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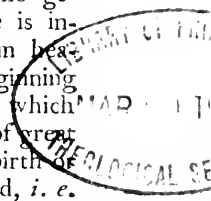
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others the Holy Ghost, in the shape and appearance of a man; because they cannot conceive how the qualities ascribed to this excellent personage can comport with any human creature. The phrase, however, made use of in the text, *agenealogetos*, without descent, or without genealogy, explains what the apostle means by without father, and without mother, *i. e.* without any father or mother mentioned in the genealogies of Moses, where the parents of all pious worthies are generally set down with great exactness. So that there being no genealogy at all of Melchizedeck recorded in scripture, he is introduced at once, even like a man dropped down from heaven; for so the description goes on, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, *i. e.* in the history of Moses, which (contrary to its common usage, when it makes mention of great men) takes no notice at all of the time either of his birth or death; and herein he is made like unto the Son of God, *i. e.* by the history of Moses, which mentions him appearing and acting upon the stage, without either entrance or exit, as if, like the Son of God, he had abode a priest continually. This is the common and best approved interpretation of the apostle's words; but then the question returns upon us, to whom does the character even with this comment belong?

The apostle's character of him explained.



THE Jews are generally of opinion (and herein are followed by some christians) that Melchizedeck was the same with Shem, one of the sons of Noah, whom they suppose alive in the days of Abraham; the only person upon earth, say they, who could with justice be called his superior, and whom the description of the apostle could any way besit; as being a person of many singularities, born before the deluge, having no ancestors then alive, and whose life had been of an immense duration in comparison of those that came after him. But not to dispute the fact whether Shem was at this time alive or no: it seems very incongruous to think that Moses, who all along mentions him in his proper name, should upon this occasion disguise his sense with a fictitious one; and very incompatible it is with what we know of Shem, that he should be said to be without father, and without mother, when his family is so plainly recorded in scripture, and all his progenitors may in a moment be traced to their fountain-head in Adam. Besides had Melchizedeck and Shem been the same person, the apostle would hardly have made him of a family different to Abraham, much less would he have set him in such an eminence above the patriarch, or made this superlative exclamation concerning him,

Different conjectures concerning him.

VOL. II.

B

* Consider

p Vide Epiphanius. Hæres. 55. q Scott's Christian Life, Part II. c. 7. r The Syriac version renders it thus directly, and in this sense are the words *apatrios* and *ametroos*, sometimes used in the heathen poets. s Vide Quæst. Hebr. in Gen. et Willet Hexapla in Gen. t Bochart's Phaleg. Lib. II. c. I. u Heb. yil. 6.

* Consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils!

THESE arguments seem to evince that Melchizedeck and Shem were different persons; and much more reason have we to suppose that he and Ham, the other son of Noah, were so; for who, upon deliberate thoughts, can believe that this cursed person was the priest of the most high God, from whom Abraham so joyfully received the sacerdotal benediction, that he returned it with the payment of his tithes? And much less can we believe that one of his ill character was the type of the blessed Jesus. Jesus indeed himself, if he be taken for Melchizedeck, appearing to Abraham in human shape (as he is often supposed to do in scripture) will answer all the character which the apostle gives of this extraordinary person: * but then the wonder is that the historian should never give us the least intimation of this; that Abraham should express no manner of surprise upon such an interview; and (what is more) how the type and the ante-type can possibly be represented the same. † For this is the case: here Melchizedeck was a representative of our Saviour, according to that of the apostle, † Jesus was a priest after the order of Melchizedeck; which he explains in another place, † after the similitude of Melchizedeck there ariseth another priest; as much as to say, Melchizedeck and Christ were like one another in several things, and thereupon one was designed to be a fit type of the other: but as it is unreasonable and absurd to say that a person is like himself, so we cannot rationally imagine that Christ, who (as St Paul says) was after the similitude of Melchizedeck, was in reality the same person with him.

The true
account at
last.

THUS we have looked into the several conjectures concerning this great man that seem to have any plausibility in them; and, after all, must be forced to content ourselves with what the scripture nakedly reports of him, viz. that this Melchizedeck was really a king and a priest (for these two offices were antiently united in one person) in ^b the land of Canaan, descended very probably from wicked and idolatrous parents, but himself a person of singular virtue and sanctity; the priest of the most high God, but perhaps the first and the last of his race that was so; which might give occasion to the apostle to describe him under such ambiguous characters: the whole of which (according to the judgment ^c of a learned author) may not improbably be reduced to this single proposition, that Melchizedeck was the most illustrious of his family, and had neither predecessor nor successor in his employ.

