Theological Sem[illegible]

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A

SCHEME

OF

SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY.

Benj. Dobbs

[redacted] to Wm Dobbs

A

SCHEME

OF

SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY,

Formed upon the PLAN of the

Divine Diſpenſations.

WITH

A Vindication of the Sacred Writings.

By JOHN TAYLOR, *D. D.*
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THE PREFACE.

THE Reader is here presented with the Plan which Dr. TAYLOR followed, in leading his Pupils to a just and rational Acquaintance with the Principles of Religion, founded upon an accurate Knowledge of the Scriptures.

THE Importance of this Service, and his Accountableness in a great Measure for the Event, were Considerations of the last Moment, and caused him to compose, and deliver his Academical Instructions with the utmost Circumspection. To his own Judgment, after the strictest Revisal, the Principles here advanced, appeared just and scriptural; but he did not therefore presume they were absolutely free from Error; much less did he think himself authorized, as a publick Tutor, to impose his Sentiments on young Minds with an overbearing Hand.

That he might do Juſtice to his Pupils, and himſelf, he always prefaced his Lectures with the following ſolemn CHARGE, which does Honor to the Author, and affords a noble Precedent to Seminaries of Learning.

I. "I DO ſolemnly charge you, in the Name of the God of Truth, and of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and before whoſe Judgment-Seat you muſt in no long time appear, that in all your Studies and Inquiries of a religious Nature, preſent or future, you do conſtantly, carefully, impartially, and conſcientiouſly attend to Evidence, as it lies in the holy Scriptures, or in the Nature of things, and the Dictates of Reaſon; cautiouſly guarding againſt the Sallies of Imagination, and the Fallacy of ill-grounded Conjecture."

II. — "THAT you admit, embrace, or aſſent to no Principle, or Sentiment, by me taught or advanced, but only ſo far as it ſhall appear to you to be ſupported and juſtified by proper Evidence from Revelation, or the Reaſon of things."

III. — "THAT, if at any time hereafter, any Principle or Sentiment, by me taught or advanced, or by you admited and embraced, ſhall, upon impartial and faithful Examination, appear to you, to be

be dubious or falſe, you either ſuſpect, or totally reject ſuch Principle or Sentiment."

IV. — "THAT you keep your Mind always open to Evidence. — That you labour to baniſh from your Breaſt all Prejudice, Prepoſſeſſion, and Party-zeal. — That you ſtudy to live in Peace and Love with all your Fellow-Chriſtians; and that you ſteddily aſſert for yourſelf, and freely allow to others, the unalienable Rights of Judgment and Conſcience."

Is it poſſible to adjuſt the Terms between a Tutor and his Pupils more equitably? But it muſt here be obſerved, that Dr. TAYLOR ever meant, the Liberty he claimed for himſelf, and allowed to others, ſhould be directed by a ſerious Frame of Mind, and a real Deſire to promote practical Religion. The inlarged View he had of divine things penetrated his own Heart, and had a manifeſt Influence over his Practice. He laboured to explain and vindicate the Doctrines of Revelation for this Reaſon, that he might moſt effectually ſerve the Cauſe of vital Religion.

IT were to be wiſhed, that thoſe who are Students for the Miniſtry, who chooſe to conſult his Writings, may imbibe the ſame Spirit of genuine Piety. This will be a

never-failing Source of Weight and Credit; and without it, other Qualifications will be insufficient for religious Improvement.

THE Doctor's whole Life being devoted to an impartial Study of the Scriptures, not by Way of Speculation and Amusement, but for the most valuable Purposes to himself and others, it is no Wonder to find him so earnestly recommending them to the serious Attention of Christians. This is the important Subject of those Chapters, which immediately follow the Scheme of SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY.

THE Editor submits the whole (as the Author would have done) to the Candor of every intelligent Reader; desiring that what is here advanced, may be regarded no further than shall appear conformable to Truth and Scripture, in Subserviency to the best Interest of Mankind.

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Page 14. l. 19. for רדכי read דרכי
76. l. 29. for מוב read טוב
104. l. 21. for טרף read טדף
l. 24. רפא
108. l. 27. for והיה read זהיה
148. l. 29. add *true* before *Token*

A SCHEME

A

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OF

SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY, &c.

CHAP. I.

Of CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

CHRISTIAN Theology, or Divinity, is the Science, which, from Revelation, teacheth the Knowledge of God, namely, his Nature and Perfections, his Relations to us, his Ways and Dispensations, his Will with respect to our Actions, and his Purposes with respect to our Being; in order to form in our Minds right Principles, for our Direction and Comfort, and in our Conversation right Practice for securing his Favour and Blessing.

IN natural Religion we take our Proofs from the Natures of things as perceived, considered, and compared by the human Mind; but now we advance upon the Authority and Scope of Writings and Books; I mean, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, acknowledged by the whole Christian World as a true Revelation from God, and as the Standard of Faith and Doctrine.

THAT God would revele to us, by such Ways as he in his Wisdom judgeth most proper, such things as are needful for us to know and to do, for the Improvement and happiness of our Nature, is perfectly agreable to his Wisdom and Goodness, who is our Father, and delighteth in our Well-being; and is also perfectly suitable to our Circumstances, as Mankind are ignorant and weak, and very liable to Error and Deception. It is consonant to the Nature of things, that a Father should instruct his Child; and that Persons of Knowledge and Learning should teach the ignorant. How much more that God, whose Understanding is infinite, and without whom we can know nothing at all, should teach and instruct us all?

AND that his Instructions should be consigned to Writing is also very fit and proper; as this, in fact, is the surest Method of preserving them in the World. Tradition from one Generation to another is no

safe

ſafe Conveyance. The Experiment hath been ſufficiently tried in the Ages before the Flood; wherein, though Tradition was then greatly favoured by the Longevity of Mankind, yet we find, that both the Religion of Nature and traditionary Revelation were both ſo far loſt, that in the Space of 1656 Years, *the Earth was filled with Violence — for all fleſh had corrupted his way upon Earth.* Gen. vi. 11, 12. And both would have been entirely loſt, had not God in an extraordinary manner interpoſed. Likewiſe after the Flood, notwithſtanding any Tradition from *Noah*, Idolatry ſoon overſpread the Nations, and rendered it expedient for God, to deviſe a new Conſtitution, to prevent a ſecond univerſal Corruption and Apoſtacy. And ſo falſe and faithleſs is Tradition, that for many Ages in the Jewiſh Nation, and for many Ages under the Goſpel, Tradition was, and ſtill is, ſo far oppoſed to Revelation, as to obſcure and diſparage it, and make the Commandment of God therein of no Effect. Inſomuch, that had not a written Revelation by Divine Providence been introduced into the World, and preſerved in it, true Religion would have been baniſhed out of it.

THE Benefit of Revelation is very great, but then it muſt be faithfully uſed; otherwiſe it will be turned againſt itſelf, and made the Patron of Falſehood and Deluſion. Which, in fact, hath been the Caſe. Men,

either weak or wicked, have perverted the Scriptures, and reduced them to a ſubſerviency to either their Luſts, or preconceived Opinions. The latter was remarkably the caſe in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity. When any of the Philoſophers were converted to the Chriſtian Profeſſion, they generally brought along with them the Schemes and Notions of the particular Sects, to which they were attached; thoſe influenced their Minds in the Study of the Scriptures, and inclined them to wreſt the Scriptures into a Conſiſtency with their preconceived Opinions. Hence it is, that many Notions, inconſiſtent with the Word of God, and with each other, have been handed down to us from the earlieſt times under the ſacred character of ſound Chriſtian Doctrine. And in our own times, we find Men pleading the Authority of Scripture for a variety of oppoſite and contradictory Sentiments, which therefore cannot all of them be founded upon Scripture.

FOR the Holy Scriptures, being a Revelation from God, the moſt perfect and invariable Standard of Truth, though written by different Perſons, living in remote Ages, during the Space of about 1500 Years, from *Moſes* to *John*, who wrote the Revelation; yet, being a Revelation from God, muſt be perfectly conſiſtent in all their Parts and Principles, Views and Sentiments, expreſt in

in Uniformity of Language. For if the Language were multiform and various, the Senſe would neceſſarily be obſcure, and the Underſtanding confounded, and ſo the Ends of Revelation would be defeated. And if, notwithſtanding the great Changes in Cuſtoms, Diſpoſitions, Intereſts, and religious Sentiments, which muſt, and actually did, happen in ſo long a tract of time, we do find, that one conſiſtent Scheme, in one conſiſtent uniform Language, is carried on in all the Writings, which compoſe the Scriptures, we may ſtrongly conclude, that they are a Revelation from God; not the Produce of human Wiſdom, which could never in Ages ſo remote, and for the greateſt Part ſo illiterate, have combined to carry on a regular, uniform Scheme of religious Principles and Sentiments, in the ſame Language or Modes of Expreſſion; but the Inſpiration or Dictates of one Spirit, the Spirit of God. Hence it follows,

I. THAT in explaining the Scriptures, Conſiſtency of Senſe and Principles ought to be ſupported in all the ſeveral Parts thereof; and that, if any Part be ſo interpreted as to claſh with any other, we may be ſure ſuch Interpretation cannot be juſtified. Nor can it otherwiſe be rectified, than by faithfully comparing Scripture with Scripture, and bringing what may ſeem to be obſcure

into a Consistency with what is plain and evident.

II. THE Sense of Scripture can no otherwise be understood, than by understanding the Force and Import of Scriptural Language. And the Force and Import of Scriptural Language can be settled in no method more authentic, than by collating the several Passages in which any Phrase or Expression occurs. Thus, in every view, Scripture is the best Interpreter of Scripture.

III. FIGURATIVE Expressions should be carefully distinguished from those that are literal; and *vice versa*. The Oriental, and consequently, the Scriptural Tropes and Figures of Speech, are very bold, and different from the European.

IV. SINGLE Sentences are not to be detached from the Places where they stand, but to be taken in Connection with the whole Discourse. The Occasion, Coherence, and Connection of the Writing, the Argument that is carrying on, the Scope and Intent of the Paragraph, are to be carefully attended to.

V. WE should always interpret Scripture in a Sense consistent with the Laws of natural Religion; or with the known Perfections of God, and the Notions of Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, which are discoverable in the Works of Creation, and in the present Constitution of things. The

Language

Language of Nature is moſt certainly the Language of God, the ſole Author of Nature. And however the Divine Wiſdom may diverſify the Circumſtances of ſupernatural Revelation, yet the Law of Nature, as it is founded in the unchangeable Natures of things, muſt be the Baſis and Ground-Work of every Conſtitution of Religion, which God had erected. Whence it follows, that the Study and Knowledge of natural Religion is a neceſſary Introduction to the Study and right Underſtanding of Revelation. And we may further conclude that ſupernatural Revelation, in all its Parts and Principles, as it certainly is, ſo it always ſhould be, interpreted and underſtood in perfect Harmony with natural Religion, or the dictates of Reaſon.

BUT miſtake me not; I do not mean, that the Law or Religion of Nature is commenſurate to Revelation; or, that nothing is to be admited in Revelation, but what is diſcoverable by the Light of Nature, or by human Reaſon. So far from that, that the whole of Revelation, properly ſo called, could never have been diſcovered by human Reaſon. And therefore in matters of pure Revelation, it is a very falſe and fallacious way to begin firſt with what our Reaſon may dictate and diſcover. Becauſe our Reaſon unaſſiſted by Revelation, in ſuch Caſes, can diſcover nothing at all. For inſtance,

the Consequences of *Adam*'s Transgression upon his Posterity; the Covenant made with *Abraham*; the Nature and Mission of the Son of God; the Grant of Blessings, and of eternal Life by him. Concerning those things, we could have known nothing at all, had not God reveled them to us. And in such matters of pure Revelation, the first thing we have to do, is to enquire, not what human Reason can discover, but what God has discovered, and declared in Scripture. But at the same time it is true, that God hath discovered nothing in Scripture inconsistent with what he has discovered in the Nature of things exposed to the view of all Mankind. And therefore, if we understand any thing in reveled Religion, in a Sense contradictory to natural Religion, or to the known Perfections of God, and the common Notions of Good and Evil, which he hath written upon all our Hearts, we may be sure we are in an Error, and mistake the Sense of Revelation.

I. HE who would effectually study the Word of God, ought, above all things, to be deeply sensible of the infinite Value of true Knowledge and Wisdom; and how absolutely necessary it is to his eternal Happiness, to cultivate and improve his intellectual Powers, in the Use of all those Means, which God hath put into his Hands. The Scriptures are given us, not for Amusement, or

or meer Speculation, in perusing the curious Remains of Antiquity, the Language, Manners, and Theology of some celebrated Ancients; but they are all, from begining to end, pointed directly at our Hearts and Lives, to make us wise unto Salvation. There we find every Rule of the most consummate Wisdom, and every Principle of Truth and Comfort; and the whole is designed to refine our Nature into its proper Excellence, to guide us into the Paths of Purity, Peace, and Righteousness; to make us happy in ourselves, and a Blessing to all about us, and finally to qualify us for the full enjoyment of God for ever.

But if we are cold and indifferent to any Attainments in true Wisdom; if we choose to dream, or jest and trifle away the important Season of Life, despising the glorious Advantages we enjoy, while we eagerly pursue the low and transitory things of this World, in neglect of ourselves, of God, and Immortality, of all that is truly great and good and excellent, we shall receive little or no Advantage from any Explications of the Holy Scriptures. We shall not value or relish them, we can have no Ground to expect the divine blessing to assist our Studies, but have reason to fear we shall be left to ourselves, to wander from God, from Truth, and Life, in deplorable Ignorance and Folly. Attend, therefore, to the Voice of Divine Wisdom,

Wiſdom, *Prov.* ii. 1, &c. *My Son, if thou wilt receive my Words, and hide my Commandments with thee,* [lay them up as a Treaſure תִּצְפֹּן in thy Heart] *ſo that thou incline thine Ear unto Wiſdom, and apply thine Heart unto Underſtanding; yea, if thou crieſt after Knowledge, and lifteſt up thy Voice for Underſtanding* [as we do for thoſe things, which we moſt of all deſire, and moſt of all ſtand in need of] *If thou ſeekeſt her as Silver, and ſearcheſt for her, as for hid Treaſures:* [as covetous Men ſeek Money, and ranſack the whole World for the Treaſures, in which they delight. If thus you value, and ſtudy to advance the Improvement of your Minds in Knowledge and Wiſdom] *Then ſhalt thou underſtand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God:* [which of all Underſtanding is infinitely the moſt excellent.]

II. BUT this Senſe of the Value of Divine Knowledge, and this Deſire to obtain it, muſt be underſtood in a Connection with a ſincere Endeavour to live agreably to it. For ſhould a Perſon, under the greateſt Advantages of Learning, and with the utmoſt Aſſiduity ſtudy the Scriptures, he will be, after all, but a poor Proficient in Divine Knowledge, if he doth not bring it home to his Heart, and reduce it to Practice. It is not Speculation, but Practice and Experience, which renders a Man truly ſkilful in any Buſineſs. So in Religion, no Man can be

be truly wiſe and knowing, but he who liveth wiſely and virtuouſly. *If ye continue in my Word* (ſaith our Lord, *Joh.* viii. 31.) *then ſhall you know the Truth, and the Truth ſhall make you free* [from the Darkneſs of Ignorance and Error, and the Servitude of abſurd Luſts and Paſſions.] *Joh.* vii. 27. *If any Man will do his*, God's, *Will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.* [He ſhall ſee it in its true Light, and be convinced that it is perfectly divine.] For (*Pſal.* xxv. 14.) *the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his Covenant.* But (*Dan.* xii. 10.) *the Wicked ſhall do wickedly, and none of the Wicked ſhall underſtand; but the Wiſe*, [the pious and virtuous] *ſhall underſtand.*

THIS is to make you ſenſible, that a ſincere Deſire of true Knowledge is a neceſſary Diſpoſition in entering upon the Study of the Scriptures; and the Obedience to God's Commands, in the courſe of a pious Life, is neceſſary to inlarge and eſtabliſh the Judgment in the Knowledge of divine Truths.

III. To the effectual Study of Scripture, it is neceſſary, that our Minds and Hearts be unbyaſſed, unprejudiced, open to the Truth, and always quite free to diſcern and receive it. If our Spirits are under the Power of Prepoſſeſſion and Prejudice we cannot be well diſpoſed for ſearching the Scriptures,

tures. For inſtance, if a Perſon, in matters of Religion and Conſcience, is ambitious to gain Reputation in the World, or ſolicitous only to pleaſe and recommend himſelf to a Party, how ſhould he ſtudy the Word of God with the ſincere and ſingle View of diſcovering and embracing the Truth, when he is preingaged, and all his Care is to find what will pleaſe his Fellow-Creatures, and ſuit his own mean and ſelfiſh Purpoſes? *Joh.* v. 44. *How can ye believe, who receive Honor one of another*, whoſe ruling Principle is the Deſire of temporal Honor, and the Favor of Men, *and ſeek not the Honor, which comes from God only*, the Honor of a good Conſcience, and of upright Conduct? Or, if we reſign our Underſtandings and Conſciences to the Authority of human Deciſions and Decrees; or imbibe the Bigotry of a Party, which determines a Perſon to retain pertinaciouſly a Sett of religious Notions, without conſidering, or examing how far they are agreable to the Word of God, our Underſtandings and Judgments are locked up, and no longer at Liberty to diſcover the Truth.

It is owing to this malignant Cauſe, that great Numbers of learned Men, who call themſelves Chriſtians, will not allow themſelves to make Enquiry, whether the Worſhip of Saints, Images, Relicks, Bread, and innumerable other abſurd Doctrines, and ſu-

perſtitious

perſtitious Practices, are agreable to the Truth and Purity of the Chriſtian Religion. The Error and Iniquity of this Conduct in Papiſts we ſee and deteſt. But the ſame moral Cauſe will in all Caſes produce the ſame Effects. If we act upon the ſame vicious Principles; if we indulge the like Prejudices, and in the ſame Manner wilfully ſhut our Eyes, we ſhall be more faulty than Papiſts, becauſe it is contrary to our Profeſſion, as Proteſtants; and ſhall be equally incapable of ſeeing the Truth and Glory of our holy Religion. In ſtudying the Scriptures we ſhould always keep our Minds open to Evidence, and further Diſcoveries of Truth, which is the only way to be more and more ſolidly eſtabliſhed in our religious Principles; for in no other Way can we *grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Moreover, this is the only poſſible Mean of reducing the Chriſtian World to Unity both of Hearts and Sentiments.

IV. PRAYER to God, the Father of Lights, the Fountain of all Illumination, is neceſſary to the ſucceſsful Study of the Scriptures. *Prov.* ii. 6. *The Lord* alone *gives Wiſdom; out of his Mouth cometh Knowledge and Underſtanding.* Nor hath he appointed any Means, how excellent ſoever in themſelves, which exempt us from a dependence upon his Bleſſing. All our Springs are in him; and his gracious influences render our endeavours,

deavours, of any kind, ſucceſsful. And therefore, when we addreſs ourſelves to the Study of the holy Scriptures, we ſhould make our Supplication to God, that he would *open* our *Eyes, that* we *may behold wonderous things out of his Law.* Or, in the Apoſtle's Words, (*Epheſ.* i. 17, 18.) *that the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Glory, would give unto us the Spirit of Wiſdom, and Revelation, in the Knowledge of him; that the Eyes of our Underſtanding being enlightened,* we may have juſt apprehenſions of the Riches of his Wiſdom and Grace, and that our Hearts may be duly impreſſed with a deep and laſting Senſe of them.

CHAP. II.

Of the Divine Diſpenſations, in Scripture called the WAYS *and* WORKS *of God.*

THE *Ways of God* דרכי אלהים frequently ſignify the Rules of Life, which he hath given us to obſerve. *Pſal.* cxix. 3. *They alſo do no Iniquity; they walk in his Ways,* i. e. *in the Law of the Lord,* Ver. 1. And *the Works* מַעֲשִׂים *of God* may ſignify the meer Operations and Productions of his Power. But both theſe Words have a more reſtricted and emphatical Signification. דֶּרֶךְ *a Way,* ſignifieth

alſo

alſo a Courſe of Action, a Cuſtom, Conſtitution or Inſtitution, which any Perſon, or Number of Perſons form to themſelves. *Prov.* viii. 22. *The Lord poſſeſſed me*, Wiſdom, *in the Begining of his Way, before his Works of old.* Prov. xii. 26. *The Way of the Wicked*, their Courſe of Action, *ſeduceth them.* Hoſ. x. 13. *Becauſe thou didſt truſt in thy Way*, the Schemes and Methods, political or religious, of thy own deviſing, *and in the Multitude of thy mighty Men.* Amos viii. 14. *The Manner*, the Way, *i. e.* the religious Conſtitution, *of Beerſheba liveth*, ſubſiſts, flouriſheth, notwithſtanding the Oppoſition made to it. עָשָׂה too ſignifies to conſtitute, ordain, appoint, diſpoſe. *Num.* xxviii. 6. 2 *Chron.* ii. 11. *Pſal.* civ. 19. *Eccl.* iii. 11.

HENCE *Ways* and *Works* ſignify the Appointments, Conſtitutions, or Diſpenſations of God. By which are meant, "The "Schemes or Methods deviſed or contrived "by the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, "to diſcover, or ſhew himſelf, his Nature "and Will, his Beneficence, Holineſs and "Juſtice to the Minds of his rational Crea-"tures, for their Inſtruction, Diſcipline and "Reformation, in order to promote their "Happineſs." Theſe are the great Ends of the Divine Diſpenſations; and theſe the principal Points to be attended to, in the Explications of them.

THE

THE great God, for ever to be adored, hath actually given Exiſtence to a World of moral Agents, ſuch as we are. He therefore is our Father, and we are his Offſpring, whom he hath created in Love, that in a right and virtuous Uſe of our rational Powers, we may be qualified for Honor and Enjoyment in the heavenly World. This ſeems to be the higheſt Deſign the divine Goodneſs can form, and the higheſt Excellency to which our Nature can attain. And this may be conſidered as the Baſis of all the Divine Diſpenſations from the begining of the World. For without pious and virtuous Diſpoſitions we cannot be qualified for Honor and Enjoyment. But pious and virtuous Diſpoſitions cannot be forced upon us, by any external Power whatever; they muſt, in ſome degree, be the Effect of our own Attention and Choice. It is, therefore, becoming the Father of our Spirits, and ſuitable to Beings of our Capacities and Circumſtances, that proper Means be provided for our Inſtruction and Diſcipline. For inſtance, as God is not the Object of any of our Senſes, and can be ſeen only by our Underſtandings, it is proper that he ſhould ſet before us in the Frame and Furniture of the World, ſuch viſible and various diſplays of his Being, Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice, and kind Regards, as may engage our Attention, diſcover his eternal

eternal Godhead, and lead us to the Acknowledgment, Adoration, Love, and dutiful Obedience of our Creator, Father, and Benefactor. These are the Works, the Dispensations, or Constitutions of Nature; whereby our Father, as in a Glass held before our Eyes and Thoughts, has shewn himself to us for our Instruction in Piety and Virtue.

BUT besides the Constitution of universal Nature, there are a Variety of Dispensations, which are more immediately relative to Mankind. As the being born of Parents, to supply the several Generations of the World, whence result sundry Relations and Duties; the being sustained by Food, covered and sheltered by Clothes and Habitations, healed by Physicians, taught by the learned and skilful; the Infirmities, Appetites, and Passions of our Constitution; the forming Societies for mutual Help and Commerce; the Institution of Government, or the Subordination of some to the Authority of others, for preserving good Order, for the Protection of Virtue, and the Restraint and Punishment of Vice. Add to these, Wars, Pestilence, Famine, Earthquakes, and such like Events; all these may be reckoned among the Divine Appointments, or Dispensations; some for the Exercise of our rational Powers in right Action; some for Discipline, Correction, and Reformation;

but none merely for Deſtruction, except where Reformation cannot be effected.

BUT thoſe Ways, or Diſpenſations, which in Scripture are conſidered as the great Hinges of Divine Providence, on which his Dealings with Mankind have turned; or as the principal Events, by which the great Purpoſes and Counſels of God's Will have been executed, are chiefly to be attended unto. Becauſe right Conceptions of theſe, under their ſeveral Views, Circumſtances, and Connections, will greatly contribute to the explaining of Scripture-Theology, and alſo mark out the proper Order and Method, in which it may be ſtudied. Let us therefore here, at firſt ſeting out, take a general Survey of them.

I. THE Creation of the World, as above.

II. THE Formation of Man after the Image of God.

III. MAN being created capable of enjoying the Honours and Felicity of Heaven, was to be diſciplined and proved, in order to his being confirmed in the Habits of Virtue and Holineſs; without which, neither Man, nor any other rational Being, can be fit to ſee, or enjoy, the Lord. Accordingly, the firſt moſt remarkable of God's Works, in the newly created World, was to put the Man, whom he had formed, upon a Trial ſuitable to his Circumſtances.

IV. UNDER

IV. UNDER which Trial, Man, yielding to Temptation, fined, and ſo became ſubjected to the Threatening of eternal Death.

V. WHICH heavy Doom, God, not willing to deſtroy his Creature, was pleaſed in Mercy, not only to mitigate, but alſo, Man having altered his moral State, thought fit to introduce a new Diſpenſation of Grace, in the Hands of a Mediator. At the ſame time, ſubjecting the human Race to a laborious Life, to Diſeaſes, and to Death temporal. And this in much Goodneſs, to ſubdue the fleſhly Principle, to give a Taſte of the bitter Fruits of Sin, to prevent the Opportunities and Occaſions of it; and, by increaſing the Vanity of the Creature, to turn his Regards more ſteadily to the all-ſufficient Creator.

VI. BUT Men multiplying in the Earth abuſed the Grace of God, and in about 1656 Years Time became ſo wicked, that *all Fleſh had corrupted his Way, and the Earth was filled with Violence.* Then, to purge the World from Iniquity, and to recover it to a State of Righteouſneſs, God created a new thing in the Earth, and, by a Deluge of Water, deſtoyed that wicked Generation, preſerving the only Family, that remained uncorrupt in the Old World, in order to propagate Piety and Virtue in the New. At the ſame Time, and for the

ſame good Purpoſes, he reduced human Life into much narrower Bounds.

VII. NOT long after the Deluge, to prevent a ſecond general Corruption, God introduced another Diſpenſation, by confounding the Language of Mankind; which divided the World into ſeveral diſtinct Societies, and, conſequently, kept them under a ſtricter Government, and better preſerved their Liberties, than if the World had been one great Empire.

VIII. THUS the Outrage of Violence and Rapine was, in a good Meaſure, cured. But now Mankind fall into a different Iniquity, namely, that of Idolatry; whereby, within 400 Years after the Flood, the Worſhip and Knowledge of the one ſupreme God was in danger of being utterly loſt. To prevent this, the Divine Wiſdom erected a new Diſpenſation by calling *Abraham* from among his idolatrous Kindred, and conſtituting his Family the Storehouſe and Standard of Divine Knowledge. To them he ſpake and reveled himſelf at ſundry Times, and in divers Manners, and ſeperated them from the reſt of the World, by peculiar Laws and religious Ceremonies, to ſecure them from the idolatrous Practices of their Neighbours. Thus they became God's peculiar People, diſtinguiſhed above all other Nations, but with a View to the future great Benefit of all Nations. And to this Day,

Day, bleſſed be God, we experience the happy Effects of this noble Scheme, and owe to it both our Bible, and the very Being of the Goſpel Church.

IX. THE Family of *Abraham*, by the Divine Conduct, was led into *Egypt*. And when they had been there, under grievous Oppreſſion, 215 Years, and were grown numerous enough to be a Nation, God ſet himſelf at the Head of them, as their King. And, in a Country much eſteemed for Learning and Arts, whither Men of Genius and Curioſity reſorted from all other Parts, upon this Stage, ſo proper, becauſe ſo public, God, as the King of *Iſrael*, combated the King of *Egypt* and his fictitious Gods, and diſplayed his infinitely ſuperior Power both to deſtroy and to ſave, by many Plagues inflicted upon the Land of *Egypt*, and by bringing out the *Iſraelites* in Oppoſition to all the Forces of the King, and all the Obſtacles of Nature, and ſettling them, after they had been ſufficiently diſciplined in the Wilderneſs, in the Land of *Canaan*. Here God ſet up his peculiar Kingdom amongſt them, and they alone of all the Nations of the Earth were the Subjects of it, and happy in its ſingular Privileges and Bleſſings; but, at the ſame time, were exerciſed with various providential Diſpenſations. The general Rule of which was this; while they adhered to the Worſhip of the true God,

they were always prosperous, when they declined to Idolatry, they were either oppressed at Home, or carried captive into other Countries.

X. THE long Captivity in *Babylon* was not only a Punishment to the *Jews*, but also a Mean of publishing the Knowledge of the true God over all the *Babylonish* Empire, as appears very evidently in the Book of *Daniel*. And the Division of the *Grecian* Empire, which put an End to the *Persian*, after the Death of *Alexander*, caused a new Dispersion of the *Jews*, especially into *Asia minor*, *Syria*, *Egypt*, *Cyrene*, and *Lylia*, where their Synagogues were very common. And lastly, when they were subjected to the *Roman* Power, their God and Religion became more known over all the *Roman* Empire. Thus the Way for the Kingdom of the *Messiah* was gradually prepared. For though the Knowledge of God, received from the *Jews*, made no public Reformation of Pagan Idolatry, yet it greatly disposed Men to receive the Gospel when it should be preached unto them. Some became *Jews*, many renounced Idolatry, and worshiped no other but the living and true God, who, in the Acts of the Apostles, are called, *devout Proselytes*, *Greeks*, *those that feared God*.

XI. THUS we are brought to the *Coming of Christ*, who came *in the fulness of Time*; for

for he came as ſoon as God, by the various Methods of his Providence, had prepared the World to receive him. When God *had made ready a People prepared for him*, then Chriſt came, and fully explained the Nature, Laws, Extent, and Glory of the Kingdom of God, and fulfilled the great and moſt excellent Deſigns of Divine Wiſdom, by giving himſelf a Sacrifice and Propitiation for the Sin of the World.

XII. THEN the great Myſtery of God, the Calling of other Nations, beſides the *Jews*, into his Kingdom and Church, was opened, and made manifeſt by the Preaching of the Goſpel. For which Purpoſe, he ſent out his Apoſtles, furniſhed with proper Powers and Credentials, eſpecially the Gift of Tongues, whereby they were inabled to communicate the wonderful things of God to People of different Countries. And by this Means, the glad Tidings of Salvation, and the glorious Light and Privileges of the Goſpel, have reached even to us in *Great-Britain*, who dwell in the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth.

XIII. BUT as *Chriſt* came to reſtore, to explain, and by the moſt glorious Diſcoveries, and the richeſt Promiſes, to inforce the Law of Nature, the true Religion of all Nations; and conſequently, as his Deſign was to erect an univerſal Religion, which ſhould recommend itſelf to all People, un-

der their ſeveral political Diſtinctions, and which, therefore, was to interfere with no political Eſtabliſhments, but ſhould leave them, in every Country, juſt as it found them, teaching the Nations only to obſerve the eternal Rules of Righteouſneſs in the Hope of eternal Life; I ſay, upon this grand, noble, and extenſive plan, the *Jewiſh* Polity would be ſunk to a level with all other national Governments; and the *Jew*, on account of any prior national Advantages, would have no more Claim to the Bleſſings and Privileges of the Kingdom of God, than any of the *Gentiles*, or Nations, who, in any of the moſt barbarous and deſpiſed Parts of the Earth, ſhould receive the Faith of the Goſpel. For in the Chriſtian Religion *there is neither Greek nor Jew, Circumciſion nor Uncircumciſion, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond nor Free; but Chriſt*, i. e. the Faith and Obedience, or true Religion, which Chriſt taught, *is all, and in all*, Col. iii. 11. Thus the *Jew* is fallen from his ſuperior Claims and Privileges; and he falls by that very Method of divine Wiſdom and Grace, which brought Salvation to all other Nations. Thus *the diminiſhing of the Jews is the Riches of the World, and the caſting away of them is the reconciling of the World*, (Rom. xi. 12, 15.) or the opening a Door for the whole World to come into the peculiar Kingdom of God.

THIS

THIS is the Idea we ought to have of the Rejection of the *Jews*. The Grace of God was, and ſtill is, as free to them as to other People, upon their embracing the Goſpel; but their political Conſtitution from henceforth gave them no Diſtinction, or Privileges in the Kingdom of God above the reſt of Mankind. And in no long time after the Publication of the Goſpel, their Polity and civil Conſtitution, which otherwiſe would have remained in full Force, and have obliged them to obey its Laws, as much as the Conſtitutions of the other Kingdoms of the World obliged their ſeveral Subjects, was quite overthrown, by the Deſtruction of the Temple, and the Expulſion of the *Jews* out of the Land of *Canaan*. Which they have not been able to recover, but remain diſperſed over the Face of the whole Earth to this Day. Thus the Goſpel Diſpenſation was erected, and ſpread and prevailed every where.

XIV. THE next of God's Works was the permiting and managing a grand Apoſtacy and Corruption of Religion in the Chriſtian Church, foretold by the Apoſtles, and at large in the Book of the Revelation. After the Apoſtles were removed out of the World, it pleaſed God to leave the Profeſſors of the Goſpel, in matters of Religion, to their own Ignorance, Paſſions and Prepoſſeſſions. Thus the Chriſtian Faith, by Degrees, was depraved,

praved, till the *Man of Sin* arose, a tyrannical, usurped Power, domineering over, and imposing upon Conscience, forbiding the Use of Understanding, and intoxicating the Inhabiters of the Earth with false and delusive Learning, worldly Pomp and Splendor, religious Sorcery, and cruel Persecution of the Truth. This, as it was the propereſt Mean of producing the moſt eminent and nobleſt Characters, was to be a long and ſevere Trial of the Faith and Patience of the Saints. In the times of this ſad Diſpenſation, it is certain, we are now living; but, we hope, towards the latter End of it. Through the whole courſe of it God hath variouſly appeared, both in Wrath upon the Corrupters of Religion, and in Mercy for the Comfort and Support of thoſe who oppoſed it. And thus the Wheels of Providence moved on, till the Morning of Reformation appeared in our happy Land, which, for ſome Centuries, hath been gradually advancing, and ſtill continues to advance, towards the perfect Day. For a Spirit of religious Liberty, which hath been long oppreſſed, revives and gains Strength, the Scriptures are more carefully ſtudied, eccleſiaſtical Tyranny and Perſecution, under every Form, more generally deteſted; and things ſeem to have a Tendency towards Love, Unity, and Concord, the moſt perfect State of Religion in this World.

XV. THIS

XV. THIS muſt give Pleaſure to every good Man, and he will chearfully join his Endeavours to bring on the next glorious Diſpenſation, which we have in Proſpect, when the *Myſtery of God*, with regard to the aforeſaid corrupt State of Religion, *ſhall be finiſhed*, when *Babylon*, in all its Principles and Powers, ſhall fall; when *the holy City, the new Jeruſalem*, ſhall come down from Heaven, and God ſhall ſet up a pure and happy State of the Church.

XVI. How long that State will continue, we do not certainly know. Nor have we any further clear Diſcoveries of God's Works till the awful Day of the Reſurrection, when the Lord himſelf ſhall in Perſon deſcend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and the Trump of God. *Then all they that ſleep in the Duſt of the Earth ſhall awake*, and ſhall be judged, *ſome to everlaſting Life, and ſome to Shame and everlaſting Contempt. And they that be wiſe*, under any of the Changes and Diſpenſations of this preſent World, *ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament, and they that* work together with God, and endeavour to *turn many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars for ever and ever.*

THUS I have given a Sketch of the Works of God from the Begining of the World to the Conſummation of all things. And very beautiful and ſurprizing would the whole

whole appear, could we ſee them in a full and clear Light. But before we attempt a more particular Explication of them in their ſeveral Views, Circumſtances, and Connections, we muſt make a few general Remarks, which will aſſiſt our Conceptions and Enquiries.

CHAP. III.

GENERAL REMARKS *upon the* DIVINE DISPENSATIONS.

CONCERNING the foregoing Diſpenſations, we may, in general, remark, that as they are deviſed and executed by God—

I. THEY are all agreable to the moſt perfect Rules of Righteouſneſs and Truth. Nothing falſe, unjuſt, or injurious, can be charged npon the Divine Conſtitutions. For (*Deut.* xxxii. 4.) *all* God's *Ways are Judgment; a God of Truth, and without Iniquity; juſt and right is He.* Pſal. cxlv. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his Ways, and holy,* ſteadily acting according to Truth, *in all his Works.* See alſo *Rev.* xv. 3. And therefore they are in perfect Conſiſtence with each other.

II. THE Ways of God are not to be conſidered as the Effect of Neceſſity, as if the End

End propoſed could not poſſibly have been otherwiſe gained; but as the Reſult of wiſe Choice, or Divine Prudence, prefering ſuch particular Methods as preferable to any other; as beſt adapted to our Circumſtances, or, all things conſidered, as the moſt likely to make Mankind wiſe and happy. For inſtance, it is by the Diſpenſation of God, that our preſent Life is ſuſtained by Food; not becauſe it is impoſſible we ſhould live in any other way, for God could ſuſtain our Life in perfect Health and Strength by an Act of his own immediate Power. Again, our Food is produced by the influence of the Sun, by Rain, the Fertility of the Ground, human Labor and Skill; not becauſe Food could not be otherwiſe produced, for God could, by an immediate Act of his own Power, create Food for us every Day, as he did for the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs; but this Method of ſuſtaining our Life is a Contrivance of Divine Wiſdom; to ſhew himſelf to our Underſtandings, (for had we been ſuſtained by an immediate Act of Divine Power, we ſhould have been led to imagine, that, not God, but our own Nature, had ſuſtained itſelf,) and to exerciſe our Virtue and Induſtry in providing a Subſiſtence, and to be mutually helpful to each other. Hence the Works of God, in Scripture, are aſſigned to his Wiſdom. See *Pſal.* civ.

civ. 24. *Prov.* viii. 22. *Ephes.* i. 5, *&c.* — iii. 9, 10.

III. ASSUREDLY all the Dispensations of God are calculated to promote Virtue and Happiness. This is the Line which runs through the whole, as will appear in our future Enquiries into the Nature and Tendencies of each of them. At present it may suffice to observe, that however our Circumstances may differ from those of our first Parents, the End of our Being is the same as theirs; and we, as well as they, are upon Trial, in order to our having the Habits of Holiness formed in us, and our being fited for eternal Life. And though it is a sad Reflection to consider, how the Wickedness of Men, hath from Time to Time fatigued the Patience of God, yet it must give us Pleasure to observe, how his Goodness hath applied various Remedies to prevent, or heal, the Corruptions of Mankind. In what way soever Men have gone astray from him, his Wisdom has never been at a Loss to find out the most proper Expedients to reclaim them. Evidently his Design is to save a sinful World, and to carry Religion both in its personal Influences, and general Prevalence, to the highest Perfection our present Condition will admit *.

IV. THE

* Now, if such a Design shall appear evidently to run through the Books of the Old and New Testament, a Man

IV. THE Scriptural Diſpenſations, which have been enumerated, were ſeverally adapted to the then Capacities and Improvements, the moral State and Circumſtances of Mankind. The ſeveral Ages of the World may be compared to the ſeveral Stages of human Life, Infancy, Youth, Manhood, and old Age. Now, as a Man under due Culture gradually improves in Knowledge and Wiſdom, from Infancy to old Age, ſo we may conceive of the World, from the Begining to the End, as gradually improving in mental and religious Attainments under the ſeveral

Man may, with infinitely greater Propriety, ſuppoſe the moſt perfect Drama (where the fineſt Deſign is carried on by the beſt choſen Plot, and by the moſt conſiſtent Underplots, and beautiful, well-proportioned Incidents) to have been writ by a Number of the greateſt Madmen or Idiots, by piece-meal, in different Ages; than imagine a Thread of ſuch an End and Mean runing through above 40 Writers, in more than 1600 Years, to be the Work of ſo many Enthuſiaſts. Or, we may as well ſuppoſe the World to be framed by meer Chance; or the moſt magnificent, beautiful, and convenient Palace, that the Imagination can figure to itſelf, to be built by Men unacquainted with all the Rules of Architecture, in ſeveral diſtant Ages, and without any Model to build by, and to be ſupported by meer Chance, through as many more; as imagine ſuch an Unity of Deſign and Mean, as I have deſcribed, to be the Reſult of Enthuſiaſm and Accident mixed together. *Ld. Barrington's Eſſay on the Div. Diſpenſations. Part.* I. *Preface, p.* 26.

veral Divine Diſpenſations †. Which Diſpenſations have been in every Period ſuited to the Improvements in Knowledge and Wiſdom, which then ſubſiſted in the World. *Adam*, when created, may be conſidered as a Child without Knowledge, Learning, and Experience; and therefore the Diſpenſation he was under, was very different from that, which we are under, who enjoy the Benefit and Light of ſo many preceding Diſpenſations.

COROLLARY. *A preceding Diſpenſation is intended and adapted to introduce and prepare for that which comes after it.* Experience is a natural and certain Mean of improving in Knowledge and Wiſdom. This is univerſally true, as well with regard to Communities as ſingle Perſons. It is therefore agreable to the Nature of things, that in a progreſſive Courſe of Knowledge, and moral Improvement, what we already have experienced ſhould be a Step to further Advances; and conſequently, in a juſt Plan or Scheme of Diſcipline, it is fit, that what goes before, ſhould be adapted to clear and eſtabliſh what is to come after. Thus Mankind, reflecting upon preceding Diſpenſations, will

† Ages of a Man. 6. 16. 20. 30. 40. 50. 60. 70.
Ages of the World. 600. 1600. 2000. 3000. 4000. 5000. 6000. 7000.

will be admonished and directed to reform old Errors and Corruptions; and thus, even the monsterous Apostacy of the Church of *Rome* may serve to introduce and establish that most perfect state of Christianity, which we expect will succeed the Dispensation we are now under.

V. ALL God's Dispensations are in a moral Way, and adapted to the Nature of rational Agents. *Exod.* xiii. 17. Force and Coaction destroy the very Nature of Holiness; and therefore all divine Methods of Reformation are so wisely adjusted, as to leave human Actions in their proper State of Freedom. By none of his Works did God ever intend to render Wickedness impracticable; and he hath always provided sufficient Supports for Integrity and Virtue. With this very sentiment Prophecy in *Daniel* and in the Revelation is sealed up. *Rev.* xxii. 11. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.* That is to say, there is no Cure for the obstinately blind and wicked; neither are the Ways of God intended to purify those, who will not be made clean; but, after all that God hath done, *the Wicked* (Dan. xii. 10.) *shall* be left to *do wickedly. And none of the Wicked will understand, but* only *the Wise will understand. But he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. Hos.* xiv. 9. *Who is wise, and* [for] *he shall*

 under-

underſtand theſe things? Prudent, and [for] *he ſhall know them? For the ways of Jehovah are right; and the juſt ſhall walk in them; but the tranſgreſſors ſhall fall in them.* The Sincere and Upright, who chooſe the way of Truth, or turn from Sin unto Righteouſneſs, the righteous and merciful God will never forſake. They make a wiſe Improvement of his Diſpenſations, and, under all Trials and Difficulties, he will guide and ſupport them; and their Path ſhall be as the ſhining Light, that ſhineth more and more to the perfect Day.

COROLLARY. *HENCE we may conclude — That in computing the Progreſs of Religion, under any Diſpenſation, the quantity of Knowledge and Religion is to be meaſured only by the Improvement of the Righteous; and that the Wicked, how many ſoever, are not to be taken into the Account, as making any Deductions from it.* Or, the Advances of Knowledge and Religion, under any Diſpenſation, are not to be eſtimated by Numbers, but by the Proficiency of ſingle Perſons, how few ſoever. *Noah*, a ſingle Perſon, was, at the time of the Deluge, the true Standard of religious Improvement in that Age; though all the reſt of Mankind were exceeding corrupt and wicked.

VI. *KNOWN unto God are all his Works from the begining of the World*, ſaith the Apoſtle *James*, *Acts* xv. 18. Then all God's Works

Works were formed and planed in his Counſels, and lay under his Eye in one comprehenſive View; and therefore muſt be perfectly conſiſtent. One uniform Scheme muſt be laid, and one even thread of Deſign muſt run through the Whole. They are not the reſult of ſudden, incoherent thoughts; but a well digeſted Plan, formed upon the moſt juſt Principles by him, who ſeeth all his Works from the begining to the end. Whence it follows, that if we do not diſcern one coherent Deſign in the Divine Diſpenſations, or if we make any one Part claſh with the reſt, we may be ſure we do not underſtand them. Goodneſs was the Principle of Creation. God made Man becauſe he delighted to communicate Being and Happineſs. Conſequently, Goodneſs and fatherly Love, which was the begining and foundation of God's Works, muſt run equally through them all, from firſt to laſt.

VII. PREVIOUS Notice was given of ſome of the principal Diſpenſations, either for Warning, or to prepare Men for the Reception of them. The Deluge was preached by *Noah* 120 Years before it came to paſs. The Jewiſh Diſpenſation was predicted to *Abraham* 430 Years beforehand. *Jeremiah* foretold the Babyloniſh Captivity; and *Paul*, and *John* at large, predict and deſcribe the grand Apoſtacy. But the coming of the *Meſſiah*, and the Goſpel Diſpenſation, run

through the whole, from the begining to the end, in a leſs or clearer degree of Light. And it was fiting that this, which is the chief of God's Works, ſhould receive the brighteſt Evidence from Prophecy. And therefore it was not fit it ſhould be introduced till ſuch time as it had received that Evidence; which in Scripture is called *the Fulneſs of Time*, Gal. iv. 4.

VIII. THE Diſpenſations of God are intended for our Contemplation and Study; and it is a ſingular advantage to form right notions of them, becauſe they will tincture our Conceptions of God, and influence our Diſpoſitions towards him. If we judge truly of God's Works, we ſhall have agreable and lovely ideas of the Workman. His Wiſdom, his Goodneſs and Truth, will ſtand in a fair light, and we ſhall confeſs him infinitely worthy of our higheſt regard. Then we ſhall think of God with Admiration, Pleaſure and Delight, (*Pſal.* xcii. 4. *Thou, Lord, haſt made me glad through thy Work; I will triumph in the Works of thy Hands.*) and ſhall ſerve and follow him with willing minds. But if we form ſuch conceptions of the ways of God, as repreſent them to be arbitrary and tyrannical, inconſiſtent with all our notions of Juſtice and Goodneſs, the effect of ſovereign Will, without either Reaſon or Love, he muſt ſtand before our thoughts in the moſt frightful Colors. The

moſt

moſt horrible Gloom will be drawn over the Perfections of the beſt of Beings, our Minds will be filled with darkneſs and dread; and, if we worſhip him at all, our worſhip and obedience will not be the free and generous duty of Sons, but the joyleſs conſtrained drudgery of Slaves.

IX. IT muſt be remembered, that the Works of God are unſearchable, and paſt our finding out to perfection. *Pſal.* xcii. 5. *O Lord, how great are thy Works, and thy Thoughts are very deep!* From a juſt ſenſe of the inſcrutability of the Divine Diſpenſations, the Apoſtle concludes a Diſcourſe upon the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, with this ſolemn Exclamation; *O the depth of the riches, both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out!* Rom. xi. 33. It becomes us to admire and adore the Counſels of infinite Wiſdom, and to acquieſce where we cannot gain a full knowledge of them. *Rev.* xv. 3. *Great and marvelous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty!* We cannot comprehend the Ways of God in their fulleſt extent, in all their largeſt views, and remoteſt connections. He therefore that is wiſe will not cavil at them, nor fooliſhly endeavour to pry into them beyond the bounds of Revelation, and of human Underſtanding.

X. BUT under all our present Darkness, and under every Dispensation, an honest Heart, sincerely desirous to know the Truth, seriously inquisitive after it, meekly submissive to what God hath reveled and commanded, willing to work together with him, patiently persevering in well doing; such a Temper, and such a Conduct, is the best and safest Guide under every Dispensation; will enable us to follow God, to comply with every design of his Providence, to overcome in every Hour of Trial, and will lead us to eternal Life. To such a Character, as well as to *Daniel*, (Chap. xii. 13.) it is the language of divine Grace—*But walk thou*, thou honest, upright Man, *walk thou thy way to the end*, take Courage and Comfort, walk on, persevere in the path of Truth and Integrity; *for*, after all the Trials and Disquietudes of this World, *thou shalt rest, and stand in thy Lot*, the Lot of pious and faithful Souls, *at the end of the days*.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the CREATION.

Gen. I. 1.—26.

THIS is the work of Creation. To *create* is to give Being to that which did not exist before; and so, is no Contradiction. That a thing should *be and not be at the same time*, is a Contradiction and Impossibility; but that a thing should exist now, which did not exist before, is no more a Contradiction, than that my Hand should move now, which did not move before.

THAT there is one first uncaused Cause, from which all other Beings derive their Existence, and upon whom they have their entire Dependence, hath already been proved. Consequently, all Beings, except the first Cause, must have been produced, or brought into Being by the Power and Agency of the first Cause. Not produced, out of Nothing, but out of Nothing besides the immense and unconceivable Fullness of the self-existent Being, who must have in himself the Power and Possibility of all Being; though we cannot comprehend or conceive in what manner, or by what kind of agency, he createth or communicateth existence to Beings distinct from himself.

OF the Creation of all things, *Moses* in this Chapter has given us a summary account; not in a precise philosophical man-

ner, but ſo as to give the Men of that age, in which he wrote, juſt and affecting notions of this firſt, and moſt ſtupendous Work of God, ſo far as was neceſſary to the purpoſes of true Religion, and no further. It is enough, therefore, that his account is true, ſo far as it goes, and not in any reſpect inconſiſtent with the moſt accurate Diſcoveries, which have been made in later ages concerning the Syſtem of the Univerſe, or any part of it.

Ver. 1. *In the begining*, &c. *The Heavens and the Earth* may comprehend the whole Univerſe, or *all things viſible and inviſible.* It doth not therefore follow, that the whole Univerſe was created all together at once, or at ſome one period of time. But the meaning is this; at firſt, when the Univerſe was produced, it was brought into Being by the ſole Power and Wiſdom of the almighty and eternal God. This is true, though the ſeveral parts of the Univerſe may have been produced at different times, or at any diſtance of time from each other; and though God may ſtill be creating new Worlds in the immenſe Boſom of Space, which is not improbable; I ſay, it is true, that in the begining of their Exiſtence, whenever that was, God created, and is ſtill creating, them all. The ſentiment which *Moſes*, I apprehend, would inculcate being this, that the whole Univerſe of Beings, whenever created, doth not exiſt by Neceſſity or Chance;

Chance; but had a begining, and was produced by the ſole Power of God.

BUT, as *Moſes* here gives us a particular Account of the Formation of our Earth, this phraſe, *in the begining*, may have a ſpecial Reference to the Time, when our Earth was created. The Matter, of which it conſiſts, was produced in the State of a *Chaos*, (Ver. 2.) *without Form and void*, i. e. ſhapeleſs, waſte, and uſeleſs; all the Parts, Solids and Fluids, jumbled together, and ſurrounded with Darkneſs, unadorned, uninhabited. But *the Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters*; i. e. the Influences and Exertions of the Divine Power actuated this dark, confuſed Maſs, and digeſted, and reduced its Parts to the beautiful State and Order in which we now behold them.

ON the firſt Day, and the firſt thing after the Production of the *Chaos*, the Element of Light was created. *Ver.* 3, 4, 5.

ON the ſecond Day was created the Element of Air, or that Body of Air, which we call the Atmoſphere, הָרָקִיעַ *the Firmament*, or rather, ſpacious Expanſion of Air, where the Fowls do fly, (Ver. 20.) and which is ſpread abroad above, and all round the Earth, including Meteors and Clouds, which are the Waters above, or at the upper Part of, the Atmoſphere, in Contradiſtinction to the Waters of the Sea and Rivers, which are under it. *Ver.* 6, 7, 8.

ON the third Day the great God formed the

the Element of Water, by draining off the Fluids of the *Chaos*, and caufing them to flow into large Cavities, prepared to receive them; that thus the Earth might become one firm, compact, voluble Globe, and in a fit Condition to produce Grafs, Herbs, Trees, and Plants, which were then created. *Ver.* 9, 10, 11, 12.

ON the fourth Day God created the Sun and Moon. *Ver.* 14—19. The Sun being the Centre of our Syftem, it feems probable, that the whole folar Syftem was produced at the fame time with the Earth, though the Defign of the Writer did not lead him to take Notice of the other parts of it. But we have no juft Ground, from his Account, to fuppofe, that all the Stars, which are probably each of them the Centre of a diftinct Syftem, were, on this Day, all of them created. Moft of them might have been created long before, and fome of them fince, our World came into Being. For that Claufe (Ver. 16.) *he made the Stars alfo*, in the Hebrew is no more than, *and the Stars*; the Words, *he made*, being inferted by the Tranflators. And therefore it may be well rendered thus—*Ver.* 16. *And God made two great Lights; the greater Light to rule the Day, and the leffer Light to rule the Night with the Stars.* That is to fay, *the Moon and Stars to rule the Night*, as it is expreffed, *Pfal.* cxxxvi. 9. The Conjunction ו fometimes hath the Force of the

the Prepoſition *with*; as *Gen.* iv. 20. *With his Weapons.* 2 *King.* xi. 8. *Jer.* xxii. 7. *&c.*

HITHERTO our Globe, and perhaps the other Planets, might, by the Power of God, be ſuſpended in the empty Space, in a State of Reſt. But now, when the Sun, the Centre of our Syſtem, was created, and the Earth was reduced to a proper State of Firmneſs and Solidity, they might be thrown into thoſe regular and rapid Motions, about the Sun, and their own Centres, which, by the ſame Power impreſſed upon them, continue to this Day; and by their exact periodical Revolutions produce that grateful and neceſſary variety of Day and Night and Seaſons; namely, Spring and Summer, Autumn and Winter; which are certainly the Effect of the annual and diurnal Motions of the Earth; and therefore the annual and diurnal Motions might on this Day commence. *Ver.* 14.

ON the fifth Day Fiſh and Fowl; on the ſixth Day Beaſts and Man were created. *Ver.* 20, *&c.*

THERE is one Difficulty remaining, namely, that *Light* was created before the Sun, *Ver.* 3, 14, *&c.* Whereas the Sun is ſuppoſed to be the ſole Fountain of Light, by emiting luminous Particles from its Body. But I ſuſpect the truth of this Hypotheſis; and *Moſes* may be found a more accurate Philoſopher than is commonly imagined. It

appears from electrical Experiments, that Light is a diſtinct Subſtance from all other, as much as Air is from Water; and that, by being properly excited, it may be made to appear in Midnight Darkneſs. Which ſhews, that it did exiſt in that Darkneſs, previouſly to its being excited; and that it was rendered viſible by being excited. Conſequently it may, and, I doubt not, doth exiſt, expanded through the whole viſible Syſtem of things at all times, by Night as well as by Day; and that the Sun, a fiery Body, is, in our Syſtem, the great Exciter, by which the Subſtance of Light is impelled, and becomes viſible. For were there no Subſtance of Light previouſly exiſting throughout the whole Syſtem, no Light would appear, though ten thouſand Suns ſhould at once be placed in our Hemiſphere. Juſt as the ringing of the Bell produces Sound, not by an Emanation of Particles from the Subſtance of the Bell, but by exciting the Air, or the ſounding Subſtance, without which the Bell could produce no Sound at all. As the Air will not ſound, ſo the Light will not appear without being ex-

* THIS Hypotheſis, I preſume, doth not interfere with any Rules of Optics, the Rays of Light being *excited* according to the ſame Laws and Directions, by which they are ſuppoſed to be *emited*. The Light of a Candle, upon an Eminence, may be ſeen at leaſt three Miles at Sea, in a dark Night. Therefore, according to the common Suppoſition, the Flame of a Candle, ſuppoſe of

excited *. Upon this Suppofition the Element or Subftance of Light was created on the firft Day, and the Divine Power alone might

of one Inch Diameter, muft emit from its Body inftantaneoufly, and in every Inftant, while it continues to burn, as much luminous Matter, or Subftance, as will fill a fpherical Space of fix Miles in Diameter, or of 113,0976 cubical Miles. Which, notwithftanding the Divifibility of Matter, *in infinitum*, feems to me, to be incredible. It is furely more probable and rational to fuppofe, that the extremely agile Particles of Light, which fill that large Space, are actuated, or excited inftantaneoufly by the luminous Body.

N. B. Dr. TAYLOR, fome time after he had finifhed this Scheme of Scripture Divinity, met with the fame Thought and Reafoning in the ingenious Author of NATURE DISPLAYED; and was not a little pleafed to find an Hypothefis, which he judged peculiar to himfelf, adopted by fo deep an Inquirer into Nature.

THAT the curious Reader may compare the paffages, he is prefented with the following Extract.

" —* LIGHT is vifibly pre-exiftent to luminous Bo-
" dies ; this may feem a Paradox at firft Sight, but it
" is not therefore a lefs evident Truth. — By Light we
" do not mean that Senfation which we experience in
" ourfelves, on the Prefence of any illumined Body,
" but that inconceivably fubtle Matter, which makes
" an Impreffion on the Organs of Sight, and paints on the
" optic Nerve thofe objects from the Surfaces of which it
" was reflected to us. Light then, taken in this fenfe, is a
" Body quite different from the Sun, and independent
" on it, and might have exifted before it, feeing now
" it does exift in its abfence, as well as when prefent.
" It is diffufed from one End of the Creation to the
" other, traverfes the whole Univerfe, forms a Com-
" munication between the moft remote Spheres, pene-
" trates into the inmoft Receffes of the Earth, and
" only waits to be put in a proper Motion to make
" itfelf vifible. — Light is to the Eye what the Air is
" to

* Vol. III. Page 409. Second Edition.

might be the Exciter, which made the Light appear for the three firſt Days of Creation, until

" to the Ear : Air may not improperly be called the " Body of Sound, and it does equally exiſt all round " us, though there be no ſonorous Body to put it in " Motion ; ſo likewiſe the Light does equally extend at " all times, from the moſt diſtant fixed Stars to us, " though it then only ſtrikes our Eyes, when impelled by " the Sun, or ſome other Maſs of Fire.

" THE difference betwixt the Propagation of Sound " and Light conſiſts in this, that the Air, which is the " Vehicle of Sound, being, beyond all Compariſon, more " denſe than the Vehicle of Light, its Motion is much " ſlower. Hence we may account for that common " Phœnomenon, why we do not hear the Sound of " the firſt Stroke of a Hammer, when at a Diſtance " from it, till it is at the Point of giving the following " Blow; whereas Light is propagated with incredible " Swiftneſs, though at ſome ſmall Diſtance of Time " between its receiving the Impulſe, and its Communi- " cating it to us ; ſeven Minutes, according to Sir " ISAAC NEWTON's Calculation, being ſufficient for " its Paſſage from the fixed Stars down to us. This " difference of Velocity between the progreſſive Mo- " tion of Light, and that of Sound, is ſenſibly demon- " ſtrated by firing a Gun in a large open Plain, where " the Spectator, at a great Diſtance from it, will per- " ceive the Flaſh a conſiderable Time before he hears " the Noiſe.

" THE body of Light therefore does either exiſt in- " dependently of the luminous Body, and only waits to " receive a direct Impulſe from it, in order to act upon " the organ of Viſion ; or we muſt ſuppoſe that every " luminous Body, whether it be the Sun, a Candle, or a " Spark, does produce this Light from itſelf, and pro- " ject it to a great Diſtance from its own Body. There " is no Medium between theſe two Suppoſitions, and " either the one or the other muſt be true. But to aſſert " the

until the Sun, the inſtrumental Exciter, was produced.

FURTHER,

" the latter, is to aſſert a very great Improbability; for if " a Spark, which is ſeen in every part of a large Room, " fifty cubick Feet in dimenſions, emits from its own Sub- " ſtance a quantity of Light ſufficient to fill the whole " Room, then there muſt iſſue from that Spark, which " is but a Point, a Body, the contents of which are fifty " cubick Feet. How incredible the Suppoſition!

" SUPPOSE the Lanthorn, on the Light-houſe of " *Meſſina*, to be ſeen only eight cubick Leagues, of " which itſelf is the Centre; it will follow, that an " Eye placed in any Point of thoſe ſix cubick Leagues " will diſcern it, and conſequently ſo much Space will " be filled with the Light of it. Now how incredible " that a little Fire, ſome few Inches in Diameter, " ſhould diffuſe around it a Subſtance capable of filling " eight cubick Leagues! Suppoſe the Lanthorn conceal- " ed, and the Light immediately diſappears; let it be " uncovered the Moment after, and it will inſtantly be " ſeen as far as before, and conſequently fill eight cubick " Leagues of Space with freſh Light; then how many " times eight cubick Leagues of luminous Matter, will " all the ſucceſſive Inſtants of Illumination produce in " one Night's time! Sure nothing was ever more incon- " ceivable.

" ON the contrary, how ſimple and natural is it to " ſuppoſe, that as the Air exiſted before the Bell that put " it in motion, and cauſed it to vibrate into Sound, ſo " in like manner, the Light exiſted round the Fire of " *Meſſina*, before the Lanthorn was illuminated, and " only waited to be put in motion by the Fire, in order " to make an Impreſſion on the Eyes of the Mariners. " The Sun and Stars do, by the ſame means, make " themſelves viſible, without ſuffering any diminution " of their Subſtance, by continual emanations of lumi- " nous Matter into thoſe vaſt regions of Space through " which we behold them; God having placed between " thoſe luminous Globes and us, the Body of that

" Light

FURTHER, we muſt remark, that although God is here ſaid to create the World, yet it may be true, that he employed a ſubordinate Agent in the Formation of it; namely, the Son of God, who afterwards came into the World for the Redemption of Mankind. See *John* i. 2, 3. *Col.* i. 15, 16, 17. 1 *Cor.* viii. 5, 6. But though he was the inſtrumental Cauſe, yet it is true, that God made all things, becauſe our Lord acted by a Power derived from him. *He that built all things is God.* Heb. iii. 4.

So much for critical Remarks. The Subject naturally leads to the following Reflections.

" Theſe are thy glorious Works, Parent of Good!
" Almighty, thine this univerſal Frame,
" Thus wonderous fair; thyſelf how wonderous then!

How wonderous, how immenſe is the Power, Goodneſs, and Wiſdom, which gave Exiſtence to the ſtupendous Fabric and Furniture

" Light which we ſee, and which is impreſſed on the
" organs of Viſion, by their Action and Influence; but
" does not proceed from them, nor owes its Exiſtence
" to them.——The account of *Moſes* therefore, as to
" this Particular, is agreable to Truth, as well as an
" uſeful leſſon of Caution, when he informs us, that
" God, and not the Sun, was the Author and Parent
" of Light, and that it was created by his almighty
" Fiat, before there was a Sun to dart it on one part
" of the Earth, and a Moon to reflect it on the o-
" ther."

ture of the Univerſe! I. POWER. How vaſt and mighty is the Arm, which *ſtretched out the Heavens, and laid the Foundations of the Earth!* Which ſuſtains numberleſs Worlds, of amazing Bulk, ſuſpended in the unmeaſurable and unconceivably diſtant Regions of empty Space; and ſteadily directs their various rapid and regular Motions! *Lift up your Eyes on high, and behold who hath created all theſe things. He bringeth out all their Hoſts by Number, he calleth them all by Names, by the greatneſs of his Might, for he that he is ſtrong in Power, not one of them faileth. Iſai.* xl. 26. How powerful was the Command, *Let there be Light, and there was Light — Let there be a Firmament*, &c. *By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Hoſt of them by the Breath of his Mouth. For he ſpake, and it was done; he commanded, and it ſtood faſt. Pſal.* xxxiii. 6, 9. Thus the Scriptures ſublimely expreſs the Exertion of the divine Power in Creation; as if it were done inſtantaneouſly, and with as little Difficulty, as ſpeaking a Word.

II. AND as for GOODNESS, what an infinite fulneſs of Life and Being, what an immenſe, inexhauſtible Treaſury of all Good, muſt that be, from whence all this Life and Being was derived! How infinitely rich is the glorious and eternal God! Out of his own Fulneſs he hath brought Worlds and

Worlds, repleniſhed with Myriads and Myriads of Creatures, furniſhed with various Powers and Organs, Capacities and Inſtincts; and out of his own Fulneſs continually and plentifully ſupplieth them with all the Neceſſaries of Exiſtence. And ſtill his Fulneſs remaineth the ſame, unemptied, unimpaired; and he can yet bring out of his Fulneſs Worlds and Worlds without End. How immenſely full of all Life and Being is the glorious and eternal God! Thus he is good in himſelf. And *he doth good.* He is kind and beneficent, willing to communicate Being and good. How profuſe is his Bounty! He might have kept, as I may ſay, the whole of Exiſtence to himſelf; but he has liberally ſhared it out among his Creatures; and of all his Creatures in this World, the moſt liberally to us Men. Survey the whole of what may be ſeen in and about this Globe, and ſay, if our Maker hath a ſparing and niggardly Hand. Say, if we have a churliſh and unkind Father. Certainly it is his Pleaſure to form Creatures, and furniſh them with Enjoyment; and therefore *his tender Mercies* muſt be *over all his Works.*

III. HIS WISDOM appears illuſtrious in the Variety, Beauty, Exactneſs, Order, and Harmony, in which God hath formed and fixed the Univerſe; in the ſeveral Capacities and Degrees of Excellence he has confered upon his Creatures; the proper Stations

Stations he hath assigned to them; the Subordination and Subserviency of one to another, which he hath established, for the Regularity and Well-being of the whole. They are all, as they come out of his Hands, just what they should be, adjusted in the exactest Proportions to their several Ends and Connections; all in every Part and Respect shewing the Workmanship of the profoundest Skill, and most curious Art. The utmost Stretch of human Understanding can reach but a small Part of God's Works; but they who study the Wisdom of Creation, cannot but admire, and use the Words of the sacred Penman, *Psal.* civ. 24. (where he is surveying the several Parts of our Globe) *O Lord, how manifold are thy Works! In Wisdom hast thou made them all; the Earth is full of thy Riches!*

THESE Reflections will (1.) inspire the most elevated Sentiments of the most high and mighty Creator, who *is exalted* infinitely *above the Heavens, his Glory is above all the Earth*, Psal. cviii. 5. *The Lord our God is very great, he is clothed with Honour and Majesty*; and we should study to magnify him in our Hearts by the most raised Conceptions of his transcending Greatness. (2.) This should also fill our Minds with Joy, and our Mouths with his high Praises. This God is our God, our Maker, and therefore our Father. The first and most pro-

per Notion we ought to entertain of the great God is, that of a Father; our Father, and the Father of the whole Univerſe. And greatly ſhould we be delighted with the Diſplays of our Father's infinite Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs. Tranſported with Joy, by an elegant Proſopopoeia, the Pſalmiſt, in the 148th Pſalm, calls upon all Creatures to praiſe God; wiſhing, in effect, that they had all of them Underſtandings and Tongues to declare, how much Skill and Kindneſs he has ſhewn in their Formation and Eſtabliſhment. Joy and Praiſe are the Creator's due, and ſhould be our conſtant Temper and Practice. (3.) He who is the Maker, is alſo the abſolute Proprietor, Lord, and Sovereign of all things; and therefore hath the firſt and higheſt Right to our Reverence, Submiſſion, and Obedience. In which he is infinitely able to ſupport us in Oppoſition to all human Power and Authority. For *all Power*, not only his own inherent Power, but alſo the Power of all created Beings, *belongs to God.* From him it is originally derived, and the Exerciſe of it depends entirely upon his Will and Pleaſure; nor, in any inſtance, can it poſſibly act beyond the Limits which he preſcribes. Therefore, in the way of Duty, relying upon his Allſufficiency, we need not fear what Man can do unto us. (4.) In our preſent Situation we are liable to many Difficulties and

and Diſtreſſes, from which we are not able to guard or extricate ourſelves; but the almighty Creator is infinitely able to deliver his Servants from any Danger, and can clear a Paſſage through all Embaraſſments. He can make a way even in the Sea, and a Path in the mighty Waters. (5.) He who from his own inexhauſtible Fulneſs hath brought forth all Worlds and Creatures, is our Shepherd; he careth for us, and can fully ſupply all our Wants. (6.) He can fully accompliſh all the great and glorious things reveled in the Goſpel. He can raiſe us from the dead, change our vile Bodies, and clothe us with immortal Honor and Glory. This ſhould not ſeem to us incredible, becauſe he hath already performed things as incredible, and we have conſtantly expoſed to our View Effects of his Power no leſs wonderful.

CHAP. V.

Of the CREATION *of* MAN.

Gen. i. 26, to the End.

NOW we are come to the Formation of *Man*. Here, obſerve, the Language of the Creator is altered. Inſtead of, *Let there be Men*, God ſaid, *(Ver.* 26.) *Let*

us make Man, or, we will make Man, *in our Image, after our Likeneſs*. Q. D. "Now "we have formed and furniſhed the Earth, "let us make Man, the nobleſt of our "Works, to inhabit, cultivate, and enjoy "it." The ſuperior Excellency of the human Nature is ſignified by the diſtinguiſhed Manner in which God is repreſented as addreſſing himſelf to the Formation of Man.

THE plural Number is uſed, [*And Gods ſaid, let us make Man*] but, according to the Genius of the Hebrew Language, this is only a magnificent Way of expreſſing the Majeſty of God; and amounts to no more than this, *And God ſaid, I will make Man.* So *Gen.* xi. 7. *Go to, let us go down*, i. e. I will go down. Thus God is called *our Makers*, Job xxxv. 10. Pſal. cxlix. 2. *Thy Creators*, Eccl. xii. 1. *Thy Makers is thy Huſbands*, Iſai. liv. 5. which are all to be underſtood, and are rendered in the ſingular Number. "Nouns appellative denotiong "Dominion, according to the Hebrew Idi-"om, are put in the Plural inſtead of the "Singular." Should it be ſuppoſed, that the great God here ſpeaks to ſome other Being or Beings beſides himſelf, it muſt be to ſome ſubordinate Beings; for neither this, nor any other Paſſage of Scripture, can juſtly be explained inconſiſtently with the Unity, Simplicity, or Singleneſs of the Divine Nature.

Ver.

Ver. 26. LET *us make Man in our Image,* [*Heb.* in the Sketch or Shadow of us] *after, or like, our Likeneſs.* Theſe Words, with reſpect to God, are diminutive, and denote, that the moſt perfect Endowments of the human Nature are but a Sketch, a Shadow, or ſomething reſembling the Likeneſs of God. And yet, with reſpect to other Creatnres on Earth, it ſpeaks high Diſtinction, and Superiority. For this Sketch of the Image of God in Man muſt include, 1. The noble Faculties of his Mind; Underſtanding and Will, or Freedom of Choice, for the Government of all his Actions and Paſſions, and his continual Improvement in Wiſdom, Purity, and Happineſs. 2. His Dominion over the inferior Creatures, expreſly mentioned, *Ver.* 26, 28. By which he is God's Repreſentative, or Viceroy upon Earth.

BUT Divines have underſtood this Image of God, as conſiſting in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs; which they affirm, were *created with Adam.* Meaning, not that *Adam* was created with ſuch Powers, as rendered him capable of acquiring Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, but that he was *made* in this Image of God; it was *concreated* with him, or *wrought into his Nature,* at the ſame time that it was created; and ſo belonged to it as a natural Faculty or Inſtinct. This they

call *original Rightcousness*, which they ground principally upon the two following Passages. *Col.* iii. 9, 10. *Lye not one to another, seeing that you have* [by your Christian Profession] *put off the old Man with his Deeds; and have put on the new Man, which is renewed in Knowledge after the Image of him that created him.* Ephes. iv. 22, 23, 24. *That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old Man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Lusts: and be renewed in the Spirit of your Mind; and that ye put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteousness, and true Holiness.* All this is supposed to relate to *Adam*'s being originally created in the Image of God.

THE *old Man*, say they, is a corrupt Nature derived from *Adam*; and the *new Man*, is fallen Man restored to the primitive Temper, or to that Righteousness and Holiness, in which they suppose *Adam* was created. But this is wide of the Apostle's Sense. It is not uncommon with him to compare the Christian Church to a Man, or the human Body, of which *Christ* is the Head, and we are all of us Members in particular. The *new Man* was created, when God erected the Gospel Dispensation, and *broke down the middle Wall of Partition between us*, Jews and Gentiles, (*Ephes.* ii. 13, 14, 15, 16.) *for to make to himself*, in the Gospel, *of twain*,

twain, or of the two Parties, believing Jews and Gentiles, *one new Man*, or the new Constitution and Community, under the Gospel. To this *new Man*, the *old Man* is directly opposed; and therefore must signify the Gentile State or Community, headed by *Satan*, to which, before their Conversion, they were joined. This is confirmed by the Apostle, *Ephes.* ii. 11. *Wherefore remember, that ye being in Time passed* GENTILES *in the Flesh*, &c. And Chap. iv. 17, &c. *This I say — that ye walk not as other* GENTILES *walk*, &c. They formerly belonged to the *old Man*, the Body of impure, idolatrous Heathen; but now they had, by their Christian Profession, *put off* this *old Man*, together *with* all *his* wicked *Deeds*, Col. iii. 9, 10, and *had put on the new Man*, or were joined to the Christian Church, or Community. And therefore, they were obliged to be *renewed in the Spirit of their Minds*, and to live in *Knowledge*, [true Wisdom] or *in Righteousness and true Holiness*. For God created the *new Man*, or constituted the Christian Church, in Wisdom and Righteousness and Holiness, after his own Image, or the Rectitude of his Nature, with this Design, to promote the same Rectitude among Men. For (*Ephes.* ii. 10.) *we*, the new Man, or the whole Body of Christians, *are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which God ordained*, when

when he formed the Gospel Scheme, *that we should walk in them.*

BUT what hath this to do with *Adam*'s being created in Righteousness and true Holiness? Which, in the Nature of things, could not be created, or wrought into his Nature at the same time that he was made; because such a Righteousness would have been produced in him without his Knowledge and Consent; and so would have been no Righteousness at all. For whatever is wrought in my Nature without my Knowledge and Choice, cannot possibly be either Sin or Virtue in me, because it is no Act of mine; but must be a meer natural Instinct, like the Industry of the Bee, or the Fierceness of the Lion. Righteousness is right Action, directed by Knowledge and Judgment; but *Adam* could neither act, nor know, nor judge, before he, and all his intellectual Powers were created; and therefore he must exist and use his intellectual Powers, before he could be righteous and holy.

WE may further observe — That God made the first Pair Male and Female, that they might multiply and inhabit the whole Earth, and supply a perpetual Succession of Men and Women, pronouncing a Blessing upon the regular Propogation of the human Species, *Ver.* 28. *And God blessed them*, &c. But this Blessing, Divines have supposed, was

was turned into a Curſe, by *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion; which ſo corrupted the human Nature, that thereby and thenceforth we all come into the World under the Wrath and Curſe of God. But that this alſo is a Miſtake, is moſt evident from *Gen.* ix. 1. where God repetes, and pronounces the very ſame original Bleſſing upon the Increaſe or Birth of Mankind 1600 Years, and upwards, after *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, when the World was to be reſtored, and repleniſhed from *Noah and his Sons.* This proves, that Mankind, in all ſucceſſive Generations, have come, and will come into the World, under the very ſame Bleſſing and Favor of God, which was declared at the firſt Creation of Man. It is of great Importance to obſerve theſe Remarks, not to produce any Diſguſt or Animoſity towards thoſe that eſpouſe the contrary Opinion, who ought to be treated with Candor and Forbearance, but to ſettle our own Judgments upon right Principles.

ONCE more; the original Grant of Suſtenance to Man was confined to Herbs, and the Fruits of Plants and Trees, *Ver.* 29, 30. which afterwards was enlarged, and included animal Food, *Gen.* ix. 3.

Now let us take a Survey of the Nature which God has graciouſly beſtowed upon us. The Body conſiſts of a mean Material, *the Duſt of the Ground*; but the Mind is of nobler Extraction, for (Chap. ii. 7.) *God breathd*

breathed into his Noſtrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul. Job xxxii. 8. *The Inſpiration of the Almighty giveth* us *Underſtanding*; the nobleſt Gift of our Maker. The Force and Excellence of which appears in a ſurpriſing Variety of Inventions and Diſcoveries. It is this Faculty which penetrates into the moſt ſecret Receſſes of Nature; judges of, and admires the Beauty and Contrivance of the vaſt Fabric of the Univerſe; and traceth the Footſteps of the moſt aſtoniſhing Wiſdom and Regularity in the various Situations and Motions of the heavenly Bodies. By this we review Generations and Actions, Characters and Events, that exiſted long before we were born; and dart our Reflections the other way, into Futurity, even as far as to the final Period of this World, with all its Works. By this we conceive, though but negatively, Eternity itſelf; and apprehend the State and Felicity of Beings far ſuperior to ourſelves. By this we ſtretch our Thoughts to the higheſt Excellency, and contemplate the Nature of the infinitely perfect Being.

