>f</sup> See *Basnage's Hist of the Jews*, B. 3. c. 22.

<sup>g</sup> See *Bingham's Ant. B.* 16. c. 5.

See *Bibl. Univers. Tom. 10. et Cleric. Ep. Crit. 4. 148, &c.*

<sup>i</sup> See a summary account of it in *Le Clerc. Ep. Crit. 4.*

<sup>k</sup> <sup>c</sup> Hunc (scil. *Philonem*) haud ita multo post culpabili affectatione sequuti sunt Patres et Scriptores Ecclesiastici, tam suam quam lectorum operam ludentes: sive quod is omnium primus annotata in Sacram Scripturam tentaret, sive potius quod *Philonem* primo in hunc modum

<sup>c</sup> scri-

*of Science falsely so call'd.* For under all their shew of Science not much solidity or real Knowledge, not much true Learning is to be met with; nor indeed had they much room to cultivate it in those times. — And though the whole Scheme of our Redemption was compleatly delivered, and all its essential parts recorded during the extraordinary Assistance and Inspection of the *Holy Ghost*, and in some respects the primitive *Christians* seem to have the advantage of others, as being better acquainted with the Stile in which it was wrote, and some Apostolical Traditions which gave light to it:<sup>1</sup> yet it by no means follows that the true Genius and Extent of this Revelation must be as well understood by the generality of them, as it could be by any that came after them. What

‘ scribentem repererint : Certum sane est eum *Christianis*  
 ‘ Scriptoribus diu plurimum arrisisse ; quorum nonnulli  
 ‘ eum adeo ad amissim imitari ambiebant, ut sacra  
 ‘ volumina, alioquin in se perspicua, foede obscurarint,  
 ‘ obductaque allegoriarum suarum fuligine minus sincera  
 ‘ præbuerint.’ *Lightfoot* Op. Tom. 2. p. 848.

<sup>1</sup> Which yet is but of very little weight, as may be seen in *Le Clerc* Ep. Crit. 4. p. 146, &. or *Whitby*, Dissert. de S. Scr. Interp. passim. ‘ Sunt equidem qui sentiunt  
 ‘ Patres eo quod N. Testamenti Scriptoribus proprios  
 ‘ essent idoneos magis fuisse sensus Scripturæ Judices, sive  
 ‘ Interpretes ; quod tamen falsissimum esse experientia  
 ‘ duce compertum est. Ex trium enim primorum seculorum  
 ‘ scriptoribus haud pauca in hoc opere congestimus ab  
 ‘ omni



our Saviour said of *John* the Baptist, that *the least in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than he*, greater in his Knowledge of the Nature and Constitution of that Kingdom; the same may be said of common *Christians* in that Period; many of less merit and lower abilities, but living in a more enlighten'd Age, might easily prove equal, if not superior to them in what may be call'd the *Theory*, or speculative part of their Religion, with regard to which only I would always be understood. The plain fundamental Doctrines and Rules of Life were then no doubt (as they have always been) well known, and these they took good care to act up to, and deserve this Character, that they lived much better than they reason'd.<sup>m</sup> Though perhaps even thus much can only be

‘ omni veritatis specie aliena. Ostendant nobis Patrum  
 ‘ Patroni unam Scripturæ Pericopen, quæ alias obscura  
 ‘ cum esset, ab iis sit lucem mutuata. Hoc autem admi-  
 ‘ randa Dei providentia contigisse existimo, ne ex humano  
 ‘ judicio Divinarum Scripturarum autoritas penderet. Nisi  
 ‘ enim experientiâ scientiæ magistrâ compertum esset  
 ‘ Patres primævos et Apostolis proprios, haud minus  
 ‘ quam cæteri, cæspitasse, pronum esset propter insignem  
 ‘ eorum Pietatem et dona quorundam spiritualia eorum  
 ‘ vestigiis instituisse.’ *Whitby* ib. Epil. p. 346.

<sup>m</sup> See *Le Clerc's* Eccl. Hist. of 2 first Cent. pass. and Ep. Crit. et Eccl. Ep. 4. or *Daille* or *Barbyrac* Pref. to *Pufendorf*, and Spirit of Ecclesiastics. *Whitby* Dissert. in Pref.

affirm'd of them in the very primitive times, during the extraordinary assistance of the Holy Spirit, and whilst the original Evidence was clear and cogent, and its Impressions strong and lively upon them; while they believ'd that the World was just at an end, however like to end soon with themselves by reason of the many Dangers, Difficulties and Distresses to which they were daily expos'd: from which extraordinary cases we are not to form our Notions of the State of any Institution, as was observ'd in the beginning.\* Nor are such any Objection to the gradual Progress of Religion here suppos'd. Neither were the first Christians different from other men as soon as these ex-

Præf. S. 4, 5, &c. et Epilog. Bp. Taylor's Liberty of Prophecy, c. 8. Ibbot's Boyle's Lect. Part 2. Sermon. 4. or Edwards's Free Disc. on Truth and Error, c. 7. or his *Patrologia* Posth. Tr. 1. at the end of which is a Catalogue of Authors that have freely censur'd the *Fathers*. Buddeus in his Judgement of *Le Clerc* [de Theolog. Patrist. Ifag. L. 2. c. 3. S. 3. p. 489.] seems to own that the learning of the generality of the Fathers is to be rated according to the Times in which they lived, and that those were much inferior to our own in this respect, which is all that I am here concern'd for. Vid. *Bub.* ib. S. 10. p. 508. add *Dodwel* Diff. in *Iren.* Præf. et. Diff. 1. or *Wotton's* Reflections, c. 29. p. 389, &c. 2 Ed.

\* Part 2.

traordinary Hopes and Terrors ceased; <sup>m</sup> as soon as they were at ease in the World, and left to the common course of it, and once became involv'd in all its Fashions, Forms and Interests, having all along *this treasure in earthen Vessels*, that the *Excellency of the Power might be of God and not of them.* <sup>n</sup>

<sup>m</sup> Ως δ' ο ιερος των Αποστολων χορος διαφορων ειληφει τριβια τελος, παρεληλυθει τε η γενεα εκεινη των αυταις ακοαις της εν θεω σοφιας επακουσαι κατηξιωμενων, τηνικαυτα της αθεα πλαυης την αρχην ελαμβανεν η συσχσις, δια της των ετεροδιδασκαλων απατης, οι και ατε μηδενος ετι των Αποστολων λειπομενς, γυμνη λοιπον ηδη τη κεφαλη, τω της αληθειας κηρυγματι την ψευδωνυμον γνωσιω αντικηρυτλειω επεχειρουν. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. L. 3. c. 26. — ‘Reformations  
 ‘ in Religion will sometimes last long with regard to  
 ‘ speculative Doctrines; but with respect to practical  
 ‘ Morality, they soon attain to Perfection and their full  
 ‘ growth; and this is succeeded by a sudden Depravation  
 ‘ of Manners, and a state of so much corruption as would  
 ‘ require a new Reformation. The strict Morals or Be-  
 ‘ haviour of the primitive Christians; their Sobriety,  
 ‘ Chastity, Humility, &c. shone in their greatest splendour  
 ‘ during the Lives of the Apostles; but degenerated so  
 ‘ much daily from the period in question, that there was  
 ‘ no difference in the fourth Century between the Man-  
 ‘ ners and Conduct of the Christians and those of other  
 ‘ People.’ Bayle Gen. Dict. V. 7. comp. Moxley’s Works,  
 V. 2. p. 204, &c. with Vitringa’s Dissertation on the State  
 of the Church from Nero’s time till Trajan. Observ. Sac.  
 L. 4. c. 7. 8.

<sup>n</sup> ‘ It is with Religion as it is with Arts and Sciences,  
 ‘ the first Essays are seldom perfect; they arrive not to  
 ‘ their

When *Christianity* comes to be establish'd in the *Roman Empire* it partakes of its Pomp and Pageantry, and soon admits the Pagan Ceremonies. <sup>n n</sup> We find it immediately split into new Heresies and Schisms, torn with ambitious Contests and Struggles for Power: ° perplexing Doubts and Difficulties rais'd in points of Doctrine, subtle Distinctions and nice Refinements made in its Precepts, and both often confound-

‘ their height at first, they require a gradual Improvement. And so it is here: the primitive *Christians* were not grown up to that perfection of Knowledge and Understanding which was design'd by the Author of our Religion. *Christianity* was in its Infancy, at most in its Childhood, when these men wrote, and therefore it is no wonder that they *spoke as Children*, that they *understood as Children*, that they *thought as Children*: This was according to the Oeconomy they were then under. And besides they had not time and leisure to search into the *Christian* Doctrines, nor had they laid in a sufficient stock and fund for that purpose, they being but newly adopted into the *Christian* Church: yet they were willing to appear in its behalf, to defend it as well as they could, which was accepted by Heaven.’ *Edwards's Patrologia*, p. 57. ‘ Let me not be censur'd though I should be so bold as to say that we should have understood the Scriptures much better if we had not had the Writings of the Fathers; for they have obscured and depraved them by their different and contrary Comments; They have rais'd Controversies, they have taught men to quarrel and dispute about the sense of many Texts which otherwise are plain and ob-

ed in many an idle Controversy : <sup>p</sup> till at length almost the whole Church of *Christ* seems to be overwhelm'd with *Popery* and *Mahometanism*, for which indeed it was too fully ripe. <sup>q</sup> Though perhaps the latter of these two ( notwithstanding the mixture of Imposture in it ) may appear to have been in the main a very considerable Reformation <sup>r</sup> [ concerning the former, see N. <sup>z</sup> below. ]

‘ obvious, and about several matters of practice which  
 ‘ are evident enough in themselves, some of which are  
 ‘ superstitious, &c. ib. p. 135.

<sup>n</sup> See Dr. *Middleton's* Letter from *Rome* 4<sup>th</sup> Edit.  
 ‘ Imperio ad fidem adducto, sed et Imperii pompa Eccle-  
 ‘ siam inficiente : Ethnicis ad Christum conversis, sed  
 ‘ et Christi religione ad Ethnicæ formam depravata, &c.  
*Turretin* de variis Chr. Rel. Fatis. Orat. Acad.

◦ *V. Amnian.* Mar. L. 15. et 27. *Socr. Eccl. H. L. I.*  
 c. 22. 23.

<sup>p</sup> See *Barbyrac* Præf. to Puf. S. 19. *Ut in illis temporibus*, says *Erasmus* very justly, *ingeniosa res fuit esse Christianum.* add *Euseb. de Vit. Constant.* L. 2. c. 61.

<sup>q</sup> See *Sale's* Prelim. Disc. to the *Koran*, Sect. 2. add *Grot. de Ver. R. G. L. 6. c. 1.*

<sup>r</sup> All Authors agree that what gave *Mahomet* the greatest room to advance his new Religion was the distracted, ignorant, corrupt state of the Eastern Church at that time ; the miserable Contentions and most horrid Persecutions on every Religious pretence, the dissoluteness of all Sects and Parties : and 'tis evident that he contributed not only to reform the Morals of a great part of the World, but likewise reduced them from Polytheism  
 and

But this is a Subject too disagreeable to dwell upon; nor am I inclined to aggravate the Imperfections of past Ages. All that I would observe is what appears from the most transient view of Ecclesiastical History, namely that the rise and progress of *Christianity* has in the main been similar to that of all other Dispensations; that both the Name of *Christ* and the Nature of his Religion were discover'd, or as we may say, both the *external* and *internal* Propagation of *Christianity* was carried on in the same gradual manner.

and gross Idolatry to the belief and Worship of one God; which was the principal Doctrine he set out with at first, and gain'd great Reputation by, and which he made the ground of his pretended Mission. His System contains a great deal of pure *Christianity*, it enforces the Virtues of Charity, Temperance, Justice and Fidelity in the strongest manner, it prohibits Extortion and all kinds of Cruelty, even to Brutes, and binds its Votaries to the strictest Order, Regularity and Devotion. Several Sects of them believe in *Christ*. [v. *D. Millius* de Rel. *Moham.* Diff. 10. p. 344, &c. *Reland* de R. M. p. 25, &c. and Sir *P. Ricaut's* Hist, B. 2. c. 11, &c. or *Millar*, p. 230.] and entertain as worthy Notions of him to the full as some of the *Papists* do [see *L' Alcoran des Cordeliers*, and *Bayle* Gen. Dict. p. 326. B.] One may see to what height the *Römish* Corruptions were grown in *Mahomet's* time by his reproaching the *Christians* with their associating to God their Doctors and Monks [*Alcoran*, 9. 31.] and by his surprising mistake of the Virgin *Mary* for the third Person in the *Trinity*: [see *Reland's* 4 Treaties on *Mahom.* p. 174, &c. or *Sale's* Prelim-

As to the first. The *Jews* who had before been made use of to spread the Knowledge of the true God and his Providence and prepare men for a more noble Institution by their frequent Dispersions all over the East, are here much more so ( when they were much better qualify'd for it and less liable than ever to be corrupted by the Heathen among whom some of them were so long to converse ) by their Dispersion over the whole World at the Destruction of their Temple and Government by *Titus*, and under the following Emperors,

Prelim. Disc. p. 35. and his *Koran*. c. 5. p. 98 ] and what havock those most lamentable Controversies on this Subject made, appears from the Confession of a learned Writer, who tells us, that obliged him to drop his Design of giving us the History of these Churches. Pref. to *Prid. Life of Mahomet*.

\* See *Le Clerc's Causes of Incredulity*, p. 264, &c. In fact none of them that we know of, however bad they were and are in other respects, have fallen from their own God to the Idolatrous Worship of their Neighbours any where, during this their most miserable Dispersion, their seeming so long to be utterly rejected by him, a tenth part of which suffering would have totally destroy'd the very Name of them in any former times. This must be thought a little remarkable by every one who thinks at all about it. Nor has their case been less extraordinary in Christian Countries, where they have never been permitted to rest long in any Kingdom, where frequently in every Age men's eyes are turn'd upon them by some new general Persecution ; and yet notwithstanding all this they

especially *Adrian*,<sup>t</sup> and thereby every where publish and prove the Truth of their own, as well as the Gospel Prophecies,<sup>u</sup> and become the best Evidences, because unwilling ones, in favour of the *Christian* Religion. And as the *Roman* Empire by its increase and settlement at the time of *Christ's* coming contributed remarkably to this same end, so did it no less afterward by its Decline and Dissolution, at which time *Christianity* was scatter'd abroad with it among the *Northern* Nations, and carried to the remotest *Isles*, in the same manner as the *Grecian* Arts

are universally believ'd to be more numerous in the whole at present than they have ever been in their most flourishing estate in their own Land.