BUT

* Heb. vii. 4. † Saurin's Dissertations. † Edwards's Survey, Vol. I.
‡ Heb. vi. 20. † Ibid. vii. 15. † For so Josephus says, that he was *chanaanite*
dynastes, a potentate of the Canaanites. † Outram, de Sacrificiis.

BUT to proceed with our patriarch Abraham: there is one remarkable instance of his life which shewed him to be a greater man than any triumph over an enemy, and that is, the victory gained over himself, in his ready compliance to sacrifice his son. The language of the scripture calls it a temptation; but we must be careful to leave out of the expression every thing odious in the sense of it, when we apply it to God. To tempt, in the common acceptation of the word, signifies to lead into a crime; in this sense, ^d God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but to tempt signifies likewise to try a man; and in this ^e sense God tempts men sometimes in his wrath, and sometimes in his love. When, by an effect of his justice, he leaves men to themselves; when he suffers them to fall into such snares as are laid for them on every side; when, for the punishment of their neglect of good council and instruction, he gives them up to the deceitfulness of sin, and the deceptions of error, it is then that he tempts them in his wrath: but when he permits his children to fall into any danger that he may deliver them with honour; when, in order to display, perfect, and crown their virtues, he suffers those virtues to be assaulted; when he exposes them in short to conflicts, in order to gain the victory; it is then that he tempts men in love. It was in this sense that he tempted Abraham, and to shew the excellency of the patriarch's conduct under such trial and conflict, we must observe,

1. † THE firmness and stedfastness of his faith, notwithstanding the objections against it: And,
2. THE constancy of his resolution, notwithstanding the difficulty of effecting it.

I. † TAKE

d Jam. i. 13. e Saurin's Dissertations.

† The learned author of the Divine Legation of Moses (Vol. II. Lib. vi.) from our Saviour's words, Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad, John viii. 56. meaning by the word day the work of man's redemption, has made God's ordering of Abraham to sacrifice his son, not so much a command as a revelation of that great mystery, which, as Abraham most ardently desired to know, so God was graciously pleased to make manifest to him, not by words, but by the significant action of his offering up his own son, even as God, in his good appointed time, had decreed to make his a sacrifice for sin, and to deliver him up for us all. So that God's primary intent (according to him) was by this sign to convey to Abraham the knowledge of man's redemption, his secondary only, to make trial of the patriarch's faith and obedience. But to have a more perfect knowledge of this author's sentiments and method of arguing, the reader should consult him with some care and attention. Other writers affirm that, in case Abraham had really sacrificed his son, there was no great matter in it, no great merit in his obedience, since it was a customary thing in those times for private persons, kings and heads of nations, to offer such sacrifices (Lord Shaftesbury's Charact. Vol. III. Misc. 2. Sir John Marsham's Can. Chron. p. 76. and Philo Judæus, Lib. de Abrahamo.) But after all their researches, they have been able to produce but a single instance, and that is of one Chronus king of Phœnicia, who, as Philo Biblius from Sanconiaton tells us, upon the raging of a famine and pestilence, offered his only son for a burnt-offering to his father Ouranus. But, upon examination, it will appear that this story is only an imitation of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac, with some few additions and mistakes, such as heathen writers frequently incurred,

Of the
World
2133, &c.
Before
Christ
1871, &c.
Abraham's
sacrifice.

The firm-
ness of his
faith.

I. 'TAKE now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest (what a dreadful gradation is this) and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. The very manner wherein the command is delivered, is enough even at first hearing to shock human nature. For as God has implanted in us no affection more natural and strong than what we bear to our children, so no act seems so horrid and barbarous as for a father to kill his own son. And as the fact was shocking enough of itself, so there were these two circumstances which mightily increased the horror of it, viz. that the son was innocent, and that the father was to slay him with his own hand.