OUR ſingular Honor and Advantage lies in our moral Capacities. While Inſtinct determines the Purſuits of inferior Creatures; whilſt they are utterly unable to judge of Cauſes and Effects, to draw Conſequences, or to reaſon about the Natures and Tendencies of things, in order to avoid

or

or embrace, and are rather acted upon, than act, we deliberate, we choose our Way, we feel and examine what is before us; this is good, and therefore to be chosen; this is evil, therefore to be avoided; this will improve and exalt our Life, this leads to Dishonour and Misery. We can study and observe the Precepts of Divine Wisdom; imitate the moral Perfections of Deity; converse with the supreme Father, and desire, and dispose ourselves for, the everlasting Enjoyment of his Favor. And agreably to these distinguishing Honors of our Nature, God our Maker, whose Delights are with the Children of Men, has expressed his high Regards to us, by supplying us with all proper Materials for the Improvement of our Understandings; not only the Objects of Nature, but also the Writings of good and wise Men, especially the holy Scriptures, a rich Treasury of the most excellent Knowledge; containing the most surprizing Discoveries, the most useful Instructions, the most just and noble Principles and Motives, and whatever is proper to cultivate and refine our Spirits. In particular, the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jesus Christ. That God should send his well-beloved Son out of his Bosom to dwell among us in our Flesh, to revele the high Designs of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, to give himself a Sacrifice

and

and Offering to God upon the Croſs, to make Atonement for our Sins, to raiſe us to the Dignity of Kings and Prieſts to his God and Father, that we might reign for ever with him; this exalts the Love of God to Men infinitely beyond our higheſt Thoughts and Imaginations; this raiſes our Nature to an amazing, to an inexpreſſible Dignity and Value.

THESE Conſiderations ſhould diſpoſe us to be pleaſed with our Being, and thankful to our Maker for it. With Pleaſure we ſhould reflect that we are *Men*. Every Perſon, how low ſoever in the World, hath that in Poſſeſſion, which is more valuable than thouſands of Gold and Silver; an immenſe Treaſure, to which the whole Earth bears no Proportion, *himſelf*, a reaſonable Soul, an immortal Spirit; to which, in real Excellence, the viſible Creation, the Earth with all its material Riches, the Sky with all its ſplendid Furniture, is not to be compared. Let us not meaſure ourſelves by worldly Riches. The Soul is the Standard of the Man, and raiſes him vaſtly above all that is earthly. How fooliſh then, how ſhameful, how impious is it to proſtitute ourſelves to the Trifles of the World; to be fond of earthly Things, and to make our Reaſon a Drudge to ſenſual Purſuits! God has made us *Men*, Creatures of the fineſt Powers and Faculties; he hath uſed us as Men, by making

making the moſt ample Proviſion to enable us to honor his Grace and our own Being. And ſhall we deſert our Manhood ? Shall we deſpiſe the rich Bounty of Heaven ? Shall we mingle with the Duſt that Particle of ſuperior Life, which God hath breathed into us ? Rather let us aſſert the Dignity of our Being, and make it our principal Care to improve it by all the Advantages God hath provided. The Knowledge of God ; Conformity of Heart and Life to his Will ; the Fruits of the Spirit, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Fidelity, Meekneſs, Temperance ; Converſe with God ; the high Privileges of the Sons of God ; the Proſpects of eternal Glory ; theſe are the Objects of our Care : as we are enlightened by the Goſpel, we are obliged to make theſe our Study, and to form our Spirits according to the ſublime and excellent Sentiments which theſe inſpire, that thus we may be fiting ourſelves for a much higher and more perfect Degree of Exiſtence in a better World.

CHAP. VI.

Of the INSTITUTION *of the* SABBATH.

Gen. II. Ver. 1, 2, 3.

AS ſoon as God had created the World, and Man in it, he *bleſſed the Seventh Day*, upon which he reſted from Creation, and *ſanctified it*, i. e. he diſtinguiſhed it from the other ſix Days by ſeting it apart to the Purpoſes of Religion. Thus the Sanctification of the Sabbath is the firſt and oldeſt of God's Inſtitutions, and muſt have a real Foundation in the nature of Man, and an immediate Connexion with our Being, and the great and excellent Ends of it. The Sabbath and Man were, in a manner, created together. This is an Indication, that although the particular time is, as it muſt neceſſarily be, of poſitive Appointment, yet the thing itſelf is an article of natural Religion, and ſtands upon the reaſon of things. The great end for which we are brought into Life, is to attain the Knowledge, and to be confirmed in the Love and Obedience of God; which includes all right Action and Virtue, all that is perfective of our Nature, all that renders us happy in our Selves, and a Bleſſing to others; and all that can qualify us

us for the enjoyment of God, and fit us for immortal Honour and Glory. We cannot keep a due and prevailing ſenſe of theſe things upon our Minds, without cloſe and repeated application of Thought; and therefore, as the Affairs and Neceſſities of this preſent Life make ſuch conſtant and importunate Demands upon us, that our Hearts and Thoughts would be unavoidably ingroſſed by them, it is in the nature of things neceſſary, that ſome certain time ſhould be publicly appropriated to the exerciſes of Religion, Inſtruction, Prayer and Praiſe, to fortify our Minds againſt Temptations, and to ſeaſon them with Piety and Virtue. And doubtleſs, God alone hath Wiſdom and Authority ſufficient to aſſign that portion of time which is proper and generally competent for thoſe good Purpoſes.

THE Sabbath is perfectly ſuited to our Nature and Circumſtances, and therefore was very properly inſtituted at the Creation. But ſome of the Learned pretend, that *Moſes* here ſpeaks, by Anticipation, of the Inſtitution of the Sabbath a long time after this, when he was Lawgiver in *Iſrael.* This is a fiction without any foundation in the Text. The Hiſtorian expreſsly relates, that God bleſſed and ſanctified that Day on which he reſted, or ceaſed, from Creation; which, in all fair Conſtruction, muſt be underſtood of his ſanctifying it, at the time when he

rested from Creation. That we find no other mention of the Sabbath in the summary and very comprehensive History of *Genesis*, is no proof that the Patriarchs did not observe it; much less that the Law thereof was not all that time in force. We find not the least mention, or intimation, of the Sabbath in all the Book of *Joshua*, nor in *Judges*, *Ruth*, I *Samuel*, II *Samuel*, I *Kings*, till we come to II *Kings*, iv. 23. a far more particular history than the Book of *Genesis*; and yet it is very certain that the Law of the Sabbath was all that time in force, and without doubt was observed too. There are very clear intimations of regard to the Sabbath in the Book of *Genesis*, Chap. viii. 8—13. Thrice *Noah* sent the Dove out of the Ark, after he had every time waited seven Days. *Jacob* (Gen. xxix. 27, 28.) fulfilled *Leah*'s Week. This plainly shews the Patriarchs, long before *Moses* was born, reckoned Time by *seven Days*, or *Weeks*; which can be referred to no other supposeable Original but the institution of the Sabbath, at the Creation.

THE *Israelites* indeed, during their long Continuance and Servitude in *Egypt*, upwards of 200 Years, seem to have lost their reckoning of the Sabbath, when they were constrained by perpetual and most servile Labor to neglect the Observance of it. However, it certainly was the Appointment of God, that they should begin a new Reckon-

ing

ing of the ſeventh Day, and from a new Epocha, namely, the falling of the *Manna*. Exod. xvi. 5. *And it ſhall come to paſs on the ſixth Day, they ſhall prepare that* Manna *which they bring in; and it ſhall be twice as much as they gather daily.* And when the People had done ſo, *the Rulers of the Congregation came, and told Moſes*; probably inquiring into the Reaſon, why God had given ſuch an Order, *Ver.* 23. *And Moſes ſaid unto them, this is that which the Lord hath ſaid*, or, this is the Meaning of the Divine Command, *To-morrow is the Reſt of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord.* Ver. 25, 26. *Ye ſhall not then find it in the Field; ſix Days ſhall ye gather it, but on the ſeventh Day, which is the Sabbath, there ſhall be none.* And this Courſe continued for forty Years till they came into the Land of *Canaan*. Now this was deviſed in much Wiſdom to ſettle and determine the Day, which, otherwiſe, having loſt their Reckoning, during their long Servitude in *Egypt*, they poſſibly would not eaſily have been brought to agree upon. For thus, for forty Years together, they would be under a Neceſſity of diſtinguiſhing the Sabbath, and of reſting upon it; having little elſe to do the greateſt Part of the time, but to gather and dreſs *Manna*; and no *Manna* falling upon that Day, they muſt of courſe be aſſured of the Day, and obliged to reſt upon it. Note — the reſtoring

and aſcertaining the Sabbath, was the firſt Point of Religion, that was ſettled, after the Children of *Iſrael* came out of *Egypt*, as being of the greateſt Moment; and this, in Relation to the original Inſtitution, for the Law at Mount *Sinai* was not then given.

AFTERWARDS the Ordinance of the Sabbath was inſerted into the Body of the moral Law, under a particular Emphaſis, *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy*. And the *Jew* is reminded of the Antiquity of this Inſtitution, in the Reaſon annexed to this Commandment, *For in ſix Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth*, &c. And being thus ranked among the other great Articles of our Duty, which are of moral Obligation, and are always refered and appealed to, by our Lord and his Apoſtles, as binding to us Chriſtians, it muſt ſtand upon the ſame Ground, and lay the ſame Obligations upon our Conſciences. For the ſame Truth and Authority, which enacted the reſt, enacted this Precept alſo. He that ſaid, *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods before me — thou ſhalt not bow down to any graven Image — thou ſhalt not take the Name of God in vain — honor thy Father — thou ſhalt do no Murder* — &c. ſaid alſo, *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy*.

THE Jewiſh Feſtivals, New-Moons and Sabbaths, as they were Shadows and Figures of good things to come under the Goſpel, our

our Lord did aboliſh. When the Subſtance was come, the Shaddow vaniſhed. And it is of Sabbaths in this Senſe the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Col.* ii. 16. *Let no Man judge you in Meat, or in Drink, or in reſpect of a Holy-Day, or of the new Moon, or of the Sabbath Days.* But the ſeventh Day Sabbath was no Part of the Levitical Law, it exiſted long before that, and therefore was not aboliſhed with it. On the contrary, our Lord claims Dominion over the Sabbath. *Luke* vi. 5. *He ſaid unto the Phariſees, that the Son of Man is Lord alſo of the Sabbath.* Therefore the Sabbath muſt be an Ordinance belonging to our Lord's Kingdom, otherwiſe he could not be Lord of it. He never pretended to be Lord of Circumciſion, or of Sacrifices; theſe belonged to a Diſpenſation of which he was not Lord. But he is Lord of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, and its Ordinances, and among the reſt of the Sabbath. In Conſequence of which Lordſhip,

I. HE rectified the ſuperſtitious Abuſe of the Sabbath, and reduced it to the original Standard. He reformed the traditionary Corruptions of ſeveral of the Commandments of moral and eternal Obligation *. But of all others, moſt ſignally, remarkably, and conſtantly, by Words and by Deeds, at the Hazard of his Life, he reformed the

* Mat. v. 21, 27, 33. xv. 4, &c.

Abuſe of the fourth Commandment †; which he never would have done, had the Sabbath been an Ordinance, that was to die in a little time with the Jewiſh Diſpenſation. On the contrary, this demonſtrates, that he regarded the juſt Sanctification of the Sabbath as of perpetual Obligation, and as of very great Importance in Religion.

II. HE removed the Sabbath from the ſeventh to the firſt Day of the Week. For we find in the Apoſtolic Hiſtory that the Diſciples met together on that Day, (called the Lord's Day, *Rev.* i. 10.) to break Bread, or to celebrate the Lord's Supper, which is the proper and peculiar Worſhip of Chriſtians, *Acts* xx. 7. Now this could not be done without the expreſs Injunction of the Apoſtles; nor could the Apoſtles do this without a Commiſſion from Chriſt. And as our Lord roſe from the Dead on the firſt Day, we ſuppoſe the Chriſtian Sabbath hath relation to his Reſurrection; and ſo the Lord's Day hath been kept holy by the univerſal Church from the Apoſtles Days to this time.

THUS there have been three *Epochas*, or Dates, from which the Sabbath has been counted, namely, (1.) From the firſt Day of

† See Mat. xii. 1—12. Luke vi. 10, 11. xiii. 11—17. xiv. 1—7. John v. 9—19. vii. 19—23. ix. 14, 15, 16.

of the Creation. (2.) From the firſt Day of the falling of the *Manna*. (3.) From the firſt Day of the Goſpel Diſpenſation. But ſtill it is the ſeventh Day makes the Sabbath, which God bleſſed; and the ſeventh, which we now obſerve, is as much, and as truly the Sabbath, which God ſanctifyed, as ever it was from the begining of the World.

THE primary Notion of the Sabbath, is a Reſt or Ceſſation from the ordinary Buſineſs of Life. The Deſign of it is to preſerve true Religion; which would never have been loſt in the World, had the Sabbath been duly obſerved from the firſt Inſtitution of it. And therefore we find in Scripture, both under the old and new Diſpenſations, it was applyed to the Purpoſes of Religion. It is repreſented as a holy Convocation, on which the *Iſraelites* were to aſſemble for divine Worſhip, *Lev.* xxiii. 3. *David* wrote the 92d Pſalm for the Sabbath Day, and therein gives us juſt Ideas of the Work of it. On this Day the *Jews* met together in their Synagogues for religious Exerciſes; and there our Lord honored and ſanctified the Sabbath by his Preſence and Inſtructions. *Mark* i. 21, 22. vi. 2. *Luke* iv. 16, 31. xiii. 10. And all Chriſtians, in all times and places, have aſſembled on the Sabbath to hear the Word of God, to offer up Prayer and Thankſgiving, and to cele-

brate the Lord's Supper, in order to employ their Thoughts in pious Meditations, and furnish their Minds with the best Principles and Dispositions. A Work exceeding pleasant and profitable, which demands and deserves the whole of our Thought and Attention. Therefore, for this good Purpose, we are to rest from ordinary Business, and to avoid whatever may dissipate our Thoughts, or indispose our Hearts for the heavenly Work of the Day.

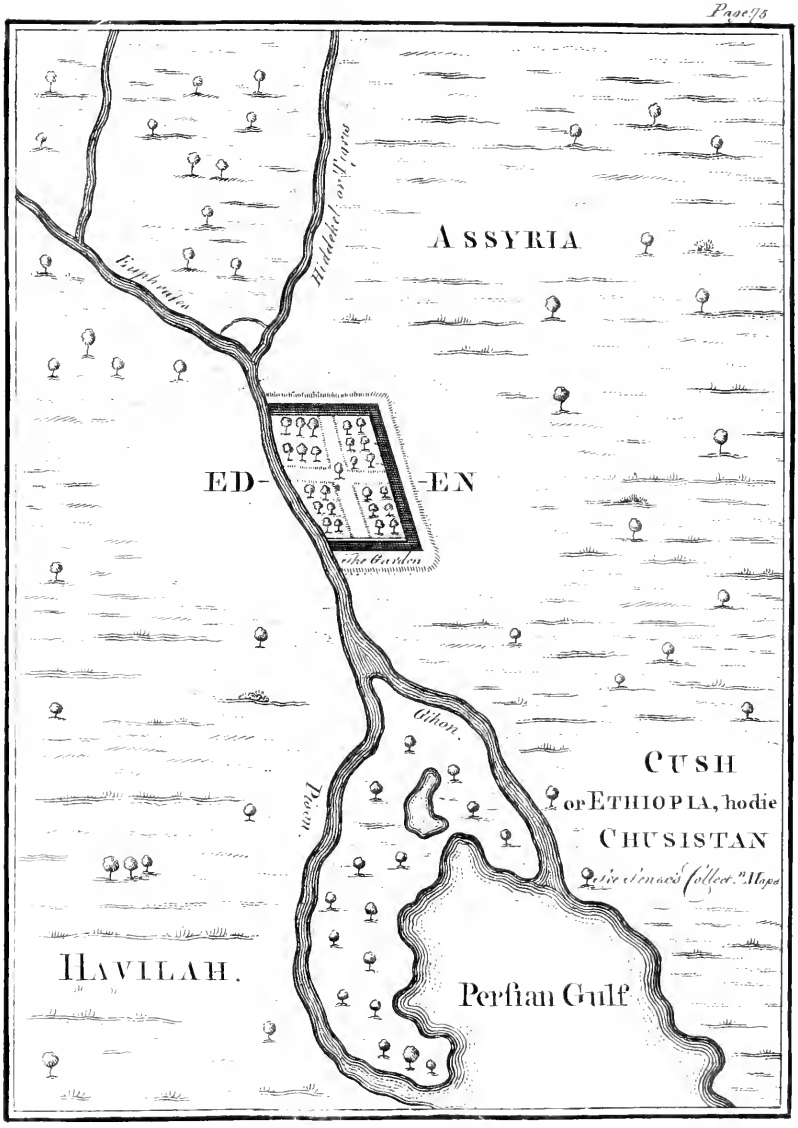
OUR Lord hath taught us so to understand this, as not to mix any thing superstitious with the Observation of the Sabbath, nor to conceive of it as such a scrupulous Rest, that we may not do any thing fit and reasonable, and which otherwise is a Duty; works of Necessity and Mercy he expressly allows. Whatever cannot be defered to another Day, without Loss or Damage, may be taken Care of on the Sabbath. And in general he hath pronounced, *That the Sabbath* (alluding probably to the first Institution of it) *was made for Man*, to be subservient to his Virtue and Happiness; *not Man for the Sabbath*. Man was made for Duties of moral and eternal Obligation, and is bound to observe them in whatever Extremity or Necessity he may be; but Man is not made for the rigorous Observation of the sabbatical Rest, or any other positive Institution, so as thereby to embarass or distress his

his Life, or to neglect any Opportunity of doing good.

I CONCLUDE with a few Reflections upon *Isai.* lviii. 13, 14. Having, in the Name of God, recommended Goodness, Charity, and Compassion, in the preceding Verses, and pronounced a singular Blessing upon those who exercise them, the Prophet adds, by the same Authority, *If thou turn away thy Foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy Pleasure on my holy Day.* Q. D. " If you con-
" scientiously suspend the ordinary Business
" of Life, and forbear to please and gratify
" your own Inclinations, that with a free
" and composed Mind you may attend upon
" the Services of Religion, for which I
" have sanctified the Sabbath ; *and* [if thou]
" *call the Sabbath a Delight, the holy of the*
" *Lord, honorable, and shalt honor him* ; if
" you have such a Sense of the Excellency
" and Benefit of the Sabbath, that you take
" Delight therein, accounting it a Pleasure
" and Happiness, as being consecrated to
" the Worship of the most high God, and
" therefore honorable and glorious in itself ;
" and honorable also to you, as it is a Mark
" of the Dignity of your Nature, a Token
" of your Interest in the divine Favor,
" (*Exod.* xxxi. 13. *Ezek.* xx. 12.) and of
" your being admited to Communion with
" him ; if in this Persuasion you shall sin-
" cerely endeavor to honor God by employ-
" ing

" ing the Day in the Offices of Devotion,
" *not doing thine own Ways, nor finding thine*
" *own Pleasure, nor speaking thine own Words*;
" not doing the ordinary Works of your
" Calling, nor spending the time in Amuse-
" ments or Diversions, or in impertinent
" Conversation ; *then shalt thou delight thy-*
" *self in the Lord* ; then thou shalt become
" such a Proficient in Piety, and gain such
" a Sense of God and Religion, as will
" establish in your Heart a Fund of holy
" Pleasure, Comfort, Joy, and good Hope
" towards God." The Prophet, in this Chapter, is inculcating real, vital, acceptable Religion, Goodness and Compassion to our Fellow-Creatures, and Piety towards God in keeping the Sabbath ; promising the like Blessings to both those Branches of true Religion, namely, the Favor of God and the constant Care of his Providence. We may therefore take this from the Spirit of God, as a just Description of the right Manner of sanctifying the Sabbath, and assure ourselves, that he who blessed the Day, will bless us in keeping it holy.

CHAP.


Hiddekel or Tigris
Euphrates
ASSYRIA
ED- -EN
The Garden
Gihon.
Pison.
CUSH
or ETHIOPIA, hodie
CHUSISTAN
Vide Senacci follio. Mapa
HAVILAH.
Persian Gulf

CHAP. VII.

Of a STATE *of* TRIAL.

Gen. ii. 8—18.

CONCERNING the Situation and Rivers of the Country of *Eden*, as here deſcribed by *Moſes*, Bp. PATRICK, in his Commentary upon this Place, gives an Account, which ſeems to be not altogether improbable. The Garden lay in the Country of *Eden*; *out of*, or through, which Country *a River went* unto the Garden *to water it*, *(Ver.* 11.*) and from thence*, from the Country of *Eden*, *it parted*, or was divided, *and became into four Heads*; namely, two above, before it entered *Eden*, called *Euphrates* and *Hiddekel*, or *Tigris*; and two below, after it had paſſed through *Eden*, called *Piſon* and *Gihon*, *which compaſſeth*, or runeth along by, *the whole Land of Cuſh*, Ver. 13.

In the eaſtern Part of *Eden* the Lord God planted a Garden, furniſhed with all pleaſant and uſeful Fruits. And there he placed *Adam* to dreſs and keep it; for Man was made for Buſineſs, *Ver.* 8, 15. Two Trees in this Garden were remarkably diſtinguiſhed from the reſt, perhaps in Appearance

pearance and Situation, as well as in Uſe, namely, the *Tree of Life, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.* Theſe, I conceive, were appointed for Inſtruction and religious Meditation; to preſerve in *Adam*'s Mind a Senſe of the Conſequences of Virtue and Vice, or of Obedience and Diſobedience. In this View, while he continued obedient, he was allowed to eat of the Tree of Life, as a Pledge and Aſſurance on the Part of God, that he ſhould live for ever, or be immortal; after his Tranſgreſſion he was denied acceſs to it, *Chap.* iii. 24. For the ſame Purpoſe, as a Pledge of Immortality reſtored in Chriſt, it is uſed, *Rev.* ii. 7. xxii. 2. On the contrary, the other Tree was deſigned to give him the Knowledge, the Senſe or Apprehenſion of Good and Evil, or of Good connected with Evil, *i. e.* of pernicious Enjoyment, deſtructive Gratification, vicious Pleaſure, or ſuch as cannot be enjoyed without tranſgreſſing the Law of God. *Good and Evil,* I apprehend, is an *Hendiadys,* like that *Gen.* xix. 24. *Brimſtone and Fire,* i. e. fired or burning Brimſtone. 1 *Chron.* xxii. 5. *the Houſe muſt be — of Fame and Glory,* i. e. of glorious Fame. *Pateris libamus et auro,* i. e. aureis pateris. טוֹב may ſignify Pleaſure or Profit. [See the Explication of it in the Heb. Engl. Concordance.] Thus *Good and Evil* may denote pernicious

pernicious Pleaſure or Profit. Of the Fruit of this Tree, though it appeared pleaſant and inviting, *Adam* was forbidden to eat upon pain of Death. This was to make him underſtand, that unlawful Enjoyment of any kind would be his Deſtruction.

THESE two Trees may be conſidered as *Adam*'s Books. He was in a kind of infantile State, void of all Learning, without any Theorems, or general Principles to govern himſelf by. God was therefore pleaſed, in this ſenſible Manner, to impreſs upon his Mind juſt Conceptions of the very different Conſequences of Obedience and Diſobedience. And it will be of great Uſe even to us, at this Day, to look into, and to meditate upon theſe two Books of our firſt Father.

WHAT requires our particular Attention is this, that *Adam*'s Obedience is put upon Trial by the Prohibition, *Ver.* 17. *But of the Tree of Knowledge, of Good and Evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it; for in the Day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.* *Adam* had not gained the Habits of Obedience and Holineſs, but was put under this inſtance of Diſcipline in order to his acquiring of them. As ſoon as God had made Man a moral Agent, he put him upon Trial. And it is univerſally allowed, that all Mankind are in the ſame State, in a State of

of Trial. It muſt therefore be of Importance to have right Notions of ſuch a State.

IN order to this, let it be well conſidered,

I. *THAT God hath erected a Kingdom for his Honor, and the Felicity of his rational Creatures.* This Kingdom, our Lord informs us, was *prepared from the Foundation of the World.* Mat. xxv. 34. There we Men ſhall be *equal to the Angels,* Luke xx. 36; and probably, like them, ſhall be placed in Poſts of Honor and Power, in ſome Part of the Univerſe; as is plainly intimated *Mat.* xxiv. 45—47. xxv. 21. *Luke* xix. 17. 1 *Cor.* vi. 2, 3. *Rev.* ii. 10. iii. 21.

II. *WITHOUT Holineſs, or an habitual Subjection of the Will to Reaſon, or to the Will of God, none can be fit to be Members of this Kingdom.* Wickedneſs, in its very Nature, ſtands directly oppoſed to the Peace and Well-being of the Univerſe; for it is Error in the Mind, Rebellion againſt God, and Miſchief to all within its Influence. And the moſt benevolent of all Beings will not take Error, Rebellion, and Miſchief into his Kingdom, erected for the Purpoſes of Goodneſs and Enjoyment. *Rev.* xxi. 27. *And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it,* the holy City, new Jeruſalem, (Ver. 2.) *any thing that defileth,* any impure, vicious Perſons; *neither whatſoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lie*; all Idolaters, all that practiſe

tiſe Iniquity and Deceit, are excluded out of it. *But they ſhall bring the Glory and Honor of the Nations into it*; the excellent of the Earth, who have purged themſelves from all Ungodlineſs and Sin, and ſo *are Veſſels unto Honor, ſanctified and fit for the Maſter's uſe, and prepared unto every good Work.* Nothing but Subjection to the Will of God, in all Duty and Obedience, can qualify us for the Honors, Felicity, and Employments of the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore,

III. *NO moral Agents, merely on account of their* natural *Powers, how excellent ſoever, are worthy to be admited into the Kingdom of God.* Natural Powers, in Angels as well as Worms, are the Workmanſhip and Gift of God alone; and therefore, not being the Virtue, nor the Effect of the Virtue of the Beings that are poſſeſſed of them, can be no Recommendation to the continued Favor and Eſteem of God. In order to that, the natural Powers of moral Agents muſt, not only be capable of right Action, but alſo actually exerted in acting rightly. Otherwiſe, their Powers, though of the nobleſt kind, are uſeleſs and inſignificant. It is one thing to be born, or produced into the *Kingdom of Nature*, and another to be born to the Habits of Virtue, whereby we are rendered fit to be admited into the *Kingdom of Heaven.* The former depends entirely upon God's

God's ſovereign Pleaſure, in giving Life and Powers, in any Kind or Degree, as he chooſeth; the other depends upon a right Uſe and Application of the Powers God hath beſtowed; and is the Privilege only of thoſe wiſe and happy Spirits, who attain to a Habit of true Holineſs. And thus, our Lord's Rule, *Joh.* iii. 3. *Except a Man be born again, he cannot ſee,* or enjoy, *the Kingdom of God,* may extend to all created Minds whatſoever, under their ſeveral peculiar Circumſtances.

IV. *HOLINESS, or Virtue, cannot be forced upon us whether we will or not.* The Violence, which overpowers and compels the Will, deſtroys the Will or Choice, and conſequently deſtroys Virtue; which is no otherwiſe Virtue, than as it is freely choſen. That Being which cannot be vicious, cannot be virtuous. If he is not free to chooſe Evil, he is not free to chooſe Good; for a Power of being virtuous neceſſarily implies a Power of being the contrary. The only Means, therefore, that can be uſed to induce a moral Agent to Virtue, are Inſtruction, Admonition, Perſuaſion, the Impreſſion of Objects or Circumſtances upon the Mind, the Suggeſtions of the Spirit of God, and ſuch like Methods as engage Attention, and influence Inclination and Choice, without deſtroying Freedom. And a *Habit* of Virtue, which alone recommends us to God,

God, can be gained and aſcertained no otherwiſe than by repeated Acts, by Uſe and Exerciſe, by being put to the Proof under proper Trials, by reſiſting Solicitations, ſurmounting Difficulties, and bearing Sufferings. This is the moſt natural way of bringing Virtue, or Holineſs, to its Maturity and Stability. Therefore,

V. *IT ſeems agreable to the Reaſon of things, that all rational Creatures whatſoever ſhould, for ſome time, be in a State of Trial.* However, this is, or hath been, the Caſe of all we are acquainted with. The Angels have paſſed through a Probation, doubtleſs adapted to their different Circumſtances; in which ſome of them *abode not in the Truth; they ſined; they kept not their firſt Eſtate, Joh.* viii. 44. 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. *Jude* 6. And our firſt Parents, how ſingular ſoever their Condition might be in other reſpects, were put under a particular Trial, by being forbiden to eat of *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*; which muſt be intended to form their Minds to an habitual Obedience to the Law, or Will, of God.

VI. *WE Men are upon Trial.* This is evident from Revelation, where we are repreſented as *Pilgrims and Strangers*, looking for, and traveling to a better Country, 1 *Pet.* ii. 11. — As in a *Warfare*, where we muſt fight for the Victory, as we hope to be crowned, *Epheſ.* vi. 14. — As in a *Race*,

where we are runing for a Prize, *Heb.* xii. 1. 1 *Cor.* ix. 24, 25. — As *Laborers* in a Vineyard, who have Work to do in order to receive Wages, *Mat.* xx. 1. — As *Servants* intrusted with their Master's Substance, for the Improvement of which they are accountable to him, *Mat.* xxv. 14. *Luke* xix. 13. And God hath appointed a Day, in which he will call us to an account for our present Behaviour, and render to every Man according to what he hath done in the Body, whether it be good or evil. This is the strongest Evidence, that we are now upon Trial. And the Sense of Revelation is abundantly confirmed by our Circumstances in Life.

Our Faculties are of the noblest kind, and we enjoy all manner of Means for the Cultivation of them; but not without great Care, Industry, and Resolution. So many are the Occasions of Deception, and so easily are we misled in our Searches after the Truth, that we cannot attain to any clear or useful Knowledge without a constant and cautious Attention. Even Revelation, like the Heavens themselves, is interspersed with Clouds, things dark and hard to be understood. And when we have found the Truth, the Profession of it is attended with much Inconvenience and Trouble from the Pride and Malice of Persecution. All which is wisely appointed. For had all been plain, obvious,

obvious, and easy, our Integrity and sincere Attachment to Truth could not have been exercised and proved. The Passions and Appetites of the Flesh; the Possessions, Gains, Pleasures, and Customs of the World; the Calamities of Life, Diseases, Disappointments, Losses, Dangers, Enemies, Fears, Wants, Weakness; all these are great Embarrassments to Virtue and Piety, fatigue and solicit our Minds from Righteousness and Purity, and oblige us to constant Watchfulness and Self-denial, in order to gain and secure the Habits of Holiness. Every Condition, every Possession is accompanied with its Temptations. Wherever we are, we are in the midst of Snares; and whatever we have carries some Danger or other in it; insomuch that, without Care and Attention, we cannot preserve the Purity of our Minds, which yet, by the Nature of things, and the Command of God, we are obliged to do. This shews we are upon Trial, or in a State of Discipline. For,

VII. *A State of Trial necessarily requires, that different and opposite Interests*, (as the Flesh and the Spirit, the Law of God, and the Law in our Members, the present World, and a future State,) *should so stand in Competition for our Affections and Regards, as to oblige us to be very serious in considering, and thoroughly sincere in choosing and pursuing what is right and good.* And herein lies our

Trial, whether we will follow God, or forſake him, prefer our mortal Bodies before our immortal Souls, the Gratification of our Luſts, before the Purity and Peace of our Minds, the things of this tranſitory World, before the heavenly and eternal Inheritance.

VIII. *THE End and Deſign of our Trial is to refine and exalt our Nature.* James i. 12. *Bleſſed is the Man that* worthily *endureth Temptation; for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.* Heb. xii. 11. *No Chaſtening for the preſent is joyous but grievous; nevertheleſs,* &c. If indeed we are overcome by Temptation, and drawn into a Contempt of God, Truth, and Righteouſneſs, we debaſe and deſtroy ourſelves; we prove ourſelves to be unfit for the happy Society in Heaven, forfeit the Favor of God, and ſhall fall into Perdition. But this muſt be our own Fault. The noble Intention of our Maker is, that we ſhould overcome Temptation, and then we are happy for ever. We have ſtood the Teſt, we have paſſed honorably through our Trials, we have approved ourſelves to God, as thoſe whom he judges fit for Preferment and Happineſs in his eternal Kingdom. And ſhortly we ſhall hear, *Well done, good and faithful, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.* Hence our Trial is compared to that of Silver and Gold,

Gold, *Job* xxiii. 10. *Pſal.* lxvi. 10, 11. 1 *Pet.* i. 6, 7.

To explain Scripture Language, we muſt diſtinguiſh between Temptation of *Trial*, and *Seduction*. Temptation of *Trial*, or Probation, God hath wiſely ordained for the Exerciſe and Proof of our Virtue. So he tempted *Abraham*, Gen. xxii. 1. Temptation of *Seduction* is when we are drawn into Sin, *James* i. 13. *Let no Man ſay, when he is tempted*, ſeduced into Sin by Temptation.

FROM the preceding Propoſitions we may draw the following Concluſions.

COROL. 1. *TRIALS, of the ſevereſt kind, are no Mark of God's Diſpleaſure, nor any Proof, that we are under his Wrath and Curſe.* *Adam* in his State of Innocence was tried. The beſt of God's Servants have gone through heavy Trials. Our Lord *was tempted in all Points as we are, but without Sin*, Heb. iv. 15. *My Son, deſpiſe not the chaſtening of the Lord; neither be weary of his Correction. For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a Father the Son in whom he delighteth*, Prov. iii. 11, 12.

COROL 2. *THE Appetites and Paſſions implanted in our Conſtitution, are not the Corruption of our Nature, but Means of our Trial.* And therefore we ſhall be freed from them, when that is over. 1 *Cor.* vi. 13. *Meats for the Belly, and the Belly for*

Meats — but God shall destroy both it and them — xv. 44. *It is sown an animal Body, it is raised a spiritual Body.*

COROL. 3. *WHATEVER Trials may be the occasion of Sin, may much more be the occasion of Virtue and Holiness.* Temptation may occasion Sin, but is not the *Cause* or Reason of it. For, seeing no Temptation can ever make it reasonable to sin, every Temptation, if the Siner chooseth, may be rejected as unreasonable. On the other hand, Temptation is naturally an Opportunity of exerting our Virtue, and of gaining an honorable and glorious Victory. Distresses and Wants may fill our Hearts with solicitude, and tempt us to murmur against God, but they have a Tendency, being duly considered, to lead us to Faith in him, and a humble patient Submission to his Will, the most perfect Part of a worthy Character. Wealth, Honor, and Power, may prove Incentives to Pride, Luxury, and Oppression; but they may, and ought to be Motives to Gratitude, and Means of greater Usefulness. Our Appetites and Passions may seduce to Intemperance and Debauchery; but they may be the occasion of practising the most laudable Self-Government and Sobriety. And so of all the rest. *Rom.* v. 3. *We glory in Tribulations; knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope,* that Hope which

which *maketh not aſhamed*, or that ſhall never be diſappointed. *James* i. 2. *My Brethren, count it all Joy when ye fall into divers Temptations; knowing, that the Trial of your Faith worketh Patience. But let Patience have its perfect Work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing* to qualify you for the Kingdom of Heaven.

COROL. 4. *IN a State of Trial natural Evil hath a Tendency to promote moral Good.* For under any Defects of Happineſs, Virtue may be exerciſed and increaſe. Hence it follows, (1.) That this Life, notwithſtanding the Afflictions which attend it, is *a Day of Salvation*, or a proper, and valuable Opportunity of attaining eternal Life. (2.) That the Quantity of Virtue in this preſent World is not to be meaſured, by the Joy it giveth the Poſſeſſor, or the Good it doth to others, but by the Circumſtances of Trial under which it acteth and ſubſiſteth. For although all Holineſs, by the Will of God, will ſooner or later be crowned with Joy; and always actually brings forth good Works, in Proportion to the Agent's Power and Opportunities; yet two Agents, of equal Virtue, may be ſo differently ſituated in the Creation, that the Virtue of the one ſhall produce a thouſand times leſs Comfort to its ſelf, and Benefit to others, than the Virtue of the other. Or, the ſame Virtue which, in this Life, brings forth but

one Degree of Joy and Uſefulneſs, in another World, may bring forth a thouſand Degrees.

THIS ſtands upon two Principles. 1. That Holineſs and Happineſs are eſſentially different, and connected only by the Will of God. Hence it is, in fact, that many Perſons, truly virtuous and pious, have yet no Comfort of their Virtue. 2. The proper Act of a moral Agent ſtands in the Will and Choice alone, not in the external Effect produced by it. And therefore the Will, or Choice, may be compleatly holy, where yet the outward Act is hindered by contrary Circumſtances. Upon theſe Grounds one may venture to affirm, that the Virtue of *Lazarus*, which under all his Pains and Poverty in our Earth, brought forth but a ſmall Degree of Joy and Uſefulneſs, might, in *Abraham*'s Boſom, be equal to the Virtue of an Angel in Heaven, which actually brought forth ten thouſand Degrees. For as a cubical Foot of our groſſer Air might poſſibly expand, and fill a cubical Furlong in the higher and thiner Region of pure *Ether*; ſo that Virtue, which can ſubſiſt under the Loads and Clogs of our Temptations and Difficulties, though its preſent Fruits are but ſmall, may dilate and blaze out into a Glory, Magnificence, and Splendor, equal to that of the holieſt Angels. This the Apoſtle *Peter* intimates, 1 *Pet.* i. 7. The *tried Faith* of perſecuted Saints will *be found*

found unto Praiſe, and Honor, and Glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt.

COROL. 5. *THIS World is not a State of Enjoyment.* He that made it, and Man in it, made it for Trial. We muſt not therefore dream of a continued courſe of Eaſe, Peace, and Proſperity, but muſt expect to meet with Trials.

COROL. 6. *IT is no Matter in what temporal Circumſtances we are, if we do but acquit ourſelves well and faithfully in the Sight of God.* *Job*, under all his Calamities, was not a worſe Man, or leſs the Care and Delight of Heaven. He was then, like Gold in the Furnace, under the Diſcipline of divine Wiſdom and Love, in order to his being purified into a Condition more illuſtrious and excellent. You are in Plenty and Proſperity. What then? This is but an inſtance of your Trial, and your real Happineſs muſt be meaſured by the Effects they have upon your Mind. If Proſperity diſpoſes to Thankfulneſs and good Works, it is happy; but if it ſeduceth you to forget God, and to indulge irregular Appetites, it is hurtful and pernicious. On the other hand, you are in Affliction, Want, Trouble, Pain. What then? This is not your fixed Condition; it is only one inſtance of a temporary Trial, which ſhortly will be at an End. And if your Afflictions work in you greater Contempt of the World, Self-denial, Faith, Submiſſion

mition, Heavenly-mindedness, *&c.* your Condition is happy, and your Afflictions are really better for you than any other State you may fondly wish for. But observe, this is to be understood of Afflictions brought upon us by Providence; and will not justify us in bringing them upon ourselves by any faulty criminal Conduct. It is nevertheless our Duty, by all lawful Means, to procure the Conveniencies and Comforts of Life.

CHAP. VIII.

Further Reflections on a STATE *of* TRIAL.

IT is of the last Importance to have right Notions of Life, as a State of Trial. For thus the whole Scene, otherwise confused and unaccountable, will appear in a just and rational Light. Thus we shall be convinced, that our Being is given us upon the most reasonable and advantageous Terms, for the highest and most excellent Ends; and shall clearly uuderstand what we have to do for the Improvement and Exaltation of it, free from the vain Imaginations and Pursuits, Hopes and Fears, Joys and Anxieties, which distract the Minds of the unthinking and ignorant. What I have

have further to advance upon this Point, is comprized in the following Propoſitions.

I. *IT is a Matter of great Difficulty to adjuſt our Trials and Succors, ſo as not to overpower our Faculties by either, but leave us in the free Uſe of them.*

II. *GOD alone hath Wiſdom ſufficient to appoint and adjuſt our Trials.* Becauſe he alone uuderſtands perfectly how to adapt them to the Nature of our Minds, and to the Deſigns of his Goodneſs. Whereas we know but little of the Nature of our Spirits, and therefore are not able to proportion Temptations to our Powers, nor Helps and Aſſiſtances to our Temptations. We are not acquainted with the Work we have to do in the future World, nor the ſeveral ſorts of Beings, with whom we may hereafter be concerned, in the way of Fellowſhip or Enmity; and therefore are by no means capable of judging, what ſort or Degree of Trials are proper to give us ſuitable Qualifications. For this Reaſon, it is plainly our Duty and Wiſdom, humbly and patiently to ſubmit to the Trials God is pleaſed to allot, and to behave well and faithfully under them; without cenſuring, or quarrelling with his Diſpoſals, which is fooliſh and impious. But though our Underſtandings in this Caſe are very defective, yet I conceive there are ſome general Principles of which we may be, in a good Meaſure, certain. As,

III. *THE*

III. *THE Bias of Evil in our Trials ought to be ſtrong in Proportion to the Degree of Virtue required of us.* For the Degree of Virtue is to be meaſured by the Degree of Temptation which it reſiſts. That Virtue is but in a low Degree, which can overcome but a ſmall Temptation. That Virtue is in a higher, which can overcome a ſtronger Temptation. And that Virtue is in the higheſt Degree, which is ſuperior to all Temptation.

IV. *THE Degree of Virtue, God expects from us, is to be proportioned to the eminent Stations to which we are to be exalted in his Kingdom.* Or, we ſhall be exalted in proportion to the Virtue we have attained. *Mat.* xix. 28. *Luke* xix. 16, 17, 18, 19.

V. *OUR Trial ſeems to be appointed for a State of Confirmation* — and therefore the Virtue we are to attain muſt be ſuch as will ſecure our Perſeverance in it; which Confirmation and Perſeverance muſt ſtand, not upon our being forcibly conſtrained to be virtuous, which is a Contradiction, but upon the Habits we have attained, or the ſetled good Diſpoſitions of our Minds. And it ſeems to be the great end of our Trial in this World, that we may attain to ſuch a Degree of Sanctity, experienced in a variety of Trials, as in God's Wiſdom appears to be of that genuine ſort, which ſhall eventually perſevere, and abide to all Eternity.

Of

Of which Matter our Lord ſpeaketh in this wiſe, *Luke* xvi. 10, 11, 12. *He that is faithful in that which is leaſt, is faithful alſo in much; and he that is unjuſt in the leaſt, is unjuſt alſo in much. If ye therefore have been unfaithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your Truſt the true Riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another Man's*, i. e. that which may at any uncertain time be taken from you, and therefore, for the ſake of which it is not worth your while to do a wrong or wicked thing, *who ſhall give you that which is your own* *? what you are to poſſeſs for ever, or which you are never to be deprived of. This plainly ſhews, that we are qualified for Honors and Truſts in Heaven, no otherwiſe than by our preſent Faithfulneſs, or the real good Qualities of our Minds; and that we are now tried in a little, that we may be faithful in much.

VI. *THE Judge of all the Earth hath certainly ballanced our Trials with the greateſt Exactneſs and Equity, that Temptation may not be too violent for our Weakneſs, and yet ſtrong*

* ———— Nimium vobis Romana propago
Viſa potens, ſuperi, propria [*perpetua*] hæc ſi dona fuiſſent.
Æneid. vi. lin. 870.
Nihilne eſſe proprium [*perpetuum*] cuiquam?
Ter. Andr. Act. iv. Scen. 3. lin. 1.
Omne quod habemus, aut mutuum eſt, aut proprium.
Donat. in locum.

ſtrong enough to put our Virtue to its proper Proof. Fleſhly Luſts war againſt the Soul, but are conquered effectually by Temperance, or keeping our Bodies in Subjection. The World allures our Minds, but the World of Glory is open to full View, to draw our Regards thither. If the Devil and his Angels are permited to practiſe his Malice in perverting Mankind, God hath ſent forth a holy and powerful Spirit to illuminate, ſanctify, ſtrengthen, and comfort; and hath ordered his Angels, in great Numbers, to be miniſtering Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation. We may aſſure ourſelves, that we are upon a fair, and even favorable, Trial; for, if we do not neglect our Advantages, the Means of ſecuring our Virtue, if we chuſe to be virtuous, do far ſurpaſs the Occaſion of Vice and Sin; and in all our Conflicts more are with us, than are againſt us; God is with us.

VII. *OUR Condition is well adapted to the Purpoſes of moral Improvement.* If we conſider Life as a State of Enjoyment, all is in Confuſion and Diſorder, and we are eaſily miſled into the moſt foul and fatal Errors; but if we take Life as a Trial, for the Exerciſe of our Virtue, in order to our future Advancement, then every Part of it will appear to be properly appointed. We have every Day Opportunities of ſhewing our ſincere Regards to *God*, by giving him the Preference

Preference to the many Appetites and Objects which court our Affections, and come in Competition with him. We have Opportunities enough to learn what is ſufficient for us to know. And the Obſcurities and Difficulties in the way of *Truth*, are not deſigned to debar us from it, but to exerciſe our Integrity in our Searches after it, and Profeſſion of it. All the Calamities of Life, Pains of Body, Infirmities, Seducements, Loſſes, *&c.* are Occaſions of *purifying our Hearts*, by Sobriety, Humility, Repentance, Self-denial, Patience, *&c.* And for *ſocial Virtues*, we cannot ſuppoſe ourſelves in any Situation, where we ſhould have more Occaſions, or more preſſing Motives to exerciſe every Species of Benevolence towards our Fellow-Creatures. And if our Love to Men muſt ſurmount both Self-love, that deceitful Principle in ourſelves, and Ingratitude, that ugly Vice in others, hereby we are obliged to exerciſe, in the moſt generous, diſintereſted, and godlike Manner, a Virtue of the firſt Rank, and the moſt neceſſary to Preferment in God's Creation. For he is the fiteſt for Buſineſs and Truſt, under the univerſal Father, who moſt of all participates of his kind Diſpoſitions and Good-will towards the whole Univerſe of Beings.

VIII. *DIFFERENT Perſons, as they have different Capacities, Advantages, and Opportunities,*

portunities, and are in different Circumſtances, Conditions, and Situations, are under different Trials. Mat. xxv. 15. Luke xii. 47, 48.

IX. *GOD allots to every particular Perſon his Trial.* He gives our Capacities and Opportunities, aſſigns our Circumſtances and outward Condition, and meaſures our Afflictions and Comforts. Therefore whatever our Trials may be, this ſhould calm our uneaſy Minds, that they are meted out to us, by the ſame wiſe Hand, which created and governs univerſal Nature.

X. *EVERY one will be judged, and receive Reward or Puniſhment according to the Circumſtances of his own particular Trial*; and all things relating to it, all Advantages and Diſadvantages, will be weighed in the exacteſt Ballance, and determined accordingly. *Luke* xii. 47, 48. *That Servant which knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his Will, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes. But he*, that was in different Circumſtances, and *knew not, and did commit things worthy of Stripes, ſhall be beaten with few Stripes.* Here obſerve, that God fully underſtands the Degrees of the Guilt, or Virtue of particular Perſons, but we do not, and therefore ſhould be cautious in judging.

XI. *THERE are Degrees of Trial*; or Temptation may be more or leſs intenſe. The Sufferings of the Fleſh may be raiſed

to

to ſuch an Height of Anguiſh and Terror, or its Paſſions ſo inflamed, as to ſuſpend the Uſe of Thought and Reaſon.

XII. *GOD can raiſe or ſink our Trials as he pleaſes.* When he ſees fit, he can give a calm and quiet State; and when he pleaſeth can raiſe Storms about us and heat the Furnace of Temptation ſeven times more than it was wont to be heated. *Job*, in his Trial by Proſperity, acquitted himſelf well; and under great Pains and Poverty, he ſined not, nor charged God fooliſhly. But at length, through the unkind Uſage of his Friends, and perhaps ſome other concuring Circumſtances, his Trial began to be ſo hard, that he opened his Mouth, and curſed his Day. Whenever the Almighty pleaſeth he can permit a Trial that will ſhake the ſtrongeſt Faith. Therefore,

XIII. *NO good Reſolutions or Diſpoſitions, no Degrees of ſpiritual Strength to which we have attained, is an abſolute Security, that we ſhall be for the future ſtedfaſt and unmoveable.* New, or ſudden Trials, ſtronger than any we have hitherto met with, may ſhake and ſtagger the Stability of our Minds. Let no Man imagine, that his former Victories will exempt him from a poſſibility of Falling. It is the Will of God, that every Man, the beſt of Men, in this State, ſhould be under a conſtant neceſſity of Watching. *Wherefore, let us take unto ourſelves the whole*

Armour of God, that we may be able to withſtand in the evil Day, and having done, or overcome, *all to ſtand.* Eph. vi. 13.

XIV. *ALL Trial is attended with Danger.* And therefore ſome, if not many, in a State of Trial, may fall into Perdition. As wicked Angels and Men.

XV. *OUR Danger is not from God, but from ourſelves. God tempteth*, or ſeduceth into Sin, *no Man*, Jam. i. 13, 14, 15, for this very good Reaſon, becauſe he *cannot* himſelf *be tempted with Evil*, ſuch is his Abhorrence and Deteſtation of it; and therefore cannot be inclined to draw any of his Creatures into the Practice of it. *But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away* from Righteouſneſs *by his own Luſt*, and *enticed* to commit Sin.

XVI. *ALL Temptation is vincible to thoſe that are willing to overcome.* See Prop. VI. All the Admonitions, Exhortations, Encouragements in Scripture, ſuppoſe and ſupport the Truth of this Propoſition.

XVII. *WE are victorious over Temptation, not by our own Power, but by the Grace and Power of God.* Even when *the Spirit is willing, the Fleſh is weak.* Mark xiv. 38. We are indeed under the higheſt Obligations to uſe faithfully the Powers we have already received, and no otherwiſe may we hope to be ſuperior to Temptation; but it is not our own Wiſdom or Strength that can preſerve

ſerve and uphold us; for we are directed in Revelation to truſt in God, and to ſeek unto him for Succor and Deliverance, which would be impertinent were we ſufficient to ourſelves. Why ſhould we aſk Help, when we do not want it? God alone *is able to keep* us *from falling, and to ſtabliſh us in every good Work.* Jude 24. 2 Theſſ. ii. 16, 17. And we are abundantly aſſured, that he will give Strength in proportion to our Trials, and our faithful Endeavors; and that our future Honors will be great in proportion to the preſent greater Trials we have ſurmounted. If we have overcome much, we ſhall enjoy much. For, obſerve, the Succors of divine Grace do not diminiſh the Quantity of our Virtue, or Reward. Whatever Helps our Infirmity may require, our Virtue is meaſured by our own ſincere Deſires and Endeavors, to which the divine Aid is proportioned. So that, in moral Conſtruction, it is all one as if we had overcome in our own Strength.

XVIII. *THE Means of conquering Temptation, on our Part, are Watching and Prayer.* Mark xiv. 38. *Watch and Pray, that ye enter not into Temptation.* (1.) *Watch.* Be not ſecure; expect Temptation, and be ſenſible of the Danger of it, the greateſt of all Dangers, the Loſs of the Soul. Be not confident of your own Strength. Keep out of the way of Temptation. Avoid every

Snare that may intangle your Minds. Indulge to no dangerous Liberties; make no uncautious Approaches towards Folly and Sin. That may be effected by ſlow Degrees, which a Man would never at firſt have conſented to be guilty of. He that fears falling down a Precipice will be ſure not to come near it; and he that would extinguiſh the Fire, ſhould withdraw the Fuel. Keep thy Heart with all Diligence; reject every ſinful Thought and Suggeſtion. Keep the Body in Subjection to Reaſon and Religion by Self-denial and Abſtinence. Beware of an undue Attachment to the World. Your Life and Treaſure is in Heaven; and there let your Hearts be. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly by daily Meditation. *Pſal.* cxix. 11. *Thy Word have I hid in mine Heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee.* (2.) *Pray.* Not that we may be totally exempted from Temptation; for we came into the World for this very end, that we might be tried and tempted. We cannot reaſonably expect that God, in our Favor, ſhould alter the Conſtitution of the World, or of the human Nature; but we ſhould pray, that God would order our Trials in ſuch Manner, as will beſt promote the Purity, and Probity of our Lives. *Prov.* xxx. 8, 9. *Remove far from me Vanity and Lies; give me neither Poverty nor Riches; feed me with Food convenient for me, &c.* The wiſe Man

Man doth not prescribe any Condition; that did not belong to him; but, in general, is desirous of that Situation in Life, which God saw would be most favorable to his Piety and Integrity. *Lead us not*, suffer us not to *enter*, *into Temptation*, i. e. suffer us not to fall under the Power and Prevalence of Temptation. The Example of our Lord is of the greatest Force to direct and animate us in our Conflicts; he took upon him our Nature, and went through all our Trials, on purpose to shew us how to behave under them; and to assure us that, imitating his Example, we shall at length be Partakers of his Glory. And thus by his perfect *Obedience*, his Obedience unto Death, a Sacrifice highly pleasing to God, he recovered that Life and Immortality, which *Adam* forfeited by his *Disobedience*.

CHAP. IX.

Of Law, or the religious DISPENSATION Adam *and* Eve *were under in the* Garden.

GEN. ii. 17. *But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* This is *Law*;

clear Ideas of which are neceſſary to the right Underſtanding of St. *Paul's* Writings.

LAW is a Rule of Action, or Duty, commanding or prohibiting, given by the Sovereign to moral Agents, with the Penalty of Death annexed *Tranſgreſs and die*, is the Language of Law. And therefore every Tranſgreſſor, the Moment he is ſuch, is dead in Law; and, for any thing in Law, he muſt continue ſo as long as it is true, that he has violated the Law, that is, for evermore. For the Law, which condemns him, can give him no Relief; as, in its own Nature, it excludes Repentance and Pardon; neither of which can take place, unleſs Law is overruled, or the Execution of it ſuſpended by the Authority and Favor of the Sovereign. For Law would not be Law if its Senſe or Language were this, *the Tranſgreſſor, who doth not repent and obtain Pardon, ſhall die.* Seeing this would be to allow Tranſgreſſion by Law, upon the uncertain Conditions of Repentance, and the Sovereign's Mercy. "You may ſin with Impu-"nity, if you do but repent, and find Fa-"vor." And ſo the Law would be invalidated by itſelf, as it would allow a conditional Tranſgreſſion, which would annul the annexed Penalty, by ſuſpending the Execution of it forever, in Expectation of the Sinner's Repentance, and the Sovereign's Forgiveneſs. For, as the Sinner may poſſibly repent

repent in any future time to all Eternity, ſo the Law could not at any time be executed. Conſequently the Law, by this Means, would be rendered for ever inſignificant, as it might be violated for ever with Impunity. Therefore, to be conſiſtent with itſelf, Law muſt be conceived in abſolute Terms, *ſin and die*, ſubjecting every Sinner immediately to the Penalty of Death, which is the *Curſe of the Law*. Gal. iii. 10, 13. By this Rule the Apoſtle, having proved that all Fleſh have ſined, concludes, that *no Fleſh*, or no Part of Mankind, *can be juſtified*, or intitled to Life, before the Sovereign, by Deeds or Works of Law. *Rom.* iii. 20. For *the Law works Wrath*, or ſubjects the Tranſgreſſor to Death, the Curſe or Penalty of it, *Rom.* iv. 15. On which Account it is very properly called, *the Miniſtration*, Diſpenſation, or Conſtitution, *of Death*, 2 Cor. iii. 7. as it is a Conſtitution which affords nothing but rigid Condemnation for all Tranſgreſſors.

Hence it follows, that Death in *Law* is Death eternal, without Hopes of a Revival or Reſurrection. For, as before proved, it is the very Nature of Law, never to remit the Penalty or Forfeiture. The Law, which now condemns the Criminal, condemns him to Death abſolutely, and for evermore; the everlaſting Language of Law to every one that breaks it, and for every Breach and

Transgression, being this, *Thou shalt die.* And this is the Force of the Expression תָּמוּת מוֹת *moriendo morieris*, "in dying thou "shalt die," in the Law given to *Adam.* It doth not speak of the Certainty of the Event, as if he should certainly die the Day he transgressed; for the Event shews the contrary; nor that he should become mortal from a Change in his Constitution, which is a random Conjecture, without any Foundation in the Nature of his Constitution, which was created mortal, or in the Force of the Words. For the Phrase תָּמוּת מוֹת is an Hebraism importing that a thing is, or is done, thoroughly, totally, in the most perfect Manner, or the most intense Degree, and is to be interpreted according to the Nature of the Subject. As *Gen.* ii. 16. אָכֹל תֹּאכֵל *comedendo comedes*, "thou mayest "freely eat" without any Restraint. *Chap.* xxxvii. 33. טָרֹף טֹרַף יוֹסֵף *discerpendo discerptus est Joseph*, "*Joseph* is torn all to pieces," or most cruelly torn to pieces. *Exod.* xxi. 19. וְרַפֵּא יְרַפֵּא *et medicando medicabitur*, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed. Thus the Force of the Words, "in dying "thou shalt die," is this, thou shalt thoroughly, utterly, totally die, or die for ever, without coming to Life again. Thou hast justly forfeited thy Life and Being, and shalt suffer a total and eternal Extinction of it.

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THIS Senſe and Language of Law muſt be underſtood only as a Declaration, that the Penalty is juſt and due; which is all that can be done by Law as a Rule of Juſtice, declaring, in general, that he who is diſobedient to his Maker hath juſtly forfeited his Being; and that, in conſequence of his Diſobedience, his Maker may juſtly deprive him of it. The Law can only declare the Truth of this Denunciation, as it hath no Power to put it in Execution; the Execution of this Threatening muſt neceſſarily and entirely reſt in the Hands and Power of the Lawgiver; who therefore may mitigate, reſpite, or ſuſpend it, as he, judging of Circumſtances, ſhall in his Wiſdom think proper. This is the Prerogative of the Sovereign or Lawgiver, which is allowed to be fit and reaſonable all the World over. For if this were not allowed, in proper Caſes, there could be no ſuch thing as Pardon, or the Mitigation of the Sentence of Law, either with God or Man. Which in every Nation, and throughout the whole Univerſe, would be a State of things the moſt ſevere and the moſt dreadful.

THUS Room is made for the Exerciſe of Favor or *Grace*, without doing any Violence to Truth. The Penalty indeed is due, but according to the true Natures of things, there may be alleviating Circumſtances in the Caſe of the Tranſgreſſor, which, though

Law

Law can make no Provision for them without destroying itself, yet the Lawgiver may, and, in Reason and Truth, ought to consider and allow with respect to the Infliction of the Penalty. *Wisdom* and *Goodness* ought to have place in him, and certainly do take place in God, as well as *Justice*. Justice consists in executing the Penalty of the Law according to the *Letter* of it; which *Letter* (2 Cor. iii. 6.) *killeth*, or destroys, the Sinner, by subjecting him to eternal Death, or to a total Extinction of Life; according to which Rule, there could be no Place for Mercy, and the whole World must be ruined. But *Wisdom* and *Goodness* may mitigate the Rigor of this Constitution, not by abrogating the Law, as a Rule of Life; for so *the Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy, just, and good*, (Rom. vii. 12.) and can never be abrogated, being, in its general Intention, agreable to the everlasting and immutable Natures of things. Much less by finding out some Expedient to satisfy *Law* and *Justice*; which can be satisfied no other Way than by the Death of the Offender. For Justice, as used in this Case, is acting strictly according to Law.

NOTHING, therefore, but the Execution of the Law can satisfy Justice. The Wisdom and Goodness of the Sovereign may do what the Law cannot do; that is to say, may suspend the Execution of the Sentence

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as long as he ſhall think fit; and ſo may leave what Space he pleaſes for the Sinner's Repentance, and provide what Means he ſhall think proper to induce him to Repentance; and upon his Repentance, may reſtore him to the Aſſurance of eternal Life, by an eternal Suſpenſion of the Execution of the Law. For as to that, he cannot be limited to any Space of Time. If he hath a Right by Prerogative to ſuſpend at all, it muſt be a diſcretionary Right to ſuſpend as long as he chooſeth. This is *Grace*, or *Goſpel*; by which the Sinner may be reſtored to the Hope of Immortality, and actually inveſted in it, by the Wiſdom and Favor of the Lawgiver. This *new*, or remedying Conſtitution, the Apoſtle calls *Spirit*, which quickens the Sinner condemned to Death by the *Letter* of the Law, or makes him to live. 2 Cor. iii. 6. *Who alſo hath made us* [Apoſtles] *able Miniſters of the New Teſtament* [or Conſtitution] *not of the Letter, but of the Spirit; for the Letter kills, but the Spirit giveth Life.* Which Spirit, he informs us, Ver. 17, is *the Lord*, or the Goſpel of our Lord. *Now the Lord is that Spirit*, that Life-giving Spirit, or the latter *Adam*, who is *a quickening*, or Life-giving, *Spirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45.

THAT the Penalty, *in the Day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely*, or utterly *die*, is to be underſtood, not of the Event, as if he ſhould certainly die, but of the Demerit of Tranſgreſſion, that he would deſerve to

die;

die; and that, notwithſtanding his Threatning, the Sovereign might reſpite the Execution of it, and not only allow the Tranſgreſſor the Benefit of Repentance, but alſo appoint Means to lead him to Repentance, and to eternal Life, may be clearly proved from *Ezek.* iii. 18. xxxiii. 8, 11, 14, 15. Where God repeats the very ſame Sentence of the Law upon the wicked Perſon, whom yet, at the ſame time, he charges the Prophet to warn, in order to bring him to Repentance, promiſing Pardon and Life in caſe he did repent. *Ezek.* iii. 18. *When* [באמרי *in dicendo me*, whereas] *I ſay* [in the Law] *unto the Wicked* מות תמות *thou ſhalt ſurely die; and thou giveſt him not Warning, nor ſpeakeſt to warn the Wicked from his wicked Way to ſave his Life.* Chap. xxxiii. 8. *When* [whereas] *I ſay* [in the Law] *unto the Wicked, O wicked Man,* מות תמות *thou ſhalt ſurely* [utterly] *die, if thou doſt not ſpeak to warn the Wicked from his Way,* &c. Ver. 14. *Again; when* [whereas] *I ſay* [in the Law] *unto the Wicked,* מות תמות *thou ſhalt ſurely* [totally] *die; if he turn from his Sin, and do that which is lawful and right,* Ver 15. — לא יָמוּת חיו וחיה vivendo vivet, *he ſhall ſurely* [totally, eternally] *live, he ſhall not die.*

THUS Law in the rigorous Senſe is to be underſtood; and thus it ſtands in Connection with the Pardon of Tranſgreſſors, or their Attainment of eternal Life through the Fa-

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vor of the Lawgiver. That our firſt Parents, while in the Garden of *Eden*, were under Law, or a Rule of Action with the Penalty of Death annexed, is manifeſt from the very Form of the Prohibition — *But of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil thou ſhalt not eat of it ; for in the Day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt utterly die.* And the Apoſtle *Paul* evidently ſuppoſes, that *Adam* was under Law, *Rom.* v. 13, 14. *For until the Law* [of Moſes] *Sin was* [commited] *in the World ; but Sin* [though commited] *is not imputed* [unto Death] *μη οντος νομυ when Law is not in being.* This ſuppoſes, 1. That Law is the only Conſtitution which ſubjecteth the Sinner to Death. 2. That Law was not in Being in the Times preceding the giving of the Law of *Moſes.* Ver. 14. *Neverthelefs Death reigned from Adam to Moſes* [while Law was not in Being] *even over them that had not ſined after the Likeneſs of Adam's Tranſgreſſion.* That is to ſay, " Death reigned all the long Space of about " 2500 Years from *Adam* to *Moſes*, even " over thoſe who did not ſin, as *Adam* did, " againſt Law, making Death the Penalty " of their Sin ; becauſe during that Period, " Mankind were not under Law, but under " the general Covenant, or Conſtitution, of " Grace, given to *Adam* immediately after " his Tranſgreſſion."

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THIS evidently ſuppoſes, that *Adam* was under Law with the Penalty of Death annexed, while he was in the Garden, or before he tranſgreſſed; and that the ſame ſevere Conſtitution was again revived by *Moſes*, after it had been ſuſpended from the time of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion till the Law was given by *Moſes*. Whence the Apoſtle concludeth, that, as Death reigned all that long Period, while Sin was commited in the World, and yet no poſitive Law ſubſiſted, making Death the Penalty of Sin; he concludes, I ſay, that Men, in general, did not die for their own Tranſgreſſions, but in Conſequence of *Adam*'s one Tranſgreſſion.

IT muſt be obſerved, that the Apoſtle *Paul* doth not always uſe *Law* in the rigid Senſe, but ſometimes for the whole Jewiſh Code, or the Old Teſtament. *Rom.* iii. 19. Sometimes for any inward Principle which influenceth and governeth a Man — vii. 23. Sometimes for a Rule in general — iii. 27. And ſometimes for a Rule of Action with the Penalty of Death annexed. *Rom.* v. 20. vi. 15. vii. 4, *&c.*

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of the INSTITUTION *of* MARRIAGE.

Gen. ii. 18, to the End.

ADAM's calling all Beaſts and Fowls by Names doth not imply, that he had a perfect Knowledge of the Natures and intrinſic Qualities of all Animals; an Opinion deſtitute of all Evidence; but that God gave him Dominion over them, as a Maſter over his Bond-Servants, according to the Force of the Phraſe, to *call Things or Perſons by Name*. Pſal. cxlvii. 4. Iſai. xl. 26. xliii. 1. God's allowing *Adam* to give the Creatures what Names he pleaſed, was the Form of conveying or making over to him the Property of them and Dominion over them. It hath alſo Reference to the Formation of Woman; that *Adam*, our firſt Parent, having ſurveyed all other Animals, and having obſerved that they were created in Pairs, for the Propagation of their ſeveral Kinds, might be ſenſible of his own ſolitary, deſtitute Condition, and of the Importance of his being alſo provided of a Mate ſuitable to his Nature, (which, by reaſon of its ſuperior Excellency, could not be matched with any of the brutal kind) a Companion in Body and

and Mind, fit to cohabit with him, for mutual Converſe, Delight, Comfort, and Aſſiſtance, eſpecially for propagating the human Species; without which the World would have been ſtocked with only Brutes.

AND it was fiting, or agreable to the true Nature of things, that the Formation of the firſt Woman ſhould be attended with ſome Circumſtance expreſſive of the Nearneſs of that Relation, which was to be the Fountain of the Exiſtence of all Mankind, and of all the near and dear Relations, ſo beneficial and comfortable to the Life of Man. And no Circumſtances could do that more ſignificantly, than taking the Woman out of a Part of the Man's Body. Thus ſhe became another Self; and this was intended as a Document to all Poſterity, that a Wife ſhould be regarded and treated as ſuch. *Epheſ.* v. 28. *So ought Men to love their Wives, as their own Bodies; he that loveth his Wife, loveth himſelf.*

Ver. 23. *AND* [when the Lord God brought to him the Woman, his Wife, and informed him in what Manner ſhe was produced,] *Adam ſaid*, [with much Satisfaction and Joy] *this is now Bone of my Bones, and Fleſh of my Fleſh*, the deareſt to me of all Creatures; *ſhe ſhall be called*, אִשָּׁה *Woman, becauſe ſhe is taken out of* אִישׁ *Man.* [A Sign of *Adam*'s Property in her.] *Ver.* 24. And the Lord God ſaid, (*Mat.* xix. 4, 5.) *Therefore*

fore ſhall a Man leave his Father and Mother, and ſhall cleave unto his Wife, and they two ſhall be one Fleſh. Thus Marriage was inſtituted; a ſacred and honorable Ordinance, of high Diſtinction, as it is very nearly connected with the Dignity and Happineſs of the human Nature.

AND by making only one Woman for one Man, God plainly declared, that this Relation ought to ſubſiſt between two; as the Prophet well argues, *Mal.* ii. 14, 15. *And did not he*, God, *make* but *one* Couple, one Man and one Woman, as a Rule to all Mankind, tha ſhould deſcend from them? *yet had he the Reſidue of the Spirit*, and could then have created more Men and Women, if promiſcuous Converſation had been for the greater Happineſs of the World. *And wherefore* did he make but *one* Couple? *That he might ſeek a godly Seed*, זרע אלהים an excellent Seed. That Man and Wife, in chaſte Wedlock, in ſincere and undivided Affection, might propagate a Poſterity to the Honor and Service of God. This is an Argument againſt Polygamy and Devorce, confirmed by our Lord's Wiſdom and Authority, *Mat.* xix. 3, 4, 5, 6. Thus Mankind are brought into the World in a Way ſuitably to the Excellency of their Nature. For, conſidering how weak and imperfect our Infancy is, and in how great Ignorance and Diſſoluteneſs of Manners we muſt neceſſarily

grow up to Manhood, without good Discipline and Instruction, it is evident, this World must have been the most wild and disorderly Scene imaginable, were the Race of Mankind propagated in a vagrant, licentious Manner, without Parents to own them, and by their tender Care and Affection to give them a good Education. The Production of an intelligent Being, in the most helpless and exposed Circumstances, and which grows up to a due Degree of Understanding, no otherwise than by good Culture, ought to be attended with all the proper Advantages in the Propagator's Power. And therefore the Propagation of the human Species, according to the true Nature of things, ought to be guarded and directed by the best Exercise of Reason, and not left to be done in a loose, brutal Manner. God did not create Man in Jest; nor should the ordinary Generation of a Man be made a Matter of lewd Jest, or of lawless Passion. This is the Rationale of Marriage, and of Modesty and Sobriety.

ADAM had no Choice, but his Descendents have great need to exercise Prudence in the Choice of a Relation so important and lasting. The Advice and Approbation of Parents is, in this Case, one of the best Rules. And as Marriage lessens the Interest of Parents in their Children, it is generally not dutiful to alienate it to another without

without their Knowledge and Consent. Nor should Parents unreasonably oppose the lawful Inclinations of their Children.

Ver. 25. *AND they were both naked, the Man and his Wife, and were not ashamed,* being free from Sin and Guilt.

CHAP. XI.

Of the TEMPTER *who deceived* EVE.

Gen. iii. 1—9.

HERE *Eve* is deceived and tempted to transgress the Law of God by some moral Agent, who could speak and argue, called by *Moses* הנחש *the Serpent*; which, he saith, *was more subtil than any other Beast of the Field, which the Lord God had made.* But a Beast of the Field, how subtil or sagacious soever, could not speak and reason. Who then was the moral Agent that deceived *Eve?* St. *Paul,* 2 Cor. xi. 3 speaks of this Deceiver in the same Manner as *Moses* doth; *I fear, lest by any Means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his Subtility, so your Minds should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ.* The Apostle did not suppose the *Corinthians* might be corrupted by the Subtilty of an irrational Creature; consequently, he did not suppose

that *Eve* was beguiled by the Subtilty of an irrational Creature. But St. *John* comes nearer to the Point in *Rev.* xii. 9. xx. 2. Where he ſpeaks of the Serpent as a *Deceiver*, and deſcribes him after this Manner, *and the great Dragon was caſt out, that old Serpent*; *called* otherwiſe in Scripture, *the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole World.* A *Dragon* is a huge overgrown Serpent. *That old Serpent*, means that Serpent, which of old, at the Begining of the World deceived *Eve*, and ſtill was deceiving the World. (And in ſeveral other Places of Scripture, which we ſhall preſently have Occaſion to take Notice of, the Devil's Temptation of *Eve* is plainly alluded to.) Therefore this *Serpent*, and the *Devil* and *Satan*, are ſynonymous, and mean one and the ſame Being. Hence Divines have juſtly concluded, that it was the *Devil* or *Satan*, an evil or malignant Spirit, which tempted *Eve*, in the Body, or aſſuming the Form and Shape, of a Serpent; which then might be a very beautiful as well as ſagacious Animal, familiar with *Adam* and *Eve*, and much admired by them.

THAT there are wicked and malignant Spirits, is undeniably true from Scripture. 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. *For if God ſpared not the Angels that ſinned, but* σειραις ζοφου ταρταρωσας *caſt them down to Hell, and delivered them into Chains of Darkneſs, to be reſerved unto Judgment.*

ment. [Or rather, caſt them down into a low, wretched Condition, in Chains of Darkneſs, delivered them to be reſerved unto Judgment.] *Jude* 6. *And the Angels which kept not their firſt Eſtate, but left their own Habitation, he hath reſerved* δεσμοις αιδιοις υπο ζοφον *in everlaſting Chains under Darkneſs, unto the Judgment of the great Day.* Being *caſt down to Hell, and delivered into Chains of Darkneſs*, in St. *Peter*, is the ſame as *being reſerved in perpetual Chains under Darkneſs*, in St. *Jude*; and may ſignify no more than, that they are degraded from their former high and glorious State, and chained, or confined to, a much lower, narrower, and darker Situation, without any Hope of Favor, unto the Day of Judgment; when they, with all Workers of Iniquity, ſhall be caſt into everlaſting Fire, *Mat.* xxv. 41. *Rev.* xx. 10, 15. For any thing, therefore, advanced in thoſe two Places, thoſe fallen Angels may, at preſent, reſide in our Air, and be permited to wander about in the Earth.

IT muſt be obſerved, that there is an Ambiguity in both the Words, שטן *Satan*, and Διαβολος the *Devil*. The former, *Satan*, ſignifies any Adverſary among Men and good Angels, as well as among evil Spirits. *Num.* xxii. 32. *And the Angel of the Lord ſaid,— behold, I went out to withſtand thee,* לשטן יצאתי for an Adverſary, a Satan. So 2 Sam. xix. 22. — *Ye Sons of Zeruiah are Adver-*

ſaries. 1 Kin. v. 4. xi. 14, 23, 25. Pſal. lxxi. 13. cix. 20, 29 *Peter* was Satan, an Adverſary, to our Lord, *Mat.* xvi. 23. And the unbelieving *Jews* were the Satan, or Adverſaries, who hindered St. *Paul*'s Return to *Theſſalonica*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 18. Διαβολος *Devil*, ſignifies an Accuſer, Slanderer. *Joh.* vi. 70. — *and one of you*, Judas, *is* Διαβολος *a Devil.* 1 Tim. iii. 11. *Their Wives muſt be grave*, μη Διαβολας not Devils, *i. e* Accuſers, *Slanderers.* 2 Tim. iii. 3. *falſe Accuſers*, Tit. ii. 3. Thus it may be applied to any wicked Perſons, who ſlander, accuſe, and perſecute the People of God. And this Ambiguity in the Senſe of thoſe two Words, שטן and Διαβολος, may render it doubtful how ſome particular Paſſages of Scripture are to be underſtood.

THAT thoſe two Words are uſed to ſignify one and the ſame wicked Spirit, who, with many others his Angels, or under-Agents, are converſant in our World, and endeavour to draw Men into Sin, and do Miſchief among us, is very evident from Revelation. As in the Caſe of our firſt Parents, of *Job*, whoſe Children and Subſtance were deſtroyed, and his Body afflicted with a grievous Diſorder by *Satan*, Job i. 12, *&c.* ii. 6, 7; of our Lord, who was tempted of the *Devil*, or *Satan*, Mat. iv. 1, 3, 10. Mark i. 13. Luke iv. 2. Which Temptation, under all its Circumſtances, can never be

be resolved into an Allegory; much less can it be supposed to be all transacted within our Lord's own Mind, as if the Devil, or Satan, was no other than the Suggestions, or Thoughts, that arose in his own Heart; which is very absurd. Nor can the following Texts be naturally understood of any other than a real Devil or Satan. *Mat.* xiii. 39. *The Enemy that sowed the Tares is the Devil*, [and his Instruments] Mark iii. 26. *How can Satan cast out Satan?* Joh. viii. 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil.* Acts x. 38. — *Healing all that were oppressed of the Devil.* 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14. *For such are false Apostles, deceitful Workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light.* Heb. ii. 14. *That through Death he might destroy him that had the Power of* [subjecting our first Parents, and their Posterity, to] *Death, that is, the Devil.* 2 Tim. 2, 16. — *recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil.* Jam. iv. 7. *Resist the Devil, and he shall flee from you.* 1 Joh. iii. 8. *He that commiteth Sin, is of the Devil; for the Devil sineth from the Begining* [of the World, alluding to his tempting our first Parents into Sin;] *for this cause the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.* Jude 9. *Yet Michael, the Archangel, when contending with the Devil, he disputed about the Body*

of Moses. And generally, *Satan* and *Devil* are thus to be underſtood in the New Teſtament, the few Places before mentioned only excepted. Though where the Devil is principally intended, his Inſtruments, or wicked Agents among Men, may, at the ſame Time, be connoted.

BESIDES Satan, or the Devil, the Scripture frequently mentions other evil Spirits, called δαιμονια, δαιμονες, *Dæmons*, which we tranſlate *Devils*. That theſe Dæmons, however underſtood in profane Authors, do belong to the Devil's Retinue, and may be his Angels or Under-Agents, over whom he is Chief or Prince, will appear by comparing *Mat.* xii. 22, 24,—28. *Luke* x. 17, 18. xi 15, 18. Thoſe who in the Goſpels are ſaid to be δαιμονιζομενοι poſſeſſed by Dæmons, in *Acts* x. 38. are ſaid to be *oppreſſed of the Devil*, υπο του Διαβολου, as they were under the Power of his Agents. Thus we may conceive of *the Devil and his Angels*, Mat. xxv. 41 *the Dragon and his Angels*, Rev. xii. 7 He is the Prince and Head, and thoſe Dæmons are his Subjects. They are often ſpoken of in the plural Number, as being many; though *Satan*, or the *Devil*, is always in the ſingular, as being but one ſingle Spirit, and Chief over all the reſt. But, as before obſerved, his Angels, or Agents, may ſometimes be included with him.