<sup>t</sup> He sold them at Fairs for the same price as Horses [ *Hier.* in *Jer.* p. 342. ] and would not suffer any of them so much as to set foot in or come in view of *Jerusalem*, say some [ *Aug.* Civ. D. L. 16. c. 21. *Hil.* in *Pf.* 48. ] or of any part of *Judea*, according to others. [ *Hier.* in *Dan.* 595. *Tert. Apol.* c. 21. ] Nor could they obtain even this privilege from any of the succeeding Emperors (except *Julian*) but with great difficulty, and only for one Day in a year to see and bewail its Ruins, and that upon paying a considerable Sum. *Univ. Hist.* B. 3. p. 40. *Echard.* Eccl. Hist. 465. &c. *Euseb.* Eccl. Hist. 21. 6. comp. *Bafnage* Hist. I. B. 6. c. 9. S. 28, 29. et *Witsii* Exerc. Acad. 12. 16. <sup>u</sup> Thus all the Attempts of that perfidious Nation towards the recovery of their former Condition served only to heighten and aggravate those Calamities with which they had been so often threatned by the Prophets, and to reduce them to the deplorable State in which we now see them, being a Crew of contemptible Vagabonds



had been dispers'd over *Asia* upon the dissolution of *Alexander's* Empire.

By these and the like means was the Gospel divulg'd every where, and the sound of it might be said without an Hyperbole to have *gone into all the Earth, and its Words unto the ends of the World:* <sup>w</sup> and where it has prevailed, it prevail'd more entirely than any other Religion could, which (as an excellent Author observes,\*) makes a great abatement in the Disproportion that Heathenism in general may seem to have in its numbers above Christianity. And though some Nations at first view seem to have quite

‘ bonds dispersed all over the World, without King,  
 ‘ Temple or Pontiff; driven from their own Countrey,  
 ‘ and not daring to set foot in it even as Passengers and  
 ‘ Strangers. The Ediſt of *Adrian* excluding all *Jews* from  
 ‘ *Jerusalem*, extended to such of them as had embraced  
 ‘ the *Christian* Religion, so that they too being obliged  
 ‘ to quit the City, the Church was by that means deliver'd  
 ‘ from the Servitude of the Law; for till that time, not  
 ‘ only the Bishops of *Jerusalem* had been chosen from  
 ‘ among the circumcised *Christians*, but all the converted  
 ‘ *Jews* joined to the observance of the Gospel that of the  
 ‘ Law.’ *Univ. Hist.* ib. p. 41.

<sup>u</sup> *Deut.* 28. *Matt.* 23. 35, 38, &c. *Luke* 21. 24. *Deut.* 32. 21. *Rom.* 10. 19. *Jer.* 15. 4. 25. 9. *Hes.* 3. 4. In what a remarkable manner every Curse described by *Moses* has been to the full inflicted on that still miserable People, may be seen in *Patrick* upon *Deut.* 28.

<sup>w</sup> *Rom.* 10. 18. See the Authors below.

\* *Jenkin*, V. I. p. 347.

lost it again, or greatly abused and corrupted it; yet upon a more strict survey, we discover a great deal of it mixed in their several Systems, and hid under different Names, which we have reason to think, will at length be found of them more fully, and like Seed sown revive in its own season. Nor is it now in so narrow a compass as is generally imagined. \* Though there be many large Countries where it is not established or formally profess'd, yet are there some traces both of this and former Revelations in most Parts of the World, as appears from several Modern Writers: y and though we often find it blended with impure Rites, and gross Superstitions among a barbarous People; yet at the same time we find that it has had a very considerable effect even upon them, and will we trust in time lead them to a more pure and perfect Profession of it, when they become ripe for such a Manifestation: and as some Corruptions both in the Natural and Civil Body generally make way for a more perfect Soundness and thorough Reformation, and then

\* V. *Fabricii Lux Evang. toti orbi exoriens.* c. 36, &c. or *Millar's Hist. of Propag.* c. 7. 8, &c.

y See many of them cited and more referr'd to by *Jenkin, Fabricius* and *Millar.* add *Young's Hist. Diff.* V. 2. p. 218, &c.

are themselves cured: so may it be in the Body Spiritual. Thus that thick Cloud of *Popery* which has been so long hanging over the Western Church, made way for a brighter Light perhaps than ever at the *Reformation*, \* (which help'd greatly to amend at least the Discipline of that very Church who refused to admit any material Alteration in her Doctrines †) and may still by its resemblance to the Worship of *Heathens* lead them more easily and insensibly out of their grosser Errors, and be no improper introduction to a more pure Religion among them, and when it has served that end, its own Idolatrys be abolished and by its Judgements alarm and convince the *Jews* (to whom it has been hitherto a Rock of Offence) and so make way for a still purer, as well as more enlarged estate of *Christianity* among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*.<sup>2</sup> But not to dwell on conjectures; this we know assuredly, that every People, Nation and Language shall at last embrace the true Religion, and all

\* See *Worthington's* Essay, p. 152, &c.

† See *Hakewill's* Apology p. 547.

<sup>2</sup> See *Edwards's* Survey, p. 715. or *Scott's* Christian Life, Part 2. V. 2. c. 7. p. 489. Some great end will most undoubtedly be serv'd by the permission of *Popery* so long even after the *Mystery* of its *Iniquity* is seen through by

Kingdoms of the World become the Kingdoms of Christ. <sup>a</sup>

Secondly. As to what may be called more particularly the internal Propagation of *Christianity*, or the Comprehension of the whole Gospel Scheme, the same method is carried on, though not in so visible a manner or capable of being distinguished by such remarkable Periods. That perfect *Analogy* between Religion and the common course of Nature, which has been so beautifully display'd by a late excellent Writer † holds no less true I believe in this respect, and

the generality of its own Professors, as seems to be in a great measure the case at present. Even during its darkest Ages, which afford the very strongest Objection to that *Progress* in Religion we suppose, *Christianity* was still spreading wider and wider in the more distant parts of the World, and where *Papish* Converts now become the Seed of *Christians*, who may not improperly be compared to the Profelytes of the Gate among the *Jews*, being probably the first fruits of the Harvest God intends to have among the Heathens of those Parts, and after they are fully converted may be most servicable to promote the Conversion of others. [ see *Jurieu*. Pref. to Accompl. of Proph. or *Millar* 2V. p. 230. 364. ] We may affirm that *Popery* there is still better than *Paganism*, and by its so great resemblance of the Pagan Superstitions (particularly in the point of Images ) it more easily insinuates itself among such People, and may be consider'd therefore in some respects as no very unfit Introduction to a more  
per-

† The Ld. Bp. of *Bristol*.

that as all Arts and Sciences, every improvement in natural and civil Life are still drawing nearer to perfection, as we become daily better acquainted with the System of the World, as well as that of the Universe, with the nature of the Heavens and Earth, with that of our own Body and Mind; in short, as every branch of knowledge has been all along enlarging and improving itself, and every successive Age not only enjoys the Discoveries of the foregoing, but adds still greater and more valuable ones of its own; † so it is probable that the Knowledge of Religion alone

perfect State of Religion in future Ages, whenever they shall become capable of it. see *Colliber's Impartial Enquiry*, p. 138. 2 Edit. with *Gage's Survey of the West-Indies*.

\* *Pf.* 2. 8. 22. 27. 72. 11. 86. 9. *Isai.* c. 2. 2. c. 9. 7. c. 11. 9-11. c. 40. 5. c. 49. 6. c. 52. 10. c. 55. 5. c. 56. 7. c. 60. 12. c. 66. 18, 22. *Ezek.* 39. 23. 29. *Dan.* 2. 44. 7. 14, 27. *Hof.* 1. 10. 3. 4. *Micb.* 5. 4. *Am.* 9. 14. *Zeph.* 3. 9. *Zech.* 9. 10. 12. 10. 14. 9. *Mal.* 1. 11. *Matt.* 24. 14. *Mark* 13. 10. *Luke* 3. 6. 21. 24. *Acts* 13. 47. *Rom.* 8. 19, &c. 11. 25. 14. 11, &c. *1 Cor.* 15. 25. *2 Cor.* 3. 14, &c. *Rev.* 11. 15. 14. 6. From such Texts as these Mr. *Worthington* infers that the Kingdom of *Christ* will be an *Universal Theocracy*, whereof that under the *Jews* was in some respects typical, *Ess.* 292, &c. Where there shall be universal *Holinefs* 302. and Obedience to the Gospel Precepts in their strictest sense, 309. and either an *Universal Language* or a perfect *Union*, in Faith and Worship, 308.

† See Part. 3.

is not at a stand; but on the contrary, that as we continually advance in the study of GOD'S Works, so we shall come to a proportionably better understanding of his *Word*: As by all these means Human Reason is still growing more perfect, so by the same means Divine Revelation will gradually clear up, and *Christianity* itself draw nearer to its *fulnes*s. What is here supposed has been remarkably confirm'd in fact since the *Reformation*, about which time these two extraordinary Discoveries of *Printing* and the use of the *Compass* in *Europe* jointly contributed to the Dispersion of Learning and Enlarging of *Commerce* over the World; and at the same time gave a new publication of *Christianity* and in much greater Purity than it had been in before for many Centuries. Ever since which time all three have been continually gaining ground. New light has been given to the Prophetic and other more abstruse parts of Scripture in every successive Age and almost by every Writer, as a very able Judge assures us.<sup>a</sup> The Grounds of our Religion are in general much better understood, more clearly and rationally explain'd and vindicated; and from what appears at present we have reason

<sup>a</sup> *Newton on Daniel c. 1.*

to think they will be still more and more so.  
 b We may venture to say that in our own Nation there never were more free and worthy Notions of God and his Providence; nor were the Designs and various Dispensations of Religion ever generally so well understood

b c At tandem, superiore præfertim seculo et hoc nostro,  
 c cum Disciplinæ omnes et quæ pertinent ad Antiquitatis  
 c Linguarumque demortuarum intelligentiam, et quæ  
 c rerum ipsarum cognitionem tradunt, et quæ veri in  
 c quavis arte inveniendi ac exponendi rationem docent,  
 c ad multo majorem perfectionem adductæ essent; anti-  
 c quissima illa Religionis Divinitus revelatæ monumenta  
 c multo melius explicari, certioraque ex iis consecraria  
 c duci, Capitaque omnia Theologica rectius tradi cæperunt  
 c quam unquam antea ab Apostolorum ætate factum fuerat.  
 c Quod multo citius contigisset, si Majores nostri Judicio  
 c suo mallissent uti quam alieno; neque enim ingenia  
 c defuisse puto posterioribus seculis, sed artem duntaxat,  
 c quæ nimia cæcæque admiratione priorum oppressa jacebat.  
 c Quare contigit idem Theologiæ Christianæ quod Phi-  
 c losophiæ; quæ tum demum cum fructu, ut par erat  
 c excoli et perfici cæpit cum homines cæpere recordari,  
 c sibi Rationem non minus esse datam quam *Aristoteli*;  
 c excussaque admiratione Antiquitatis, Dogmata ejus ad  
 c examen revocare. Ut igitur qui nunc pulcherrima  
 c Recentiorum in Philosophia inventa oblivioni mandari  
 c vellent ut *Aristoteleæ* Decreta sola iterum obtinerent,  
 c tenebras luci præferre merito censerentur: ita qui nunc  
 c nos revocant ad Elementa ac prima veluti tentamina  
 c *Patrum* Græcorum aut Latinorum, plurisque ea fieri  
 c volunt quam quæ nunc scimus, ii virum adultæ ætatis  
 c per-

as at present. Never was Learning and real Knowledge so fully and equally dispers'd among all Parties and Professions of Men. Nor is there any Sect, however wild and extragavagant it may have been at its first setting out, but evidently partakes of these Improvements. And though while the minds of Men are warm and eager in the quest of Truth, while they are in continual agitation and daily teeming with new Inventions, many Monsters will spring up (as may naturally enough be expected) together with it, and strange Errors and Absurdities be advanc'd in such full Freedom of Enquiry and Debate; and though this Increase of Knowledge be attended with an Increase of Libertinism and Extravagance of all kinds, and an Evil Spirit of Infidelity and Prophaneness be at the same

‘pertinaci studio longaque experientia edoctum ad pueritiae ruditatem redire volunt, majorique in pretio habere quæ puer animo agitabat, quam quæ adultus maturo judicio pensitavit. *Inimici sunt Profectus omnis in sacris Literis, adeoque ipsius Veritatis. Talenta Divinitus nobis data et nuper mirum in modum aucta minuere atque infodere omni ope conantur. Quod ab iis perfici nec Deus, nec Homines sinent donec in aliquo terrarum angulo Literæ et Veritatis amor vigeant.* Clerc. Ep. Crit. 4. p. 151, &c. comp. Ibbot's B. Lect. 2 Part Ser. 4. p. 119. and *Laëtant*. de Orig. Err. L. 2. S. 7. To which we may be added Wotton's two excellent Chapters on the *Philological* and

*Theo-*



time gone abroad; yet is this neither so uncommon or unconformable to the course of Divine Providence in other respects as to make us despair of seeing it attended with the usual Consequences: We have still reason to trust that when Truth and Knowledge have once fully got the better of Error and Superstition, this Spirit of Reformation will at length reform and rectify itself, and we shall have more and more of the true Life and Spirit of our Religion as we draw nearer to those times wherein the sure Word of Prophecy has fix'd its Reign.

I am far from imagining that *Christianity* is yet come to its mature state, that it is understood in the whole extent, or held in its utmost purity and perfection by any particular Church<sup>c</sup>. But as when it was first preached Men were fit

*Theological Learning of the Moderns.* Refl. c. 28, and 29, and *Worthington's Essay*, c. 8.

c ' It will not be thought any imputation on *Christianity* that all its Mysteries and Doctrines have not been  
 ' as yet so fully discover'd and understood by the several  
 ' Sects and Parties of *Christians*, as to come to a settled  
 ' Agreement concerning them, if it be considered that  
 ' no human Science hath been brought to such perfection  
 ' as not to admit of farther Improvements, many of  
 ' which began to be cultivated long before the Com-  
 ' mencement of *Christianity*.' Pref. to Mr. *Worthington's*  
*Essay*, p. 7.

to hear and profit by it in a competent Degree, (as we have shown) as that was a very proper time to divulge it, in order to improve the World, which it did very considerably \* excelling all former Dispensations of Religion, and Systems of Science, refining the Notions, even of those who did not formally receive it, <sup>a</sup> and yet was itself for some while but partially communicated <sup>b</sup> and imperfectly understood: So now, 'tis of much greater advantage to the World in general, and yet still capable of increase; it waits for its own Fulness, nor shall Mankind receive the proper influence and advantage of it till their Minds be much farther open'd, their Reason more fully exercised in this great Mystery of Divine Love. We must surely be sensible that the Scriptures are very far from being thoroughly understood by us, who are of so reform'd a Church, live under such

\* See the Bp. of London's 2<sup>d</sup> Pastoral Letter, or *Worthington's* Essay, c. 7.