THOSE that have felt the pangs and tender relentings of nature, must confess that to give up a son to death, even though he were never so undutiful and disobedient, must be a great grief to a parent's heart; and the case of David, who wished himself to have died for his son Absalom, though he died in the act of rebellion, though the preservation of his life had been inconsistent with the peace of his government, is the common case of most good-natured parents, who see, or (if absent) who paint in their imaginations the distress of their expiring children, and feel the strugglings of nature with them. How deep then must it sink into the heart of any parent, not only to give up his innocent son to death, but to slay him with his own hand; not only to be the spectator, but the actor in this bloody tragedy? What father would not shrink and start back at such a command? What good man (especially in such a case, and where nature was so hard pressed) would not have been apt to have looked on such a revelation as this, rather as the suggestion and illusion of an evil spirit, than any command of God? especially when it seemed to clash with former revelations, and to make void the promise which God had made to Abraham, * that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; which promise was expressly limited to Isaac and his posterity who had then no son.

How then can we sufficiently admire the steadfast faith of Abraham, who against hope believed in hope, and with-held not his son, the nearest and dearest pledge of his love and obedience that he had

Curred, and that Abraham and Chronus, in short, were one and the same person: for, 1. Chronus was the son of a father who had three children (Euseb. Præp. Evang. Lib. i. c. 10.) and so was Abraham: 2. Chronus had one only son by his wife, and so had Abraham: 3. Chronus had another son by another person, and so had Abraham: 4. Chronus circumcised himself and family, and so did Abraham: 5. Chronus sacrificed his only son, so is Abraham by some heathen historians reported to have done: 6. Chronus's son was named Jehud, and so is Isaac called by Moses; for God said to Abraham, take now thy son Jehudka, *i. e.* thine only son, Gen. xxii. 2. From these, and many more particulars that might be mentioned, it seems evident, that this account of Sanconiathon's Chronus is only the history of Moses's Abraham, with some small alterations revived. Shuckford's Connection, Vol. II. Lib. vi.

f Gen. xlii. 2, g Gen. xviii. 12.

had to give ; that son whom he had received from God after many promises and long expectancies in the wean of life ; that son who was the only one he was ever to look for, since the strength of nature was decayed, and the power of generation departed from him ; that son whose company had endeared him so long, and from whose life he had promised himself the support and comfort of his old age ; and what is more than all, that son in whom all the promises of God were centered ; from whom he expected a numerous offspring, kings and princes to be born, and the joy of all nations, the Saviour of mankind to proceed.

HE might have argued otherwise ; and from the seeming contradiction between the promise and command have started objections, and furnished himself with this excuse ; ^h “ How can this command be taken in a literal sense ? How can I reconcile the horror of the fact with the attributes of God ? How can I persuade myself that his promises are faithful, when I myself am ordered to cancel them ? How can I believe that my Isaac will be the comfort of my grey hairs, when I am going to make him the subject of my perpetual grief ; or that his seed will spring up, and be as numerous as the stars, when I am commanded to stifle that seed, and with him to sacrifice as it were on the same altar all those nations that are in his loins ? ” This might have been the reasoning of a carnal mind ; but the patriarch had other sentiments of the matter : ⁱ he believed that God, who gave him Isaac at first in so miraculous a manner, was able by another miracle to restore him to life again after he was dead, and to make him the father of many nations. In short, rather than disobey the command, or suppose the promise of God could be frustrated, he would believe any thing that was credible and possible, how improbable soever it might seem ; and for this reason the apostle tells us ^k that our father Abraham was justified by faith, and that it was counted unto him for righteousness.

2. BUT to raise the merit of Abraham's obedience, let us consider farther the constancy of his resolution, notwithstanding the harshness and difficulty of the thing. Had Abraham been firmly persuaded that this command to kill his son was really from God, yet it is no easy matter for a man to bring himself to compliance in so difficult a case, and out of mere reverence to the divine authority to divest himself of his nature, and thwart the strongest propensions of it. Let any man, who knows what it is to be a father, lay his hand upon his heart, and consider his own bowels, and he must needs be astonished at Abraham's obedience as well as faith.

The constancy of his resolution.

HAD Abraham indeed upon his first receiving the command taken his knife and slain his son immediately, his compliance might

might have been imputed to some sudden transport of zeal more than any deliberate purpose. But, that his obedience might be more glorious, and have all the circumstances of advantage attending it, God would have it done upon full consideration, and therefore appointed him to go to a mountain (three-days journey from the place where he was) and there to offer up his son. It is in acts of virtue and obedience, as it is in acts of sin and vice: the more deliberate the sin is, and the more calm and sedate temper the man is in when he commits it, the greater is his fault; and so it is in the acts of virtue and obedience (especially if they be attended with considerable difficulty) the more deliberately they are done, the more virtuous they are, and the more praise they merit.

The land
of Moriah.