THE

THE Characters which the Devil or Satan ſuſtains in Scripture, are theſe, the *great Dragon*, or fierce Devourer, the *old Serpent*, full of villainous Subtilty, *Rev.* xii. 9. The *Wicked One*, Mat. xiii. 38. 1 Joh. iii. 12. A *Murtherer and Liar*, Joh. viii. 44. *Ye are of your Father, the Devil, and the Luſts of your Father will ye do; he was a Murtherer from the Begining*, [in effecting the Death of *Adam* and his Poſterity; and thus he may be ſaid to have had the Power of Death, *Heb.* ii. 14.] *and abode not in the Truth, becauſe there is no Truth in him. When he ſpeaketh a Lie, he ſpeaketh of his own, for he is a Liar*, [as he was to *Eve*,] *and the Father of it. The Accuſer of the Brethren*, Rev. xii. 10. [See Job i. 6—13. ii. 1—7.] *A roaring Lion*, [the Lion roars only when he is hungry, Pſal. xxii. 13. Ezek. xxii. 25.] *ſeeking whom he may devour.* The *Prince of the World*, meaning, as it is corrupt and wicked, *John* xii. 31. xiv. 30. xvi. 11. *The Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Diſobedience*, the idolatrous Heathen, *Epheſ.* ii. 2. Here the Devil is repreſented as a Prince, or Sovereign, at the Head of a Kingdom, which ſtands in Oppoſition to, and is at war with, the Kingdom of *Chriſt*; who was manifeſted as his Antagoniſt, *that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil*, 1 John iii. 8.

THE

THE Dæmons are characterized as the *Devil's Angels*, Mat. xxv. 41. As *unclean Spirits*, Mark v. 2, 8, 12. Luke iv. 33, 36. viii. 27, 29. *Evil*, wicked, *Spirits*, Luke viii. 2.

THESE vicious Spirits, the Devil and his Angels, when permited, are capable of doing any Mischief to the Estate, Body or Mind, 1 *Sam.* xvi. 14. *Job* i. 12, *&c.* ii. 6, 7. *Mark* iii. 23, 26. *Luke* xiii. 16. 1 *Cor.* v. 5. 1 *Tim.* i. 20. Nor is there any Absurdity, any thing inconsistent with the Divine Goodness, in supposing that evil Spirits may inflict Calamities and Disorders upon Mankind. For they are only Instruments in God's Hands, under his Direction and Controul, as much as any other Cause whatever; and so must come under the same Rules, as any other Means, which Providence may imploy in distressing or destroying human Life, as Storms, Inundations, the Passions and Powers of wicked Men, a putrid Air, vitiated Humors in the Body, *&c.* In all these Cases, whatever is the instrumental, God is the appointing and directing Cause; and it would have been all one, whether he had sent a good or evil Angel, or had only changed the Temperature of the Air, to destroy the *Israelites* by Pestilence, 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 15, 16. Or to slay *Sennacherib*'s Army. 2 *King.* xix. 35. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 21.

In

In correcting or punishing by Diseases, or other Distresses, God may use what Instruments he pleases.

THUS far we may go upon this Part of the Subject, and not much further. The World of Spirits lies so far out of our Sight, that we can know no more of them, than what is reveled. Nor have we Principles sufficient to inable us to form clear and compleat Notions of every thing said concerning them even in Revelation.

THAT which most of all requires our Attention, is, that the Devil delighteth in seducing Mankind to sin against God, and takes every Advantage, and uses every Wile to effect his wicked Purpose. *Rev.* xii. 9. *The great Dragon, called the Devil and Satan, deceiveth the whole World.* Mat. xiii. 39. *The Enemy that sowed them*, the Tares, *i. e.* wicked Men, *is the Devil.* Of which we have a Specimen in his Temptation of our first Parents. He concealed himself in the Body, or Shape of a Serpent, probably, at that time, a Creature admired by *Adam* and *Eve* for it's Beauty and Sagacity. He first addressed the Woman, when alone, and at a Distance from her Husband; and first endevored to weaken her Sense of the Obligation of the Divine Prohibition, by representing it as uncertain or unreasonable. *Ver.* 1. *Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every Tree in the Garden?* "Surely you mistake

"him;

" him ; it can never be ſo ; for why ſhould
" God debar you of any of the inno-
" cent and delightful Fruits this Garden
" yields ? " The Woman expoſed herſelf to the greateſt Danger by deliberating with the Tempter, upon a Matter which ſhe ſhould not have heard ſo much as called in Queſtion without Abhorrence. But ſhe was not aware of his wicked Deſign ; and therefore, in much Simplicity, gave him a full Account of the Law they were under, *Ver.* 2, 3 Which only gave him, on the other Hand, an Opportunity of contradicting it by a moſt bold and impudent Lie, *Ver.* 4. *Ye ſhall not ſurely die.* Yea, he aſſures her, they ſhould receive great Advantage by eating the forbiden Fruit, *Ver.* 5. *For God doth know, that in the Day ye eat thereof, then your Eyes ſhall be opened ; and ye ſhall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil.* To favor his Aſſertion, he perverts the Word of God, by wreſting the Name God had given the Tree ; as if it had been called, *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil,* becauſe God was aware it would endow them with the moſt exalted and extenſive Knowledge ; whereas it had its Name upon a very different Account.

THUS Satan perſuades Men to have hard Thoughts of God, as if he envied our Happineſs, and laid the Reſtraints of his Law upon our Appetites out of Ill-will ; but infinite

finite Goodneſs is not capable of Envy. Thus he tempteth us to be uneaſy in the Condition Providence has alloted us, and prompts us to be ambitious of things too high for us. And thus he deludeth with falſe Hopes of Benefit and Advantage from Sin; and, when this laſt Point is gained, we fall an eaſy Prey to the Tempter. *Ver.* 6. *And when the Woman ſaw that the Tree was good for Food, and that it was pleaſant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be deſired to make one wiſe, ſhe took of the Fruit thereof and did eat.* "She ſaw it was to be deſired to make one "wiſe." What wrought this Opinion in *Eve* was, poſſibly, the Aſſurance the Serpent gave her, that he which, ſhe very well knew, before was, like other Brutes, dumb and irrational, was, by the admirable Virtue of the Fruit, advanced in Speech and Reaſon, as ſhe ſaw, to an equality with herſelf, the moſt excellent Creature in the Earth; and, therefore, ſhe needed not doubt but it would, in the ſame Proportion, exalt the human Nature to the high Perfection of the angelic Order. This would paſs for Demonſtration with her, who knew not that it was an evil Spirit that acted and ſpake in the Serpent. But this is only my own Conjecture. — *And ſhe gave alſo unto her Huſband with her, and he did eat*; being, probably, perſuaded (beſides the Arguments the Serpent uſed with *Eve*) by the ſtrong Affection

fection they had for each other. Thus the Devil, by tempting our first Parents to transgress the Law, subjected them, and their Posterity in them, to eternal Death. Thus he was a Murtherer, and may be said to have *had the Power of Death.* Heb. ii. 14.

CHAP. XII.

Reflections on the DEVIL'S TEMPTATIONS.

BY searching the Scriptures we have found, that there is a malicious Spirit which, by divine Permission, ranges about this World, attended with many more of the same depraved Nature; and, as any Opportunity offers, is endeavouring to draw Men from the Practice of Virtue, into all Wickedness and Alienation from the Truth.

To prevent any Cavils against the scriptural Account of this wicked Spirit, let it be well observed,

I. THAT we cannot be sure, from any unassisted Knowledge or Observation of our own, that this Earth is not frequented by numerous Spirits of a Nature much superior to the human. Our Knowledge even of the Animals, which naturally belong to our Globe, hath been, and probably still is, very defective. Without the Help of Microscopes we could never have discerned vast Tribes

Tribes of Insects, which we now plainly see do live and move even in our own Bodies, and in all Parts of the Earth and Water. And even with this Advantage of Sight, there may still be a World of smaller Animals, which our Senses cannot reach. Much more may Myriads of Spirits be mixed amongst us, which come not under our Observation. Therefore, as without the Aid of Microscopes we should never have discovered the most numerous Part of the Inhabitants of our Earth; so neither, without the Light of Revelation, can we be ascertained, what Spirits are and act in the Region of our Air. And Revelation is a Mean as proper, at least, for discovering the one, as our own artificial Inventions for discovering the other. But Revelation informs us, that Angels, both good and bad, are conversant in this World; which may be true, though we have no distinct, sensible Perceptions of their Existence and Operations. Under former Dispensations of Religion they might appear, and act in a sensible Manner; but under the present Dispensation they may, for wise Reasons, (particularly, because we are now sufficiently instructed in their Nature and Agency,) be wholly invisible: nor may we be capable of distinguishing their secret internal Impressions from the Suggestions of our own Minds; or the external, kind Assistances of good Angels,

gels, or the malicious Injuries of evil Angels, from the common Course of Providence.

II. THAT we are now upon Trial hath been already proved; and that our Trial is well and wisely adjusted, cannot be doubted. We ourselves are by no Means capable of judging what kind of Trials are most suitable to our own Spirits, because we know but little of the Nature of them. To settle the Kind and Degree of our Trials, belongs entirely to him, who alone understands the Nature of our Minds, and the Designs of his own Wisdom. Therefore, if we are shocked when we hear God hath permited many evil Spirits to range our World, and to exercise their Malice in tempting Mankind, we are really shocked at our own Ignorance; seeing this Method of Trial, as well as the rest, is under Regulations of infinite Wisdom, and designed for the Purposes of infinite Goodness.

OBJECTION. "SUPPOSE God hath "for wise Ends permited such Beings to "mingle among Mankind, is it not very "strange that any should be found so ma-"licious as to imploy that Permission to the "worst of Purposes? How can we suppose "any Spirits, any Intelligences, especially "of a superior Nature, so far abandoned to "all sense of Goodness and Virtue, as to "indeavor

" indeavor without ceasing the Corruption
" and Perdition of their Fellow-Creatures?"

ANSWER. THAT Wickedness exists in the Universe is too plain from the State of things in that Part of it, which we inhabit; where we see great Numbers, in spight of their own Reason and Understanding, and of all the instances of God's Love and Goodness, and of all the most evident and powerful Arguments to Virtue and Piety, who not only are very vicious themselves, but take an unnatural Pleasure in tempting and corrupting others, and making them as bad as themselves. It cannot then be hard to suppose, that there are other Spirits, in other Circumstances, who, in the same Manner, oppose God; that is to say, oppose Truth and Virtue. For the Devil opposeth and seteth himself against God, not by Might and Power, as if he were able to contend with the Almighty, but only as he opposeth Virtue and Truth; just as wicked Men do among ourselves. Indeed, we Men are under strong Temptations from the Flesh, and the Objects that relate to it; but the Spirits we are speaking of, may be under as strong Temptations of some other Kind, that we are not acquainted with; they may, by some sinful Pursuits and Compliances, have sunk themselves into the last Degrees of moral Pravity, and even be more wicked than the wickedest Man in the

Earth, more blind to the Goodneſs of God, and more fearleſs of his Wrath. Nor are ſuperior natural Abilities an abſolute Security againſt the very worſt moral Corruption. For we do actually find, that great Knowledge and Underſtanding are ſo far from always making Men good and virtuous, that, on the contrary, theſe are often in a high degree the Inſtruments of Sin and Diſobedience; being wholly imployed in finding out Pleas and Pretexts for the moſt abandoned Iniquity.

THUS you ſee it is very poſſible ſuch vicious Spirits may be, may be mixed among us, and permited to tempt us; and, according to Scripture Repreſentations, they are very dangerous Enemies. For,

I. SATAN is continually going about ſeeking all Advantages againſt us, Job i. 7. *The Lord ſaid unto Satan, Whence comeſt thou? Satan anſwered, and ſaid,—From going to and fro in the Earth, and from walking up and down in it.* And from the Query in the next Verſe, *Haſt thou conſidered my Servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God and eſcheweth Evil?* And alſo from what our Saviour ſaith to *Peter*, Luke xxii. 31. *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift you as Wheat*; it appears, that he is inquiſitive into the Characters of Men, and buſily ſeeks, and gladly

gladly lays hold of any Occaſion to try, and, if poſſible, to overthrow their Integrity. 1 *Cor.* vii. 5. *Defraud you not one the other, except it be with Conſent for a time, that ye may give yourſelves to Faſting and Prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your Incontinency.*

II. WE may ſuppoſe a Spirit of ſuperior Faculties to be very ſubtil in underſtanding our various Conſtitutions and Inclinations, and the particular Sins to which our Circumſtances do expoſe us; and in laying his Baits, and addreſſing his Temptations accordingly.

III. SUCH a Tempter can apply a great variety of Machinations, Devices, [νοημαϲα, 2 *Cor.* ii. 11.] and Wiles [μεθοδειας, *Epheſ.* vi. 11.] to deceive. This is ſeen in the Caſe of *Eve.* And in tempting our Lord, it is very obſervable, how he varied his Devices, and ſhifted the Scene of Temptation, to fix, if poſſible, ſome Stain upon his ſpotleſs Mind. He can put himſelf into any Shape, either of Terror, or pleaſing Allurement; either as a roaring Lion, or an Angel of Light, [2 *Cor.* xi. 14.] Sometimes he works by his Agents, imploying thoſe who are already inſnared to draw in others; ſo *Eve* was his Tool to tempt *Adam:* ſometimes injecting into our Minds unrighteous, impure Suggeſtions, [*Luke* xxii. 3. *Acts* v. 3.] ſometimes taking the Word out of our

Heart, [*Luke* viii. 12.] or mixing Tares with the good Seed, [*Mat.* xiii. 25.] and corrupting our Minds from the Simplicity that is in Christ.

BUT then, all this must be understood under the following Restrictions.

1. THAT the Devil can neither hurt us, nor so much as attempt to hurt us, further than God permits. He is not like the pretended evil God of the *Manichees*, eternal, self-existent, almighty, and independent, but as much under the Power of God as the weakest Reptile under our Feet. When God gives him a Commission, he cannot act beyond it; and when he has no Commission, he is chained up and can do nothing. He is therefore no other than an Agent, entirely and always in God's Hand, to be used as he sees fit.

2. NOR can he any ways pollute our Minds, further than we ourselves do consent. If God permits, possibly he may work upon the Humors of the Body, he may inflame our Passions, abuse our Imaginations, or suggest evil things to our Thoughts; but unless we willingly admit those Impressions, he cannot possibly stain our Consciences with Sin.

3. GOD hath not only furnished Means and Strength to resist him, but hath appointed that, if we do resist him, he shall be conquered and vanquished. *Jam.* iv. 7.

Resist

Resist the Devil, and he will, he shall, he must, *flee from you*; not by his own Choice, but by the Will and Power of God. *The God of* our *Peace* and Safety *shall bruise Satan under our Feet.* And such a Victory shall turn to the Praise and Glory and Establishment of our Virtue. Hence it follows,

1. THAT it must be our own Act and Deed if we are overcome by the Temptations of the Devil. It is common for People to consider themselves as altogether *passive* in this Case, and to ascribe the Wickedness they commit to the Power of Temptation; whereas, in truth, so far as we are tempted *effectually* we are *active*, we consent and agree to the Temptation, we are drawn away of our own Lust and enticed, *Jam.* i. 14. Satan tempts, yet can have no Advantage over us but what we chuse to give him. And therefore,

2. IT must be an Aggravation of any Crime that it was done under the Power and Influence of this wicked Spirit. For we must be *the Children of Disobedience*, we must have abandoned ourselves to Wickedness, before Satan can *work in us*. If *Satan* can fill our Hearts, consider in what a wretched Condition we must be. We must have abused the Faculties of our Minds, we must have despised all the Riches of Divine Goodness, we must have shut our Eyes against the Light of saving Truth, hardened

our Hearts againſt the Fear of God, ſeared our Conſciences, ſtifled many and ſtrong Convictions, done deſpite to the Spirit of Grace; we muſt have withdrawn ourſelves from God, till he hath forſaken us; we muſt have advanced from one Degree of Iniquity to another, till our Hearts are prepared to be the Seat and Reſidence of the unclean Spirit, the Murtherer, the Father of Lies, the Prince of Darkneſs. A Condition unſpeakably deplorable!

WITH Men of Virtue and Piety he hath no Power, though he may vex and aſſault them, but only with the Vicious. And they not only imitate his Wickedneſs, which is bad enough, and conſtitutes him their *Father*, but likewiſe are under his Government, which is ſtill worſe, and conſtitutes him their Prince and Ruler. Moſt dreadful Caſe, to be the Children of ſuch a Father, the Subjects of ſuch a Prince, the Children of Perdition, the Subjects of the Enemy of all Righteouſneſs! To have the Powers of our Minds, deſigned for the nobleſt Acts and Enjoyments, under the Dominion of Error and Luſt; to have the Spirits created for eternal Happineſs in Union with God, in Slavery to the vileſt of Beings; to have the Souls, for whom Chriſt ſhed his Blood, to deliver them from Iniquity, to purify them into the Divine Image, and to prepare them for everlaſting Salvation; to have

have thoſe Souls quite inſenſible to all that is true and excellent, heavenly and divine, guided by the grand Deceiver, in the Power of the Deſtroyer, and by him puſhed on in the way of Iniquity to eternal Perdition, how frightful is the Reflection; how dreadful muſt the State of ſuch Souls be!

To prevent our falling into ſuch a ſad Condition, and to ſecure ourſelves from the Encroachments of this wicked Spirit, let us ever be mindful that we have ſuch an Enemy, and that, without due Care and Circumſpection, we ſhall fall under his Power. Let us carefully guard our Hearts, and obſerve well the Temper and Frame of our Minds, that we may ſeaſonably reſtrain every inordinate Affection, and immediately reject every evil Thought and Suggeſtion which ſtarts up in our Minds. Be ſober, be vigilant. Nothing gives this Adverſary greater Advantage than ſenſual Indulgences. Mortify the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts. Shun all Intemperance and Exceſs; and never dare to venture, how little ſoever, into the way of Temptation and Sin. And let us be ſure to keep cloſe to God in Prayer, and other Exerciſes of Religion. Thus we ſhall put ourſelves under the Banner of the Prince of Life, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and ſhall be kept by the Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Consequences of ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION.

Gen. ii. 7, to the End.

WE are now come to a very grand Point in Theology, the Fall of Man, or the Consequences of *Adam*'s Transgression upon himself and his Posterity. Which Consequences Divines, both Papist and Protestant, have generally, and for a long tract of Time, represented to be those that follow, namely, " the Guilt of *Adam*'s first " Sin imputed to, or charged upon, all his " Posterity — a total Defect of that Righ- " teousness, wherein he is supposed to have " been created — the Corruption of the hu- " man Nature, whereby all Mankind are " utterly indisposed, disabled, and made op- " posite unto all that is spiritually good, " and wholly inclined to all Evil, and that " continually ; which Corruption of our " Nature is the Source of all Wickedness " that is commited in the World. — Fur- " ther, by *Adam*'s Transgression all Man- " kind were deprived of Communion with " God — and all, as soon as ever they come " into the World, under his Displeasure and " Curse,

" Curſe, being by Nature the Children of
" Wrath, Bond-ſlaves to Satan, juſtly liable
" to all Puniſhments in this World, and in
" the World to come, to an everlaſting
" Separation from the comfortable Preſence
" of God, the moſt grievous Torments in
" Soul and Body without Intermiſſion in
" Hell-Fire for ever."

THIS is an Affair of the moſt dreadful Importance, and requires to be examined with all poſſible Care and Impartiality. For an Error in this Point will affect the whole Scheme of Chriſtianity, pervert and abuſe our Conſciences, and give us very wrong Notions of God and of ourſelves. Upon this Article I have examined the Scriptures, with Diligence and Impartiality, in the Treatiſe entitled — *The Scripture Doctrine of original Sin, propoſed to free and candid Examination* — in the Study of which this is a proper Place to exerciſe your Thoughts and Judgments.

[* ADAM having tranſgreſſed the Law, not only loſt a Claim to Life, but became obnoxious to Death, which was *Death in Law*, or eternal Death. And had the Law been immediately executed, his Poſterity, then included in his Loins, muſt have been extinct,

* Take this in, as a Note, P. 18. of *Scripture Doctrine of original Sin*, at the Paragraph, 1. *Whereas Adam had before.* &c.

extinct, or could have had no Existence at all. For, the Covenant of Innocence being broken, there was no Covenant or Constitution subsisting upon which *Adam* could have the least Hope of the Continuance of his own Life, and consequently, could have no Prospect of any Posterity. Thus *in Adam all die.* While things were in this State, under broken Law, and before a Promise of Favor, or Grace, in this Interval, for any thing *Adam* could know, he, and the whole World in him, were utterly lost and undone for ever. But our merciful God and Father had quite different Views. He graciously intended to make *Adam*'s Sin, and his being exposed to eternal Death, an Occasion of erecting a new Dispensation, a Dispensation of Grace in the Hands of a Mediator. According to which, *Adam* was assured that he should not immediately die, but should live to have a Posterity by his Wife. So *Adam* understood what the Lord God said, *Ver.* 15. And upon this he gave his Wife a new Name, (*Ver.* 20.) חַוָּה *Life*, or *Life-giving*, for Joy that Mankind were to be propagated from her, when he expected nothing but immediate Death in Consequence of his Transgression.]

[† God graciously intended, after *Adam*'s Transgression, to erect a Dispensation of Grace,

† Take this in, as a Note, P. 66. of *Scripture Doctrine of original Sin*, at *No. Immediately upon the anulling the first Covenant*, &c.

Grace, for the Redemption of Mankind. Which Grace was declared, and, consequently, which Dispensation was established, (*Gen.* iii. 15. *And I will put Enmity*, &c.) before the Sentence of Death was pronounced upon *Adam*, (Ver. 19. *Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return.*) Death therefore, in that Sentence, stands under the new Dispensation, or the Dispensation of Grace, and for that Reason cannot be *Death in* LAW, or eternal Death; but *Death in* DISPENSATION, or Death appointed for wise and good Purposes, and to be continued only so long as God should think fit. And thus also *all die in Adam*; thus *by Man came Death*; thus *by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by*, or in Consequence of, his *Sin*. But it was the high and glorious Purpose of God, that his beloved Son, *the Seed of the Woman*, having, in our Flesh, performed the most perfect and compleat Obedience, should be invested with Dominion and Power to raise all Men from the Dead, and to give eternal Life to all them that tread in the Steps of his Obedience. Thus, *as by Man came Death, by Man came also the Resurrection from the Dead; for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.* 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. Thus, *as by the Offence of one Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation; even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all*

Men

Men unto Justification. For as by one Man's Disobedience the many were made Sinners; so by the Obedience of one shall the many be made Righteous. Rom. v. 18, 19.]

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Origin of SACRIFICES.

Gen. iv. 1—6.

HERE *Cain* and *Abel* perform an Act of religious Devotion, by way of Oblation or Sacrifice. The Question is, whether this kind of Worship was of divine or human Institution. They who are of the latter Opinion alledge, "that we read of no "Command from God for sacrificing; there-"fore Men did it of their own Heads, out "of a grateful Inclination to return unto "God some of his own Blessings, and to "acknowledge him the absolute Proprietor "of all their Enjoyments; though they had "no Directions from him about it." Answer. This seems highly improbable. For how came *Abel* to offer his Sacrifice in *Faith* of God's Acceptance, (*Heb.* xi. 4.) if his Faith had nothing to warrant it but his own Imagination? Human Imagination, or Opinion, never was, or ever can be, either the Ground or Object of *Faith*. It is said, *Gen.* iv. 4. that

that God had respect to, or shewed his Approbation of, both *Abel* and *his Offering*; or in the Apostle's Words, *he obtained Witness, that* himself *was righteous, God testifying of his Gifts*, that they were right, and offered in a right Manner. On the other hand, he censured *Cain* as having presented his Oblation in such a Manner as was not pleasing to God. Which evidently supposes a previous Institution, and a Rule which *Cain* was, or might have been acquainted with. For had there not been such a Rule given, how could he have been blamed for not observing it? It is absurd to say, he transgressed a Rule of his own Imagination and Invention.

THE Institution's not being mentioned in a History so concise argues nothing. Other things are also omited, as religious Assemblies, *Enoch*'s Prophecy, *Noah*'s Preaching, the peopling of the World, or the Increase of *Adam*'s Family. Things well known, or generally supposed, when the Historian wrote, needed not to be mentioned, but might be taken for granted. The only proper and conclusive Argument would be to prove, "that in those early Days they "had no Communication with, or Revelation "from God; and therefore, having no way "of knowing what the Mind of the Lord "was, were under a Necessity of inventing "something of their own." But this is far

"from

from being the Caſe. God, in ſome viſible Form, frequently appeared, and made his Mind known to *Adam*, and to all the ſucceeding Patriarchs, mentioned in the Book of *Geneſis*, for the Space of 2315 Years. Yea, he converſed and reaſoned with and inſtructed *Cain* himſelf. When therefore *Adam*, and all the other Patriarchs, had the fulleſt Opportunity of knowing from God himſelf, what kind of Worſhip was moſt acceptable to him, there was no need of their own Invention; and it is abſurd to ſuppoſe that they followed no other Guide.

IN the Infancy of the Church they wanted Direction, and, without doubt, were directed in every thing relating to Religion eſpecially, ſo far as was agreable to that Diſpenſation. Doubtleſs *Adam* was inſtructed by God to ſacrifice. And it is not improbable that thoſe Beaſts, with the Skins of which *Adam* and *Eve* were clothed, *Gen.* iii. 21. were ſlain as Sacrifices. God certainly inſtructed our firſt Parents in the Faith and Worſhip, which the alteration in their Circumſtances required. Having made a moſt gracious Covenant with them (*Ver.* 15.) it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he alſo ſignified to them, that they ſhould, for a perpetual Ratification and Aſſurance of it to their Faith, offer to him Sacrifices. For by the Blood of Sacrifices Covenants were ratified in after Times. The eating of

of the Tree of Life, was a covenanting Action, (aſſuring Immortality to their continued Obedience) ſuitable to a State of Innocence. But the Mactation of a living Creature, (expreſſing the deadly Nature of Sin, at the ſame time that it aſſured them of eternal Life through a ſacrificed Redeemer) was more ſuitable to a State of Guilt.

Ver. 3. *CAIN brought* יָבִא *of the Fruit of the Ground*, &c. Ver. 4. *And Abel alſo brought of the Firſtlings of the Flock*, &c. " As there were ſome ſolemn Times " of making their devout Acknowledg- " ments to God; ſo, I doubt not, there " was ſome ſet Place, where they aſſembled " for that Purpoſe. For the Hebrew Word " for *brought*, is never uſed in relation to " domeſtic, or private Sacrifices; but al- " ways in relation to thoſe public Sacrifices, " which were brought to the Door of the " Tabernacle of the Congregation. As *Lev.* " iv. 4. *He ſhall bring* וְהֵבִיא *the Bullock to* " *the Door*, &c. Which occurs all along, " eſpecially in the ninth Chapter of that " Book.

" AND therefore, I ſuppoſe, they brought " theſe Sacrifices, here mentioned, to ſome " fixed [public] Place, where the *Shechinah*, " or glorious Preſence of God, appeared. " For as they muſt have ſome ſetled Place, " where they [publicly] performed ſacred

" Offices,

" Offices, it is moſt reaſonable to think
" it had, in thoſe early Days, reſpect to
" the *Shechinah*, or Divine Preſence, as
" well as afterwards under the Moſaic Diſ-
" penſation, [when the Divine Preſence re-
" ſided] in the Tabernacle and Temple.
" And therefore they are ſaid to *appear be-*
" *fore God*, [Exod. xxiii. 17. xxxiv. 24.
" Pſal. xlii. 2, *&c.* or to *preſent themſelves*
" *before the Lord*, Job i. 6." *]

THAT ſome viſible Token of the Preſence of God appeared in their religious Aſſemblies in thoſe earlieſt Days of the Church, and ſpake and converſed with them, as Occaſion required, is evident enough. So the Lord God appeared frequently and familiarly to *Adam*. He held a Conference with *Cain* in ſuch a Manner as plainly ſhews it was no extraordinary thing. And *when the Sons*, or Children, *of God came together to preſent themſelves before the Lord*, the Lord is repreſented as diſcourſing with *Satan* about the Character and Circumſtances of *Job*. Job i. 6—12. ii. 1—7.

WHILE Men were not ſo numerous, but that they might all aſſemble together at one Place, probably the *Shechinah* ſtatedly appeared among them every Sabbath. But when they were ſo numerous, that they could not ordinarily meet together once a Week, and therefore were under a Neceſſity of

* Biſhop *Patrick's* Comment. in loco.

of performing their Worſhip in ſeparate and remote Places; yet the *Shechinah*, or Token of the divine Preſence, might ſtill remain and appear as uſual in that original Place, where *Adam* and his immediate Deſcendents had firſt attended upon Divine Service, and where the Patriarchs, in a right Line deſcended from *Adam*, had their place of Reſidence. There, probably, *Noah* builded his Altar, and there the Lord converſed with him. *Gen.* viii. 20, *&c.* ix. 1—18. There *Rebekah* went to *enquire of the Lord.* Gen. xxv. 22, 23; and ſhe received an Anſwer, probably, from the *Shechinah* or divine Preſence.

FROM all this it ſeems not unlikely, that *Cain* and *Abel*'s Offerings were performed before the whole Aſſembly of *Adam*'s Family, (which then muſt have been conſiderably increaſed,) and that the divine Acceptance of the one, and Rejection of the other, was ſignified by ſome viſible Mark, which appeared and was obſerved by the whole Congregation. It would add very much to *Cain*'s Diſguſt to find himſelf ſo openly diſparaged, and ſunk ſo much in the Favor of God, and the Eſteem of the whole Family, below his younger Brother; over whom, on that ſole account, as he was the Firſt-born, he claimed Pre-eminence, and expected, whatever his Character was, pious or impious, to have been preferred before him.

THE Mark, by which the Lord God testified his Acceptance of *Abel* and his Sacrifice, was, probably, a Stream of Fire issuing from the *Shechinah*, which consumed his Sacrifice. So *Gen.* xv. 17. *A smoking Furnace and burning Lamp*, i. e. the Shechinah, *passed between the Pieces* of the Sacrifice, and consumed them, in Confirmation of the Covenant. And we have many other Examples of this kind in sacred History; as when *Moses* offered the first great Burnt-offering. *Lev.* ix. 24. When *Gideon* offered upon the Rock. *Judg.* vi. 21. When *David* stayed the Plague. 1 *Chron.* xxi. 26. And *Solomon* consecrated the Temple. 2 *Chron.* vii. 13. And when *Elijah* contended with the *Baalites*. 1 *Kings* xviii. 38, *&c.* whence the *Israelites*, *Psal.* xx. 3, wishing all Prosperity to their King, pray that God *would accept* [יְדַשְּׁנֶה *turn into Ashes*] *his Burnt-offering*.

Ver. 6, 7. THE Lord God reproved *Cain* for the Disgust and Indignation he had conceived against his Brother, instructing him in the Terms of divine Acceptance. *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?* Most certainly — For I have an impartial Regard to true Piety, wheresoever I find it. *But if thou dost not well, Sin* (i. e. the Punishment of Sin, as *Ver.* 13, and *Chap.* xix. 15, and several other Places,) *lieth* couching *at the Door*, ready to fall upon thee; *and unto thee*

thee ſhall be his Deſire, and thou ſhalt rule over him. Three things are here ſuggeſted to appeaſe his Reſentment. 1. That the Reaſon of his not being reſpected was not in his Brother, but in himſelf; for if he had done well, he would have been as much reſpected. 2. That if he did ill, he had no Reaſon to expect the divine Favor, but the Reverſe. 3. That this ſhould not alter his civil Right, nor give *Abel* any Authority over him, but he ſhould ſtill retain the Privilege of his Birth-right. Note — This ſhews, that the Privileges of the Birth-right had been previouſly ſettled, either by divine Appointment, or Approbation.

BUT the Rancor of *Cain*'s Mind could not thus be cured. Being *of the Wicked One*, the Murtherer, who had lately attempted to deſtroy all Mankind, he took an Opportunity, and ſlew his Brother. Poſſibly the next Sabbath, *Abel*'s Place being empty in the Aſſembly of *Adam*'s Family, the Lord addreſſed himſelf to *Cain*, charged him with his Crime, and, in Puniſhment of it, baniſhed him from the Country, where *Adam* and his Family reſided; by rendering the Ground barren to him, inſomuch that, notwithſtanding all his Endeavours, it ſhould not yield him any Increaſe. This would neceſſarily oblige him to go ſeek a Subſiſtence in ſome other Place. To this Sentence *Cain* remonſtrates as too ſevere, [and by the

Bye, his familiar, indeed too familiar, Manner of anſwering the *Shechinah*, ſhews, that ſuch Appearances of the divine Preſence were common and cuſtomary] apprehending he ſhould thereby *be hid from the Face of the Lord*, (Ver. 14.) or deprived of his Care and Inſpection, and conſidered by all Mankind as a ſtrolling Brute, expoſed to their Hatred, and in continual Danger of being deſtroyed. But God, who for wiſe and holy Ends often protects and prolongs the Lives even of very wicked Men, intended that *Cain* ſhould live; either that he might have Space to repent, or, being impenitent, might remain a Monument of divine Juſtice. And therefore, before the whole Aſſembly, threatened a worſe Puniſhment than *Cain*'s to the Man, who ſhould, by killing him, defeat the divine Sentence, or fruſtrate his Grace.

AND the Lord ſet a Mark אות *upon Cain*, &c. In the Hebrew it is, *And the Lord ſet*, or exhibited, *a Token to Cain, that no one, who met him, ſhould kill him*; i. e. gave him ſome Pledge or Aſſurance, declared either in Words, as by an Oath, or by ſome outward Token, that his Life ſhould be preſerved. So the Spies gave *Rahab a Token*, אות אמת, that her Life, and the Lives of all her Relations, ſhould be preſerved. *Joſhua* ii. 12—14. This Token to *Rahab* ſeems to have been a ſolemn Oath; for the

ſcarlet

ſcarlet Cord was not a Token to *Rahab*, but to the Spies, to diſtinguiſh her Houſe. *N. B.* I do not find in Scripture, that אות ever ſignifies a Mark, or Brand, impreſſed upon a Man's Body, but always ſome external Aſſurance, or Pledge given by God. *Gen.* ix. 13. xvii. 11. 1 *Sam.* ii. 34. xiv. 10. 2 *King.* xix. 28. *Iſai.* xxxviii. 7, 8. *Jer.* xliv. 29, *&c. &c.*

Ver. 16. AND *Cain*, by Force of the divine Curſe, *went out from the Preſence of the Lord*, i. e. out of the Aſſembly, where the Lord appeared, and was worſhiped, and never injoyed the Bleſſings and Advantages, which attended the Aſſembly, any more.

CHAP. XV.

Of the SHECHINAH, *and Divine* APPEARANCES.

HAVING had Occaſion, in the foregoing Chapter, to mention the *Shechinah*, (a rabinical Word from שכן *to dwell,)* which is uſed to ſignify a glorious Appearance, covered, or attended with a Cloud, denoting the extraordinary Preſence of God, who is neceſſarily every where preſent ; this may be a proper Place to examine the Scripture upon the Point of divine Appearances. They are mentioned in both Parts of the

holy Scripture; ſometimes without taking any Notice of a viſible Glory, and often expreſly mentioning it; as in the following Places. *Gen* xv. 17. *The ſmoking Furnace and Lamp of Fire*, וְלַפִּיד אֵשׁ, are juſtly ſuppoſed to correſpond to the *Cloud and Pillar of Fire*, afterwards mentioned, as repreſenting the divine Preſence. Probably, in a viſible Glory the Lord appeared to *Abraham*, Gen. xvii. 1; and to *Iſaac*, *Chap.* xxvi. 2; and certainly to *Moſes* in the Buſh. *Exod* iii. 2. The *Shechinah* was alſo in the Cloud and Pillar of Fire. *Exod.* xiii. 21. For it was the ſame Cloud that afterward reſted upon the Tabernacle, when it was ſet up, and is called *the Cloud of the Lord.* Exod. xl. 38. Numb. x. 34. For *the Glory of the Lord* was within the Tabernacle upon the Mercy-Seat, as the Cloud was on the outſide of it. *Exod.* xl. 34, 35. And it is there deſcribed, as in *Exod.* xiii. 21. that it appeared as a Cloud upon the Tabernacle by Day, and as a Fire by Night. *Exod.* xl. 38. *Numb.* ix. 15, 16.

THUS it conducted and guarded them in their Journeys, [and then alone was ordinarily ſeen by the whole Congregation] *Exod.* xl. 36. *Numb.* ix. 17, 18, *&c.* [*Iſaiah* alludes to this *Chap.* iv. 5, 6.] And, as thus the Token of the divine Preſence went before them, *the Lord* is ſaid *to go before them*, and *to lead them* by this Cloud. And out of

of this Cloud, or rather from the Glory of the Lord, within the Tabernacle, the Lord ſpake unto *Moſes* what he ſpake and delivered in the Books of *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, and *Numbers*. Numb. vii. 89. *And when Moſes went into the Tabernacle of the Congregation, to ſpeak with him*, [God,] *then he heard the Voice of one ſpeaking unto him from off the Mercy-Seat, that was upon the Ark of the Teſtimony, between the two Cherubims, and he ſpake unto him*; agreably to what God had ſaid, *Exod.* xxv. 22. *I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy-Seat, from between the two Cherubims, which are upon the Ark of the Teſtimony, of all things which I will give thee in Commandment unto the Children of Iſrael.* And there, as upon a Throne, between the Cherubims, the *Glory of the Lord* had its Reſidence in the *holy Place* in *Solomon*'s Temple, after it had taken Poſſeſſion of the Houſe, at the Conſecration of it. 1 *King.* viii. 10, 11. [and there it continued till the Babyloniſh Captivity] Hence God is ſaid *to dwell between the Cherubims.* 1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi. 2. 2 King. xix. 15. Pſalm. lxxx. 1, *&c.* The *Glory of the Lord* appeared to *Iſaiah* in the Temple. *Iſai.* vi. 1. and to *Ezekiel*, with many awful Circumſtances. *Ezek.* i. 28. iii. 23. x. 4. xi. 23. xliii. 2, 4, 5. xliv. 4. *The Glory of the Lord ſhone round about the Shepherds, and the Angel of the Lord*

came upon them, Luke ii. 8, 9. and to the three Disciples at the Transfiguration, *Mat.* xvii. 5. *While he yet spake, behold, a bright Cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a Voice out of the Cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son*, &c. The *Shechinah* appeared to *Saul*, Acts ix. 3. *Suddenly there shined round about him a Light from Heaven*; and to *Peter* in the Prison. *Acts* xii. 7.

THESE are the most remarkable divine Appearances mentioned in Scripture. Now the Question is, who, in such instances, was the Person that appeared and spake? For Example, *Exod.* iii. 14, it is written, *And God said unto Moses*, I AM THAT I AM: *and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel*, I AM *hath sent me unto you.* Who was it that spake to *Moses?* Or what Notion are we to form of that Being, who pronounced those Words, I AM THAT I AM? What makes the Enquiry necessary is this, that in the second Verse it is said, *The* ANGEL OF THE LORD *appeared in a Flame of Fire out of the midst of a Bush.* And yet it is said, concerning the same Person, *Ver.* 4 *When* THE LORD *saw that he turned aside to see,* GOD *called to him out of the midst of the Bush.* Ver. 6. *Moreover he said, I am the* GOD *of thy Father, the* GOD *of Abraham, the* GOD *of Isaac*, &c. And, *Ver.* 14. GOD *said unto Moses*, I AM THAT I AM. *Ver.* 15. GOD *said unto Moses, Thus shalt*

ſhalt thou ſay unto the Children of Iſrael, the LORD GOD *of your Fathers hath ſent me unto you.* Now, moſt certain it is, that it was the ANGEL of the LORD that appeared to *Moſes.* And certain it is, that the *Angel of the Lord*, that appeared to *Moſes* in the Buſh, did, out of the Buſh, pronounce the ſeveral Sentences I have quoted. It was the *Angel of the Lord*, who ſaid, *I am the* GOD *of thy Father*; I AM THAT I AM. But *the Angel of the Lord God*, is not the *Lord God*, whoſe Angel he is. How then can it be ſaid, that the *Lord God* appeared and ſpake to *Moſes?* This is the Difficulty; and the Solution is ready, and very clear.

THE ſolid and inconteſtible Foundation of the Solution is laid by our Lord himſelf, who perfectly underſtood the whole Affair of divine Appearances, in *John* v. 37. *And the Father himſelf, who hath ſent me, hath born Witneſs of me. Ye have neither heard his Voice at any time, nor ſeen his Shape.* John i. 18. *No Man hath ſeen God at any time.* He is *the inviſible God, whom no Man hath ſeen, or can ſee.* It is often ſaid, that the Lord, the moſt high God, *appeared* to the Patriarchs, to *Moſes*, and to the Prophets, the Anceſtors of the *Jews*; but, according to our Lord's Rule, the Appearance, Form, or Shape, which they ſaw, was not the Appearance of the Lord God himſelf, for never, at any time, did they ſee his

Shape.

Shape. Again, it is often ſaid, that the moſt High God *ſpake* to the Patriarchs, to *Moſes*, and the Prophets; but our Lord affirms, that they never heard his Voice at any time. How ſhall we reconcile this ſeeming Inconſiſtency?

THE true Solution, according to the Scriptures, is this. That the Lord God never ſpake or appeared in Perſon, but always by a Proxy, *Nuncius*, or Meſſenger, who repreſented him, and therefore ſpake in his Name and Authority, ſaying, *I am God all-ſufficient*; *I am the God of Abraham*; I AM THAT I AM. Which Words were pronounced by an Angel; but are true, not of the Angel, but of God, whom he repreſented, and upon whoſe Errand he came. So a Herald reads a Proclamation in the King's Name and Words, as if the King himſelf were ſpeaking. Or, to uſe a more common inſtance, ſo a Brief is publiſhed in the King's Name and Language, as if the King himſelf were addreſſing the Congregation where it is read. Thus, GEORGE *by the Grace of God*, &c. *whereas it hath been repreſented to* US, &c. *therefore they have humbly beſought* US *to grant unto them* OUR *Letters Patent*, &c. *unto which their Requeſt* WE *have graciouſly condeſcended*, &c. But much, ſurely, would he be miſtaken, who ſhould imagine, that the Perſon who reads the Proclamation, or the Brief, was his Majeſty KING GEORGE, becauſe

because he useth his Words, and speaks as if the King himself were speaking.

THAT this is a true Representation of the Case, will appear,

I. FROM the Signification of the Word ANGEL, [αγγελος מלאך] which is a Greek Word, and both in that Language, and in the Hebrew, signifies a *Messenger*, or Nuncius, an *Ambassador*; one who acts and speaks, not in his own Name, or Behalf, but in the Name, Person, and Behalf of him that sends him. And thus the Word is frequently rendered in our Translation. And had it always been rendered the *Messenger of the Lord*, instead of *the Angel of the Lord*, the Case would have been very plain. But *Angel*, being a Greek Word, which the English Reader doth not understand, it throws some Obscurity upon such Passages.

II. IT is in Scripture expressly said, that it was an *Angel*, a *Nuncius*, or Messenger of the Lord, who spake, even when the Lord himself is said, or supposed to speak. As *Gen.* xvi. 7. *The Angel* מלאך found Hagar, and, *Ver.* 10, *said unto her, I will multiply thy Seed exceedingly.* Gen. xviii. 1. *The Lord appeared unto Abraham*, Ver. 2. *And he lifted up his Eyes, and lo, three Men*, three Angels in the Shape of Men, *stood by him.* Now one of those Men, or Angels, was a *Nuncius* sent particularly to *Abraham*; for

Ver.

Ver. 10, *he ſaid*, as he was ſiting at Meat, *I will certainly return unto thee; and lo, Sarah ſhall have a Son. And* Sarah heard it, *Ver.* 12, and laughed. *Ver.* 13. *And the Lord*, i. e. the Angel who ſpake in the Lord, *ſaid, wherefore did Sarah laugh?* Ver. 14. *Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return unto thee, and Sarah ſhall have a Son.* Again, *Gen.* xxii. 15. *And the Angel*, or Meſſenger, *of the Lord called unto Abraham out of Heaven*, Ver. 16, *and ſaid, by myſelf have I ſworn, ſaith the Lord, that in bleſſing I will bleſs thee*, &c. Upon which Place St. AUSTIN, quoted by Bp. PATRICK in his Commentary upon the Place, argues in this Manner.

" IN the Begining of this Chapter, *Ver.* " 1, 2, we read, that GOD *tempted* [tried] " *Abraham*, and bad him go, and offer up " his Son *Iſaac*; but, *Ver.* 11, 12, *the An-* " *gel of the Lord called unto him out of* " *Heaven, and ſaid, Lay not thy Hands upon* " *the Lad.* What is the Meaning of this? " Will they ſay, that *God* commanded *Iſaac* " to be ſlain, and that his *Angel* forbad " it? And that *Abraham* obeyed the An- " gel, who bid him ſpare his Son, againſt " God, who ordered him to ſlay him? This " is ridiculous, and not to be endured. The " plain Meaning is, that God ſpake both " times, in the one Caſe, and the other; " but he ſpake by an Angel, who was his

" Miniſter.

" Miniſter. That is the Reaſon, Angels " ſometimes ſpeak as if they were the Lord, " becauſe they ſpake in the Lord's Name. " Juſt as when a public Crier in a Court " pronounces the Sentence of the Judge, " it is not entered in the public Records, " that the Crier pronounced that Sentence, " but the Judge, in whoſe Name and Au- " thority the Crier pronounced it." Thus St. AUSTIN. — In *Exodus* iii. 2. the Angel, *Nuncius*, or Meſſenger of the Lord appeared unto *Moſes*; and ſaid, *I am the God of Abraham*; I AM THAT I AM; ſpeaking not of himſelf, but of the Lord whoſe Meſſenger he was. — *Joſhua* vi. 2. *The Lord ſaid unto Joſhua.* It appears from *Chap.* v. 13, 14. that it was not the Lord who ſpake, but an Angel, under the Title of *the Captain of the Lord's Hoſt.*

FURTHER, it is evident from every Part of the Law of *Moſes*, that it was given and ordained by God, the LORD, the moſt high God; and in his Name it is every where worded and enjoined, *Exod.* xx. 1, 2. *And God ſpake all theſe Words, ſaying, I am the Lord thy God. And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes. And Moſes ſaid unto the Lord.* And yet it appears from repeated Teſtimonies in the New Teſtament, that it was not the Lord, who immediately himſelf ſpake, either to *Moſes*, or to all the People. Thus *Stephen, a Man full of Faith, and of the holy Ghoſt.*

Acts

Acts vii. 35. *This Moses, whom they refused, — did God send to be a Ruler, and a Deliver by the Hands of the Angel,* or Messenger, *who appeared to him in the Bush*; and who is called *the Angel of his*, God's, *Presence.* Isai. lxiii 9. Ver. 28. *This* [Moses] *is he that was in the Church in the Wilderness, with the Angel who spake to him in Mount Sinai.* [Note — it was an Angel, a Messenger, that spake to *Moses* in Mount *Sinai.*] Ver. 53. — *who have received the Law by the Disposition*, in the Constitutions published by the Ministry, *of Angels.* Gal. iii. 19. *Wherefore then serveth the Law of Moses? It was added because of Transgressions, till the Seed should come, to whom the Promise was made*; *and it*, the Law, *was ordained by* the Ministry of *Angels.* Heb. ii. 2. *For if the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast*, meaning the Law given by *Moses.* That Law was spoken to him, and to all the People, by Angels, who spake, not of themselves, but what was communicated to them from God.

III. THE *Jews* very well understood the Nature of those Manifestations. They knew when a miraculous Voice came to them, speaking as God himself would speak, that it was a Messenger from God, who spake in his Name and Stead, *Gen.* xvi. 7, 9. The Angel of the Lord appeared and spake to *Hagar*; yet she knew it was a divine Appearance,

pearance, and that the Angel perſonated the moſt high God. Therefore, *Ver.* 13. *ſhe called the Name of the* LORD, *that ſpake unto her, Thou* GOD *ſeeſt me.* — Gen. xxxii. 24. *There wreſtled a Man with Jacob.* Now *Jacob* knew that Man was a Meſſenger from God; and therefore, *Ver.* 30. *he called the Name of the Place Peniel; for I have ſeen* GOD *Face to Face*, i. e. I have ſeen an evident Manifeſtation from God. — The common Token, that ſuch were divine Manifeſtations, was the Glory which attended the Meſſenger, who pronounced the Words of the Meſſage. And whenever that Glory appeared, the *Jews* knew the Meſſage came from God, whoever it was that brought it. Thus *Luke* ii. 9. *The Angel of the Lord came upon* the Shepherds, *and the Glory of the Lord ſhone round about them.* They knew the Glory they ſaw was not the Glory of the Angel, but a Token of the divine Preſence and Authority, ſignifying that the Meſſage came from the Lord. Therefore they ſay, *Ver.* 15. *Let us now go — and ſee this thing, which the* LORD *hath made known unto us.* And ſo *Saul* knew the Light ſhining from Heaven, was the Glory of the Lord, and an infallible Proof of a divine Manifeſtation. And, 2 *Pet.* i. 17. *He*, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *received from* God the Father, *Honor and Glory, when there came ſuch a Voice unto him from the excellent Glory,*

this

this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Whoever the Messenger was that uttered these Words, the Disciples, that saw the Transfiguration on the Mount, knew that the thing came from God the Father; because *the Voice*, or Words, *came from the excellent Glory*, or the *Shechinah*.

IT is very remarkable, that when our Lord was exalted to universal Dominion, at the Right-Hand of God, as Head of the Church, he also had his ANGEL, *Nuncius*, or Messenger, whom he dispatched upon the Affairs of his Government. *Rev.* i. 1. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which* GOD *gave unto him, to shew unto his Servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he*, Jesus, *sent and signified it by his* ANGEL *unto his Servant John.* And therefore, though the glorious Appearance, *Rev.* i. 13—17. is rightly understood of our Lord, yet it was not he in Person, but his ANGEL, Nuncius, or Messenger, who represented him, and appeared and spake in his Name. And so in other Places of the *Revelation*; where, nevertheless, our Lord may justly be supposed to appear and speak.

WE may here observe, that it hath been commonly supposed, that our Lord, before his Incarnation, was the ANGEL that appeared in the *Shechinah*, and spake to *Adam* and the Patriarchs, to *Moses* and the Prophets, and is called *the Angel of his Presence*, Isai. lxiii. 9.

In

In all their Affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saved them; in his Love and in his Pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the Days of old. To this Purpose they understand, *John* xii. 41. *These things said Esaias, when he saw his Glory and spake of him*, i. e. "saw, at that time, the Glory of *Christ*, "who was then the Medium of Divine "Manifestations, *and spake of him*, and of "his times, or what would happen with "respect to the Reception of the Gospel, "when he should preach it to the Jews." [Dr. *Dodderidge*.] But, *when he saw his Glory*, may be well interpreted, "when he [Esaias] "foresaw his Glory, or the glorious Ma-"nifestations, which God intended to make "of himself to the Jews by his Son." [Dr. *Clarke*.] So *John* viii. 56. *Abraham saw*, foresaw, *my Day, and was glad.* Thus also, as he tabernacled among the Jews in the Cloud of Glory, they judge *he was in the Form of God*, Phil. ii. 9; which Form, or Likeness, he was not greedy of retaining, *but emptied himself of it, and took upon him the Form of a Servant.* But this Form, or Likeness of God, may refer to *the Glory which he had with the Father before the World was*, John xvii. 5. With regard to which he may also be said to be *the Image of God*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. — *the Image of the invisible God*, Col. i. 15. — *the Brightness of his*

Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon, Heb. i. 3. However, I ſhould willingly admit that ſuch Expreſſions refer to the glorious Appearances of the *Shechinah* under the Old Teſtament, were it not for this Objection, that our Lord muſt then be ſuppoſed to publiſh the Law, and to preſide over the Jewiſh Diſpenſation, as well as over the Goſpel; which ſeems to be quite inconſiſtent with *John* i. 17. *The Law was given by Moſes, but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt*. See alſo *Heb.* i. 1, 2. ii. 2. [Here the Apoſtle's Argument proceeds wholly upon the difference of the Perſons, the *Angels*, who publiſhed the Law, and the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who publiſhed the Goſpel; but his Argument hath no Strength at all, if thoſe Perſons are the ſame *. See Mr.

* BUT may we not diſtinguiſh between the λογος as a Proxy of Deity, or as perſonating the glorious Majeſty of God in the *Shechinah*, and in that Capacity, by the Holy Spirit, inſpiring the Prophets, and preſiding over the Angels at the giving of the Law; and the ſame λογος acting and ſpeaking to us, in his incarnate State, in the Capacity of a Prophet? In the former Capacity he may be conſidered in Relation to God, as perſonating God, or as in the Form of God, whoſe Agent he was under *every* Diſpenſation which God erected; and therefore as doing nothing in his own Perſon. For thus, his Perſon would coincide with that of the ſupreme God, and is not to be conſidered as different from him, but as acting in his Name and Authority. In the latter Capacity he may be conſidered in Relation to *us*, and to our Salvation by the Goſpel; for the Accompliſhment

Mr. *Pierce* upon the Text.] *Heb.* iii. 1—3. [Here *Moses*'s Houſe, and *Chriſt*'s Houſe, or Diſpenſation, are clearly diſtinguiſhed.]

ment of which, he ſtooped ſo far as to take upon him our Nature, and, not as perſonating God, but in Quality of a Prophet ſent from God, to publiſh among us in his own Perſon, and Name, the Promiſe of eternal Life.

AND muſt not this bring us under greater Obligations to attend to him; and be ſufficient to diſtinguiſh him as acting in delivering the Law, and preaching the Goſpel? He that was in the Form of God, and repreſented God, when the Law was delivered, and who delivered it by the Miniſtry of Angels and of *Moſes*; that tranſcendently glorious Perſon afterwards became a Man, and in his *own* Perſon, and by his *own* Miniſtry, delivered to us the Goſpel. Doth not this, in a very peculiar Manner, recommend to us the Goſpel, and oblige us to attend to its Doctrines? *Heb.* i. 1, 2. *God, who at ſundry Times, and in divers Manners, ſpake in Time paſt unto the Fathers* BY THE PROPHETS, *hath in theſe laſt Days ſpoken unto us* BY HIS SON, *&c.* God always ſpake by Proxy. And the Apoſtle might ſpeak as he doth, although it be true, that our Lord was the Proxy of Deity under the Old Teſtament Diſpenſation. For the Apoſtle here conſiders, not who was the Proxy of Deity, but by whom he immediately ſpake to the Fathers in the Jewiſh Church, and to us in the Chriſtian Church. And the Oppoſition lieth between, not the Proxies or Repreſentatives of Deity, but between THE PROPHETS in the former Diſpenſation, and THE SON OF GOD in the latter. By his Son, as his Proxy, he ſpake to the Prophets, and by the Prophets he ſpake to the Old Teſtament Fathers. But under the New Teſtament his well beloved Son, who before was indeed in the Form of God, as his Proxy, himſelf became a Prophet, and in the Form of a Man ſpake to us immediately as a Prophet.

BUT ſuppoſing our Lord was the Angel, who appeared and ſpake under the Old Teſtament, yet it muſt be remembered, that he appeared and ſpake only as an *Angel*, or *Nuncius* from God. Which Character he expreſsly ſuſtains, *Mal.* iii. 1.—*and* הָאָדוֹן *the Lord, whom ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly come to his Temple; even* מַלְאַךְ הַבְּרִית *the Meſſenger*, Angel, *of the Covenant*, [not the Sinai, but the Goſpel Covenant,] *whom ye delight in.*

CHAP. XVI.

Of the GLORY OF THE LORD, *as it hath relation to the* SHECHINAH, *or Divine* APPEARANCES.

IT is deſerving of our further Obſervation, that the *Shechinah*, or divine Appearances, as a Token of God's Preſence, and of his Guidance, Encouragement, and Protection of his People, is often mentioned in the old Teſtament under the Character of THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH. As in *Exodus* xvi. 7, 10. xxiv. 16. *Lev.* ix. 6, 23. *Num.* xiv. 10, 21, 22. xvi. 19. xx. 6. *Hebrew* ix. 5.—*the Cherubim of the glory*, i. e. the Glory of Jehovah, dwelling between the Cherubim, over the Mercy-ſeat. St. *Peter* alludes to this, 2 Epiſt. i. 17.—*there came a Voice from the excellent Glory.* This Token of God's Preſence

ſence is otherwiſe called his *Preſence*, Exodus xxxiii. 14. and his *Name*, as that ſignifieth a Mark of Diſtinction or Eminence. *Deut.* xii. 5. 2 *Chron.* vii. 16.

CERTAINLY it was the peculiar Honor and Advantage of the *Iſraelites*, that they had ſuch a public viſible Manifeſtation of the Preſence and Favor of God; [Rom. ix. 4. *Who are Iſraelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the Glory*, or the glorious Manifeſtations of God.] And was well adapted to that Diſpenſation of the Church; eſpecially in the early times of its Inſtitution under *Moſes*, when they could not, by abſtract Reaſoning, be ſo well acquainted with the Nature and Perfections of God; and therefore ſtood in need of ſome extraordinary viſible Token, to ſtrike and affect their Minds with a Senſe of his Preſence, Power, Authority, Favor and Protection.

AND as *the Glory of the Lord* appeared publicly in Favor of the *Iſraelites*, to guard and guide them, when they left the Land of *Egypt*; ſo *the Glory of the Lord* is uſed figuratively to denote, in general, his ſpecial Bleſſing, Favor, Preſence, and Protection, upon any Occaſion. *Iſaiah* lviii. 8. *Is it not to deal thy Bread to the Hungry*, &c. *Then ſhall thy Light*, Proſperity, *break forth as the Morning, and thy Health ſhall ſpring forth ſpeedily: and thy Righteouſneſs*, [Salvation, Saviour] *ſhall go before thee*, THE GLO-

RY OF JEHOVAH *shall be thy Rereward*, shall advance in thy Rear, or behind thee, to guard thee; alluding to the *Shechinah* as it guarded and guided the Children of *Israel*. *Isa.* lx. 1. *Arise, shine; for thy Light*, Happiness, *is come, and* THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH *is risen upon thee.* Thus it is figuratively to denote the divine Favor and Guardianship.

AND in the same Manner it is applied to the Christian Church, as denoting all the Light and Blessings, Grace, and Glory of the Gospel. *Num.* xiv. 21. *But as truly as I live, all the Earth shall be filled with* MY GLORY; speaking of the Gospel, in Contradiction to the Jewish Peculiarity. *Isa.* xxxv. 1, 2. *The Wilderness of the solitary Place shall be glad for them; and the Desert shall rejoice and blossom as the Rose*, &c. *They shall see* THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH, *and the Excellency of our God. Isai.* xl. 3, 4, 5. *The Voice of him that crieth in the Wilderness, prepare ye the Way of the Lord; make straight in the Desert a high way for our God. Every Valley shall be exalted*, &c. *And* THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH *shall be revealed, and all flesh* shall see it together, [יַחְדָּו compleatly, or in it's Perfection.] *for the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Hab.* ii. 14. *For the Earth shall be filled with the Knowledge of the* GLORY OF GOD, *as the Waters cover the Sea.*

ALL

ALL these Passages are to be understood of the Gospel Manifestations of God's Grace, which is his Glory. *Exodus* xxxiii. 18, 19. *And Moses said, I beseech thee, shew me thy* Glory. *And he said, I will make all my* Goodness *pass before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of Jehovah before thee*; namely, as in Chap. xxxiv. 6, 7, *The Lord—proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God merciful, and gracious*, &c. The Goodness and Mercy of the Lord is *the Glory of the Lord.*

AND observe, how the Apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 13—18. alludes to the Glory of the *Shechinah*, with which *Moses* conversed in the Mount; and which impressed such a Splendor upon his Countenance, as obliged him to cover it with a Veil, when he returned to the People; who otherwise could not bear to look upon the excessive Brightness of the Glory of God, reflected from his, *Moses*'s Face. In allusion to this Veil, obscuring the Brightness of *Moses* his Countenance, the Apostle informs us, Ver. 14, 15. that there was an Obscurity, a Veil over his Writings; which Veil, after *Christ* was come, and had taken it away, from the Old Testament, the *Jews*, through unbelief, transferred to their own Hearts, and so remained ignorant of the true Meaning of *Moses* and the Prophets. *But*, Ver. 18. *we all*, [all we Christians, in Opposition to the blinded *Jews*. Ver. 13, 14.] *we all with open*,

unveiled, Face, having *the* GLORY *of the* LORD, *reflected upon us* [from the Face of Jesus, Chap. 4, 6.] *as from a Mirror, are*, in the Dispositions of our Minds, *changed into the same Image* of moral Excellency, *from Glory to Glory*, or in order to the most compleat Glory, *even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* John i. 14. *The Word was made Flesh, and* εσκηνωσεν *dwelt*, tabernacled, *among us*; *and we*, as well as his first Disciples, *beheld the Glory of Jesus Christ, as of the only begotten Son of God, full of Grace and Truth.* The Son of God became a Man subject to like Frailties with us, and lived and conversed freely amongst Men; teaching them fully and plainly the great Truths relating to God's gracious Purposes concerning the Redemption and eternal Salvation of Mankind. And thus God, and his merciful Regards to Men, his Presence in his Church, and his Power, ingaged to keep his Servants, and to bring them to the Possession of eternal Life, is more clearly and illustriously manifested in the Gospel, than his favorable Presence and Protection were by the *Shechinah* in the Temple, or in any other Place, among the *Israelites*.

WE, who under the Gospel Dispensation, are so well acquainted with the Nature and Perfections of God, do not stand in need of any extraordinary visible Token of the Divine Presence. The glorious Truths of the Gospel,

Gospel, revealed by *Jesus Christ*, are our *Shechinah*, shining from him upon our Minds, and filling them with Comfort and Joy, in the assured Hope of his present Care and Blessing, and of the Possession of Glory, Honor and Immortality in the future World. And this is to us a *Shechinah*, infinitely preferable to the visible Appearances in the Church of Old.

CHAP. XVII.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY *from the* CREATION *to the* DELUGE.

Gen. 5th Chapter.

WE are now got as far as the Deluge. And here, according to *Moses*, who here begins his Genealogies, is the proper Place for considering how far we are advanced in the Age, or Chronology, of the World. For in this Chapter he gives the Names and Ages of the Patriarchs from *Adam* to *Noah*, together with the Age of every Father, at the time when every Son was born. And if we add together the Ages of the Fathers, when their several Sons were born, and the Years of *Noah*'s Life at the Time of the Deluge, we shall form Chronological Tables of the best Authority, from the Creation to the Deluge, after this Manner.

Years

Years before the Birth of Christ	Proofs.	Table I.			II.	III.	IV.	V.
							Years.	Yrs.
4004	Gen. v. 3,	Adam lived - -	130	Years, and begat	1	930	800	
	- - - 6,	Seth lived - -	105		130	912	695	84
	- - - 9,	Enos lived - -	90		235	905	605	179
	- - - 12,	Cainan lived - -	70		325	910	535	234
	- - - 15,	Mahalaleel lived -	65		395	895	470	366
	- - - 18,	Jared lived - -	162		460	962	365	
	- - - 21,	Enoch lived - -	65		622	365	243	600
	- - - 25,	Methuselah lived	187		687	969	56	595
	- - - 28,	Lamech lived -	182		874	777		
2348	- 7. 11,	Noah, at the Deluge	600	Years old	1056			
		In all - -	1656	Years from the Creation to the Flood.				

Born in Year of World — Lived in all, Years — Lived with *Adam* — Lived with *Noah*

ACCORDING to Table I. if you add together the Years from the Creation of *Adam* to the Birth of *Methuselah* you will find that *Adam* was 687 Years old when *Methuselah* was born. And, as *Adam* lived in all 930 Years, as in Table III. if you substract 687 from 930, there will remain 243, which is the Year of *Methuselah*'s Life when *Adam* died. Therefore *Methuselah* lived 243 Years with *Adam*.

Adam. In the ſame Way of Computation you may find how long any of the junior Patriarchs lived with *Adam* as in Table IV.

IF to the Year of *Enos*'s Life, when *Cainan* was born, and to the Year of *Lamech*'s Life, when *Noah* was born, you add all the intermediate Years, you will find they are 821, which is the Age of *Enos* when *Noah* was born: but *Enos* lived 905 Years; from which ſubſtract 821, and the remainder is 84. the Number of Years in which old *Enos* and young *Noah* were Cotemporaries. And in the ſame Way you may find how long any of the ſenior, preceding Patriarchs, lived with *Noah*, as in Table V.

So likewiſe if you add together the Years from the Birth of *Methuſelah* to the Flood, you will find them to be 969; which is juſt the Time that *Methuſelah* lived, as in Table III. Hence we may conclude, that *Methuſelah* died juſt before the Flood came; and *Noah* being then 600 Years old, he had lived juſt ſo long with *Methuſelah*.

So again, if you add the Years from the Birth of *Lamech* to the Flood, you will find them to be 782 Years; and whereas *Lamech* lived but 777 Years, it follows, that *Lamech* died five Years before the Flood came. Therefore, all the Patriarchs, except *Noah*, were dead, when *Noah* entered into the Ark.

FROM

FROM the above Account it appears, that *Methuſelah* lived with *Adam* 243 Years, and doubtleſs converſed with him the greateſt Part of that time; and ſo, had Opportunity abundantly ſufficient to receive from *Adam* an Account of what he knew concerning the Creation, and all the Tranſactions and Events contained in the firſt four Chapters of *Geneſis*. And as *Noah* lived 600 Years with *Methuſelah*, he had time ſufficient to learn the ſame Account from him, and may well be ſuppoſed to have carried it with him intire into the Ark. And this may be one Reaſon of the Longevity of the Antediluvians; which muſt be reſolved into the ſole Will of God, and can be accounted for no other Way. They lived ſo long, in order to preſerve, and hand down to Poſterity, religious Knowledge, in that Period of time when it could not be commited to Writing; and when it would have been either totally loſt, or miſerably depraved, had Men lived no longer than 70 or 80 Years. Beſides, their Longevity contributed to the more ſpeedy peopling of the World, and to the bringing of neceſſary Arts, in Tillage, Building and Clothing, to a greater Perfection.

Ver. 1. זֶה סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדֹת אָדָם *This is the Book of the Generations of Adam*, that is to ſay, this is the Pedegree, or the Genealogy of the Deſcendants of *Adam*. So *Mat.* i. 1.

The

The Book of the Generation, is the Genealogy *of Jesus Christ.*

Ver. 3. As we know that *Adam* had both *Cain* and *Abel* before *Seth* was born, so both he, and the other Patriarchs, might have several other Children before those that are named in this List; it being, probably, the Design of *Moses* to set down only those Persons, by whom the Line of *Noah* was drawn from *Seth*, by their true Ancestors, whether they were the eldest of the Family, or not.

Ver. 21.—and begat *Methuselah.* It is the ingenious Conjecture of *Ainsworth*, that מתושלח is a Word compounded of מֵת *he dieth*, and ושלח for ומִשְׁלַח *and an Emission*; as much as to say, *When he dieth, there shall be an Emission*, or Inundation, *of Waters.* Thus *Enoch* may be supposed to have predicted the Deluge in the Name, which he gave his Son *Methuselah*, with this particular Circumstance, that the Deluge should happen in the Year, in which his Son should die; as it certainly did. However we have the Authority of an Apostle, that *Enoch* was a Prophet, and did foresee, and foretel the Deluge to that Generation of Men. *Jude* ver. 14, 15. *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these*, or of such Men as these, *saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints*, or with Myriads of his holy Angels, *to execute Judgment upon all, and to convince all that are*

ungodly

ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly commited, and of all their hard, unreasonable, contumacious, blasphemous *Speeches, which ungodly Sinners have spoken against him.* This, I apprehend, in its primary Intention, is a Prediction of the Deluge, by which God would punish that impious Race, which then inhabited the Earth. But as their Destruction by the Deluge is made an Example of the Vengeance which God will execute upon all impenitently Wicked at the last Day, (2 *Pet.* ii. 5.) so *Enoch*'s Prophecy will suit the Wicked of all Ages, who shall certainly meet with a like Reward of their Deeds.

Ver. 22. אֱלֹהִים ויתהלך חֲנוֹך אֶת *And Enoch walked* diligently *with*, or unto, *God*, and in a Manner agreable and pleasing to God. And so did *Noah*, Chap. vi. 9. In this Construction (with אֶת) הִתְהַלֵּךְ is used but once more, 1 *Sam.* xxv, 15; and there it implies Friendship and Benevolence on the Part of those they conversed with. Therefore the Apostle rightly inserts the Idea of *pleasing God* in the Account he gives of *Enoch*'s Translation, *Heb.* xi. 5, 6; and argues well, that *Enoch*'s pleasing God, was the Effect of his Faith in God, and in a future Reward. *For without Faith it is impossible to please God*, or to walk with, or to come unto him, as *Enoch* did. *For he that cometh unto God, must*, in the very nature of

of the thing, *believe that he is, and that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* [Obſerve — *pleaſing God, coming unto God, and diligently ſeeking him*, are ſynonymous, and all included in the Senſe of *walking with God.*] By Faith *Enoch* lead a very religious and heavenly Life. His Thoughts and Affections were removed from things below, and fixed upon things above. He had a deep Senſe of God and his Perfections, delighted in his Ways, behaved as always in his Sight, and conſtantly ſtudied to pleaſe him, and promote his Glory. Being of a Character ſo excellent, and withal a Perſon of eminent Note, and great Induſtry in oppoſing the growing Wickedneſs of the World, God was pleaſed to reward his Piety, and give the reſt of Mankind a Demonſtration of a future State of Glory, the Inheritance of the holy and virtuous, by tranſlating him alive, without ſeeing Death, into Heaven. It is not improbable, that he was tranſlated in ſome viſible Manner as *Elijah* was afterwards, by a glorious Appearance of the *Shechinah*, from whence ſome heavenly Miniſters might be detached to convey him to a better World. This happened 57 Years after *Adam*'s Death, in the Year of the World 987, and 669 Years before the Deluge.

Ver. 29. *And Lamech called his Son's Name Noah*, [Reſt or Refreſhment, from נוח to reſt, to take Repoſe,] *ſaying, This ſame ſhall comfort*

comfort us concerning our Work, and Toil of our Hands, becauſe of the Ground, which the Lord hath curſed. *Lamech* might give his Son this Name when he found he had an extraordinary Genius for Agriculture, and was likely by his uſeful Inventions, to diminiſh the very great Toil, which had hitherto attended the Tillage of the Earth. See Chap. ix. 20, 21.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the DELUGE.

Gen. Chapters VI. and VII.

GEN. iv. 26.—*then it was begun to call by the Name of the Lord.* Or then, in the Days of *Enos*, the Family of *Seth*, which adhered to God and his Worſhip, began to give themſelves a Denomination expreſſive of their Relation and Regards to God; that is to ſay, to aſſume the Title of *the Sons*, or Children *of God*, as in Chap. vi. 2. in order to diſtinguiſh and ſeparate themſelves from the irreligious Family of *Cain*. Which Title was alſo uſed after the Flood. *Job* i. 6. ii. 1.

BUT (Chap. vi. 1. which is in Connection with Chap. iv. 26, the intermediate Chapter being a genealogical Parentheſis) [*But*

[*But when men began to multiply on the face of the Earth, and Daughters were born unto them*, &c.] The Families of *Seth* and *Cain*, increasing and spreading upon the Earth, at length met and unhappily mixed together. For the Sons of God, by the Instigation of sensual Appetite, without Regard to Reason or Religion, joined themselves in Affinity to *Cain*'s impious Posterity, by marrying their beautiful Women. The Consequence of which was, that they were soon corrupted by the prophane Conversation of their new Relations. The virtuous and godly in marrying both themselves, and Children, should be careful to keep within the Limits of Religion. A Wife is the Foundation of many other Relations, and commonly has a great Influence upon a Man and his Family. But it is a Relation we can chuse for ourselves. And in a Case of so great Importance, we should neither follow the Lust of Covetousness, nor of carnal Desires, but the Rules of Religion, and the Fear of God.

THUS, notwithstanding the divine Manifestations, and the Preaching of *Enoch* and *Noah*, and, probably, of other good Men, the Contagion of Wickedness by Degrees infected the whole Earth, and turned it into a Scene of Impiety, Lewdness, and Injustice. The Issue, of the aforesaid disorderly Marriages, joined the worst Part; and growing up without any Sense of Religion and

Virtue, became wholly ingaged in ſenſual ambitious Purſuits, and joining, or imitating a lewd and impious Race of Giants, which were then in the Earth, they affected to be Men of Renown for great and valorous Exploits, by all Methods of Oppreſſion and Violence, ſubjecting all others to their Wills and Luſts; and every where extinguiſhing a Senſe of God, both by their wicked, *ungodly Deeds*, and *their hard*, contumacious, blaſphemous *Speeches* againſt him, and his holy Laws, (*Jude* 15.) deſpiſing his Goodneſs, and diſdaining the Reſtraints of his Government; till *all the Earth was corrupt before God, and filled with Violence*, Ver. 13. *every Imagination of the Thoughts of their Hearts* being *only evil continually*, Ver. 5; which cut off all hopes of their Amendment, their Minds being wholly intent upon gratifying their Ambition and Luſt.

IN Relation to this ſad Condition of the World, the firſt thing that God declared, probably, from the *Shechinah* in the thin Aſſembly of his Worſhipers, was this, (Ver. 3.) *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man*, &c. This is the Spirit (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.) *by which* our Lord *went and preached* [not in Perſon, but by ſuch Preachers as *Enoch* and *Noah*, 2 Pet. ii. 5.] *unto the Spirits* [which are now, i. e. at the time of the Apoſtle's writing] *in Priſon*, [confined in the State of the Dead, and reſerved in ſafe Cuſ-

tody

tody to the Day of Judgment,] *which sometimes were disobedient in the Days of Noah, while the Ark was in preparing. My Spirit shall not always strive*, or debate, *with Man*, for his Reformation, בְּשַׁגַּם הוּא eo quod profecto ille caro, *seeing that really he is* [nothing but] *flesh*, altogether fleshly, void of all virtuous Principles, and therefore uncapable of being reformed by any Means proper to be applied to a rational Nature. Violence, or Coaction cannot make him good, and he will not attend to any Methods of Persuasion. But where the Reformation of moral Agents cannot be effected, it is fit and reasonable that they should be destroyed; for it is to no Purpose to continue in being a Race of Creatures, who live in direct Opposition to the Perfections of God, and all the wise and good Ends of their Creation; and who therefore might as well never have been made at all; because rendered utterly incapble of honouring God their Maker, of injoying themselves, or being useful to others. It must be inconsistent with the divine Perfections, and all the good and wise Ends of his Government, to make that Life the Object of his providential Care and Liberality, which is thus miserably perverted. On the contrary, such are the Nusance, Corruption, Disorder, and Plague of the Creation; and for that Reason it is agreable, not only to Justice, but to Goodness, and Beneficence that

ſuch ſhould be removed out of the Creation. Hence it is, that God ſpeaking בני אדם על־ דברת after the Manner of Men, is ſaid *to repent, and to be grieved, that* he *had made Man on the Earth*, and was reſolved to deſtroy them. Ver. 6, 7.

COROLLARY. I. Religion and Virtue are the Soul and Support of the Univerſe; which being totally taken away, no Reaſon can be given why any Worlds or Agents ſhould exiſt.

COROLLARY. II. The holy Scriptures, which aſſure us the Wages of Sin is Death, and conſtantly affirm, that the impenitent Workers of Iniquity ſhall be deſtroyed, do give us infallibly a juſt and true Account of things, which demands the whole Attention of our Minds.

IT was determined, becauſe it was fit, that the World ſo vicious ſhould be deſtroyed. And the great God might deſtroy them in what Way he ſhould judge moſt proper, without any Injuſtice on his Part, or on the Part of any Agents which he might employ. He might have deſtroyed them by Fire from Heaven, as *Sodom*, &c. Or by Peſtilence, or by deſtroying Angels, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 12, 27. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 21. Or he might have given a Commiſſion to any one more righteous Nation among them, had there been any ſuch, to deſtroy all the reſt by the Sword, and a Right to enter upon all their Poſſeſſions,

Poſſeſſions, as in the Caſe of the wicked *Canaanites, Deut.* vii. 2. ix. 5. *Lev.* xviii. 26, &c. For the Property of Life, and of all Poſſeſſions, belongs originally and abſolutely to God alone. But he choſe to deſtroy them by a Deluge, or general Inundation.