<sup>a</sup> This is very visible in the Writings of those Philosophers who came after its promulgation, as *Epicetus*, *Plutarch*, *Max. Tyr.* and more especially *M. Antoninus*, who is well acquainted with the *Christian* Virtue of *Humility*, among many others, and frequently insists upon it. The like may be observ'd of *Porphyry* and *Hierocles* [see passages in *Burnet de Fid. et Off.* p. 29.] as also in *Seneca* [see *Lamott's* Enquiry into his Religion: Works of the Learned

an excellent Government, and in this enlighten'd Age, not even those parts of them which treat of past States and Dispensations, much less those which regard Futurity. How long is it since men were so very ignorant of its Doctrines as to fix that horrid one of *Abjolute Reprobation* upon St. *Paul* himself? and 'tis to be fear'd that almost as hard things are yet believ'd of him and other inspired Writers. We are still apt to confine the Gospel of our Lord, as his primitive Disciples sometime did, to particular Nations, Churches, Sects, Opinions; to contend vehemently either about things in their own Nature abstruse and difficult to be understood, and therefore less necessary to be determin'd; or else such lighter Matters, as the Ceremonies, Circumstances and outward Forms of its Administration; instead of explaining and recommending the true Nature End and Design of

for July 1738 ] The same thing is own'd by the Emperor *Julian* in his excellent advice for a Reformation in their Philosophy by taking in the *Christian* Morals. Ep. ad *Arfac.* 49. V. *Cave* Introd. p. 32, &c. *Millar* Propag. p. 402. or *Gordon's* Disc. before his *Tacitus.* or Bp. *Leng's* B. Lect. S. 12. p. 111. Fol. add *Jenkin,* Part 3. c. 5. p. 386.

<sup>b</sup> See the several Periods of this Communication accurately settled by the Author of *Misc. Sac.* in his Abstract of the Scr. Hist. of the Apostles, and Pref. p. 14, &c.

it,

it, and being intent upon enlarging its real Kingdom, and taking care to maintain those Works which are intrinsically good and profitable unto men: <sup>a</sup> instead of attending to that more excellent way which the same blessed Apostle shew'd us, \* that bond of Perfection which he has so earnestly exhorted us to put on above all things, † which he has taught us to esteem above all Faith and Knowledge and even the best miraculous Gifts. — But though the Face of *Christianity* be still miserably darken'd and deform'd; (of which more below) though some Nations seem to be in their *Childhood* yet and cannot receive it; and others grow so vicious and profligate as to be inclined to reject it: though in some Ages it seems to be quite hid in darkness and sunk under Ignorance and Superstition, in others born down with the Torrent of Lewdness and Libertinism: though like the Sea, it have its Ebbs and Flows,

<sup>a</sup> *Tit.* 3. 8, 9. ‘The great Offence — which in all Nations and in all Ages has hindred the Propagation of the Gospel of Truth, has been a hypocritical Zeal to secure by Force a fictitious Uniformity of Opinion, which is indeed impossible in nature, instead of the real *Christian* Unity of Sincerity, Charity, and mutual Forbearance, which is the *Bond of Perfectness*.’ Dr. Clarke’s Sermon. 18. V. 6. 8<sup>vo</sup> Fol. V. 2. S. 18.

\* *1 Cor.* 12. 31. † *Coloss.* 3. 14.

and

and leave some Lands to gain on others; nay though sometimes it seem to be at a general stand, and even retreating: yet nevertheless we have reason to conclude that upon the whole its motion is progressive, and that each very Lett tends in the main to accelerate this Progress; (as was observed in the beginning) that its Power is still visibly or invisibly enlarging over the World, and that it will always go on to do so till the Kingdom of *Christ* be fully come, till it be *within us*, and known by all from the the least to the greatest; till the *Everlasting Gospel* \* go forth and be so thoroughly understood and embraced as to bring on the *Fulness of the Gentiles*, and by their means the Restoration of God's own People the *Jews*, as he has often foretold:<sup>a</sup> and so *the whole Earth be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.*

From the whole we have reason to conclude, that the objection mentioned in the beginning of these Discourses is absolutely groundless, that

\* *Rev.* 14. 6.

<sup>a</sup> See the Texts above, p. 183. Many more to the same purpose are collected in a Note to Part 2. c. 11. p. 187. Fol. of *Kidder's Demonstr.* To which may be added *Whitby's Appendix* to his Comment on *Rev.* 11. and *Treatise on the true Millenium* c. 2. *Burnet's App.* to his *B. De Stat. Mort.* *Werthington's Essay*, p. 295.

there

there is nothing in the time and manner of the Christian Dispensation inconsistent with infinite Wisdom and Goodness: that God is by no means partial or arbitrary in the distribution of his Blessings, but at all times takes care of all Mankind; and that this great scheme of Revelation was contriv'd and carried on in the best manner for the World in general; which ought chiefly to be regarded by us as it is in the Eye of our common Father. When we come to particular Ages and Nations, it is the same as with particular Persons, the same Benefits are not, cannot be confer'd on all, and the Dispensations of Religion are perfectly analogous to those of Providence in the constant course of both the natural and moral World, and these perhaps are capable of being shown to be the best upon the whole, as may in part appear from the former Discourse.\* If Christ was to come once for all, he must appear in some particular time and place which could not be equally near to all the successive Generations of Mankind: nor could all have the same priviledges of seeing and conversing with him in the Flesh: and as they are blessed who

\* See this more at large in Bp. *Butler's Analogy*, P<sup>t</sup> 2. c. 6. &c.

have not seen and yet believed, so are they too most undoubtedly (though perhaps in a lower degree) who having not so much as heard of *Christ* are yet in a good measure qualified to receive his doctrine were it delivered to them.

The great Scheme of our Redemption in *Christ* was laid before the World began,\* and if we take the account which itself gives of its Design, we shall find the greatest of its Benefits extended to all Mankind, namely the Covenant for restoring the whole Posterity of *Adam* to that *Immortality* which he forfeited. *The Gift of God is eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* † *Death* was abolish'd and *Life* and *Incorruptibility*<sup>b</sup> fix'd in the Divine Decrees from the beginning in view of *Christ's* future *Ransom*,<sup>c</sup> though not so fully brought to light till the actual Accomplishment of it by him in our Nature. As to any particular Privileges that can be supposed to be annex'd to the bare belief in him, or explicit profession of it, we have reason to think that no less were enjoy'd

\* *Eph.* 1. 4. † *Rom.* 6. 23.

<sup>b</sup> Αφθαρσία. 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. i.e. of the Body raised 1 *Cor.* 15. 52.

<sup>c</sup> *Matt.* 20. 28. *Mark* 10. 45. *Rev.* 13. 8. *Acts* 15. 11. *Heb.* 9. 15.

by those good Men of old, who by the dim Light of Prophecy or Tradition beheld his Day and rejoiced in it; who saw these Promises afar off and were perswaded of them and embraced them. \* Faith in him to come was the same in proportion to the Evidence as in him past, and must be equally meritorious. <sup>a</sup> Nor have we any reason to doubt but that the same Benefits, in kind at least, whatever they be, might accrue from a pious Prefiguration of his Death, with a lively Faith, in *Sacrifice*, as now do from remembering it in the same manner in his *Holy Supper*. So far then it might be the same when ever he came. And when we speak of the *Christian Scheme* being absolutely *necessary to Salvation*, † we understand *Salvation* in the Scripture sense of that word, as implying a particular *State and Degree* of Happiness, or as the *Christian's Heaven*, <sup>b</sup> not as the sole Condition of enjoying everlasting *Life*, or as necessary in all Men to the avoiding absolute Misery, or escaping the pains of *Hell*. He

\* *Heb.* 11. 13. *Gal.* 3. 8.

<sup>a</sup> See Dr. *Denne's* Sermon, before the Society for the Propagation of the G. p. 53, &c.

† p. 25.

<sup>b</sup> See *Rymer's* Represent. of Rev. Rel. p. 104. or *Whitby* on *Rom.* 2. 14.



has told us that in his Father's House are many *Mansions*, States suited to every Degree of Holiness and Virtue ; and as it often appears that men under very different Dispensations here, differ but almost insensibly from each other in the abovemention'd Qualifications, can we conceive that their States of Retribution shall be so infinitely different hereafter as those of *Heaven* and *Hell* are commonly believ'd to be? No doubt there are great Advantages and sure Promises belonging to those who have been so happy as to be included in the *Christian* Covenant, and hold it in Faith and Purity. But let not such exclude others from the Mercies of their common Lord, or murmur at the good man of the house if these also receive every man his penny,\* Whether they shall not sometime hereafter be call'd into the *Vineyard* and at length become acquainted with that Person who has done so great things for them as well as us ;<sup>a</sup> or what amends may be made them for the want of those singular Advantages which we here enjoy, is known only to that God of all Mercies in whose hands they are. What our

\* *Matt.* 20.

<sup>a</sup> See *Stainoe's* Enquiry into the State of those Men in another Life who never heard of *Christ* in this, from *Rev.* 20.

Saviour said of the *Gentiles* in contradistinction to the *Jews*, may be no less true perhaps between *Christians* and the rest of the World that never heard of *Christ*, but yet are prepared to enter, and in a good measure worthy to be admitted into his Kingdom; — who have duly attended to that *Candle of the Lord*, which is set up in the breast of every man, and which would lead such to the clearer Light of his Gospel, — *other Sheep I have which are not of this Fold; them also must I bring and they shall hear my Voice, and there shall be one Fold and one Shepherd.*<sup>b</sup> To them likewise may *the Times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord.*<sup>c</sup> — However, the case of such will undoubtedly be very different from that of those who frequently and perversely reject the Counsel of God against themselves, resolved to trust to their own Strength, and *going about to establish their own Righteousness, and not submitting themselves unto the Righteousness of God.*<sup>\*</sup>

To conclude with our Blessed Saviour's admonition in a like case, † *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me:* Let us instead of judging others or

<sup>b</sup> *Joh.* 10. 16. comp. *Matt.* 8. 11. and *Luke* 13. 29.

<sup>c</sup> *Acts* 3. 19. comp. *Rom.* 8. 22.

<sup>\*</sup> *Rom.* 10. 3. † *Joh.* 21. 22.

determining of their State, take care to set a due value on and to secure our own Salvation: instead of charging God foolishly and ungratefully for not having imparted the same Benefits to All which we enjoy, let us rather be giving him continual Thanks for his *unspeakable Gift*, and endeavouring to employ it to his Glory. Let us be intent on Studying the pure Word of God and careful to interpret it in such a manner as may do most honour to its Author; and at all times encourage a free and an impartial Study of it. 'Tis now high time to do this, and to awake out of Sleep, since our Reformation is much nearer than when we first believed: and it is to be wish'd that we ourselves could be perswaded to examine our own State before others are obliged to do it for us; that we were disposed to help and forward, rather than check the progress of every serious Enquiry, and stop any farther Improvements in the Knowledge of that which of all things deserves and wants them most; rather than withstand a general Reformation in Religion by rigorously insisting on and obtruding such things for Doctrine as are the Commandments of Men and very foreign to the Essence of it; instead of either entertaining that Antichristian kind of Spirit which calls down fire from Heaven on

all who don't receive us ; which delights in straitening the way that leads to Life, and shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men ; or else incurring the Woe denounc'd against those Hypocrites who are desirous of lading Men with heavy Burdens, and binding upon them things which are too grievous to be born, and which they know that none need touch with one of their fingers. \*

As we see the Faults and Follies of past Ages, a double Woe will be to us if instead of taking warning by them and avoiding the like, we are resolv'd to tread the same Steps, and fill up the Measure of our Fathers.

Let us who have leisure given us for this very purpose think on these things, and study to discern *the Signs of the Times*, that we may be prepared for them and profit by them : that we may not only save ourselves in the day of Trouble, but also contribute to the safety of our *Jerusalem*, and be ready to watch over and defend it whenever, or from what quarter soever the Enemy cometh. As we are a City upon a Hill, let us shew forth the Praises of him that has called us out of Darkness into his marvellous Light ; let our Light shine before Men, and let us freely communicate it to them

\* *Matt. 23. Luke 11,*

who still sit in Darknefs, and strive to adorn the Doctrine of our Lord. As we live in a more enlighten'd Age and are intrusted with a greater share of Talents, let us walk worthy of it and endeavour to excell others as much in our improvements. Above all things, let us labour to bring forth the genuine Fruits of our Religion in true Holines and Virtue, and daily draw nigh unto God in the imitation of his *Moral Perfections*, which is the Sum and Substance, the End and Aim of all *Religion*.



### III.

## The Progress of *Natural Religion and Science,*

OR,

The continual Improvement of the  
World in general.

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*Antiquitas Seculi, Juventus Mundi.*

BACON de Augment. Scient. L. i. c. 5.

Antiquity I unfeignedly honour and reverence, but why I should be bound to reverence the Rust and Refuse, the Dross and Dregs, the Warts and Wens thereof, I am yet to seek. — As in the little, so in the great World, reason will tell you that Old Age or Antiquity is to be accounted by the farther distance from the Beginning, and the nearer approach to the End: and as grey Beards are for Wisdom and Judgement to be preferred before young green Heads, because they have more Experience in Affairs: so likewise for the same Cause the present Times are to be preferred before the Infancy or Youth of the World, having the History and Practise of former Ages to inform us, which they wanted — In disgracing the present Times therefore you disgrace Antiquity properly so call'd. HAKEWILL, Apol. p. 132.





ECCLES. vii. 10.

*Say not thou what is the Cause why the former Days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.*

**T**HE badness of the Times has been a common Topic of Complaint in every Age, and that they are growing worse and worse continually is what some Persons think themselves obliged to insist upon with no less frequency and vehemence, how hard soever they find it to account for this in any respect. The former of these arguments if urg'd only to expose and give a check to some particular predominant Vices ( for which indeed all Ages have afforded too much room) may be of constant use and often necessary. But when the latter is added to it, and both carried so far as to make us discontented and uneasy with ourselves and troublesome to one another; to set us a quarrelling with the Station and Society in which we are placed, a murmuring at and speaking evil of the Government we live under; despising every human Dominion and even repining at the  
of

Conduct of Divine Providence, and mistaking the Issue of its Dispensations to such a degree as must confound our judgement and unhinge our Faith in the unlimited Goodness, Power and Wisdom of their Author; then 'tis high time to correct an Error of this kind, and enquire into the true state and History of the World in the abovemention'd particular.

In order to which, so far as the compass of such a Discourse will allow, I purpose in the first place.

I. To shew the Falsity of this Complaint in several respects.

II. Secondly, to point out some of its ill Consequences, which may be sufficient to justify the Preacher's observation in the Text, *viz.* that this way of judging is no very *wise* one.

The Design of the Book from which these words are taken is to examine into the Course of this World in general, to consider the Nature of its Enjoyments and the Ends proposed in our pursuit of them. No one saw farther into these things or better understood their real value; none perhaps had a mind more elevated and refined above them, or could in a more lively manner display the Vanity and Emptiness thereof on some occasions than King *Solomon*; yet where he meets with those who treat

treat the Subject so very injudiciously as both to disparage the Works of God by representing them to be ever going backward and on the decline, and to distract the Minds of Men by teaching them to undervalue and grow weary of the present Benefits through an invidious retrospect to former Days : — when things are placed in such a light as this, we find him absolutely disapproving of the view and all those Questions which arise from thence, intimating that the very Foundation of them is not true in fact. To make this appear more fully let us consider some of the Advantages of Life both *natural* and *acquired*, in order to see whether there be any signs that these are now dispens'd in a less liberal way than formerly, or whether the reverse is not more probable.