¹ MORIAH, to which Abraham was ordered to go, was not any particular mountain, but that tract of land whereon Jerusalem was built in following ages, and the adjacent country where among many other hills was the Mount of Olives, and Mount Calvary on which our Saviour did afterwards offer himself to God for the redemption of mankind; it seeming good to the divine wisdom to assign the same place for the typical sacrifice of Isaac, where in the fulness of time the great ante-type was to be offered. ^m This country is not much above one-day's journey from Beer-sheba, the place where Abraham at this time dwelt; but he and his company travelling on foot, and the ass being laden with wood, and not able to go far in a day, they made it three: so that, ⁿ by putting this space between the command and the performance of it, God gave him time to cool upon it, to weigh the injunction, and to look on every side of this difficult duty: he gave him scope, ⁱ say, for his reason to argue and debate the case, and an opportunity for natural affection to play its part, and for flesh and blood to raise all its batteries against the resolution which he had taken up. And now we may easily imagine what conflict this good man had within himself during those three days that he was travelling to the appointed place, and how his heart was ready to be rent in pieces, betwixt his duty to God, and his affection to his child; so that, in every step of this unwelcome and wearisome journey, he did as it were lay violent hands upon himself.

THE Jews have a tradition • that the devil followed Abraham, and used his utmost endeavours to dissuade him from the purpose of sacrificing his son: but if any thing could have induced the patriarch to break his resolution, it must have been those innocent and endearing words that proceeded from Isaac in his journey. ^p Josephus upon this occasion has used all the softness of thought and delicacy of style that he was master of to represent this circumstance of distress, and yet after all he is a bungler

¹ Wells's Geography. ^m Patrick's Commentary. ⁿ Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. II. ^o Maimonides More Nev. Part II. ^p Antiq. Lib. I. c. 14.

bungler in comparison of this great author of the book of Genesis. Abraham was just going to sacrifice his son, the altar, the wood, the fire, the knife, and all were ready, when he finds himself called upon by him in so tender a manner as was enough to pierce his heart, and to arrest his arm already lift up to wound the innocent victim; Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father; and he said, Here am I, my son. Nature which was confined and limited by the divine command here makes a bound, and passes to the utmost verge of what was allowed her. Isaac spake to Abraham, his father, and said, My father; Abraham answered, Here am I, my son: and what said this innocent child to his melting father? Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering? and Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering. ^a Nothing but the heart can be a comment upon these words: a man must be a father, he must be a tender father, he must have an only son, he must suppose himself just going to slay that son, in order to be truly sensible of the energy of this question, and of the effect which it had upon Abraham.

If all this be not enough to shew the stedfastness of his resolution, there is one circumstance more, which though but conjectural has no small probability of being true, and if so, a great tendency to advance the patriarch's praise. The greatest part of the Jewish doctors are of opinion that Isaac at this time was arrived at man's estate; and upon this supposition the words will fairly enough and without straining admit of this sense, that Abraham did not bind his son, but persuaded him to lay himself upon the altar. Without all doubt, as the patriarch drew near to the mount (which ^r was probably distinguished by some bright and glorious appearance) he began to prepare Isaac to submit to be sacrificed; he disposed him to obey the commandments of heaven; he explained the commission he had received from thence; he represented to him the sovereignty of God over his creatures; he made him sensible that nothing should set bounds to our obedience, when God signifies his will; he convinced him that he who had wrought one miracle for his birth, might likewise redeem him from the jaws of death by another; he took a most tender and affectionate leave of him, for the command he had received to sacrifice him, did not forbid him to vent his grief in lamentations for his loss: and
having

^q Saurin's Dissertations. ^r Josephus says, he was but five and twenty years old; David Gantz, in his Chronology, makes him twenty-six; and Eliezer thirty-seven. ^s This conjecture is confirmed by R. Eliezer, who says, that when God bad Abraham go the place he would tell him of, ver. 2. and there offer his son, he asked how he should know it? And the answer was, wheresoever thou seest my glory, there will I stay and wait for thee, &c. and accordingly, he beheld a pillar of fire, reaching from heaven to the earth, and thereby knew that this was the place. Patrick's Commentary.

having thus satisfied the laws of nature, * he set himself now to execute the fatal order, and that very moment had done it, had not the Lord from on high (who saw to what length his obedience would go, and was satisfied) stopped his hand just as it was going to his son's throat: Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from him.

Inferences
from the
whole.

The extent
of our obe-
dience.