NOT that the divine Wiſdom intended to extirpate the human Race; the Deſign was not to extirpate, but to reform; and therefore the Lord was graciouſly pleaſed to reſpite the Judgment, the impious World had deſerved, for 120 Years, Ver. 3. This was to ſhew that he had no Pleaſure in their Deſtruction, and to give them Space for Repentance, that their Ruin, if poſſible, might be prevented. Thus *the long-ſuffering of God waited* for the Converſion of the *diſobedient in the Days of Noah, while the Ark was preparing*, 1 Pet. iii. 20. *Noah* was an excellent Perſon, *a juſt Man and perfect*, who, like *Enoch, walked with God*, Ver. 9. Him and his Family God was pleaſed graciouſly to preſerve; that from ſo good a Stock the human Race might be again propagated, and Religion reſtored in the World. With him God purpoſed to *eſtabliſh his Covenant*, or Grant of Bleſſings, Ver. 18. The Grace of God to Mankind, eſpecially the grand Scheme of Redemption, was not to fail, or to be ſuſpended; therefore the Lord directed *Noah* to build a Veſſel in ſhape like a large Cheſt, every Way convenient for floting up-

on the Waters, and for containing all the Creatures, which it was to receive, Verse 20. * [See PIERCE on *Heb.* xi 7.] *Noah* without Delay expressed his humble and entire Faith in the divine Warning; and in Obedience to it, applied himself to the building of the Ark, for the saving of himself and Family, (*Heb.* xi. 7.) *by the which he condemned* the unbelieving and impenitent *World, and became heir of the Righteousness*, [or became intitled to the Salvation] *which is by Faith.*

NOTE—*Noah* is commonly, and I think, justly supposed to have been 120 Years in building the Ark, for that was the time *the long-suffering* of God waited; which time of long-suffering was, *while the Ark was in preparing*, as in 1 Pet. iii. 20. At the Begining of this time, *Noah*'s three Sons, *Shem*, *Ham* and *Japhet*, were not born; for *Noah* was now but 480 Years old, and none of his foresaid Sons were born till he was 500. Chap. v. 32. And therefore that Paragraph, Verse 17, &c. wherein mention is made of *Noah*'s Sons, *Shem*, *Ham* and *Japhet*, and their Wives, must have been spoken after the Ark was finished.

WHEN

		Cubits.		*Feet.*		*Yards.*
* *The Length of the Ark*		300	equal to	450	equal to	150 at least.
The Breadth	——	50		75		25.
The Height	——	30		45		15.

WHEN the Ark was finiſhed, and *Noah* and his Family, the Animals and their Food, ſafe lodged in it, about the 6th of November, in the Year of the World 1656, by the mighty Power of God, *the Fountains of the great Deeps were broken up*, Chap. vii. 11. the Sea overflowed, being prodigiouſly raiſed by the violent Eruption of the ſubterraneous Waters; and Rain came down from the Skie, not in Drops, but in Streams and Spouts, *the Windows of Heaven were opened*; and both together eaſily prevailed over the Earth, and put it out of the Power of the wiſeſt and ſtrongeſt of Men to relieve either themſelves or their Friends.

AND now, how were the careleſs and impenitent Unbelievers ſurprized! Conceive them ſecurely going on in the uſual Way of Life, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in Marriage, *Mat.* xxiv. 37; feaſting and reveling, thinking of nothing but ſenſual Enjoyments, in contempt of every ſerious Admonition. When all on a ſudden the moſt terrible Rains and Inundations threatened their inevitable Deſtruction. How would they be terrified! How would they condemn their own Unbelief, and be forced to own there was a juſt and righteous God, who will execute Vengeance on all the incurable Workers of Iniquity! This is a Specimen of the final Deſtruction of the Ungodly at the laſt Day, which God hath re-

vealed. Let us not harden our Hearts, but believe and prepare.

Chap. vi. 17. *AND behold I, even I*, by my own immediate Operation, *do bring* הַמַּבּוּל *a Flood of Waters upon the Earth, to destroy all Flesh.* The Word מַבּוּל in its primary Sense, doth not include the Idea of a Flood; it comes from נבל which, with Relation to Plants and Animals, originally signifies, to be so exhausted of natural Moisture and Spirits, in which their Life consists, as to be withered, or dead. And it is applied peculiarly to the Deluge, and to nothing but that, under the Notion of Extinction of Life; and so the Phrase הַמַּבּוּל מַיִם may be translated, *an Extinction of Life by Waters.* It is only used in *Gen.* Chapters the 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th; and in *Psal.* xxix. 10. *The Lord siteth* [יָשַׁב sat, or did sit] *upon*, or at, *the Flood*, the Extinction of Life at the Deluge. He then sat upon the Seat of Judgment executing Vengeance upon that wicked Generation; *yea, the Lord siteth King for ever.* AINSWORTH upon *Psal.* xxix. 10.

THIS Dispensation, as all the rest, had relation to the Morals of Mankind; and the evident Design of it was to lessen the Quantity of Vice and Profaneness, and to preserve and advance Religion and Virtue in the Earth, the great End for which the Earth, and Man in it, were created. This End it was well adapted to obtain in the then present State of things, and in all future Generations. In the present

present State of things, it prevented a total Corruption. For if the whole tainted Part had not been cut off, a single Family would soon have been drawn in, or destroyed; and then the whole Globe must have been ruined, and the Schemes and Purposes of God from the Begining of the World, had been defeated. But by reserving a select Family for the Continuation of the human Species, the System of the divine Counsels were preserved intire, and the most proper Method was devised for the Establishment of Religion and Virtue in the new World; as the Family of *Noah* enjoyed much greater Advantages for this End, than the Family of *Adam* at the Begining of things.

NOAH was not, like *Adam*, a new, unexperienced Being, ignorant of every thing, but what he received from Revelation. *Noah*, besides the Benefit of Revelation, and Intercourse with Heaven, had the whole Compass of ancient antediluvian Knowledge from the Creation, in his own Possession. He was a Man of the most eminent Abilities, and the most steady Integrity. *Adam* was easily seduced; but in the midst of an universal Degeneracy, *Noah* firmly adhered to Truth and Religion; and when he was warned of God to prepare the Ark, even 120 Years before the Deluge, or any Appearances of it, so strong was his Faith, or Persuasion of the divine Power, Justice, and Veracity, that he applied himself to the Work,

Work, and compleated it, ſurrounded as he was with the Infidelity and Contempt of all the World. A Man of ſo much Underſtanding, and of ſuch a Spirit, would not fail to communicate all he knew to his Poſterity, nor to inculcate it ſtrongly upon their Hearts.

BUT his Family, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, with their Wives, were Eye-Witneſſes of the dreadful Inundation, and had the moſt affecting Proof of their own Deliverance. They reſided full twelve Months in the Ark, from the Begining of the Deluge, to the End of it. And it is eaſy to conceive how they would be affected in ſuch a moving Situation. They knew this ſhocking Cataſtrophe was not an unfortunate Accident, but occaſioned by the Wickedneſs of the World; therefore all the Terrors of the Deluge muſt give them the moſt ſenſible Perception of the malignant Nature of Wickedneſs, that it is infinitely odious to God, and dreadfully pernicious to Sinners. They muſt be convinced of the uncontrolable Power and Dominion of the moſt High, the Impoſſibility of eſcaping his Vengeance, what a fearful thing it is to fall into his Hands, and how much they were obliged, both in Intereſt and Duty, to reverence and obey him.

ON the other Hand, their Preſervation from ſo terrible a Calamity, in the midſt of the Ruins of all the World beſides, muſt be a very

a very ſtriking Demonſtration of God's Favor and Compaſſion to themſelves; which was naturally adapted to make the deepeſt Impreſſions of Gratitude, Love, and Duty. Eſpecially as they could not but be ſenſible, that ſuch a great and miraculous Deliverance was particularly owing to the eminent Piety of their Father, *Gen.* vii. 1. Thus they would be well prepared and diſpoſed to acknowledge and admit the Excellency of thoſe Principles and Practices which had been, through divine Goodneſs, their Security in the general Deſolation.

AND when they left the Ark, all the diſmal Appearances of the deſolate World, the Ruins of Palaces, Towns, and Cities, the ſadly changed Face of Countries, which they had ſeen in a cultivated, flouriſhing State, the Bones of Men and other Animals, ſtrewed over all the Face of the Earth, would have a natural Tendency to fix upon their Minds the good Impreſſions they had received in the Ark, and render them ſolicitous to inculcate the Principles of Religion upon their Children. Add to all this, that *Noah*, who lived 349 Years after the Flood, and whoſe pious Admonitions would be of much greater Weight and Authority, than when he was an unſucceſsful Preacher of Righteouſneſs to the Antediluvians, was the Inſtructor, and, for ſome time at leaſt, the Governor of the new World.

FROM

FROM all this it will appear, that this was a very juſt and proper Diſpenſation for reforming Mankind, and reſtoring Religion in the Earth; well adapted to that thoughtleſs Age, (when they ſeem not to have attained to any conſiderable Degree of Reaſoning, and therefore not diſpoſed to be wrought upon by Argument) and to the State of things in it, when no regular civil Governments and Laws were formed for the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, and the Reſtraint of Injury and Wrong. And it appears to have had the intended Effect, by ſuppreſſing Violence and Rapine, which never any more univerſally prevailed in the World; and by fixing a Senſe of Religion upon the Minds of Men, which afterwards was indeed perverted, but not quite extinguiſhed. And as it ſtands recorded in ſacred Writ, it is a Warning to the remoteſt Generations. In which View it is refered to 2 *Pet.* ii. 5. *And* [God] *ſpared not the old World, but ſaved Noah, the eighth Perſon, a Preacher of Righteouſneſs, bringing in the Flood upon the World of the Ungodly; and turning the Cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into Aſhes — making them an Example unto thoſe that afterwards ſhould live ungodly.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Of NOAH's *Sacrifice, and the Divine Intercourse on that Occasion.*

Gen. viii. to the End of the ix^th^ Chapter.

NOAH, being restored to the Possession of the Earth, entered upon it with a solemn Act of Divine Worship, according the original Institution, *Gen.* viii. 20. *He builded an Altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean Beast, and of every clean Fowl,* i. e. of such Beasts and Fowls as God had ordained for Sacrifices, *and offered Burnt-Offerings upon the Altar.* Which as they were intended to denote, so they were in *Noah* accompanied with, Faith in the Mercy of God, Thankfulness for the late miraculous Deliverance, and the Dedication of himself, and of all his, to the Honor and Obedience of God, through the promised Redeemer; of whom *Noah* and the Patriarchs, we may well suppose, had a general Knowledge and Expectation. The Acceptableness of this Act of Devotion to God, is signified by his *smelling a sweet Savour,* רֵיחַ הַנִּיחֹחַ Ver. 21. This one may call *Hieroglyphic* Language. *Hieroglyphics,* which by bodily Sensations, or external Representations,

tions, denoted abſtract Notions, or the Sentiments of the Mind, were the Literature of the firſt Ages of the World. So here, the Approbation of the Judgment, or what is pleaſing to the Mind, is ſignified by an Odor or Fragrance grateful to the Smell. Or the Taſte and Reliſh of the Body is transferred to the Taſte and Reliſh of the Mind. This Language is frequently uſed in the Levitical Law. As in *Lev.* i. 9, 13, 17. ii. 2, 9. iii. 5, *&c.* meaning the Acceptableneſs of the Sacrifice or Offering. So the Fragrance of Burnt-Incenſe repreſents the Acceptableneſs of ſincere Prayer, *Pſal.* cxli. 2. *Luke* i. 10. *Rev.* viii. 3, 4.

IT is alſo applied, in the ſame Senſe, to the Offering and Sacrifice of our Lord, *Epheſ.* v. 2. *And walk in Love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us, an Offering and Sacrifice to God for a ſweet ſmelling Savour.* God, who is a Spirit, can reliſh, or be pleaſed with, only that which is morally, or ſpiritually good, the Love and Obedience of the Heart. This is the only Savour that is grateful to him. And therefore, the Sacrifice of our Lord muſt have been an actual Exhibition of Obedience and Love; and the Sacrifices of *Noah*, and of the *Iſraelites*, muſt have been hieroglyphic Repreſentations of, or Inſtructions in, the like moral Diſpoſitions, in order to expreſs, or produce them in the Hearts of the Worſhipers.

ſhipers. *Smelling a ſweet Savour* is plainly hieroglyphic, or figurative Language; and therefore the Sacrifice, or Offering, the Object of ſuch ſmelling, muſt alſo be figurative, repreſenting thoſe good Diſpoſitions, which were, or ought to have been, in the Worſhiper's Heart, and which were in the higheſt and moſt perfect Degree in our Lord. The Sacrifice of a clean Beaſt or Fowl figuratively repreſented what the Worſhiper was, or ought to be and do; and our Lord really was, and perfectly did what the Sacrifice repreſented. Hence *Sacrifice* is applied to beneficent Actions, or Actions morally good, and pleaſing to God, *Pſal.* iv. 5. l. 14, 23. *Phil.* iv. 18. *Heb.* xiii. 15, 16. And in *the Book of Wiſdom* is applied to the whole of a virtuous Life, *as Gold in the Furnace hath he tried them*, [afflicted good Men,] *and received them as a Burnt-Offering.*

THE Smell, or Savour, of a Perſon, or thing, is the Quality of it, good or evil, which occaſions the Approbation or Diſlike of thoſe that paſs a Judgment upon it. *Exod.* v. 21. *You have made* רִיחֵנוּ *our Savour*, that in us which is the Object of *Pharaoh*'s Judgment, *to be abhorred*, to ſtink, *in the Eyes*, the Opinion, *of Pharaoh.* So *Gen.* xxxiv. 30. *Jer.* xlviii. 11. *Moab hath been at Eaſe from his Youth, and he hath ſettled on his Lees, — therefore his Taſte*, טַעְמוֹ his Reliſh, *remaineth in him, and his Scent*, רִיחוֹ his Savour,

vour, his bad Qualities, *is not changed.* 2 Cor. ii. 14, 15, 16. *Now Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest,* displays, *the Savour,* *την οσμην* the excellent Qualities, *of his Knowledge,* the Knowledge of Christ, *by us in every Place. For we are to God,* ευωδιαν, *the sweet smelling Savour of Christ,* [*i. e.* my Ministry is to God a Sacrifice of a sweet smelling Savour, which I offer unto him on the Behalf of *Christ.* See *Rom.* xv. 16.] *both in regard of them that are saved, and also of them that perish.* [For in both Cases the Counsels and Schemes of divine Wisdom are accomplished.] Though *to the one we are,* *οσμη, the Savour of Death unto Death*; *and to the other we are the Savour of Life unto Life.* [*i. e.* to the Minds of the one my Preaching is offensive; and rejecting it, they are advancing towards eternal Death; to the Minds of the other it is grateful and pleasing; and embracing it they are advancing towards Life eternal.] *And who is sufficient for these things* of so great Consequence? Note — *A Savour of Death unto Death,* is a Savour which occasions their advancing towards eternal Death.

UPON the solemn Occasion of *Noah*'s Sacrifice, *the Lord said in his Heart,* i. e. determined, or resolved, that he would *not again curse the Ground any more for Man's Sake*; (Chap. viii. 21.) *for* [כִּי though] *the Imagination*

Imagination of Man's Heart is [ſhould be] *evil from his Youth. From his Youth*, denotes a Corruption of Manners of long Continuance. See *Iſai.* xlvii. 12, 15. *Jer.* iii. 25. *Ezek.* xxiii. 8. See alſo *Job* xxxi. 18. The Lord was alſo pleaſed to repeat to *Noah* and his Sons the ſame Bleſſing upon the Propagation of the human Species, and the ſame Marks of Diſtinction upon our Nature, as he had given *Adam* at his Creation, with an additional Grant of animal Food, (*Chap.* ix. 3, 4.) with this Reſtriction, that they ſhould not *eat the Fleſh* of an Animal *in the Life thereof, the Blood thereof*; or that they ſhould not eat any Fleſh cut off from any Animal while it is alive. At the ſame time God made a Covenant with *Noah*, and with every living Creature, or he made a free and abſolute Grant, or Promiſe to them, that *all Fleſh* ſhould *not any more be cut off with the Waters of a Flood.* Of which more hereafter.

WHAT is here particularly to be obſerved is, the Inſtitution of Magiſtracy, and the Puniſhment of Murder. Ver. 6. *Whoſo ſheds Man's Blood, by Man ſhall his Blood be ſhed.* Ver. 5. *And ſurely your Blood of your Lives will I require, at the Hand of every Beaſt will I require it; and at the Hand of Man, at the Hand of every Man's Brother, will I require the Life of Man.* The Beaſt that killed, or the Man that murdered a

Man, is here commanded to be put to Death *by Man*, i. e. by the Magiſtrate, or Judge. Here Courts of Judicature are authorized, not only for the Puniſhment of Murder, but, by Parity of Reaſon, of any other great Offences, which may affect Life nearly as much as Murder.

THIS ſeems to be the original Inſtitution of Magiſtracy, of which we have not hitherto the leaſt Intimation in the ſacred Hiſtory. On the contrary, it appears from the Caſe of *Cain*, (Gen. iv. 15.) and of *Lamech*, (Gen. iv. 23, 24.) that Murder, the greateſt of Crimes, was left to be puniſhed, as God in his Providence ſhould ſee fit. And if Murder, much more every leſſer inſtance of Injury. It ſeems probable, there were no ſeparate States, nor regular Governments, among the Antediluvians; but that as they ſpread over the Face of the Earth, they removed further from the Place of public Worſhip, loſt a Senſe of God, and lived in a diſorderly Manner, exerciſing Violence and Outrage, as they had Power; and were inſtigated by Luſt, Avarice and Revenge, till the Earth was filled with Violence. Which, I apprehend, could not have been the Caſe, under Laws and Governors, armed with Power to reſtrain Outrage and Injuſtice. For though Governors themſelves, and their Creatures, may be tyrannical and oppreſſive, yet, for their own Security, they will

will not ſuffer their Subjects to break out into Anarchy and licentious Invaſion of Life and Property, becauſe this is open Rebellion againſt Governors. The State of the old World, probably, was like that of the *Iſraelites*, when there was *no King*, no Magiſtrate, among them, *but every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes*, Jud. xxi. 25. Which proves the Poſſibility of ſuch a licentious State, and the ſhocking Diſorders that would attend it.

THE leaving Mankind, in the firſt Ages of the World, in this looſe and diſcretionary State, certainly, was not to lead them into Wickedneſs; but, I conceive, to teach them by Experience the Neceſſity of Laws and Governors, and the Reaſonableneſs of ſubmiting to them. [See Chap. III. §. IV. the Corollary.] For even upon the contrary Suppoſition, that Magiſtracy, in ſome Form or other, was inſtituted from the Begining of the World, yet it is plain, that Mankind in thoſe Ages would not bear the Yoke, but univerſally ſhook it off. Nor could Government, in Fact, be permanently eſtabliſhed, till the Ruin of the World demonſtrated the Neceſſity of it. Therefore, if God did not ſee fit to eſtabliſh Magiſtracy from the Begining, it was becauſe he knew Mankind would not bear the Reſtraints of Government with a rational Conſent and Approbation; (without which Conſent and

Approbation, at leaſt from the Majority, Government could not have been either erected or ſupported) till ſad Experience had taught them the Utility and Importance of it. Thus a particular Species of Injuſtice, and even of Murder, is permited under our preſent Diſpenſation, and, inſtead of being reſtrained, is eſtabliſhed by Law; I mean Perſecution, or the taking away of Life for difference of Sentiments in Religion, which ſubſiſts in moſt Chriſtian Countries. And this, I apprehend, the Wiſdom of God has permited, that Chriſtians at length may be rationally convinced of the monſtrous Iniquity of ſuch Practice, and ſo be generally induced by the Senſe of their own Minds, to approve and chooſe Goodneſs, Love, and mutual Forbearance; which we hope will be the Genius and happy Temper of the next enſuing Diſpenſation. This is the only Method of moral Improvement, namely, when the Mind, by proper Methods, is led to apprehend, and freely imbrace, what is right and fit; and I doubt not, takes Place in the gradual Advances of all, or of any Part of Mankind in Wiſdom, as well as of particular ſingle Perſons. This, with what hath been ſaid before, is the beſt Account I can give of this antediluvian Diſpenſation.

N. B. THE Curſe upon *Canaan*, Ver. 25. is to be underſtood as affecting only the temporal Circumſtances of his Poſterity, *a Servant*

vant of Servants ſhall be be. As in *Deut.* xxviii. 16, 17, *&c. Curſed ſhall be thy Baſket and thy Store.* Nor is it to be conſidered in *Noah* as a malevolent Wiſh, or Imprecation, but ſimply as a Prediction of the future State of *Ham*'s Poſterity; as appears from the whole of *Noah*'s Diſcourſe, which is plainly prophetic.

CHAP. XX.

Of the DISPERSION *at the Tower of* BABEL.

Gen. x.

HERE *Moſes* gives an Account how the Earth was peopled by the ſeveral Families, or Deſcendents of *Noah*'s three Sons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, *Ver.* 32. For the Particulars of this curious Account conſult the Commentators, eſpecially Bp. PATRICK. What I would obſerve is this — That after the Account of the ſeveral Nations deſcended from each of *Noah*'s Sons it is added, as in *Ver.* 5. *By theſe* Deſcendents of *Japhet*, *were the Iſles*, or tranſmarine Countries, *of the Gentiles divided in their* ſeveral *Lands*; *every one after his Tongue*, or Language, *after their Families*, *in their Nations.* The ſame is ſaid *Ver.* 20, 31. of the Poſterity of *Ham* and *Shem.* Which

plainly ſignifies, that they did not all ſpeak the ſame Language; but that the Deſcendents from *Noah*'s Sons, at leaſt in general, if not ſeveral of the particular Nations, had a Language peculiar to themſelves, diſtinct from the reſt, and unintelligible to them. *Noah* and his Poſterity, while they lived together after the Flood, which muſt be for ſome conſiderable time, could have but one and the ſame Language amongſt them. How they came to have different Languages, and how they were ſeperated into ſeveral diſtant Countries, by a very memorable Event, *Moſes* relates in the next Chapter.

WHEN *Noah*'s Family was numerous enough, probably the Lord, by the Mouth of *Noah*, commanded them to ſeparate into different Countries, particularly ſpecified, that the Earth might be better cultivated and governed. Certainly their Diviſion and Removal into *diſtant* Countries (*Gen.* x. 5.) muſt have been a general public Act. And, as *Moſes* ſaith, the Earth was divided into Nations in *Peleg*'s Days, (*Ver.* 25, 32.) it ſeems to imply, that it was done by a divine Command, and not accidentally, as any might chooſe a more convenient Situation. Which is more clearly expreſt, *Deut.* xxxii. 8. where it is ſaid, *when the moſt High divided to the Nations their Inheritance, when he ſeparated the Sons of Adam*, [refering to this Diviſion of the Earth] *he ſet the Bounds*

of

of the People, the adjacent Nations, *according to the Number of the future Children of Israel*, leaving for them a convenient Situation, and Room sufficient. In Prosecution of this Design, the whole Earth, except, perhaps, the elder Patriarchs, and their Attendants, journying from the Mother-colony towards the West, and finding a spacious fruitful Vale in the Land of *Shinar*, there they determined to settle, and build a City and a Tower, *reaching up to Heaven*, or of a very great Height. *Deut.* i. 28. ix. 1. *Psal.* cvii. 25, 26. [An Hyperbole.]

THEIR Intention was to *make* themselves *a Name*, and to prevent their being *scattered abroad upon the Face of the whole Earth*, (Ver. 4.) as God had probably ordered they should. The Scheme was to keep together, and very likely under one Head. *Schultens*, upon *Job* i. 1. derives שֵׁם *a Name*, from the Arabic Verb שמה or שמא to be high, elevated, eminent. And according to him, the primary and proper Notion of שֵׁם is a Mark or Sign, standing out, rising up, or exposed to open View; a standing Mark or Title of Distinction and Eminence. 2 *Sam.* vii 23. — *and to make him a Name*, a Monument of Honor and Eminence. *Chap.* viii. 13. 1 *Kin.* v. 3, 5. — *build an House unto*, or for, *the Name*, Honor, eminent Distinction, *of the Lord*, to denote, that he is the only true God, and King of the *Israelites*.

1 *Kings* viii. 16, 29 1 *Chron.* xvii. 21. — *to make thee a Name*, a Monument, *of Greatneſs and Terribleneſs.* Iſai. xviii. 7. lv. 13. — *it ſhall be to the Lord for a Name*, i. e. *for an everlaſting Sign, that ſhall not be cut off.* Chap. lxiii. 12, 14. So in this Place, *Gen.* xi. 4. — *and let us*, ſay the Heads or Leaders, *make us a Name*, a Monument or Token of Superiority and Eminence, I conceive, to ſignify to all ſucceeding Generations, that they were the true original Governors, to whom all Mankind ought to be in Subjection; leſt other Leaders ſtarting up ſhould carry off Parties, and ſo break the Body, and ſet up ſeparate Governments. It ſeems to have been a Piece of State-Policy, to keep all Mankind together, under the preſent Chiefs and their Succeſſors. And the lofty Tower was probably intended to command every Part of the Town, and keep off any Body of Men, that ſhould attempt to break in upon them.

BUT God, whoſe Wiſdom perfectly foreſaw the miſchievous Effects of ſuch an Attempt, determined to fruſtrate and defeat it. By this Scheme a great Part of the Earth muſt for a long time have been uninhabited, uncultivated, and over-run with Beggary, and wild Beaſts; which, as it was, for a long time, according to ancient Authors, exerciſed the Induſtry and Valor of the primitive Heroes in hunting and ſubduing them.

It

It was thus *Nimrod*, that mighty Hunter, gained his Renown. *Gen.* x. 9. *He was a mighty Hunter before the Lord.* Which is an Hebrew Phrase, to signify the greatest, and most eminent thing of any kind. *Acts* vii. 20. Αστειος τω θεω, *exceeding fair*; 2 Cor. viii. 1. Την χαριν τȣ θεȣ, *the very great Liberality bestowed by the Churches of Macedonia.* Chap. x. 4. Δυνατα τω θεω, *exceeding powerful.* Psalm. lxxx. 10, 11. אַרְזֵי־אֵל the Cedars of God, *the goodly Cedars.*

MOST probably the bad Effects, which this Project would have had upon the Minds, the Morals, and Religion of Mankind, was the chief Reason why God interposed to crush it as soon as it was formed. It manifestly had a direct Tendency to Tyranny, Oppression, and Slavery. Whereas in forming several independent Governments by a small Body of Men, the Ends of Government, and the Security of Liberty and Property, would be much better attended to, and more firmly established; which, in Fact, was generally the Case, if we may judge of the rest, by the Constitution of one of the most eminent, the Kingdom of *Egypt.* Gen. xlvii. 15—27. The *Egyptians* were Masters of their Persons and Properties, till they sold them to *Pharaoh* for Bread. And then their Servitude amounted to no more, than the fifth Part of the Produce of the Country, as an annual Tax payable to the King;

King; which is not near ſo much as we, with all our Engliſh Liberties, pay yearly to the Church and Government.

CORRUPTION may creep into Religion under any Conſtitution, but Tyranny and deſpotic Power is the readieſt and ſureſt Way to deprive Men of the Uſe of Underſtanding and Conſcience; and Vice and Idolatry would have ſpread much faſter, had the whole World, in one Body, been under the abſolute Dominion of vicious, inſolent, idolatrous Monarchs. This would have been a State of things juſt in the oppoſite Extreme to the antediluvian Licentiouſneſs, and would have been nearly as pernicious to Virtue; as it muſt have ſunk Mankind into the baſeſt Servility of Mind, and have ſtockt the Earth with a mean ſpirited Race of Mortals, who durſt not open their own Eyes, make any generous Uſe of their own Faculties, or reliſh the Bounty of Heaven with Pleaſure and Thankfulneſs. Ημισυ γαρ τ'αρετης αποαινυται-δελιον ημαρ, ſaith *Homer* (Odyſs. P. Ver. 322.) — *Whatever Day makes a Man a Slave, takes half his Worth away.* "Thus "I have heard, ſaith *Longinus*, Sect. XLIV. "if what I have heard in this Caſe deſerve "Credit, that the Caſes in which Dwarfs "are kept, not only prevent the future "Growth of thoſe who are incloſed in them, "but alſo diminiſh what Bulk they already "have, by too cloſe Conſtriction of their "Parts.

" Parts. So Slavery, be it never ſo eaſy, " yet is Slavery ſtill; and may deſervedly " be called, the Priſon of the Soul, and the " public Dungeon."

FOR theſe wiſe and beneficent Reaſons, I preſume, the divine Providence interpoſed, and baffled the Project; which in the then Circumſtances of the Projectors, would otherwiſe have been unhappily ſucceſsful, by confounding, and altering their Language in ſuch Manner, as that they could not underſtand one another; and ſo were obliged to deſiſt from the Work they had begun, to ſeparate into many ſmaller Bodies, and to ſeek for Settlements at a Diſtance from each other, as the ſeveral Companies, by the Sameneſs of Speech, were capable of converſing together, and poſſibly in the very Countries which God had marked out for them.

THUS the Contagion of Wickedneſs, for ſome time at leaſt, had Bounds ſet to it; evil Example was confined, and could not ſtretch its Influence beyond the Limits of one Country; nor could wicked Projects be carried on with univerſal Concurrence by many little Colonies, ſeparated by the natural Boundaries of Mountains, Rivers, Deſerts, Seas, and hindered from aſſociating together by a Variety of Languages unintelligible to each other. And further, in this diſperſed State, they would, whenever God pleaſed, be

be made Checks reciprocally upon each other by Invaſions and Wars; which would weaken the Power, and humble the Pride of corrupt and vicious Communities. This Diſpenſation, therefore, was properly calculated to prevent a ſecond univerſal Degeneracy. God therein dealing with Men as rational Agents, and ſuiting his Scheme to their preſent State and Circumſtances. This Diſperſion probably happened about 240 Years after the Flood.

CHAP. XXI.

Of the סוד COUNCIL *of* GOD; *or a Criticiſm upon thoſe Words*, Let us go down, *Gen.* xi. 7.

ALL allow, that the *Lord's coming down to ſee the City, and Tower*, Gen. xi. 5, is to be underſtood ανθρωποπαθως by Way of Accommodation to our Conceptions; and means no more, but that by the Effects, he made it appear, that he obſerved their Motions, and knew their Intentions. This is a very common, and in our preſent embodied State, a very proper Way of repreſenting the Actions of Deity. But when *Jehovah* is repreſented as ſaying, *Go to, let us go down*, Verſe 7, as before, Chap. i. 26, he had ſaid, *Let us make Man*, &c. learned Men

Men have ſuppoſed, that this is to be taken literally, and that God here ſpake to ſome Beings included in his own Nature and Subſtance. Whereas this alſo is a Figure of Speech, which is to be underſtood as the foregoing. Kings tranſact their moſt important Affairs in a ſolemn Council. Hence God is pleaſed to repreſent himſelf as having likewiſe his סוֹד or privy Council. And the Determinations of his Providence are deſcribed, after the Manner of Men, as having been made in that Council, in order to expreſs the Wiſdom, Importance, and Certainty of them. Thus, and for this Purpoſe, *Jehovah* is here, and in *Gen.* i. 26, repreſented as ſpeaking in his Council, *Let us make Man, let us go down, and there confound their Language.*

OF this Council, I apprehend, *Job* ſpeaks, Chap. xxix. 4. — *when the ſecret* Council בְּסוֹד *of God was upon my Tabernacle*; when the auguſt Aſſembly, where God's Counſels and Decrees are paſſed, was held, as it were over my Habitation; and it ſeemed to be his peculiar Care to proſper me and my Family. To this Council the Prophets in Viſion are ſuppoſed to be admited as Standers-by, and Hearers of what is there decreed, and reſolved upon. *Job* xv. 8. הַבְּסוֹד אֱלוֹהַּ תִּשְׁמָע *haſt thou heard*, or been a Hearer, *in the ſecret* Council *of God.* Jer. xxiii. 17, 18. *They*, the falſe Prophets, *ſay ſtill unto them that*

that despise me, the Lord hath said, Ye shall have Peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the Imagination of his own Heart, No Evil shall come unto you. יהוה כי מי עמד בסוד *For who hath stood* [as a Waiter, or Servant, ready to carry God's Messages to his People. So לפני מֶלֶךְ עמד one that stands before the King, is properly the King's Minister. And when *Elisha* saith, (2 *Kings* iii. 14.) *as the Lord liveth before whom I stand*, he means, *whose Minister I am.*] *in the secret Council*, or Assembly, *of Jehovah, and hath seen and heard his Word?* Q. D. Which of you hath been wrapt in Vision, and admited as a Stander-by and Hearer in that great Assembly, where God's Councils are held, and hath brought a Message to his People from thence? No, you go presumptuously with Messages of your own Heads. Verse 21. *I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.* וְאִם עָמְדוּ בְסוֹדִי *But if they had stood in my Council, and had caused my People to hear my Words, then they should have turned them from their evil Way, and from the evil of their Doings.* This Connection of the Prophets with the Council of God may serve to explain *Jonah*'s fleeing *from the Presence of*, or from before, *the Lord*, *Jon.* i. 2. He was sent upon a frightful and dangerous Message; but as he judged, I suppose, that the Council of God

was

was held in no other Land, but that of *Israel*, he hoped to break off his Connection with it, by removing to a remote Country among the Gentiles.

THE Vision of *Micaiah* (1 Kings xxii. 19—24.) will set this Affair in the strongest Light. *And he said, Hear thou the Word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his Throne, and all the Host of Heaven standing by him, on his right Hand and on his left. And the Lord said, who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up, and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one said on this Manner, and another on that Manner. And there came forth a Spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying Spirit in the Mouth of all his Prophets. And he said, thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so.* Here the Lord is shewn in Council, after the Manner of Men, deliberating upon this Affair. Now whether there was any such real Consultation is not necessary for us to enquire. Thus it was represented in all its Circumstances to the Prophet, and stampt upon his Mind in Vision; and it was God who directed him to use it in this Form, as appears plainly from the solemn Introduction, *Hear thou therefore the Word of the Lord.* And though it should only be a parabolical Vision, yet the Drift and Substance of

of it was a divine infallible Truth, namely, that *Ahab*'s Prophets prophesied Lies; and this by the divine Permission, and the Instigation of the wicked Spirit, who was a Lyar from the Begining, and the Father of Lyes.

A PASSAGE similar to this, is that in the Book of *Job*, Chap. i. 6. *Now there was a Day when the Sons of God*, Angels, *came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord*, &c. And again, Chap. ii. 1, &c. Here we see is the same grand Assembly in the Case of *Job*, as in the foregoing Instance of *Ahab*. The same Host of Heaven, called here *the Sons of God*, presenting themselves before Jehovah, as in the Vision of *Micaiah* they are said to stand on his right Hand and on his left. A wicked Spirit appears among them, here called *Satan*, an Adversary, and there *a lying Spirit*; both of them bent on Mischief, and ready to do Hurt, as far as God should give them leave. And the Meaning in both Cases is the same, that God in his wise Providence permited Satan to afflict *Job*, and the lying Spirit to deceive *Ahab*. Only *Micaiah* delivers his Representation as a Prophet, in the Exercise of his Office, and as he received it, that is to say, in a Vision; *I saw the Lord siting on his Throne*, &c. The other, [probably *Job* himself,

himſelf, who was not unacquainted with the *Council* of God, as we have ſeen.] as an Hiſtorian, inter-weaves it with the Hiſtory in the plain, narrative Stile, *There was a Day* &c. The things delivered to us by both theſe ſacred Writers, are in Subſtance the ſame, equally high, and above the Reach of meer human Sight and Knowledge. Note —the Repreſentations of this Kind are founded in the Doctrine of Angels, good and bad, eſpecially the former, as the Inſtruments of Providence. A Point revealed, no doubt, from the Begining, and well underſtood in the earlieſt Ages; witneſs *Jacob*'s Ladder, with *the Angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon it*. *Gen.* xxviii. 12.

ISAIAH alſo in Viſion ſtood in the Council of God, Chap. vi. 1, &c. *Where he ſaw the Lord ſiting upon a Throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the Temple. Above it ſtood the Seraphim*, the angelic Hoſt, &c. The Matter in Conſultation was, Verſe 6. *Whom ſhall I ſend, and who will go* upon the prophetic Errand, *for us*, uſing deliberative Language, and the plural Number, as in the two Texts under Conſideration, *Let us make Man—Let us go down.—Iſaiah* readily offered his Service, Verſe 8. And the Lord delivered to him his Commiſſion and Meſſage, Verſe 9. And he ſaid, *Go and tell this People*, &c.

EZEKIEL in the ſame Manner in Viſion ſtood in the Council of the Lord, Chap. i. 1. *The Heavens were* (i. e. the Temple was) *opened, and I ſaw Viſions of God*; namely, the four living Creatures, or Cherubims, repreſenting the Church of God, attending upon *the Glory of the Lord*, or the Shechinah, Verſe 28, and ſeated upon a Throne, Verſe 26. *And he ſaid unto* Ezekiel, Chap. ii. 3. *Son of Man, I ſend thee to the Children of Iſrael*, &c.

ZECHARIAH too, Chap. i. 7, 8, &c. to the End of the ſixth Chapter, is repreſented as converſing with the Lord in his Council, and with an Angel; though the Scene is not deſcribed ſo diſtinctly as in the other Places.

JOHN alſo *in the Spirit*, i. e. in a Viſion, Rev. i. 10, was preſent in the ſame Council of God, deſcribed in the 4th and 5th Chapters of the *Revelation*. Chap. iv. 1. *A Door was opened in Heaven*, in the Temple; *John* was invited to attend, a Throne was ſet in Heaven, with a majeſtic Perſonage upon it, attended by the Cherubim, or the Church, and the angelic Hoſt. The Matter, which was there very ſolemnly tranſacted, was the future State of the Church to the End of the World.

THIS is the prophetic Way of telling us *how* a thing was done, which really was done, but in a Way to us inviſible. Thus things of the greateſt Importance were repreſented

preſented in the ſtrongeſt Images to the Mind of the Prophet; and in this Way infinite Wiſdom would have them deſcribed and repreſented to us. Nor ſhould we quarrel with our Maker for creating us with ſuch Faculties as are moſt affected and impreſt with Truths, that are conveyed in this Manner; for thoſe Truths make the deepeſt Impreſſion which firſt enter like a Picture into the Imagination, and from thence are ſtampt upon the Memory.

NOTE—*Homer*, previouſly to Events, repreſents the Conſultations of his fictitious Deities in the ſame narrative Way, to denote, that all things are ſubject to an overruling Providence. A Method practiſed long before him, and very probably derived from the truly inſpired.

I SHALL only further obſerve, (1.) That סוד is ſometimes applied to worſhiping Aſſemblies, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 7. cxi. 1. (2.) Sometimes it ſignifies the thing that is tranſacted, commanded, or eſtabliſhed in the Council of God. *Pſal.* xxv. 14. *Prov.* iii. 32. So it may be underſtood, *Amos* iii. 7. *The Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth* סודו *his ſecret Council unto his Servants the Prophets.*

CHAP. XXII.

Of the PATRIARCHAL RELIGION.

WE ſhould now advance to the next divine Diſpenſation, the Calling of *Abraham*, but before we proceed it may be of Uſe to gain the cleareſt Notions we are able of the State of Religion among the Nations after the Deluge.

ABOUT 425 Years after the Deluge, and 185 after the Diſperſion, the Lord *ſaid unto Abraham*, (Gen. xii. 1) *Get thee out of thy Country*, which was *Ur* of the Chaldees, (*Gen.* xi. 28.) *and from thy Kindred, and from thy Father's Houſe, unto a Land that I will ſhew thee.* Compare this with *Joſh.* xxiv. 2. *Joſhua ſaid unto all the People, thus ſaith the Lord God of Iſrael, your Fathers dwelt on the other Side of the Flood*, [in *Meſopotamia* beyond the River *Euphrates*,] *in old time, even Terah, the Father of Abraham, and the Father of Nachor; and they ſerved other Gods*; that is to ſay, they were Idolaters. Some learned Men ſuppoſe, that in the Days of *Reu*, i. e. ſome time before the Year 370. after the Deluge, the *Egyptians* and *Babylonians* began to introduce idolatrous Principles and Practices; which from the fore-quoted Place in *Joſhua*, it is certain, crept

crept into the Family of *Shem*; ſome, and ſome of the principal of his Poſterity, growing vain in their Imaginations, and worſhiping the heavenly Bodies, with a divine, or however with an undue Honor. For this Species of Idolatry ſeems to have been the moſt ancient, as this, and no other, is mentioned in the Book of *Job*. Chap. xxxi. 26, 27, 28. *If I have beheld the Sun when it ſhined; or the Moon walking in brightneſs; and my Heart hath been ſecretly inticed, or my Mouth hath kiſſed my Hand:—this alſo were an Iniquity to be puniſhed by the Judge, for I ſhould have denied the God that is above.*

THE Worſhip of the heavenly Bodies is ſuppoſed to have prevailed among the Nations in the Days of *Moſes*, Deut. iv. 19. xvii. 3. and was continued long after, 2 *Kings* xxi. 3, 5. xxiii. 4. *Jer.* xliv. 17, 19. The Splendor and great Utility of the heavenly Bodies would naturally ſtrike the Minds of Mankind; and there would not then, any more than at any other time, be wanting artful Men, who for their own Advantage, and the Honor of ſuperior Wiſdom, would ſupply Arguments for this Idolatry, as the moſt effectual Mean of ſecuring all the Enjoyments of Life, and inculcate them ſtrongly upon the Minds of the weak and credulous, who have always been the moſt numerous Part of Mankind. *Maimonides*, the learned

Jew, (as quoted by AINSWORTH upon *Gen.* iv. 26.) ſuppoſes the Advocates of this corrupt Worſhip argued after this Manner. "They ſaid—For as much as God hath "created theſe heavenly Bodies, to govern "the World, and ſet them on high, and "imparted Honor unto them, and they are "Miniſters that miniſter before him, it is "meet that Men ſhould praiſe, and glorify, "and give them Honor. For this is the "Will of God, that we magnify and ho-"nor whomſoever he magnifieth and ho-"noreth; even as a King would have them "honored, that ſtand before him; and this "is honoring the King himſelf. When this "thing was come up into their Hearts, "they began to build Temples to heavenly "Bodies, and to praiſe and glorify them "with Words, and to worſhip before them, "that they might, in their miſguided Opi-"nion, obtain Favor of the Creator." Thus you ſee, the firſt Corrupters of Religion had Principles and Reaſons; and perhaps as good as thoſe, who have in like Manner corrupted Chriſtianity, by introducing Idolatry into it.

THIS Corruption was not at firſt univerſal, it ſpread gradually. And therefore, though in *Abraham*'s Days it had made a conſiderable Progreſs, yet even then, and for ſome time after, we meet with ſome eminent Perſons, who were not of *Abraham*'s Family,

Family, that retained a juſt Senſe of God, and the Purity of his Worſhip. For Inſtance, *Melchizedeck*, King of *Salem*, Gen. xiv. 18. who was (Heb. vii. 3.) *without Father*, *without Mother*, *without Deſcent*, αγενεαλογητος, without a Genealogy, *having neither begining of Days, nor end of Life*, recorded in the Hiſtory of the Patriarchs from *Noah* to *Abraham*. For (Verſe 6.) *his Deſcent*, or Genealogy, *was not counted from them*, in the *Abrahamic* Line; but for all that, he was a Perſon of great Eminence in Religion. *Gen.* xiv. 18, &c. " For he was " a Worſhiper of the true God, and a " Perſon of the moſt exemplary Juſtice, " and ſincere Piety, remaining abſolutely " untainted, amidſt the general Corruption " of the Country, in which he lived; and " who for the better promoting of true Re- " ligion, was himſelf a *Prieſt*, as well as a " *King*, and performed the ſacred Offices " of it among his own People. This great " Man came forth to meet, and to congra- " tulate *Abraham*, and provided him a " princely Entertainment for himſelf and his " Men, for their Refreſhment, after they " had ingaged with, and defeated five Kings. " And then, as Prieſt, in which Capacity " he was ſuperior to *Abraham*, (Heb. vii. 7.) " he ſolemnly gave *Abraham* his Bleſſing, " or Wiſh of Happineſs; puting up his " hearty Prayers to the great Creator and

" Governor of the World, to confirm the
" Bleſſing he had pronounced upon him;
" as alſo his humble Praiſes and Thankſgiv-
" ings for the remarkable Mercies of his
" late Victory. And *Abraham*, on the other
" ſide, paid his Acknowledgment to the Al-
" mighty, by preſenting the Tenth of what
" he had taken in the Battle to *Melchizedeck*
" his Prieſt, by whom he had been ſo de-
" voutly bleſſed." PYLE.

NOTE—*Melchizedeck*'s Prieſthood, as it was prior to that of the Jewiſh Prieſts, ſo it was of a diſtinct and ſuperior Order, as the Apoſtle argues, *Heb.* vii. For long after the Inſtitution of the Jewiſh Prieſthood, the Lord, with an Oath declares, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be *a Prieſt for ever, after the Order* [in the Hebrew עַל־ דִּבְרָתִי *ſecundum Rem*, according to the Affair, the Caſe; which as it relateth to a kind or ſort of Prieſthood, is well tranſlated διὰ ταξιν] *of Melchizedeck*, Pſal. cx. 4. Of what Order was *Melchizedeck?* The Apoſtle directs us to underſtand his Names appellatively, or as denoting a Character of moral Excellence; *King of Righteouſneſs*, or a righteous King; and *King of Peace*, or Bleſſing or Happineſs, as he wiſhed well to others, and endeavoured to make them happy, (*Heb.* vii. 2.) which is the higheſt Character of Worth and Excellence any moral Agent can ſuſtain. Thus he was *the Prieſt*, or officiated in the Service

of

of the moſt High God. And thus the Object of his Prieſthood, and conſequently his Prieſthood itſelf, was of an eternal, unchangeable, and univerſal Nature, even Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs, not limited to time or Family. For the Scripture gives no Account of his Birth, Death, or Genealogy. We read of no Predeceſſor or Succeſſor in his Office, as in the Jewiſh Prieſts. [Note —this Argument is adapted (*ad hominem*) to the Jews, who in this Way, or by Deſcent from *Aaron* and *Levi* judged of the Validity of their Prieſts.] But being of an univerſal unchangeable Nature, muſt ſubſiſt as long as there are any moral Agents, that live in obedience to God.

THUS our Lord was made Prieſt after the order of *Melchizedeck*, i. e. *not after the Law of a carnal* poſitive *Commandment*, which confined the Office to a fleſhly, mortal Deſcent, and employed in certain external Rites, and Ceremonies; but *according to* that real *Power*, which is productive *of endleſs*, or eternal *Life*, namely, true Holineſs. *For* Verſe 17, *God declared, thou art a Prieſt for ever, after the Order of the King of Righteouſneſs.* And Chap. i. 8, 9. *Unto the Son he ſaith—Thy Throne, O God, is everlaſting! A Sceptre of Rectitude is the Sceptre of thy Kingdom. Thou haſt loved Righteouſneſs, and hated Iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee* King and Prieſt, *with the*

Oil

Oil of Gladneſs above thy Fellows. And ſtill nearer to the Caſe, Chap. v. 8. *Though he were a Son*, in the higheſt Senſe, before he came into the World, *yet was he diſciplined in Obedience*, as if he had been a Learner, *by the things which he ſuffered.* Verſe 9. *And being made perfect*, having exhibited a perfect Character of all moral Excellence, *he became the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him.* And it was on this Account, Verſe 10, that he was *called* and conſtituted *of God an high Prieſt after the Order of the King of Righteouſneſs. For*, as the Apoſtle concludes his Diſſertation upon this very Subject, (*Heb.* vii. 26.) *Such an high Prieſt became us*, who is holy, *harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from Sinners, and made higher than the Heavens*, or the Angels, in order to raiſe us to their Happineſs.

MELCHIZEDECK was eminently religious. And probably *Abraham*'s Neighbours and Confederates, *Mamre*, *Eſhcol* and *Amer*, Gen. xiv. 13. were good and pious. For though they were *Amorites*, it was about 400 Years after this, before the Sins of that Nation were full.

THE Book of *Job* gives the cleareſt and moſt extenſive View of the patriarchal Religion. The Reality of his Perſon, the Eminence of his Character, his Fortitude and Patience in very great Afflictions, his preceding and ſubſequent Felicity, are allowed by all; and it is generally ſuppoſed that he lived a Generation or two before *Moſes*; and, probably,

probably, the Book was wrote by himſelf, in the time of his reſtored Proſperity.

SOME learned Men indeed, as *Grotius*, *Codurcus*, *Le Clerc*, and others, pretend that this noble Performance was written about a thouſand Years after the time in which *Job* lived; namely, in or near the time of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; alledging, "that frequent Chaldaiſms, as the plural יוֹם for יָם "are to be found in it; that ſome Paſſages "are taken from the *Pſalms*, *Proverbs*, and "*Eccleſiaſtes*; that there are more than a "hundred Words, partly *Syriac*, partly *Arabic*, which are not to be found in the "other Parts of Scripture; which are all "Signs that the Author lived in the later "times, when many Words, borrowed from "the Idiom of the neighbouring Nations, "were admited into the Hebrew."

IT is one Mark of the Simplicity of very ancient times, that in the Inventory of *Job*'s Eſtate, no Mention is made of Money, but only of Oxen, Sheep, Camels, Aſſes, Servants. And *Grotius* himſelf owns, "That "there is no Mention in the Book of *Job* "of any Law, or religious Rites, but ſuch "as were traditional, [*Chap.* viii. 8, 9, 10. "xv. 18, 19. xxii. 15, 16.] nor of any "Points of Hiſtory, nor of any idolatrous "Practices, but ſuch as were of the more "ancient times, before the Moſaic Inſtitution. [*Chap.* xx. 4, 5, meaning *Adam*. "xxii. 15, 16.] And that the Length of

"*Job*'s

" *Job*'s Life, extended to about 200 Years, " agrees alſo with the ſame times; that the " Country where it happened was *Arabia*, " as appears, not only from the Names of " Places, *Uz*, *Teman*, *Shuhah*, but from the " many *Arabic* Words here uſed." And might not *Grotius* from hence have fairly and ſtrongly concluded, that the Writer was an *Arabian?* No. He ſaith, " it was writ- " ten by ſome Hebrew." Why ſo? Becauſe *Arabia*, *Job*'s Country, is called *the Eaſt*. Chap. i. 3. And it was uſual with the Hebrews to call *Arabia* the Eaſt, as he has ſhewn upon *Mat.* ii. 1. But the Arabian *Magi* themſelves, in the next Verſe, call their own Country *Arabia*, the Eaſt; and ſo might *Job*, or any other Arabian in *Job*'s time. The Eaſt-Country was the common Name of *Arabia*, as the Weſt-Country is the general Name of one Part of *England*. Many Words, uſed in this Book, are not to be found in other Parts of Scripture. The Reaſon is, becauſe it is ſo ancient, that ſome Words therein are grown obſolete, and their true Meaning is hard to be recovered. It is therefore the moſt difficult, becauſe it is the moſt ancient Book in the ſacred Code. Had it been wrote in later times, the Language would have been more intelligible.

IT is no Argument that the Author of this Book took ſimilar or ſame Expreſſions from *David*'s or *Solomon*'s Writings, [Compare *Pſalm.* cvii. 40. with *Job* xii. 21, 24.] becauſe

becauſe it is more probable, that *David* and *Solomon* borrowed ſuch Expreſſions from the Book of *Job*. [Compare *Job* xxxix. 33. *Mat*. xxiv. 28.] *Schultens*, a very good Judge, affirms, that the Style of the Book hath all the Marks of a moſt venerable and remote Antiquity; and that the Chaldaiſms, as ſome call them, particularly the Plurals in ין are true Hebrew and Arabic, and that of the moſt ancient Stamp. *Job* is honorably mentioned with *Noah* and *Daniel*, Ezek. xiv. 12—20. Hence it follows, (1.) That *Job* is no fictitious Character, but a real Perſon, as truly as *Noah* and *Daniel*. (2.) That he was, as well as they, a Perſon of diſtinguiſhed Piety. (3.) That he was well known and celebrated as ſuch amongſt the *Jews*, to whom *Ezekiel*'s Prophecy was directed. (4.) That he muſt either have been of the Seed of *Iſrael*, or, like *Noah*, of the patriarchal times; otherwiſe the *Jews*, ſeparated from, and raiſed in ſpiritual Privileges above all other Nations, would never have propoſed to themſelves one of their Gentile, uncircumciſed Neighbours, of whom they had a mean Opinion, as an Example of the greateſt Piety, nor have admited his Story into their Canon. If he was of the patriarchal times (for an Iſraelite he could not be) he muſt have been at the Diſtance of about a Thouſand Years before *Ezekiel*. Meer oral Tradition of ſuch a Perſon could not have ſubſiſted

ſifted through ſo long a Space of time, without appearing, at laſt, as uncertain or fabulous. There muſt, therefore, have been ſome Hiſtory of *Job* in *Ezekiel*'s time; no other Hiſtory, but that which we now have, and which has always had a Place in the Hebrew Code, was ever heard of, or pretended. Therefore this muſt be the Hiſtory of *Job* in *Ezekiel*'s time; and which muſt have been generally known, and read as true and authentic, and, conſequently, muſt have been wrote near to the Age in which the Fact was tranſacted, and not in after times, when its Credibility would have been greatly diminiſhed.

In ſhort, ſhould I aver, that this is the oldeſt and nobleſt Book in the World, I ſhould have the Vote of all the beſt Critics; and the very Frame and Caſt of the Book itſelf would juſtify the Aſſertion.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of Job's *Caſe and Character.*

THE Book of *Job* is the Hiſtory of a real Sufferer, *Job*; and the Subſtance of a real Converſation with his Friends, about his Sufferings, in a poetic Dreſs. *Job* was a Prince of the greateſt Eminence, Wealth, and Authority among the People of

of the Eaſt; whoſe Piety and Integrity equalled his temporal Grandure, *Chap.* i. 1, 2, 3; of the ſtricteſt Religion and Virtue; the Patron of the injured Poor and Fatherleſs; the Scourge of Injuſtice and Oppreſſion; highly honored and eſteemed by the good, revered and dreaded by the vicious and profane. *Chapters* xxix. and xxxi. This Man ſo good, and ſo glorious, was, by the divine Permiſſion, and Malice of the Devil, at once reduced to the moſt indigent and deplorable Circumſtances, ſtript of all his Subſtance, bereaved of all his Children, Seven Sons and Three Daughters, and, ſoon after, ſeized with a moſt noiſom and painful Diſeaſe, from Head to Foot; which rendered him the moſt ſhocking Spectacle of Sorrow and Wretchedneſs. The Country, ſo far as the Fame of his Grandure and Religion had ſpread, would be full of his Story and of Aſtoniſhment. The religious would be inclined to conclude, that ſuch ſignal and ſudden Calamities, could be no other than the Judgments of God upon a Man, who, under the Maſk of Religion, had concealed a wicked and profligate Life. The wicked and profane would triumph in his Sufferings, as a Juſtification of their own bad Principles and Practices, and as a Demonſtration of the Inſignificancy of the ſtricteſt Regards to God and his Worſhip. *Chap.* xvi. 9, 10, 11. xvii. 6. His Relations and Acquaintance,

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ſtruck with Horror and Averſion to ſuch a deſpicable, vile, abandoned Creature, would not own him. His Wife and Family treated him with Unkindneſs and Neglect, *Chap.* xix. 13—19. The baſeſt of Men broke in upon him like a Legion of Fiends, made his Afflictions their Merriment, treated him with all Manner of Indignities, Calumnies, and Slander; and even *ſpared not to ſpit in his Face*, Chap. xxx. 1—15. Scarce ever were the Feelings of the human Heart oppreſſed with ſuch a complicated Load of Grief; ſcarce ever was a Profeſſion of Religion ſo much expoſed to Cenſure, Reproach, and Inſult.

And how did the good Man bear all this? With heroic Bravery, that is to ſay, with a Patience as ſteady and uniform as human Infirmity will admit. [*Patience is ſincere Adherence to God and Duty, under all Difficulties and Diſcouragements*; and the Ground of Patience is *Faith*, or *a full Perſuaſion of the Power, Goodneſs, and Wiſdom of God.*] When his Calamities, the Loſs of his numerous Herds, Flocks and Servants, and of his deareſt Children, partly by the Hands of Violence, partly by Lightening and Storm; when theſe Calamities ruſhed upon him like an Inundation, though he felt all the Pangs of the moſt grievous Affliction, and uſed ſuch Expreſſions of his doleful Caſe, as were cuſtomary at that time; [*Chap.* i. 20.—*rent his*

his Mantle, shaved his Head, fell down upon the Ground, Chap. ii. 8, 12. *Sprinkled Dust upon their Heads*; See 1 *Sam.* iv. 12. 2 *Sam.* xiii. 19. *Josh.* vii. 6. *Ezek.* xxvii. 30. *Iliad* xviii. 22.] yet he behaved like a wise and good Man, prostrating himself upon the Ground in a humble Sense of his own Unworthiness, and a patient Submission to the Will of God, composing his Mind into a calm and quiet Adoration of his supreme Dominion and unblemished Justice, *Chap.* i. 20, 21. "I came," saith he, "by the "Divine Will into the World, a naked "helpless Creature; and by the same Will "I must shortly return to the Dust. I am "bereaved of my most valuable and dearest "temporal Enjoyments, but by the Per-"mission of a wise and righteous God. His "own he gave; his own, for wise Ends, he "hath taken away. I acquiesce in his so-"vereign Disposals, and adore the incon-"testible Purity and Righteousness of his "Dealings with me." O brave Soul! O happy Man, who could keep up good Thoughts of God, and Communion with him under the sharpest Strokes of his Rod!

When covered over with painful Boyls, in the Place and Posture of an humble Penitent, he was probably pouring out his Submissions and Supplications to Heaven, his Wife spared not to reproach him with his preposterous Godliness. *Chap.* ii. 9, 10. *Dost*

thou ſtill retain thine Integrity by bleſſing God, and dying? Q. D. "Will you bleſs "God when he is deſtroying you? Will "you call upon him, and believe he is "good, when he hath ruined your Eſtate "and Family, and, in ſpite of all your "humble Submiſſions, is ſlaughtering your "Body, and within a Stroke of your Life?" But *Job* returned no other than a mild Anſwer, as became a good Man, and affectionate Huſband. "You ſpeak not like your-"ſelf," ſaid he, "but as a Woman void of "Underſtanding. Is it fit God ſhould al-"ways ſmile upon ſinful Creatures? Shall "we ſay, he is not juſt when he brings us "into Afflictions? We receive what pleaſ-"eth us with Joy, and it is but reaſonable "that we receive what is ungrateful with a "calm Reſignation; ſeeing both come from "the ſame wiſe and ſovereign Diſpoſer of "all things." Still *Job* is patient, and, under every Trial, adheres to God and Duty.

The Compoſure and Steadineſs of his Mind was more ſeverely tried by his three Friends, *Eliphaz*, *Bildad*, and *Zophar*, Men of the ſame Rank, and of like good Senſe and Piety; who dwelt in ſome of the adjacent Provinces, and in whoſe Familiarity he had, probably, been long happy. The Report of his Sufferings, of the Ruin of his Character, and the Wound thereby given to Religion, having reached their Ears, they agreed,

agreed, with a ſincere Intention, to join their Endeavours in adminiſtering the only Advice and Conſolation, they apprehended, his Caſe would admit. For, as the Suſpicions were very ſtrong, and his Calamities carried evident Marks of divine Inflictions, they had the ſame Opinion of them with the reſt of the World, and believed they were the juſt Judgments of God upon a Hypocrite; and therefore were determined, by all Means, to fix a Senſe of Guilt upon his Conſcience, in order to bring him to true Repentance, and ſo to a ſolid Intereſt in the divine Favor and Bleſſing. But when they were come, and had found their late flouriſhing, honorable, and highly eſteemed Friend, reduced to the moſt lothſome and miſerable Wretch, that was ſiting in the Aſhes, they were aſtoniſhed beyond Expreſſion; and being confirmed in their evil Suſpicions, though they ſat with him on the Ground, yet, as their bad Opinion of him would not allow them to ſay any thing comfortable and incouraging, they choſe to ſay nothing at all for ſeven or ſeveral Days together, *Chap.* ii. 12. The Sight of his old Acquaintance, and their unfavorable Manner of Condolence, raiſed his Paſſion of Sorrow to ſuch a Pitch, that it burſt out into a Torrent of the moſt bitter Reflections upon his Birth-day; wiſhing it were ſtruck out of the Number of

Days, or rendered as odious and deteſtable to all others, as it was to himſelf.

UPON this, *Eliphaz*, probably the oldeſt and moſt honorable of the three, addreſſed himſelf to *Job*, and, in the ſofteſt Manner, openeth their Senſe of his Caſe; namely, that, in their Apprehenſions, he had been very defective in the Character to which he had pretended; that great Sufferings muſt be the Puniſhment of great Sins; and that they could recommend to him no other Method of regaining his former Peace and Proſperity, but Repentance, and ſeeking unto God for Pardon. In ſhort, they ſoon declared plainly, that they judged he had been a very wicked Man, and that his Calamities were an evident Indication of the Wrath of God againſt him as ſuch. This *Job* flatly denied; and this is the Matter in diſpute between him and his Friends. Which Diſpute, as is uſual in ſuch Caſes, was carried on with a growing Eagerneſs and Heat on both Sides; and on both Sides might occaſion ſome Expreſſions too ſtrong and exagerating.

HIS Friends argue from Experience, and what they had obſerved to be the uſual Method of divine Providence. They had ſeen many Inſtances of wicked Men, or of thoſe who had paſſed for ſuch, remarkably puniſhed; and hence they formed to themſelves a general

a general Maxim, that where they ſaw great Wretchedneſs and Sufferings, there muſt be Crimes proportionably great. To this *Job* alſo oppoſes Obſervation and Experience; and ſhews, that the Rule of judging, they had formed to themſelves, was by no Means right, or without Exception. That good Men were ſometimes afflicted, and the wicked flouriſhing and happy; and that, for the moſt Part, things were dealt out here promiſcuouſly. That this was more eſpecially obſervable in times of War and Peſtilence, and ſuch other ſweeping Calamities, where the good and bad fall undiſtinguiſhed. *Chap.* ix. 22, 23. To all which he adds, that it was a very heavy Aggravation of his Miſery, to hear his Friends, ſo well acquainted with him, Men of Senſe and Diſtinction, charge him with Crimes which his Soul abhorred, and of which God, who had afflicted him, knew that he was innocent. To him he would appeal, and ſtill adhere in Life and Death, though he did not know why he had dealt ſo ſeverely with him. And ſo ſtrongly did *Job* aſſert the Integrity of his Religion and Virtue, (*Chapters* xxix. and xxxi.) that his Friends, though perhaps not convinced, were however put to Silence. (*Chap.* xxxii. 1.)

Upon this, *Elihu*, a young Man of good Underſtanding, who, probably, with others, was a Byſtander and Witneſs to this Debate,

(*Chap.* xxxii. 15.) acts as Moderator between *Job* and his Friends, and cenſures both very freely and judiciouſly; only he charges *Job* with no Crime as the Cauſe of his Afflictions, but thinks he had not managed the Diſpute about them with ſo much Calmneſs and Submiſſion to God as became his Piety.

Finally, the Lord anſwered *Job* out of the *Whirlwind*, (the Septuagint add, *and Clouds)* a Token of the divine Preſence. So *Ezekiel*'s Viſions were introduced, *Ezek.* i. 4. *And I looked, and behold, a Whirlwind came out of the North, a great Cloud and a Fire.* Perhaps, *Elihu* ſaw this Token of the divine Preſence approaching. *Job* xxxvii. 22, *&c. Fair Weather* [זהב *Gold*, Splendor, the Splendor of the divine Preſence. See *Schultens* in loc.] *cometh* [יָאֵתֶה will come, or is coming, ſpeedily,] *out of the North*; *with God is terrible Majeſty.* The Speech of Deity, (*Chap.* xxxviii. xxxix. xl. xli.) moſt inimitably grand and ſublime, repreſenting the vaſt Extent of the divine Wiſdom and Power in the Works of Creation, which *Job* and his Friends had well ſtudied, and from which they knew how to deduce proper Concluſions, ſhews, 1. That all things in the Skie, the Air, the Earth, the Sea, are produced and diſpoſed in a Manner far beyond the Reach of human Wiſdom and Power. Conſequently, 2. That Man is not qualified

qualified to dispose of himself, or of any other Being. That God may have wise and good Reasons for his Ways and Works, and Dealings with us, which we cannot comprehend; and therefore it is our Duty, in all Cases, to acquiesce and submit. 3. That he who has given various Natures and Instincts to Animals, can give Being and Life, when and where, and in what Degree he pleases. 4. That he is present to, cares for, sustains and directs every living thing; and therefore that we ought to trust in him for a happy Issue of any of his Inflictions. 5. That the wisest of Men should be very cautious and modest in censuring the Ways of Providence.

Chap. xlii. Job humbleth himself before God, sacrificeth for his Friends; his Family is restored, his Estate is doubled.

RULES to be observed in expounding the Book of *Job*.

I. He that would rightly explain this Book must, as much as he can, imagine himself in the same afflicted Condition.

II. Every daring Thought, or ardent Expression, which occurs in the Speeches of this afflicted, and exasperated Man, is not to be vindicated; yet, as he was a great Man, and a Prince, he may be allowed to use bold and animated Language.

III. We ſhall certainly judge amiſs, if we think every thing wrong, which will not ſuit with the Politeneſs of our Manners. Allowance muſt be made for the Simplicity of thoſe times.

IV. In judging of *Job*'s Character, we muſt ſet the noble Strains of his Piety againſt the unguarded Expreſſions of his Sorrow.

V. It is not his Innocence, ſtrictly ſpeaking, which *Job* inſiſts on, but his Sincerity. *Chap.* vii. 20, 21.

VI. Except their hard Cenſures of *Job*, his Friends ſpeak well and religiouſly.

VII. His Friends incouraged *Job* to hope for a temporal Deliverance; *(Chap.* v. 18, *&c.* vii. 20, *&c.* xi. 14. *&c.)* but *Job* deſpaired of it, and expected his bodily Diſorder would terminate in Death, *(Chap.* vi. 11, 12. vii. 6, 7, 8, 21. xvii. 1, 13, 14, 15. xix. 10. Though, in the increaſing Heat of the Diſpute, they ſeem to drop this Sentiment, in their following Anſwers, as if they ſuppoſed *Job* to be too bad to hope for any Favor from God.) He hoped, however, that his Character would be cleared in the Day of Judgment; though he was greatly concerned that it could not be cleared before. That after a Life lead in the moſt conſpicuous Virtues, his Reputation, in the Opinion of his neareſt Friends, would ſet under a black Cloud; and, with regard to the ignorant and profane, leave an odious Reproach

proach upon a Profession of Religion. This touched him to the Heart; exasperated all his Sufferings, and made him often wish, that God would bring him to his Trial here, in this Life; that his Integrity might be vindicated, and all, Friends and Enemies, might understand the true End or Design of God in his Sufferings; and the Honor of Religion might be secured. *Chap.* x. ii. 2, 3. *Is it good unto thee, that thou shouldst — shine upon the Counsel of the Wicked?* who from my Case take Occasion to reproach and vilify true Religion, and to confirm themselves in their wicked and idolatrous Practices. *Chap.* viii. 20, 21, 22. xi. 17—20. xvi. 9—11.

VIII. HE could only affirm his Integrity, but could give no special satisfactory Reason, why God should afflict him in a Manner so very extraordinary, and beyond all preceding Cases, that were ever known in the World. This very much perplext and embarrast his Mind, and laid him under a great Disadvantage in the Dispute. And, for one thing, it is on this Account that he is so earnest to come to a Conference with God, to know his Mind and Meaning. *Chap.* x. 2. *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.* See Bp. PATRICK's Paraphrase upon the Place, from *Ver.* 2d to the 8th. He knew very well he could not absolutely justify himself before God, *Chap.* ix. 2, 3, *&c. Ver.* 17. *For he breaks*

breaks me with a Tempest, he multiplieth my Wounds without Cause, or without any apparent Reason. *Chap.* vii. 12, 20. The whole xxiii[d] Chapter relates to this Point; in which he wishes he could come to the dwelling Place of God, *(Ver.* 3.) and spread his Case before him, and argue about it at large, *(Ver.* 4.) for he had turned his Thoughts every way, and could make nothing of it, *(Ver.* 8, 9.) only he was sure God knew he was an upright Man, *(Ver.* 10, 11, 12.) *But*, (Ver 13.) *he is in one*, באחד or in Unity, supreme above all others, absolutely entire, keeping his Mind and Designs to himself, *and none can turn*, or oblige him to alter his Resolution. All that we can say is, that he doth whatever is agreable to his own Wisdom. For *(Ver.* 14.) what he hath resolved to inflict upon me he hath accomplished; and many such things he doth, of which he will not give us the Reason. To the same Purpose understand *Chap.* xxvii. 2, 3, 4, 14. and *Chap.* xxviii. 2. *He hath taken away my Judgment*, i. e. the Rule by which I might judge of the Reason of my Afflictions. This Point, in Reference to God, *Elihu* tells him *(Chap.* xxxiii. 13.) he had urged to no Purpose, *seeing he gives no Account of his Matters*, or will not reveal to us the Secrets of his Providence.

IX. In such a noble Performance, if any thing seems to be said not in Consistency, or

or not in Character, we ſhould rather ſuſpect our own Judgment, than the good Senſe of the Author. The Fault is not in the Book, but in our Underſtanding.

X. THAT Senſe which beſt agrees with the Subject, or the Point in Hand, or which ſtands in the beſt Connection with the Context, ſhould always be judged the beſt Senſe.

CRITICISMS.

Chap. i. 5. To bleſs a Perſon is a Form of Valediction, 2 *Sam.* xix. 39. So here, *My Sons have* taken Leave of *God.* And ſo 1 Kings xxi. 13. *Naboth* hath bid Farewell to *God and the King*, or hath treated them with Contempt.

Chap. iii. 25, 26. *THE thing that I greatly feared is come upon me*, &c. This alludes to the Loſs of his Children, for whom he was very much concerned, *Chap.* i. 5. But *Chap.* xxix. 18. and xxx. 26. relate to his Circumſtances in general.

Chap. xiii. 12. *YOUR Remembrances* זִכְרֹנֵיכֶם *your* [quoting of] *memorable Sayings are like Aſhes*, or Dirt; *your Bodies* גַּבֵּיכֶם *your Heaps*, Eminencies, your ſtrongeſt Arguments, *to Heaps of Clay*, ſoon waſhed away.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

The Doctrines of the PATRIARCHAL AGE.

THE Instructions, particularly designed to be given in the Book of *Job*, might not be so well understood in that Age of the World; namely, that great Sufferings are not always an Argument of great Sins; but that very good Men may be very much afflicted in this World; that therefore we should not censure any under Calamities, be the Hand of God ever so apparent, unless the Crimes be likewise certain and apparent. That we ought not to complain of God in any Condition, as if he neglected us, or dealt hardly with us, but rather meekly submit to his blessed Will; who never doth any thing without Reason, though we cannot always comprehend it, adoring and revering the unsearchable Depths of his wise Counsel, and believing that all at last will turn out to our Advantage, if like his Servant *Job* we persevere in Faith, Hope, and Patience. This was *Job*'s real Character, though not without Errors. No Error can be discerned in his Behaviour, but what the uncharitable Censures of his Friends provoked him to. Thus he was put upon too frequent and too strong Justifications of himself, being

ing withal extremely perplexed to give a plain and ſatisfactory Account, why God afflicted him ſo ſeverely.

GOD, in the Iſſue, ſatisfied him, that he had juſt and weighty Reaſons; and, in particular, by doubling his Proſperity, that he deſigned to make him a Pattern of Patience and Reward. *James* v. 11. *Behold, we count them happy who endure* patiently the greateſt Sufferings. *Ye have heard of the* wonderful *Patience of Job, and have ſeen,* in his Caſe, *the* happy *End* to which *the Lord* brought his Calamities. Whence we may learn, that under the ſevereſt Viſitations, the Lord is very compaſſionate and merciful to the ſincere and upright, and will amply recompence them in a future World.

THUS the great Point in Religion, before dark and doubtful, relating to the Providence of God, and the Sufferings of good Men, is cleared up with ſuch Evidence, as can no where elſe be found but in the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

THOUGH this Point might not be ſo well underſtood, before it was thus illuſtrated, yet there are ſeveral other important Articles of Religion, of which *Job* and his Friends, and doubtleſs many others, had very juſt and clear Conceptions. As the Being and Perfections of God; that we can receive neither Good nor Evil but from him, the Author of our Being, and Diſpoſer of all Events; that he ſees and orders all things in

Heaven

Heaven and Earth; that there can be no Iniquity with him; that he is the Friend and Patron of Virtue, and hates, and will punish Vice and Wickedness; nevertheless, that he is merciful and gracious, and will certainly pardon and bless those who sincerely repent of their Sins, and return unto him. That he is to be supremely reverenced and worshiped, as the sole Sovereign of the Universe, by Prayers and Sacrifices, by Purity and Integrity of Heart, by Justice in all our Dealings, by all acts of Charity, Goodness, and Benevolence to others, particularly, to the helpless and indigent; by Temperance and Sobriety, curbing irregular Desires and Appetites; that Men should not be elated and puffed up by large Possessions, nor put their Trust in Riches, *Chap.* xxxi. 24, 25; that they should abhor Idolatry, *Ver.* 26, 27, 28; that they should not wish Evil to an Enemy, nor rejoice in his Misfortunes, *Ver.* 29, 30, much less think of murdering him; that they should abstain from Adultery and Fornication, *Ver.* 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11; from Theft, Rapin, and Deceit, *Ver.* 5, 6, 7. For the Punishment of which Crimes he mentions Judges in his Days, (Ver. 11, 28.) and was himself one of the chief, Chap. xxix. 7, 9, &c.

THESE, and such like Principles of natural Religion, are allowed both by *Job* and his Friends, and therefore were the Religion of the Patriarchs, as indeed they are the Principles

ciples of true and acceptable Religion in all Ages and Parts of the World.

FURTHER; the religious in that, and the preceding, as well as ſubſequent Ages, I am perſuaded, entertained the Faith and Hope of a future State. This hath been the popular Belief of all Nations from time immemorial; and it is ſcarce credible, in the Nature of the thing, that the greateſt Happineſs of this Life, which might at any uncertain time, and at length would infallibly and totally be demoliſhed by Death, ſhould ever become a ſolid Principle of Religion, conſidered as the ſole Reward of Piety and Virtue.

HOWEVER it appears, that *Job* expected a future World, for he had Hope with regard to his Condition, but not in this World; therefore, his Hope muſt be in a future State. Chap. xiii. xv xvi. הֵן־ יִקְטְלֵנִי לֹא אֲיַחֵל *Lo*, or certainly, *he will ſlay me: I will not hope*, non eſt quod ſperem, I have no ground to hope, that I ſhall ſurvive my Sufferings, *yet will I maintain* the Integrity of *my own Ways before him. And even this ſhall be for Salvation to me*; [where but in a future World?] *for a Hypocrite ſhall not come before him*; ſhall not have Confidence to preſent himſelf before his Tribunal. Chap. xxiii. 10. *But he knows the Way that I take; when he has tried me, I ſhall come forth as Gold.* As *Job* abſolutely deſpairs of any temporal Deliverance,

ance, this muſt neceſſarily be underſtood of the Hope he entertained of having his Innocence cleared in the Day of Judgment.

He had, moreover, a Notion of the Reſurrection. Chap. xiv. 7. *For there is hope of a Tree, if it is cut down, that it will ſprout again, and that the tender Branch thereof will not ceaſe.* Ver. 8. *Though the Root thereof wax old in the Earth, and the Stock thereof die in the Ground,* Ver. 9. *yet through the Scent of Water it will bud, and bring forth Boughs like a* new *Plant.* Ver. 10. *And ſhall Man die, and totally waſte away? And ſhall Man give up the ghoſt, and where is he?* Or be no more for ever? Ver. 11. *As the Waters fail from the Sea,* as the Sea ebbs and flows again, *and the River,* or Brook in in the dry ſandy Country of *Arabia, decays, and drieth up,* in Summer, but is made a Brook again by the Rains and Snows of Winter; Ver. 12. *So Man lieth down, and riſeth not, till the Heavens be no more; they ſhall not awake, nor be raiſed out of their Sleep,* to return to the Affairs and Poſſeſſions of this World. Ver. 13. And *Oh that thou,* O God, *wouldſt hide me in the Grave,* in that State of Sleep and Inſenſibility, *that thou wouldſt keep me ſecret,* in that ſilent Retirement, *until thy Wrath be paſt; that thou wouldſt appoint me a ſet time, and remember me* to reſtore me to a new and better Life! Ver. 14. *If a Man die, ſhall he live again?*

Or

Or ſhall a Man live again, after he is dead? Then I will patiently wait all the Days of the time thou ſhalt be pleaſed to appoint, till my happy Renovation ſhall come. Ver. 15. *Thou ſhalt call, and I will* joyfully *anſwer thee; thou wilt have a longing Deſire to* reſtore *the Work of thy Hands.* Ver. 16. *Though now,* at preſent, *thou numbereſt my Steps,* &c.