As to the Fruitfulness of the Earth and Clemency of Seasons, the Temperature of the Air and Influence of Heavenly Bodies, the vulgar mistake of their Decay and tendency to Dissolution has I think long since been exploded.<sup>a</sup>

Whatever might have been the employment of Man had he continued innocent, (which yet we see was not exempted from the Care of

<sup>a</sup> A sufficient Confutation of it may be seen in *Hakewill's* Apology, passim.

*dressing* and *keeping* that spot of Ground in which *Adam* was placed \* ) upon his Fall a State of Toil and Labour became necessary in order to secure the Virtue Health and Quiet of the Species in any tolerable degree : <sup>b</sup> on which account the Earth is represented as lying under an extraordinary *Curse* of Barrenness, which has been generally thought to have continued and receiv'd considerable addition at the *Deluge* ; and very philosophical Reasons were assign'd for this Opinion, <sup>c</sup> till of late a learned Prelate <sup>d</sup> shew'd us from the Circumstances of the History, that the direct contrary was fact. For some time after, the Longevity of Mankind was very necessary for peopling the World and learning Arts, <sup>e</sup> though I should think it difficult to point out the Natural Causes of this Longevity and the following Change, at least such as can be consistent with the fore-

\* *Gen.* 2. 15.

<sup>b</sup> See *King's* Origin of Evil, p. 192. Note 33. 3 Edit. and the Authors there refer'd to. To which add *Worthington's* Essay on *Man's* Redemption, who has treated this point more particularly, p. 64, &c.

<sup>c</sup> See them collected in the *Universal Hist.* Vol. 1. p. 106, &c.

<sup>d</sup> Bp. *Sherlock*, Use and Intent of Proph. Disc. 4. comp. Mr. *Worthington* on the same Subject, Ess. p. 84, &c.

<sup>e</sup> See *Hakewill*, p. 42. *Joseph.* L. 1. c. 3.

mention'd opinion. <sup>†</sup> Since if the Earth was corrupted to such a degree at the universal Deluge, and the Period of Human Life thereby so much shortned, this effect one would imagine should have been most evident while these same Causes must be fresh and operate most strongly: not to repeat that this supposed Corruption is a vulgar Error. This great Change therefore seems to have been owing to a positive Appointment of the Deity distinct from, and subsequent to that of Noah's Flood, and introduced for Reasons which took place some Ages after it, and may be conceiv'd as a *New Dispensation* necessary for the future Government of the World in every age. <sup>‡</sup> However, so early as *Mojès's* days \* we find the Life of Man fix'd to the same length in general that it has at present, ( for his Description of it seems not capable of being wholly restrain'd to the

<sup>†</sup> V. *Clarke* in *Gen.* 3. 27. et *Buddi's* Hist. Eccl. Vol. 1. p. 151. Mr. *Worthington* supposes a Decay in the Constitution of Noah's Sons immediately occasion'd by the Rains and Waters of the Deluge, *Est.* p. 74, &c.

<sup>‡</sup> ' After the Flood, God made a sudden alteration in the Length of Men's Days: for perceiving the general Iniquity to encrease again, and thereupon designing to make an alteration in the World's continuance, he hasten'd the Period of Human Life, that the number

\* *Pf.* 90. 10.

particular Case at that time in the Wilderness) and ever since so far as the Accounts of ancient Times can be rely'd on we have reason to believe that the Constitution of Mankind in general, as well as the State of the Earth and Heavens, whereon that must depend, have at all times been much the same as we now find them,<sup>h</sup> and may rest satisfied that the original Promise has been, and will amply be made good, that *while the Earth remaineth, Seed-time*

‘ of Souls he intended to send into the World, before the  
 ‘ final Consummation of all things, might have a speedier  
 ‘ Probation.’ [ *Stackhouse B. of Div. p. 309. 1st Edit. ]*  
 ‘ and that Death being brought nearer to their view might  
 ‘ draw off their attachment from this World, and induce  
 ‘ them to place it upon another, which at the distance of so  
 ‘ many hundreds of years it had little power to effect.’  
*Worthington Ess. p. 73.* ‘ Sin brought Death in first, and  
 ‘ yet Man lived almost a thousand years. But he sinned  
 ‘ more, and then Death came nearer to him: for when all  
 ‘ the World was first drowned in Wickedness and then in  
 ‘ Water, God cut him shorter by one half, and five hun-  
 ‘ dred years was his ordinary Period. And Man sinned still,  
 ‘ and had strange Imaginations, and built Towers in the  
 ‘ Air; and then about *Peleg’s* Time God cut him shorter  
 ‘ by one half yet, too hundred and odd years was his de-  
 ‘ termination. And yet the Generations of the World re-  
 ‘ turned not unanimously to God; and God cut him off  
 ‘ another half yet, and reduced him to a hundred and  
 ‘ twenty years. And by *Moses’s* Time one half of the final  
 ‘ remanent Portion was pared away, reducing him to three-  
 ‘ score

and Harvest and Cold and Heat and Summer and Winter and Day and Night shall not cease,\* and therefore may conclude that the Distribution and Enjoyment of what I call the *Natural Advantages* of Life is so far from a constant gradual Decline, that these have been at all times in themselves pretty equal, and rather improving as they receive assistance, which they do very much, from the *acquired* ones, which we are in the next place to consider.

‘ score years and ten.—But if God had gone on still in the  
‘ same method and shorten’d our Days as we multiplied  
‘ our Sins, we should have been but as an *Ephemeron* ;  
‘ Man should have lived the Life of a Flie or a Gourd.  
‘ — But God seeing *Man’s Thoughts were only evil conti-*  
‘ *nually*, he was resolv’d *no longer so to strive with him,*  
‘ nor destroy the *Kind*, but punish *Individuals* only and  
‘ single Persons ; and if they sinned, or if they did obey,  
‘ regularly their Life should be proportionable.’ *Taylor,*  
*Life of Christ*, p. 305.

<sup>h</sup> See Sir *T. P. Blount*. *Ess.* 4. p. 188. 192, &c. or Lord *Bacon’s* *Hist. of Life and Death*. That the *Stature* of Man in this Age is the same as it was near three thousand years ago appears from *Greaves’s* account of the Monument in the *Egyptian Pyramid*. *Derham*. *Phys. Theol.* B. 5. c. 4. N. 4. That we have had several very late instances of Persons whose Longevity exceeded that of the *Patriarchal* Age may be seen in *Worthington’s* *Essay*, p. 417. comp. *Huet*. *Alnetan*. *Quæst.* L. 2. c. 12. S. 4.

\* *Gen.* 8. 22.

The late Invention of *Arts* and *Sciences* is usually insisted on, and very justly, in our Disputes with *Atheists* against the *Eternity* of the World; and their continual *Progress*, though perhaps seldom attended to, seems to be a Point no less necessary to complete the Argument. For if it can be shewn either that these which we now have, or others of equal use and importance were discover'd sooner and dropt again, and subject to their several *Revolutions*, why should not we grant from *Analogy* that the World itself has undergone the like? that the same *Time and Chance* has happen'd to all things concerning it and its Inhabitants? But that there actually have been such *Vicissitudes* in Nature, or so much as one valuable Art, or useful branch of Science wholly lost since the Creation I know no ground sufficient to believe.<sup>a</sup> In a History of the World which

<sup>a</sup> For proof of this see the pretended Instances of lost Arts in *Pancirollus*, which upon examination will appear all to be either manifestly false or frivolous, or of such trifles as have been dropt by disuse: to which may be added *Wotton's* Pref. to *Reflect. on Ancient and Modern Learning*. 'I will agree—that several Arts in the World  
' have been lost, and others after a time again revived;  
' but then these have been such Arts as have been more  
' curious than useful, and have rather been ornamenta]l  
' than beneficial to Mankind: and there has been some  
' good



has been prov'd by a late unexceptionable Writer<sup>b</sup> to be of all others by far the most ancient and authentic, and which carries its Accounts as high as either could be wish'd or hoped for from History, even to the forming and first peopling the World itself, and the original Division of the Nations; in this we have the Birth and Genealogy, the Names and Characters of the Founders of States and King-

‘ good reason to be given of their disuse, either by their  
‘ growing out of fashion, or by some more easy and com-  
‘ modious Invention. Thus the Art of *Glass-painting* was  
‘ lost about the time of the Reformation\* when the  
‘ Images of Saints were not so highly esteem'd, and  
‘ Churches began to be more gravely adorned. Thus the  
‘ use of *Archers* in an Army has been laid aside since the  
‘ Invention of Pikes and Guns. But who can imagine  
‘ that the Art of the Smith and the Carpenter should  
‘ ever be forgot after the first Invention; unless we could  
‘ suppose that Houses and all sorts of Utensils and Con-  
‘ veniences should grow out of fashion, and it would be  
‘ the Mode for Men to live like Colts and Wild Asses?  
‘ Unless Men could be supposed to forget the use of eating  
‘ and drinking, I am confident they could never forget  
‘ the Art of Ploughing and Sowing and Pressing the  
‘ Grape.’ *Nicholl's Conf.* Part. 1. p. 86. 1st Ed. See more  
of this in *Wotton's Pref.* p. 14, &c. 2d Edit.

<sup>b</sup> Sir *J. Newton.* Chronol. of Ancient Kingdoms.

\* This seems to be a vulgar Error. See *Glass painting* in *Chambers's Cyclopaedia.* or *Speſtacle de la Nature*, V. 3. p. 219. of *Cement.* ib. p. 228. add *Motte's Abr. of Phil. Transf.* V. 2. Part 4. p. 62, 63.

doms, as well as the Inventors even of manual Arts deliver'd down, <sup>a</sup> and from the very air of Truth and that Simplicity which runs through the whole relation, have much more reason to depend upon it than on the fabulous Antiquities of *Greece* and *Egypt*, as the same excellent Author has demonstrated. From whom we learn that neither the planting of the World, nor the Introduction of Arts and Sciences

<sup>a</sup> *Cain builded a City, or the first City. Gen. 4. 17. add Gen. 10. 8, 9, &c. Jubal was the Father of such as dwell in Tents and such as have Cattle, and his Brother's name was Jubal, he was the Father of all such as handle the Harp and the Organ, and Tubal Cain was an Instructor of every Artificer in Brass and Iron; or a Forger of Arms. Gen. 4. 20, &c. After the Flood we are told that Noah began to be an Husbandman and he planted a Vineyard; Gen. 9. 20. which by his being surpris'd in such a manner with the Effects of its Fruit seems to have been the first of the kind. So late as Abraham's time we find there was enough of the best Land unoccupied for both him and Lot to chuse out of Gen. 13. 9. which (as the Author of *Bibliotheca Biblica* observes, p. 335.) is a most illustrious Testimony for the late peopling of the World and by consequence for the Truth of the *Mosaic* History of the Creation and Deluge, in as much as it appears by this that the most pleasant and most fruitful Country of the whole Earth and which in a few hundreds of years afterward was so exceeding populous, was yet in the days of *Abraham* so very thinly peopled that even large Tracts of Ground were left in a manner uncultivated and without Proprietor.*

were

were of so early a Date as they have usually been represented. <sup>b</sup> Most Nations, like private Families, have at all times been unaccountably fond of carrying up their Pedigree as high as possible, and where no marks remain'd of the successive Alterations in their State, were apt to imagine that it had always been the same. Hence the many foolish Pretences among the Ancients to their being *Aborigines* of the

<sup>b</sup> ‘ Though *Noah* and his Sons had doubtless some knowledge of the Inventions of the Antediluvians and probably acquainted their Descendants with such of them as were most obvious and useful in common Life, yet it is not to be imagined that any of the more curious Arts or speculative Sciences were improved in any degree, supposing them to have been known or invented, till some considerable time after the Dispersion.—For on their settling in any Country, they found it employment sufficient to cultivate the Land (which yet for want of separate Property and security in their Possessions in those early times, they improved no farther than barely to supply their Necessities) and to provide themselves Habitations and Necessaries for their mutual comfort and subsistence. \* Besides this they were often obliged to remove from one place to another, where they could more conveniently reside; and it was a great while before they came to embody themselves together in Towns and Cities, and from thence to spread into Provinces and to settle the bounds and extent of their Territories. †

Two or three Ages at least must have been spent in

\* Vid. *Thucid.* L. 1. sub. in.

† *Stillingfleet.* Or. S. B, 1. c. 1. S. 16.

Countries they had inhabited time out of mind : hence were they led to make their several *Gods* the Founders of their Government. <sup>c</sup> They knew but very little of the World, and the Tradition which they had of that little was so far blended with fiction and Romance that it serv'd only to confound them. <sup>d</sup> Upon the removal of this Cloud by the more faithful, diligent and accurate Enquiry of the Moderns, we see History beginning to clear up even at this distance ; the World puts on a very different face, and all parts of it appear conformable to the late well known course of things. We find the *Marvellous* in all their Annals, and more especially in the great point of their Antiquity, exceedingly reduced, and our own plain accounts still more and more confirmed ; from which we may be convinc'd that both the peopling and cultivating of the Earth arose at first from a few low beginnings, and very gradually spread itself ; and that it has at all

<sup>c</sup> this manner ; and it is not very likely they should  
<sup>c</sup> amuse themselves with celestial Observations in particular, when they had so many more pressing affairs to  
<sup>c</sup> mind.' *Univ. Hist.* B. I. c. 2. p. 173.

<sup>e</sup> Datur hæc venia Antiquitati ut miscendo humana Divinis Primordia Urbium augustiora faciat. *Liv. Pref. Hist.* L. I.

times proceeded by pretty near the same slow regular steps it does at present. Since we have look'd into past times more narrowly we prove the Ancients far from being so expert and knowing as by a superstitious reverence for every thing remote we once were accustom'd to suppose: And as well from the present State of those particular Nations which used to brag most of their extraordinary advancement and long possession of the Sciences, as from the Remains of their Forefathers Skill, when fairly represented, we find no great reason to envy them their best Acquirements; so far I mean as concerns real Use; for all the worth that Fashion and Fancy may give things is out of the question. \* Some of them indeed describe their Knowledge in high strains, and perhaps for their times and in comparison with some of their Neighbours, it may have been considerable; and yet 'tis more than probable that such accounts are chiefly owing to their Ignorance

<sup>d</sup> The Grounds of the Uncertainty of Ancient History, may be seen in *Stillingfleet*, Or. Sac. B. I. c. I. S. 16, 18, &c. Of the *Egyptian* in particular, see *Shaw's Travels* p. 442. comp. *Baker on Hist. and Chronol. Reflections*, c. 10, and 11. and *Shuckford*, V. 2. B. 8.