To come to a conclusion with this great example of faith and obedience. This story of Abraham (as † a very judicious expounder of the laws tells us) establishes two fundamental points, the one is to show us how far the love and fear of God should extend itself, and the other to convince us of the certainty of divine revelation. Here then we see a command to do that, whereunto the loss of money, or the loss of life itself, is not comparable; nay that which nature abhorred, viz. that a man very rich, and in good authority, who earnestly desired an heir, who was born to him, when he had no hopes of one in his old age, should so overcome his natural affection to him (which doubtless was very great) as to forego all the expectations he had from him, and, after a journey of three days, consent to slay him with his own hands. How then should this example of the father of the faithful encourage us all in a chearful submission to the severer duties of our holy profession; to despise the shame, to endure the cross, to face the severest punishments, to resist the softest inclinations, to deny ourselves, and to mortify our members which are upon the earth, which, how painful soever they be in the operation, offer not half that violence to nature as to kill an only son; besides the consideration of

* It may not, in this place, be amiss to observe, that the heathen world was not altogether ignorant of this sacrifice of Abraham. The story of Iphigenia very much resembles it; for there all things were ready for her immolation, the priest was come, and his arm lift up to give the fatal stroke; when on a sudden a strange and preternatural voice issues out from the woods, telling them that Diana, for whom she was to bleed, did not approve of the sacrifice; and, while the people were deliberating how to find a more acceptable one, a very beautiful Fawn comes voluntarily up to the altar, and there was sacrificed in the stead of Agamemnon's daughter. Datis Cret. de Bell. Troj. Lib. 1. There is another story much of the same nature related by Plutarch (Tom. II. Parall.) when the plague reigned in Lacedemonia, the oracle told them that it would not cease, until they consented annually to sacrifice a virgin of noble birth. The lot fell upon Helena, who was led to the temple dressed for a sacrifice, and just going to be offered up; when an eagle came suddenly down, and snatching away the sword that was to pierce her breast, carried it into the field where some herds were feeding, and there dropped it upon an heifer. These, and many more stories of the like nature, are manifestly founded on the sacrifice of Isaac. Isaac was certainly the first intended sacrifice of this kind; and though both sacred and profane history abound with examples of mens sacrificing their children to idols, yet nothing of this nature could be a motive to Abraham, since this custom was neither in Babylon, nor Mesopotamia, nor Chaldea, where he had lived a long time, no, nor in Beer-sheba, where he abode at that time; but he (as Philo tells us) was by God's order to be the beginner of a perfectly new and unusual example. Patrick's Commentary. † Maimonides More Nevoch. Part III. cap. 24. u Col. iii. 5;

of the extraordinary comfort and support, and of a glorious reward promised to our obedience in such particulars; encouragement enough to make a very difficult duty easy.

THE other thing we are taught by this history is, that the prophets were fully assured of the truth of those things which God spake to them, either in dreams, or visions, or any other way. For if Abraham had in the least doubted whether this sacrifice of his son were the will of God or no, he would never have so readily consented to a thing which nature so strangely abhorred. Nothing indeed is more reasonable than to believe that those persons to whom God is pleased to make immediate revelations of his will, are some way or other assured that they are divine; otherwise they would be in vain, and to no purpose: but how men are assured of this is not so easy to determine, because the scripture has no where informed us.

The certainty of revelations.

THIS farther improvement, however, we may be allowed to make of the history that is now before us, viz. that, as Isaac is acknowledged to be a type of the Messiah, we ought in all justice to sanctify the notions of the Jews, and to apply that to the spiritual Isaac which they affirm of the carnal. They tell us, "that Isaac was a perfect sacrifice; that God took pleasure in him; that they were all offered up in his person; that, whenever they are afflicted, God remembers that Isaac was bound; that, by this sacrifice, his anger is appeased, and the works of Satan are defeated." These are their own words; and this is their prayer to the same purpose, O God, our Lord, let this be thy will, as often as the posterity of Isaac shall sin, as often as it shall rebel against thee, remember the sacrifice of Isaac; for his sake be merciful to us; look upon this only son, and vouchsafe to be favourable to us for his sake who was bound as a lamb. All this is literally applicable to Jesus Christ only. "He was presented as a perfect sacrifice; in him we are all offered up; in our afflictions God remembers this oblation, and by this atonement is appeased; the merits of our Saviour procure us the mercy of God; he looks upon this only Son, and is favourable to us for the sake of him who was bound like a lamb." And we may say to him, but in a sense different to these deluded people, O God, our Lord, let this be thy will, as oft as the posterity of Isaac shall sin against thee, to remember Isaac's sacrifice; shew mercy to us for his merits; look upon thine only Son, and vouchsafe thy favour to us for the sake of him who was bound like a lamb, * and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to thee for a sweet-smelling favour. Amen.