CHAP. xix. 23. Obſerve the ſolemn Introduction; *Oh, that my Words,* which I am going to ſpeak, *were now written! Oh, that they were printed in a Book!* Ver. 24. *That they were graven with an iron Pen and Lead, in the Rock* [my Grave-ſtone, SCHULTENS.] *for ever!* This is too grand for a temporal Deliverance. Why ſhould that be recorded upon a Rock, as a laſting Monument to all Mankind? But it very well ſuits the noble and ſublime Hope of a Reſurrection and future Judgment, worthy of univerſal Attention. Ver. 25. *For I know,* or am well aſſured, *that my* גֹּאֵל *Vindicator,* [the Vindicator of my Innocence is] *living, and that at the laſt over the Duſt,* [the Dead, that have been reduced to Duſt,] *he ſhall ariſe,* [to execute Judgment, *Job* xxxi. 13, 14. *Pſal.* lxxiv. 22. lxxxii. 8. Verſe 26. *And* though *after my Skin they ſhall deſtroy this,* [or this Body ſhall be deſtroyed,] *yet from my* reſtored *Fleſh I ſhall with Pleaſure ſee God.* [Vide R. חזה] Verſe 27. *Whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf,* [to do me juſtice, as Chap. v. 27,

—*for thy good* [for thyſelf] *and mine Eyes ſhall behold*; *but* זר *a Stranger* to Goodneſs and Juſtice ſhall *not* behold him in the ſame Manner. *My Reins are conſumed in my Boſom* [in ardent Expectation of this glorious Event. *N. B.* כלה *ſequente* עין, נפש *vel* רוח deſiderium, ingens, flagrans et conſumens ſignificat; videſis Pſalms lxxxiv. 2. cxix. 82, 123. clxiii. 7. Sic quoque de כליות renes, ſtatuendum.] Obſerve — if after his Skin, his Body alſo was deſtroyed, how could he out-live this Deſtruction, ſo as to be a Man proſperous and happy again in this World? Had this been his fixed Belief, his frequent wiſhing for Death would be utterly unaccountable, and his tragical Complaints ridiculous, and his deſpair of Health and Happineſs in this World a Contradiction.

If wicked Men, though ſometimes in great wretchedneſs, [Chap. xxi. 16, &c.] are alſo ſometimes proſperous and powerful, *Verſe* 7, &c. the proper Inference is, *Verſe* 30. *That the Wicked are reſerved unto the Day of Deſtruction*, and that *they ſhall be brought forth to the Day of Wrath*; not in this World, for that would have cut the Neck of *Job*'s Argument at once, and have fallen in directly with that of his Friends. Chap. xxxi. 2, 3.

Chap. xxvii. 8. *FOR what is the Hope of an Hypocrite*, in the future State, *though he hath gained much* in this World; *when God*

God takes away his Soul at Death? This ſuppoſeth a Hope after Death. — Again, Chap. xxxi. 13, 14. *What then ſhall I do when God riſeth up* to Judgment? Not in this World, where his Sufferings were as great as could be, and where he did not expect they would be abated.—Laſtly, his *Friends had not ſpoken of God the thing that was right*, as *Job* had done, Chap. xlii. 7, 8. But, ſeting aſide a future State, the Friends would have ſpoke more worthily of God, by vindicating his Providence in the exact Diſtribution of Good and Evil in this Life; and *Job*, who aſſerted the contrary, would have miſrepreſented his Dealings with Mankind.

THE Patriarchs before and after *Job*, and the *Iſraelites* before *Chriſt came*, had a Notion of a future State. — By Sacrifices was plainly ſhewn, that a way was open to the divine Favor and Acceptance; and the Favor of God imports Happineſs, which to *Abel*, who was for that very Reaſon, becauſe he was accepted of God, unjuſtly ſlain, could be only in a future State. *Heb.* xi. 4. Και δι' αυτης αποθανων *and dying on account of that* his Faith *he yet ſpeaketh* an inviſible future State of Reward.—The Tranſlation of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, in two diſtant Ages, were well known demonſtrations of a future State of Reward and Glory.—They were certainly acquainted with God and Angels, and Heaven where both reſided. *Gen.* xxii. 11. And the

Connection between this World and Heaven, by the Miniſtry of Angels, was clearly repreſented to *Jacob*. Geneſis xxviii. 12. They muſt, therefore, have a Notion of another and better World.

THE Promiſe to *Abraham*, Geneſis xvii. 7. *I will be a God unto thee*, we ſhall find is the ſame with the Goſpel Promiſe, and therefore muſt include the Gift of eternal Life. And as that Promiſe was ſure to *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, when they were dead, (*Exodus* iii. 6.) our Lord rightly infers, that they would riſe again. (*Luke* xx. 37, 38.) *For* God *is not a God of the dead*, who cannot, as ſuch, be benefited by him, *but of the living*; for though they are dead, *they all live unto him*, or with reſpect of him, as he will raiſe them all to Life again. — And the Patriarchs thus underſtood this Promiſe; for when they conſidered and repreſented their Life in this World as a Pilgrimage, *Geneſis* xlvii. 9. or a State of ſojourning or traveling, they plainly intimated that they were ſeeking, πατριδα, their Father's Country *i. e.* the heavenly Country or City. *Heb.* xi. 13 —16. Had the Proſpects of *Moſes* been confined to this World, doubtleſs he would have preferred the Pleaſures and Honours of *Pharaoh*'s Court; but by refuſing them, and chuſing rather to ſuffer with the People of God, he plainly indicated, that *he had reſpect*

to

to the future *recompence of Reward.* Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26.

IT is certain the *Jews*, even during their Peculiarity, were under the *Abrahamic*, or Gospel Covenant, promising the Pardon of Sin, and eternal Life, as well as under the Law, or *Sinai* Covenant. *Deut.* xxix. 12, 13. And surely, if they were admited to a Covenant of Life and Immortality, they could not be ignorant of a future State. Nor can it be judged at all improbable, that *Moses* propounds eternal Life to them in such Passages as this, *Deut.* xxx. 6. *The Lord thy God will circumcise thy Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, that thou mayst live.* This our Lord understood of eternal Life. *Luke* x. 25, &c. When one asked him, *What shall I do to inherit eternal Life?* he sent him to the Law of *Moses*; and when the Enquirer readily quoted the Rule of Life given by *Moses*, our Lord replied, *Thou hast answered well; this do, and thou shalt live*, meaning eternally. Which leads us to understand *Moses* in the same Sense, when he proposes Life as the Reward of their sincere Religion, Virtue, and Goodness. *Deut.* xxx. 15, 19, 20. *Lev.* xviii. 5. compared with *Romans* x. 5. *Gal.* iii. 10, 11, 12. Indeed Life and Prosperity in the Land of *Canaan*, is intermixed with such Promises. This is to be considered as addressed to them

in a national Capacity, and with respect to the Covenant of Peculiarity. [Note—*Life* is put for eternal Life, *John* vi. 47, 48 52, 53, 58.] רֵאשִׁית is the Begining, or former Part; אַחֲרִית properly denotes, what comes after, the after Part, Time, or State. Thus *Job*'s time, after his Afflictions were over, is called his *ahharith*, Chap. xlii. 12. So is a Man's Posterity, or those that come after him in Being. *Amos* iv. 2.

Sometimes it signifies the happy Consequence, or Sequel of a Course of Action, *Proverbs* xxiv. 14, 20; frequently after-Days, or Times in this World; but is never used more properly than to denote a future State after Death. *Num.* xxiii. 10. *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my* ahharith, *my after*, or future *State, be like his.* Psalm lxxiii. 3—18. The wicked lived in Prosperity, and died an easy Death. *There are no Bands in their Death*, Verse 4. I envied them, saith *David*, Verse 17, *until I went into the Sanctuary* of God; *then understood I their*, ahharith, *future State* after Death. *Surely thou hast set them in slippery Places; thou hast cast them down into* eternal *Destruction*, &c. Verse 20. *As a Dream after one is awake; so, O Lord, when thou awakest* [בְּעִיר in awaking *them*, or when they are awakened] *thou wilt despise*, [debase, pour contempt upon, *Daniel* xii. 2] *their Image* [צַלְמָם their vain, shadowy, unsubstantial

ſtantial Condition.] Verſe 23. *Nevertheleſs I am continually with thee*, [the Object of thy ſpecial Care.] Verſe 24—27. *Thou ſhalt guide me by thy Counſel, and afteward receive me to Glory*, &c. *Proverbs* xxiii. 17, 18. *Surely there is an End*, ahharith, an after-ſtate. *Jer.* xvii. 11. *As the Bird Kore hatcheth Eggs, which ſhe did not lay; ſo he that geteth Riches, and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his Days, and at his End* [ובאחריתו in his after—or future-ſtate,] *ſhall be* נבל *a Fool*, vile, contemptible. Verſe 13.—They that depart from me *ſhall be written in the Earth*, not regiſtered in Heaven, in the Book of Life. *Deut.* xxxii. 29—their latter End, their after — or future-ſtate. *Pſalm* xxxvii. 37, 38.—*the End*, ahharith, *of that Man is Peace*, Happineſs. *But the Tranſgreſſors ſhall be utterly deſtroyed* [where but in the future World?] *the End*, ahharith, *of the wicked ſhall be cut off.* Deut. xiv. 1, 2. *Ye are the Children of the Lord your God*; (of an immortal Father) *ye ſhall not cut yourſelves, nor make any Baldneſs between your Eyes for the dead.* They muſt not mourn as thoſe that had no Hope, 1 *Theſ.* iv. 13. Adoption includes the Redemption of the Body. *Romans* viii. 23.—*Iſaiah* xxvi. 19. *Thy dead* Men *ſhall live, with my dead Body ſhall they ariſe: awake, and ſing ye that dwell in the Duſt; for thy Dew is as the Dew of Herbs*, which makes Herbs to ſpring

and grow up. *But the Earth ſhall caſt out the* wicked *dead*, the Rephaim, as Abortives.

SEE Pſalms xv. xvi. 9, &c. xvii. 15.—*when I awake* out of Death. *Daniel* xii. 2. *Pſalms* xxiii. 6. xxiv. 3, 4, 5. *Eccl.* iii. 16, 17. xii. 13. *Iſaiah* xxv. 8. li. 6.

THESE Inſtances may ſatisfy, that, although Life and Immortality are brought into the fulleſt Light by the Goſpel, a future State was not unknown from the Begining to the Coming of *Chriſt*. We may therefore take it for a good Rule, that the Words, *Life* and *Salvation*, in the Old Teſtament, may be underſtood of a *future Life and Salvation*, when the Context will admit of ſuch an Interpretation.

WE have found, that in the patriarchal Age, among the Nations, before the Jewiſh Peculiarity, there were Perſons eminent for Religion and Virtue, who worſhiped the living God, and enjoyed extraordinary Communications from him; but that many were of a different Character, wicked and ungodly Men; and that Idolatry, captivating the Minds of the ignorant, weak, and vicious, ſpread ſo faſt, that it threatened the total Extinction of good Morals, and of the Knowledge and pure Worſhip of God. How the Father of Mankind counteracted this new Inſtance of Degeneracy we ſhall ſee, when we have ſetled the Scripture-Chronology, and conſidered the Judgment of God upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY *from the* DELUGE *to the* EXODUS. *The Wickedness and Ruin of* SODOM, *&c.* 857 *Years.*

Year before Christ.	Year of the World.	Year of *Shem*'s Age.	Proofs.	Names of the Patriarchs, and their Ages, when they had Sons.	Years
2346	1658	100	Gen. xi. 10.	Shem, after the Fl.	2 and begat
			- - - - 12.	Arphaxad lived	35 and begat
			- - - - 14.	Salah lived	30 and begat
			- - - - 16.	Heber lived	34 and begat
			- - - - 18.	Peleg lived	30 and begat
			- - - - 20.	Reu lived	32 and begat
			- - - - 22.	Serug lived	30 and begat
			- - - - 24.	Nahor lived	29 and begat
				Terah lived	130 * and begat
1921	2083	525	- - - xii. 4.	Abraham	75 when the Promise was made.
		550	- - - xxi. 5.	After that	25 and begat
			- - xxv. 26.	Isaac lived	60 † and begat
1706	2298		- - xlvii. 9.	Jacob aged	130 when he removed into *Egypt*.
1491	2513			Israelites continued there.	215

* GEN. xi. 26. it is ſaid, that *Terah* lived 70 Years, and begat *Abram*, *Nahor*, and *Haran*. But *Terah* was 205 Years old when he died in *Haran*, Gen. xi. 32. After *Terah*'s Death, *Abram* left *Haran*; and then was he 75 Years old, *Gen.* xii. 4. which being ſubſtracted from 205, *Terah*'s Age, gives 130, the Year of *Terah*, when *Abram* was born.

† Add *Iſaac*'s Age (60) when *Jacob* was born, to the Years from the Deluge, and you will have 512, the Year after the Deluge when *Jacob* was born. *Shem* was 98 Years old at the Deluge, and lived 600 Years, *Gen.* xi. 10, 11. Take 98 from 600 and there remains 502, the Years *Shem* lived after the Deluge; which, deducted from 512, the Year after the Deluge, in which *Jacob* was born, leaves ten Years, the time between *Shem*'s Death and *Jacob*'s Birth. Hence it follows, that *Iſaac* lived with *Shem* 50, and that *Abraham* lived with *Shem* 150 Years. *Iſaac* alſo, who lived 180 Years, (*Gen.* xxxv. 28.) lived 120 with *Jacob*, i. e. till within ten Years of *Jacob*'s going down into *Egypt*. And as *Shem* lived with *Methuſelah* 98, and *Methuſelah* with *Adam* 240, three Perſons, *Methuſelah*, *Shem*, and *Iſaac*, might bring down the Account of things from *Adam* till within ten Years of the going down of the *Iſraelites* into *Egypt*. From the Deluge to the Promiſe was 427 Years.

FROM

FROM the Promiſe to the time when *Jacob* and his Family went down into *Egypt* was 215 Years. And from the Promiſe to the time when the Children of *Iſrael* came out of *Egypt* was 430 Years. Compare *Exod.* xii. 41. with *Gal.* iii. 17. Therefore the time of their Continuance in *Egypt* muſt be 215 Years.

JOSEPH was 30 Years of Age when preferred by *Pharoah*, Gen. xli. 46. After that there were ſeven Years of Plenty, and two of Famine, *(Gen.* xlv. 11.) before *Jacob* came down into *Egypt*. *Joſeph*, therefore, was then 39 Years of Age, after that he lived 71 Years, for he lived in all 110 Years, *Gen.* l. 22, 26. Take 71 out of 215, and there remains 144, the time the *Iſraelites* remained Slaves in *Egypt* after *Joſeph*'s Death. *Exod.* i. 8.

BEFORE we come to the Promiſe made to *Abraham*, which was the Foundation Stone of the grand Scheme to preſerve Religion and Morals in the World, we muſt turn our Thoughts a while to a particular Diſpenſation, which God inflicted upon four Cities, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Admah* and *Zeboim*, (Gen. xiv. 2. Deut. xxix. 23.) that ſtood in a very extenſive, fruitful, and pleaſant Vale, along the Sides of the River *Jordan*. Gen. xiii. 10. So far had Idolatry, and the Immorality which uſually attends it, infected the World, that theſe four populous Cities, and

and *Zoar*, which lay not far from them, (*Gen.* xiv. 2. xix. 20.) were become excessively debauched and wicked, indulging to that vilest sort of Lewdness, which is commonly called Sodomy, *going after strange Flesh*, (Jude 7.) *the Men burning in their Lust one towards another, Men with Men working that which is unseemly*. Rom. i. 27.

THEREFORE God purposed to punish them with an exemplary and total Destruction. *Abraham*, in the Benevolence of his Soul, interceded for their Preservation. *Gen.* xviii. 23. And such is the Mercy of God, so great his Regard to virtuous Characters, and so ready for their Sakes to bestow Blessings, even upon the unworthy, that he would have spared them, if but Ten truly sober and virtuous Persons could have been found in all those five Cities; but they were universally and irreclaimably corrupt. Therefore, sparing *Zoar* for *Lot*'s Sake, (*Gen.* xix. 20, 21.) he destroyed the other four Cities, with all their Inhabitants, by pouring upon them the most dreadful Storm of Fire and Brimstone from Heaven; and also, probably, by a terrible Earthquake, that broke up the very Soil of the Earth, and by an Irruption of bituminous Waters, which turned the whole Vale into one heavy, fetid, and unwholsome Lake, called the *dead*, or *salt Sea*, about 30 Miles long, and 10 Miles broad, *Gen.* xix, 24, 25, which remains unto this Day.

THIS

THIS dreadful Inſtance of divine Vengeance, through the Mercy of God, removed the bad Examples of thoſe daring Sinners, had a natural Fitneſs to awaken and reform the ſurviving Impious, and was very properly intended to remain a perpetual Monument of the Wrath of God upon the Wickedneſs of Mankind. 2 *Pet.* ii. 6. *Jude* Ver. 7. *Suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire.* Note — the Fire was *eternal*, as it totally and for ever deſtroyed thoſe Cities never to be built again. God thus *revealed his* future *Wrath from Heaven againſt all Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs of Men.* And though there be no preſent Appearances of it, we ſhould not therefore be ſecure. For, as our Lord obſerves, *Luke* xvii. 28. The *Sodomites did eat, they drank, they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded*, thoughtleſs and ſecure; *but the ſame Day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained Fire and Brimſtone from Heaven, and deſtroyed them all. Even thus ſhall it be in the Day that the Son of Man is revealed.*

Gen. xix. 24. *The* LORD *rained Fire and Brimſtone from the* LORD *in Heaven.* This is an Hebraiſm, where the Noun itſelf is put inſtead of the perſonal Pronoun.

Gen. xix. 26. *But his Wife looked back from behind him, and ſhe became a Pillar of Salt.* Note — The ſulphureous Storm did not begin to fall upon *Sodom*, till *Lot* was ſafely

ſafely arrived at *Zoar*, Gen. xix. 22. But his Wife looked back before he reached *Zoar*; for ſhe *looked back from behind him*, as he was going to *Zoar*. Therefore, when ſhe looked back, *Sodom*, and the fine Country about it, appeared in the ſame pleaſant and ſerene State as ever. Conſequently, ſhe looked with a Look of Affection to the Place, and of Regret to leave it, and their Goods that were in it, according to the Import of the Verb נבט — This implied Unbelief and Diſtruſt of what the Angels had affirmed, that God would immediately deſtroy the Place. She did not believe, or ſhe did not regard it; ſhe ſtopt by the Way, and left her Huſband to go by himſelf; ſhe would go no further, and might be at a conſiderable Diſtance from *Zoar*, and ſo near to *Sodom*, as, probably, to be involved in the terrible Shower, and thereby turned into a nitro-ſulphureous Pillar. This gives the proper Senſe and Force of our Lord's Admonition, *Luke* xvii. 32. *Remember Lot's Wife.* Let the Judgment of God upon her, warn you of the Folly and Danger of hankering after, and being lothe to part with ſmall and temporal things, when your Life and Happineſs, the greateſt and moſt laſting Concerns, are at Stake.

C H A P.

CHAP. XXVI.

The State of RELIGION *in the World, when God made the Promise to* ABRAHAM.

THOUGH we may be sure, that our State of Trial hath been, from the Begining of the World, perfectly well adjusted, as to the proper Ballance of Means and Temptations, for all the Purposes of divine Wisdom and Goodness, yet it is certain that the Contagion of Evil so far spread in the earliest Ages, as, in Process of time, to threaten the total Extinction of true Religion and good Morals. This is evident in the Case of the old World, where Wickedness and Impiety had, at length, and by Degrees, infected the whole Race of Mankind, except *Noah*'s single Family. And in about 450 Years after the Deluge, Idolatry and Wickedness had spread and corrupted the World so far, that *Sodom* and four other Cities, being universally debauched, were destroyed (one excepted for the Reason already given) by a most tremendous Judgment. The *Amorites*, and several other neighbouring Nations, were then filling up the Measure of their Iniquity; (*Gen.* xv. 16, 19, 20, 21.) which in about 400 Years after was quite full; and God, who might have

have deſtroyed them, as he did *Sodom*, &c. gave the *Iſraelites* a Commiſſion to expel, or extirpate them.

THIS ſpreading Corruption, after the Deluge, is not to be aſſigned to ſimple Irreligion, but to Religion directed to wrong Objects and Purpoſes. While Men retained the Knowledge of the true God, they cared not to glorify him by the Practice of Virtue and Holineſs, nor were thankful for his Benefits. *Rom.* i. 21, 22. And artful Men, through Pride and Wantonneſs, indulging to idle Conceits and falſe Reaſonings, involved their own Underſtanding, and that of others, in the thickeſt Clouds of Error and Deluſion. Probably, they repreſented the heavenly Bodies, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, as illuſtrious Intelligences, who, being ſo eminently exalted, muſt have the higheſt Intereſt in the Favor of God, the Direction of human Affairs, and the Diſtribution of all temporal Bleſſings; and therefore it would be ſufficient to all the Purpoſes of Religion, to ſecure their Friendſhip, as Mediators between God and them. Thus they might *be driven*, enticed, drawn in, to worſhip them, (*Deut.* iv. 19.) by ſuch impious Rites as were invented by the Folly and Ignorance of the ſame Sophiſters, and adapted to the depraved Minds of ſuch as liſtened to them. Thus they might be deceived into the Practice of all Manner of Lewdneſs and Vice. For the

Attributes

Attributes of those supposed Deities, and Benefactors of Mankind, being feigned purely by human Imagination, they would naturally be represented by Men, who had their own Interests and Lusts to serve, in such Manner as best suited the corrupt Taste and Inclinations of those who were disposed to follow them. If this was not the Case at first, it may easily be conceived to have been so in Process of Time, by after-improvements upon the original Scheme of Idolatry. And by this method Men would be lead to believe, they might be religious, and gain Health, long Life, fruitful Seasons, Plenty, Prosperity, not only without the Practice of Virtue and Holiness, but, positively, by lewd and wicked Practices; and thus Religion would be turned into an Encouragement to Vice, and the Principles of Virtue and Goodness would be extinguished.

Whether they were seduced precisely after this Manner or not, the Fact is certain, that their abominable Idolatries were attended with abominable Lusts and Intemperance. 1 *Pet.* iv. 3. Add to this, that cunning Men, who knew how to make their own Advantage of the Foibles of Mankind, introduced into their Minds Notions of Fate, Destiny, Fortune, Chance, Necessity, with many other Delusions. Hence arose Professors of the vilest Arts, pretending to look into Futurity, to gratify malicious Desires, to secure

good, and prevent bad Luck to those who consulted them. *Deut.* xviii. 10. *Diviners, Observers of Times, Inchanters, Witches,* or such as pretend to work upon the Mind, or Body, for evil Purposes, by Herbs or Potions; *Charmers, Consulters with a* pretended *familiar Spirit, Wizards, Necromancers.* And so far were they infatuated, that they made their Sons and Daughters to pass through the Fire, under the Notion of Sacrifices to their Idols; probably, to gain their Blessing upon their Children, and to make them healthy and fortunate. *Deut.* xii. 31. xviii. 10. *Lev.* xviii. 21. xx. 2. Thus their Hope and Trust, and their Regards were diverted from God and his Providence to vain Idols and the vilest Impostors.

THE Neglect and Abuse of Understanding, and the indulged irregular Inclinations of the Heart, were doubtless the Spring and principal Cause of this Defection from God and Virtue. But we may believe it was forwarded and compleated by the Suggestions and Instigations of the Devil and his Angels; *the Prince of the power of the Air, the Spirit* whom God permits *to work in the Children of Disobedience,* (Ephes. ii. 2.) and to *deceive the Nations.* Rev. xx. 2, 3. For when Men *receive not the Love of the Truth, that they may be saved, God* judicially *sends them strong Delusion, that they may believe a Lie. That they may all be condemned, who believe not the Truth,*

Truth, but have Pleasure in Unrighteousness. 2 Thess. ii. 9—12.

THUS we see how Idolatry first began, and by what Means it might, as it certainly did, spread in the World; and would have prevailed universally, as the remaining virtuous dropt off, and as Men of Understanding happened to be drawn in by various Allurements. For the Heart even of *Solomon*, the great and wise, was, by the Love of strange Women, so far turned away after Idol-Gods, that he built High-places and Altars in Honor of them, even in the Neighbourhood of the City *Jerusalem*. 1 Kin. xi. 1—8.

To prevent the universal Prevalence of Idolatry, and to preserve among Mankind the Knowledge and Worship of the living and true God, the wise and gracious Father of Men was pleased to advance a new and noble Scheme, which, under several Variations and Improvements, was to reach to the End of Time. The Scheme was this, to choose and adopt one Family, afterwards to be formed into a Nation, instructed in religious Knowledge by God himself, and favored with such extraordinary Privileges, and Honors, above all other Nations of the Earth, as were in their own Nature adapted to ingage them, by the most rational Motives, to adhere to God and his Worship. At the same time, to prevent their being infected

with the Idolatries and Vices of the reſt of the World, as they certainly would have been, had they mingled with them, they were to be diſtinguiſhed and ſeparated from all other People by their Diet, their Dreſs, and divers civil and religious Rites and Ceremonies; but more particularly by a ſecret Mark in the Fleſh, by which they might be certainly known from all other Men. Thus they would be kept together in a Body, and hindered from mixing with, and being corrupted by, their idolatrous Neighbours, and in every Reſpect fited to be an Example and Inſtruction to them under the various Diſpenſations wherewith they were viſited. And further, their Laws and religious Inſtitutions being originally recorded in *Books*, would more certainly be preſerved and known in all future Ages and Generations. Thus God provided a Store-houſe of religious Knowledge, a whole Nation of Prieſts, *Exod.* xix. 6. a School of Inſtruction and Wiſdom for all the World. Or the Nation of *Iſraelites* may be conſidered as a Peice of Leaven which in Proceſs of time was to leaven the whole Lump or Maſs of Mankind.

ABRAHAM, a Perſon of the moſt eminent Piety and Virtue, was choſen to be the Head and Father of this Nation; that, as he would always be held in great Veneration among them, he might always ſhine before their

their Eyes as an illuſtrious Pattern of Godlineſs.

THE Ground of this Scheme, and of God's ſingular Regards to *Abraham* and his Poſterity, was the COVENANT OF GRACE, the PROMISE or Grant of Favors and Bleſſings to Mankind in *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord. *Who verily was fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World*, though *not manifeſted till the laſt Times.* 1 Pet. i. 20. This Covenant or Grant was firſt publiſhed to *Adam.* Gen. iii. 15. *Her*, the Woman's, *Seed ſhall bruiſe thy Head*, O Serpent, *and thou ſhalt bruiſe his Heel.* Nor could it be wholly unknown to the Patriarchs; but it was much more clearly revealed to *Abraham.* Gen. xii. 3. xvii. 7. xviii. 18. xxii. 16, 17, 18. And this is the Subject which now requires our particular Attention. [See the Treatiſe *on the Covenant of Grace*, &c.]

CHAP. XXVII.

The Methods of DIVINE WISDOM *in raiſing up a new and religious* NATION.

TO return to the Age in which *Abraham* lived. The Deluſions of Idolatry were ſo ſtrong, and the human Underſtanding ſo weak, that all Nations ſeem to have run into it at once and alike. And

ſuch was the infatuating and ſpreading Nature of the Infection, that there was no rational Proſpect of the Reformation of any one of them. Violence could not be uſed, Argument and Reaſoning would have no Effect, the moſt dreadful Judgments were forgotten, or diſregarded.* The Knowledge and Worſhip of the one living and true God, the great Principle of moral Goodneſs, and of publick and private Happineſs, would have been totally loſt in the Earth. But the Father and Governor of Men provided a Remedy. Inſtead of deſtroying all Nations, as at the Deluge, it was the merciful Scheme of divine Wiſdom to create, out of one pious and faithful Perſon, *Abraham*, a new and religious Nation, ſeparated from all the reſt, in order to aſcertain among them, and at length among all Nations, right Sentiments of his Being, Perfections, and Providence. And it is greatly worth our while to obſerve the Steps and Methods by which God was pleaſed to train them up for this Purpoſe.

FIRST, *Abraham* is required to caſt himſelf wholly upon *God*'s Providence, by removing, at *God*'s Command, from his own Kindred and Country, to an unknown diſtant Land, which God would ſhew him; aſſuring him of his Preſence and ſpecial Bleſſing.

* Reckoning by the Age of Man, the World was 20 Years old; for God called *Abraham* in the Year of the World 2083.

Bleſſing. *Geneſis* xii. 1, 2, 3. Thus *God* took him under his immediate Care and Protection. In this ſtrange Land he wandered about as long as he lived, but *God* was with him every where. *God* appeared to him, and converſed with him frequently and familiarly. By extraordinary Interpoſitions, and expreſs Declarations from time to time *God* incouraged, directed, proſpered, guarded and provided for him. He became very rich, great, and honourable; but all was moſt viſibly the Gift and Operation of *God*. *God* gave him repeated Aſſurances, that he would *make of* him *a great Nation*, give his Poſterity the whole Land of *Canaan*, and that *in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed*. But he was not to have a Son, till the Birth of that Son was manifeſtly the extraordinary miraculous Effect of divine Power, and inſured the Performance of the Promiſes. What could be more ingaging than all theſe Circumſtances? What more proper to excite in a Man, Duty, Affection, and Confidence towards God? The ſame Encouragements, Bleſſings, and Promiſes are repeated to *Iſaac*, and afterwards to *Jacob*, and the ſame heavenly Correſpondence is kept open with them during their Lives. *Egypt*, then a plentiful Country, of Genius and Learning, [*Acts* vii. 22.] the Reſort of the curious and inquiſitive, was choſen to be the Nurſery of this Family. Thither was

Joſeph firſt carried by a ſingular Providence, ſold for a Slave, and moſt unjuſtly caſt into Priſon, but only that *God* might ſhew himſelf in his Enlargement. By Means which *God* only could provide and direct, he was at once releaſed from a Jail, and raiſed to almoſt regal Honor and Authority. And in high Dignity and Eſteem, and with aſtoniſhing Succeſs, which none but *God* could give, in the moſt important Affairs, he continued all the Days of his Life.

BY him *God* predicted Seven Years of prodigious Plenty in *Egypt*, and Seven ſucceeding Years of the moſt diſtreſſing Famine in the Land, and in all the adjacent Countries. By this Event, *Jacob*'s whole Family, in all Seventy Two Souls, were brought to reſide, with the great good-will of the King, and of the whole Nation, in *Goſhen*, the richeſt Province in the Land of *Egypt*, Gen. xlvii. 6. where their Situation, Manners, and way of living would keep them ſeparate from their idolatrous Neighbours. *Gen.* xliii. 32. xlvi. 34. Thus God, by a ſurpriſing Train of Events, introduced the Family of *Abraham* into the Nurſery, where they were to grow up into a Nation. At length a Prince aroſe, *who knew*, or regarded, *not Joſeph*, Exodus i. 8. Then they fell into a State of Slavery, and the ſevereſt Oppreſſion and Suffering, for about 140 Years. But this was only to render the Power of God more conſpicuous in

in their Preſervation and Deliverance. The more they are oppreſſed, and the more cruelly they were uſed, the more they increaſe and flouriſh, till they were numerous enough to be formed into a Nation. Then *Moſes* was miraculouſly preſerved, educated by *Pharaoh*'s Daughter in all the Wiſdom of the *Egyptians*, and raiſed up to be their Deliverer. And now the Vials of divine Wrath are poured out one after another upon *Egypt*. God made bare his Arm, or gave the moſt ſignal and ſtriking Demonſtrations of his Being and Power, infinitely ſuperior not only to all human Strength, but alſo to all the pretended Deities, in which the *Egyptians* truſted. *Exodus* xii. 12.

To this End (1.) the divine Wiſdom permited, on this ſpecial Occaſion, *Pharaoh*'s Magicians, poſſibly by the Miniſtry of evil Spirits, or by extraordinary Powers immediately communicated to the Enchanters, to imitate ſome of the Miracles which *Moſes* wrought, in order to diſplay more clearly his own divine Power; and to convince both *Egyptians* and *Iſraelites* of the Vanity of ſuch Arts, by controling and defeating them, even when exerciſed in the higheſt Degree. So a Man was born blind, and *Lazarus* died, on Purpoſe to give our Lord an Opportunity of demonſtrating his Power, and the Truth of his Miſſion. *John* ix. 3. xi. 4. And for that Reaſon, an extra-

extraordinary Power might be permited to evil Spirits to poſſeſs the Bodies of Men, that our Saviour's Dominion over the Devil and his Angels might be more evidently ſhewn. The inviſible World of Spirits may undergo many Variations, and be ſubject to different Reſtraints and Regulations in different Ages, ſo as to interfere more or leſs, or not at all in human Affairs. *Jortin.*

(2.) God hardened *Pharaoh*'s Heart, by granting him Reſpite from one Plague after another, that he might multiply, and ſo render more conſpicuous, the Demonſtrations of his Being and ſupreme Dominion. And this is all that God did towards hardening *Pharaoh*'s Heart. See *Exodus* viii. 15. ix. 34, 35, and Verſe 15, 16. *For now*, ſaith the Lord, *I have ſtretched out my Hand* [in the preceding Plague of Boils and Blains,] *and I have ſmitten thee, and thy People, with the Peſtilence, and* [by this Plague] *thou mighteſt have been cut off from the Earth. But in very Deed for this Cauſe I have raiſed thee up*, [I have reſtored thee to Health, by removing the peſtilential Boils,] that by reſpiting thy Deſtruction, I may *ſhew in thee* more and greater Proofs of my almighty Power.

ALL the Miracles, which God wrought in *Egypt*, were ſuch as muſt be ſeen and acknowledged to come from him alone, and not from any poſſible Power of Man, or from any natural Accidents. This is true of

of all the Ten Plagues, but especially of the last. The Pestilence, in ordinary Cases, sweeps away Multitudes promiscuously, but when it singleth out only the First-born in every Family, it must plainly appear to be a Judgment immediately from the Hand or Direction of God; [*Exodus* xii. 29.] as it was to the *Israelites* a just Retribution of the Cruelty of the *Egyptians* in endeavouring to destroy all their male Children. *Exodus* i. 16. [Note—In those Ages and Circumstances of the World, when Men were not so capable of being convinced by abstract Reasoning, and probably understood nothing of the Perfections of God *a priori*, his supreme Authority and Omnipotence would be best demonstrated by *Facts*, which experimentally proved his uncontroled Dominion over all other Powers, and over universal Nature.] At last *Pharaoh* and his People give up the Cause. God's superior Power is owned, because so dreadfully experienced. The *Egyptians* urge them to depart, and to remove all Objections that might hinder their Departure, willingly give them the most precious and valuable of their Possessions, [which, by the way, might be but equal Payment for the Labor of so great a Multitude, for 140. Years.] See *Exodus* xii. 33, &c. Verse 35. *And the Children of Israel*—וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ *asked of the Egyptians Jewels*, &c. i. e. asked the *Egyptians* to give them Jewels, &c. [שאל signifies

nifies to *ask to give*, as well as to *lend*. Josh. xv. 18, 19. xix. 50. *Jud.* v. 25. viii. 25, 26. *Psal.* ii. 8. See Hebrew English Concordance.] Verse 36. *So that they lent unto them*, &c † So that they readily gave them, &c. [illegible] in *Hiphkid* to make to ask, i. e. to encourage, to gratify asking by freely giving. [Note—Upon the Occasion of the Death of all the First-born among the *Egyptians*, and the Departure of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, a commemorative Festival, the *Passover*, is instituted; an Ordinance very proper for preserving the perpetual Memory of the Power and Goodness of God among the *Israelites*.]

THE *Israelites* leave *Egypt*, in Number no less than Twenty Four Hundred Thousand, *Num.* i. 45, 46, and all Nature giveth way before them. A Passage is open for them through the Red-sea, which closes upon, and overwhelms *Pharaoh* and his pursuing Army. Pillars of Cloud and Fire, alternately appearing in the Air, direct their March. Bitter Fountains are made sweet. In a dry, thirsty, barren Country they are supplied with Water from the hard and flinty Rock, and with Food from the Sky for Forty Years together. With all the Appearances of Glory and dreadful Majesty, God, as their King and Sovereign, established his Covenant, or entered into a solemn Contract, with them in Mount *Horeb*; chusing them for *a peculiar Treasure*

Treasure above all People, Exodus xix. 5, and ingaging himself to be their God and King, and to bestow on them all national Blessings upon Condition they were obedient, adhered to his Worship, and kept clear of Idolatry, with which they had been tinctured in *Egypt*, (Lev. xvii. 7. Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 8.) otherwise they might expect the severest Judgments. *Deut*, xxix. 10, &c. At the same time he gave them a System of Laws and Statutes, most excellent in themselves, fited to their present Temper and Circumstances, as well as to the future Intents and Purposes of the Gospel Dispensation. Here God took up his Residence among them in the Tabernacle, aftewards in the Temple, seting himself at the Head of their Affairs, and upon all important Occasions directing them as an Oracle. And all this to attach and unite this one Nation to himself.

AT length, through a Train of very striking Miracles, (*Jordan* divided, the Walls of *Jericho* thrown down) he brought them into the promised Land, with a Commission to destroy all the Inhabitants, the Measure of whose Iniquity was then full; and, who probably were more corrupt than any of their Neighbours, and as deserving of Destruction as *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, for all the Idolatrous, brutish, cruel, incestuous, and unnatural Crimes, which universally prevailed amongst

amongſt them. Had the *Iſraelites* been mixed with the idolatrous *Canaanites* they would ſoon have loſt the Knowledge of God, and been involved in all their Corruptions; but being made the Inſtruments of their Deſtruction, this would give them the greater Horror of thoſe Crimes, which they knew (for *Moſes* had told them, *Deut.* ix. 4, 5.) were thus dreadfully avenged by their Arms. Moreover, thus they would give themſelves a clear Demonſtration, that Idol-Gods had no Power to defend and preſerve their Votaries. Therefore it was not unjuſt in God to command the Deſtruction of the *Canaanites*, nor cruel in his Servants to execute that Command, (any more than it is to extirpate Outlaws, and the worſt of Criminals, by legal Authority) but in the Views of divine Wiſdom, the propereſt Way of extirpating them, conſidering the Effects it would have upon the Minds of the *Iſraelites*.

HERE we may obſerve, (1.) that the *Iſraelites* made no Claim to the Land of *Canaan* in their own Right. The Right was in God, who gave it them. (2.) We may obſerve a good Reaſon why the divine Wiſdom erected this Scheme for preſerving true Religion, only in the one Nation of the *Iſraelites*. Becauſe had he ſelected a pious Perſon, and his Family, as he ſelected *Abraham*, and his Poſterity, out of every Nation upon Earth, then to make room for them,

every

every Nation upon Earth muſt have been devoted to Deſtruction, as the *Canaanites* were. But ſeeing the whole Earth was not filled with Violence, Injuſtice, Rapine and Oppreſſion, God in much Lenity and Forbearance was pleaſed to *wink at*, or overlook, the Ignorance and Error of other Nations, without puniſhing them as they deſerved, *Acts* xvii. 30; leaving them to the Light of Nature, *Acts* xiv. 16, to feel, or grope after his Exiſtence and Perfections, *Acts* xvii. 26, 27; and to the Dictates of Conſcience, for their Conduct in Life; while he continued his providential Care in giving the Supplies of Life, and viſiting them with ſuitable Diſpenſations; and will, at laſt, judge them in perfect Equity, making Allowance for all unavoidable Defects. *Rom.* ii. 6, 10, 11, 12.

EVEN after the *Iſraelites* were ſetled in the Land, the Danger of Idolatry was not over. They were ready on every Occaſion to catch the Infection from their Neighbours; and ſtill there was need of further divine Interpoſitions. And through a long Courſe of Years they were exerciſed with various Diſpenſations, according as they did or did not adhere to the Worſhip of God. When they clave unto the Lord, they were proſperous and triumphant; when they forſook him, and followed ſtrange Gods, they were in great Diſtreſs, in Servitude, and Captivity; till

till by repeated Calamities, and ſignal Deliverances, accompanied with the clearer Light, and more rational Convictions, which, at length, they were prepared to receive from their Prophets, they were at laſt weaned from Idolatry, after the Babyloniſh Captivity, about 955 Years after their Return out of *Egypt*; and never relapſed into it again.*

ALL this was neceſſary, and in Conſiſtence with human Agency, and the gradual Improvements of Mankind; was the properest Method to preſerve the Knowledge of the true God in the World, not only in that ſingle Nation, but in all the Nations of the Earth. For the Diſpenſation among the *Jews*, like a Piece of Leaven, which leaveneth the whole Maſs, was intended for the Benefit of all Mankind; as by this Means they became Examples and Inſtructors, while they remained in their own Country, to all their Neighbours; and when in Captivity, or Diſperſion, as they carried with them the Knowledge of God into the Countries where they were diſperſed; till the Nations ſhould, by this and other Means of Improvement, be prepared to receive the clearest Revelation of the true God, and of eternal Life by the *Meſſiah*. Which was the

* Reckoning by the Age of Man, the World was then 34 Years old; for the *Jews* returned from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity about the Year of the World 3468.

the great End and Design of the Scheme, which we have been considering.

AND now, the more a thinking Man revolves in his Mind this Train of Affairs, and sees how one Nation are led, step by step, as their Capacities would admit, to a Sense of the Pre-eminence and Sovereignty of the true God, in order to be set apart as the Repository of his sacred Laws and Religion, till they and all Mankind are fit for the Reception of them in a more simple, clear, and extensive Form, under the Gospel, the more he will confess and admire the Signatures of Wisdom and Goodness that appear through the whole and every Part of the Oeconomy.

THERE is one thing deserves particular Attention, I mean, the Spirit and Behaviour of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness. A very remarkable Instance of the wretched Effects of Servitude upon the human Soul. They had been Slaves to the *Egyptians* for about 140 Year; their Spirits were debased, their Judgments weak, their Sense of God and Religion very low; they were very defective in Attention, Gratitude, Generosity; full of Distrust and uneasy Suspicions; complaining and murmuring under the most astonishing Displays of divine Power and Goodness, as if still under the Frowns and Scourges of their unjust Task-Masters; could scarce raise their Thoughts to Prospects the most pleasing and joyous; knew not how to

value the Bleſſings of Liberty; of a Taſte ſo mean and illiberal, that the Fleſh and Fiſh, the Cucumbers, the Melons, the Leeks, Onions and Garlick, and ſuch good Doings in *Egypt*, weighed more with them than Bread from Heaven, and all the divine Aſſurances and Demonſtrations, that they ſhould be raiſed to the nobleſt Privileges, the higheſt Honor and Felicity, as a peculiar Treaſure to God, above all People in the World. *Num.* xi. 4, 5, 6.

IN ſhort, nothing would do; the ill Qualities of Slavery were engrained in their Hearts; a groveling, thoughtleſs, ſturdy, daſtardly Spirit fatigued the divine Patience, counteracted and defeated all his wiſe and beneficent Meaſures; they could not be worked up to that Senſe of God, that Eſteem of his higheſt Favors, that Gratitude and generous Dutifulneſs, that Magnanimity of Spirit, which were neceſſary to their conquering and enjoying the promiſed Land. And therefore the Wiſdom of God determined, they ſhould not attempt the Poſſeſſion of it, till that Generation of Slaves, namely, all above 20 Years of Age, were dead and buried. However, this did not lie out of the divine Plan. It ſerved a great Purpoſe, namely, to warn that, and all future Ages of the Church, both *Jewiſh* and Chriſtian, that if they deſpiſe and abuſe the Goodneſs of God, and the noble Privileges and

Proſpects

Proſpects they enjoy, they ſhall forfeit the Benefit of them. And the Apoſtle applieth it to this very important Uſe, with great Force and Propriety, in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. iii. Ver. 15, to the End; and Chap. iv. Ver. 1—12.

THUS, for a general View of this noble Scheme. The Nature and Excellency of it will ſtand in a ſtronger Light, if we examine the particular Privileges and Honors confered upon this diſtinguiſhed Nation, their Tendency to promote Piety and Virtue, and the Relation they bear to the State of things under the Goſpel. For this Part of the Subject we muſt turn to my *Key to the Apoſtolic Writings.*

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of the Jewiſh RITUAL, *or Ceremonial* LAW.

WE muſt now turn back to the *moſaic* Conſtitution; which conſiſted, 1. Of political and judicial Laws. For which conſult Mr. LOWMAN on *The Civil Government of the Hebrews.* 2. Of moral Precepts, ſuch as the Ten Commandments. 3. Of Rites and Ceremonies, ſuch as Circumciſion, Sacrifices, Waſhings, Purifications, the Uſe of certain Garments, &c. and divers Rites uſed by the Prieſts in the Tabernacle.

For a particular Account of which, conſult Mr. LOWMAN *on the Ritual of the Hebrew Worſhip.* I ſhall only obſerve in general, that the Deſign of thoſe Ceremonies, juſtly explained, was to convey religious and moral Inſtructions, as well as the expreſs Precepts.

HIEROGLYPHICS, *which repreſent the Senſe of the Mind, by outward Figures, or Actions,* were the firſt and moſt ancient Literature. So the Government of the World by divine Providence, and its extraordinary Interpoſition in Favor of good Men, is repreſented by a Ladder ſtanding upon the Earth, and reaching to Heaven, with the Angels aſcending and deſcending on it, to receive and execute Orders from God above, who ruleth over all. *Gen.* xxviii. 12, 13. In the Style of this *Hieroglyphic* our Lord ſpeaks, *John* i. 51. *Hereafter ſhall you ſee Heaven open, and the Angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the Son of Man,* as upon *Jacob*; meaning you ſhall ſee an extraordinary divine Interpoſition working in my Favor, by many miraculous Operations. [Dr. BENSON] The Exaltation of *Joſeph* above the reſt of the Family, was repreſented by the Hieroglyphic of his Sheaf ſtanding upright, and the eleven Sheaves of his Brothers ſtanding round about and bowing to it. As alſo of the Sun, Moon, and eleven Stars making Obeyſance to him. *Gen.* xxxvii. 7, 9. The Tribe of

Judah

Judah is represented by a young Lion; *Issachar* by a strong Ass; *Dan* by a Serpent lurking in the Road; *Naphtali* by a Hinde; *Joseph* by a fruitful Bough; *Benjamin* by a ravening Wolf. *Gen.* xlix. 9, 14, &c. A *Rod*, or Staff, as it is an Instrument of striking or beating down, is the Hieroglyphic of Power exerted in conquering, punishing, ruling, *Isaiah* x. 5, 24; and of Dominion and Authority, *Psalm* cx. 2; and as such, is continued to this Day, under the Name of a Sceptre. With such a Rod *Moses* and *Aaron* appeared before *Pharaoh*, as hieroglyphically representing the Power and Authority of God, in whose Name they demanded the Release of the *Israelites*. Exod. vii. 15. And thus they appeared as Men of Learning, and acted agreably to the Literature of the Age. A *Horn* represented temporal Power and Dominion. 1 *Sam.* ii. 10. 1 *Kin.* xxii. 11. *Psal.* lxxxix. 24. A *Yoke*, such as Slaves carried upon their Shoulders, Servitude, or Bondage, *Gen.* xxvii. 37, 40. *Jer.* xxvii. 2, 6. xxviii. 10.

THIS may serve to explain the Nature of Hieroglyphics; a Sort of Language the *Jews* were then accustomed to, being the Learning of that Age, which they would understand much better than abstract Reasonings about moral Truths and Duties. We may therefore, on this Account, well admit, that the Rites and Ceremonies of their religious

Institution were hieroglyphic, and intended by external Representations to give them useful Instructions in true Religion and real Goodness. If we consult the Prophets and Apostles, who were well acquainted with their Meaning, we shall find so much Evidence of the moral and spiritual Intention of so many, as may induce us to believe, this was the Sense and Spirit of all the rest.

THEY were enjoined various and frequent Ablutions, or Washings with Water; the common Use of which is to discharge the Body from all Dirt and Filth, and to keep it clean. This was a very easy Representation of Purity of Mind, or of an Heart purged from the Filth of Sin. And so the Prophets understood it. *Psal.* li. 2. *Wash me from mine Iniquity.* Ver. 7. *Wash me, and I shall be clean* Isai. i. 16. *Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, put away the evil of your Doings.* — *Cease to do evil, learn to do well.* Jer. iv. 14. Acts xxii. 16. Heb. x. 22. Rev. i. 5. Anointing with Oil, or Ointment, by which the Head was beautified, and the Countenance exhilarated, had the Signification of Honor, Joy, Holiness, and Inspiration, *Psal.* xlv. 7. *Acts* x. 38. The Priests officiated in Garments of fine Linen, *Exod.* xxxix. 27; meaning, that the Priests should *be clothed*, or have their Souls adorned *with Righteousness*, Psal. cxxxii. 9. *For the fine Linen is the Righteousness*

teousness of Saints. Rev. xix. 8. Burning of Incense, whose Smoak riseth up with a pleasant Smell, was an hieroglyphic Representation of acceptable Prayer. *Psal.* cxli. 2. *Luke* i. 10. *Rev.* viii. 3, 4. Circumcision had Relation to the Heart and Soul, or to the retrenching all inordinate Affections and Inclinations. *Lev.* xxvi. 41. *Deut.* x. 12—17. xxx. 6. *Jer.* iv. 4. *Rom.* ii. 29. The Sprinkling of Blood, and of the Water of Separation (*Num.* xix. 13, 19.) was hieroglyphic, and had a moral Signification. See *Heb.* ix. 13, 14. x. 22. xii. 24. 1 *Pet.* i. 2. And so had the muzzled Mouth of the Ox. *Deut.* xxv. 4. compared with 1 *Cor.* ix. 9, 10. 1 *Tim.* v. 17, 18.

SOME may have indulged too much to Imagination, and found more Mysteries in the Hebrew Ritual than were really designed; but these Instances, explained by authentic Evidence, may convince us, that the whole had a rational and spiritual Meaning. And as we are taught in the Gospel every thing relating to Virtue and Religion in the plainest Manner, we need not give ourselves much Trouble about discovering the Meaning of the other Rites, which are not explained by Prophets and Apostles. Only the Affair of Sacrifices is so often alluded to in the New Testament, and seems to have such Respect to the Sacrifice of our Lord, that it demands a more particular Examination. [Turn to *the Scripture-Doctrine of Atonement*.]

CHAP. XXIX.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY *from the* EXODUS *to the Founding of* SOLOMON'*s Temple.*

THIS Space of Time was 480 Years; as appears from 1 *Kings* vi. 1. which is made out, in the beſt Manner I have yet ſeen, as follows.

Years before Chriſt		Years	Proofs
1451	From the *Exodus* to the Death of *Moſes*, and Succeſſion of *Joſhua*. Note — *Moſes* was 40 Years old, when he fled out of *Egypt*, Acts vii. 23. He was 40 Years with *Jethro*, Exod. vii. 7; and 40 Years in the Wilderneſs with the *Iſraelites*. Therefore, he was 120 when he died. *Deut.* xxxiv. 7.	40	*Exod.* vii. 7. *Acts* vii. 30.
1426	From the Succeſſion of *Joſhua* to his Death. Note — After the Death of *Joſhua* the *Iſraelites* fell into Idolatry, *Judg.* ii. 7, *&c.* And in thoſe licentious times, about the Year before Chriſt 1398, the Events, recorded in the xviiith and xviiith Chapters of the Book	25	*Joſephus.*

Years before Christ		Years	Proofs
	Book of *Judges*, by which Idolatry was introduced into the Tribe of *Ephraim*, and by that Means propagated among the *Danites*, might happen. For it was in the times when *there was no King in Israel*. And in the same unhappy Period fell out, most probably, the War of the eleven Tribes against *Benjamin*, of which we read *Judg.* xix. xx. xxi. Chapters. For *Phineas*, the Son of *Eleazar*, (Josh. xxiv. 33. 1 Chron. vi. 4.) who after the Death of *Joshua* succeeded his Father, about the Year before Christ 1402, was then High-Priest, *Judg.* xx. 28. *And in those Days* also *there was no King in Israel*, Chap. xxi. 25. which shews it was in the same times with the preceding Events.		
1391	From the Death of *Joshua* to the Bondage of East-*Israel* under *Cushan*.	35	*Judg.* iii. 8,
1383	To their Deliverance by *Othniel*.	8	. . 9, 10, 11,
1343	To the Bondage of East-*Israel* under *Eglon* King of *Moab*.	40	. . 12, 13, 14,
1325	To their Deliverance by *Ehud*. [After which, that Part of *Israel* had Rest for 80 Years, *Judg.* iii. 30.] Note — It may probably be supposed, that scarce	18	. . . 15—30.

Years before Christ		Years	Proofs
	ſcarce any of the Judges ruled over the whole Country of *Iſrael*, but ſome in one Part, and ſome in another; ſo that, at the ſame time, there might be ſeveral Judges in ſeveral Parts of the Land; and Peace and Liberty in one Part, when there was War and Slavery in another. The eaſtern Part, that had ſhaken off the Yoke of *Moab*, had reſt 80 Years; but, in the mean while, the *Philiſtines* invaded the weſtern Parts, and were repulſed by *Shamgar*, Judg. iii. 31. Afterward *Jabin* afflicted the northern Tribes, Chap. iv. 2. while the eaſtern Parts ſtill remained in Peace. See Bp. PATRICK on *Judg.* xi. 26.		
1285	To the Deliverance of North-*Iſrael* from *Jabin*, by *Deborah* and *Baruch* [After which that Part of the Land had Reſt 40 Years. *Judg.* v. 31.]	40	Authority of Chronologers
1245	To the Bondage of North and Eaſt-*Iſrael* under the *Midianites*, for 7 Years. Note — In ſome of thoſe 7 Years, probably, *Elimelech* removed into the Land of *Moab*, by Reaſon of the Famine, occaſioned by the Depredations	40	*Judg.* vi. 1.

Years before Christ		Years	Proofs
	dations of the *Midianites*, *Ruth* i. 1, 2. *Judg.* vi. 4.		
1238	To their Deliverance by *Gideon*.	7	*Jud.* vi. 1, *&c.*
1199	To *Abimelech*'s Usurpation, 40 Years, or 39 compleat.	39	. . . viii. 28.
1196	To *Tola*, Judge over North and East-*Israel*.	3	. . . . ix. 22.
1173	To *Jair*, Judge over North and East-*Israel*. Note — While *Jair* was Judge, North and East-*Israel* were in Bondage to the *Ammonites* 18 Years, *Judg.* x. 8. At the same time with *Jair*, *Eli* began to judge South and West-*Israel* 40 Years, 1 *Sam.* iv. 18; all which time that Part of *Israel* was oppreſt by the *Philiſtines*, Judg. xiii. 1. In the firſt of thoſe 40 Years of *Eli*, which was alſo the firſt Year of *Jair*, *Samſon* might be born; who lived 40 Years, and judged West-*Israel*, (while *Eli* alſo was Judge there, and while that Part of the Country was under the *Philiſtines*,) 20 Years, *Judg.* xv. 20. [*Eli* judging in civil Affairs; *Samſon* by harraſſing the *Philiſtines*. USHER.] About the 13th Year of *Eli*, before *Chriſt* 1160, *Samuel* might be born.	23	. . . . x. 1, 2.
1152	From *Jair* to *Jephthah*, who delivered North and East *Israel* from the *Ammonites*,		

Years before Christ		Years	Proofs
	Ammonites, 22, or 21 compleat Years.	21	*Judg.* x. 3.
1147	From *Jephthah* to *Ibzan*, over North and East-*Israel*, six, or five compleat Years.	5	. . . . . xii. 7.
1140	From *Ibzan* to his Successor *Elon*, in North and East-*Israel*.	7	. . . . . 9.
1135	About the fifth Year of *Elon*, *Samuel* was publickly known to be a Prophet, 1 *Sam.* iii. 20. iv. 1.		
1133	About the seventh of *Elon*, *Samson* pulled down the Temple, *Judg.* xvi. 30. and destroyed great Numbers of the *Philistines*. USHER thinks, that this Calamity might encourage the South and West-*Israelites* to give them Battle. 1 *Sam.* iv. 1, *&c.*		
1130	From *Elon* to *Abdon*, over North and East-*Israel*.	10	*Judg.* xii. 11.
1122	From *Abdon* to his Successor *Samuel*, who now was also Judge over North and East-*Israel*, as he had been before over South and West-*Israel*, 1 *Sam.* vii. 15, 16, 17. probably, from the time that he was publickly known to be a Prophet.	8	. . . . . 14.
1094	From *Samuel* to King *Saul*.	28	Chronologers
1054	From *Saul* to *David*.	40	*Acts* xiii. 21.
1014	From *David* to *Solomon*.	40	1 *Kings* ii. 11.
	From *Solomon* to the Founding of the Temple, four, or three compleat Years.	3	. . . . . vi. 1.
	In all . .	480	1 *Kings* vi. 1.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

Authors within the Period from the EXODUS *to the Founding of* SOLOMON'*s Temple.*

ABOUT the Begining of this Period Books began to be written; and it hath furnished the World with the noblest Productions both in History, Poetry, and the instructive kind.

The Book of JOB.

IF *Job* wrote his own Book; or if it was written by *Elihu*, one of the Interlocutors, as some gather from *Chap.* xxxii. 10, 15, *&c.* where he speaks in the Language of the Writer of the Book; and if *Moses* found it when he was with *Jethro* in *Midian*, and transcribed it, adding the historical Parts at the Begining and the End; then this Book of *Job* is earlier than this Period, and the oldest Book in the World. And, as it is worthy of the highest Antiquity, any of these Suppositions is far more probable, than theirs, who imagine it was written in a later Age, about the time of the *Babylonish* Captivity.

The PENTATEUCH.

THAT *Moses* wrote the *Pentateuch*, or fivefold Volume, (from πεντε, *quinque*, and

τευχος,

τευχος, *Volumen*, *Liber*,) containing the five first Books in the Bible, we have the same Reason to believe, as we have that *Homer* wrote the *Iliad*; namely, the Consent of all the learned in all Ages. The first of these Books is *Genesis*, בראשית containing the only History of the World from the Creation down to *Jacob*'s removing into *Egypt*, for 2298 Years. 2 *Exodus*, שמות is the History of the Departure of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, and of the erecting and furnishing of the Tabernacle. 3. *Leviticus*, ויקרא in which are the Laws, Ceremonies, and Sacrifices of the Jewish Religion, and what particularly related to the *Levites*. 4. *Numbers*, במדבר begins with the numbering of the *Israelites*; after which several Laws and remarkable Events are recorded. 5. *Deuteronomy*, דברים is a Repetition and an Abridgement of the Law, with Exhortations and Motives to the Observance of it.

The Book of JOSHUA.

JOSHUA probably wrote the last Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, and the Book of *Joshua*, containing an Account of his own Acts, in conquering and dividing the Land of *Canaan*; and *Phineas*, the High-Priest, might add the five last Verses relating to the Death of *Joshua*, and of his Father *Eleazar* the High-Priest.

The

The Book of JUDGES,

WAS certainly written before the ſecond Book of *Samuel*; compare 2 *Sam.* xi. 21. with *Judg.* ix. 53; and before *David* had taken *Jeruſalem*, 2 *Sam.* v. 6. *Judg.* i. 21. *Samuel*, the Prophet, or Seer, the laſt of the Judges, was an Hiſtorian, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 29. and probably wrote this Book of *Judges*. In which we read the great Efficacy of Religion to make a Nation happy, and the diſmal Calamities which Impiety brings along with it. St. *Paul (Heb.* xi. 32.) points out ſome Examples of heroic, and ſurprizingly ſucceſsful Faith in *Gideon*, *Barak*, *Samſon*, and *Jephthah*, whoſe Hiſtory is recorded in this Book. It conſiſts of two Parts, the one containing the Hiſtory of the Judges, from *Othniel* to *Samuel*, which Part ends with the xvi^th^ Chapter; the other, containing ſeveral memorable Actions, performed not long after the Death of *Joſhua*, is thrown to the End of the Book, that it might not interrupt the Thread of the Hiſtory.

The Book of RUTH.

RUTH may be conſidered as an Appendage to the Book of *Judges*, and brings down the Hiſtory to the times of *Samuel*, who probably was the Author of it, and draws the Lineage of *Judah* down to *David*.

Chap.

Chap. iv. 18. Which makes it not unlikely, that it was written after *David* was anointed by *Samuel*. 1 Sam. xvi. 13.

HERE it may not be improper to obſerve, that *Samuel* was not only an Author, but otherwiſe ſeems to have been a great Promoter of Literature and Religion. We never read of the Companies, or Colleges of Prophets till this time, and therefore, probably, he erected them. They were Seminaries for the Inſtruction of Youth in the Knowledge of the Law, and for training them up in the Exerciſes of Piety; particularly in the ſinging of ſacred Hymns, in Concert with inſtrumental Muſic. This in the Language of thoſe times, was prophesying, 1 *Sam.* x. 5. 1 *Chron.* xxv. 1, 2, 3, 7. They were not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, all of them *Prophets*; but upon ſome of them God beſtowed the Spirit of Prophecy, or of predicting future *Events*, 2 Kings ii. 3. And we may ſuppoſe, that moſt of the Prophets, properly ſo called, came out of thoſe Schools. *Amos* excepts himſelf, *Chap.* vii. 14. — *I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's Son*, i. e. Diſciple; for the Scholars were called, *the Sons of the Prophets.* At their Head, as Governor, they had ſome venerable truly inſpired Prophet, who was called their *Father.* 1 *Sam.* x. 12. 2 *Kings* ii. 12. *Samuel* was one, and perhaps the firſt of thoſe *Fathers*, or Governors. 1 *Sam.* xix. 20. *Elijah* was

was another. 2 *Kings* ii. 12. And *Elisha* succeeded him in this Office. 2 *Kings* iv. 38. *Elisha* came to *Gilgal* — *and the Sons of the Prophets were siting before him.* The Master, or *Father*, sat above; and the Scholars below, before him, *at his Feet.* 2 Kings ii. 3. *Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy Head?* or from the Seat, where he sits above thy Head—See *Acts* xxii. 3. They lived together in Society, 2 *Kings* vi. 1; and when they had done their Lectures, and religious Exercises, were wont to eat together with their Masters. 2 *Kings* iv. 38, *&c.* This Institution had a manifest Tendency to advance Religion and Learning.

I. II. SAMUEL.

1 SAMUEL was wrote before 1 *Kings.* 1 *Kings* ii. 17. 1 *Sam.* ii. 31, 35, compared; and it is not unreasonably supposed, that *Samuel* wrote the first 24 Chapters; and that, after his Death, the History of *David* was continued in the first and second Books of *Samuel* by the Prophets *Gad* and *Nathan.* 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

I. II. KINGS.

THESE Books contain the History of the Kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, from *Solomon* to the Captivity in *Babylon*, for the Space of 423 Years. In this Period were several Historiographers;

toriographers; for we read of *the Book of the Acts of Solomon*, 1 Kings xi. 41. which *Acts of Solomon* were recorded *in the Book of Nathan the Prophet, and in the Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the Visions of Iddo the Seer.* 2 Chron. ix. 29. Which *Iddo* was imployed, together with *Shemaiah* the Prophet, in writing the Acts of *Rehoboam.* 2 Chron. xii. 15. We also read of the Book of *Jehu*, the Prophet, relating the Acts of King *Jehoshaphat.* 2 Chron. xx. 34. 1 *Kings* xvi. 1. And *Isaiah*, the Prophet, wrote the Acts of King *Uzziah*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 22; and also of King *Hezekiah*, 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. And it is highly probable, that he wrote the History of the two intermediate Kings *Jotham* and *Ahaz*, in whose Reigns he lived. *Isai.* i. 1. And, we may well suppose, all these Histories added one to another, make the two Books of *Kings.*

NOTE — No Writer of the History of the Kings of *Judah* or *Israel* is any where expresly named, but his Title is either given him as a Prophet, or it appears from some other Part of Scripture that he was a Prophet. This Quality of the Writer was given to draw from us a proportionable Respect, and make us receive the History with the Reverence which is its due. The Prophets were the *Jewish* Historians; therefore to the historical Books, *Joshua*, *Judges*, I. II. *Samuel*, I. II. *Kings*, they give the Title of, ראשונים

נביאים ראשונים the *former Prophets*; as they give the Title of, נביאים אחרונים the *latter Prophets*, to *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, &c.

The Book of PSALMS,

WAS composed by several Authors, but chiefly by King *David*. *Moses* composed the xc[th] Psalm, when God had shortened the Lives of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, as a Punishment for their Unbelief. The cxxxvii[th] Psalm was indited soon after their Transportation to the Land of *Babylon*, and Captivity there, and the cxxvi[th] upon their Return out of it. Others were made upon other Occasions; as may be seen in their Titles, (although those are not supposed to be of the same Authority with the Text) or collected from the Sense and Scope of the Psalm. For which Bp. PATRICK's Paraphrase may be consulted.

THE Book of Psalms is divided into five Parts. The first reaches to the End of the xli[st] Psalm; the second to the End of the lxxii[d] Psalm; the third to the End of the lxxxix[th]; the fourth to the End of the cvi[th]; and the fifth Part to the End of the whole.

IT is a Collection of divine Odes, sublime and elegant, far beyond all human Compositions; consisting of the loftiest Celebrations of the divine Praises, the most lively

and fervent Devotions of Meditation, Thankſgiving, Prayer and Supplication, Faith, Hope, and Truſt in God in every Condition, and the moſt excellent Inſtructions in every Branch of Piety and Virtue. And the frequent reading of it hath a ſtrong Tendency to eſtabliſh in our Minds the Principles of true Wiſdom, even every right Diſpoſition towards God and Man; and that Purity of Heart, and Serenity of Mind, which is a Fund of Comfort and Joy in the Ways of God, and will animate us to walk in them with Steadineſs and Delight.

Moses was the firſt that compoſed ſacred Hymns, that we read of, *Exod.* xv. *Deborah* the next, *Judg.* v. and then *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* ii. But *David*, an admirable Artiſt in Muſick, (1 *Sam.* xvi 18. *Amos* vi. 5.) carried divine Poetry and Pſalmody to its Perfection; and therefore is called *the ſweet Pſalmiſt of Iſrael.* 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1. He, doubtleſs by divine Authority, appointed the ſinging of Pſalms by a ſelect Company of ſkilful Perſons, in the ſolemn Worſhip of the Tabernacle, 1 *Chron.* vi. 31. xvi. 4—8. which *Solomon* continued in the Temple, 2 *Chron.* v. 12, 13. And ſo did *Ezra*, as ſoon as the Foundation of the ſecond Temple was laid. *Ezra* iii. 10, 11. Hence the People became well acquainted with the Songs of *Sion*, and having commited them to Memory, were famous for melodious

Singing

Singing among the neighbouring Countries. *Pſal.* cxxxvii. 3. And the Continuance of this Branch of divine Worſhip is confirmed by the Practice of our Lord, and the Inſtructions of the Apoſtle. *Mat.* xxvi. 30. *Mark* xiv. 26. *Epheſ.* v. 19. *Col.* iii. 16. See alſo *Rev.* v. 9. xiv. 1, 2, 3. Pſalm-ſinging is a Part of Chriſtian Worſhip, which ought to be ſupported, incouraged, and performed in the moſt ſkilful and harmonious Manner.

THESE are the Books that were writen before the Founding of *Solomon*'s Temple.

CHAP. XXXI.

From the Founding of SOLOMON'*s Temple, till the Deſtruction of it by* NEBUCHADNEZZAR 423 *Years.*

RULES for calculating and adjuſting the Chronology of this Period.

THE Chronology is here carried on by the ſacred Hiſtorians in a double Series of ſucceeding Kings; one in the Kingdom of *Judah*, the other in the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, the Year of the Reign of every King of *Judah* being mentioned, in which any King of *Iſrael* began his Reign; and *vice verſa*. Therefore,

I. To be able to form a true Judgment of the Chronology, it is neceſſary that we draw up two Columns, one of the Kings of *Judah*, and the other of the Kings of *Iſrael*, in ſuch manner, that the Years of their ſeveral Reigns may be ſet exactly over againſt each other; together with the Texts which prove the Order of Succeſſion, and the Years of the ſeveral Reigns. Thus the two Colums will be a Check upon each other; and the general Rule will be,

II. So to adjuſt the correſponding Numbers of Years in both the Columns, as that they may be reduced to a Conſiſtency. Otherwiſe, the Calculation cannot be juſt and true. Here lies the Difficulty; and in order to ſurmount it ſome Allowance muſt be made. As,

III. That Succeſſors may be ſuppoſed ſometimes to reign with their Fathers, when the Conſiſtency of the two Liſts of Kings cannot otherwiſe be made out. Thus it is certain, that *Solomon* was anointed King by order of his Father *David*. 1 Kings i. 34. And *Jehoram* did begin to reign while his Father *Jehoſhaphat* was alive. 2 *Kings* viii. 16.

IV. The Years of Reigns is delivered in full Sums, without taking Notice of the odd Parts of a Year, either at the Begining, or at the End of a Reign. Therefore, to bring the two Liſts to an Agreement, it may reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that, for inſtance, 12 Years,

Years, (or the 12th Year) are put down, when only eleven compleat Years are intended. So 2 *Kings* xviii. 9, 10, it is ſaid, that *Salmaneſer* laid Siege to *Samaria* in the fourth Year of *Hezekiah*'s Reign, and, after a Seige of three Years, took it in the ſixth Year of *Hezekiah*. Hence it appears, that the three Years of the Siege are not to be underſtood of three full Years, but only of two ſuch Years; the Siege begining in the middle, ſuppoſe, of *Hezekiah*'s fourth Year, continuing the whole fifth Year, and ending in ſome Part of the ſixth Year. It is therefore plain that, according to the Style of the ſacred Hiſtorians, one whole Year and two Parts of two Years, one before, and another after that Year, may be called three Years.

V. IN a turbulent State of things, an *Inter-regnum* may be allowed, where Conſiſtency cannot be preſerved without it.

VI. To find the Year before Chriſt, (or before A. D.) in which any Reign began, ſubſtract the Years of the preceding Reign from that Year before A. D. in which the preceding Reign began. To find the Year of the World, (or A. M.) ſubſtract the Year before A. D. from 4004, which is the A. M. in which our Lord was born, according to Arch-Bp. USHER, who is generally followed by our Chronologers. Further, from 4714, the Year of the *Julian Period*, correſponding

to A. M. 4004, ſubſtract the Year before A. D. and it will give the Year of the *Julian Period.* e. g. To know what Year before A. D. *Jehoſhaphat* began to reign, ſubſtract 41, the Years of his Father *Aſa*'s Reign, from the Year before A. D. 955, when *Aſa* began to reign, and the Remainder will give 914, the Year before A. D. when *Jehoſhaphat* began to reign. Subſtract the Year 914 from 4004, and it will give 3090 the A. M. of the ſame Event. Subſtract 914 from 4714, and it will give 3800, the Year of the *Julian Period* when *Jehoſhaphat* began to reign.

From the Founding of SOLOMON's *Temple till the Destruction of it by* NEBUCHADNEZZAR 423 Years.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	*Yrs. of Regins*	*Kings of JUDAH*	*Proofs*	*Kings of ISRAEL*	*Yrs. of Reigns*	*Yrs. bef. A. D.*
1011	36	SOLOMON (*a*)	1 *Kin.* vi. 37, 38.			1011
975	17	REHOBOAM	—— xiv. 20, 21.	JEROBOAM I.	22	975
958	3	ABIJAM	—— xv. 2, 1.	18. (*b*)		958
955	41	ASA	—— xv. 10, 9.	20.		955
953		2	—— xv. 25.	NADAB (*c*)	1	953
952		3	—— xv. 28, 33.	BAASHA (*d*)	23	952
929		26	—— xvi. 8.	ELAH (*e*)	1	929
928		27	—— xvi. 10, 15,	ZIMRI	7 *days*	928
928		27 (*f*)	—— xvi. 23.	OMRI (*g*)	11	928

(*a*) *Solomon* laid the Foundation of the Temple in the 4th Year of his Reign; and after that Year he reigned 36 Years. (*b*) 17th Compleat. (*c*) *Nadab* reigned two Parts of 2 Years, which together made 1 Year. (*d*) The latter Part of *Baasha*'s first Year is laid to *Nadab*'s second Year. (*e*) Part of two Years, or one compleat. (*f*) To preserve a Consistency with the Chronology of the Kings of *Israel*, we must suppose, that *Omri* reigned with *Tibni* 4 Years, 1 *Kings* xvi. 21, 22, begining in the 27th Year of *Asa*: that after *Tibni*'s Death he reigned alone 8 Years, or 7 compleat, begining at the 31st Year of *Asa*. For so the Text, 1 *Kings* xvi. 22, 23. may be read,—*so Tibni died, and Omri reigned* alone *in the* 31st Year of *Asa King of Judah. Omri reigned* in all *twelve Years: in Tirzah he reigned six Years.* (*g*) Eleven Years compleat. When it is said, that he reigned twelve Years, Part of a Year is counted for a whole Year.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	Yrs. of Reigns	Kings of JUDAH	Proofs	Kings of ISRAEL	Yrs. of Reigns	Yrs. bef. A. D.
917		38	1 *Kin.* xvi. 29.	AHAB (*b*)	20	917
914	25	JEHOSAPHAT	—— xxii. 42, 41.	4 (*i*)		914
910			—— xvii. 1.	[*Elijah* (*k*)]		910
904		[*Troy* taken (*l*)]				
897		17	—— xxii. 51.	AHAZIAH (*m*)	1	897
896		18	2 *Kin.* iii. 1.	JEHORAM (*n*)	11	896
896			[—— i. 17. ii. 1, &c. iii. 1.	*Elijah* tranſlated, *Eliſha* ſucceeds him.]		896
889	4	JEHORAM (*o*)	—— viii. 16.	5		
885	1	AHAZIAH	—— viii. 26, 25.	12 (*p*)		885
884	6	ATHALIAH	—— xi. 3.	JEHU	28	884
			—— x. 36.			
878	40	JOASH (*q*)	—— xii. 1.	7 (*r*)		878
870		[*Heſiod* and *Homer**]				
856		22 (*s*)	—— xiii. 1.	JEHOAHAZ	17	856

(*b*) *Ahab* reigned but twenty Years compleat. See the correſponding Part of the oppoſite Column. (*i*) This was the third Year compleat. (*k*) About this Time *Elijah*, the Prophet, appeared. (*l*) According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON. (*m*) *Ahaziah* reigned one Year with his Father, and one Year alone. (*n*) Or *Joram*, he reigned eleven Years compleat. (*o*) Or *Joram*. It is ſuppoſed he reigned four Years with his Father. (*p*) Eleven Years compleat. (*q*) Or *Jehoaſh*. (*r*) The ſixth Year compleat. * According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON. (*s*) Twenty-ſecond compleat.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	*Yrs. of Reigns*	*Kings of JUDAH*	*Proofs*	*Kings of ISRAEL*	*Yrs. of Reigns*	*Yrs. bef. A. D.*
839		37 (*t*)	2 *Kin.* xiii. 10.	JEHOASH (*u*)	14	839
			—— xiii. 14.	[*Elisha* dieth.]		839
839	29	AMAZIAH	—— xiv. 2, 1.	2 (*x*)		839
825		15 (*y*)	—— xiv. 23.	JEROBOAM II.	41	825
812			—— xiv. 25.	[*Jonah* (*z*)]		812
810	52	AZARIAH (*a*)	—— xv. 2, 1.	27 (*b*)		
800		[*Joel* prophesied.]				