\* Why the Sciences of Men's Brains have been more subject to Vicissitudes than than the Arts of their Hands, see *Sprat's Hist. R. S.* p. 118, &c. 3 Edit.

of the true State of the rest of Mankind; as is the case remarkably with the *Chinese*, a People so much celebrated by themselves and others, who yet upon more strict examination have appear'd in most things of consequence, and where most might have been expected, least to deserve a Character: So that nothing but their as small acquaintance with the *Europeans* formerly, as ours with them, could possibly give rise to those extravagant Sentiments and Sayings that are recorded of each other. ° The same may in a great measure be affirm'd of the

° See the 1st Part p. 18. to which may be added *Jenkin*, V. I. p. 340, &c. *Wotton's* and *Baker's* Reflections, under the Heads *Physic* and *Astronomy*. These and many other Authors shew us how little able they were to make any proper Observations in their so much boasted Science of the Heavens, till shewn the way of late by Missionaries; as also how monstrously inaccurate were both their Chronological and Astronomical Tables. *Pere Du Halde*, their Panegyrist, says, they have applied themselves from the beginning of their Empire to *Astronomy*; yet when he comes to explain himself, all their Study appears to be a little, low, judicial *Astrology*, V. I. Fol. Eng. p. 394. So ignorant were they in *Geography* that their Literati seeing a Map of the World in the hands of the *Jesuits* took that one of the two Hemispheres, which contain'd *Europe*, *Asia* and *Africa*, for the Empire of *China*, p. 280. Some of their curious Notions in Religion may be seen, p. 254. 652. 655. 657. Their skill in *Metaphysics* has been touch'd upon by Mr. *Gurdon*, B. Lect. S. 14. p. 425, &c.

*Egypt*

*Egyptian Learning.* <sup>f</sup> Though this Country has been stiled the Mother of Arts <sup>g</sup> as well as Mistress of Religion: <sup>h</sup> and was no doubt as early polished as most, yet if we be allow'd to judge of her improvement in other parts of Science from that most concerning one, and that which therefore in all reason should have been most cultivated, I mean *Medicine*, of which she also claims the first Invention, <sup>i</sup> we shall not have much room to marvel at her high

Their *Mechanics* may be judg'd of from the *Jesuit's* account of their taking the first Watch he brought thither for a living Creature: *Boyle* on Final Causes, p. 230. Their Method of communicating any Science, from their yet being without any *Alphabet*; as is observ'd by the ingenious Author of the *Divine Legation*, V. 2. p. 79.

<sup>f</sup> 'The truth is, there want not grounds of suspicion  
' that the old *Egyptian Learning* was not of that elevation  
' which the present distance of our Age makes us apt to  
' think it was: and a learned Man hath in a set Discourse  
' endeavoured to shew the great Defects that there were  
' in it. \* Neither can it I think be deny'd but according  
' to the reports we have now concerning it, some parts  
' of their Learning were frivolous, a great deal magical,  
' and the rest short of that improvement which the ac-  
' cession of the parts and industry of after Ages gave unto  
' it.' *Stillingfleet*. Or. S. B. 2. c. 2. p. 81. add *Wotton's*  
*Reflections*, c. 9. and Sir *T. P. Blount's* Ess. 4. p. 153, &c.

<sup>g</sup> *Macrob.* Sat. L. 1. 15.

<sup>h</sup> Id. L. 7. c. 13. et *Ammian.* Marc. L. 22.

<sup>i</sup> *Plin.* N. H. L. 7. c. 56.

ad-

\* *Conring.* de Hem. Med. c. 19, 11, 12.

advances. — ‘ It must evidently appear, says a  
 ‘ very learned Writer, that the *Egyptians* could  
 ‘ have no such Physicians in the days of *Moses*  
 ‘ as *Diodorus* and *Herodotus* seem to suppose :  
 ‘ it is much more probable that Ages after these  
 ‘ times they were, like the *Babylonians*, entirely  
 ‘ destitute of persons skilful in curing any Dis-  
 ‘ eases that might happen amongst them, and  
 ‘ that the best method they could think of,  
 ‘ after consulting their Oracles, was when any  
 ‘ one was sick, they took care to have as many  
 ‘ Persons see and speak to him as possibly could,  
 ‘ that if any one who saw the sick Person, had  
 ‘ had the like Distemper, he might say what  
 ‘ was proper to be done in that Condition.’ <sup>k</sup>

<sup>k</sup> *Shuckford*. *Connect.* B. 9. p. 367. *Babylonii* ( teste *Herodot.* L. 1. et *Strab.* G. L. 16.) languentes in forum efferebant, ut viri qui eos adirent consulerent hortarenturque ad ea quæ ipsi faciendo effugissent similem morbum, aut alium novissent effugisse. — Idem factitabant *Lusitani* et *Egyptii*. *P. Virg.* de Inv. Rer. L. 1. c. 20. Conf. *Strab.* G. L. 3. et *Plutarch.* de Occult. Vivend. That the same was done in other Countries. see *Harle’s Hist.* Essay on the State of Phys. in the *O. T.* p. 4. ‘ The *Egyptian* Practice of Physic depended much on Astrological and  
 ‘ Magical Grounds, either the Influence of some particular Planet, or some Tutelar Dæmon were still considered [ *Wotton*, p. 119. ] which precarious foundation  
 ‘ must needs depreciate their Skill, and stop any increase  
 ‘ of Knowledge which might be made on other Principles.’

*Univers.*



From which single instance of the State of this most necessary Art in those Times and Places, as well as its first Rudiments in like manner described by an able Judge,<sup>1</sup> we may I think be pretty well satisfied in what Condition the rest then were in other parts of the World, as also of their gradual Improvement since in all respects.<sup>m</sup> Many are indeed carried on much faster in some Countries than in others, and some now and then are soon brought to so great Perfection in one Country as to seem almost incapable of any increase for several Ages; which proves against an exact equable Improvement under each Period and in each particular, which never was contended for; but is no Ar-

*Univerf. Hift. V. 1. p. 219.* nor was the Method which they are said to have taken of establishing its Rules by Law [*Diod. Sic. L. 1. 74. Shuckford, B. 9. p. 362. Chandler, Vind. of O. T. part 2. p. 442.*] like to make any great progress in the Science. A tolerable account of the Ancient State of Physic may be seen in a Note to p. 85. of *Dr. Young's Hift. Diff. V. 2.* Add *Harle's Eff. p. 80, &c.* or *Barchusen de Medicinæ Orig. & Progress. Dissert. 1. & 18.*

<sup>1</sup> *Celfus Inventionem Artis scienter ponit L. 1. scribens.*  
“ Sæpe causa apparet utpote Lippitudinis, Vulneris, ne-  
“ que ex his patet Medicina : quod si scientiam non sub-  
“ jicit evidens causa, multo minus ea potest subjicere  
“ quæ in dubio est. Cum igitur illa incerta incompre-  
“ hensibilisque sit, a certis potius & exploratis petendum  
“ est

gument against Improvement in general, much less any Evidence that these grow daily worse; and notwithstanding this or other Limitations which might be admitted, yet from some of the great out-lines (as we may say) of Nature, from plain Appearances in many remarkable Æras, and most considerable Events, we seem to have still ground sufficient to conclude that on the whole, they are and always have been in the main *progressive*.

Now this Progress in *Arts* will necessarily bring with it a proportionable Improvement of all the other Natural Advantages; as Health, Strength, Plenty and Politeness: each of them

“ est præsidium, id est ab his quæ in ipsis curationibus  
 “ *Experientia* docuit, sicut in cæteris omnibus artibus.  
 “ Nam ne agricolam quidem aut gubernatorem disputa-  
 “ tione, sed *usu* fieri liquet. Ast istæ cogitationes nihil  
 “ ad medicinam pertinent, cum de his rebus qui diversa  
 “ senserunt non ab obscuris causis, neque a naturalibus  
 “ actionibus, sed ab *Experimentis*, prout cuique respon-  
 “ derant in perducendo homines in eandem sanitatem,  
 “ medendi vias traxerint. Notarunt enim ægrorum qui  
 “ sine medicis erant, alios propter aviditatem primis die-  
 “ bus cibum protinus sumpsisse, alios propter fastidium  
 “ abstinuisse, & levatum magis morbum eorum qui ab-  
 “ stinuisent: itemque alios in ipsa Febre aliquid edisse,  
 “ alios paulo ante eam, alios post remissionem ejus, &  
 “ optime iis cessasse qui post finem Febris id fecissent.  
 “ Eadem ratione alios inter principia statim usos esse cibo  
 “ ple-

tend in some respect or other to improve and adorn the Face of Nature, and lead us to apply its Laws to our respective Uses much more effectually than could be obtain'd without them. By them we are enabled to reap its several Benefits in ways more easy and compendious, with less time, labour and expence; the World is stock'd more plentifully with Inhabitants, and each of them supported in a way more elegant and advantageous to itself and all around it. In short, every thing in Life becomes more comfortable and commodious, and Life itself may be said to attain a longer Date by means of both a better and more early Education.<sup>11</sup>

“ pleniore, alios exiguo, & graviores eos factos qui se  
“ implevissent. Hæc similiaque cum quotidie inciderent,  
“ diligentes homines talia animadvertentes ad extremum  
“ perceperunt quæ ægrotantibus utilia forent. Sic Medi-  
“ cinam ortam inter omnes constat.” *C. Cels.* ap. *Pol.*  
*Virg. de R. I. L. 1. c. 20.* Add *Wotton. Refl. c. 26. p. 341.*  
*Æc. 2<sup>d</sup>. Ed. Max. Tyr. Diff. 40. 234. Barchusen. Dissert.*  
*1. 3. p. 11. &c.*

<sup>m</sup> See *Nicholls's Conf. Part 1. p. 81, 82. 1<sup>st</sup> Ed.*

<sup>11</sup> There is a sense in which these latter Generations  
in general have the advantage of the Ancients, and in  
which they may be said to out-live them — viz. in that  
they live more in less time. It is a common Observa-  
tion that Children ripen and become Men sooner in  
these latter Ages than formerly they did. — Notwith-  
standing our prejudices in other respects, we esteem so  
well

That this has been the case in later Ages seems too clear to be deny'd by any, who will be at the least trouble to compare them with the most extravagant account of former ones. <sup>mm</sup> 'Tis no great Compliment to the present times to say we are improved in every manual Art, as well as those of Government, <sup>n</sup> the social ones, and even our very Amusements; <sup>nn</sup> the thing shews itself every where; and 'tis no less

well of ourselves in this, that we think we are more knowing in every Science and Profession of Life, and more capable of Business than our Ancestors, not far backwards were at double our Age. And in confirmation hereof some traces in Scripture may be observed, whereby it appears that the State of Childhood continued much longer in the Infancy of the World than at present, and seem'd to bear proportion to the greater length of Men's Lives. And the same is observed by Heathen Authors.' *Worthington's Essay*, p. 422, 423.

<sup>mm</sup> — 'When Men began to unite into Societies, to cloath themselves, and build Cottages, and apply themselves to Agriculture, the Persons who fell upon the first hints of these rude Contrivances, were esteem'd such mighty Benefactors to Mankind that they could never sufficiently express their Gratitude to them. Hence they were made immortal, and Divine Honours were paid to them; and hence it is well known, arose the Godship of *Jupiter, Bacchus, Minerva, Ceres*, and the rest of that Tribe of Deities: But there is not a *Plough-boy* now, that would not have been a God, even to *Jupiter* himself; had he lived in his Days, with his present Skill in Husbandry. "Had the Mystery of Printing  
" been

plain *a priori* that it must be so. If, as the *Psalmist* says, \* *One Day telleth another, and one Night certifieth another* : if according to the Prophet, † *many run to and fro*, (travel by Sea and Land) and thereby *Knowledge is increased*; if by repeated Observation and Experience, the World grow (as it does unavoidably) in any respect more perfect, this will, by that affinity and union long since observ'd between

“ been invented in ancient Times, *Guttenberg* of *Mentz*  
 “ might have been a God of higher esteem throughout  
 “ *Germany*, than *Mercury* or *Jupiter* himself.” [*Worthington's* *Essay*, p. 169.] which we cannot think improbable, since his assistant *Fust* or *Faust* attain'd the Title of *Conjurer* for it in so late times and such a Place as *Paris*.

“ The Modern Governments are better calculated for the general good of the governed, which is now known to be the only end of Government, than the Ancient ones were. That horrid Spirit of Heroism and Desire of Conquest seems to be pretty well extinguish'd : and ‘ if at present there are fewer Revolutions in Christendom, ‘ ’tis because the Principles of sound Morality are more ‘ universally known; Men are less savage and fierce, and ‘ their Understanding is better cultivated; and perhaps ‘ all this is owing to Men of Learning, who have polish- ‘ ed Europe.’ Exam. of *Machiavel's* Prince, p. 18, 19. Add Mr. *Worthington's* judicious Observations on this Subject. *Essay*, c. 8. p. 173, &c.

<sup>an</sup> See *Worthington. Ess.* p. 201.

\* *Psal.* 19. 2.

† *Dan.* 12. 4.

the parts of Science ° derive Perfection on each Sister Art. The same effect will in a good measure follow if the World be but supposed to continue in the same natural State in which it was created, and the Genius of Mankind keep where it was originally; nay this must be the case if both do not grow worse, and in a very great degree, much greater than has ever been pretended. But as this point can be no longer call'd in question than till the matter is duly stated, we have not so much occasion to give a direct Proof of it by descending to Particulars, (which indeed would be infinite, and most of which appear too obvious to need naming<sup>p</sup>;) as to point out what is more material and perhaps less taken notice of, the farther connection which this *Progress of Arts* has with our *Religious Knowledge* of each kind.

By Religion in general, I mean the way of promoting our most perfect Happiness upon the whole, in this Life, as well as qualifying

° Omnes Artes quae ad Humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, & quasi cognatione quadam inter se continentur. *Cic. pro Arch. P. Id. de Or. L. 3.* Est illa *Platonis* vera — vox omnem Doctrinam harum ingenuarum & humanarum artium uno quodam societatis vinculo contineri. Ubi enim perfecta vis est Rationis ejus qua causæ rerum, atque exitus cognoscuntur, mirus quidam omnium quasi consensus Doctrinarum concentusque

us for and by particularly recommending ourselves to the Divine Favour entitling us to higher Degrees of it in the next. Now the knowledge of this, whether natural or revealed, will appear to have held pace in general with all other Knowledge from the beginning, and these three Branches of Science seem to have been in the main similar and synchronous, as indeed they ought to be, or else perpetual Disappointment, Misery and Confusion would ensue, as was observ'd in part before. \* The first Race of Men had as much Knowledge imparted to them, most probably by God himself, as they could either then want, or well be capable of; as much as they had either means or leisure to employ; and higher notices, could they have been attended to, would we conceive rather have distracted and render'd them uneasy in their then situation, and tended to disqualify them for their more immediate Occupations in that part of Life. They were placed in a World

centusque reperitur. It would be mere impertinence to bring Instances in proof of this.

p The Reader may see a List of them in *Pancirollus de Nov. Repert.* as also in *Edwards, Glanvill, Wotton, Sir T. P. Blount, Perault, Sprat's Hist. R. S.* and others, who have appear'd for the *Moderns*, as I think with great advantage, in the late Controversy on this Subject.