Isaac a type of Christ.

S E C T. I.

Of the Destruction of SODOM, and Metamorphosis of
LOT'S Wife.

Of the
World,
2107, &c.
Before
Christ
1897, &c.
How many
cities de-
stroyed.

DURING the life of the patriarch Abraham, there happened an instance of divine vengeance upon a wicked people, the severest we read of since the general deluge, in the sudden destruction of some cities in the plain of Jordan. Moses indeed in the account he gives of it makes mention but of two, Sodom and Gomorrah: but in another place he enumerates four, and gives this description of their dreadful punishment; * when the generations to come shall see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it, and that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning (like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath) even all the nations shall say, Wherefore has the Lord done thus unto this land? Nay, if we will believe † Strabo, a man of great reading and sagacity, and who perhaps might have an account of the thing from some writer of the Phœnician history, the number of the cities that were destroyed at this time were thirteen; and to this there is a passage in the prophet that seems to give some countenance, though not as to the precise number of them; ‡ As I live, saith the Lord God, to Jerusalem, Sodom thy sister has not done, she nor her daughters (*i. e.* the cities which were built round it, and were tributary to it) have not done as thou and thy daughters have done. But whatever the number of the cities might be, it will be proper for us, before we come to consider in what manner they were destroyed, to give some account of their situation.

Where
situated.

§ THE plain of Jordan includes the greatest part of the flat country through which the river Jordan runs, from its coming out of the sea of Galilee, to its falling into the Asphaltite lake, or Salt-sea. But we are not to imagine that this plain was one continued level, without any risings and descents; the greatest part of it indeed was an open champain country (and for this reason it was commonly called *megapedion*, or the great Field) but therein we read of the ¶ valley of Jericho, and † of the vale of Siddim, ‡ in the latter of which were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. situate, once a pleasant and most fruitful country, but now a noisome, poisonous, and dead-sea.

Well wa-
tered.

§ THE description which the holy scripture gives us of this country deserves our observation, the rather, because it may be of use to teach us in what manner this lake or dead-sea came
to

y Deut. xxix. 22, &c. z Lib. XVI. a Ezek. xvi. 48. b Wells's Geog-
phy. c Deut. xxxiv. 3. d Gen. xiv. 3. e Ibid.

to be formed : † And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. The only difficulty in these words lies in the last clause, as thou comest unto Zoar, which some commentators have referred to the words immediately preceding, like the land of Egypt ; * whereas, if what is said in comparison of the plain of Jordan to the garden of the Lord (*i. e.* the garden of Eden) and to the land of Egypt, be understood by the way of parenthesis (as it seems most natural and obvious so to do) the difficulty will be removed, and the import of the last clause (leaving out the parenthesis) will become plain and easy, viz. that, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, the plain of Jordan was well watered every where, as thou comest unto Zoar, *i. e.* in the vale of Siddim, where Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities that were consumed with them, once stood. This, I think, is a very easy and proper explanation of the last clause of the verse, if we read it Zoar, as it is in the present Hebrew, and most of the translations : but then, if instead of Zoar, we read it Zoan (as we may easily do, considering that the variation is but in one letter, and that the Syriac translation actually reads it so) † nothing can agree better with what goes before, in relation to Egypt ; for Zoan was a famous, and (at this time, very probably) the capital city of Egypt, lying on the lower part of the Nile, not far from the sea-coast, and where that river is divided into several branches : so that the sense of the passage, according to this reading, will be, That the plain of Jordan about Sodom and Gomorrah was so well watered every where, that it resembled the garden of Eden, or the land of Egypt, and particularly, as thou comest unto Zoan, *i. e.* in the parts about Zoan where the Nile is divided into several branches, and where the country is more watered than in other parts.