(*t*) The thirty seventh of *Joash* of *Judah* is the Year in which *Joash* of *Israel* began to reign with his Father; with whom he is supposed to reign two Years. But those two Years are not taken into the Account, which must be reckoned from the fortieth, or thirty ninth Year compleat, when *Joash* of *Israel* reigned alone. (*u*) Or *Joash*. He reigned two Years with his Father, in all, sixteen Years. (*x*) Those two Years he reigned with his Father; and therefore they are not taken in. (*y*) Fourteen Years compleat. (*z*) *Jonah*, in his younger Days, perhaps about twenty eight, might begin to prophesy about this Time. (*a*) Or *Uzziah*, 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 1. *Isai.* i. 1. vi. 1. *Amos* i. 1. (*b*) *Amaziah* reigned twenty nine Years, namely, fourteen Years before *Jeroboam* II. began to reign, and fifteen Years after he began to reign. How then could his Son *Azariah*, or *Uzziah*, succeed him in the twenty seventh Year of *Jeroboam* II, when *Jeroboam* had reigned but fifteen Years when *Amaziah* died? *Ans.* If *Azariah* was sixteen, in the twenty seventh of *Jeroboam* (2 *Kings* xv. 2.) then he was born in the eleventh Year of *Jeroboam*, and so was but a Minor of four Years old in the fifteenth of *Jeroboam*, when his Father *Amaziah* died. It may therefore be supposed, that he was not inaugurated, or crowned King till twelve Years after, when he was sixteen Years of Age in the twenty seventh of *Jeroboam*: the Government in the mean while, being in the Hands of a Regency. But to preserve the Truth of the Chronology, the twelve Years of his Minority are included in the fifty two Years, which he is said to have reigned. Which twelve Years are to be deducted out of the twenty seven of *Jeroboam*'s Reign; and so he will be considered as succeeding his Father in the fifteenth Year of *Jeroboam*. Thus all will stand right. As the Regency governed and tutored the young King exceeding well, the People were in no Haste to have him crowned.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	Yrs. of Reigns	Kings of JUDAH	Proofs	Kings of ISRAEL	Yrs. of Reigns	Yrs. bef. A. D.
			[*Amos* i. 1.	*Amos* prophesied.]		787
			[*Hosea* i. 1.	*Hosea* prophesied.]		785
784				Interregnum	11	784
773		38 (*c*)	2 *Kin.* xv. 8.	ZECHARIAH	6 *months*	773
772		39	—— xv. 13.	SHALLUM	1 *month*	772
772		39	—— xv. 17.	MENAHEM	10	772
				[*Jonah* went to *Nineveh*. (*d*)]		770
761		50	—— xv. 23.	PEKAHIAH	2	762
759		52	—— xv. 27.	PEKAH	20	760
		[*Isaiah* (*e*)	*Isa.* i. 1. vi. 1.]			
758 (*f*)	16	JOTHAM	2 *Kin.* xv. 33, 32.	2		758
753		[*Micah* prophesied	*Micah* i. 1.]			
742	16	AHAZ	2 *Kin.* xvi. 2, 1.	17 (*g*)		742
						740

(*c*) Thirty seven compleat. (*d*) About this time *Jonah*, advanced in Years, might prophesy against *Nineveh*, in the Reign of *Pul*, who soon after invaded the Land of *Israel*, 2 *Kings* xv. 19; but it doth not appear, that he had any Design to conquer it. (*e*) About this time *Isaiah* began to prophesy, *Isai.* i. 1. and it is supposed, continued to the latter End of *Hezekiah's* Reign. (*f*) This Number is found by substracting 52, the Years of *Azariah*, or *Uzziah*'s Reign, from 810, which is the Year before Christ, when he began to reign. (*g*) Sixteen compleat.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	*Yrs. of Reigns*	*Kings of JUDAH*	*Proofs*	*Kings of ISRAEL*	*Yrs. of Reigns*	*Yrs. bef. A. D.*
740			[1 *Chron.* v. 26. 2 *Kin.* xv. 29.	I. Captivity of Israel by *Tiglath.* P.]		
738				Interregnum	8	738
730		12	—— xvii. 1.	HOSEA	9	730
726	29 (*b*)	HEZEKIAH	—— xviii. 2, 1.			726
721		6 (*i*)	—— xviii. 9, &c.	3 II. Israel carried into Captivity. (*k*)		721
720		[*Nahum* prophesied.]				720
698	55	MANASSEH	—— xxi. 1.			
677		22	[—— xvii. 24. *Ezra* iv. 2.	III. Captivity of Israel by *Esarhaddon* *]		
643	2	AMON	2 *Kin.* xxi. 19.			
641	31	JOSIAH	—— xxii. 1.			
628		[*Jeremiah* began. *Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (*l*)]	*Jer.* i. 2, 3. —— xxv. 3.			

(*b*) Twenty eight compleat. (*i*) Five compleat. (*k*) King *Hoshea* and his People, the ten Tribes were now carried into *Assyria* by *Shalmaneser*, King of *Assyria*, who dwelt at *Nineveh*. * See Page 329, in the Note. (*l*) In this Year *Jeremiah* began, and continued till the eleventh Year of *Zedekiah*. *Jer.* i. 2, 3. *Habbakkuk* and *Zephaniah* were probably Cotemporaries with *Jeremiah*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's Connect. at the Year before A. D. 609.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	Yrs. of Reigns	Kings of JUDAH	Proofs	Kings of ISRAEL
610	3 *months*	JEHOAHAZ (*m*)	2 *Kin.* xxiii. 31.	
610	11	JEHOIAKIM (*n*)	—— xxiii. 36.	
606		[*Daniel* carried to Babylon. (*o*)]	*Dan.* i. 1, 6.	I. Captivity of *JUDAH.*
603		[*Daniel* interprets *Nebuchadnezzar's* Dream.	—— ii. 1.]	
599	3 *months*	JEHOIACHIN (*p*)	2 *Kin.* xxiv. 8.	
599		[*Mordecai* and *Ezekiel* Captives.	*Esth.* ii. 5, 6. *Ezek.* i. 1, 2.	II. Captivity of *JUDAH.*
599	11	ZEDEKIAH	2 *Kin.* xxiv. 18.	
595		[*Ezekiel* had his first Vision.	*Ezek.* i. 2.]	
588		The Temple was demolished.	2 *Kin.* xxv. 2, 9.	III. Captivity of *JUDAH,* and of the Remains of *Israel.*

587 *Obadiah* prophesied against the *Edomites,* who cruelly assisted in the Destruction of *Jerusalem.*
569 *Nebuchadnezzar* distracted for 7 Years together. *Dan.* iv.
555 *Daniel* had his Vision of the 4 Empires. *Dan.* vii.

(*m*) Or *Shallum.* (*n*) Or *Eliakim,* 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 4. (*o*) Hence began the seventy Years Captivity, foretold by *Jeremiah,* Chap. xxv. 1, 12. xxix. 10. *Dan.* ix. 2. (*p*) Otherwise called *Coniah,* and *Jeconiah. Jer.* xxii. 24, &c. *Esth.* ii. 6.

Yrs. bef.
A. D.

538 He interpreted the Hand-writing on the Wall. *Dan.* v. 25. and was caſt into the Lion's Den. *Dan.* vi.
536 *Cyrus* reſtores the Jews, and puts an End to their 70 Years Captivity. *Ezra* i. 1. See the Year before A. D. 606. *Zerubbabel* was then Governor, and *Joſhua* High Prieſt. *Ezra* iii. 2, 8. *Hag.* i. 1. *Zech.* iii. 1. iv. 6.
535 Jews begin to rebuild *Jeruſalem* and the Temple. The *Samaritans* obſtruct them. *Ezra* iii. 1, &c. iv. 1.
534 *Daniel*'s laſt Viſion. *Dan.* x. 11, 12.
520 *Haggai* and *Zechariah* propheſy. *Ezra* v. 1. *Hag.* i. 1. *Zech.* i. 1.
515 The Temple rebuilt and dedicated. *Ezra* vi. 15, 16.
462 *Ahaſuerus*, alias *Artaxerxes*, divorces *Vaſhti*, and afterward marries *Eſther*. Eſth. i. 1, &c. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's Connect. at the Year before A. D. 465.
458 *Ezra* ſent to be Governor of *Judea* by *Artaxerxes*. *Ezra* vii.
453 *Haman* plots the Deſtruction of the Jews. *Eſth.* iii. 11.
445 *Nehemiah* ſent Governor to *Judea*, and rebuilds the Walls of *Jeruſalem*. *Neh.* ii. 1, &c.
444 *Ezra* is ſuppoſed to publiſh his Edition of the Holy Scriptures.
433 *Nehemiah* goes from *Jeruſalem* to the *Perſian* Court. *Neh.* v. 14. xiii. 6.
429 About this time *Malachi* propheſied, according to Dr. PRIDEAUX's Con. 428.
428 *Nehemiah* comes again to *Jeruſalem* with a new Commiſſion. *Neh.* xiii. 6.
404 *Socrates* flouriſhed.
296 *Simon* the Juſt, High-Prieſt of the *Jews*.

CHAP. XXXII.

The moral Cauſes of the Babyloniſh CAPTIVITY; *and the Propriety of that Diſpenſation.*

THE whole *Jewiſh* Nation, both *Judah* and *Iſrael*, had all along a ſtrong and ſtrange Propenſity to Idolatry, even after the erecting of the Temple, and the eſtabliſhing of the Worſhip of God there, in the moſt grand and ſolemn Manner. They erected *Altars to ſtrange Gods*, frequented *High-Places* and *Groves* conſecrated to Idolatrous Worſhip, and furniſhed them with *Idols* and *Images* for that Purpoſe. 2 *Chron.* xiv. 3. 1 *Kings* xv. 11, 12, 13. And their Morals were juſt as corrupt as their Religion, even to the Degree of Sodomy itſelf. 1 *Kings* xv. 12.

WHAT their peculiar Temptations were, we know not. All the Endeavours of good Kings, and all the preaching of holy Prophets, ſent by ſpecial Commiſſion from God, were ineffectual to produce a Reformation. The pious King *Hezekiah* was zealous and active in rooting out Idolatry; but *Manaſſeh*, his Son and Succeſſor, reſtored it again in the higheſt and moſt flagitious Degree of Profaneneſs and Iniquity, even beyond that of

of the dark and ignorant Nations. 2 *Kings* xxi. 1—10. *He built up again the High-Places, which Hezekiah his Father had deſtroyed*, &c. He was alſo a grievous Perſecutor of all that would not conform to his idolatrous Eſtabliſhments, and ſo *ſhed innocent Blood* very much. *Amon*, his Son, followed his bad Example. *Joſiah*, his Grandſon, vigorouſly attempted a Reformation. 2 *Kings* xxiii. 24, 25. But the People never came heartily into it. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 14, &c. *All the chief of the Prieſts, and the People tranſgreſſed very much, after all the Abominations of the Heathen, and polluted the Houſe of the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jeruſalem. And the Lord God of their Fathers ſent to them by his Meſſengers, riſing up betimes, and ſending; becauſe he had Compaſſion on his People, and on his Dwelling-place; but they mocked the Meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his Words, and miſuſed his Prophets, until the Wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his People, till there was no Remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the King of the Chaldees, who ſlew their young Men with the Sword, in the Houſe of their Sanctuary; and had no Compaſſion upon young Man or Maiden, old Man, or him that ſtooped for Age, he gave them all into his Hand. And all the Veſſels of the Houſe of God, great and ſmall, and the Treaſures of the Houſe of the Lord, and the Treaſures of the King, and of his Princes; all theſe he brought to Babylon. And they burnt*

the Houſe of God, and brake down the Wall of Jeruſalem, and burnt all the Palaces thereof with Fire, and deſtroyed all the goodly Veſſels thereof. And them that eſcaped from the Sword, carried he away to Babylon; where they were Servants to him and his Sons, until the Reign of the Kingdom of Perſia.

OBSERVE—This dreadful Calamity came upon them gradually. Firſt, good King *Joſiah* was, in Judgment upon the Land, ſlain in Battle by *Pharaoh-Necho*, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 29. who put *Jehoahaz* that ſucceeded him into Chains, ſent him Priſoner into *Egypt*, and put the Land of *Judah* under a heavy Tribute. 2 *Kings* xxiii. 33. *Jehoiakim* ſucceeded, a wicked Prince like his Predeceſſors. In his third Year, *Nebuchadnezzar* took *Jeruſalem*, and carried away Part of the Veſſels of the Houſe of God, and many of the People into Captivity. Particularly, he gave Order to *Aſhpenaz the Maſter of his Eunuchs*, that he ſhould make Choice out of the Children of the royal Family, and of the Nobility of the Land, ſuch as he found to be of the faireſt Countenance, and the quickeſt Parts, to be carried to *Babylon*, and there made Eunuchs in his Palace, *Daniel* i. 1—4. whereby was fulfilled *Iſaiah*'s Prediction above an hundred Years before. *Iſaiah* xxxix. 7. Among theſe Youths were *Daniel, Hanamiah, Miſhael* and *Azariah*. *Dan.* i. 6, 7. Moreover the King was made a Tributary, and the

the whole Land reduced into Vaſſalage under the *Babylonians*. A ſevere Viſitation, but had not the proper Effect upon *Jehoiachin*, the next King, who was as corrupt as his Father. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 8, 9. He had been but three Months on the Throne, when *Nebuchadnezzar* again beſieged and took *Jeruſalem*, with the King and all the royal Family; all the moſt valuable things in the Temple, and in the King's Treaſures, with all the mighty Men of Valor, all the Craftsmen and Smiths, he took away, leaving none in the Land, but the pooreſt Sort. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12, 13, 14. Among the reſt, *Ezekiel*, (Chap. i. 1, 2.) and *Mordecai* (Eſth. ii. 5, 6.) were now carried Captives. Yet ſtill there was no Amendment of the Religion or Morals of the Nation. *Zedekiah*, the next and laſt King, was as bad as his Predeceſſors. 2 *Kin.* xxiv. 18, 19. And in about eleven Years, *Nebuchadnezzar*, after a long and cloſe Siege, took *Jeruſalem*, brake down its Walls, burnt the City and Temple, carried away all the ſacred Utenſils, and all the People, except a few of the very pooreſt to till the Ground, and reduced the whole Land of *Judea*, in a Manner, to utter Deſolation for the Sins thereof.

THE Propriety of this Diſpenſation will appear, if we reflect,

I. THAT the Lenity of God appeared in bringing this terrible Overthrow upon them

ſo gradually, after a Succeſſion of Judgments from leſs to greater, for the Space of Twenty-two Years; which ſhould have been a Warning to them, and by Experience have convinced them, that the Threatenings denounced by the Prophets would certainly be executed.

II. THAT it was a juſt Puniſhment of their Sins; particularly of their Idolatry, whereby they forſook God, and therefore God juſtly forſook them, and delivered them into the Hands of their Enemies, as *Moſes* had foretold. *Lev.* xxvi. 30—36.

III. THIS dreadful Calamity was the moſt effectual Means to work their Reformation, which was the End propoſed by the divine Wiſdom. Now, in their captive, diſconſolate State, they had time, and their Calamities had a natural tendency to give them a Diſpoſition, to reflect upon the long Series of Iniquity and Perverſneſs, which had brought them under the heavieſt of God's Judgments. Now *their own Wickedneſs corrected them, and their Backſlidings reproved them; now they* muſt *know and ſee, that it was an evil thing, and bitter, that they had forſaken the Lord their God, and that his Fear had not been in them.* Iſaiah ii. 19. In the Land of their Captivity the Sermons of the Prophets, declaiming with the higheſt Authority againſt their profane and vicious Practices, would be ſtill ſounding in their Ears, and

and their abject, wretched Condition, the Conſequence of ſuch Practices, would ſink them deep into their Hearts, and ſurely give them an utter Deteſtation of what they very well knew was the Cauſe of all their grievous Sufferings.

THEY had ſuffered themſelves to be ſhamefully infatuated by their falſe Prophets, who had prophesied to them in *Baal*, as the moſt infallible Oracle. *Jer.* ii. 8. They were Prophets *of the Deceit of their Hearts*, xxiii. 26. They had incouraged a Rabble of *Diviners*, *Dreamers*, *Enchanters* and *Sorcerers*, who had moſt impudently impoſed upon their Credulity, aſſuring them, in the Name of the Lord too, that they ſhould not ſerve the King of *Babylon*, Jer. xxvii. 9. xxviii. 4. xxix. 8, 9; that he ſhould not come againſt them, nor againſt the Land; xxxvii. 19. They *belied the Lord, and ſaid, it is not He, neither ſhall Evil come upon us; neither ſhall we ſee Sword*, nor *Famine*, Jer. v. 12. *but I will give you aſſured Peace in this Place.* xiv. 13. Thus they cauſed the People to err; and their Kings, Princes, and Prieſts concurred to ſtrengthen the Deluſion. *Jer.* ii. 26. v. 31. xxxii. 32. By the way, theſe Prophets and Prieſts were Men of very wicked Lives. *Zeph.* iii. 4. *Jer.* xxiii. 11. They *commited Adultery, walked in Lies, ſtrengthened the Hands of evil Doers*, and prevented their *returning from Wicked-*

neſs, Jer. xxiii. 14; they perſecuted and murthered the Juſt, in the midſt of *Jeruſalem. Lam.* iv. 13. From them *Profaneneſs went forth into all the Land*, Jer. xxiii. 15, which by their Means was *become full of Adulterers*, and *mourned becauſe of Swearing*, Verſe 10. See a more particular Deſcription of the Wickedneſs of the Land, *Ezek.* xxii. 6—13.

BUT now, where were all their falſe Prophets, with all their bold Pretenſions, and flattering Promiſes? The Deluſion is now quite at an End, and they find themſelves moſt miſerably deceived. Their Eyes are opened, and they are thoroughly convinced, they were a Set of the vileſt Impoſtors, who had deluded them into the moſt wretched Circumſtances. *The Prophets* were now *become Wind*, Jer. v. 13, *an everlaſting Reproach, a perpetual Shame, which* could not *be forgotten*, xxiii. 40. And in Proportion as theſe Deceivers were deteſted, the true Prophets, who would have drawn them to juſt Regards of God and his holy Law, would be eſteemed and honored.

DOUBTLESS the lying Prophets and Prieſts had filled their Heads wish ſpecious Pretences for their idolatrous Practices; and aſſured them, they were ſtill the beloved People of God, inveſted in all the diſtinguiſhing Privileges of his Church and peculiar People, and ſecure under his Protection; with

with great Oſtentation and Confidence crying out, *the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are theſe* [Men or Buildings] *Jer.* vii. 4. But now they found all their Sophiſtry to be lying Words, and could no longer take Aſſurance from their peculiar Privileges, or their magnificent Temple, when their Temple and City were both deſtroyed, and themſelves caſt out into an Heathen Land, where they were ſo long, and ſo ſhamefully ſtript of all their peculiar Honors. In ſhort, no Method could have been deviſed more proper to give this People a fixed Deteſtation of Idolatry, and the vile Arts by which they were ſeduced into it. And it had this Effect. They never more fell into Idolatry, but retain the greateſt Abhorrence of it unto this Day.

IV. THE Law of God, writen by *Moſes*, as the Rule of their Conduct in all Affairs civil and religious, and the Ground of their Happineſs, they had ſo far neglected, that once it was almoſt unknown and loſt among them. 2 *Kings* xxii. 8—12. This Contempt of the divine Law, the Prophets had frequently and ſtrongly proteſted againſt. (*Iſai.* v. 24. xxx. 9. *Jer.* vi. 19. viii. 8. ix. 13. *Hoſ.* viii. 12. *Amos* ii. 4. and in other Places) and publicly declared, that it would be their Ruin. And in their ruined State, this muſt be remembered, as the primary Reaſon of all their Sufferings; and they muſt be tho-

roughly ſenſible, that a due Regard to the Law of God, was the only Way to recover his Favor, and their own Proſperity; and accordingly muſt be diſpoſed to be attentive to it. For *Ezra*, after the Captivity, found ſo little Difficulty in introducing the publick Reading of the Law, that the People themſelves called for it. *Neh.* viii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 18, xiii. 1. *Ezra* was a ready Writer of the Law of God, *Ezra* vii. 6, 10, 11, 12, and active in propagating the Knowledge of it. Doubtleſs he wrote, or directed to be writen, ſeveral Copies of the Law, to be diſperſed into proper Hands. And whereas before the Captivity they had no Synagogues for publick Worſhip or Inſtruction, nor any Places to reſort to for either, unleſs the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, or the Cities of the *Levites*, or to the Prophets, when God was pleaſed to ſend them; thus Ignorance grew among the People; but after the Captivity Synagogues were erected among them in every City, where the Law was read every Sabbath, and other Acts of Devotion performed. This was the moſt effectual Method of preſerving the Knowledge of God and his Law, and a Senſe of their Duty. This was another good Effect of this Diſpenſation, and may juſtly be given as one good Reaſon of their being ſo ſtrongly fixed againſt Idolatry, ever after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity.

V. THIS

V. THIS Diſpenſation was alſo calculated to produce good Effects among the Nations, whither they were carried into Captivity. For wherever they were diſperſed in the eaſtern Countries, they would bring with them the Knowledge of the true God, now ſeriouſly impreſt upon their Hearts. But divine Providence, by ſuch ſignal Circumſtances of his Interpoſition, as were publiſhed and known over all the vaſt Extent of the eaſtern Empires, raiſed ſome of the captive *Jews* to the higheſt Poſts of Dignity and Power in the Courts of *Aſſyria* and *Perſia*. *Dan.* i. 19, 20. Inſomuch that the moſt haughty Monarchs openly confeſſed the living and true God, as the only and ſupreme God. *Dan.* ii. 47, 48, 49. iv. 34, *&c.* And made Decrees, that were publiſhed throughout their ſpacious Dominions, in Favor of the Profeſſion and Worſhip of him. *Dan.* iii. 29. vi. 25, *&c.* And the Affair of Queen *Eſther* and *Mordecai*, and the Decree of the Emperor *Ahaſuerus*, in Favor of all the *Jews* in his Empire, conſiſting of 127 Provinces, muſt, not only give the *Jews* every where great Diſtinction and Honor, but alſo render the great God more known, and his Religion more reſpectable; inſomuch that many of the People of the Land, many of the *Perſians*, became *Jews*, or Proſelytes to the Jewiſh Religion. *Eſther* viii. 11, *&c.* And the great CYRUS was ſo well acquainted with the

the true God, that, as one of his first Acts, after he was advanced to the Empire of *Persia*, he made a Decree for the Return of the *Jews* into their own Country, and for the rebuilding the Temple. *Ezra* i. 1—5. From all this it is clear, that the *Jews*, notwithstanding their Depravity in their own Country, during the Captivity of 70 Years, must have been a burning and a shining Light, all over the eastern Countries. And thus, in this Dispensation also, God, the Father and Governor of Mankind, was working for the Reformation and Improvement of the World, in that which is the true Excellency of their Nature, and the only Foundation of their Happiness.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Authors within the PERIOD *from the Building to the Destruction of the* TEMPLE.

LITERATURE in this Period received a considerable Advance; probably, by Means of the Schools of the Prophets.

SOLOMON was a great Author, as he was endowed with an uncommon Share of Wisdom. For *he spake three thousand Proverbs, and his Songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of Trees, from the Cedar that is in Lebanon,*

Lebanon, even unto the Hyſſop that ſpringeth out of the Wall; he ſpake alſo of Beaſts, and of Fowl, and of creeping things, and of Fiſhes. But of all his Works only three are taken into the ſacred Canon, namely, *Proverbs, Eccleſiaſtes,* and his *Song.*

PROVERBS.

THIS Book conſiſteth of the moſt uſeful Rules for the right Direction of Life in Religion and Morals, and is the moſt authentic and excellent of the kind that can be produced in Antiquity. It may be divided into five Parts. I. In the firſt Part the Tutor gives his Pupil Admonitions, Directions, Cautions, and Excitements to the Study of Wiſdom. *Chap.* firſt to the tenth. II. The ſecond contains the Proverbs of *Solomon,* properly ſo called, delivered in diſtinct, independent, general Sentences. *Chap.* 10th to the 22d, *Ver.* 17. III. The third Part begins at *Chap.* xxii. 17. where the Tutor again addreſſeth himſelf to his Pupil, and gives him freſh Admonitions to the diligent Study of Wiſdom; which is followed by a Sett of Inſtructions delivered in the imperative Mood to the Pupil, who is ſuppoſed all the while to be ſtanding before him. *Chap.* xxii. 17. to *Chap.* xxv. IV. The fourth Part is diſtinguiſhed by its being a Collection of *Solomon*'s Proverbs, ſelected, we may ſuppoſe,

out

out of a much greater Number, by the Men of *Hezekiah*; perhaps, by the Prophets *Isaiah*, *Hosea*, *Micah*, who all flourished in the Days of *Hezekiah*, and not improbably assisted him in his pious Endeavours to restore true Religion. 2 *Chron.* xxxi. 20, 21. This Part, as the second, consists chiefly of distinct, unconnected Sentences, and reacheth from *Chap.* xxv. to *Chap.* xxx. V. The fifth Part contains a Sett of wise Observations and Instructions, which *Agur*, the Son of *Jakeh*, delivered to his Pupils, *Ithiel* and *Ucal*, Chap. xxx. And the xxxi^st^ Chapter contains the Precepts which his Mother, possibly a *Jewish* Woman married to some neighbouring Prince, delivered to *Lemuel*, her Son; being passionately solicitous to guard him against Vice, to establish him in the Principles of Justice, and to have him married to a Wife of the best Qualities. These two Chapters are a kind of Appendix to the Book of *Proverbs*. Note — It is uncertain who *Agur* and the Mother of *Lemuel* were.

ECCLESIASTES.

THIS Book was writen by the *Preacher*, the Son of *David*, *King* of *Jerusalem*, Chap. i. 1; that is to say, by *Solomon*, (probably in the latter Part of his Life) as appears from *Chap.* i. 16. ii. 4, *&c.* The Subject of it is, an Enquiry into the chief Good, or Happiness of Man, in this World. And

I. HE

I. He confutes the falſe Opinion of thoſe that place Happineſs in human Wiſdom, or Philoſophy; in the Pleaſures, Amuſements, or Splendor of Life; in Honor, Magiſtracy, and Dominion; in Riches or Wealth. This, in the ſix firſt Chapters. II. He teaches, that true Felicity is to be found only in a ſerious Regard to God and Religion, in the ſix laſt Chapters. In both Parts he intermixes ſeveral incidental Reflections, which are of uſe to make us wiſe and pious. The whole is adapted to draw us from the inordinate Purſuit of earthly things, and from a wrong to a lawful Uſe of them; without any Offence to God, or Damage to ourſelves, till we arrive at a never-dying Felicity.

The SONG of SOLOMON.

The *Song of Songs*, or the moſt excellent Song, was compoſed by *Solomon*; and is a noble *Epithalamium*, or Marriage-Song, of the paſtoral kind, embelliſhed with the moſt grand and beautiful Images. In the Letter it is allowed to be a Celebration of the Marriage of *Solomon* to *Pharaoh*'s Daughter; but the *Jewiſh* Rabbies, and many of the Chriſtian Fathers, have underſtood it as a ſpiritual Allegory, repreſenting the Love of God, or as Chriſtians ſay, of Chriſt, to his Church; which,

which, in other Parts of Scripture, is repreſented as his Spouſe, *Pſalm.* xlv. 10, *&c. Hearken, O Daughter, and conſider*, &c. Ver. 13. *The King's Daughter is all glorious within*, &c. Which Pſalm *David* is ſuppoſed to have made upon the ſame Occaſion, namely, at *Solomon*'s Marriage; wherein, as the Bridegroom is juſtly ſuppoſed to be Chriſt, *Ver.* 3—8. ſo his Bride may well be ſuppoſed to be the Church. *John* Baptiſt compares Chriſt to a Bridegroom, *John* iii. 28, 29; and ſo doth our Lord himſelf, *Mat.* ix. 15. xxv. 1. and the Kingdom of Heaven he compares to a ſumptuous Marriage-Feaſt, *Mat.* xxii. 2. So alſo *Rev.* xix. 7. xxi. 2. the Marriage of the Lamb to his Bride, or Wife, clothed in fine Linen, (which doubtleſs repreſents the Chriſtian Church in a State of Purity) is ſpoken of. And St. *Paul*, in ſtrong Terms, ſuch as *Adam* uſed when he was married to *Eve*, repreſents Chriſt as a Huſband to the Church. *Epheſ.* v. 25, *&c.* And ſo alſo, 2 *Cor.* xi. 2. *I have eſpouſed you to one Huſband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte Virgin to Chriſt.* And frequently in the Prophets God is ſet forth as the Huſband or Bridegroom to the Church. *Iſai.* liv. 5. lxi. 10. lxii. 4, 5. *Jer.* iii. 20. xxxi. 32. *Hoſ.* ii. 2, 7, 16, 19. Hence, Apoſtacy from God is very commonly repreſented as Whoredom, and Adultery, both in the old and new Teſtament.

ALL

ALL this is very juſt, and ſupplieth very inſtructive and comfortable Meditation. And it is certainly the beſt Uſe we can make of this elegant Song to apply it thus to ſpiritual Purpoſes. But the Ideas, which the Scripture gives us of God's or Chriſt's Relation to the Church, as a Huſband, are too general, to ſerve as a Key to the great Variety of Particulars in this Poem; which therefore, as it is never quoted in any other Part of Scripture, can be reduced to no certain Rule of Interpretation, but muſt be left to every Perſon's Fancy or Imagination. Bp. PATRICK has done, perhaps, as much as can be done upon the ſpiritualizing Scheme.

WITHIN this Period were alſo writen the Prophecies of *Joel*, *Amos*, *Hoſea*, *Jonah*, *Iſaiah*, *Micah*, *Nahum*, *Jeremiah*, *Habakkuk*, *Zephaniah*, *Obadiah*. Theſe before the Captivity. During the 70 Years Captivity, *Lamentations*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, *Eſther*. After the Captivity, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, *Malachi*, I. and II. *Chronicles*. Theſe compleat the Canon of the old Teſtament. And whereas it is of great Uſe to the right Underſtanding of the Prophets to know the Reigns and Times in which they propheſied, and the particular Occaſions upon which any of them delivered their Prophecies, I ſhall now attempt to digeſt and range them in chronological Order, as follows.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

PROPHETS *before the* CAPTIVITY.

ABOUT Twenty-ſix Years after the Death of *Eliſha*, the Prophet, (2 *Kings* xiii. 20.) *Jonah the Son of Amittai, the Prophet, which was of Gath-heper*, was ſent by God with a Meſſage of Encouragement and Succeſs to *Jeroboam* II. King of *Iſrael*. 2 Kings xiv. 25. This might happen when *Jonah* was about 28 Years of Age.

JOEL i. ii. iii.

JOEL at *Jeruſalem* (Joel ii. 1, 15, 17.) might prophesy before *Amos* at *Samaria*, Amos i. 1. iv. 1. For *Amos*, Chap. iv. 7, 9. may refer to the Devaſtation by *Palmer-Worms*, &c. and Drought, which *Joel* predicted, *Chap.* i. 6, 7, 19, 20. However, as the Senſe of this Prophesy, in no Part, that I know of, depends upon the time, when it was delivered, there can be no Harm in ſuppoſing, that *Joel* prophesied about this time.

AMOS i—ix.

SOME time after *Joel*, *Amos* might begin to prophesy in the Kingdom of *Iſrael*. Certainly

tainly he did prophesy in those Days of *Uzziah* or *Azariah* King of *Judah*, and of *Jeroboam* II. King of *Israel*, in which they were Cotemporaries, *Chap.* i. 1. How long he continued is not intimated. He had no regular Education in the Schools of the Prophets, (which supposeth that other Prophets had) but was originally a Herdsman, and a *Gatherer of Sycamore Fruit*, or wild Figs, *Chap.* vii. 14. He had an express Commission from God to prophesy unto his People *Israel*, Ver. 15. This Book may consist of several distinct Discourses, but as they are without Date, we cannot assign the particular times when they were delivered.

HOSEA i. ii. iii.

HOSEA is justly supposed to be Cotemporary with *Amos*. He prophesied against the Ten Tribes, or the Kingdom of *Israel*, begining in the Reign of *Jeroboam* II. and prophesying in the Reigns of *Uzziah*, *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Hezekiah*, Kings of *Judah*. He predicted the Captivity of the Ten Tribes; and as that Captivity happened in the sixth Year of *Hezekiah*, probably he lived to see it accomplished by *Shalmaneser* King of *Assyria*; which was done about 64 Years after the Commencement of his prophetic Office.

THIS Prophet is commanded to *take unto* him *a Wife of Whoredoms, and Children of*

Whoredoms, Chap. i. 2. This might all be tranſacted in a Viſion, in the *Council of God*. See the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh Chapters of *Ezekiel*. Or it might be a Parable, to be ſpoken as ſuch to the Children of *Iſrael*. See *Ezek*. xxiv. 3, *&c*. Here that is ordered to be done as a Fact, which was only to be ſpoken as a Parable. But if the Prophet did really marry a lewd Woman, who had Children not by him, but by ſome other Man, this was no Sin in him, who did it by divine Command, in order to explain to the *Iſraelites* their Wickedneſs, and the Puniſhment of it. The adulterous Wife repreſented the *Iſraelites*, who by their Idolatries had gone a whoring from God, their own Huſband. The Children, which this Woman bare, are the ruinous Effects of the Idolatry of the Children of *Iſrael*. The firſt Baſtard was called *Jezreel*; and denoted the Vengeance which God would take upon the Houſe of *Jehu*, for the Blood which he ſhed in *Jezreel*, Chap. i. 4. The ſecond was called *Lo-ruhamah*, Ver 6. to denote, that God would no longer ſpare the Houſe of *Iſrael*, but take them quite away out of their Land. The Name of the third was *Lo-ammi*, Ver. 9. which ſignified, that the Relation between God and the *Iſraelites* was diſſolved.

HOSEA

HOSEA iv.

THE *Interregnum* in *Israel*, preceding the Reign of *Zechariah*, was doubtless a time of very great Disorder and Violence, and of much bloody Strife for the Crown. Probably, *Zechariah* gained it by cuting off Competitors. *Shallum* slew him, *Menahem* slew *Shallum*, and all within the Space of seven Months. To this sad State of things *Hosea* may well be supposed to refer, *Chap.* iv. 2. *By Swearing and Lying, and Killing and Stealing, and commiting Adultery, they break out, and Blood toucheth* [reacheth unto] *Blood.* Here, therefore, we may place the fourth Chapter of *Hosea.*

JONAH i. ii. iii. iv.

JONAH, I suppose, about the second Year of *Menahem*, King of *Israel*, and about the 70th Year of his Age, was sent to cry against *Nineveh*, about 700 Miles from *Gath-heper*, then a great, wealthy, populous, and haughty City, the chief Seat of the *Assyrian* Empire, and the Mistress of the World; which had long been remarkable for Luxury and Jollity, to a Proverb, κρεισσων Νινε ευφραινεσης, *better than merry Nineveh.* By *Zephaniah* it is called, *the rejoicing*, or joyous, *City*, Chap. ii. 15. To be sent with a Message of divine Wrath to such a Place as this could not but

ſeem a frightful and dangerous Errand to *Jonah*. He ſaw how much the *Iſraelites*, God's own People, hated and perſecuted the Prophets, who reproved and threatened them. What then could he expect from that great and wicked City, *Nineveh*, the Head-quarters of Pride and Sin? Further, he knew the Prophets very much hazarded their Reputation in the World, when employed in denouncing Judgments; becauſe God, being gracious, was ſlow in executing them. On this Account, the Prophets at *Bethel* and *Jeruſalem* were vilely abuſed and decried by inſolent and rude Infidels, who durſt even profeſs to *deſire*, or long for, *the Day of the Lord*, (Amos v. 18.) in a confident Perſuaſion, that it would never come; and dared to challenge God to haſten his Work. *Iſai.* v. 19. See alſo *Jer.* xvii. 15. *Ezekiel* xii. 22. And if this ſhould be *Jonah*'s Caſe at *Nineveh*, what could he expect but to be torn in Pieces for an Impoſtor? How muſt he, and the Religion he profeſſed, be expoſed to publick Contempt and Scorn? This was what he particularly dreaded. *Chap.* iv. 2. He was therefore reſolved *to flee from the Preſence of* [from before] *Jehovah*; that is, I ſuppoſe, to run away from the *Council* of God in the Land of *Iſrael*, to ſome remote Country beyond Sea *, where, he thought, it was never held. But

* Note — *Tarſhiſh* may ſignify any remote Country beyond Sea, as the *Indies* now with us. See Root 1827 in the Eng. Heb. Concordance.

But he was ſtopt by a Miracle, and at length obliged to deliver the doleful Meſſage, *Yet forty Days and* impenitent *Nineveh ſhall be overthrown.* Convinced of his miraculous Miſſion, § the King proclaimed a Faſt, and enjoined all the uſual Forms of Repentance; *and God repented of the Evil, which he had ſaid he would do unto them.*

IT is very probable, that the idolatrous Prieſts, and the Aſtrologers, Soothſayers, and Magicians, who muſt be numerous at *Nineveh*, as well as at *Babylon*, (*Iſai.* xlvii. 13. *Dan.* ii. 2.) would zealouſly endeavour to divert the King, when the firſt Fright was over, from attending to a Meſſage from *Jehovah*, as ſoon as ever they poſſibly could, before the forty Days were expired. They would naturally repreſent *Jonah* to the King and all the People, as an Impoſtor; and bear them in Hand that the Prediction was falſe, and would not be fulfilled. This muſt give the Prophet, who was zealous for the Glory of the God of *Iſrael*, very great Uneaſineſs; inſomuch, that he wiſhed for Death, *Chap.* iv. 2, 3; as *Elijah*, in a Caſe ſomewhat ſimilar, had done before him. 1 *Kings* xix. 4.

THE Queſtion of *Jehovah*, Jon. iv. 4. which we render, *Doſt thou well to be angry?* ſhould have been rendered, *Art thou very*

§ *Luke* xi. 30.

much grieved? And so *Ver.* 9. See *Heb. Eng. Concordance.* R. 748, 637.

PUL, the King of *Assyria*, who came against the Land of *Israel* in the Reign of *Menahem*, 2 Kings xv. 19. is supposed by Arch-Bishop USHER to be the King of *Nineveh*, to whom *Jonah* was sent. As it appears from the History, that *Pul* had no Design to make Conquest of the Land of *Israel*, I can assign no Reason, why he should reach his Arm over the Kingdom of *Syria*, which lay to the Extent of about 300 Miles, between his Dominions, and the Land of *Canaan*, to strike at *Israel*, but that he did it in Revenge for the supposed Insult, which *Jonah* had offered to him and his People.

ISAIAH vi. ii. iii. iv. v.

ISAIAH, the brightest Luminary of the *Jewish* Church, justly called the evangelical Prophet, he speaks so much, and so clearly of *Christ*, began to prophesy in the Year King *Uzziah* died, *Chap.* vi. 1. and prophesied in *Judah* in the successive Reigns of *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Hezekiah*. He was certainly alive and prophesied when *Merodach-baladen* sent his Embassy to *Hezekiah*, who had been sick, in the 14th Year of *Hezekiah*, and before Christ 714. Thus we certainly know that he prophesied 46 Years. There is an ancient and probable Tradition among the

the *Jews*, that he suffered Martyrdom under *Manasseh*, in the first Year of his Reign, before Christ 698, by being cruelly sawn asunder; to which the Apostle, *Heb.* xi. 37. is generally thought to have Respect. And then he must have continued 61 Years. See PIERCE upon *Heb.* xi. 37.

THE first Chapter, by Reason of the grand Exordium, might be judged proper to stand at the Front of the Book; but it gives such an Account of the distressed, desolate Condition of the Land of *Judah*, as agrees much better with the wicked and afflicted Reign of the Apostate *Ahaz*, than with the flourishing Circumstances of the Country in the Reigns of *Uzziah*, and of his Son and Successor *Jotham*, who were both, in the main, good Princes. Compare *Isai.* i. 7, 8, 9. with 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 1—16. and the whole 27th Chapter. But the second, third, fourth, and fifth Chapters of this Prophecy, do describe, and exactly correspond to, a State of national Wealth and Prosperity, which are usually attended with Pride, Arrogance, and Luxury. See *Chap.* ii. 6—18. iii. 16—25. v. 8, 11, 12.

THEREFORE, I take this to be the Order of those Chapters. In the sixth Chapter, and in the Year before Christ 759 the Prophet, in the Council of God, received his Commission; and soon after delivered the Contents of the second, third, fourth, and

fifth Chapters. And these Chapters contain all that remains of his Prophecies in the Reigns of *Uzziah* and *Jotham*, for about the Space of 16 Years, till the first Year of King *Ahaz*.

MICAH i. ii.

THESE two Chapters were delivered before the Destruction of *Samaria*, which is here predicted, *Chap.* i. 6. in the Reign of *Jotham*, Chap. i. 1. And therefore may be rightly placed about this time.

ISAIAH. vii.

IN the first Year of *Ahaz* King of *Judah*, *Rezin* King of *Syria*, and *Pekah* King of *Israel*, formed a Design of dethroning *Ahaz*, and of extirpating the Family of *David*, by seting up the Son of *Tabeal*, some potent, factious *Jew*, to be King of *Judah*. And therefore having no Design upon the Nation, but only upon the royal Family, marched directly to *Jerusalem*, and laid close Siege to it. But as it was the Will of God, not to extirpate the Family of *David*, but only to punish wicked *Ahaz*, he sent *Isaiah* to incourage him to make a vigorous Defence, and to assure him they should not prevail against him; and that the House of *David* should subsist till the *Messiah* was born. Then was the Prophecy delivered

to

to *Ahaz* contained in the ſeventh Chapter of *Iſaiah* *.

ISAIAH viii. ix. x. to the fifth Verſe.

AHAZ, a wicked Idolater, paid little Regard to what *Iſaiah* had ſpoken to him in the Name of the Lord. Therefore God ordered *Iſaiah* to take a large Roll of Parchment, and therein, with the *Pen of a Man*, i. e. in the common and moſt legible Way of writing, to put down and publiſh, what God ſhould further diſcover about the preſent Deliverance and future Calamities of *Judah*. The Roll was to be a Comment upon the Name of a Son, which was then born to the Prophet, and by divine Direction was

* ISAI. vii. 8. *Within* 65 *Years Ephraim ſhall be broken, that it be not a People.* This was predicted in the firſt Year of *Ahaz*. *Ahaz* reigned 16 Years, and in the ſixth Year of his Succeſſor, *Hezekiah*, *Shalmaneſer took Sameria, and carried away Iſrael* [Ephraim] *unto Aſſyria*. This makes but 16 and 5, or 21 Years. How then ſhall we make out 65 Years? This has very much puzzled the Critics. But obſerve, probably *Iſrael*, or *Ephraim*, was carried into Captivity by the *Aſſyrians* three times. I. By *Tiglath-Pileſer*. 1 Chron. v. 26. 2 *Kings* xv. 29. II. By his Son *Shalmaneſer*, 2 *Kings* xvii. 6. xviii. 10, 11. Thus *Ephraim* was no more a *Kingdom*. III. Probably, by *Eſarhaddon*, who finally carried away all Remains of the People; which is implied in his bringing new Inhabitants from *Babylon*, *Cuthah*, &c. 2 *Kings* xvii. 24. *Ezra* iv. 2. Thus *Ephraim* was no more a *People*. This happened in the 22d Year of *Maneſſeh*, 65 Years from the firſt of *Ahaz*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 677.

was called *Maher-ſha-lal-haſh-baz*, i. e. *make Speed to the Spoil, and haſten to the Prey*. Denoting the ſpeedy Deſtruction of the two confederate Kings of *Samaria* and *Damaſcus*. This Roll, I ſuppoſe, takes in the eighth and ninth Chapters of *Iſaiah*, and the five firſt Verſes of the 10th Chapter.

ISAIAH xvii.

THIS Chapter relates to the ſame Subject, the Deſtruction of *Iſrael* and *Damaſcus*; and therefore, I judge, it was delivered in the ſame Year, after the Roll was finiſhed. For in about two Years after, *Tiglathpileſer*, King of *Aſſyria*, took *Damaſcus*, and carried the People therein captive to *Kir*. 2 Kings xvi. 9.

ISAIAH i.

PEKAH and *Rezin* failing in their Attempt upon *Jeruſalem*, (2 Kings xvi. 5. *Iſai.* vii. 1.) the next Year, 741, they returned with Forces better appointed, and Councils better concerted; and dividing themſelves into three Armies, one under *Pekah*, another under *Rezin*, and a third under *Zichri*, *a mighty Man of Ephraim*, they fell upon the Country in three different Parts, making every where terrible Havock and Slaughter, and carrying away a prodigious Number of Captives. See 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 5—9. And no ſooner was the Land freed from thoſe

Enemies,

Enemies, but it was invaded by the *Edomites*, on the South, and the *Philiſtines*, on the Weſt, who treated it with the ſame Cruelty, ſlaying, plundering, and carrying away Captives. 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 17, 18, 19. Thus was *Judah* grievouſly diſtreſſed all over the Country, and brought exceeding low, which lately had been high in Wealth and Power, becauſe they and their King had forſaken the Lord their God. And upon this Occaſion, moſt probably, *Iſaiah* delivered the prophetic Sermon, contained in the firſt Chapter, as it is very ſuitable to the State of the Nation at that time.

ISAIAH xxviii.

THIS Chapter, relating to the Deſtruction of *Ephraim*, or the Ten Tribes, without any mention of *Syria* or *Damaſcus*, lieth between the Deſtruction of *Damaſcus*, 740, and the Captivity of the Ten Tribes, 721.

HOSEA v. vi.

AHAZ, greatly diſtreſſed by *Pekah*, *Rezin*, &c. called in *Tiglath-pileſer*, King of *Aſſyria*, to his Help, 2 *Kings* xvi. 7. 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 16. And *Menahem*, King of *Iſrael*, about 30 Years before that, had hired *Pul*, King of *Aſſyria*, to confirm the Kingdom in his Hand, 2 *Kings* xv. 19; though they reaped no Benefit from them. Theſe are the only times

times in which the Kings of *Judah* and *Israel* applied to the *Assyrian* for Assistance. And whereas *Hosea*, Chap. v. 13. mentions both those Applications, the fifth and sixth Chapters must be taken in after *Ahaz* had applied to *Tiglath-pileser*.

ISAIAH xiv. 28, *&c.*

THE *Philistines* triumphed over *Israel* all the Days of *Ahaz*. But in the Year *Ahaz* died, *Isaiah* delivered the *Burden*, or Message, relating to them, *Chap.* xiv. 28, *&c.* which was fulfilled by *Hezekiah*, Son and Successor to *Ahaz*. 2 Kings xviii. 8.

ISAIAH xv. xvi.

THE *Moabites* had not used the *Israelites* well, who fled for Shelter from the Ravages of *Pekah* and *Rezin*. With this Inhumanity they are ironically upbraided, *Isai.* xvi. 3, 4. But now they are told, the Oppressor and Spoiler were ceased, and the Throne of *Hezekiah* should *be established in Mercy, and he should sit upon it in Truth*, &c. Therefore, this Prophecy against *Moab*, must have been delivered about the Begining (perhaps in the second Year) of *Hezekiah*'s Reign. And Dr. PRIDEAUX supposeth it was accomplished by *Shalmaneser*, three or four Years after, when, as he thinks, *Shalmaneser*, previously to the Siege of *Samaria*, subdued the *Moab-*

ites,

ites, to prevent any Incurſions, or Attacks, from that Quarter.

HOSEA vii—xiv.

THE Prophecies in theſe Chapters were delivered (1.) after *Ephraim*, or the King of *Iſrael*, had called to *Egypt* for Succour, *Chap.* vii. 11. xii. 1. as *Menahem* had done before to *Aſſyria*. 2 Kings xv. 19. But the only time they applied to *Egypt* was, when King *Hoſhea*, revolting from *Shalmaneſer*, ſent Meſſengers to *So* King of *Egypt*. 2 Kings xvii. 4. Which occaſioned *Shalmaneſer*'s beſieging of *Samaria*, and carrying the Ten Tribes into Captivity. And therefore theſe Chapters might be delivered about three Years before that Event. (2.) Theſe Prophecies were delivered after the firſt Year of *Shalman*, or *Shalmaneſer*, who, according to Dr. PRIDEAUX, began to reign in the Year before Chriſt 728, or 729. For the Prophet *Hoſea* refers to the Deſtruction of *Beth-arbel* by *Shalman*, Chap. x. 14. And they were delivered before the taking of *Samaria*, which was in the 8th Year of *Shalmaneſer*, before Chriſt 721; for the Prophet evidently, in thoſe Chapters, ſuppoſeth, that *Ephraim*, or the Ten Tribes, were not yet carried into Captivity. Therefore, they were delivered after the Deſtruction of *Beth-arbel*, and before the Captivity of the Ten Tribes, about the time above noted.

MI-

MICAH iii, iv, v, vi, vii.

THE laſt Verſe of the third Chapter of *Micah* was uttered in the time of *Hezekiah*, Jer. xxvi. 18; and here may both that Chapter, and all that follow it be placed, as propheſied in ſome time of *Hezekiah*'s firſt 13 Years, before *Sennacherib* beſieged *Jeruſalem*. For the Prophet ſeems to ſpeak of that Siege and *Sennacherib*'s Blaſphemy, Chap. v. 1, 5. He ſpeaketh glorious things of *Chriſt* and his Kingdom, and nameth the very Town where he ſhould be born, Chap. v. 2. In Chapter iv. 1, 2, 3, he uſeth the very Words of *Iſaiah*, Chap. ii. 2, 3, 4, to expreſs the Conflux to the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, his Power in it, and the Peace which, at length, it ſhould give to the World.

NAHUM i, ii, iii.

AFTER *Shalmaneſer*, King of *Nineveh*, had taken *Samaria*, and carried the Ten Tribes captive, *Nahum* might predict the Ruin of *Nineveh*, then the Capital of the *Aſſyrian* Empire.

ISAIAH xxiii.

SHALMANESER, having taken *Samaria*, turned his Arms againſt the City of *Tyre*, which held out againſt him five Years, and then was delivered from the Siege by the Death

Death of *Shalmaneſer*. By this Succeſs they were too much elated, and growing very inſolent, this occaſioned the Prophecy againſt them in this Chapter; which foretels the miſerable Overthrow of *Tyre*, which was effected by *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* An. 715, 720.

ISAIAH xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii.

THESE Chapters may refer to the final Deſolation of *Judea* and *Jeruſalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*. But I can diſcover no Marks of the time when they were delivered. However, with the Threatenings he mixes many gracious Promiſes and Comforts. See Dr. LIGHTFOOT.

ISAIAH xxxviii, xxxix.

IN this Year King *Hezekiah* fell ſick, and the other Affairs happened, which are recorded in this Chapter. For 15 Years are added to *Hezekiah*'s Life, Chap. xxxviii. 5. and as he reigned in all 29 Years, this muſt have been the 14th Year of his Reign. And that it happened when the Intentions of *Sennacherib*, King of *Aſſyria*, to attack *Jeruſalem* were known, appears from *Iſaiah* xxxviii. 6.

ISAIAH xxix, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv.

HEZEKIAH, having refuſed to pay the annual Tribute to the King of *Aſſyria*, towards

wards the End of the 14th Year, *Sennacherib* coming upon him with a numerous Army, he made all Manner of Preparation for a vigorous Defence. 2 *Kings* xviii. 13. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. *Isai.* xxxvi. Particularly, he entered into an Alliance with the King of *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*. 2 *Kings* xviii. 21. *Isai.* xxxvi. 6. This was a Measure displeasing to God, and therefore is protested against by his Prophet *Isaiah* in the xxxth and xxxist Chapters. And at the same time all the other Chapters, from the xxixth to the xxxvith Chapter, especially those that have immediate Reference to this Invasion, might have been dictated to the Prophet by the Spirit of God.

ISAIAH xxii. Verse 1 to 15.

As in this Paragraph are manifest Allusions to *Sennacherib*'s Invasion and *Hezekiah*'s Preparations for the Defence of *Jerusalem*, (compare Verse 9, 10, 11. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 5, 30.) this prophetick Admonition to the People, who depended too much upon these Preparations, probably was delivered about this time. See LOWTH's Comment. on the Place.

ISAIAH xxi.

THE Inhabitants of *Kedar* were the Descendents of *Ishmael*, Gen. xxv. 13, and were one Species of *Arabians* dwelling in *Arabia petræa*.

petræa. Thefe were to be ruined within a Year after this Prophecy was given out. Moft probably they were overthrown either by *Sennacherib* as he went into, or returned out of *Egypt*; or by *Tirhakah* King of *Ethiopia*, as he advanced out of *Egypt* againft *Sennacherib.* 2 *Kin.* xix. 9. And therefore, this Prophecy may be placed at this time, or within a Year or two of it.

ISAIAH xx.

HEZEKIAH, having treated with *Sennacherib*, and agreed to pay him a Sum of Money, 2 *Kings* xviii. 14, 15, 16, *Sennacherib* turned his Arms againft *Egypt*; which he greatly diftreffed for three Years together, *Ifa.* xx. 3, 4. But firft he fent *Tartan*, one of his Generals, before him to take *Afhdod*, the Key to *Egypt*. At this time the Prophecy againft *Egypt*, in the xxth Chapter of *Ifaiah*, was delivered. Note—*Sennacherib* is, in Ver. 1, called *Sargon.* Ver. 5. *They*, the Jews, *fhall be afraid and afhamed of Ethiopia their Expectation, and of Egypt their Glory.*

ISAIAH xviii, xix.

THESE two Chapters are alfo leveled againft *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*, upon which the *Jews* relied too much; and therefore might be delivered about the fame time.

ISAIAH x. Ver. 5, &c. xi, xii, xiii, xiv. to Ver. 28.

IT appears from Chap. x. 8—12, which is a *Prosopopoeia*, or supposed Speech of the King of *Assyria*, that this Chapter was delivered after the taking of *Samaria* by *Shalmaneser*, 721; and some time before *Sennacherib* besieged *Jerusalem*, 710, who was the only King of *Assyria* that besieged *Jerusalem* after the taking of *Samaria*. And the Speech in this Place bearing a near Affinity to that of *Sennacherib*. 2 Kings xix. 10—14. *Isaiah* xxxvii. 10—14, it is probable that this, and the other Chapters, to the 28th Verse of the xivth Chapter, were delivered about the time *Sennacherib* besieged *Jerusalem*. Note—In Chapter x. 11, *Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria*, &c. *Sennacherib* speaks as King of *Assyria*, and so takes in what his Father *Shalmaneser* had done, as if done by himself.

ISAIAH xxxvi, xxxvii.

SENNACHERIB returning out of *Egypt*, where he had been 3 Years, notwithstanding the Agreement of Peace, which he made with *Hezekiah*, marched his Army again into *Judea*, laid siege to *Lachish*, and from thence sent three of his Generals with a proud and blasphemous Message to *Jerusalem*,

lem, 2 Kings xviii. 17, 18. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 9, &c. This Event, with the Circumſtances which attended and followed it, are recorded in the xxxvith and xxxviith Chapters of *Iſaiah*.

NOTE—Before *Sennacherib* laid ſiege to *Jeruſalem*, *Tirhakah*, King of *Ethiopia*, advanced againſt him out of *Egypt*. 2 *Kings* xix. 9. But, as the Prophet *Iſaiah* had predicted, did the *Jews* no Service; for he was overthrown by *Sennacherib*, who after that returned to *Jeruſalem*, where his Army being 185000 Men, were all miraculouſly deſtroyed in one Night. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* at the Year 710.

ISAIAH xl, xli, xlii, xliii, &c. to the End of the Book.

As there is no Direction to lay theſe Chapters, or any of them, in any particular time, they may all be alloted to the Eleven laſt Years of *Hezekiah*'s prolonged Life.

ISAIAH xxii. Ver. 15 to the End.

SHEBNA had been Secretary to King *Hezekiah*, and the good and pious *Eliakim*, the Maſter of his Houſhold, *Iſai.* xxxvi. 3. 22. *Shebna*, by the Queſtions, Chap. xxii. 16, ſeems to have been a Foreigner, and not well affected to the jewiſh Religion. *What haſt thou* to do *here? and whom*, what

Relations *hast thou here?* It is possible this *Shebna*, a Man of great Abilities, might have got the young King *Manasseh*, but 12 Years old, and the whole Management of Affairs, into his own Hands; having routed *Eliakim* by such Arts as Courtiers are wont to practise. For he was now both Treasurer, and Master of the Houshold. To this, perhaps, the wicked Conduct of *Manasseh* may be assigned. *Shebna*, secure of the Stability and Continuance of his Power and Grandeur, was hewing out a magnificent Sepulchre for himself and Heirs, to perpetuate his Memory to all succeding times. On this Occasion, *Isaiah* might publish this Prophecy, predicting *Shebnah*'s Captivity and Death, in a remote foreign Country, and the future Exaltation of good *Eliakim*. This, which would greatly exasperate *Shebna*, and might occasion *Isaiah*'s being put to a cruel Death, [sawn asunder, *Heb.* xi. 37.] was fulfilled about twenty-two Years after, when *Shebna* was taken Captive with *Manasseh* by *Esarhaddon*, and carried to *Babylon*, where *Shebna* continued all his Life. But *Manasseh*, upon his Repentance, was restored to the Throne of *Judah*. And then, probably, good *Eliakim* was restored, and intrusted with the Management of all his Affairs, and assisted him in the great Reformation he made in Religion. 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 11—17. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* Anno 677. *Manasseh* 22.

JERE-

JEREMIAH i, ii.

IN this Year *Jeremiah*, in the Council of God, received his prophetic Commiſſion, as in the firſt Chapter. See alſo Chap. xxv. 3. And in this Year probably he publiſhed the Admonitions, Warnings, and Threatenings, in the ſecond Chapter.

JEREMIAH xi, Verſe 1—18.

THE Prophet, Ver. 2—9, moſt probably refers to the Covenant, which *Joſiah* publickly made to keep God's Commandments, upon finding the Book of the Law. 2 *Kings* xxii. 11. xxiii. 3. This was in the 18th Year of King *Joſiah*. 2 *Kings* xxii. 3.

JEREMIAH iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xii, &c. to the xxi.

THESE Chapters, for any thing that appears to the contrary, do lie in regular Order, nor have we any Ground or Intimation for tranſpoſing any of them. There is a Date, Chap. iii. 6, *In the Days of Joſiah*, without mentioning the Year of his Reign; which, however, ſhews, that that Chapter was delivered in ſome Part of his Reign. And whereas a ſevere Drought is frequently mentioned in ſeveral of theſe Chapters, (*viz.* Chap. iii. 3. v. 24, 25. viii. 13, 20. ix. 10, 12. xii. 4. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.) this ſhews, that they

are to be laid together in the ſame Year, or Years, in which the Drought continued; and all the reſt, to the xxiſt, may follow in order of time; and all might be delivered in the laſt Years of King *Joſiah*. Dr. LIGHTFOOT.

JEREMIAH xi, Ver. 18, to the End.

IN ſome Part of the ſame Years the Men of *Anathoth* might conſpire againſt *Jeremiah*.

HABAKKUK i, ii, iii. ZEPHANIAH i, ii, iii.

As theſe two Prophets prophesied the ſame things, that *Jeremiah* did, and upon the ſame Occaſion, that is, Deſtruction and Deſolation upon *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, becauſe of the many heinous Sins they were guilty of, they might prophesy about this time.

JEREMIAH xxii. Ver. 1—24.

JEREMIAH being ſent of God to the King's Houſe, there proclaimed God's Judgments againſt him and his Family, contained in theſe Verſes of this Chapter. This was ſoon after *Jehoahaz*, or *Shallum*, was carried captive into *Egypt*, by *Pharaoh-necho*, King of *Egypt*, who ſlew *Joſiah*, Ver. 10, 11. *Weep not for the Dead*, Joſiah, *but weep ſore for him that goeth away*, Jehoahaz; *for he*

he ſhall return no more. Note—*Jehoahaz* reigned but 3 Months.

JEREMIAH xxvi.

AFTER that, the Prophet was ordered to go to the Temple, and to denounce to all the People the Judgments of God, if they did not repent. By this he was brought in Danger of his Life, through the Reſentment of the Prieſts and Prophets, *Ver.* 7, 8; but was preſerved by the Princes, *Ver.* 16.

JEREMIAH xxv.

IN this Chapter, and in the Begining of this Year, *Jeremiah* propheſied of the coming of *Nebuchadnezzar* againſt *Judah* and *Jeruſalem.*

JEREMIAH xxxv.

THE *Rechabites*, upon *Nebuchadnezzar's* begining to invade the Land of *Judea*, retired out of the Country to *Jeruſalem*, where *Jeremiah* found them, in this Chapter.

JEREMIAH xlvi.

IN the ſame Year, after *Nebuchadnezzar* had defeated the Army of *Pharaoh-necho*, this Prophecy relating to the Gentiles, was delivered.

JEREMIAH xxxvi. Ver. 1—9.

IN the ſame Year God commanded *Jeremiah* to collect, and write in a Roll, all the Words of Prophecy, which had been ſpoken by him againſt *Iſrael* and *Judah*, and againſt the Nations. Which he executed by the Aſſiſtance of *Baruch*, his *Amanuenſis*; who, as *Jeremiah* was then under Confinement, *Ver.* 5, read the Roll in the Temple upon the Faſting-day, *i. e.* the great Day of Atonement, being the 10th of the ſeventh Month.

JEREMIAH xlv.

BARUCH being very much affrighted at the Threats contained in the Roll, and probably uneaſy under Apprehenſions of the Danger he might incur by reading it publicly, *Jeremiah*, by the Command of God, delivered to him the Meſſage of Encouragement and Comfort contained in this Chapter.

DANIEL i.

IMMEDIATELY after this, *Nebuchadnezzar*, who ſet out upon his Expedition the Year before, laid Siege to *Jeruſalem*, and took it; and bound *Jehoiakim* in Fetters, with a Deſign to carry him to *Babylon*. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 6. But upon *Jehoiakim*'s Submiſſion, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 1, he did not car-

ry

ry him to *Babylon*, but restored him to the Kingdom. Nevertheless, he carried great Numbers of the People, and Sons of the royal Family, and of the Nobility, Captives, among the rest *Daniel*.

JEREMIAH xxxvi. Verse 9. to the End of the Chapter.

THIS Year, after the *Chaldeans* were gone from *Jerusalem*, *Jehoiakim*, and his People growing worse and worse, in the ninth Month, at the Fast, which was then proclaimed, on Account of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s having taken the City the Year before, *Baruch* again read the Roll in the House of the Lord, *Ver.* 9, 10. Which coming to the King's Ear, and Part of the Roll being read to him, he, thinking perhaps, that *Nebuchadnezzar* had already executed the divine Threatenings, and nothing more was now to be feared, and that the Prophet was a malicious, troublesome Fellow, burnt the Roll, and commanded *Jeremiah* and *Baruch* to be apprehended. But they could not be found, for the Lord hid them. Note—*Jeremiah* was now at Liberty.

DANIEL ii.

IN this Year, which was the second of *Nebuchadnezzar*, according to the *Babylonish* Account, the 4th according to the *Jewish*,

Daniel

Daniel revealed to *Nebuchadnezzar* his Dream.

JEREMIAH xxii. Ver. 24, to the End.

IN this Year this Prophecy was declared against *Jehoiachin*, or *Coniah*, who reigned but 3 Months, and then, with many others, was carried into Captivity. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 11, &c. His Uncle *Zedekiah* succeeded him. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 17.

JEREMIAH xxiii.

This Chapter might be delivered at the same time with the foregoing Prophecy.

JEREMIAH xiii. Ver. 15, to the End.

BY the King and Queen mentioned *Ver.* 18, are probably meant *Jehoiachin* and his Mother. See Chap. xxii. 26. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12. Thus, this Prophecy must have been delivered about the same time with the foregoing.

JEREMIAH xxiv.

AFTER *Jehoiachin* or *Jeconiah* was carried into Captivity by *Nebuchadnezzar*, this Prophecy was delivered.

JEREMIAH xlix. Verse 34, to the End.

IN this Year also is to be placed the Prophecy against *Elam*, a Kingdom upon the River

River *Ulai*, eaſtward beyond the *Tigris*, in which ſtood *Shuſkan*, afterward the Metropolis of the Kingdom of *Perſia*.

JEREMIAH xxix.

ABOUT the ſecond Year of *Zedekiah*'s Reign, *Jeremiah*'s Letter, contained in this Chapter, was ſent to the captive Jews at *Babylon*; and an impious Anſwer returned by *Shemaiah*.

JEREMIAH xxx, xxxi.

THESE two Chapters, which aſſure the captive Jews, that they ſhould not only return again to *Judea*, but alſo be the particular Care of the divine Providence to the End of the World, to ſhew the Certainty of the incouraging Contents, are ordered to be written in a Book, Chap. xxx. 2, about the ſame time with the foregoing Letter, and probably were ſent to the captive Jews in *Babylon*, whom they principally reſpected.

JEREMIAH xxvii.

THIS Chapter is to be placed in this Year, (See Chap. xxviii. 1.) namely, after the Departure of *Nebuchadnezzar* out of *Judea* and *Syria*, when the Kings of the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Edomites*, *Zidonians*, *Tyrians*, &c. ſent an Embaſſy to *Zedekiah*, propoſing to him a League againſt the King of *Babylon*.

Note—

Note—In the firſt Verſe, *Jehoiakim* is put for *Zedekiah*, [See Ver. 3.] probably by a Miſtake of the Tranſcriber, who might then have his Eye upon the firſt Verſe of the foregoing Chapter.

JEREMIAH xxviii.

IN this Year the Affair concerning *Hananiah* the falſe Prophet, related in this Chapter was tranſacted. Note—The firſt Verſe, according to the beſt Commentators, ſhould be read thus, *When it had been ſo*, [i. e. when I had continued prophesying with a Yoke upon my Shoulders from that Year, which was] *in the Begining of the Reign of Zedekiah, until the fourth Year*, &c. See *Glaſs. Phil. ſacra Lib.* IV. *Tract.* I. *Obſerv.* V. *Pag.* 860. *Nold. Concord. Nota* 677, and LOWTH upon the Place.

JEREMIAH l, li.

THESE two Chapters contain a Book of Prophecies, which *Jeremiah* wrote, and ſent to *Babylon*, by *Seraiah*, who was ſent thither by *Zedekiah*, in the 4th Year of his Reign, Chap. li. 59, &c. [*when he went with*, rather, *from Zedekiah*, &c.] See *Nold. Concord.* under אֵת or אֶת No. 1.

EZEKIEL i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii.

In the 5th Year of *Jehoiachin*'s Captivity, which was alſo the 5th of *Zedekiah*'s Reign, *Ezekiel*,

Ezekiel, a captive Prieſt in *Chaldea*, received his prophetic Commiſſion in the Council of God, and had the Revelations and Prophecies contained in the ſeven firſt Chapters of his Book. Note—*Ezekiel* dates his Prophecies from the Year in which himſelf and King *Jeboiachin* were carried into Captivity.

EZEKIEL viii, ix, x, xi.

THIS Year *Ezekiel* in a Viſion was carried to *Jeruſalem*, ſhewn the ſeveral Sorts of Idolatry practiſed there by the *Jews* in the very Temple; and had revealed unto him the Puniſhments which God would inflict upon them for thoſe Abominations, and the divine Protection of thoſe in Captivity, who continued ſteady and faithful to his Service.

EZEKIEL xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii, xix.

ABOUT this time, *Zedekiah* having entered into a Confederacy with the King of *Egypt*, and broken the ſolemn Oath of Fidelity, which he had ſworn to King *Nebuchadnezzar*, God, both by Types and Words of Revelation, foreſhewed to *Ezekiel* the taking of *Jeruſalem* by the *Chaldeans*, *Zedekiah*'s Flight by Night, the puting out of his Eyes, his Impriſonment and Death at *Babylon*, the carrying away of the *Jews*, and the Remains of the *Iſraelites*, contained in the above-

bove-mentioned Chapters. Note—*Daniel*, though then but a young Man, was grown to ſuch a Pitch of Piety and Holineſs, as to be matched by God himſelf, with *Noah* and *Job*. Ezek. xiv. 14, 20.

EZEKIEL xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii.

THE Elders of *Iſrael* came to *Ezekiel* to enquire of the Lord; but God refuſeth to be enquired of by ſuch wicked Hypocrites; and in theſe four Chapters denounces the Judgments their abominable Impieties deſerved.

JEREMIAH xxi, xxxiv. Ver. 1—8.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR having advanced a great Army againſt *Judea*, 2 *Kin.* xxv. 1, to puniſh *Zedekiah* for his Perjury and Rebellion, *Zedekiah* firſt ſent *Paſhur* and *Zephaniah* to *Jeremiah*, to deſire him to enquire of the Lord; by whom *Jeremiah* returned the Anſwer related in the 21ſt Chapter. Afterward, *Jeremiah* was ordered in Perſon to deliver to *Zedekiah* the Prediction contained in Chap. xxiv. 1—8.

JEREMIAH xlvii.

PHARAOH-HOPHRA marching out of *Egypt* to the Relief of his Ally *Zedekiah* againſt *Nebuchadnezzar*, who was advancing to beſiege *Jeruſalem*, in his Way took *Ga-*

za

za, a Town of the Philiſtines. A little before this Event, *Jeremiah* uttered this Prophecy againſt the *Philiſtines*.

JEREMIAH xlviii, xlix, Ver. 1—34.

THESE Prophecies, relating to the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Edomites*, &c. who would be obnoxious to the Ravages of the *Aſſyrian* Armies, might be delivered at the ſame time with the former.

EZEKIEL xxiv, xxv.

ON the tenth Day of the tenth Month in the ſame Year, when *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Army had laid Siege to *Jeruſalem*, the ſame was revealed, on the very ſame Day, to *Ezekiel* in *Chaldea*; and the Deſtruction of the City was typified by a boiling Caldron; the ſame Day alſo his Wife died, as recorded in Chap. xxiv. But Vengeance is denounced againſt the neighbouring Countries, that rejoiced in the preceding Calamities, or ſhould rejoice in thoſe that were to come upon *Judea*. Chap. xxv.

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 1—11.

NOT long after *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Army had laid Siege to *Jeruſalem*, *Pharaoh-Hophra* came with a great Force to the Relief of *Zedekiah*. Upon which *Nebuchadnezzar* raiſed the Siege of *Jeruſalem* in order to march

againſt him. Upon which *Zedekiah* ſent a Meſſage to *Jeremiah*, before he was put into Priſon, Chap. xxxvii. 4, the Anſwer to which is contained in Chap. xxxvii. 1—11.

JEREMIAH xxxiv. Ver. 8. to the End.

UPON the Approach of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Army, the terrified Jews entered into a ſolemn Covenant, to obſerve God's Law, and to releaſe the Hebrew Servants, which they kept in Bondage contrary to his Law. But when the *Chaldeans* were gone to meet *Pharaoh*, the general Opinion being, that they would return no more, the Jews openly violated the Covenant of Reformation, by obliging all their Servants to return to their former Servitude. For which impious Act, the Prophet *proclaimed Liberty to the Sword*, &c.

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 11—16.

WHEN the *Chaldeans* were gone to meet *Pharaoh*, *Jeremiah* was releaſed out of Priſon; and intending to retire to *Anathoth*, from the Calamities of the Siege, which he knew would be renewed, was taken up for a Deſerter as he was paſſing through the Gate, and clapt in Priſon; but principally for perſiſting, that the City ſhould again be beſieged and taken by *Nebuchadnezzar*.

JERE-

JEREMIAH xxxii. xxxiii.

WHILE *Jeremiah* was in Prison, the Contents of these Chapters were transacted.

EZEKIEL xxix. Ver. 1—17. xxx.

UPON the Approach of the *Chaldeans*, the *Egyptians* treacherously deserted *Zedekiah*, and returned into their own Country. Upon this Occasion, *Ezekiel* denounces the Displeasure of God against their Perfidy, predicts their Desolation, and at length, (within 40 Years, Chap. xxix. 13.) their being reduced to one of the basest of Nations, insomuch that they should no more have a Prince of their own to reign over them. Chap. xxx. 13. Which hath been remarkably fulfilled, even unto this Day. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad Annum* 589. *Zedekiah* 10.

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 17 to the End.

ON the Retreat of the *Egyptians*, *Nebuchadnezzar* returned to the Siege of *Jerusalem*; and it was then King *Zedekiah*, fearing the Issue, sent for *Jeremiah* out of Prison to consult him.

JEREMIAH xxxviii. Ver. 1—14.

THE Princes, offended at *Jeremiah*, cast him into a low, lothsome, miry Dungeon, where he must have perished, had not *Ebed-melech* gained leave to draw him out, and to place

 him

him in a better Situation in the Court of the Prison.

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 15 to the End.

WHILE *Jeremiah* was in the Court of the Prison, God by him sent a Message of Mercy and Deliverance to *Ebed-melech.*

JEREMIAH xxxviii. Ver. 14 to the End.

ZEDEKIAH again sent for *Jeremiah* out of the Court of the Prison into the Temple, there secretly to enquire of him about the Issue of the Siege.

EZEKIEL xxvi. xxvii. xxviii.

HERE God declares his Judgments against *Tyre*, for insulting the calamitous State of *Jerusalem*, closely besieged by *Nebuchadnezzar*. Note—*Daniel*'s Wisdom, though but about 36, was become famous over all the East. *Chap.* xxviii. 3.

EZEKIEL xxxi.

GOD declares his Judgments against *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians.*

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 1—11. lii. Ver. 1—30.

THE Account of *Jerusalem*'s being taken, with the subsequent Circumstances. Upon this

this Occasion the 137th Psalm was composed.

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 11—15. xl. Ver. 1—7.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR giveth Charge concerning *Jeremiah* to *Nebuzaradan*; who treateth him in a kind and friendly Manner.

JEREMIAH xl. Ver. 7. to the End. xli. xlii. xliii. Ver. 1—8.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR makes *Gedaliah* Governor of *Judea*. *Ishmael* slays him. *Johanan*, &c. by Force carry *Jeremiah* into *Egypt*.

CHAP. XXXV.

PROPHETS *after the Destruction of the* TEMPLE, *during the* CAPTIVITY.

JEREMIAH xliii. Ver. 8. to the End. xliv.

THE Propecies contained in these Chapters were revealed, and published to the *Jews*, in the Land of *Egypt*.

The Book of LAMENTATIONS.

THIS Book, which mournfully bewails the Desolation of *Jerusalem*, and the Temple, was composed by *Jeremiah* after that sad Event, possibly, in the Land of *Egypt*;

where *Jeremiah* might end his Days; for we never hear of his Return from thence.

EZEKIEL xxxiii.

THE begining of this Chapter is upon a general Subject, and of uncertain Date. From the 21st Verse it is dated from the time, when *Ezekiel* first received the News of the City's being taken and destroyed, which was 18 Months, or a Year and a half, after the sad Event happened.

EZEKIEL xxxii.

THIS Prophecy against *Egypt* was delivered in this Year and Month.

EZEKIEL xxxiv. xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix.

THESE Chapters fall under no Date, till we come to the 40th Chapter, which is dated the 25th of *Jehoiachin*'s Captivity. Therefore, these Chapters were probably delivered some time between the 12th and 25th of that Captivity.

OBADIAH.

OBADIAH prophesied against the *Edomites* for their unnatural and spiteful Behaviour towards the *Jews*, in their Distress at the taking of *Jerusalem*.

EZEKIEL

EZEKIEL xxxv.

THIS Prophecy againſt the *Edomites* ſeems to have been delivered upon the ſame Occaſion.

DANIEL iii.

IN this Year alſo *Nebuchadnezzar* ſet up his golden Image. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno* 587. *Nebuchad.* 18.

EZEKIEL xl. xli. *&c.* to the End of the Book.

ALL theſe Viſions and Prophecies, relating to the future State of the Church of God, were revealed to *Ezekiel* this Year, being the 14th from the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem.*

EZEKIEL xxix. Ver. 17. to the End.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR's Army having endured great Hardſhips in the Siege of *Tyre*, which held 13 Years, and having got little on the taking of it, (the Inhabitants having conveyed themſelves and their Effects into the adjacent Iſland) God, by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, promiſeth them the Spoils of *Egypt*, as a Reward for their Labor. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 573. *Nebuchad.* 32.

DANIEL iv.

THIS Year *Nebuchadnezzar* had his Dream of the wonderful great Tree, and the cuting

down thereof; and the next Year fell distracted. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 570.

JEREMIAH lii. Ver. 31. to the End.

THIS Year *Nebuchadnezzar* dies, and is succeeded by his Son, *Evil-merodach*, who released *Jehoiachin*, King of *Judah*, out of Prison, where he had been confined 37 Years, and advanced him to Honor and Friendship. Note — This last Chapter was not wrote by *Jeremiah* (See *Chap.* li. 64.) but by *Baruch* or *Ezra*, or whoever collected *Jeremiah*'s Prophecies into one Volume.

DANIEL vii.

DANIEL had the Vision of the four Monarchies, and of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*.

DANIEL viii.

DANIEL had the Vision of the Ram and He-goat.

DANIEL v.

DANIEL reads the Hand-writing on the Wall. *Belshazzar* is slain, *Darius* the *Mede* took the *Assyrian* Kingdom.

DANIEL vi.

DANIEL's being advanced by *Darius* above all the Princes, and made prime Minister, next

next to the King, raiſed ſo great an Envy againſt him among the Courtiers, that they laid the Snare for him, which brought him to the Lion's Den.

DANIEL ix.

DANIEL, apprehending from the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, that the 70 Years Captivity of *Judah* were drawing to an End, maketh his Prayer to God for the Reſtoration of *Jeruſalem*. In Anſwer to which, the Angel *Gabriel*, was ſent to aſſure him of a much greater Redemption to the *Jewiſh* Nation by the *Meſſiah*, at the End of 70 Weeks, or 490 Years.

EZRA i. ii.

DARIUS dieth; *Cyrus* ſucceeds him, and by his Decree puts an End to the 70 Years Captivity of the *Jews*. This in the firſt Chapter of *Ezra*. In the ſecond Chapter an Account is given of the *Jews* that returned. Note — On the Return of *Judah* and *Benjamin* from the Babyloniſh Captivity, ſeveral of the other Tribes of *Iſrael* returned with them out of *Aſſyria*, *Babylon*, and *Media*, whither they had been before carried. *Ezra* vi. 17. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 536. P. 190. Upon this joyous Occaſion the 126th Pſalm was compoſed.

EZRA iii.

THE *Jews* begin to rebuild *Jerusalem* and the Temple.

CHAP. XXXVI.

PROPHETS *after the* CAPTIVITY *under the second* TEMPLE.

EZRA iv.

THE *Samaritans* obstruct the *Jews* in the Building of the City and Temple. And so the Work ceased till the second Year of *Darius Hystaspes*; namely, for 14 Years.

DANIEL x. xi. xii.

THE Visions and Prophecies in these Chapters were revealed to *Daniel* in the third Year of *Cyrus*, and the third Year after the Captivity.

HAGGAI i. Ver. 1—12.

HAGGAI excites *Zerubbabel*, the Governor, and *Jeshua*, the High-Priest, to build the Lord's House, in the second Year of *Darius Hystaspes*.

HAGGAI i. Ver. 12. to the End. EZRA v. 1, 2.

ZERUBBABEL and *Jeshua* immediately apply to the Work.

HAGGAI

HAGGAI ii. Ver. 1—10.

HAGGAI incourages them from the Lord to proceed.

ZECHARIAH i. Ver. 1—7.