\* Part. I. p. 7, 8, 9.

capable of affording all Gratifications suited to their mortal frame, and made for its support, and were design'd to glorify their Maker's Goodness in the Enjoyment of them for some time here, as well as to expect a reparation of its Decays, with farther and more full Manifestations of the same Goodness somewhere hereafter. Their first Employ then was to learn the present use and application of these natural Benefits themselves, as well as to lay a foundation for communicating and extending them to future Generations, which were to inhabit the same place for many Ages. And accordingly their Notions of the World and of its Governour and consequent Opinions in Religion both natural and positive were such as might be expected from Men in such circumstances.\* As to the latter, and more especially that great Article of it which concern'd the Restauration of Human Nature, they had only a general, indeterminate expectation of some Redeemer or other, who was sometime to arise among them: <sup>a</sup> which yet was very sufficient to keep up their Hopes and secure a Trust and Dependence on

\* What these Opinions might be is largely and beautifully described by Dr. *Winder*. Hist. of Knowledge, V. I. c. 2. S. 2. though whether our first Parents *thought so clearly on the Subject*, as this ingenious Author and *those celebrated Moderns* he there mentions [ p. 36 ] I much question.

their



their Creator, especially when revived by so many earnest of present temporal Blessings : but when or where, or upon what plan that Redemption was to be work'd they knew not ; and perhaps it might be as unnecessary to impart this fully to them as it was probably above their comprehension. To preserve an intercourse with the Divine Being it is likewise probable that they had positive Directions about consecrating to him a part of their Goods, together with the Times and Places for presenting this before him, by way of acknowledgement of his present Bounty, and application for the continuance of it, and also in deprecation of his Displeasure whenever they became sensible of having incurr'd it by abusing them ; and lastly as a settled stated means of always having access to him, and finding acceptance with him. Hence was the Origin of *Sacrifices*,<sup>b</sup> as they are distinguish'd into *expiatory*, *euctical* and *eucharistical* ; and this seems to have been the substance of the primitive Religion, which was as plain and simple as the Times. When the Notions of Mankind grew more complex, Religion by degrees became so too, and spread

<sup>a</sup> See Bp. *Sherlock's* Use and Intent of Proph. S. 2. or Dr. *Winder's* Hist. of Knowledge, p. 26, 27.

<sup>b</sup> See Part 2. p. 29. Note d. and p. 30. Note a. c. with Dr. *Winder* on the Subject p. 30.

itself together with their other Notices, all which were in some measure supplemental and subsidiary to it. Each new degree of Knowledge in each part of Nature was a new opening of the Human Mind, still more and more displaying the Divine Wisdom and Goodness in the original Constitution of things and Construction of Animals, as well as in the constant regular Preservation of each Species of them, and pointing out their various Ends and Uses, thereby enabling Man, to whom they were all subjected, to enter farther into this Constitution himself, as well by receiving the Benefits thereof more perfectly, as by resembling his Creator in distributing the same more copiously, and both ways paying his most acceptable tribute of Duty and Devotion to the common Parent.

When the Lives of Men began to shorten, we find Arts increasing much faster in proportion; as it was fit they should, since otherwise many Discoveries would drop before they could be brought to any tolerable Perfection, or apply'd to use; there being then no other Repository for such beside the Memory of their Inventors: till at length came the Art of *Writing*, which drew along with it all the rest,

\* Part. 2. p. 19. add *Winder*. Hist. of Knowl. p. 221, 222.

helping at once to spread and to perpetuate them. And it is worth observing, as was just hinted before,\* that about the same time more frequent and more full Revelations were communicated to the World, which thereby became better qualified to receive, keep and convey them, as they were likewise dispens'd in a way best suited to its own State, and which most effectually supply'd its Wants, and tended to give greater Light and Improvement to it as well as one another : as may be seen particularly in Part 2. We have seen in some measure how the case stood both with Religion and Science in the *Antediluvian* and *Patriarchal* Ages, and are sufficiently acquainted with those alterations it receiv'd under the *Israelites* and *Jews* by various additional Institutions and a succession of Prophets : not very unlike to which was a Light held forth to the East by their great Oracles *Zoroaster* and *Confucius*, and to most parts of the West by a long series of their Philosophers, as is observ'd in the same place. \*

To these in its proper Season succeeds *Christianity*; of which there scarcely is occasion to remark that it surpass'd them all as much as the Times of its Promulgation were superior in all kinds of Knowledge to the past; and

\* p. 67.

which was evidently as great an Improvement upon *Natural Religion* properly so call'd, as it was upon any of the former Dispensations, and might, I think, with just as much propriety, be term'd a bare Revival or Republication of the one as of the other. Though perhaps there may be some room to doubt whether even those Ages, enlighten'd as they were above the former, were capable of receiving all the Improvement which it was fitted and design'd to give; whether the World was yet able to admit it in its utmost Purity and Perfection. On the contrary, there seem to have been so many Dregs of *Jewish* Superstition and *Gentile* Philosophy as required a long time to purge away, and from the one of which it had no sooner got well clear, than it became immers'd and clouded in the other. \* Even in its early Days we find it loaded with the refuse of each System, which was brought in to explain Mysteries, or rather make them, in the Gospel: till by Degrees itself is made a Matter of high Speculation and Refinement, and such nice Disputes † rais'd about the Natures of its Author and the precise *Modus* of their Union;

\* Part 2. p. 83. 84.

† See *Constantine's* excellent Letter on this Subject in *Euseb. de Vit. Const.* c. 66, 67, &c.

also concerning the abstract Nature and separate Subsistence of the Human Soul, as serv'd one of them to fill the Eastern Church with Blood and Desolation, and at length subject it to the *Mahometan* Yoke, for which alone it seem'd at that time fitted, \* the other to introduce the Doctrine of *Purgatory*, and with it a long train of *Papish* Errors, which ended in a Western Tyranny no less severe over both Soul and Body. Both these have indeed a long while oppress'd the *Christian* World, and if they be altogether so bad as we have been used to esteem them, are not at present easily accounted for; but we hope they may be found really not such, <sup>a</sup> and that the same wise and good Ends

\* Part. 2. p. 88. Not. <sup>r</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Popery (says Mr. *Worthington* Ess. p. 156.) itself begins to be ashamed of some of its grosser Errors, and its Divines of late have been forced to explain them in a manner more agreeable to Truth and Scripture. [ and the same thing may be observ'd of the *Mahometan* Doctors in their Comments upon the *Koran*, as appears remarkably all through *Sale's* Notes ] Moreover that persecuting Spirit which was the Reproach and Scandal of *Christians*, is, God be praised, in a good measure abated among all sorts and denominations of them; and we do not now hear so much of *Christians* being Burnt and Tortured by *Christians*. Nor do *Papists* at present seem to thirst so much after *Protestant* Blood, though there is reason to suspect that they still retain too much of the old Leaven, durst they suffer it to work

will appear to be accomplish'd by them in due time, either before or at their expiration, as have been evident in most other Dispensations. <sup>b</sup> However, at the next great Æra which is, we think, justly stiled the *Reformation*, there appear'd sufficient Tokens of this Progress in Knowledge we have been maintaining, and these succeeding so fast one upon another that they cannot escape the slightest Observation. <sup>c</sup> Here the abovemention'd Branches of it are again united and affording mutual assistance and support to one another. Science of all kinds, Human and Divine revives, and with it come new Methods of Communication (or rather it rises as much above the past as these exceed all others before them) and since has been con-

‘ out. It is observed likewise that there is not that Ignorance  
 ‘ and Immorality to be objected against the *Papists* now  
 ‘ as formerly; Learning being no less propagated among  
 ‘ them than *Protestants*: many good and pious Books are  
 ‘ Published by their Clergy; nor are they so Scandalous  
 ‘ in their Lives as in the Ages preceding the Reformation,  
 ‘ but they in general are exemplary in their Behaviour,  
 ‘ and afford us Patterns in some things which we might  
 ‘ profit by.’ The like has been observ'd of the *Mahome-*  
*tans* above.

<sup>b</sup> Of which see more in Part 2. p. 88, and 91.

<sup>c</sup> See some of the particulars in Part 2. p. 92. and *Worthington's* account of the progress of Learning after its Revival. Essay, p. 200, &c. To which we may add, that the

tinuing to improve and to draw with it all collateral advantages down to the present Times.

The more we still know of human Nature and become better vers'd in the Art of Living, ( and who doubts but we do so daily ? ) the more enlarg'd and adequate Notions must we have of natural Religion, and thereby be better able to judge of and apply reveled : the more acquainted we are with the faculties of our own *Soul*, the better qualified must we be to regulate and improve them, to direct the reasoning Power, assist the Memory, refine the Imagination ; in each of which Points very considerable Discoveries have been made of late : the more we know of the *Body*, the more able we are to prescribe a Regimen and remedy the several Disorders of it : and (though it seems to be the intent of Providence, for reasons obvious enough, that *Physic* in particular should not receive the same degrees of Improvement with other Arts, yet) perhaps it would not be hard to prove,

the Avenues to Learning of all kinds have been plan'd out and open'd by *Ld. Bacon*, the Nature and most intimate Recesses of the Human Mind unfolded and explain'd by *Locke*, the Frame and Constitution of the Universe by *Newton* (to name no other Writers of our own) in a more perfect Manner than ever was done or attempted since the Foundation of the World.

were

were this a place for it, that we are actually able to effect this in a more perfect manner now than formerly; that 'tis rather our Observations on the Disorders and Defects in each of these that multiply, than the Disorders and Defects themselves, excepting some such as probably arise and propagate themselves from some particular reigning Vices. <sup>a</sup>

The more we know of the *World*, the more we view its Order, Beauty, Symmetry; the uniform Laws which it is govern'd by, the just arrangement and mutual subserviency of all its Parts, (and I need not observe how much this kind of Learning has of late increas'd <sup>b</sup>) the more we see the Glory, and Perfection of its Architect, and are more fully satisfied that he design'd its several Inhabitants for Happiness in general, and must approve of every regular consistent method which they take to promote it. Such Observations on this World enable us likewise to argue from it to *another*, and

<sup>a</sup> If some new Distempers have arisen of late 'tis likely others of an older date have ceas'd; as is observ'd by *D. Le Clerc*. 'Fuerunt ergo Morbi, nonnullorum Siderum ' instar, orti certo tempore, postea extincti sunt; suntque ' alii, quos ortos quidem non ita pridem novimus, sed ' quorum finem nondum videmus.' *Dissert. de Lepra Mosaica* p.9. Several Instances occur in *Barchusen De Medic. Orig. et Progr. Diff.* 5. S.6.



conclude that that will probably go on in the like way, as consisting of the like Inhabitants, and conducted by the same hand. As the present World has generally improved hitherto, we may expect that for the same Reasons, be they what they will, it shall continue to do so; and that the next will likewise be still more and more improving: and by the same rule perhaps each Part and Member of it in its respective Order and Proportion; every distinct *Class*, as it rises above others through all that *Scale* of Beings which exist together, may preserve the same Uniformity in point of *Succession* too, may follow upon each other in no less regular Progress in a growing Happiness through all Eternity; and thus the whole Creation be every way for ever Beautifying in its Maker's Eye, and drawing nearer to him by Degrees of resemblance, as is suggested by an elegant Writer.\* To these Deductions of Reason Revelation adds new Light and Confirmation, (as it is in like

<sup>b</sup> Of this and the Benefit the World receives from it, see *Worthington* Eff. p. 94, &c. 'And if *Natural Philosophy* in all its parts by pursuing this method shall at length be perfected, the bounds of *Moral Philosophy* will also be enlarged.' *Newt.* Opt. B. 3. And that *supernatural* Light or Knowledge will be Increas'd in the same way, its Hindrances being of the very same kind, see *Bp. Butler's* Analogy p. 262, &c. 2d Edit.

\* *Spectator* N<sup>o</sup> III.

manner itself illustrated and establish'd by them) it carries on and completes these Notices of Natural Religion, and Improves the Prospect by express Declarations of the unlimited Goodness of our Creator towards *all* his Works ; by giving *us* in particular a positive Assurance that we shall be exactly disposed of in another State according to our respective Deserts and Qualifications : fixing and ascertaining our Hopes of arriving at those Blessed *Mansions*, where we shall find room for the free exercise and full enjoyment of each good Moral Habit and intellectual Accomplishment : furnishing ample Motives for our perseverance in this Course, and guarding against every Deviation from it, especially against that very dangerous attendant on the noblest Dispositions, Pride and Self-sufficiency : keeping us in a strict Dependence on that God who is to be both our Guide thither and our great Reward there ; in whose Hands we always are and ought to wish ourselves ; and to whose Bounty alone we owe and should be always very sensible that we do owe *every good and every perfect Gift*. \*

Lastly, the more we trace the ways of Providence in the *Moral World*, as also the manner of conducting every *Dispensation* of Reveled

\* *James* I. 17.

Religion (and we have had much better means of tracing each of them) we see more of the Designs and Purposes of each than those before us could, and from the manner in which this Prospect has already open'd have ground to think it will still more and more enlarge; and though yet far from being able to comprehend the whole Scheme (which is not to be wonder'd at in Beings which so lately sprung from *Nothing*) yet we do comprehend enough already to convince us that there is a wise and good one laid from the beginning, and executed in a regular gradation; and from thence also can infer that it will still be farther answering its several Ends and still appearing more to do so: that the *Manner* how this is to receive its Completion will unfold itself as we proceed in the study of it, adding our own Observations to those of Times past, and *comparing Spiritual things with Spiritual*; as we do those of the Natural World with one another, whereby we have discover'd several of its general Laws unknown to former Ages, and probably by them judg'd undiscoverable; and from some others just beginning to discover themselves, find more room daily to believe the Case will be the same with those who shall come after us. And thus it may be made appear that the Means of Knowledge

*natural, moral and revealed* have been imparted in a much more ample manner than ever to *us on whom the Ends of the World are come.* Why a more proper Application of them does not follow, why a proportional improvement of these same Advantages is not at all times made, as this seems not to have a necessary Connection with the former, it must be accounted for on other Principles. Whether by all these Means the World might and ought to have more true *Religion* and sound *Morals* now than formerly, will scarcely admit a doubt: but whether it actually has or not, becomes a very different enquiry. Though perhaps something might be said in favour of the present Times in both respects.

First, That we exceed the wisest among ancient Heathens, who either practis'd or at least permitted and connived at the Worship of monstrous Deities and most unnatural Rites, is readily allow'd, and with reason attributed to the superiority of the *Christian* Dispensation, in comparison with which former Ages are justly term'd Days of Darkness; and that we of the Reformation as much excell the dark times of *Monkery* in rational true Piety might perhaps be as easily granted, and with equal Justice ascribed to the superior Knowledge that  
we

we have of our own Dispensation. We have indeed less Shew and Ceremony now than ever, less of the *Form of Godliness* in general, but 'tis hoped not less of the real Power. Unprofitable Austerities are rather chang'd for that more *reasonable Service* and Devotion which renders the Deity amiable and the Imitation of him useful to Mankind; which makes each Worshipper more happy in himself, and helpful to his Fellow-Creatures. There seems to be much less of *Superstition* and reliance on such things as can at best be but *Means* to Religion, and often hardly that; nay rather tend to take Men off the proper Principle, and substitute another very different in its room; teaching them to *compound* for real Goodness the Substance of all true Religion, by that which has not so much as even its Shadow; and leading them to contend about that with such a Temper as could not possibly be exercis'd or entertain'd in any thing that bore a near relation to the other. It seems, I say, as if there were less of all this, and that there would be less yet, would all those who perceive its remains unite in opposition to it with that Zeal and Soberness which true Religion only can inspire.