‡ BUT it is wholly indifferent to our purpose, whether Lektion, viz. that of the common bibles, or that of the Syriac interpreter, the reader will be pleased to follow, provided he does but remember that the part of the plain of Jordan, where these cities stood, is compared to the garden of paradise, and the land of Egypt, upon the account of its being well watered : and well it might, seeing it had (as the Lacus Asphaltites has to this day) not only the streams of the river Jordan running quite through it, but the * river Arnon from the east, † the brook Zared and the famous † fountain Callirrhoe from the south falling into it. Now, since all this water had no direct passage into the sea, it must necessarily follow, † either that it was conveyed
away

† Gen. xiii. 10. † Wells's Geography. † Ibid. † Le Clerc's Dissertations.
‡ Joseph. Antiq. Lib. IV. cap. 4. † Numb. xxi. 17. † Pliny, Lib. V. c. 16.
‡ Wells ibid

away by some subterraneous passage, or swallowed up in the sands, which every way encompassed it; and this might the more easily be done, because the inhabitants of those hot countries used to divide their rivers into several small branches for the benefit of watering their fields.

AND as this plenty of water gave great richness to the soil, and fertility to the country; so the wealth and abundance of all things (as mankind is too apt to abuse God's gifts) made Sodom and the neighbouring cities very infamous for their wickedness and impiety. The prophet Ezekiel gives us this description of them: *Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy, but was haughty, and committed abomination before me; which Josephus might have in his eye when he gave us this account of them. "The Sodomites, says he, waxing proud, by reason of their riches and wealth, grew contumelious towards men, and impious towards God; so that they were wholly unmindful of the favours they received from him: they hated strangers, and burnt in mutual lust with one another."* And certainly the debauchery of the place could admit of no new accession, but was arrived at its utmost height, when they could think of abusing strangers after so abominable a manner; to which the prophet, with all modesty, seems to allude, when (to reprove the profligate of his age) he tells them that they declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not.

How de-
stroyed.

THESE horrid and execrable enormities provoked the divine justice to destroy those cities, whose cry was grown great for vengeance; and the manner wherein it was effected, Moses has recorded in these words: *Then the Lord rained upon Sodom, and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. For the better understanding of which words, we must observe that in the vale of Siddim, the tract of ground which was now destroyed, there were a great many pits of bitumen, which our translation calls slime-pits, into which the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, when pursued by their enemy fell, and that this bitumen, which is a very combustible matter, is in some places liquid, in others firm; and not only found near the surface of the earth, but lies sometimes very deep, and is dug from the bowels of it. 2. We must observe that brimstone and fire which the Lord is said to rain upon Sodom and Gomorrah, means brimstone inflamed; that in the Hebrew stile, brimstone inflamed signifies lightning; and the reason why lightning is thus*

Moses's
words ex-
plained.

o Le Clerc's Dissertations. p Chap. xvi. 49. 50. q Antiq. r Isa. iii. 9. s Gen. xviii. 25. t Ibid. xix. 24, 25. u Ibid. xiv. 10. x Vide Pin. Nat. Hist. Lib. XXXV. c. 15. y Saurin's Dissertations.

thus described, no one can be ignorant of, that has either smelt the places which have been struck with thunder, or read what learned men have wrote upon the subject. 3. We must observe farther, that God is not only said to have rained down brimstone and fire, but brimstone and fire FROM THE LORD; where the addition of from the Lord, which, at first sight, may appear to be superfluous, or to denote a plurality of persons in the Deity (as several Christian interpreters will have it) does more particularly describe the thunder-bolt, which by the Hebrews and other nations is frequently called the Fire of God, or Fire from God, &c. and the reason is, because men having no power over these kind of meteors, and it being impossible for them by any kind of contrivance to ascend up to the clouds, God is therefore supposed to dwell there, and to cast down his bolts from thence.

* Now these observations being put together, we may in some measure form a notion to ourselves how this destruction came to be effected. For, though Moses does not inform us, after what manner the lightning and thunder-bolts from above subverted these unhappy cities and the adjoining territory; yet, since he plainly makes mention of them, we cannot comprehend how it could happen any otherwise than that the lightning and thunder-bolts falling in great abundance upon some pits of bitumen, the veins of that combustible matter took fire immediately, and, as the fire penetrated into the lowermost bowels of the bituminous soil, those wicked cities were subverted (as the tradition of the heathen was) by a dreadful earthquake, and the subsiding of the ground; and that as soon as the ground was sunk, it would unavoidable fall out, that the waters running to this place in so great an abundance, and mixing with the bitumen which they found in such plenty would make a lake of what was a valley before, and a lake of the same quality with what the scripture calls the Salt-sea, not only because its waters are salt to a very great degree, but to distinguish it likewise from two other lakes through which the river Jordan runs, which are fresh water; and what in succeeding times came to be called the Dead-sea, not only because its waters are immoveable, and more like a sea of liquid pitch than of water, but because no living creature can abide in it, nor any plant or tree grow near it, by reason of those bituminous fleams which it sends forth; and from the abundance of which matter, it most frequently occurs in heathen authors under the name of Lacus Asphaltites.