ZECHARIAH makes his first Address to the *Jews*, who were building the Temple, assuring them that God would turn to them with a Blessing, if they turned to him by Repentance and Reformation.

HAGGAI ii. Ver. 10. to the End.

HAGGAI rebukes the Indifference of the *Jews* in building the Temple; incourages vigorous Endeavours with the Blessing of Plenty; and assures *Zerubbabel* of the extraordinary Favor of God.

ZECHARIAH i. Ver. 7. to the End.
ii. iii. iv. v. vi.

AT this time these Visions, greatly incouraging the *Jews* in building the City and Temple, and assuring them of the divine Protection against all their Enemies, were revealed to *Zechariah*.

EZRA v. Ver. 3. to the End.

THE *Samaritans* again disturb the *Jews*, and put a Stop to the Building of the Temple.

EZRA

EZRA vi. Ver. 1—15.

DARIUS ſends a Decree to *Jeruſalem* poſitively ordering the Temple to be rebuilt, and the Expences of it furniſhed out of the Taxes of the Provinces. Which accordingly was done, till it was finiſhed. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 518.

ZECHARIAH vii. viii.

THE *Jews*, who were in *Babylon*, (for great Numbers ſtill remained there, and in other Parts of the *Perſian* Empire,) judging that the State of *Judea* and *Jeruſalem* was now ſo thoroughly reſtored and eſtabliſhed by *Darius*'s Decree, that it might be no longer proper to keep the Faſt in the fifth Month, (when the City and Temple were burnt by *Nebuzaradan)* which they had hitherto obſerved for 70 Years together, ſent two Meſſengers to *Jeruſalem*, to aſk the Opinion of the Prieſts and Prophets, that were there, about this Matter. And God gave them, by the Prophet *Zechariah*, the Anſwer relating to that, and other Faſts, which we have in the ſeventh and eighth Chapters of his Prophecy.

ZECHARIAH ix. x. xi. xii. xiii. xiv.

As theſe Chapters have no Date, we may ſuppoſe they were delivered in ſome of the times

times ſubſequent to the fourth Year of *Darius Hyſtaſpes.*

EZRA vi. Ver. 15. to the End.

THIS Year the Temple was finiſhed, and dedicated with great Joy and Solemnity. The *Jews* had been about it from firſt to laſt 20 Years.

ESTHER i.

ARTAXERXES, or *Ahaſuerus*, being thoroughly ſettled in his Throne, made a great Feaſt for all his Nobles, and divorced *Vaſhti* his Queen.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 1—16.

A Collection of Virgins made for the King, of which *Eſther* was one.

EZRA vii. viii. ix. x.

IN the Begining of this Year *Ezra* received from *Artaxerxes*, or *Ahaſuerus*, a very ample Commiſſion, for his Return to *Jeruſalem*, with any of his Countreymen, that were diſpoſed to go along with him; giving them full Authority in things both civil and religious, to regulate both according to the Law. This Decree was probably granted at the Solicitation of *Eſther*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 458. The Decree, the Families and Numbers of the *Jews*, that went with *Ezra* to *Jeruſalem*, fall within the Compaſs of

of this and the next Year, and are contained in the four laſt Chapters of this Book.

NOTE — From *Ezra*'s entering upon this Work, the Begining of *Daniel*'s 70 Weeks is to be computed. Dr. PRIDEAUX'*s Con. ad An.* 458. P. 377. Note alſo — That *Ezra* continued in the Government about 13 Years; till *Nehemiah* ſucceeded him in the 20th Year of *Artaxerxes*, or *Ahaſuerus*.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 16—21.

ESTHER, after having been only Concubine about two Years, is now made Queen.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 21. to the End.

BIGTHAN and *Tareſh*, two Eunuchs in the Palace, entered into a Conſpiracy againſt the Life of *Artaxerxes*, or *Ahaſuerus*, which was diſcovered to the King by *Mordecai*, Queen *Eſther*'s Uncle.

ESTHER iii. iv. v, *&c.* to the End of the Book.

HAMAN, an *Amalekite*, deſcended from King *Agag*, in *Saul*'s time, made prime Miniſter to *Artaxerxes*, laid a Plot to extirpate the whole Race of the *Jews*. But it turned upon himſelf, as related in the Book of *Eſther*.

NEHE-

NEHEMIAH i. ii. iii, *&c.* to the End of the Book.

NEHEMIAH, with a Commiſſion from *Artaxerxes*, or *Ahaſuerus*, probably by Favor of Queen *Eſther*, (Neh. ii. 6.) ſucceedeth *Ezra* in the Government of *Judea*, rebuilds the Walls, repeoples *Jeruſalem*, reforms Diſorders, *&c.* Thus he was employed for 12 Years; namely, from the 20th to the 32d Year of *Artaxerxes*, Neh. v. 14. xiii. 6. Within which time *Ezra* is ſuppoſed to have publiſhed his Edition of the Hebrew-Scriptures. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* P. 475, *&c.*

NEHEMIAH returns from *Jeruſalem* to the *Perſian* Court. *Neh.* xiii. 6.

MALACHI i. ii. iii. iv.

ABOUT this time flouriſhed *Malachi*, the Prophet. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 428. P. 570.

NEHEMIAH xiii. Ver. 6, 7, *&c.*

AFTER *certain Days*, i. e. after about five Years, *Nehemiah* comes again to *Jeruſalem* with a new Commiſſion, and makes further Reformation. With which Act of Reformation, the holy Scriptures of the Old Teſtament are cloſed up.

SIMON

SIMON the juſt, High-Prieſt of the *Jews*, compleats the Canon of the Old Teſtament, by adding the *two Books of Chronicles*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Eſther*, and *Malachi*. "That theſe "could not be put into the Canon by *Ezra* "is plain. For four of thoſe Books are "upon juſt Grounds, ſuppoſed to have been "writen by *Ezra* himſelf, (that is, the *two* "*Books of Chronicles*, and the Books of *Ezra* "and *Eſther*,) and the Book of *Nehemiah* "was writen after his [*Ezra*'s] time; and "ſo moſt likely was the Book of *Malachi* "alſo. And therefore a later time muſt be "aſſigned for their Inſertion into the ſacred "Canon; and none is more likely, than "that of *Simon the juſt*, who is ſaid to have "been the laſt of the Men of the great "Synagogue. What the *Jews* call the great "Synagogue, were a Number of Elders "amounting to 120, ſucceeding each other "in a continued Series from the Return of "the *Jews* from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, "to the time of *Simon the juſt*, and labored "in reſtoring the *Jewiſh* Church and State "in that Country. In order to which, the "holy Scriptures being the Rule they were "to go by, their chief Care and Study was "to make a true Collection of thoſe Scrip-"tures, and publiſh them accurately to the "People. *Ezra*, and the Men of the great "Synagogue in his time, ſettled the Canon "of all but the foreſaid Books; and thoſe

"were

" were probably ſettled, and added to the
" Canon, in the times of *Simon the juſt*, who
" died about 31 Years after *Alexander the*
" *great*. For in 1 *Chron*. iii. 19, *&c*. the
" Genealogy of the Sons of *Zerubbabel* is
" carried down for ſo many Deſcents after
" him as may well be thought to reach the
" times of *Alexander*. And in *Neh*. xii. 22.
" we have the Days of *Jaddua* ſpoken of,
" as then paſt; but *Jaddua* outlived *Alex-*
" *ander* two Years. Theſe Paſſages, there-
" fore, were probably inſerted by *Simon*
" *the juſt*, who perfected, and finally
" ſettled the Canon of the holy Scriptures.
" After this followed the *miſhnical* times,
" that is, the times of Traditions. Hitherto
" the Scriptures were the only Rule of Faith
" and Manners, which God's People ſtudied;
" but thenceforth Traditions began to be
" regarded, till at length they overbore the
" Word of God itſelf, as we find in our
" Saviour's time. The Collection of theſe
" Traditions they call the *Miſhnah*, that is,
" the ſecond Law; and thoſe who delivered
" and taught them were ſtiled the *miſhnical*
" Doctors." See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno* 292. *Ptolemy Soter* 13. *

* TURN to the Appendix, for the Chronological Dates belonging to this and Chapters xxxiv. xxxv.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVII.

The State of the JEWS, *and of other* NATIONS, *at the time when our Lord came into the World.*

AFTER the *Babyloniſh* Captivity the *Jews* no more lapſed into Idolatry, but remained ſteady in the Acknowledgment and Worſhip of the one living and true God. Even then they fell into new Ways of perverting Religion, and the wiſe and holy Intentions of the divine Law. I. By laying all the Streſs on the external and leſs momentous Parts of it, while they neglected the weighty and ſubſtantial, true Holineſs of Heart and Life. Mankind are too eaſily drawn into this Error. While they retain a Senſe of Religion, they are too apt to liſten to any Methods by which it may be reduced to a Conſiſtency with the Gratifications of their Paſſions, Pride, and Avarice. Thus, by placing Religion in mere Profeſſion, or in the zealous Obſervance of Rites and Ceremonies, inſtead of real Piety, Truth, Purity, and Goodneſs, they learn to be religious without Virtue. II. By ſpeculating and commenting upon the divine Commands and Inſtitutions, till their Force is quite enervated, and they are refined into a Senſe that will

will commodiouſly allow a ſlight Regard inſtead of ſincere Obedience. III. By confirming and eſtabliſhing the two former Methods of corrupting Religion, by Tradition and the Authority of learned Rabbies. Pretending, that there was a Syſtem of religious Rules delivered by Word of Mouth from *Moſes*, explanatory of the writen Law, known only to thoſe Rabbies; to whoſe Judgment, therefore, and Deciſion, all the People were to ſubmit.

THIS, in time, the Space of 210 Years, became the general State of Religion among the *Jews*, after they had diſcarded Idolatry. And this Spirit prevailed among them for ſome Ages, (290 Years) before the Coming of the *Meſſiah*. But, however, it did not interfere with the main Syſtem of Providence, or the introducing the Knowledge of God among the Nations, as they ſtill continued ſtedfaſt in the Worſhip of the true God, without Danger of deviating from it. Beſides, they were now, much more than formerly, exerciſed in reading, thinking, and reaſoning, and were more capable of themſelves of judging what was right. *Luke* xii. 57. And ſeveral of them did ſo judge. Some of them were truly religious and virtuous; and all of them had ſtrong Expectation of the *Meſſiah* about the time of his Appearance; and were ſufficiently qualified to judge of religious

Matters, and of the Evidences of his Miſſion. Thus the *Jews* were prepared by the preceeding Diſpenſation for the Reception of the *Meſſiah*, and the juſt Notions of Religion, which he was ſent to inculcate; inſomuch that their Guilt muſt be highly aggravated if they rejected him and his Inſtructions. It could not be for want of Capacity, but of Integrity, and muſt be aſſigned to wilful Blindneſs and Obduracy. Out of Regard to temporal Power, Grandeur, and Enjoyments, they loved Darkneſs rather than Light.

IN the mean time, the Pagan Nations had made great Openings in Wiſdom and Virtue. Thoſe Arts that began in *Greece*, had traveled into other Lands; Learning had got footing among the illiterate; and Humanity and ſocial Affections among the barbarous; and many good and uſeful Books, uſeful even to this Day among Chriſtians, were writen in Ethics for the right Conduct of Life. The Light of Nature was carried high; or rather, the Darkneſs of it was much enlightened. Such was, at length, the State of the *Gentiles*, God having ſtill been pleaſed, from time to time, to raiſe up among them Perſons uncommonly endowed, for their Inſtruction, and to fit them for the Day, when he ſhould more explicitly reveal himſelf, and his ſacred Will to them. In a Word,

Word, what with Time, and the transmigrating of Knowledge from Region to Region, and the Labors of Poets and Philosophers, Men, at about the *classic Æra*, when our Lord came into the World, in general, had gained tolerable just Ideas of Virtue and moral Truth; and so, were in a Condition to apprehend and embrace the higher and more important Truths of God, and his Providence, and a future State.

FOR many Ages the *Jews* had been well known in the eastern Empires, among the *Assyrians*, *Chaldeans*, *Medes*, and *Persians*; but, till the time of *Alexander the great*, they had no Communication with the *Grecians*. About the Year before Christ 332, *Alexander* built *Alexandria* in *Egypt*; and to people his new City, removed thither many of the *Jews*, allowing them the Use of their own Laws and Religion, and the same Liberties with the *Macedonians* themselves. The *Macedonians*, who spake the *Greek* Language, and other *Greeks*, were the principal Inhabitants of *Alexandria*. From them the *Jews* learned to speak *Greek*, which was the common Language of the City, and which soon became the native Language of the *Jews*, that lived there; who, on that Account, were called *Hellenists*, or *Greek-Jews*, mentioned *Acts* vi. 1—9. xi. 20. These *Greek-Jews* had Synagogues in *Alexandria*; and for their Benefit, the five Books of *Moses*,

which alone, at firſt, were publickly read, were tranſlated into *Greek*, (by whom is uncertain) and read in their Synagogues every Sabbath-Day. And in the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, about 168 Years before *Chriſt*, when the Prophets alſo began to be read in the Synagogues of *Judea*, the Prophets alſo were tranſlated into *Greek* for the Uſe of the *Alexandrian* Jews. This Tranſlation contributed much to the Spread of the Knowledge of true Religion among the Nations in the weſtern Parts of the World.

FOR the *Jews*, their Synagogues and Worſhip, were, after *Alexander*'s Death, diſperſed almoſt every where among the Nations. *Ptolemy*, one of *Alexander*'s Succeſſors, having reduced *Jeruſalem* and all *Judea*, about 320 Years before *Chriſt*, carried a hundred thouſand *Jews* into *Egypt*, and there raiſed conſiderable Numbers of them to Places of Truſt and Power; and ſeveral of them he placed in *Cyrene* and *Libya*. *Seleucus*, another of *Alexander*'s Succeſſors, about 300 Years before *Chriſt*, built *Antioch* in *Cilicia*, and many other Cities, in all 35, and ſome of them capital Cities in the greater and leſſer *Aſia*; in all which he planted the *Jews*, giving them equal Privileges and Immunities with the *Greeks* and *Macedonians*; eſpecially at *Antioch* in *Syria*, where they ſettled in great Numbers, and became almoſt as conſiderable a Part of that City, as they

they were at *Alexandria*. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno* 293. *Ptolemy Soter* 12. On that memorable Day of *Pentecoſt*, Acts ii. 5, 9, 11, 12. were aſſembled in *Jeruſalem*, *Jews*, *devout Men*, *out of every Nation under Heaven*; namely, *Parthians*, *Medes*, and *Perſians* of the Province of *Elymais*, Inhabitants of *Meſopotamia*, *Judea*, *Cappadocia*, *Pontus*, *Aſia*, *Phrygia*, *Pamphylia*, *Egypt*, *Cyrene* in *Lybia*, *Rome*, *Cretes*, and *Arabs*, who were all either natural *Jews*, or devout Men, *i. e.* Proſelytes to the *Jewiſh* Religion. And in every City of the *Roman* Empire, where *Paul* preached, he found a Body of his Countreymen, the *Jews*; except in *Athens*, which was, at that time, I ſuppoſe, a Town of no conſiderable Trade. Which ſhews that the *Jews*, and their Synagogues, at the time of our Lord's Appearance, were providentially ſcattered over all the *Roman* Empire; and had in every Place introduced, more or leſs, among the Nations, the Knowledge and Worſhip of God; and ſo had prepared great Numbers for the Reception of the Goſpel.

ABOUT the time that *Alexander* built *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, the Uſe of the *Papyrus* for writing was firſt found out in that Country. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno* 332. *Darius* 4. P. 706. Vol. II. This Invention was ſo favorable to Literature, that *Ptolemy Soter*, one of *Alexander*'s Succeſſors

was thereby enabled to erect a *Museum*, or Library; which by his Son and Successor, *Philadelphus*, who died 247 Years before *Christ*, was augmented to an hundred thousand Volumes; and by succeeding *Ptolemies* to seven hundred thousand. Part of this Library, which was placed in a separate Building from the other Part, happened to be burnt when *Julius Cæsar* laid Siege to *Alexandria*; but after that Loss, it was again much augmented, and soon grew up to be larger, and of more eminent Note, than the former; and so it continued for many Ages to be of great Fame, and Use in those Parts, till at length it was burnt and finally destroyed by the *Saracens*, in the Year of our Lord 642. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* Vol. III. P. 21, *&c. Anno* 284. This plainly proves how much the Invention of turning the *Papyrus* into *Paper* contributed to the Increase of Books, and the Advancement of Learning for some Ages before the Coming of our Lord. For doubtless, by this Means, private Hands would also more easily be supplied with Books than before.

ADD to all this, that the World, after many Changes and Revolutions, was, by God's all-ruling Wisdom, thrown into that Form of civil Affairs, which best suited with the great intended Alteration. The many petty States and Tyrannies, whose Passions and Bigotry might have run counter to the Schemes

Schemes of Providence, were all ſwallowed up in one great Power, the *Romans*; to which all Appeals lay; the Seat of which, *Rome*, lay at a great Diſtance from *Jeruſalem*, the Spring from whence the Goſpel was to ariſe, and flow to all Nations. And therefore, as no material Obſtruction to the Goſpel could ariſe, but from that one Quarter, none could ſuddenly ariſe from thence, but only in Proceſs of time, when the Goſpel was ſufficiently ſpread and eſtabliſhed, as it did not in the leaſt interfere with the *Roman* Polity or Government. The Goſpel was firſt publiſhed in a time of general Peace and Tranquility throughout the whole World, which gave the Preachers of it an Opportunity of paſſing freely from one Country to another, and the Minds of Men the Advantage of attending calmly to it. Many ſavage Nations were civilized by the *Romans*, and acquainted with the Arts and Virtues of their Conquerors.

THUS the darkeſt Countries had their Thoughts awakened, and were growing to a Capacity of receiving, at the ſtated time, the Knowledge of true Religion. So that all things and Circumſtances conſpired now with the Views of Heaven, and made this apparently *the Fulneſs of Time*, (Gal. iv. 4.) or the fiteſt Juncture for God to reveal himſelf to the *Gentiles*, and to put an End to Idolatry throughout the Earth. Now the

Minds of Men were generally ripe for a purer and brighter Dispensation, and the Circumstances of the World were such, as favored the Success and Progress of it.

IN this very Time the *Messiah* came; nor, for ought I can see, could he have come more opportunely at any other; because the World was at no other preceeding time so well prepared to receive his Doctrines. As to Remission of Sin, and eternal Salvation, it is all one whenever he came. Because the Sacrifice, which he offered for Sin, had its Effects with regard to the Time past, as well as to the Time to come; to the Penitent, that were dead, as well to the living, or those that were yet to be born. (See *Scripture Doctrine of Atonement*, P. 80.) Immortality must belong as much to those who lived virtuously, according to their Degree of Light, before the *Messiah* came, as to those who lived after his coming; and the Blessedness of the future State, though not alike revealed, yet was alike accessible to the one as to the other.

UPON a Review of the whole, it will appear, that the Condition of Mankind was bettered Step by Step, as the Reason and Nature of things directed and would permit. The Scope and Intendment of the whole Scheme of divine Providence, in all its various Dispensations, was to bring human Nature, by proper Degrees, and in a

Way

Way consistent with moral Agency, to all the Beauty, Holiness, and Perfection it can, in this present State, attain to. And though we are not indeed able absolutely to trace all the Reasons of the divine Conduct, and to demonstrate the Wisdom of it in every Particular; yet we may, in general, discover, that all the Parts of this Scheme were wisely formed, and pursued, depending regularly on each other, leading to the same great and good End, and adapted to the respective Circumstances and Condition of Mankind.

Note — AFTER the Publication of the Gospel, the *Jewish* Peculiarity was no longer of Use for preserving the Knowledge of God in the World. That End would be much better answered by its Dissolution, and the Dispersion of the *Jews* all over the Earth, as they are even unto this Day. [For the most excellent Character of *Jesus Christ*, and the divine Principles, Doctrine, and Spirit of the Gospel, see my Treatise upon the LORD'S-SUPPER.] *

* WITH this Chapter ends Dr. TAYLOR's SCHEME of SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY, from the Copy he printed at *Warrington*, for the Use of the Students, in the Academy there; and since corrected, with the Hebrew and Greek Words inserted, by himself.

THE following Chapters the EDITOR hath annexed, and are printed from Dr. TAYLOR's Manuscript; and would have appeared to greater Advantage, had they had his correcting Hand.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Mankind, having abuſed their Natural POWERS, *ſtand in Need of an Extraordinary* REVELATION.

THE Scriptures are the Word of God; they are the Language and Addreſs of the univerſal Father to his Children in this World, whom he hath endowed with rational Faculties to hear and underſtand his Voice. The Scriptures are given *by Inſpiration of God, and are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs.* 2 Tim. iii. 16. The Glory of God indeed is to be ſeen in all the Works of his Hands; and the Speech of his almighty Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs is to be heard in the Appearances of Creation which are daily before our Eyes. *Pſal.* xix. 1, &c. Mankind in a faithful Uſe of their natural Powers, might, without any other Guide, know God. *Rom.* i. 19. *For that which may be known of God is manifeſt in them; for God hath ſhewed it unto them (for the inviſible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, ſo) that* even the Heathen, who have no other Rule but the Light of Nature, they might be *without Excuſe,* if

if they are totally ignorant of God. But how much Mankind in all Ages have abuſed and miſapplied their Underſtandings is notoriouſly evident, and therefore it muſt be evident how much they ſtand in need of an extraordinary Revelation to correct their Errors, to reduce them to the Obedience of God, and to ſecure them from relapſing into Idolatry and Apoſtacy from him.

I THINK, no Book can contain more evident Marks of ſuch a Revelation, than the Scriptures, eminently ſo called, which we are happily poſſeſſed of. There we have the fulleſt and cleareſt Account of the Nature and Perfections of God, beyond what the World at beſt could have attained to, and far beyond what could, in the ordinary Courſe of things, have been preſerved through ſucceeding Generations. The Knowledge of God not being a mere ſpeculative Truth, but having near Connexion with our Morals, would conſequently, as the Morals of Men are very liable to be corrupted, have alſo proportionably been obſcured, till it had in a Manner quite vaniſhed away; which we know hath in Fact been true. In the Scriptures, as in a durable Storehouſe, not to be demoliſhed by Time, or uncertain Tradition, we have the moſt noble Diſcoveries of the Nature and Perfections of God, as he is our Maker, our Father, Owner, Ruler, and daily Benefactor; as he is glorious in all his Attributes; as he is infinite, and independent, eternal,

eternal, and unchangeable, in his Being, Knowledge, Wiſdom and Power; as perfectly holy, good, righteous, and true. And theſe Glories of the divine Nature are deſcribed, not in the Way of philoſophical Diſſertations, not by a Series of abſtract Reaſoning, which how amuſing or inſtructing ſoever to Minds of a more refined Turn and Taſte, are but of little Service to the Bulk of Mankind, who have but little Leiſure, and perhaps leſs Inclination to attend to the curious and abſtruſer Deductions of Reaſon; not thus are the Glories of the divine Nature delineated in Scripture, but exhibited in a long and eaſily intelligible Series of Facts and Events, wherein God hath manifeſted his Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Power, and Juſtice, from the Begining of the World. In which way the Mind, with very little Labor of Thought, is at once convinced of the Being and Perfections of God, and ſtruck with Admiration, Reverence, Love, and every right Affection which the Knowledge of God ſhould produce in us.

In the Scriptures any one, in common Life, may not only very readily ſee that God is, and that he is all that the moſt learned, the moſt exact, the moſt ſubtle, the moſt ſublime Philoſophy, all that the utmoſt Application and Study of the wiſeſt of Men can diſcover; but he ſeeth this at the ſame time in a practical Light; he ſeeth that God is all

all this to *us*; that as great as he is in himſelf, he is our God and Father, that he hath, from his own Immenſity of Being, given us Being, a noble and diſtinguiſhed Kind of Being; that he conſtantly regards us, loveth us, intereſts himſelf in our Affairs, is concerned for our Welfare, is daily near us, the Object of our Truſt and Dependance; that all our Safety is in his Favour, and that in his Favour, and under his Protection, we are infinitely ſafe and happy. That we are accountable to him for our Actions, that we are continually under his Eye, and can flee no whither from his Spirit and Preſence; that we ought always to ſet him before us, to act as in his Sight, and to approve ourſelves to his all-ſearching Eye; that he hath taken us into the neareſt Relations to himſelf, that his Deſign is to make us good, in Order to make us for ever happy; that for this Purpoſe, he hath been carrying on various Diſpenſations from the Begining of the World to invite and draw Men unto himſelf.

AT length, in the Fulneſs of Time, in that Time which to his infinite Wiſdom ſeemed moſt expedient, he ſent a divine Meſſenger, the Word, his only begotten Son, from his own Boſom, to redeem Men from Iniquity, to reconcile them to God; and in the Way, divine Wiſdom judged moſt proper, to eſtabliſh upon the moſt firm and beautiful

ful Foundation, the eternal Salvation of all pious and virtuous Men that have ever been, or ſhall hereafter be in the World. The eternal God in Chriſt will be their everlaſting Strength, and Joy, and Glory. Thus, I would obſerve, we not only, in the eaſieſt and cleareſt Way, learn God and his Perfections from Scripture, but we learn them in a Manner the moſt proper and powerful to engage and unite our Hearts to God; to warm and quicken our Spirits, to excite us to the Love and Obedience of God, and to conſider ourſelves infinitely intereſted in his Attributes and Perfections. Which is to learn divine things; i. e. the moſt excellent things in a Method vaſtly ſuperior to all the Reaſonings and Inſtructions of the beſt and wiſeſt of Philoſophers.

In the Scriptures, any Man of common Senſe may not only with Eaſe learn his Duty in the fulleſt Extent, but at the ſame time by the numerous Examples of pious Men in all Ages, he may ſee that it is practicable, and may ſee how to ingage in it; how exact, how conſtant, how ready and chearful he ſhould be in the diſcharge of it; how he ought to reſiſt Temptations, to ſtruggle with Difficulties. Even a mean Capacity by reading the Scriptures, ſhall at the ſame time diſcern the Reaſonableneſs, and the Beauty of Holineſs, and alſo be furniſhed with the ſtrongeſt Arguments and Motives to embrace it,

it, and to perſevere therein, ſhall be aſſured of the divine Aſſiſtance and Protection in a religious Courſe, ſhall find the moſt proper Conſolations and Encouragements in every the moſt diſtreſſed State of Affairs; to every Precept he ſhall find an adjoined Promiſe, and his Duty will ſhine brightly before his Eyes, in the Light and Hope of everlaſting Glory.

THERE we have the trueſt and moſt effectual Rules for forming our Minds into all Habits of Virtue; not ſimple Propoſitions, declaring what we ought to do and be, but Rules of Life intermixed with the Power and Splendor of divine Grace, working mightily to renew us into the divine Nature. There Religion appears in all its Truth, Luſtre, Sweetneſs, and Majeſty. There it is dreſſed in all its Charms; not as a ſour, ſevere, moroſe, gloomy Principle, forbiding Enjoyment, and the Parent only of Sorrow, Horror, and Deſpair, but as our Life, our Glory, our Peace, our Joy; as giving us the trueſt Reliſh and Enjoyment of Life, as the Source of the moſt ſolid Pleaſure and Comfort, as uniting us to God, as lodging us for ever in the almighty Arms of his Love and Goodneſs, as leading to, and preparing for endleſs Joys and Pleaſures in his Preſence.

As to Sin and Wickedneſs, the Philoſophers have ſaid much concerning the odious Nature of Vice, that it is Evil, and the worſt of Evils, that it is the Diſeaſe and

Deformity

Deformity of the Mind, hurtful to the Health of the Body, and ruinous to the Reputation and Eſtate. Their Reflections were ſo far juſt, but the Benefit of them was confined to Men of Letters and Study; the Vulgar received little or no Advantage from them; but in the Scriptures, the meaneſt Minds are favoured with far better Inſtructions than they could give. There Sin is not only ſet forth in all its odious Colours, and in all its pernicious Effects, as to this preſent Life, but its deadly Nature is demonſtrated as it ſtands in Contrariety to God, as it is the Tranſgreſſion of his holy Law, as it expoſeth us to his Diſpleaſure, and diſqualifieth us for his Bleſſing; as it is oppoſite to all the Ends of our Creation, and conſequently as deſerving of Death. That God will puniſh all the impenitent Workers of Iniquity with everlaſting Deſtruction, and purge out of his Kingdom every thing that offends, that is either miſchievous or polluting. And all this is ſo plainly and powerfully inculcated upon the Mind, by many dreadful Examples of the divine Vengeance upon ungodly Men, throughout the whole Series of Scripture-Hiſtory, by ſo many expreſs Declarations of God's Wrath, and ſo many Exhortations of his Goodneſs and Mercy, to turn from every evil Way, that no one, who carefully and ſeriouſly reads the Scriptures, can miſs not only of ſeeing the Evil,

Evil, the Irregularity and Deformity of Sin, but of having his Mind affected with it, and wrought into the moſt rational and the moſt ſettled Deteſtation of it.

WITH Regard to the Pardon of Sin, the wiſeſt of Philoſophers ſeem to have very imperfect Notions of it. They rarely and very ſuperficially conſidered it in its Relation of Diſſonancy to the divine Perfections; and therefore ſay little or nothing concerning the Placableneſs of the Deity, whether God would pardon Sin, or in what Way his Wiſdom thought proper to do it. Sacrifices were frequent among them, but they ſeem to have underſtood nothing of their true Nature and End, nor were at all ſolicitous to enquire into them. In truth, they did not underſtand the true Demerit of Sin, and therefore of courſe, muſt be in the dark, as to the Remiſſion of it. But all theſe things are open and obvious to the weakeſt Capacity in Scripture.

How much the World was in the dark about a future State without a Revelation is well known, and how clearly now the World to come is opened to us in the awful Proſpects of eternal Happineſs, or endleſs Perdition, can be concealed from none who are ever ſo little acquainted with the Goſpel of Chriſt. — Theſe things duely attended to, will ſhew us the admirable Excellency of the holy Scriptures; that God's Word is Truth,

and able to make us wiſe unto Salvation; and further do demonſtrate, that it is our Duty to be much in reading them.

READING the Scriptures is one of the firſt Principles of our Religion, as we are Chriſtians, becauſe our Profeſſion is built wholly upon the Scriptures. We juſtly own no other Rule of our Faith but the Word of God. *Eph.* ii. 20. *We are built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner-Stone.* And we are built upon no other Foundation. If we are true Chriſtians, however we may uſe or value the Writings of Men, we make not them, not the beſt of them, the Rule of our Faith, but the Word of God alone. But that Rule ought to be thoroughly peruſed, and digeſted, otherwiſe how good ſoever in itſelf, or how much ſoever we profeſs to take it for our Rule, it is in Fact, no Rule to us. The Word of God is the Guide of our Actions; *it is a Lamp unto our Feet, and a Light unto our Path.* Pſal. cxix. 105. Should we not then diligently ſtudy the Word of God, that we may not wander from his Commandments? The Word of God is the Spring of all our Comfort and Hopes.

THERE and there alone, we have the rich and immenſe Treaſure of the divine Promiſes; and from thence alone, we can draw ſolid Support and Conſolation, in any dark Hour of Trial and Affliction. In ſhort, to all the valuable Purpoſes of Knowledge and Life,

Life, the Scriptures do infinitely excel all human Compoſitions whatſoever. They are but as the twinkling Stars to that Ocean of Light which is poured out daily from the Body of the Sun. Of all the Means of Knowledge and Wiſdom in the World, I know nothing to be compared with the Word of God. The Reaſon of the thing therefore requires we ſhould have our Eyes intent upon this Light and Illumination. For this End God hath given us this invaluable Treaſure, the holy Scriptures, that we ſhould make them our Study.

IT muſt be obſerved carefully, that it is not enough to be much in reading the Scriptures, but while we read we ſhould employ all our Attention to underſtand them. The Scriptures may be underſtood, but evidently not in every Degree by every Man; for as there are various Sorts and Degrees of Knowledge in Scripture, ſome perhaps, at preſent, beyond the Reach of any Man that ever yet was in the World; and as there are in Men various Capacities, and Degrees of Learning, ſo it is manifeſt, all Men cannot attain to the ſame Degree of Underſtanding in divine things; but there muſt neceſſarily be a great Difference between the Knowledge of one Man and another in Matters of Faith and Revelation. This ſhews the Abſurdity of the Popiſh Scheme, which pretends to reduce the chriſtian Faith in all its Parts to a certain invariable Standard, to which every Man either explicitly or implicitly,

either with or without Underſtanding, muſt conform.

THIS ſhews how much ſoever it is our Duty to communicate Knowledge one to another, that it is quite contrary to true Religion to quarrel with one another, or to be diſpleaſed becauſe we have not all the ſame Degree of Underſtanding in Matters of Faith and Religion; becauſe this, according to the preſent Conſtitution of our Minds, and of the Revelation God hath given us, which he never intended ſhould be equally underſtood by all, is quite impracticable. But although the Scriptures are not to be underſtood in every Degree by every Man, yet they may be underſtood by every Man ſo far as God requireth, i. e. ſo far as he is capable of underſtanding them; for what a Man can underſtand, he may underſtand, if he is not wanting to himſelf.

AND as God can require of no Man beyond his Abilities, ſo no more than what a Man can underſtand of Scripture is to him a Rule of Faith and Practice; for what he cannot underſtand, he cannot be bound to believe or do. Further, thoſe things in Scripture which are of the higheſt Importance, and moſt conducive to a holy Life, are generally very eaſy to be underſtood; and therefore how perplexed ſoever thoſe other things may be about which Men have differed, though not ſo perplexed in Revelation, as they are in Mens Heads and Writings;

tings; yet I ſay, how perplexed and difficult ſoever they may be, the grand Principles of Faith and Practice are ſo evident, that any ordinary Capacity, may, with due Care and Attention, eaſily gain the moſt comfortable Knowledge of them. Thus the Scriptures may be underſtood.

So far as they are not underſtood, they are, at leaſt, uſeleſs to us. Nay further, the Scriptures miſunderſtood, may prove very hurtful to us. The things chiefly to be underſtood in Scripture are *Principles*, or the Grounds and Reaſons of things, and *Precepts* which are the Rules of Duty; now if we miſtake either, we ſhall throw all into Confuſion, our Way will be all Miſt and Clouds, that which ſhould be Light will be Darkneſs, or, which is all one, a falſe Light to miſlead us; that which ſhould be our Joy, will be our Heavineſs; that which ſhould be our Comfort, and inſpire chearful Hope, will be a dead Weight to burthen our Spirits and clog our Courſe. Our Path which ſhould be as the ſhining Light, that ſhineth more and more, will be a gloomy melancholy Road, and we ſhall make our Way with Difficulty, becauſe we want that true Senſe and Knowledge of the Ways and Will of God, which is neceſſary to give Life, Comfort, and Vigour. Chimeras and frightful Images will terrify our Conſciences, and fill us with groundleſs Fears; God will be painted in monſtrous Colours, and all the

raviſhing Glories of his Truth, Wiſdom, and Love, which ſhould powerfully draw our Hearts to him, will be hid from our Eyes. The Luſtre of redeeming Grace will in part, or wholly, be eclipſed. Some parts of Religion will be ſuperſtitiouſly magnified, while others of greater Conſequence will be undervalued.

FURTHER, if for want of due Attention to the Senſe of Scripture we miſtake and fall into Error, we ought to be ſenſible, that religious Error is of a far worſe Nature than any other; not only as it is Error in a Matter of the greateſt Importance, but as it is of all others, the moſt difficult to be corrected. For under the ſacred Name of Religion it ſhelters and defends itſelf, and gains the Character of Truth, of important, neceſſary, awful, and perhaps excellent Truth; and the unwary think themſelves bound in Conſcience and Duty to maintain it with Zeal; and then whoever endeavours to correct it, though ever ſo much in the Spirit of Meekneſs and Peace, muſt do it at his Peril. Hence thoſe groſſer Inſtances of Perſecution and Bloodſhed which have fouled the chriſtian Name. Hence thoſe Wranglings, Debates, Heats, Animoſities, which have deſtroyed chriſtian Societies. Theſe things are the Fruit of Mens taking their religious Principles upon Truſt, and not fetching them from the Scriptures, ſtudied, and underſtood by themſelves. Such Contempt and Neglect

lect of the Word of God expoſeth them to ſtrong Deluſion, and ſuch Deluſion leads them to fight in the Dark for they know not what. Thus Religion is corrupted, the Corruption of it defended, and Irreligion and Infidelity propagated, even by religious People themſelves. So the Sceptic, who is indifferent to any Principles, when he finds Abſurdity mixed with the chriſtian Faith, taking the whole for a true Account of Chriſtianity, rejects the whole. For even common Senſe will not allow that Revelation to be divine, which cannot, in many of its parts, be reconciled with the known Perfections of God.

BY this unhappy Means what Numbers in our Land have been drawn into Deiſm! And, by this unhappy Means, I gueſs, if the Truth were known, Religion appears but in a doubtful Light to many who ſeem to be ſtrict Profeſſors of it; for where it is not received in its proper Evidence, there cannot be, I think, a full and ſtrong Aſſent of Faith; and no Man can receive it in its proper Evidence, who doth not endeavour carefully to underſtand the Scriptures.

THUS many who talk much of the Word of God, and pretend a great Reverence for it, may poſſibly at the laſt Day be ranked among the Deſpiſers of it; becauſe, although they have, perhaps, been much in reading of it, they never ſet themſelves in good earneſt

to underſtand it, and ſo in Effect might as well not have read it at all; for their Read-in of it is only from a ſuperſtitious Opinion, as *Turks*, and *Jews*, and *Papiſts* turn over the Books in Reputation among them, not from the Love of Truth, not with a Deſire to underſtand the Truth; that moſt People ſuppoſe they underſtand before they read their Bibles or however without reading their Bibles; not to open their Eyes, and to give them a more juſt and diſtinct View of the Ways and Diſpenſations of God, ſuch things they learn from other Books; not to confirm and eſtabliſh their Minds in the Faith of God and of Chriſt; not for thoſe Purpoſes, I fear, are the Scriptures read, but only in a cuſtomary, ſuperſtitious, or however, in a very careleſs, ſuperficial Way; and therefore there are ſo few Chriſtians that grow in Grace, that riſe in ſpiritual Strength, Peace, Love, and Joy, becauſe there are ſo few that grow in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. 2 *Pet.* iii. 18.

The full Knowledge of Chriſt moſt People preſume they have attained long ago, and to talk of knowing more of Chriſt, or in a clearer and more rational Way, is perfectly ſhocking to them. They have ſomewhere or other fixed the preciſe Standard of divine Knowledge, and either more or leſs than that Standard of theirs is impious and

and heretical. How then can they grow in the Knowledge of Chriſt? How can they ſet themſelves to underſtand the Scriptures, who in another way, as they think, have already gained the whole Sum and Body of ſpiritual Underſtanding? See *Rom.* xv. 4. *Whatſoever things were writen aforetime, were writen for our Learning, for our Inſtruction, that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope.* We have hope through that Patience and Comfort which is taught in the Scriptures; but the Grounds and Reaſons of that Patience and Comfort muſt be underſtood, otherwiſe we cannot eſtabliſh in our Minds a ſure and ſolid Hope. Hence it is that the chriſtian Hope, that Faith, and Hope which overcometh the World, is ſo great a Rarity; therefore ſo few rejoice in Hope, becauſe ſo few underſtand the Scriptures, which are the Ground of the chriſtian Hope. Laſtly, becauſe the Scriptures are but little underſtood, therefore they are ſo little valued. We delight not in them, becauſe we know ſo little of them.

LET it be remembered, that we ſhall have the *Benefit* of the Scriptures by ſtudiouſly endeavouring to underſtand them. Then ſhall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. So far as we underſtand the Word of Truth, we ſhall be truly enlightened, our Conſciences will be rightly directed, and all our Principles well eſtabliſhed;

tabliſhed; we ſhall ſee its real Excellency, and it will accordingly be valued and eſteemed; we ſhall taſte its Comforts, feel its Power, be convinced of its divine Original, and it will be pleaſant and precious to us. The more we underſtand of the Scriptures, the more we ſhall with Pleaſure ſee the Righteouſneſs, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs of all the divine Diſpenſations, that all of them are adjuſted and ſettled by the Love of a Father, and calculated to promote our Happineſs. This will draw our Hearts to God, and ſhew us the infinite Reaſonableneſs of comporting with the Conſtitutions of his Grace.

If we are built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, our Faith will ſtand upon a ſure Bottom, and not upon the weak, precarious Judgment of Man; henceforth we ſhall be no more Children toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine. *Epheſ.* iv. 14. But ſhall by Uſe have our Senſes exerciſed to diſcern both Good and Evil. Thus we ſhall with our own Eyes ſee the Truth, and be inſtrumental in preſerving the Purity of our Religion. Thus we ſhall grow up into Chriſt in all things, in Knowledge, in Faith, and Love. Thus we ſhall be rooted and grounded in Love, in the Love of God, of Truth, and of our Neighbour. The Knowledge we gain, whether it be more or leſs, being

drawn

drawn from the true Fountain, will compoſe our Spirits, and incline us neither to deſpiſe the Weakneſs of thoſe that know leſs, nor to reject the Inſtructions of thoſe that may know more than ourſelves.

THESE weighty Conſiderations ſhould engage us to read the Scriptures with all poſſible Care and Diligence; to ſtudy them with an upright Deſire to gain their true Senſe and Meaning. We all know how much Men are at Variance about the Senſe of Scripture, one affirming that this, another that that is the true Senſe. So it may well be expected to be in our preſent Weakneſs; and ſo God hath permited it to be; not to give us Occaſion to cenſure, judge, and diſparage one another, as is too common, for this is expreſly forbiden; but this Variety of Sentiments is permited to teach us to ceaſe from Man, and ſhould convince us that we ought not to reſign our Underſtandings or Conſciences to any Man's Judgment whatſoever.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIX.

The History of REVELATION, *and some* OBJECTIONS *to it answered.*

I SHALL consider first,

THE Authority and Original of holy Scripture; and then,

THE Use and Importance of it; it *is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.* 2 Tim. iii. 16. and so is profitable for the noblest Purposes, the enlightening of our Minds, the purifying of our Hearts, the regulating of our Practice, and the saving of our Souls.

As to the Authority and Original of holy Scripture, it is said, by a very good and sufficient Judge, that it *is given by Inspiration of God.* How we are to understand being *given by Inspiration of God,* the Apostle PETER will inform us, 2 *Pet.* i. 20, 21. *Knowing this,* sais he, *that no Prophecy of the Scripture is of any private Interpretation,* Sense, or Impulse; meaning, that no Prophecy did issue or proceed from the private Sense or Thoughts of the Writer; it was not giving a Loose to his own Conceits and Imaginations. *For,* as it follows, *the Prophecy came not*

not in old time by the Will of Man ; but holy Men of God ſpake as they were moved by the holy Ghoſt ; or by the holy Spirit of God, enlightening their Minds and directing them what to ſay. Thus the Scriptures are inſpired ; they are the Word of God, and what is contained in them, we are to underſtand and reverence as ſpoken by God himſelf. But then, in the ſtricteſt Senſe, this is to be underſtood only of what *Prophets*, as Prophets, have delivered to us ; ſuch as *Moſes*, *Samuel*, *David*, *Iſaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and the reſt. No *Prophecy* of Scripture did proceed from the private Senſe of the Writer, but was dictated by the Spirit of God. But as for the hiſtorical Writings, though, doubtleſs, they owe their Original to the ſpecial Providence of God, yet it is ſufficient to ſuppoſe, that they were wrote by Men of Probity, fully acquainted with the Facts which they relate.

THIS premiſed, I ſhould now advance a few Arguments to eſtabliſh the Authority and Excellency of the Scriptures, that they were indeed given by Inſpiration of God, or that in them holy Men of God ſpake as they were moved by the holy Spirit. But to prepare the Way it is neceſſary I ſhould give a general Account and Hiſtory of Revelation ; then remove ſome Objections which are leveled againſt it, as if it were needleſs,

too

too partial, or too ineffectual, to be consistent with the divine Goodness; or as if we were not sufficiently secure, that we now have in Possession those very Books entire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded.

REVELATION is that which makes known to us the Will and Ways of the most high God, the Father of the Universe, the Fountain of all Being and Happiness, upon whom we have a necessary Dependence for Life, for Understanding, and Knowledge, for well-being, and Enjoyment, at all times and in every respect; for without him we cannot live, we cannot breathe, we can have no kind or Degree of Sense and Understanding. This is true. And it is equally true, that the best, and most beneficent of Beings, the greatest, and the kindest of all Fathers, could have no other End or Design in creating Mankind, but his own Glory, and their Happiness. The chief End of Man must be to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever; for perfect Goodness cannot be conceived to propose any lower End in making a Creature so noble and excellent. But then it is certain, both from the Holiness of God, and the Nature of an intelligent, rational Being, that a Character of Holiness and Virtue, of Obedience, Righteousness, or right Conduct, is necessary, on our part, to our Enjoyment of

of God, or our Happineſs in his Favor and Bleſſing. It is neceſſary that we love the great Author of our Being, that we pay him all due Honor and Obedience, that we are dutifully ſubmiſſive to his Will, that we underſtand our Dependence upon him, and what we have to expect from him, that we may be excited to Gratitude, and a due Improvement of his Benefits.

WE cannot love, honor, and obey God, unleſs we know him, and are acquainted with him; nor can we poſſibly have any Knowledge, or Underſtanding of any kind whatever, but what muſt come originally from God. Therefore, that God, our Father, ſhould inſtruct and teach his Creatures, whom he has made for the higheſt and nobleſt Ends, in thoſe things which immediately relate to his Glory and their Happineſs, is perfectly conſonant to his Goodneſs and Love. And that infinite Wiſdom, the Lord and Proprietor of all Being, ſhould have various Ways of making known himſelf and his Will to us, is alſo perfectly true. He hath produced a great Variety of Creatures with different Powers and Inſtincts in our World, by them to ſhow that he can beſtow upon us any Kind or Degree of Being; he hath diſplayed his immenſe Greatneſs, Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs in the numberleſs glorious Bodies which, by his Hand,

Hand, are perpetually rolled about us in the Heavens. His continually providing for our Subsistence, in a way which is quite out of our Power, plainly demonstrates our absolute Dependence upon him, and Obligations to him. This is the Book of Nature spread before all Nations, and legible to every Understanding; in which every attentive Mind may read the Perfections of God, and the main Duties which we owe him. But, to him who made our Senses and Minds, and is always intimate to them, there must be many other possible Ways of making known his Will to us; as by an audible Voice, a Vision, or secret Impressions upon our Spirits. Therefore to believe, that God at sundry times, and divers Manners, spake to the ancient Fathers by the Prophets, is believing a thing very possible, reasonable, and fiting.

AND it is no improbable Supposition, that in the earliest Ages of the World, God should only communicate his Will to pious Men, and leave them to hand it down to others by Tradition. For in those Days the Longevity of Mankind favored this Manner of Conveyance. With our Grand-Parent *Adam*, *Methuselah* lived 243 Years; with *Methuselah*, *Shem* the Son of *Noah* lived about 97 Years; and with *Shem*, *Jacob* the Son of *Isaac*, the Son of *Abraham*, lived 50 Years,

Years, as appears from the History of *Genesis*. So that no more than three Persons, *Methuselah*, *Shem*, and *Jacob*, were sufficient to hand down the Knowledge and Worship of the true God, from *Adam* to the time when the Children of *Israel* went down into *Egypt*, that is, through the Space of 2238 Years. But when the Life of Man was reduced to the narrow Period of fourscore Years, and the World on all Sides was fallen into various sorts of Corruption, and Idolatry and Ignorance of God generally prevailed among the Nations, Tradition evidently ceased to be a safe Mean of Conveyance.

IT was then the divine Wisdom judged it a proper time to erect a peculiar Kingdom, Church, or Congregation in the World; and for its Illumination gave the Knowledge of his Will and Worship in Writing, by the Hand of his Servant *Moses*; that by such Writing, or Scripture, divine Truth might more easily be preserved, be further spread, and, when lost, more easily restored. This must be acknowledged a wise and proper Expedient. After the time of *Moses*, God was pleased to give Revelations to the subsequent Prophets, as Occasion required; till in the Fulness of Time, the great Prophet, the Son of God, came into the World, opened a new Dispensation, and all the Treasures of the divine Grace, which had not before been

ſo clearly made known to the Church and People of God. And what he and his Apoſtles taught is alſo commited to Writing, and compleats what we call the Canon of Scripture.

THIS is the general Account and Hiſtory of Revelation which I propoſed to give. And we may here obſerve, that a writen Revelation and the Church of God are co-exiſtent; that is to ſay, at the ſame time the Church was brought into the World, the Scriptures were brought into the Church; and both are ſo eſſentially connected, that take away the one, and you take away the other. Take away the Scriptures, and we are reduced to the State of meer Nature; our Charter is deſtroyed, and our Polity, as we are God's Church and Kingdom, is overthrown. We may indeed, poſſibly, pretend, as the Papiſts do, that we are, though deprived of the Scriptures, ſtill a Church; yet without the Scriptures, as our Rule and Foundation, we are not the Church of God, but under a different Head, it may be the Pope, or ſome other uſurped Authority. But this by the Bye.

I ſhall now remove ſome Objections which may be leveled againſt Revelation in general.

IT is pretended—*To be quite needleſs, Nature and Reaſon being ſufficient to direct any Man in the plain Way of his Duty, without any ſupernatural Aſſiſtance.* I anſwer —

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It muſt be allowed, in general, that Nature and Reaſon are ſufficient to direct any Man in the Way of his Duty, ſo far as God, in his Circumſtances, expects Duty from him. For God expects Duty from every Perſon only in Proportion to the Light he enjoys, and to the Talents he hath received. But the Experience of all Mankind ſhews that Nature and Reaſon, by themſelves, will advance but a little Way in the Knowledge of divine things. Gentlemen in a Land like ours, where, in ſpite of themſelves, their Nature and Reaſon is enlightened and directed in a conſiderable Degree by Revelation, may talk of the Perfection and Sufficiency of Nature and Reaſon.

IF we look into thoſe Nations, which are perfect Strangers to Revelation, we ſhall find them groſsly ignorant of the Being, Unity, and Perfections of God, the Diſpenſations of his Providence, the proper Honor and Worſhip that is due to him, the Prayers we may addreſs to his Goodneſs, and the Hopes we may entertain of his Acceptance. They know nothing of the Pardon of Sin, the Promiſes of God's Mercy and Bleſſing, nor of any thing belonging to the Covenant of his Love, the preſent Privileges, or future Glory of his Kingdom. The Reſurrection from the dead, the Day of Judgment, the immortal Life, which will be the Reward of Piety and Virtue, and the Death ever-

lasting, which will be the sad Lot of all the impenitently wicked, they are altogether, or in a great Measure, unacquainted with. But all these are great Principles in Religion, and of great Force to purify our Spirits, ennoble our Minds, animate our Hopes, and guard us against the Influence of bodily Appetites, and the Violence of Temptation.

AND however others may fare, in a great Degree of Darkness and Ignorance, through the favorable Allowance of God, yet surely every Man's Reason will tell him, that superior Knowledge, and a more extensive View of the divine Dispensations, is absolutely necessary to a higher Degree of Goodness, Comfort, Obedience, and Devotedness to God. What the Poets relate may be true, that some primitive Mortals subsisted only upon Acorns and Water, in Dens and Caves; and we know there are some Parts of the World where the naked Inhabitants enjoy very few Conveniencies of Life; but shall we therefore despise the Blessings of Agriculture, and the various Accommodations which make Life happy and comfortable, and say they are needless? Would any Man in *England* ever think of turning out naked into the Fields and Woods, because it is possible, and may somewhere in Fact be true, that Men may live upon wild Fruit and Water, without Cloths, or any Habitation, but the Dens and Caves of the Earth? Corn and other

other agreable Food, Cloths, and commodious Habitations, fited up with proper Furniture and Utenſils, are neceſſary to our Kind and Degree of Life in the natural World; and ſo is Revelation to a correſponding Kind and Degree of ſpiritual Life. The Food, Raiment, and Habitations we enjoy are the Gift of God's Goodneſs, and it is our Duty to accept and uſe them with Thankfulneſs. In like Manner, Revelation is the Gift of God, and, as ſuch, it ought to be received; and as it gives greater Light, we are obliged to attend accordingly to it, becauſe we muſt, in the Nature of things, be accountable for it.

I may add upon this Head, that however Nature and Reaſon, in their pure and moſt perfect State, may be ſufficient to direct in the Way of Duty, yet when Nature is corrupted, and Reaſon obſcured, or almoſt quite extinguiſhed, they are by no Means ſufficient to reſtore and recover themſelves to the Knowledge and Obedience of the Truth; becauſe they themſelves, who ſhould be the Phyſician to heal themſelves, are ſick and diſabled. But it was the primary Intention of Revelation to reſtore and preſerve the Knowledge of God and of his Will in a corrupt and degenerate World.

So far therefore I ſee no Objection againſt Revelation, but it may be both very needful, and a very great Bleſſing to Mankind.

IT may be ſaid—*If this Bleſſing was given to all Mankind, who all equally ſtand in need of it; but whereas it is confined only to a Part of Mankind, while others are left to grope in the Dark, how can it be accounted the Gift of divine Goodneſs? For is not God equally the God, Father, and Saviour of all Men? How then can it be conſiſtent with his Beneficence to confine the Light of Revelation to ſome, which would ſo much contribute to the Happineſs of all? May we not then conclude, that a partial Revelation is no Revelation from God, nor worthy of our Regard?*

I anſwer—It is very certain that God is the Saviour of all Men, that he is good to all, and that his tender Mercies are over all his Works. But while we are ſure of this, we are not equally ſure that our Reaſon is a perfect Rule for adjuſting the Diſtribution of his Benefits. On the other Hand, we may be very ſure that it is not. From the loweſt to the higheſt Degree of Exiſtence, from a Grain of Sand, to the moſt glorious Angel in Heaven, every higher Degree of Being is an inconteſtible Proof, that God may very juſtly, according to his own Wiſdom and good Pleaſure, beſtow what Gifts, Endowments, Privileges, and Advantages upon his Creatures he ſees fit. He is Debtor to none. Our Underſtanding is no Meaſure of his Wiſdom, neither are his Diſpenſations to be cenſured by our narrow and imperfect Judgments.

ments. And methinks, we may as well make it an Objection againſt the Goodneſs of divine Providence, that all Men are not rich alike, wiſe alike, or knowing and learned alike.

WOULD you not think him a very fooliſh Man, who ſhould be diſpleaſed that God has made him rich, and placed him in eaſy Circumſtances, becauſe there are many about him in a poor low Condition? Who refuſes Wealth, or Objects againſt Plenty, becauſe his Neighbours are pinched, and make but a hard Shift to get a Living? Or who can be ſo abſurd, as to reckon his ſuperior Knowledge and Learning to be no valuable Advantage, becauſe there are Numbers of illiterate Perſons, who are much below him in Underſtanding? Or that the Poſſeſſion of Reaſon is no Bleſſing, becauſe there are ſo many Idiots to be found among Mankind? Or can you ſuppoſe there are any of the angelic Body, or of thoſe Spirits who excel us in all Endowments and Happineſs, who deſpiſe their own Bleſſings and heavenly Felicity, as no Gifts of the divine Bounty, becauſe we in this Earth, are not ſet upon a Level with them? And is it not as fooliſh and abſurd to deny Revelation, or to argue againſt it, as improperly beſtowed, and unworthy of the divine Goodneſs, becauſe indeed it is not communicated to all the World, as well as to ourſelves? It is very unnatural

to dispute against God's Goodness in any Shape, and very presumptuous to direct him how to bestow it either as to Quantity, Quality, or Extent. If it is Fact, that he has given us any Blessing, our Duty surely is to be thankful, and to enjoy and improve it, whether he has bestowed more or less upon our Fellow-Creatures; being certain where less is given, less will be required; and that the Judge of the whole Earth, will, in the last Day, deal with all in perfect Equity and Goodness. But,

IF Revelation is such a Blessing, surely it would appear in the Fruits or Effects of it. Whereas great Numbers, if not the generality of those who enjoy Revelation, are as bad as the very Heathen, who are Strangers to it. And such Evils have been produced, such Variance, Discord, and bloody Persecutions, on Account of revealed Religion, that it may justly be questioned, whether it has not done more Harm than Good. What Reason then have we to say, it is a valuable Gift, or worthy of the Father of the Universe?

To this I reply—That natural Causes by a Sort of Necessity produce their proper Effects; so Fire always burns combustible Matter, and a good Medicine heals a Disease; and that is no Fire which will not burn proper Matter, nor that a good Medicine, which never heals a Disease. But moral Causes are of a different Nature, because their

their Efficacy depends upon the Choice and Disposition of the Subjects to whom they are applied. And therefore a moral Means, or Cause, may be in itself most excellent, though it happens to produce no good Effect; nay, though accidentally it may prove the Occasion of very bad Effects. Our Lord's Ministry and Doctrine was perfectly divine, and yet it had but small Influence for good upon the *Jewish* Nation; nay, on the other Hand, excited their Malice to that Degree, that they slew the Prince of Life.

WHATEVER Effects therefore, Revelation may have produced in the World, still it is true, that it is a valuable Gift, and worthy of the divine Goodness. But it must ever be remembered, that it is absolutely necessary to our receiving any Benefit from Gospel-Means, that we be truly desirous to shake off the Yoke of Sin, and to cultivate and improve our Minds in Virtue and true Holiness. If therefore we expect there is any Life or Power provided in the Gospel, which will anticipate our own Thoughts and Concerns; or that will begin to work upon our Minds, and excite them to Thoughtfulness and Care, whilst we ourselves are thoughtless and unconcerned, we shall but deceive ourselves. For sure I am, there is nothing in the Gospel that encourages such an Expectation; on the contrary, such an Expectation is utterly inconsistent with the grand

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Design of revealing the Grace and Mercy of God; which is to awaken our Consciences, and to excite us to Care and Diligence in our spiritual Concerns.

THE Notion I have just now mentioned, manifestly tends to lull us asleep in Security and Indolence; and encourages to go on in the Contempt of God and our own Salvation; or in any of the Paths of Folly and Sin, upon a Presumption, that we can never turn out, till we are constrained by some uncertain, unaccountable Act of almighty Power. True indeed, our own Thoughts, Desires, and Endeavours, will effect but little, without the Help of divine Power; but yet, if we choose to live in Ignorance, Unbelief, or any Branch of Impiety and Wickedness; if our Hearts are so attached to the World, so ingrossed by Business, sensual Pleasures and Amusements, that we can spare no serious Reflections for God, our Souls, and a future World, I cannot see how we should be saved by any Grace, which the Gospel has provided in Jesus Christ.

IT is certain, the Gospel hath produced many good Effects, and will always do so, where it is received and attended to. For as for those pretended Christians who make it the Occasion of Variance, Hatred, and Persecution, we cannot, with any Justice or Propriety, say, that they do receive or attend to Revelation; nay, it is very certain, that

that in Fact, they do not. Nor must we allow, that in Popish Countries, where Corruption of Manners greatly prevails, and Superstition, Idolatry, and Persecution are established, they enjoy the Benefit of Revelation, when we know, that for many Ages, the Use of the Scriptures hath been forbidden, and a Religion taught and professed, which is quite foreign to the Word of God.

BUT how can we be sure, that we have now in Possession, those very Books entire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded? May they not in length of Time be lost, or quite altered from what they were at first? Or so varied and changed by Transcribers and Translators, that we can never be sure that we have the true and genuine Sense of Scripture?

I ANSWER—No Nation in the World, can be more sure of any of their publick Acts and Records, preserved in their Archives with the utmost Care, than we are of the Truth of the Scriptures now in our Hands. The *Jews* preserved the Books of *Moses*, as the Laws of their Kingdom, in the most sacred Part of the Tabernacle and Temple; those Books, the Psalms and Prophets, were every where publickly read in their Synagogues, every Week on the Sabbath-Day; their learned Men, with the utmost Exactness and Scrupulosity, inspected and

and guarded the Text, even ſo far as to count the very Number of Letters in every Book. In ſhort, our Lord, and the Apoſtles, frequently quote *Moſes*, the *Pſalms* and *Prophets*, without any Intimation, that thoſe Books were in any Reſpect altered or depraved. Whereas had they indeed been corrupted, we need not doubt but our bleſſed Saviour would have reformed that as well as, or rather, more than any other Inſtance of Corruption among the *Jews*.

FROM our Lord's Time, the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament were publickly read by the Jews in all Parts of the World; and thoſe Scriptures, and the apoſtolic Writings, as they came out, were read by Chirſtians every where in their Aſſemblies, and diſperſed over all the World, where the Religion of Jeſus was profeſſed; as containing the Laws and Rules of the Religion he taught. Inſomuch that it was impoſſible to corrupt or deprave them. And for that Reaſon, even the Church of ROME, or thoſe who erected that antichriſtian Power, never durſt attempt to make the leaſt Alteration in the Scriptures, as knowing it would be to no Purpoſe; but inſtead of that, they claimed the ſole Right of interpreting the Scriptures, which ſerved their Ends full as well as corrupting them. For he who hath Power to put what Senſe he pleaſes upon a Law, may

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as effectually make it void, as he who destroys it.

AND as for Transcribers, or Translators, it is for the same Reason impossible they should make any material Alterations. And it is in Fact true, that they have not. For you may take any Translation, in any Language, or by any Party among Christians, Papists as well as Protestants, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the Covenant of the Lord our God, and the several Duties to which we are thereby obliged, though they may differ in some things, and Commentators may put their own Sense upon others. But the main things, I am well satisfied, have been preserved pure and entire in every Translation from the Begining to this Day.

THUS the Objections against Revelation in general, which are all that I ever heard of, are removed, I hope to Satisfaction. Upon the whole, they seem to me to proceed not from a sober Mind, sincerely desirous of the best Knowledge and Instruction; for how can one allow him to be a true Scholar, or sincerely desirous of improving in useful Learning, who meeting with a Book excellently adapted to that Purpose, refuses to make Use of it, because he is already possessed of the Faculty of Reason, or because it is not in the Hands of every Body; or because some have made a bad Use of it;

or becauſe he doubts whether it may not have undergone ſome Alterations; when the Book, in itſelf conſidered, is an excellent Performance, and capable of giving him the moſt profitable Inſtruction?

THE Bible, as we now have it in our Hands, thanks be to God, is by far the moſt excellent Book in our Language; and as we have it in our Tranſlation, is in itſelf, ſeting aſide all Circumſtances, a pure and plentiful Fountain of divine Knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full Account of the divine Diſpenſations, and particularly of the Goſpel of our Salvation. So that whoever ſtudies the Bible, the Engliſh Bible, is ſure of gaining the Knowledge and Faith, which if duely applied to the Heart and Converſation, will infallibly guide him to eternal Life. For which Reaſon it is our Wiſdom and Duty, to be much in reading and meditating upon the Bible, that our Minds being well furniſhed with heavenly Wiſdom, and our Hearts tinctured with a divine Spirit, we may be prepared for Glory, Honour, and Immortality.

CHAP.

CHAP. XL.

That the Scriptures are given by INSPIRATION *of God, appears from the expreſs and frequent Aſſertions of* Moſes, *the* Prophets *and* Apoſtles.

I HAVE already given a general Account and Hiſtory of Revelation; and have ſhewn that it is perfectly conſonant to the Goodneſs and Love of God, to the Relation in which we ſtand in to him, and the high and glorious Purpoſes for which he has given us our Being; and that he commited Revelation to Writing at a very proper Time, when the Shortneſs of human Life, and the general Corruption of the World, rendered Tradition no longer a ſafe Mean of Conveyance; and when the Kingdom or peculiar Congregation, he had erected, required a ſtanding Light for the Preſervation of divine Truth.

I HAVE likewiſe endeavoured to remove ſome Objections againſt Revelation in general.

ON this head I would beg leave to repeat, that never were any Books more publickly and commonly known, being read and heard with the greateſt Reverence once every Week, in both *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Aſſemblies;

blies; for a very long Tract of Time, the Old Teſtament before the Coming of our Lord, and the Old and New after his Coming, to this very Day. So that it is, in the Nature of things, impoſſible that the holy Scriptures ſhould be adulterated; nor could any Man, who had a Mind to alter or corrupt them, promiſe himſelf Succeſs in an Attempt, which muſt immediately be detected, and confounded, by Thouſands of Copies every where diſperſed, and conſtantly read before numerous Aſſemblies, in the various Languages of even more Nations, than ever compoſed the Roman Empire in its largeſt Extent.

TRANSCRIBERS may indeed make literal Miſtakes, but thoſe are eaſily corrected by a Variety of Manuſcripts; and Tranſlators may differ in giving the literal Senſe of ſome Words and Phraſes, but not ſo as to render the main Subjects and Subſtance of the Scriptures either obſcure or uncertain. For you may take any Tranſlations in any Language, or done by any Party among Chriſtians, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the Covenant of the Lord our God, the State of things in a future World, and the ſeveral Duties to which we are obliged, though they may not render the Letter of the Text in the ſame Words, nor with the ſame Propriety of Expreſſion. The more perfect, and exact in all things, any

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Tranſlation is, the better it is; but I am very ſure, that all things pertaining to the Diſpenſations of God, his Grace and Promiſes, and our Hopes and Duty, have been preſerved pure and entire in every Tranſlation, from the Begining to this Day. And this is abundantly enough for our Inſtruction, Comfort, Direction, and Edification.

GENTLEMEN in foreign Buſineſs, who do not underſtand foreign Languages, are obliged to carry it on by the Help of Tranſlations. And if a Letter in *Italian*, *German*, *Spaniſh*, or *French*, was put into the Hands of Twenty Tranſlators, there are great Odds, but every Tranſlation would differ, more or leſs, in ſome Expreſſions. The ſame Words or Phraſes would hardly be rendered in the ſame Manner by every one of the Tranſlators; and yet they might all agree with Reſpect to the Senſe of the Merchant. And that being all his Correſpondent wants to underſtand, he will never think it worth his while to enter into minute Particulars, or a critical Propriety of Phraſes, which have nothing to do with his Buſineſs. Juſt ſo it is with Reference to the Tranſlation of the Bible. In above the Space of an Hundred Years, Learning may have received conſiderable Improvements, and by that Means, ſome Inaccuracies may be found in a Tranſlation, more than a Hundred Years old. But you may reſt fully ſatisfied, that as our En-

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gliſh Tranſlation is, in itſelf, by far the moſt excellent Book in our Language, ſo it is a pure and plentiful Fountain of divine Knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full Account of the divine Diſpenſations, and particularly of the Goſpel of our Salvation; inſomuch, that whoever ſtudies the Bible, the Engliſh Bible, is ſure of gaining that Knowledge and Faith which, if duly applied to the Heart and Converſation, will infallibly guide him to eternal Life.

[BUT you may ſay, how then comes it to paſs, that learned Men differ ſo much about the Senſe of Scripture? I anſwer. They differ not ſo much about the literal Senſe, or Tranſlation of Scripture, as about the Conſtruction which they put upon the literal Senſe. For Example, all are agreed that thoſe Words, *Take, Eat, this is my Body, which is broken for you*, are rightly and well tranſlated; but the Queſtion is, what is the Meaning of them? The Papiſt will tell you, they mean, that the Bread in the Lord's-Supper is really turned into the Body, Soul, and Divinity of Chriſt; the Proteſtant very juſtly denieth the monſtrous and idolatrous Abſurdity, and affirms, that the Bread is only a figurative Repreſentation of Chriſt's ſacrificed Body. Tranſlators are generally pretty well agreed, but Divines differ very much about the Senſe of Scripture, which may afterwards be conſidered.]

THUS,

THUS, by demonſtrating the Reaſonableneſs and Expediency of Revelation in general, by removing Objections againſt it, and by ſhowing the Sufficiency of the Tranſlation, which, thanks to God, is in all our Hands, the Way is prepared —

To advance a few Arguments to eſtabliſh the Authority and Excellency of the Scriptures; that they were indeed given by Inſpiration of God, or that, in them, holy Men of God ſpake as they were moved by the holy Spirit.

WE have ſufficient Reaſon to believe that we have in our Hands the very Books that were writen by *Moſes*, by the Prophets, and by the Apoſtles of Chriſt. Now that thoſe Books were given by Inſpiration of God, or that the Perſons who wrote them have delivered to us what they received from Heaven, will appear —

FROM their own expreſs and frequent Aſſertions. *Moſes* and the Prophets always declare they ſpake in the Name of the Lord, and delivered to the People what they received in Commiſſion from him; the Apoſtles likewiſe aſſure us, that they were taught by Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, were endued with the Spirit of God, and commiſſioned by him to preach the Goſpel to all Nations. And we have all the Reaſon in the World to believe they have told us the Truth. For if they have not, they muſt be

very bad, designing Men, who solemnly and publickly fathered upon God, Constitutions, Laws, Doctrines, and Declarations which they knew very well were false and fictitious, the Creatures of their own Invention, obtruded upon the World to serve some selfish, sinister Purposes. But, for any thing we can see, they appear to be Persons of the highest Character for Honor and Probity. In the whole of their Conduct we find the utmost Integrity and Disinterestedness, and in every Part of their History and Writings the utmost Simplicity and Impartiality.

We may carry this Argument further, and set it in a still stronger Light in the Case of the *Prophets*. For if, when they declared they spake in the Name of God, and by a Commission from him, they declared a Falshood, they must certainly know that it was a Falshood; and if they knew it was a Falshood, they were not only very wicked, but even void of common Sense. For the Prophets, in a long Series one after another, got nothing by speaking in the Name of the Lord, but Scorn and Contempt from the Generality of their Countreymen. When they entered upon the ungrateful Office, they renounced all worldly Views, and were harrassed and persecuted in Proportion to their Fidelity in executing it.

Now, this is too much by far for any pious Fraud to bear, even in the Case of a single

ſingle Perſon, much more in a Series of Succeſſion of Men in ſeveral Generations. An Impoſtor, like *Mahomet*, may carry his Pretences very high, but he can never bear the Furnace of Perſecution. That terrible Scourge will either ſilence his falſe and arrogant Claims, or force him to take up Arms, if it is in his Power, for his own Vindication and Security. But the Prophets were naked Men, who, without the leaſt Dependence upon worldly Power or Policy, oppoſed nothing but a divine Commiſſion to very unkind and ſevere Uſage. Now there is nothing to be found in human Nature, or in any ſuppoſeable State of things, that can poſſibly account for this Conduct, but either, that really they had a divine Commiſſion, or elſe, that they were diſordered in their Heads, and had loſt their Senſes. But their Writings prove they were Men of good Senſe, and of a ſound and excellent Judgment; therefore, nothing remains but that they really acted by a divine Commiſſion.

THE Force of this Argument will be ſeen even ſtill more evidently in the Caſe of the *Apoſtles*. No Hiſtory in the World has been better preſerved than that of the New Teſtament. There we find that Jeſus Chriſt had gathered, while he was upon Earth, ſome Hundreds of Diſciples, who all of them made Profeſſion of Faith in him immediately after his Death, declaring that he was riſen

from the Dead, and aſcended into Heaven. Particularly, the Apoſtles, with ſeveral others, went about preaching the Goſpel, firſt in *Judea*, then in all Parts of the *Roman* Empire, perſuading Men to believe in Chriſt, affirming that he was the Son of God, that all the wonderful things related of him were true, and that they had a Commiſſion from Heaven to teach, ſpread, and propagate his Religion every where, though they knew they ſhould every where meet with the moſt violent Oppoſition, and the crueleſt Treatment. Now, they muſt either be fully convinced in their own Minds that their Aſſertions were true; or, if they knew that the Goſpel, and their Commiſſion to preach it, was a Forgery, we muſt conclude they were diſtracted, and had loſt the Uſe of Underſtanding and Reaſon. For, ſuppoſing our bleſſed Lord never did or ſaid any of thoſe things, which the Apoſtles repeated; and that they had no Inſtructions or Commiſſion from him to preach the Goſpel; then we muſt ſuppoſe, they entered into a fooliſh and frantick Confederacy after this Manner.

" MEN and Brethren, what that Seducer
" was, who lived among us the other Day,
" and how juſtly he ſuffered Death for his
" vile Impoſture, we, of all Men living,
" have moſt Reaſon to know. And though
" others, who were leſs intimately acquainted
" with him, and his Ways of deceiving,
" might

" might have ſome Opinion of his Worth
" and Honeſty, yet we, who were the
" daily Companions of his Converſation,
" ſaw nothing in him anſwerable to the
" Greatneſs of his Pretenſions, but that his
" Deſign was, by all the boldeſt Arts of
" Craft and Hypocriſy, to get a Name in
" the World; and therefore let us enter into
" the moſt ſolemn Agreement to propagate
" the Belief of this notorious Cheat among
" Mankind, and to feign all manner of Lies
" in its Confirmation; to aver that we ſaw
" him reſtore Eyes to the Blind, Ears to
" the Deaf, and Life to the Dead; and
" though it be all falſe, yet let us confi-
" dently report and aſſert it to the very laſt
" Drop of our Blood.

" And becauſe, after all his great and
" glorious Pretences of being no leſs than
" the Son of God, he was at laſt executed
" as a vile Malefactor, with all the Cir-
" cumſtances of Shame and Diſhonour, we
" muſt agree among ourſelves upon ſome
" Story to wipe off this Diſgrace. Let us
" therefore reſolve to affirm, with undaunted
" Steddineſs, that after he was thus diſ-
" honourably crucified, the third Day he
" roſe again; often converſed with us, in
" the ſame familiar way as he had always
" done before his Execution; and that, af-
" ter a while, we ſaw him aſcend up into
" Heaven. But then, we muſt be ſure to

" ſtand unalterably to this bold Falſhood,
" and perſevere to Death itſelf in the Aſ-
" ſertion. For what Abſurdity is there in
" throwing away our Lives with no other
" Proſpect than that of final Perdition?
" And why ſhould any Man think it hard
" to ſuffer Stripes, Bonds, Impriſonments,
" Reproaches, Diſhonour, and Death itſelf,
" with this View only?"

THIS, or ſomething like it, muſt be the Senſe and Reſolution of the Apoſtles and firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, upon Suppoſition they knew and believed, that the Goſpel, and their Commiſſion to preach it, was a Forgery. In this Caſe, a ſet of Men in private and low Life, without any manner of worldly Power or Intereſt; in the certain Proſpect of all manner of Oppoſition, of ſacrificing all that is dear and valuable in Life, of ſuffering all manner of Indignities, Tribulations, and Cruelties, and of expoſing themſelves to all the Terrors of Death; muſt agree together to propagate throughout the whole World a Syſtem of Falſhood, knowing it to be ſuch, directly contrary to their own Conſciences, and to all their Intereſts both in this, and a future World.

NONE but a Company of Madmen, ſeized with the moſt extravagant Frenzy, and void of all Senſe and Reaſon, could poſſibly join in ſuch a Deſign. Whereas, if we peruſe their Writings, we ſhall find that the Apoſ-

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tles were Men of the fineſt Senſe; not only in full Poſſeſſion of Underſtanding, but endowed with Knowledge and Wiſdom in a Degree far beyond the moſt eminent Philoſophers, or Maſters of Reaſon, that ever had been in the World. They had a ſurpriſing Acquaintance with God and the Perfections of his Nature; they ſet the Diſpenſations of his Wiſdom, and the grand Deſigns of his Love, in the cleareſt and moſt amiable Light; they well underſtood the whole Syſtem of Morality, and fixed every Branch of it upon its proper Foundation; upon Principles either ſelf-evident or allowed, they demonſtrate and eſtabliſh the whole Scheme of the Goſpel. The Apoſtles were ſo far from being void of common Senſe, that they were, in Fact, Men of the beſt Senſe, of the moſt accurate and ſublime Knowledge, of the moſt excellent and divine Spirit, next to their Lord and Maſter, that the World ever was acquainted with. Therefore their eſpouſing and aſſerting the Goſpel with ſo much Zeal could not proceed from any Diſorder in their Heads.

THERE remains then, but one other Cauſe to which it can poſſibly be aſſigned, and it is this, that they were fully perſuaded of the Truth of what they reported. And if they were fully perſuaded of the Truth of what they reported, then it follows, that what they reported was certainly true. They were fully

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ſatisfied that it was true, and they were perfectly capable of receiving the cleareſt Evidence, and fulleſt Satisfaction. For obſerve, what they reported was not a Matter of meer Opinion, as in the Caſe of *Superſtition*, nor a warm Suggeſtion or ſecret Impulſe upon their Minds, as in the Caſe of *Enthuſiaſm*, but bare ſimple Matter of Fact. *We cannot*, ſay they, *but ſpeak the things, which we have ſeen and heard.* Acts iv. 20. They were things, not which they conceited, or fancied, but which all of them, which great Multitudes of all ſorts of People, had often and openly, for the Space of three or four Years together, ſeen with their Eyes, and heard with their Ears. And that they were not miſtaken, or deceived, they were ſo fully ſatisfied, that they ventured all they had in the World, and Life itſelf, upon the Truth of what they had heard and ſeen. Conſequently, their Aſſurance muſt be in the higheſt and fulleſt Degree of Satisfaction, leaving no Room for Doubt or Uncertainty.