As to that Spirit of *Infidelity* which so remarkably prevails at present, they who are confident

fident that they understand Religion thoroughly and profess it in its utmost purity, must condemn this Humour of examining all parts of it as absolutely bad and of pernicious consequence: they who are not so sanguine will conclude that there are very good Ends to be serv'd by it, whatever be the Fate or the Intent of such (and such it must be own'd there are) as most injuriously oppose Religion: These believe that there is the same necessity for suffering this *Heretical turn* in general, as for any particular *Heresies*, and that thereby already Truths of great importance are made manifest. They see and lament the consequences of long neglecting to review Establishments, and suffering the public Wisdom of past Ages to serve here, and here only, for all following ones. <sup>a</sup> They think there

<sup>a</sup> ' But there are few Christian Princes who lay this to  
 ' heart, and Divines have quite others things in their  
 ' thoughts: their great Business is to maintain what is  
 ' establish'd, and to dispute with those who find fault with  
 ' it. On the other hand, Knowledge or Resolution is  
 ' wanting, and there is not enough of Honesty or Great-  
 ' ness of Soul to confess the Truth. Few Writers have  
 ' the courage to speak so impartially as the famous Author  
 ' of the History of the Reformation in *England* has done,  
 ' in the Preface to his second Vol. It is thought by many  
 ' Persons that all would be ruin'd if the least alteration  
 ' was made. Some of these Defects—are now become  
 ' inviolable Customs and Laws. Every body fancies true  
 ' and

has been so much *Wood, Hay, Stubble* built on the Foundation as must take a considerable time to be removed; especially when they see some got no farther yet than to doubt whether there be occasion to have any thing at all removed, or even to deny that there is reason either for attempting or so much as wishing farther Reformation. They observe Light and Liberty at the same time advancing with an equal pace, and affording their mutual help, as they do generally, to separate these from the *Gold, Silver, Precious Stones*; many having taken the Fan in hand and resolv'd thoroughly to purge the Floor, though some be apt to throw away part of the good Seed together with the Chaff, which also generally has been the Case, and is a very natural one.

Secondly, As to the present *Morals*, it may perhaps be a question whether they grow worse upon the whole when it is consider'd, that the less Vices as well as Uneasinesses of past times

‘ and pure *Christianity* to be that which obtains in his  
‘ Country, or in the Society he lives in; and it is not so  
‘ much as put to the question whether or not some things  
‘ should be altered. As long as *Christians* are possessed  
‘ with these Prejudices we must not expect to see *Christi-*  
‘ anity restored to an entire Purity.’ *Causes of the present*  
*Corruption of Christians*, Part 2. p. 271.

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are

are soon forgot, and the most flagrant, notorious ones only appear upon Record : — that we are apt to judge those Evils greatest which we feel ourselves, and that Good least which seems to rival and eclipse our own, and raises Envy in the room of Admiration ; and that hence one of them is often aggravated, the other extenuated most unduly. <sup>a</sup> On which account Vices may not probably be greater now in general, but we more immediately concern'd with them and suffering under them, especially the reigning ones, ( of which there always have been some \* ) as those of Faction and Corruption, Luxury and Lewdness seem to be at present ; and great ones indeed they are, especially in our own Country ; which yet perhaps are not worse than the reigning ones of former Times : and 'tis to be remember'd that they come attended with the foremention'd Advantages of Light and Liberty in such a degree as we can

<sup>a</sup> See Bp. *Fleetwood's* first Charge, p.6, &c. and *Ibbot's* Sermon on *Eccl.* 7. 10. with *Brown's* Causes of Common Errors, B. I. c.6, &c.

\* 'There is a certain List of Vices committed in all Ages, and declaimed against by all Authors, which will last as long as Human Nature ; or digested into common places may serve for any Theme, and never be out of date until Dooms-day.' *Brown's* Vulgar Errors, p. 22.



never be too thankful for, and which we hope will speedily correct them, the one enabling Men soon to see their evil consequences, the other allowing them full scope to censure and expose them; and through both these it may be that each other Vice becomes more open and apparent now, rather than of superior size and strength. So that concerning the present Times we have some room to think that they are not absolutely worse than all before them as to *Morals*.<sup>b</sup> Perhaps I may be allow'd to advance a step farther, and suppose them better

<sup>b</sup> I believe it would be hard to produce modern instances of Cruelty and Barbarity in any civilized State, whether in War or Peace, equal to such as were decreed publicly and executed without the least seeming remorse by the politest People of Antiquity: Witness their frequent refusing Quarter, their Triumphs, torturing of Slaves; their Proscriptions, Poisonings, exposing Children, Rapes, &c. which need no aggravation. There is even at this Day a sort of Decency in all our public Councils and Deliberations: and I believe the boldest of our Demagogues would hardly undertake in a popular Assembly to propose any thing parallel to the Rape of the *Sabines*, the most unjust usage of *L. T. Collatinus*, or the ungrateful treatment of *Camillus*, which, as a learned Father observes, were pieces of Iniquity agreed to by the public Body of the *Romans*. Instances of the same kind with the two last every one knows occur frequently among the *Greeks* as well as *Romans* in the politest Ages of their Government. see Sir *T. P. Blount* *Ess.* p. 145

in some respects ; that we have certain Virtues now in greater Perfection, particularly more of true *Charity* or *Universal Benevolence*, than ever since the time of primitive *Christianity*.<sup>c</sup> — But if this be deem'd a mistake and too partial fondness for the present Times, I trust it will be also judg'd a pardonable one amid so much most evident Partiality against them ; especially as it is on the charitable side, and tends to make them really better than they would be, did worse opinions of them universally prevail : which brings me, in the last place, to the *Consequences* that attend the other way of thinking.

These have been hinted at in the beginning of this Discourse, and might be shewn more particularly to affect the Honour of God, our own Happiness, and that of others ; in as much as the foregoing supposition casts a Cloud over

<sup>c</sup> I may add, that there seems to be a more perfect resignation to the Will of God and acquiescence in his Providence among all Ranks of Men ; a greater Firmness in enduring Pain, more Chearfulness and Courage in submitting to Death, among the generality even of lowest Education : in short, that Mankind may be said to grow more spiritual and *intellectual*, in these and many other respects, than they have been in former Ages.

‘ I think it may be said, in Honour of the present Age,  
 ‘ that Controversy is carried on with more Decency and  
 ‘ good Manners than in any former Period of time that

‘ can

all the Works of God, confounds our Notions of his Wisdom, Power and Goodness, raises Distrust, if not Disbelief of all his Perfections, and thereby deadens our Devotion toward him; damps and discourages all Study, and destroys the pleasure that would arise from a Survey of both the *Natural* and *Moral* World, and a Reflection on the Station we hold in them; renders us far less sensible of the Happiness within our power, and by consequence makes us receive less from them; not only hinders Men from growing better, but actually makes them worse, and suffers the World daily to decline through a persuasion that it is design'd to do so; it having been observ'd that those Writings which *villanize* Mankind have a pernicious tendency towards propagating and protecting Villany, and help most of all to teach

‘ can be named; which together with the *Toleration*  
‘ granted by Law in this and other Protestant Countries  
‘ for all Persons to worship God in their own way, and  
‘ that *Christian* Charity and Moderation which is gener-  
‘ ally shewn towards those that differ from us, seems al-  
‘ ready to be attended with good Effect. — the setting up  
‘ so many *Charity-Schools* as have of late years been erected  
‘ in these Kingdoms, — the forming of *Religious Societies*,  
‘ and other good means, have greatly contributed to the  
‘ promoting the Knowledge and practise of Virtue and  
‘ Religion among us.’ *Worthington's Essay*, p. 157, 158.

and encourage it; in the same manner as those which perpetually dwell on the dark side of things and difficulties that attend our search after the ways of God, serve only to darken the view still more and multiply these very Difficulties. How much better both the End and the Effect of those which place Human Nature in its fairest Light, and represent the *lovely Form* as worthy of its Author; as well as of those that display the Beauty and Beneficence of the Divine Oeconomy, and produce an Assurance of that paternal Care and Conduct of us here, which brings the truest Enjoyment and most grateful Acknowledgement of present Benefits, and likewise begets a joyful Hope and Expectation of more substantial ones hereafter!

The *Consequences* of the foregoing Doctrine might be urg'd farther in regard both to the *Atheist* and *Deist*, to convince the one that all things have not gone at random, but that there are plain tokens of a Plan and Government, and from what has already past, reason to think that more of it will ever appear and in a still more perfect manner: to shew the other, that as the several Dispensations of what we call Reveled Religion have hitherto been in the main conformable to those of Providence in both the natural and moral World, this possibly may  
may

may come from the same Author, and receive yet farther increase, which these also do as they are daily better understood.

But if this be not the case in any degree here, we seem to have nothing left whereon to ground an *Analogical* Argument (which yet is our best, if not our only natural Argument) for an hereafter; no visible footsteps of Wisdom and Goodness to conduct us in our search after a First Cause, no settled foundation for our Hopes of Futurity, the basis of all Natural Religion: All is Chaos and Confusion thus far, and therefore may be so, for ought we know, eternally; either without any good consistent Scheme at all, or that as soon as fix'd unfix'd again, and disappointed: — in short, the Divine Government, if there be one, must on this Scheme be inferior to most Human Administrations. Thus then we see how necessary it is to form right Notions of the past State of the World, especially in regard to that important point, *Religion*, in order to judge how it will be for the future, and in what manner we are to conduct ourselves. If it has hitherto been really progressive, we find good reason to expect the same still farther. We have strong motives to go into this Scheme ourselves, and clear directions how to proceed in it. Instead of looking back and

labouring to confine it to the model of past Times, we learn rather with the great *Apostle*, to *forget those things which are behind, reaching forward unto those things that are before, and pressing toward the Mark.*\* And to use the same *Apostle's* advice, *Let us therefore as many as desire to be perfect, be thus minded.* As we have the best means of effecting this within our Power; as we live under the mildest, most indulgent of all Governments, and enjoy the Blessing of *Liberty* in that perfection which has been unknown to former Ages; a Blessing [suffer me once more to remind us of it] which includes every thing valuable in Life, and above all things tends most to accelerate the Progress abovementioned: Let us instead of making it either a Covering for *Sedition* † against such a Government, or a Cause of gratifying our *Maliciousness* against each other, be diligent in using it to the good purposes for which it is so liberally indulg'd us, and render ours as much superior to those Nations that are deprived of it, as most other Countries are observed to have been in like Circumstances.

Let us concur with this auspicious course of Providence, and each contribute our endea-

\* *Phil.* 3. 13, &c.

† Vid. *Benson* on *1 Pet.* 2. 16.

vours towards carrying on this Progress by every serious, fair and free Enquiry: *free*, not only from all outward Violence and Clamour, but also from ( what our most holy Religion with the greatest reason equally condemns as being the Root from whence these spring) all inward Bitterness, Wrath, Hatred: learning to bear with one another's Mistakes in this as well as other matters; nay rather the more here, since these are of the highest consequence, and this the only proper method to remove them: thus labouring as well to reform the Errors of our Brethren in Love, as to promote and confirm their Knowledge of the Truth; *not for that* in either case we have *Dominion over their Faith, but as being Helpers of their Joy.\** And thus shall Religion be at length suffer'd to partake the Benefit of those Improvements which every thing beside enjoys.

I desire it may be observ'd here once for all, that when I mention *Improvements* in Religion I don't by any means intend a Discovery of new Points, or improving upon the original Revelation itself † in any thing essential to the general Doctrine of Salvation: but only a more perfect comprehension of what was formerly deliver'd; a view

\* 2 Cor. 1. 24.

† See Part 2. p. 86, 87.

of the extent and excellence of this great Mystery conceal'd from former Ages, and which though given almost all at once, yet was receiv'd perhaps but partially, at least by the bulk of Mankind, as was observ'd above, † and soon adulterated to such a degree, as ( I beg leave to repeat it ) may take yet more time to rectify ; especially when so much Rubbish has been since continually thrown upon the Scriptures, both by Translators and Expositors, as if we set aside the care of a particular Providence (which has in this respect [so far I mean as relates to the Text ] been very remarkable ) might make us justly wonder they have not sunk under it. This has in these parts of the World been for some time a clearing off by the help of a more sound Philosophy, as well as by more sober Rules of Criticism, a much more close, consistent method of Interpretation ; which must produce as great a difference in them as if they were quite different Books. Though perhaps even here it would not be a difficult task, were it not too invidious, to suggest means of yet farther Improvement. Perhaps we ought to attend still more to the *Hebrew* Idiom, and observe the vast disparity between the Eastern way of speaking and our

† ib. p. 85.



own; for want of which, 'tis to be fear'd, we oft retain the Words without the Sense, nay with a very different one, and by adhering too much to the Letter are apt to overstrain most things, and carry them both beyond common Reason and the nature of the Subject. Perhaps our very Reverence for these sacred Writings misapply'd, our too unguarded Zeal to do them honour and support their Divine Authority against that Church which substitutes another in its room, may have contributed to cast a Cloud over the whole, which makes us as it were afraid to look into them, and examine them with the same freedom that we do and find we must do every other Book which we desire to understand: — I mean the Notion of an *absolute*, immediate *inspiration* of each part and period, even where the Writers themselves, by the very manner of expressing themselves, most effectually disclaim it: <sup>a</sup> which beside the bad effects it may be supposed to have at present, when once it appears, as soon perhaps it may, to have no good foundation in these holy Books, <sup>aa</sup> 'tis to be fear'd, it will produce a

<sup>a</sup> See Instances in *Whitby* on the *N. T.* Gen. Pref. p.6.