However ſome now a days may cavil and object, it is certain the Apoſtles, who were the familiar Companions of our Lord, had not the leaſt Scruple or Difficulty about any thing related in the Goſpel. They were perfectly ſatisfied they ſaw Chriſt upon Earth; that they converſed with him; that they heard the gracious Words which proceeded from his Mouth; that they ſaw him

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work all his Miracles; that they ſaw him crucified and dead; that they ſaw him alive again within a few Days; that they heard him give them a Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel to all Nations, and promiſe them Succeſs; that they actually ſaw him aſcend up into Heaven; that the Holy Ghoſt actually fell upon them on the Day of Pentecoſt; and that by his Influences they actually felt themſelves indowed with new and miraculous Powers which accompanied them during the Courſe of their Miniſtry. And, to their being fully perſuaded of the Truth of theſe things, and to no other poſſible Cauſe, can we aſſign their ſteddy and zealous Endeavours to publiſh and ſpread the Goſpel every where.

ADD to all this, that the Apoſtles were ſurpriſingly ſucceſsful in Preaching the Goſpel. Theſe Men in private and low Life, theſe defenceleſs Men, quite deſtitute of all temporal Power and Intereſt, only by the Force of Truth, the Truth of the Goſpel which they preached, and the Power which they received from their Maſter, after he was gone to Heaven, encountered the Fury of the Multitude, the moſt inveterate Prejudices of the whole World, the Zeal of Superſtition, the Hatred of the *Jews*, the Contempt of the *Greeks*, the Power of the *Romans*, the Pride of the *Philoſophers*, and the Policy of *Stateſmen*; all theſe Difficulties they encountered, and ſurmounted them

them all. The Doctrine they taught, like the Sun, inlightened the whole World, in a manner, all at once; and infinite Multitudes of People, both from Cities and Villages, were, by the Apostles Preaching, brought into the Church, like Corn into a Granary.

ALL this, taken together, amounts to a sufficient Proof, that the Apostles are to be credited when they affirm, that they received their Instructions and Commission from the Son of God; and upon the Foot of this Argument alone, I am, for my own Part, as fully convinced that the Apostles were inspired by the Spirit of God, and that they have in their Writings infallibly delivered the Truth, in all things pertaining to the Christian Faith and Doctrine, as I am of any mathematical Proposition, or that twice Two is equal to Four. The Proof indeed is of a different kind, but fully convincing and satisfactory.

AND if our Lord came from God to teach us the Truth, and if his Apostles received from him their Instructions, Commission, and the holy Spirit, then it follows, that the Books of *Moses*, and of the Prophets, are undoubtedly the Word of God, and that the sacred History may be depended upon as a true Account of things; for those Books are not only asserted by our Lord, and his Apostles, in general, to be the

Word

Word of God, given by divine Inſpiration, and a true Rule of Knowledge, Faith, and Doctrine, but particular Paſſages are frequently produced in Proof or Confirmation of the Doctrine they taught; and almoſt every ſingle Part of the Hiſtory, from the Begining to the End, as of *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, the *Deluge*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Abraham*, the *Iſraelites*, and their miraculous Deliverance from *Egypt* and Settlement in the Land of *Canaan*, and all the ſurpriſing Events in their Story, are refered to as true and authentic.

WHAT Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles have reported and taught in the Books of the New Teſtament, is certainly the Truth, as they received it from God. And if ſo, then the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament are alſo given by Inſpiration of God, a Storehouſe of ſacred and religious Knowledge, of undoubted Credit and Veracity, for our Lord and his Apoſtles have repreſented and eſtabliſhed them as ſuch.

THUS the frequent and expreſs Aſſertions of *Moſes*, the *Prophets*, and the *Apoſtles*, taken in Connection with their proper Circumſtances, is a Proof of the Truth of Revelation as it ſtands in the Scriptures.

LET me recommend it to your ſerious Conſideration, that we certainly have in our Hands an ineſtimable Treaſure, a Revelation from Heaven, a ſure Word of Prophecy,

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ſhining as a Light in a dark Place, a Magazine of the moſt excellent Knowledge, clearly diſplaying the divine Nature and Perfections, opening fully the Diſpenſations of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs from the Begining of the World; ſhewing the Riches of his Grace and Love to Mankind, delivering the moſt excellent Precepts of Wiſdom, Truth, and Holineſs, for the purifying our Hearts, and directing our Converſation, and propoſing the nobleſt Motives to ingage us to, and incourage us in, the Practice of all Virtue and Goodneſs. We cannot over-value this Bleſſing, neither can we deſpiſe it without great Guilt. We are accountable to God for the Uſe we make of it. Let us eſteem it in Proportion to its Worth, and ſtudy it as the Rule of our Life, as the grand Source of our Comfort and Hope, and as an infallible Guide to eternal Glory.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLI.

The divine Original and Authority of the Scriptures, proved from the Harmony and Agreement of the ſeveral WRITERS *of them.*

HAVING gon through the firſt Argument, I proceed — To prove the divine Original and Authority of the Scriptures; which we may do from the Harmony and Agreement of the ſeveral Writers of them.

THEY are not a Book compiled by a ſingle Author, nor by many Hands acting in Confederacy in the ſame Age; in which Caſe there would be no Difficulty in compoſing a conſiſtent Scheme, nor would it be any Wonder to find the ſeveral Parts in a juſt and cloſe Connection; but the Scriptures were done by ſeveral Hands, in very different Conditions of Life, from the Throne and Scepter down to the loweſt Degree, and in very diſtant Ages, through the long Space of about 1500 Years, when the World muſt have put on a quite new Face, and Men muſt have different Intereſts to purſue; which naturally would have led a Spirit of Impoſture to have varied its Schemes, and to have adapted them to different Stations in the World,

World, and to the different Turns and Changes in every Age.

DAVID wrote about 400 Years after *Moses*, and *Isaiah* about 250 after *David*, and *Matthew* more than 700 Years after *Isaiah*. And yet these Authors, with all the other Prophets and Apostles, write in perfect Harmony, confirming the Authority of their Predecessors, labouring to reduce the People to the Observance of their Instructions, and loudly exclaiming against the Neglect and Contempt of them, and denouncing the severest Judgments upon such as continued disobedient.

THIS was the principal Work of the Prophets in a long Succession. And it is well known our Lord came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil, *i. e.* to vindicate and illustrate their Meaning, to compleat what was imperfect, and to answer the highest Ends of what was typical and figurative. Now this is a very strong Proof, that the Scriptures were throughout dictated by one and the same Spirit, which could be no other than the Spirit of God, and of Truth. It is allowed, as in the Case of *Mahometism*, that an Imposture, or religious Fraud, may be handed down from one Age to another, but not by several different Persons, all making equal Pretensions to a divine Authority and Commission. For in this Case they are to be considered, not as a Succession of Teachers, deriving their Doctrine from

from one common Original, but as ſingle and diſtinct Impoſtors; and conſequently, every one in a diſtant Age, and in a quite different State of things, would ſet up for himſelf, and ſeek a ſingular Glory by building upon a diſtinct and ſeparate Foundation from others. It would ſignify little to an Impoſtor, who has no other Intention but to advance his own Honor and Renown, to pretend a Commiſſion from Heaven, only to give Reputation to another Deceiver, by confirming what he has already eſtabliſhed.

THEREFORE as the Writers of the holy Scriptures, though they all claim a divine Authority, yet write in perfect Connection and Harmony, mutually confirming the Doctrine and Teſtimony of each other, and concuring to eſtabliſh the very ſame religious Truths and Principles, it is a ſtrong Proof that they all derive their Inſtructions from the ſame Fountain, the Wiſdom of God, and were indeed under the Direction and Illumination of his Spirit.

WE may take another Argument from ourſelves, as we make Profeſſion of Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*. For our Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, who dwell in the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth, is a Proof that the Goſpel ſpread itſelf over all the *Roman* Empire; for, from *Jeruſalem*, it came to us by a gradual Progreſs, and advancing from one Country to

 another,

another, arrived at length in theſe Iſlands of *Great-Britain* and *Ireland.* No body can doubt or deny that the chriſtian Faith is, and for many Ages paſt has been, embraced in all thoſe numerous and diſtant Lands, which once compoſed the *Roman* Empire, and even in Countries far beyond the utmoſt Bounds thereof. In all theſe ſpatious Tracts the chriſtian Faith, in one Form or other, has been profeſſed; and Baptiſm and the Lord's-Supper, in one Form or other, have been adminiſtered, in a Succeſſion of Ages, quite up to the times of the Apoſtles, and of our Lord.

It is moſt certain that Baptiſm and the Lord's-Supper, thoſe Summaries of the whole Goſpel, were not inſtituted in any following Age, by any one Party of Chriſtians, but have been handed down to us, and to all Parties among Chriſtians, from the very Mouth and Inſtitution of *Jeſus Chriſt.* No Fact can be more evident than this. From our Lord therefore, and his Apoſtles, the Goſpel ſpread over the greateſt Part of the known World, which before the Publication of the Goſpel was univerſally involved in Idolatry, eſtabliſhed by long Cuſtom and human Laws, ſtrongly guaranteed by all the Power and Learning of the World, by all the Zeal of the wildeſt Superſtition, by all the Violence and Obſtinacy of Prejudice, by all the Blindneſs of profound Ignorance, and all

all the incorrigible Perverseness of corrupt and dissolute Manners. A Complication of Causes which would for ever have bid Defiance to any Philosophy or Wisdom of the few that can be supposed to attain a better Sense in the midst of universal Darkness and Depravity. But the Gospel gained a most compleat and extensive Victory over all these, demolished every Idol in the Heathen World, and every where erected the Trophies of a conquering *Jesus*.

Now this surprising Change, which is notorious to all Mankind, must be effected either by human Power and Policy, or by a divine and supernatural Influence. By human Power and Policy great Revolutions have been brought about in all Ages and Parts of the World. And therefore we do not wonder at the Spread of the *Mahometan* or *Turkish* Religion, as it was propagated by the Sword, under the Conduct of a mighty Warrior and Politician, who by Ravages, Bloodshed, and Desolations, conquered many Nations and Kingdoms, laid the Foundation of a potent and spacious Empire, and thus by Violence opened a Way for the Reception, and extensive Profession of his newly devised Religion. But the Religion of *Jesus* was triumphant, not only without the Aid of human Power or Policy, but even in direct Opposition to it.

For the plain Fact is this. A Poor Young Man, about 30 Years of Age, called *Jesus*, a Carpenter's Son, of no Education or Learning, without House or Habitation, without the least human Interest or Influence, begins to preach up Reformation among the *Jews*, the most suspicious and bigotted People in the World; declares himself the Son of God, gathers a few Disciples, Persons in the same low and naked Condition with himself, Fishermen, Publicans, and such like, and sends them about Preaching, what he called the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. He was despised by the Generality, and greatly opposed and harrassed by the Men of Power and Learning. However, he shifted for himself as well as he could; but after he had preached Three or Four Years, they caught him and crucified him as an infamous Malefactor.

This direful Event, which would have totally ruined an Impostor, he plainly foresaw and foretold; but not in the least discouraged by the Prospect, he ordered his Disciples to go and preach his Gospel over all the World, promising that after his Death he would assist them with Power from Heaven, in virtue of which they should certainly succeed. They believed him, they set out, they preached up their crucified Master as the Lord and Saviour of all Mankind; and,

and, which is very ſtrange, under the Conduct and Influence of a Maſter who was dead to this World, and gone to the other State, they prevailed; and in ſpite of the Fury of the Multitude, the moſt inveterate Prejudices of the whole World, the Zeal of Superſtition, the Hatred of the *Jews*, the Contempt of the *Greeks*, the Power of the *Romans*, the Pride of *Philoſophers*, and the Policy of *Stateſmen*, their Doctrine, like the Sun, almoſt at once, enlightened the World, overthrew the whole Syſtem of Pagan Idolatry and Religion, and advanced as far as our own Country in the darkeſt and remoteſt Corner of the Earth.

OF this we ourſelves, we Chriſtians, are living Monuments and Proofs; we have received the Goſpel, we own it a glorious and ſhining Light, we have renounced the Idolatry and vain Converſation of our Fathers, we acknowledge and worſhip the living and true God, we confeſs and adore the crucified Jeſus, our King and Head, and hope for eternal Life through him. Now, there is no poſſible Way of accounting for this, but by allowing that *Jeſus* really was the Son of God, that he really roſe again from the Dead, and aſcended up into Heaven, and that he actually from thence ſent his Diſciples the Aids and Powers which he had promiſed, and which were ſo far above all that is human, that they carried their own

Evidence along with them, and rendered their Doctrine so surprisingly successful.

And as *Jesus* did not send his Disciples to preach to all the World, till after his Death, and as he then, after his Death, did actually furnish them with all miraculous Powers to render their Doctrine effectual, this is the most convincing Proof that his Doctrine was divine, and that he himself was actually gone to Heaven, and lived there in the highest Interest and Favor with God. For that an Impostor, a Deceiver, hateful to the God of Truth, should, after his Death, be able to animate, instruct, authorize, and impower a Company of Men, otherwise destitute of all Assistance, and labouring under all possible Difficulties, to throw down all the Religions of the World, and to erect a new one in their Stead, is utterly impossible. It is therefore certain, beyond all Doubt, that *Jesus Christ* was sent from Heaven to reveal the Gospel to the World. And as we are very sure that we have in our Hands the Writings of his Apostles, we may be as sure, that they contain a Revelation from Heaven, or that Doctrine, which *Christ* received from God, and delivered to his Disciples. And if so, then the Writings of the Old Testament are also the Word of God, for *Christ* and his Apostles declare them to be such. Therefore all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God.

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THE ſame thing may be proved by the long Train of miraculous Operations, which could be effected only by a divine Power, and which were wrought in Confirmation of the Miſſion of Prophets and Apoſtles; as alſo from the Spirit of Prophecy predicting future Events at a great Diſtance of time, which no human Wiſdom or Sagacity could poſſibly foreſee, and yet were actually and punctually fulfilled in Correſpondence to the Prediction. But as a minute Detail of Particulars would perhaps be ſomewhat tedious, I ſhall ſingle out one Inſtance of the divine miraculous Power, and the Truth of the prophetic Spirit; which Inſtance has been in all Ages a ſtanding Proof of Revelation, and which ſtill exiſts, and is before the Eyes of the preſent Generation, in almoſt all Countries of the World; I mean, the preſent State and Being of the *Jews*. For this People, as they were originally choſen to be the Repoſitory, or Storehouſe of divine Knowledge, by the Revelation which was given to them, ſo they were alſo intended to be viſible Proofs of the Truth of it in all Ages and Parts of the World. Our Lord, contrary to all human Probability, while he was on Earth, foretold the Deſtruction of the Jewiſh Temple and Polity, and their Diſperſion among all Nations, which was exactly accompliſhed in about 40 Years after. And in this diſperſed State they have now con-

tinued about 1700 Years, in great Numbers, and in great Ignominy and Contempt, and yet quite diſtinct and ſeparate from all the People among whom they lived.

THIS appears to me a ſtanding Miracle; nor can we attribute it to any other Cauſe, but the Will and extraordinary Interpoſition of Heaven, when it is conſidered, that of all the famous Nations of the World, who might have been diſtinguiſhed from others with great Advantage, and the moſt illuſtrious Marks of Honor and Renown, as the ancient *Egyptians*, *Aſſyrians*, *Perſians*, *Macedonians*, *Romans*, who all in their Turns held the Empire of the World, and were, with great Ambition, the Lords of Mankind; yet theſe, even in their own Countries, are diſſolved into the Bulk of Mankind, nor is there a Perſon upon Earth can boaſt he is deſcended from thoſe renowned and imperial Anceſtors.

WHEREAS a ſmall Nation, generally deſpiſed and hated, and which, though now upon pretty good Terms with us, both *Pagans* and pretended *Chriſtians* have for many Ages treated with the utmoſt Inſult, Indignity, Outrage and cruelty, and which therefore one would imagine, every Soul that belonged to it ſhould have gladly diſowned, and have been willing to have loſt the odious Name by mixing with any other Nation; yet, I ſay, this hated People, harraſſed and butchered

butchered more or leſs by all Mankind, baniſhed and bandyed from one Country to another, and who ſcarce had any Peace till Trade and Traffic brought the World to a better Temper, and more ſavourable Treatment of them: I ſay, this hated People have, under all Temptations to the contrary, and againſt the ordinary Courſe of things, continued in a Body *diſtinct* and *ſeparate* from all Mankind, even in a State of Diſperſion, for about 1700 Years.

THIS demonſtrates, that the Wiſdom which formed them into a peculiar People, that they have almoſt ever ſince the Deluge, for about 3600 Years, remained in a diſtinct and ſeparate State, and are ſtill likely to do ſo, is not human but divine. For no human Wiſdom or Power could form, or however could execute, ſuch a vaſt, extenſive Deſign. It muſt be the Wiſdom and Power of that God alone, who is the ſame in every Age, and who in every Age has exerciſed a peculiar Providence over his peculiar People, the Deſcendents of *Abraham* his Servant. And thus the preſent State and Being of the *Jews* is every where a publick and ſtanding Evidence of the Truth of Revelation, in two Reſpects.

1. WITH Reſpect to their long Diſperſion, or Captivity, as they call it, and the various Calamities they were to ſuffer therein.

THIS

THIS is foretold in ſeveral Places, particularly, *Deut.* xxviii. 63, 64, 65. *The Lord will rejoice over you to deſtroy you, and bring you to nought*, as to their ſingular Privileges and Enjoyments; *and ye ſhall be plucked off from the Land, whither ye go to poſſeſs it. And the Lord ſhall ſcatter thee among all People, from one End of the Earth, even unto the other — and among thoſe Nations thou ſhalt find no Eaſe, neither ſhall the Sole of thy Foot have Reſt; but the Lord ſhall give thee there a trembling Heart, and failing Eyes, and Sorrow of Mind.* Ezek. xxxvi. 19. *I ſcattered them among the Heathen, and they were diſperſed among the Countries. I will ſcatter thee among the Heathen, and diſperſe thee among the Countries.* And our Lord predicts, *Luke* xxi. 24. *And they*, the Jews, *ſhall fall by the Edge of the Sword, and ſhall be led away captive into all Nations, and Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles.*

2. WITH Reſpect to their being preſerved in their Diſperſion, and preſerved as a diſtinct and ſeparate Body, this alſo was plainly predicted. *Deut.* xxvi. 44. *Yet for all that, when they be in the Land of their Enemies, I will not caſt them away, neither will I abhor them, to deſtroy them utterly, and to break my Covenant with them.* Jer. xxx. 10, 11. *Fear not, O my Servant, Jacob; neither be diſmayed, O Iſrael; for lo, I will ſave*

ſave thee from afar, and thy Seed from the Land of their Captivity; for though I make a full End of all Nations, whither I have ſcattered thee, yet will I not make a full End of thee. Jer. xxxi. 10. *Hear the Word of the Lord, O ye Nations, and declare it in the Iſles afar off; and ſay, he that ſcattered Iſrael will gather him, and keep him, as a Shepherd doth his Flock.* Ver. 35, 36, 37. *Thus ſaith the Lord, who gives the Sun for a Light by Day, and the Ordinances of the Moon and of the Stars for a Light by Night; who divides the Sea when the Waves thereof rore; the Lord of Hoſts is his Name. If thoſe Ordinances depart from before me, ſaith the Lord, then the Seed of Iſrael alſo ſhall ceaſe from being a Nation before me for ever. Thus ſaith the Lord, if Heaven above can be meaſured, and the Foundations of the Earth ſearched out beneath, I will alſo caſt off all the Seed of Iſrael, for all that they have done, ſaith the Lord.* Rom. xi. 25, 26. *Blindneſs in part is happened to Iſrael, until the Fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in; and ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved; as it is written, there ſhall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and ſhall turn away Ungodlineſs from Jacob.*

THESE, and many more Paſſages, too numerous to be now quoted, plainly ſhew that it was the Deſign of divine Providence to preſerve the Jewiſh Nation, in their Diſperſion, and to preſerve them a diſtinct and

ſeparate

ſeparate People in order to their future Reſtoration. And we, and many other Nations, at this Day, ſee theſe Predictions made good in the preſent State of the *Jews*, who have been ſo long, and ſtill are miraculouſly preſerved ſeparate from all other People. Now this is, in my Opinion, a ſtanding Miracle, a wonderful Work of divine Providence, and as ſtrong a Proof of Revelation, as if we were to ſee the Dead, every Year, riſe out of their Graves in Confirmation of it. For we have ſtill among us, after ſo long a time, and ſo many various Revolutions in human Affairs, the peculiar People, whom God, above Three Thouſand Years ago, ſeparated unto himſelf; the very People who are the principal Subject of Revelation, and who are ſaid there to be the principal Objects of his Providence, and we ſee them at this Day to be ſo in a very ſurpriſing Manner.

THEREFORE in their preſent State we may plainly read the ancient Promiſe made to *Abraham*, the Head and Root of the Nation, the many wonderful Works wrought for them from firſt to laſt, and the Truth of prophetic Predictions; in the preſent State of the *Jews* we may read the Truth of the Goſpel, for the Rejection of which God rejected them, and ſcattered them over the Face of the Earth. In ſhort, we are ſure there was ſuch a People as the *Jews*, to whom

whom God delivered the Revelation of his Will in ancient times, for this very People exiſt among us at this Day, and preſerve among them that very Revelation, with the moſt ſacred and religious Care. And we are ſure the numerous Predictions of Scripture, both in the Old and New Teſtament, relating to their future State, are true, for we ſee them made good in the preſent State of the *Jews*; and therefore we may be as ſure that the holy Scriptures are given by Inſpiration of God; for only the Spirit of God could foretel ſuch Events; and the ſame Spirit which foretold theſe Events, ſpake in the Prophets and Apoſtles, and inſpired them with all that divine Wiſdom and Knowledge which we find in all their Writings.

I might add the long Apoſtacy, and general Corruption of the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, ſo plainly foretold, and under ſuch expreſs and particular Characters, in the apoſtolic Writings. This all the World may ſee has been abundantly fulfilled in the Church of ROME. Now, only the Spirit of God could foreſee ſuch a diſtant, and deplorable State of things, which no human Probability could have conjectured would have riſen out of the pure and heavenly Doctrine of Chriſt. But the Spirit which predicted this Event, is the very ſame which was poured out upon the Apoſtles, and enlightened their Minds with the Knowledge

of

of the Gospel; therefore the Apostles, who wrote the New Testament, had the Spirit of God, and were enlightened by it.

By these Arguments I am pointing out to you the only Fountain of Life and Happiness, a Mine infinitely more valuable than of Gold and precious Stones; a plentiful Magazine of heavenly and everlasting Wealth, an inexhaustible Fund of solid Comfort and Peace, the holy Scriptures, the Word of the ever blessed God; a Treasure of immense Value, which we have in our Possession, if we are wise to make a right Improvement of it.

There remains yet another Argument to prove the divine Authority and Original of Scripture, taken from the internal Excellency of it. This I shall consider in the following Chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLII.

The internal Worth and Excellency of the SCRIPTURES *considered, as containing the best Principles of Knowledge, Holiness, and Comfort.*

THE Arguments which I have already advanced, are taken from the external Evidence that the Scriptures are the Word of God. Proceed we now to consider their internal Worth and Excellency, which more fully and directly demonstrates their divine Original, and falls in with the second Part of my Design, which was to consider the Use and Importance of the holy Scriptures.

CONSIDERING the Scriptures as a Gift and Blessing from God, the Father of Lights and the Fountain of all Good, for our Improvement in Knowledge and Holiness, in order to our being advanced to eternal Glory and Happiness, we may in general conclude, that the Scriptures are in Worth and Usefulness fully proportionable to the Wisdom and Goodness of the Donor, and to the noble and beneficent End for which they are intended. They are a glorious Display of heavenly Light, irradiating the Darkness of the World, which otherwise would have been

been involved in the blackeſt Night of Ignorance. Let it be obſerved to the Honor of the Bible, that it is the Book, which, under the divine Providence, has preſerved in the World the Knowledge of the one true God, which otherwiſe muſt have been loſt and extinguiſhed. For when God in his infinite Wiſdom was pleaſed to call *Abraham*, and ſeparate his Family to the Purpoſes of Revelation, Idolatry, even in thoſe early Days, not long after the Flood, was ſo far ſpread, that even *Abraham*'s Family were Idolaters, and ſerved other Gods. And ſo far did the Corruption of Religion prevail, that all Nations, loſing the true Idea of the one God and Father of all, fell into the fouleſt Idolatry, the groſſeſt Superſtition, and all the abominable Vices in Connection with them, except the Nation of the *Jews*, who enjoyed the Word and Revelation of God. And it was the Word and Revelation of God, at the time our Saviour came into the World, which inlightened the *Gentiles*, and ſo generally reduced them to the Worſhip and Obedience of the everlaſting *Jehovah*, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth.

WHAT Knowledge of the living God, what Deteſtation of Idol-Worſhip, what Belief of a future State of Rewards and Puniſhment, MAHOMET has propagated in the World, he received partly from *Jews*, and partly from *Chriſtians*, who had learnt thoſe things

things from Revelation; though, as he could not read himſelf, with much Confuſion, and a large Mixture of Fiction and Falſhood. Is any Part of the chriſtian World ſunk into Superſtition and Idolatry? It is becauſe they have ſhut up the Scriptures, forbiden the free Uſe of them, and commanded the People under Pain of Damnation to follow other Guides. Is any Part of the chriſtian World reformed from the groſs Errors, and monſtrous Corruptions of Popery? It is becauſe they have aſſerted the Authority of the Scriptures, reſumed the Uſe of them, and opened them again to free and common Peruſal. Nay further—Is the Deiſt, or the Man, who in a chriſtian Land denies or diſparages Revelation, acquainted with the firſt Cauſe, the Fountain of all Being, Power, Life, and Happineſs, the univerſal Sovereign? Has he a clear Idea of the Syſtem of Duties which we owe to our Maker, and to one another; or any Expectation of a future State of Felicity? It is becauſe he has lighted his twinkling Candle at this reſplendent Sun, which he unnaturally, ungratefully, and weakly Endeavours to extinguiſh. I ſay *weakly*, becauſe this Sun, which God, ever ſince the Creation of his Church and Kingdom, has cauſed to ſhine in the moral World, ſhall by his Providence be preſerved, and ſhine with a growing Luſtre, ſo long as the Sun in the Firmament ſhall endure.

UNDER God, it muſt be owned the inſtrumental Cauſe of all the true Religion and Piety, that is to be found in the World, which, for aught we can ſee, notwithſtanding all the Philoſophy and Wiſdom of Man, would have been totally loſt among all the Nations; and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed more and more, it ſhall ſhine forth more and more, it ſhall be honoured more and more, in the Truth of its Doctrines, in the Wiſdom of its Precepts and Inſtructions, in the Accompliſhment of its Predictions and Promiſes, and in the Appearing of our Lord at the laſt Day, to receive into his Joy all that know God, and obey his Goſpel. It ſhall be eſtabliſhed, it ſhall ſhine, it ſhall be honoured, when thoſe, who now deſpiſe and diſparage it, ſhall be confounded and periſh for ever.

THUS much may be truly ſaid of the Uſefulneſs of Scripture in general; which gives it infinitely the Preference to all Books of meer human Compoſure, that it has been the Means of preſerving in the World the grand Principles of Religion, the Knowledge of the Being and Perfections of God, and of that true ſpiritual Worſhip, which alone pleaſes him, and ennobles, purifies, and comforts our Souls. And juſt in Proportion as the Bible is received, eſteemed, and diligently ſtudied, true Religion has prevailed, and will always prevail and flouriſh. On the other hand, in Proportion as the Scriptures are unknown,

unknown, neleſted, abuſed, and perverted, Ignorance, Idolatry, Irreligion, Error, Superſtition, and Wickedneſs, have and will ſpread their Gloom, and more or leſs infect Nations and particular Perſons.

THE Scriptures contain Principles, which muſt be allowed to be of a ſuperior and moſt excellent kind. The beſt Principles of Knowledge, Holineſs, and Comfort.

IN the Scriptures we find the beſt Principles of Knowledge. There the Mind expatiates in a boundleſs Field of heavenly Light, and clearly views the Proſpects of Truth, where the Eye of meer Nature could never have penetrated. There you ſee the Being of God aſſerted, his Nature and Perfections, his glorious Majeſty, and univerſal Sovereignty deſcribed with the juſteſt Propriety of Sentiment, and Magnificence of Language. There you read—" That the ever-
" laſting God, the Lord, the Poſſeſſor of all
" Being, of all Wiſdom and Power, made
" the Earth and created Man upon it; that
" he ſtretched out the Heavens, and com-
" manded all their Hoſts. He meaſured the
" Waters in the hollow of his Hand, and
" meted out the Heavens with a Span,
" and comprehended the Duſt of the Earth
" in a Meaſure, and weighed the Mountains
" in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance.
" He toucheth the Mountains, and they
" ſmoke, he looks upon the Earth, and it

" trembleth. Behold, the Nations are as a
" Drop of a Bucket, and are counted as the
" ſmall Duſt of the Earth. Behold, he takes
" up the Iſles as a very little thing. All
" Nations are before him as nothing, and
" they are counted to him as leſs than no-
" thing and Vanity.

" THE whole Univerſe reſts wholly upon
" his Arm, and is entirely ſubject to the
" Diſpoſals of his Will. Lift up your Eyes
" on high, and behold, who has created
" theſe things, that brings out their Hoſt by
" Number? He calls them all by Name,
" by the Greatneſs of his Might, for that
" he is ſtrong in Power, not one of them
" fails; in Underſtanding he is infinite; he
" is mighty in Wiſdom, wonderful in Coun-
" ſel, and excellent in Working. He fills
" Heaven and Earth, nor can any hide him-
" ſelf in ſecret Places from his all-penetrat-
" ing Eye. The Earth is full of his Glory
" and Riches; and his Providence is per-
" petually exerciſed about all and every one
" of his Creatures. All Power belongs to
" him, he can help and caſt down, he can
" ſave and deſtroy, and nothing is too hard
" for the Lord. God is Love; the Lord is
" good and doth Good, he is good to all,
" and his tender Mercies are over all his
" Works; he is daily loading us with Be-
" nefits. The Righteous he will bleſs, to
" them he will give Grace and Glory, and
" even

" even to the Wicked the Lord is plenteous
" and rich in Mercy. He is a God of
" Truth, and without Iniquity, juſt and right
" is he. He is glorious in Holineſs, and
" of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, neither
" can he look on Iniquity. And this God,
" ſo great, ſo glorious, is our God, our
" Maker, Owner, and Ruler, our Father,
" Shepherd, and Friend."

THIS is the Doctrine of Scripture; and a Sentence or two in this holy Book will give you much clearer Conceptions of God than all the Volumes of Philoſophy, wrote by Strangers to Revelation. There you are taught the various Diſpenſations of the divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, from the Begining of the World to this Day, and even to the End of Time. There you ſee the excellent Schemes which he has formed for the Inſtruction, Reformation, and Happineſs of the Children of Men; and we read with Pleaſure the numerous Inſtances of his Favor to the Righteous, and with Dread the Terrors of his Vengeance upon the Wicked. There we find a twofold Covenant, of Works, which threatens Death to every Tranſgreſſion; of Grace, which grants the Benefit of Repentance and Pardon; and promiſes all needful Supplies of Strength to the Sincere and Upright. There we learn how he erected a Kingdom among the Nations, or a peculiar Congregation, to prevent the

univerſal Corruption of the World, and, like a Beacon upon a Hill, to diffuſe the Light of divine Knowledge in the Darkneſs of the Earth. At length we ſee the Meſſiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the World, appear, to take away Sin, to bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs, or Salvation, to illuſtrate the Grace of God, and give the plaineſt Explications of his Will and our Duty; to ſhew the future World in the cleareſt and moſt awful View, and to appoint the moſt powerful Means to attract our Hearts to God, and to guide our Feet into the Ways of Peace.

In his Goſpel we ſee the Dead, ſmall and great, reſtored to Life, and appearing before his Judgment-Seat, to receive a Sentence according to what they have done in the Body. There he has opened the Glories of Heaven to our Sight, and ſhewn to our Faith the far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, the aſſured Conſequence of patient Continuance in well-doing; he has alſo uncovered the bottomleſs Pit, the Blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever, which will be the terrible Portion of all impenitent Workers of Iniquity. In the Scriptures the State of the Church to the End of the World is deſcribed, and we ſee the preſent State of things correſpondent to prophetic Deſcriptions.

I ſhould exceed my Bounds only to mention the ſeveral Heads of Inſtruction and Knowledge

Knowledge with which the Word of God is crowded. I ſhall mention but one more, and that is the Deſign of our preſent Being in this World, which is there repreſented, agreably to the Appearances of things, and the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, to be not for Enjoyment, but for Trial; not to gain temporal Pleaſures or Poſſeſſions, but to diſcipline our Souls, and to prepare them for immortal Honor and Glory. In particular, the many Afflictions incident to our Frailty, are ſet in a true and encouraging Light, as the Diſcipline and Correction of our heavenly Father; not for our Deſtruction, but for our Improvement in Holineſs, to purify our Spirits from Senſuality, to draw our Regards to things heavenly and eternal, to exerciſe our Faith, Hope, Patience, and every Virtue, which is our real Excellency and beſt Qualification for everlaſting Happineſs. This is a brief and very imperfect Specimen of Scripture Doctrine; which, even in this curſory View, aſſiſted a little with ſober Reflection, muſt, to an impartial Judgment, moderately acquainted with what the wiſeſt of Pagans have taught, appear infinitely ſuperior to the Darkneſs and Uncertainty of meer human Knowledge and Wiſdom.

IN the Scriptures you will find the beſt Principles of *Holineſs*, or of that State of Mind whereby we are habitually devoted to God and Truth. For there we are ſhewn

the Dignity and Worth of our Being, vaſtly beyond any thing we could have hammered out of our own Reflections. There we read that we are made in the Image of God, inſpired with Underſtanding, raiſed vaſtly in our Faculties above the Beaſts or the Fowls, and made for Ends proportionably grand and noble; not for the mean Purpoſes of Time and Senſe, but for God, for his Honor and Favor, to ſhow forth his Praiſe, and for ever enjoy his Goodneſs. And every Obligation reſulting from this Superiority of Nature, and the higheſt and moſt excellent Purpoſes of our Being, is with the greateſt Propriety and Force urged upon us. In every Page of the holy Scriptures the Love of God ſmiles upon us with an attractive and endearing Aſpect, to draw our Affections to him, and to give a Conſtancy and Steddineſs to our Virtue in the midſt of ſo many and ſo ſtrong Temptations, when we know that only ſuch an Adherence to Truth and Righteouſneſs will finally and for ever give us an Intereſt in our heavenly Father's Bleſſing.

In the Scriptures we have the divine Diſpleaſure againſt all the Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs of Men ſet upon its true Foundation, the odious and pernicious Nature of Sin; which is in itſelf falſe, and miſchievous, the only proper and radical Evil in the Univerſe, and which alone can deprive us of Happineſs, and ſubject us to Miſery. In the

the Word of God, his Favor to Men of Piety and Virtue is alſo ſet upon its proper Foundation, the amiable and excellent Nature of true Holineſs; which in itſelf is true and ſalutary, the only proper and radical Good, the Glory of our Nature, and which alone can render us fit to dwell for ever with God. — There we are kindly encouraged by the divine Grace to think of our Ways, and by true Repentance to turn from whatever is ſinful to the Obedience of God. — There we are directed frequently to ſcrutinize our Hearts, to baniſh thence every corrupt Principle, and to keep the Spring of Action within us pure from every diſorderly Thought and Inclination; to guard our Spirits with a watchful Eye from every impure Motion and Suggeſtion, to be vigilant againſt every Attack of Temptation, that we may keep ourſelves undefiled in the good Ways of God. — There we are inſtructed in the moſt perfect and reaſonable Sobriety, Temperance, and Self-denial, and warned of the Danger of every ſenſual Snare and Allurement. — There this periſhing Body, with whatever can delight and adorn it; there this preſent World, with whatever in it can ingage our Affections and Eſteem, are fully expoſed to the Judgment and Cenſures of Reaſon, and manifeſtly ſhewn to be Emptineſs and Vanity, infinitely below the Excellence and Worth of immortal Spirits, and therefore

therefore infinitely unfit to be purſued at the Expence of our preſent Integrity, or future Felicity.

In the ſacred Writings we find a rich Magazine of all proper Means for the Sanctification of our Souls, and our moſt ſucceſsful Advances in the Life of God. — There we ſee that the divine Power and Spirit is ready with its mighty Aids, to aſſiſt, enlighten, and ſtrengthen our Spirits, in Proportion to our ſincere Deſires and Endeavours in Godlineſs; and there we are directed every Day, and at all times, to ſeek unto God, by fervent and believing Prayer, for his Guidance and Protection, and are aſſured we ſhall never ſeek his Face in vain. — There, in the holy Scriptures, we are taught the Ordinances of Religion, both publick and private, in the conſcientious Uſe of which we ſhall grow up into Chriſt Jeſus; particularly, we are commanded to ſet apart a competent Portion of our time, every Day, and to keep the Sabbath holy every Week; that by ſerious Meditation upon God's Word, and by pouring out our Hearts before him in Prayer and Thankſgiving, we may renew our ſpiritual Strength, be more and more confirmed in the Habits of Holineſs, and find ourſelves ſtill advancing nearer to heavenly Perfection. This Sketch of the Principles of Holineſs, to be derived from the Scriptures, clearly proves their divine Original and Excellence, as it ſets them vaſtly above

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any thing meer human Wiſdom can diſcover or deviſe.

IN the Scriptures we alſo find the beſt Principles of Comfort and Refreſhment to the Soul. How needful are ſuch Principles in a Scene of Affliction, Sin, and Weakneſs! In general, under how many amiable Characters, under how many ſweet Encouragements, are we invited to truſt in the Almighty and Eternal; to look unto him, and make his Name, his Goodneſs, and Power, our Refuge in every Want, Danger, Difficulty, and Conflict? Being aſſured that he cares for us, while we hope in him, and that he will never leave us nor forſake us. That however he may permit our Sufferings and Griefs, he can never forget us, and will make all things, how bitter ſoever, work together for our Good. Heaven is at all times open to our Complaints and Supplications, and the Throne of God, which is a Throne of Grace, is eaſy of Acceſs to the Breathings and Deſires of our Hearts.

ARE we loaded with a Senſe of Guilt? See the Blood of Jeſus the Security and Seal of our Pardon. Are we humbled under a Senſe of our own Unworthineſs? Hear the Voice of divine Grace freely confering a Dignity upon us far ſuperior to all the Honors of this World. Look into the Scriptures; view the unſearchable Riches of *Chriſt*; behold the Love of our God and Redeemer,

Redeemer; of his own gracious Will, and meer good Pleasure, he has begoten us, he is become our Father, he has justified us, he has bestowed upon us the Honours of his Children, he has made us welcome to all the Blessings of his Covenant, and to all the Glories of his Kingdom. Fearful and dejected Soul, look into the Gospel and see thy God shining in all the Beams of free, rich, and heavenly Grace. Be of good Comfort, thy Sins are forgiven, thy Interest in the Covenant is sure; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is thy God and Father, and thou art welcome to all the Treasures of his Mercy and Goodness. Only rejoice in this Grace, and live agreably to it in all Faith, Purity and Holiness, Love and Goodness.

ARE you afraid your own Weakness and surrounding Temptations should draw your Regards from God, pervert your Minds, and cause you to fall short of Salvation? Fear not, thou Worm *Jacob*, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God; *I will strengthen thee*; *yea, I will help thee*; *yea, I will uphold thee with the Right-hand of my Righteousness*, or Salvation. Only cleave unto God, by Faith in Christ, with Purpose of Heart, and he who has begun a good Work will certainly perfect it unto the Day of Christ. You shall be more than Conquerors through him that has loved us. Doth the World frown,

frown, and pour its Sorrows into your Breaſts? Look to the heavenly World, the Glory that ſhall be revealed in the Saints. That is your Home and Country, that is your Portion and Inheritance; and if you regard it as ſuch, you will rejoice in the Hope of the Glory of God, and be raiſed far above the Cares and Fears of this low and tranſitory State. Such ſtrong Conſolations the holy Scriptures ſupply, and therefore their Author is undoubtedly the God of all Conſolation; for no Wiſdom of Man could ever poſſibly have opened to us ſuch a Fountain of Joy and Refreſhment. And thus we ſee the Scriptures contain, beyond all Diſpute, the beſt Principles of Knowledge, of Holineſs, and Comfort.

IT is no leſs evident that they deliver the beſt Precepts for directing all our Actions. Such Precepts are reducible to Three Heads, our Duty to God, to our Neighbour, and to ourſelves. God we are taught to worſhip with a ſincere Admiration of his Glory and Perfections, with profound Reverence of his Greatneſs, with humble Adoration of his Sovereignty, with the higheſt Love and Eſteem for his Excellency and Amiableneſs, with Joy and Gratitude for his Goodneſs, and with a Heart truly devoted to his Honor, and determined for his Obedience. To our Neighbour we are directed to perform not only Juſtice, Truth, and Equity, but

alſo

alſo unfeigned Charity, the moſt extenſive Kindneſs and Benevolence. To ourſelves we owe Self-Preſervation and Self-Government, and the Scriptures admoniſh us to take the wiſeſt Care of our Being, by cultivating and guarding our Minds, and by mortifying all inordinate Affections and Paſſions. In ſhort, all that our Reaſon can find in the Law or Religion of Nature, is, without the leaſt Omiſſion, tranſcribed into Revelation; and moreover, the Wiſdom of God has not only perfected and ſupplied our Deficiencies, but has diſcovered to us the Riches of Goodneſs, Knowledge, and Power, infinitely beyond what our natural Faculties could ever have attained.

THUS we are furniſhed both with the moſt perfect Rules of Virtue and Godlineſs, and alſo with the moſt powerful Motives to the Obſervance of them. And thus the Scriptures are a Storehouſe of the moſt ſacred and uſeful Knowledge, adapted to the Improvement of our Minds in whatever is good and excellent, beyond all Competition and Objection. But as thoſe only can object againſt them, who never read them, or never with ſerious Minds, if you would know what the Scriptures are, if you would know whether they are of God, read them, ſtudy them, meditate upon them, and you cannot fail of being convinced of their Excellency and divine Original.

SUCH

SUCH being the intrinſic Excellency of the Scriptures, it is no Wonder it entered into our Lord's Thoughts, and was the Object of his Care in his laſt Moments, even amidſt the Pains and Agonies of Death. Its being the Subject of his Thoughts at a time, when his Thoughts turned upon nothing but what was infinitely momentous; his being concerned upon the Croſs, that no Point of Scripture ſhould want its full Evidence, or Eſtabliſhment, is a Demonſtration of the high Worth and Excellency of Scripture. Under all his preceding Sufferings, which muſt be exceeding bitter, he never dropped the leaſt Expreſſion of the Sorrow and Anguiſh he felt, but endured it with the Silence of the moſt perfect Meekneſs and Patience. We muſt therefore conclude, he would not have opened his Mouth to ſignify his grievous Diſtreſs, when on the Croſs, *why haſt thou forſaken me?* had it not been for the ſake of expreſſing his Truſt in God; nor would he have mentioned his Thirſt, but out of regard to divine Revelation, and its Accompliſhment.

OUR Lord has, all along, from firſt to laſt, ſhown the higheſt Reſpect to the Word of God. With this Sword he did combat and conquer Satan, when tempted by him in the Wilderneſs. He always in the Courſe of his Miniſtry appeals to it as the Standard of religious Truth, revealing the Will of God,

God, and explaining his Dispensations. He declares he came not to destroy so much as one Tittle of the Law or the Prophets, but to compleat, vindicate, and illustrate them; assuring us that as their Original is divine, their Honors shall be perpetual; and that, *till Heaven and Earth pass away*, and the whole Frame of Nature be dissolved, *not one Jot shall pass*, or perish, *from the Law*, or from Revelation, *till all be fulfilled.* John v. 39. He directs the *Jews* to search the Scriptures, as they rightly apprehended the Doctrine of eternal Life was contained in them, and as they testified of him.

As his Sufferings drew nearer, he frequently takes Notice of the Fulfilment of the Scriptures in the several Steps and Events which led to them. *Matt.* xxvi. 31, 54. *John* xiii. 18. xv. 25. That the Scriptures might be fulfilled in his Sufferings and Death, he would not allow his Disciples to rescue him out of the Hands of those who came to seize him. *Matt.* xxvi. 53, 54. Had he prayed to the Father he would have given him more than Twelve Legions of Angels; *but how then*, says he, *shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* And when upon the Cross, he is not diverted from the same important Subject, though in the midst of the most exquisite Torments, and labouring under a violent Drought. Regard to the Scriptures prevails in his Mind, more

more than the Sense of the greatest Pain and Anguish; and not to relieve his Thrist, *but that the Scriptures might be fulfilled*, he cried out, *I thirst*.

THUS our crucified Lord has set the Seal of his Blood to the divine Authority, Excellency, and Certainty of the holy Scriptures. He came into the World, he laid down his Life to accomplish what was foreordained, and foretold in the Scriptures. Now this evidently implies, that our Lord knew, and was persuaded, the Scriptures are of divine Original, are the Word, and declare to us the Mind and Will of God; consequently, that they contain Discoveries and Instructions of the highest and most excellent Nature; and that all things they predict must, and most certainly will, be accomplished.

IT seems but an inconsiderable Circumstance, that the Scriptures intimate, they would give the *Messiah* in his Thirst Vinegar to drink. This seems to be a Fact of no great Moment, nor do we know that it stood in Connection with any thing of Consequence, and yet our Lord would not overlook it. He took Care it should be punctually fulfilled. How much more then may we persuade ourselves, that all the great Promises, and all the Predictions, relating to Matters of vast Importance, shall be accomplished? The apparent Insignificancy of Vi-

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negar being offered to *Chriſt* on the Croſs, adds great Force to this Argument. If a Point, ſeemingly ſo minute, was carefully attended to, and punctually diſcharged, when the Redeemer was in Extremity of Pain and Torture, how much more, now that he is entered into his Joy; now that he is poſſeſſed of the higheſt Felicity and Glory; now that he is inveſted with the moſt extenſive Power and Dominion; how much more will he make good all that God has declared by the ancient Prophets in the Old Teſtament, and all that he himſelf has foretold and promiſed in the New, relating to things of infinite Moment? Exceeding great and precious Promiſes are given us of the divine Preſence, Bleſſing, and Protection through this World, which every upright Mind may be aſſured will be fully made good.

How many magnificent Predictions has our Lord, and his Apoſtles, delivered concerning the World that is to come — *That he will raiſe us up again at the laſt Day.* And we ſhall certainly be raiſed out of our Graves, and reſtored to a Life quite different from the preſent — *That he will come in great Power and Glory to judge the World.* And moſt aſſuredly he will ſo come, and we ſhall every one of us ſtand before his Tribunal to give an Account of ourſelves — To his faithful Servants *he has promiſed eternal Life*; and

and to all ſuch, without fail, he will give eternal Life. — It is frequently foretold, that *everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord* will be the dreadful Lot of the impenitently wicked, and doubtleſs everlaſting Deſtruction will be the dreadful Lot of ſuch. — Moſt clearly he has made known his everlaſting Kingdom of Glory, where his ſincere Followers ſhall partake of his Glory and Felicity; and we may firmly believe and hope, this will be our happy Condition if we make it our preſent Care to be his ſincere Followers. Thus has our benevolent Saviour afforded us, in his laſt Moments, a moſt ſolid Ground of Hope towards God, and directed us abſolutely to depend upon all that the Scriptures reveal concerning our Salvation.

CHAP. XLIII.

Christians ought to be thankful for the SCRIPTURES, *and maintain a high Esteem for them.*

HAVING, so far as seems necessary, considered the Use and Importance of the holy Scriptures, I would now point out the propereſt Improvement of this interesting Subject.

WE may evidently see our Obligation to be thankful for the Scriptures; they are the Gift of God, and a great Help to our Understanding, and rational Powers in the best Attainments. And as our natural Light and Faculties certainly demand our Gratitude and Thanks, that God has *made us wiser than the Fowls of Heaven, and taught us more than the Beasts of the Earth*; and as our Joy and Praise will be agreable to our Illumination, when in God's heavenly Light we shall see glorious and eternal Light; so the superior Instructions and Discoveries of Revelation do challenge our sincere Thanks to our wise and benevolent Father, who has imployed his Spirit at sundry times, and divers manners, to pour Knowledge and Light into the Darkness of the Nations, which otherwise would, in Effect, have generally lost the Use of Intelligence;

Intelligence; and that at length he has visited us with the Day-Spring from on High, a full Display of his heavenly Grace in the everlasting Gospel.

SHOULD we not maintain a just, that is to say, a very high Esteem of the Word of God? If it is true, *that all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable* for the noblest Ends, *for Doctrine, for Reproof, Correction, Instruction in Righteousness*, then it is true that we cannot set too high a Value upon it. The things of this World, which are very imperfect and transitory, have, alas, too large a Share of our Hearts; but the holy Scriptures are a Treasury of heavenly and everlasting Riches, and it is but reasonable we should give them the Preference to what we know is infinitely inferior in Worth. And it is upon this Ground that the wisest and best of Men have represented them as the highest Object of our Delight and Esteem. *Psalm* xix. 7—10. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul; the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart. More to be desired are they than Gold; yea, than much fine Gold; sweeter also than Honey, and the Honey-Comb:* Psalm cxix. 96, 97, 103. *I have seen an End of all Perfection; but thy Commandment is exceeding broad. O, how love I thy Law! It is my Meditation all the Day. How sweet*

are thy Words unto my Taste; yea, sweeter than Honey to my Mouth! And we may then only call ourselves happy when we have attained the same Sentiments and Taste of the good Word of God. Indeed I cannot see that we use it as what it is, or answer our Christian Profession, if we do not treat it with great Esteem and Regard. To this Purpose let us —

NOT allow ourselves to think of it with Indifference, or in any Respect to treat it irreverently. The Worth, and infinite Importance of the thing will not bear a cool and languid Thought; and it is too sacred and divine to admit of any Degree of Contempt. It is with some reckoned a Turn of Wit to introduce Scripture Phrase into common Conversation, and to provoke Pleasantry by quoting the Bible. What is this but burlesquing the Word of God, and raising a Laugh at the Expence of the greatest Blessing of Heaven? Such a prophane Levity will by Degrees lessen the Reverence we owe to Scripture, and destroy all serious Regard to it; which is, in Effect, to destroy ourselves; and therefore should not only be carefully avoided, but with Abhorrence detested.

GUARD your Minds well against Deism on the one Hand, and Popery on the other. Both these agree in depreciating the Scriptures. The Deist will persuade you Revelation

tion is unneceſſary, and conſequently that the Scripture is no Revelation from God, but a Fallacy and Cheat, at firſt invented, and afterwards ſupported, by thoſe who find their Account in it. He racks his Invention to ſtart any Difficulty or Objection to prove that the Bible is not ſufficient to the Purpoſes of Revelation. And here, the Romaniſt joins him. They go indeed different Ways, the one, as he pretends, to the meer Religion of Nature, and the other, in reality, to the Authority of the Church, and a living infallible Guide upon Earth. But both ſtart from the ſame Point, degrading the holy Scriptures; and I fear very much, they will meet and unite again in a few Generations. For where Deiſtical Principles prevail in a Family, the riſing Generation muſt grow up in great Ignorance of Revelation, and the true Worſhip of God, and ſo will be expoſed to the Artifice of the Seducer, who lies in wait to deceive. For however Men may refine in their Speculations, and put a Force upon the moſt common and obvious Principles in their Minds, yet certainly ſuch is the general Senſe of Mankind, when left free and unbiaſſed, with Regard to Religion, that they eaſily admit the Belief of ſome ſuperior inviſible Powers, and their Intercourſe with this World. And being ignorant of the Truth, are with little difficulty drawn into Error.

THIS makes me apprehend that the present Spread of Deism will, in a few Ages, produce a large Increase of Popery among us. Not to say, that Popish Seminaries, where they cannot directly promote the Cause of the Church of ROME, are allowed and instructed to do it in this indirect Way. For Confusion and Ignorance of any kind, is a proper Ground for them to work upon. But this by the Bye. My Design is to guard you against those who would raise Scruples and Prejudices in your Minds against Revelation. And without descending to Particulars, you may be very sure of this one thing, that whoever cavil against the Scriptures are Strangers to them. They object and take upon themselves to judge in a Matter in which they are no ways qualified to be Judges; in a Matter which they neither understand, nor, in their present way of thinking, ever intend to understand. For, whatever Airs such may give themselves, or what Semblance or Shew soever they make of Knowledge and Wisdom, these Men have never studied the Scriptures; nor, generally speaking, have they Learning or Capacity to enter into their deep and abstruse Parts. Had they ever soberly and seriously studied the Scriptures, they must of Necessity have found so many, and such evident Marks of a divine Spirit, such glorious Displays of the Wisdom, Power, and Truth of God, as would have taught

taught them to think more modeſtly of what is doubtful and obſcure.

WHEN did you ever hear of any Name, illuſtrious for Learning and Wiſdom, that ever diſputed the divine Original and Authority of Scripture? Did ever a BOYLE, a NEWTON, or a LOCKE, queſtion the divine Original and Truth of Scripture? * No. Theſe

* THE famous SELDEN, one of the moſt eminent Philoſophers, and moſt learned Men of his Time; who had taken a diligent Survey of Antiquity, and what Knowledge was conſiderable amongſt *Jews*, *Heathens*, and *Chriſtians*, and read as much, perhaps, as any Man ever read; towards the End of his Days, declared to Arch-Biſhop USHER.

" THAT notwithſtanding he had been ſo laborious " in his Enquiries; and curious in his Collections; " and had poſſeſt himſelf of a Treaſure of Books and " Manuſcripts, upon all ancient Subjects; yet he could " *reſt his Soul on none ſave the Scriptures.* And above " all, that Paſſage gave him the moſt Satisfaction. " *Titus* ii. 11—14. as comprizing the Nature, End, " and Reward of true Religion.

" *THE Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath* " *appeared to all Men*

" *TEACHING us, that denying Ungodlineſs, and* " *worldly Luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and* " *godly, in this preſent World.*

" *LOOKING for that bleſſed Hope, and the glorious* " *Appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus* " *Chriſt.*

" *WHO gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us* " *from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar* " *People, zealous of good Works.*"

SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON, a great Stateſman, a little before his Death, adviſed his Relations to be ſe-

rious

These Men, of the most eminent Attainments in Wisdom and Knowledge, held the Scriptures

rious in searching after the Will of God in his holy Word; for, said he —

"IT is deservedly accounted a Piece of excellent "Knowledge to understand the Laws of the Land, and "the Customs of a Man's Country; how much more "to know the Statutes of Heaven, and the Laws of "Eternity, those immutable and eternal Laws of Justice and Righteousness! To know the Will and Pleasure of the great Monarch, and universal King! *I "have seen an End of all Perfection, but thy Command-"ment is exceeding broad.* Whatever other Knowledge a Man may be endowed withal, could he by a "vast and imperious Mind, and a Heart as large as the "Sand upon the Sea-Shore, command all the Knowledge of Art and Nature, of Words and Things; "and yet not know the Author of his Being, and the "Preserver of his Life, his Sovereign and his Judge, "his surest Refuge in Trouble, his best Friend or worst "Enemy, the Support of his Life and the Hope of his "Death, his future Happiness and his Portion for ever; "he doth but go down to Hell with a great deal of "Wisdom."

MR. LOCKE, also justly esteemed one of the greatest Masters of Reason, and a Philosopher of the greatest Freedom of Thought, at the Close of his Life, thus advised an intimate Friend.

"STUDY the holy Scriptures, especially the New "Testament; therein are contained the Words of "Eternal Life. It hath God for its Author, Salvation "for its End, and Truth without any Mixture of Error "for its Matter." Posthumous Works, p. 344.

AND to the same Effect, a wiser still in the same Situation, SOLOMON. *To fear God, and keep his Commandments*, (in order to which it is necessary, that we read and study them,) *is the whole of Man. For God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Eccles. xii. 13, 14.

Scriptures in the highest Veneration and Esteem, as a Revelation from God; and by their excellent Comments have acknowledged the divine Authority even of the most abstruse and difficult Parts. No. The Cavillers against Scripture are Men of an inferior Class, who want, and are no ways solicitous to gain, the Qualifications needful to render them in any Degree fit or competent Judges. It is enough for such to pick up a small Collection of Scruples, to ease themselves of the Trouble of Thought and Study, and at the same time to give a plausible Appearance of both. But with Men of Judgment, such must stand in a very ridiculous Light. To a judicious Physician, how silly and contemptible must a Person be, who, though no ways skilled in the Science, should take upon him perpetually to censure, vilify, and condemn a BOERHAAVE, or a SYDENHAM, the greatest Masters in the Art of Medicine.

PERHAPS you may say—Are there not real Difficulties in the Scriptures? And will not Difficulties naturally and unavoidably produce Objections? I answer—There are Difficulties in the Scriptures, and Difficulties are the natural Ground of Objections, but not of destroying any Truth, otherwise well established. For all Science whatever is attended with Difficulties, and Objections may be raised against the clearest and most demonstrable Truths. The Being of God, and his Perfections,

fections, the Creation of the World, the Conſtitution of Nature, the Ways of Providence, and any the beſt and moſt uſeful Knowledge we can gain, is attended with Difficulties, and conſequently liable to Objections. Let it be well obſerved, thoſe Difficulties ariſe not from the things themſelves, but from the Imperfection of our Minds. In the things themſelves there are no Difficulties, nor any Ground for Objection; the Difficulties are in the Narrowneſs of our Underſtandings, which find a great Difficulty in comprehending many things relating even to the moſt certain and undoubted Truths. And, with regard to the Scriptures, I myſelf have had large Experience of this. Many things which at firſt, and for ſome time, appeared to me very obſcure, unaccountable, and inconſiſtent, by patient Application, and a cloſer Attention, have ſhone out unclouded into the plaineſt and cleareſt Truths. By this I am convinced, that all remaining Difficulties are not ſo in themſelves, but only ſo with reſpect to the Imperfection of my Mind. And upon the whole, you may be very ſure, when you hear any Objection advanced againſt the Scriptures, that the Objection, in Truth and Reality, lies againſt the Objector himſelf, as he either cannot, or will not, ſee the Truth as it ſtands in the Word of God.

BUT

BUT you may ſay—Why ſhould God put into his Word things to us difficult and obſcure? I anſwer — To exerciſe our Diligence, and to try our Integrity. I have ſaid ſo much to convince you of the Vanity and Folly of Deiſm, and to guard you againſt any bad Impreſſions from that Quarter, which may prove of very fatal Conſequence. A little of this Leaven may do a great deal of Harm, as it creates an Indifference to divine Knowledge, to the Inſtructions and Counſels of our heavenly Father; as it takes us off from the ſtudy of the Scriptures, robs us of the beſt Guide of our Actions, the moſt powerful Motives to all Virtue, the ſtrongeſt Conſolations in every Day of Affliction; and at laſt expoſes to the righteous Judgment of God, for the Neglect and Contempt of the beſt of Bleſſings he ever beſtowed upon the World.

WE have the ſtrongeſt Reaſon to be fully ſatisfied of the Sufficiency of Scripture, as perfectly able to make us wiſe unto Salvation. The Papiſt will own the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and a true Rule of Faith, but not a ſufficient Rule. The only ſufficient Rule of Faith, he will tell you, is the Church of ROME, which infallibly underſtands, and propounds what the Chriſtian World is to believe and do in order to eternal Salvation; and therefore you ought implicitly to ſubmit your Underſtanding and Conſcience

Conſcience to her Direction and Deciſions; and doing ſo, you have no need to conſult the Scriptures, being already provided with a living infallible Guide. But if the Scriptures are a true Rule of Faith, then are they a ſufficient Rule to all Sorts and Degrees of Perſons, for they expreſly affirm their own Sufficiency in this extenſive Senſe.

THAT nothing but Scripture is a ſufficient Ground to build our Faith and Practice upon, as Chriſtians, will clearly appear to any conſiderate Perſon. All beſides is Uncertainty and Confuſion. You have Popes againſt Popes, Councils againſt Councils, Fathers againſt Fathers, the Church of one Age againſt the Church of another Age, and Tradition paſſing through Hands ſo uncertain and inconſiſtent, muſt of Neceſſity loſe all Force of Evidence. Only upon the Rock of Scripture can we find any Reſt for the Sole of our Feet; and there we have a firm Foundation, and a ſure infallible Guide, which we may with the greateſt Certainty and Stedfaſtneſs oppoſe to the Authority of the Church of ROME.

WHATEVER may be pretended to gain that Church the Credit of a Guide, all that, and much more may be ſaid for the Scriptures. Has the Church of ROME been ancient? The Scriptures are more ancient. Is that Church a Means to keep Chriſtians in Unity? So is the Scriptures to preſerve Unity of

of Belief in things neceſſary and plainly revealed, and in Unity of Charity in other Matters. Following the Scriptures, we ſhall follow that which muſt be true, if the Church of ROME be true, for ſhe owns the Truth of Scripture. Whereas if we follow that Church, we follow that which, if the Scriptures be true, may be falſe; nay, which if the Scriptures be true, muſt be falſe, becauſe the Scriptures teſtify againſt it. We have God's expreſs Command to follow the Scriptures, and no Intimation or Colour of any Prohibition; but to believe in the Church of ROME we have no Command at all, much leſs an expreſs Command. Nay, on the contrary, we have a general Prohibition in theſe Words, *Call no Man Maſter upon Earth.*

FOLLOWING the Scriptures we ſhall embrace a Religion, which being contrary to Fleſh and Blood, without any Aſſiſtance from worldly Power; Wiſdom, or Policy, nay, againſt all the Power and Policy of the World, prevailed and ſpread itſelf in a ſhort time, over a very great Part of the World. Whereas it is apparent the Church of ROME has got, and ſtill maintains her Authority over Mens Conſciences by counterfeiting falſe Miracles, forging falſe Hiſtories, corrupting the Monuments of former times, by Wars, by Perſecutions, by Maſſacres, by Treaſons, by Rebellions; in ſhort, by all manner of

carnal

carnal unjuſtifiable Means, whether violent or fraudulent.

FOLLOWING the Scriptures, we ſhall believe a Religion the firſt Preachers and Profeſſors whereof could certainly have no worldly Ends; could neither project, nor promiſe to themſelves by it any of the Profits, Honours, or Pleaſures of this World, but rather the contrary, even all the Hardſhips the World could lay upon them. On the other hand, the Head of the Church of ROME, the pretended Vicar of Chriſt, Succeſſor of the Apoſtles, and Guide of Faith, it is palpably evident, makes the Popiſh Religion the Inſtrument of his Ambition, to gratify the Luſt of Dominion, by ſubjecting the Conſciences of all Mankind to his Authority, and all Nations to his Juriſdiction. Beſides, it is evident to any Man, who has but half an Eye, that moſt of thoſe Doctrines, which the Romiſh Church addeth to the Scriptures, are, one Way or other, calculated to promote the Honour or temporal Profit of the Teachers of them.

FOLLOWING the Scriptures only, we ſhall embrace a Religion of perfect Simplicity and Purity; conſiſting, in a manner, wholly in the Worſhip of God in Spirit and Truth, and in ſincere Obedience to his Will. Whereas the Roman Church, and Doctrine, is loaded with an Infinity of weak, childiſh, ridiculous

ridiculous Superſtitions and Ceremonies, and the moſt groſs and manifeſt Idolatry. If we follow the Scriptures, we muſt not promiſe ourſelves Salvation without forſaking effectually, and mortifying all Vices, and practiſing ſincerely all Chriſtian Virtues, which our Reaſon tells us is the only Way in which we can ſecure the Favour of God, and our own Happineſs. But the Church of ROME opens an eaſier and broader Way to Heaven, and though a Man continues all his Life long in a Courſe of Sin, gives him Aſſurance he may be let into Heaven by a back Gate, even by an Act of Attrition, at the Hour of Death, if it be joined with Confeſſion to a Prieſt, or by an Act of Contrition without it.

JUST and perfect are the Precepts of Piety and Humility, of Innocence and Patience, of Goodneſs, Temperance, Sobriety, Juſtice, Meekneſs, Fortitude, and Conſtancy, Contempt of the World, the Love of God, and of Mankind; in a Word, of all Virtues, and againſt all Vices, which the Scriptures oblige us to obſerve and obey, as ever we hope to ſee God in his heavenly Kingdom; which if they were generally obeyed, could not but make the World generally happy; and the Goodneſs of them alone is ſufficient to make any wiſe and good Man believe, that the Religion, which obliges to them, comes from God the Fountain of all Goodneſs.

The Church of ROME enervates, and in a manner diſſolves and abrogates many of the holy Precepts of the Goſpel, by teaching Men, that they are not Laws for all Chriſtians, but Counſels of Perfection, and Matters of Supererogation, which a Man ſhould do well, if he obſerves, but ſhall not ſin, if he doth not obſerve them; that they are for thoſe who aim at high Places in Heaven, but if a Man will be content with an inferior Situation there, eſpecially if he will be content to taſte of Purgatory in the Way, he need not incumber his Thoughts at preſent with many of the Rules of the Goſpel. Not to ſay, that the *Romiſh* Church manifeſtly foments a Spirit of Uncharitableneſs and Cruelty to all Mankind, not of her Profeſſion. Therefore the Religion of this Church is far from being ſo holy or ſo good as the Doctrine of Chriſt delivered in the Scriptures, and conſequently cannot come from the ſame Fountain of Holineſs and Goodneſs.

FOLLOWING the Church of ROME for our Guide, we ſhall only follow a Combination of deluded Men, who have faſt cloſed their Eyes, and are not at Liberty to open them, or to examine and conſider whether they are in the right or no. For that Papiſts have no Liberty of Judgment is manifeſt, becauſe they reckon it a mortal Sin to *doubt of any Part of their Doctrine.* Whence it follows, that ſeeing every Man muſt reſolve that

that he will never commit mortal Sin, that he muſt never examine the Grounds of Popery at all, for fear he ſhould be moved to doubt; or if he do examine, he muſt before reſolve that no Evidence, not even of Scripture, no Motives, be they ever ſo ſtrong, ſhall move him to doubt, leſt he ſhould fall into mortal Sin.

SEEING this is the Condition of all who are eſteemed good Catholicks, who can deny that they are a Sett of Men unwilling and afraid to underſtand; that have Eyes to ſee and will not, that have not the Love of the Truth, but are given over to ſtrong Deluſion? And therefore in following ſuch a Church, and ſuch Guides, we ſhall only follow the Blind, and with them fall into the Ditch. If we follow the Scriptures, we ſhall follow only the Truth; we ſhall follow a Guide which exhorts us to keep our Eyes always open to the Truth, to try all things, and to hold faſt only that which is good; to try every Spirit, and to bring every Doctrine to the Teſt of God's pure and holy Word. And thus we are at Liberty to review the Ground upon which we ſtand, to correct any Error, and to improve our Minds in the Knowledge and Love of the Truth.

IN theſe, and ſeveral other Reſpects, the Sufficiency of Scripture, to guide us in the way of Life and Salvation, is evidently ſeen, and how fooliſh and unſafe it is to forſake

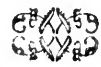
this heavenly Guide, and follow the Delusions of the Church of ROME. But then, the greater the Evidence that Scripture is a perfect Guide to eternal Life, the greater must our Obligations be to use it faithfully as such.

LET us be much in reading the Scriptures; and think and judge freely. By judging freely, I do not mean rashly, and at random. We must judge of the Scriptures with all possible Care and Caution. But judge freely, without regard to the Authority of any Person, Party, or Church whatsoever. We are made by our gracious Creator for the Knowledge of the Truth; not to be the Dupes of Custom or Authority, not blindly to follow the Dictates, Decrees, and Constitutions of weak and ambitious Men; but imploy our Minds generously in the Search and Knowledge of the Truth. Christianity calls us to the noblest Exercise of our Understanding, and we lose the Benefit of it, if we do not think seriously, and judge freely.

THERE is no other Way of having our Minds established, and well seasoned with the Principles of our Religion. In this Way we shall see the Glory and Excellency of the holy Scriptures; thus we shall feel the Power of God's Word upon our Hearts; thus our Understandings will gradually be inlightened with divine Knowledge, and, to our unspeakable Comfort, grow up into Jesus Christ, and gain the Happiness of the Man, who forsaking

ſaking all Impiety, and every falſe Way, delights himſelf in the Law of the Lord, and daily meditates therein. Such a one is under the ſpecial Bleſſing of Heaven, and, like a Tree planted in a fruitful Soil, ſhall grow and flouriſh, and riſe infinitely higher than all the Honours, Wealth, and Enjoyments of this World; he ſhall riſe to Immortality, and there find all the glorious Fruits of a Life of Piety, and the full Accompliſhment of the magnificent Promiſes which here on Earth he with Pleaſure peruſed in the Word of God.

THIS is what I have to offer on this important Subject. Whatever the Reſult may be, with Regard to others, this one Point is ſufficiently ſecured—I have ſatisfied my Conſcience by diſcharging what I eſteem an incumbent Duty; and I have done it in the Faithfulneſs and Integrity of my Heart, according to the Wiſdom God has given me.



APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Chronological Dates for Chapters xxxiv. xxxv. and xxxvi.

CHAP. XXXIV.

PROPHETS *before the* CAPTIVITY.

Years before Chrift.		
812	A Maziah King of Judah Jeroboam II. King of Ifrael	Jonah fent with a Meffage. 2 Kings xiii. 20. xiv. 25.
800	Uzziah King of Judah Jeroboam II.	Joel i. ii. iii.
800	Jeroboam II. King of Ifrael Uzziah King of Judah	Amos i—ix.
800	Jeroboam II. Uzziah	Hofea i. ii. iii.
772	Menahem I.	Hofea iv.
770	Menahem II.	Jonah i. ii. iii. iv.
759	Uzziah 52. Pekah 1.	Ifaiah vi. ii. iii, iv. v.
753	Jotham 5. Pekah 7.	Micah i. ii.
742	Ahaz 1. Pekah 18.	Ifaiah vii.
	In the fame Year	Ifaiah viii. ix. x.
	In the fame Year	Ifaiah xvii.
740	Ahaz 3. Pekah 20.	Ifaiah i.
	In the fame Year	Ifaiah xxviii.
739	Aphaz 4.	Hofea v. vi.
726	Hezekiah 2.	Ifaiah xiv. Ver. 28, &c.
	In the fame Year	Ifaiah xv. xvi.
725	Hezekiah 3. Hofhea 6.	Hofea vii—xiv. Micah iii. iv. v. vi. vii.
720	Hezekiah 7.	Nahum i. ii. iii.
715	Hezekiah 13.	Ifaiah xxiii—xxvii.
714	Hezekiah 14.	Ifaiah xxxviii. xxxix.
714	Hezekiah 14.	Ifaiah xxix. xxx—xxxv.

Ifaiah

Years before Christ.		
	In the ſame Year	Iſaiah xxii. Ver. 1—15.
	In the ſame Year	Iſaiah xxi.
713	Hezekiah 15.	Iſaiah xx.
	In the ſame Year	Iſaiah xviii. xix.
710	Hezekiah 18.	Iſaiah x. Ver 5, &c. xi. xii. xiii. xiv. Ver. 28, &c.
	In the ſame Year	Iſaiah xxxvi. xxxvii.
	In the ſame Year	Iſaiah xl—xliii, &c.
698	Manaſſeh 1.	Iſaiah xxii. Ver. 15.
628	Joſiah 13.	Jeremiah i. ii.
623	Joſiah 18.	Jeremiah xi. Ver. 1—18. Jeremiah iii—x. xii—xxi. Jeremiah xi. Ver. 18, &c.
611	Joſiah 31.	Habakkuk i. ii. iii. Zephaniah i. ii. iii.
610	Jehoiakim 1.	Jeremiah xxii. Ver. 1—24.
	In the ſame Year	Jeremiah xxvi.
606	Jehoiakim 4.	Jeremiah xxv.
	In the ſame Year	Jeremiah xxxv.
	In the ſame Year	Jeremiah xlvi.
	In the ſame Year	Jeremiah xxxvi. Ver. 1—9.
	In the ſame Year	Jeremiah xlv.
	In the ſame Year	Daniel i.
605	Jehoiakim 5.	Jeremiah xxxvi. Ver. 9, &c.
603	Jehoiakim 7.	Daniel ii.
599	Zedekiah 1.	Jeremiah xxii. Ver. 24, &c.
	In the ſame Year	Jeremiah xxiii.
	In the ſame Year	Jeremiah xiii. Ver. 13, &c.
	In the ſame Year	Jeremiah xxiv.
	In the ſame Year	Jeremiah xlix. Ver. 34, &c.
598	Zedekiah 2.	Jeremiah xxix.
	In the ſame Year	Jeremiah xxx. xxxi.
	In the ſame Year	Jeremiah xxvii.

Jeremiah

Years before Christ.		
596	Zedekiah 4.	Jeremiah xxviii.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah l. li.
595	Zedekiah 5. Jehoiachin's Capt. 5.	Ezekiel i.—vii.
594	Zedekiah 6. Jehoiachin's Capt. 6.	Ezekiel viii.—xi.
593	Zedekiah 7. Jehoiachin's Capt. 7.	Ezekiel xii—xix.
	In the same Year, fifth Month	Ezekiel xx—xxiii.
591	Zedekiah 9. Jehoiachin's Capt. 9.	Jeremiah xxi. xxxiv. Ver. 1—8.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xlvii.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xlviii. xlix. Ver. 1—34.
	In the same Year	Ezekiel xxiv. xxv.
590	Zedekiah 10. Jehoiachin's Capt. 10.	Jeremiah xxxvii. Ver. 1—11.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxiv. Ver. 8, &c.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxvii. Ver. 11—16.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxii. xxxiii.
	In the same Year	Ezekiel xxix. Ver. 1—17. xxx.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxvii. Ver. 17, &c.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxviii. Ver. 1—14.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxix. Ver. 15, &c.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xxxviii. Ver. 14, &c.
589	Zedekiah 11. Jehoiachin's Capt. 11. first Month.	Ezekiel xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii.
	In the same Year, third Month	Ezekiel xxxi.
	In the same Year, fourth Month	Jeremiah xxxix. Ver. 1—11. lii. Ver. 1—30.
	In the same Year, fifth or sixth Month.	Jeremiah xxxix. Ver. 11—15. xl. Ver. 1—7.
	In the same Year	Jeremiah xl. Ver. 7. xli. xlii. xlii. xliii. Ver. 1—8.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV.

PROPHETS *after the Destruction of the* TEMPLE, *during the* CAPTIVITY.

Years before Christ.		
588	JEhoiachin's Capt. 12. tenth Month	Ezekiel xxxiii.
	In the same Year, twelfth Month	Ezekiel xxxii.
	Between the 12 and 25 Captivity	Ezekiel xxxiv. xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix.
	In the same Year	Obadiah
	In the same Year	Ezekiel xxxv.
	In this Year Nebuchadnezzar set up his golden Image	Daniel iii.
754	Jehoiachin's Captivity 25.	Ezekiel xl. xli. *&c.*
569	Jehoiachin's Captivity 30.	Ezekiel xxix. Ver. 17, *&c.*
	In the same Year	Daniel iv.
562	Jehoiachin's Captivity 37.	Jeremiah lii. Ver. 31, *&c.*
555	Belshazzar 1.	Daniel vii.
553	Belshazzar 3.	Daniel viii.
539	Belshazzar 17.	Daniel v.
538	Darius the Mede 1.	Daniel vi.
	In the same Year	Daniel ix.
536	Cyrus 1.	Ezra i. ii.
535	Cyrus 2.	Ezra iii.

CHAP. XXXVI.

PROPHETS *after the* CAPTIVITY, *under the second* TEMPLE.

Years before Christ.		
535	CYRUS 2.	Ezra iv.
	In the third Year of Cyrus, and third after the Captivity	Daniel x. xi. xii.
520	Darius Hystaspes 2. sixth Month	Haggai i. Ver. 1—12.
	In the same Year and Month	Haggai i. Ver. 12, *&c.* Ezra v.
	In the same Year, seventh Month	Haggai ii. Ver. 1—10.
	In the same Year, eighth Month	Zechariah i. Ver. 1—7.
	In the same Year, ninth Month	Haggai ii. Ver. 10, *&c.*
	In the same Year, eleventh Month	Zechariah i. Ver. 7, *&c.* ii—vi.
516	Darius 3.	Ezra v. Ver. 3, *&c.*
518	Darius 4.	Ezra vi. Ver 1—15.
	In the same Year, ninth Month	Zechariah vii. viii.
	Subsequent to the fourth Year of Darius Hystaspes	Zechariah ix—xiv.
515	Darius 6.	Ezra vi. Ver. 15, *&c.*
462	Ahasuerus 3.	Esther i.
461	Ahasuerus 4.	Esther ii Ver. 1—16.
458	Ahasuerus 7.	Ezra vii—x.
	In the same Year	Esther ii. Ver. 16—21.
457	Ahasuerus 8.	Esther ii. Ver. 21, *&c.*
453	Ahasuerus 12.	Esther iii iv. v, *&c.*
445	Ahasuerus 20.	Nehemiah i—iii *&c.*
433	Ahasuerus 32.	Nehemiah xiii. Ver. 6.
429	Ahasuerus 36.	Malachi i—iv.
428	Ahasuerus 37.	Nehemiah xiii. Ver. 6, *&c.*
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