<sup>aa</sup> As I would not give any unnecessary Offence in such a tender point as this, which most Writers are still very unwilling to give up expressly, though they seem forc'd

worfe, by tending to discredit that *partial* one whether of *Guidance* or *Suggestion*, which upon some occasions they do claim, which is absolutely requisite to secure a due authority to them,

forc'd to treat it either in a confus'd or a contradictory way, I shall beg leave to explain myself a little upon this Head. The true sense then of the *Divine Authority* of the Books of the *O. T.* and which perhaps is enough to denominate them in general *Θεοπνευστοι*, seems to be this, that as in those times God has all along, beside the inspection of his general Providence, interfered upon particular occasions by giving exprefs Commissions to some Persons (thence call'd *Prophets*) to declare his will in various manners and degrees of evidence [see *Smith. Sel. Disc. N.6.*] as best suited the Occasion, Time and Nature of the subject, and in all other cases left them and the rest of the World wholly to themselves; in like manner he has interpos'd his more immediate assistance (and notify'd it to them, as they did to the World) in the *recording* of these Revelations, so far as that was necessary, amidst the common (but from hence term'd *Sacred*) History of those times, and mix'd with various other Occurrences, in which the Historian's own natural Qualifications were sufficient to enable him to relate things with all the accuracy they required, and where a supernatural interposition would have been unworthy of its Author: which mixture of Divine and Human in the same Times, Things, Persons and their History, seems much more conformable to the other Works of God, and affords many Circumstances which more clearly evince and will in all ages more incontestibly confirm the Reality of a Divine concurrence (by offering so many means to confute every pretended instance of it were it groundless)

than

and which when prudently distinguish'd from the other has, and we trust ever will appear to have, ground sufficient to support itself. To this high, I had almost said, blind, reverence

than if such Revelations had been all made at one time, by themselves and by men altogether over-ruled in the delivery of them. This likewise seems in a good measure to have been the case with the *N. T.* Writers; who notwithstanding the things they were to deliver are mostly of greater consequence and more closely united in point of Time, Place and other Circumstances; notwithstanding the extraordinary assistance of the Spirit which was to abide with them and lead them into all necessary Truth, and for the most part either the thing itself shews, or they give us sufficient intimation when they have recourse to that assistance; yet from the very form in which they usually deliver them it must appear, that this Influence is no less frequently suspended in the delivery of these fundamental Truths; and beside these, how oft do the same Persons condescend to treat of other inferior, controversial Matters, useful indeed some to the then present, some to all future times, but surely of a very different nature from the former, and in which that Influence and Assistance does not seem so requisite! How justly do they place the Evidence of Facts on their own Senses only! declaring *what they have seen and heard*, which at all times may, and which alone can be produced as proper Proof. In Reasonings how beautifully do they add their private Sentiments, and in affairs of smaller moment even their Conjectures, to what they had received from the Lord himself! where Circumstances shew us the expediency of such Additions, and where Common Sense was and will be always equally sufficient to distinguish one from the other, as it is to  
in-

for the words of Holy Scriptures, perhaps I may be allow'd to add another full as great relating to the Sense: not the true, real one, for which we cannot surely have too much concern; but one which sometimes widely varies from it, and yet is very apt to slip into its place, the commonly receiv'd, *traditional* one. This Doctrine we learn from those very Adversaries which in the former we were striving to oppose: and though indeed it have a shew of deference to public Wisdom and

interpret the whole Scriptures, so far as they become necessary to be interpreted, without any other more infallible Guide. But Common Sense is generally laid aside in Subjects of this nature. Many good Men think they can never do too much to decry it, to set the Bible at variance with it, or carry the whole up beyond its reach, though by schemes merely of their own Invention, rather than forming any judgement from what they really find in that sacred Book. Not content with a *Moral Evidence* of its *Truth*, which is clear, strong and every way sufficient for the conviction of all fair Enquirers, they must needs introduce another where there is no room for it, and insist on such *universal* absolute *Infallibility* as never can be made out to those who are not already perswaded of it (and who can have no other Evidence for such perswasion than the same moral one on which that *Truth* is grounded) and which is at last either useless or inconsistent with those natural Proofs which constitute the *Credibility* of this and every other History so circumstanc'd. Is not a Moral Evidence enough to assure us of  
the

*Humility*, yet in time probably may be attended with no better Consequences; if Men cannot distinguish pure primitive *Christianity* from that which oft may happen not to be such, and through which the other always suffers; and if in this, which of all things is most deserving of their care and caution, they will content themselves with the Sense of the Multitude, and take that for a sure, sufficient Rule, which they know to be far from even excusing those who have means of judging for themselves,

the Genuineness and Incorruptness of these Writings? Why should it not then, where it can take place, be sufficient for the Authors themselves to proceed on in writing, and equally ascertain the Truth of what they have written? and why should the generality of the *Composition* (were any great stress ever to be laid upon it) be deem'd altogether Divine, when the *Conveyance*, which so much affects that, is allow'd to be no more than Human? Most Persons now begin to see that there is at least some mixture of this latter in the *Language*, and I believe upon due consideration it will appear that there is no greater Difficulty to admit it in the *Sense* on several Occasions.

I am very sensible that what is here hinted is too superficial to give any tolerable satisfaction on so nice a point, but can with great Truth assure the Reader, that the intention of it is not to degrade or in the least disparage the Holy Scriptures, but rather to free them from an unnecessary load of Objections and render them more useful to the chief purposes for which I humbly apprehend they were design'd.

and

and which they would be extremely unwilling to abide by in almost any other case. — But I should be sorry to be found so far contradicting my main Design as to make things in any respect worse at present than they really are. On this Subject I could hardly avoid hinting at some few of those Rubs that seem to lie most in our way to Perfection: but notwithstanding these or any others which could be produced, I must beg leave to conclude that we have Encouragement enough left to proceed with chearfulness and vigour in it, till every thing which lets, in God's good time be taken away, and true Religion, Righteousness and Virtue shine in perfect Beauty: *till we all come in the Unity of the Faith and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ.*

*F I N I S.*

## E R R A T A.

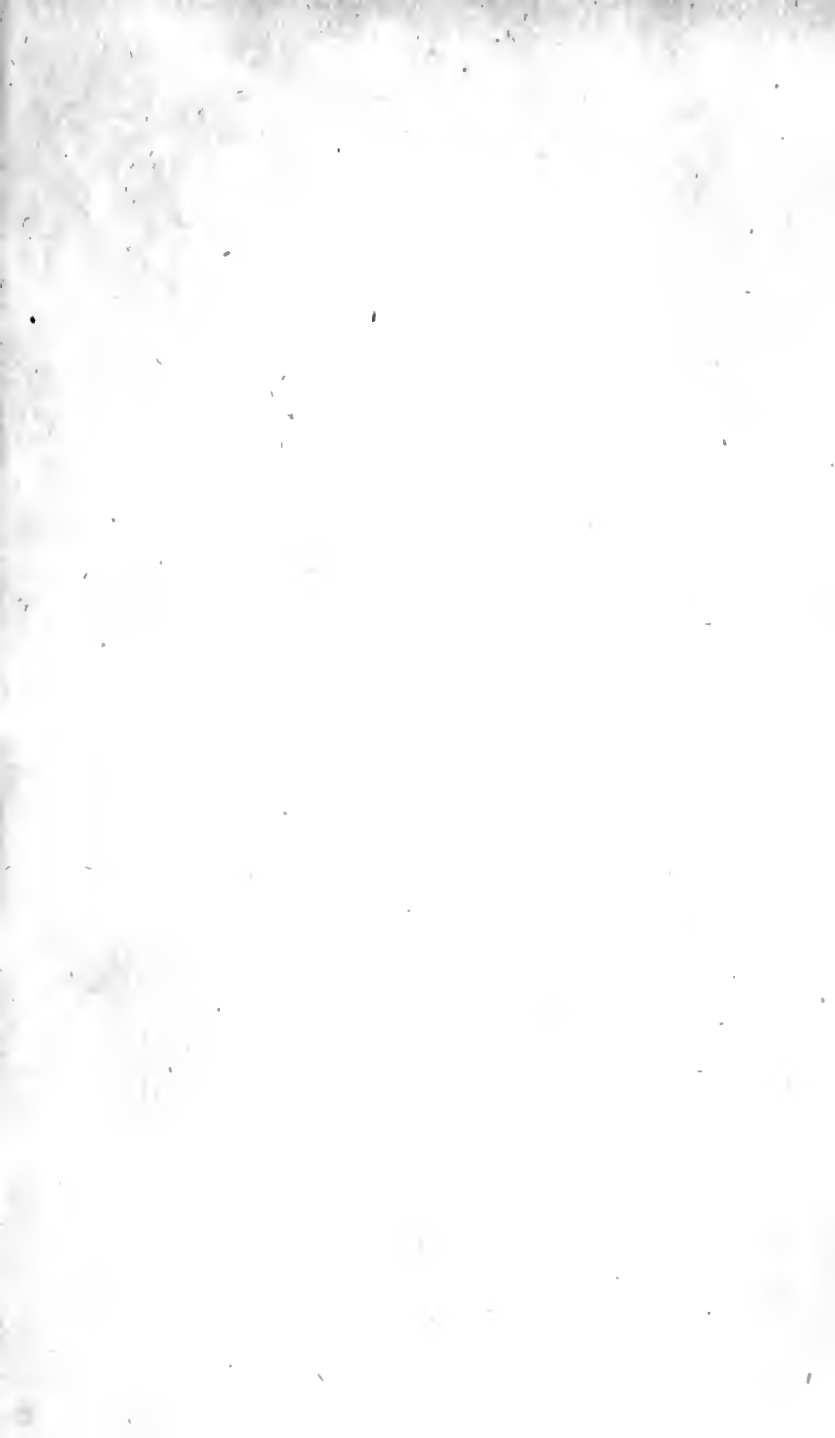
**P**AGE 18. line 10. *after* unreasonable in itself *add* which I think  
 may be fairly done after what has been wrote upon the subject  
 both by Dr. *Jenkin* V. i. c. 1. and the Ingenious Author of an  
*Enquiry into the Evidence of the Christian Religion*, sect 8. — p. 63.  
 Note, l. 26. *for* Faith, in *read* Faith in, — p. 71. N. b. l. 5. *r.* eight.  
 — p. 73. l. 23. *for* they *r.* many of them, *and add in marg.* \* *Winder*  
*Hist. of Knowl.* p. 110, &c. *Patrick* in *Gen.* 11. 2. — p. 102. N. a.  
 l. 14. *for* p. 96. *r.* 93. — p. 108. N. l. 14. *for* Rom. *r.* Rome. —  
 p. 112. l. 6. *after* perfect one, *insert* ) — p. 114. *for* p. 107. *r.* 97.  
 — p. 120. N. b. l. 2. *for* p. 29. *r.* 57. *ibid.* N. c. *for* p. 29. *r.* 56.  
 — p. 124. \* *for* p. 25. *r.* 50. — p. 126. \* l. 1. *r.* *Sanhedrim.* —  
 p. 128. N. a. l. 20. *r.* *sequutus.* — p. 129. N. b. l. 8. *r.* Fol. 4. —  
 p. 131. Note. l. 4. *r.* *σιμωσις.* — p. 132. N. l. 7. *r.* *μυθος.* —  
 p. 136. l. 17. *after* Government *for* . *r.* , — p. 144. l. 10. *dele* and.  
 — p. 145. l. 24. *r.* reason. — p. 159. l. 12. *for* instructed *r.* intrusted.  
 — p. 160. l. 7. *for* God's *r.* God. — p. 172. N. l. 11. *for* *Bub.* *r.*  
*Bud.* — p. 172. \* *for* Part 2. *r.* p. 53. — p. 173. N. l. 1. *r.* *διεφορον.*  
 p. 174. l. 2. *for* he *r.* the. — p. 176. N. l. *last* *r.* *Treatises.* —  
 p. 183. l. 1. *r.* improvement. — p. 184. l. 2. *r.* continually. —  
 p. 194. † *for* p. 25. *r.* p. 50. — p. 216. N. e. l. 1. *for* p. 18. *r.* 36.  
 — p. 217. \* *r.* Herm. — p. 225. \* *for* p. 7, 8, 9. *r.* 10, 11, 12. —  
 p. 227. N. b. *for* p. 29. *r.* 56. *ib.* *for* p. 30. *r.* 58, 59. — p. 227. \*  
*for* p. 19. *r.* 158. — p. 229. \* *for* p. 67. *r.* 158. — p. 230. \* *for*  
 p. 83, 84. *r.* p. 169. — p. 231. \* *for* p. 88. *r.* 175. — p. 232. N. b.  
*for* p. 88. and 91. *r.* 175. and 181. *ib.* N. c. *for* p. 92. *r.* 182. —  
 p. 249. † *for* p. 86, 87. *r.* p. 170, 171. — p. 250. † *for* p. 85.  
 r. p. 167.



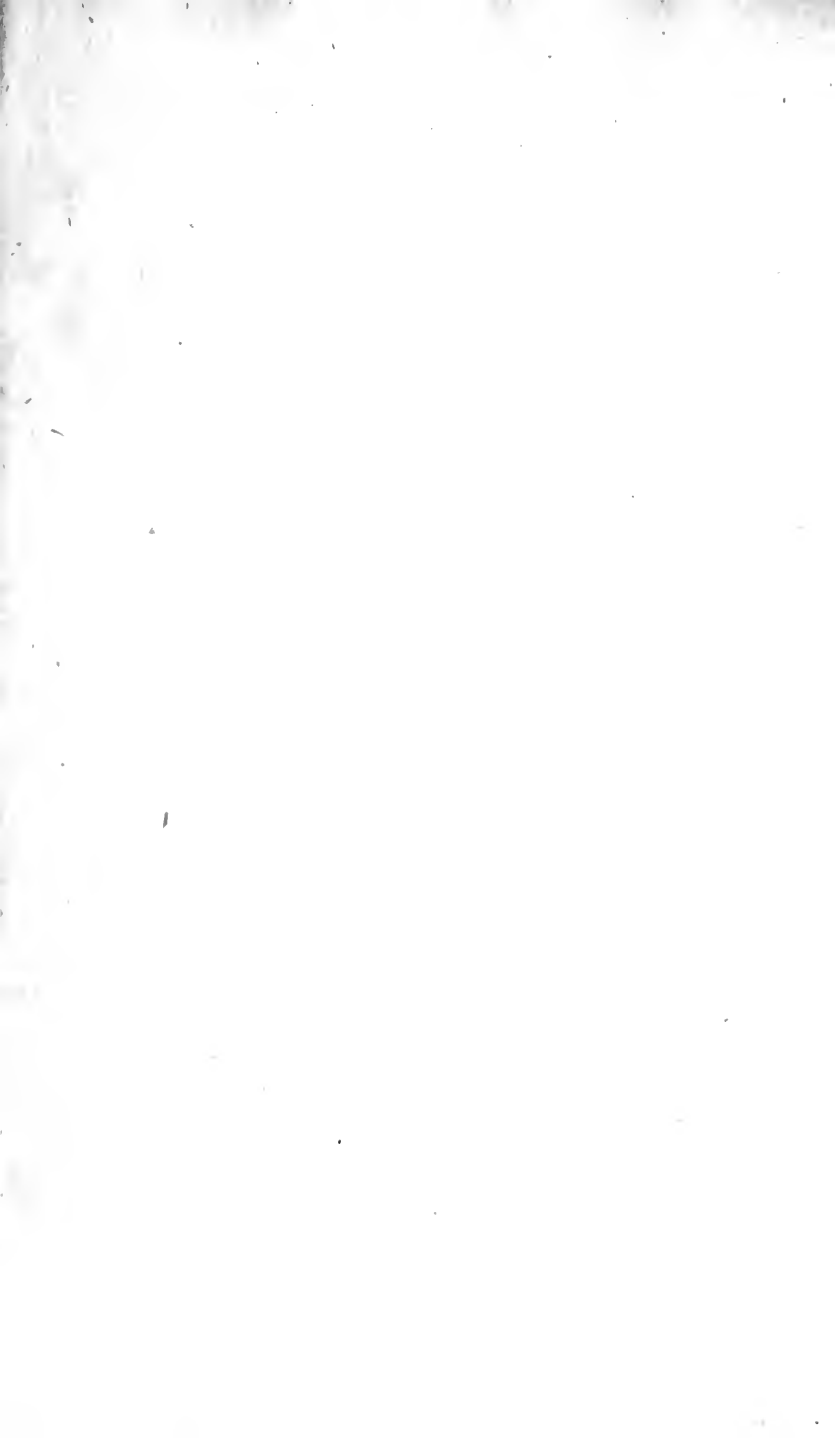












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