The different names of the Dead-sea

THIS

z Thus in the second book of Kings, the fire of God came down from heaven and devoured them, Ch. i. 12. And Isaiah uses the same expression, he shall be punished with the fire of the Lord, Ch. lxvi. 16. and so the Latin poets speak,

Illicet igne Jovis, lapsisque citatio astris,

Tristibus exiluit Ripis. Stat. Theb. Lib. I.

a Le Clerc's Dissertations.

b That of Samachon, and that of Gennesareth.

c Heylin's Cosmography.

Its situa-
tion, quali-
ties,

THIS lake, ^a according to the accounts we read of it, is inclosed on the east and west with exceeding high mountains; on the north it is bounded with the plain of Jericho, on which side it receives the waters of Jordan; on the south it is open, and extends beyond the reach of the eye, being twenty-four leagues long, and six or seven broad. Its water is extremely deep and heavy, of a nauseous taste, and a very noisome smell; it is never agitated with the wind, nor does it harbour either fish or fowl unaccustomed to the water. It is full of bitumen, which at uncertain seasons boils up from the bottom in bubbles like hot water, at which time the superficies of the lake swells, and resembles the rising of an hill. Adjoining to the lake are fields which, they report, were extremely fruitful in former times, and inhabited by populous cities, but are now so parched and burnt up that they have lost their fertility, insomuch that every thing, whether it grows spontaneously, or is planted by man, whether it be herb, fruit, or flower, as soon as it is compressed, ^e moulders away immediately into ashes: and to this the author of the book of Wisdom certainly alludes, when he tells us that ^f of the wickedness of those cities, the waste land that smoketh to this day is a testimony, and the plants bearing fruit that never come to ripeness.

and adja-
cent coun-
tries.

The re-
mains of
their de-
struction.

^g THE cinders, brimstone, and smoke, says Philo, and a certain obscure flame, as it were of a fire burning, still appearing about Syria, are memorials of the perpetual evil which happened to them; and, as Josephus ^h adds, the things that are said of Sodom are confirmed by ocular inspection, there being some relicts of the fire which came down from heaven, and some resemblance of the five cities still to be seen. ⁱ And it is the duration of these monuments of divine wrath perhaps which gave occasion to St Jude to say, that the wicked inhabitants of these cities ^k were set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, *i. e.* of a fire whose marks were to be perpetuated unto the end of the world; ^l for it is no uncommon thing in scripture

^d See Strabo, Lib. XVI. and Tacitus Lib. V. c. 6. ^e Whether there be any truth in this part of the account of Tacitus, it is hard to tell; as for the apples of Sodom (to which he seems to allude) Mr Maundrell tells us that he neither saw nor heard of any thereabouts; nor was there any tree to be seen near the lake from which one might expect such kind of fruit: and therefore he supposes, the being as well as the beauty of that fruit is a mere fiction, and only kept up because it serves for a good allusion, and helped poets to a pat similitude. Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem. ^f Wisd. x. 7. ^g De Vita Mosis, Lib. II. ^h De Bello Jud. Lib. V. c. 27. ⁱ Saurin's Dissertations. ^k Jude ver. 7. ^l Whittly Annot. in Jud. ver. 7. Thus God threatens to make the people of Israel *cremian aioonion*, a perpetual desolation, Ezek. xxxv. 9. *syrgman aioonion* a perpetual hissing, Jer. xviii. 16. and *encidimon aioonion*, an everlasting reproach, Jer. xxiii. 40. And this more especially is threatened, where the destruction of a nation is compared to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; thus Babylon shall be, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, *ou katokelhesetai eis ton aionon chronon*, it shall never be inhabited, Isa. xlii. 19, 20. and, to name no more, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammen as Gomorrah, *ephephthene eis ton aionon*, a perpetual desolation, Zeph. ii. 9.

scripture to represent a great and irreparable vastation, whose effects and signs shall be permanent to the latest ages, by the word *aiounios*, which we here render eternal.

THUS, in all probability, were the cities in the plain of Jordan overthrown: but if it should be demanded, whether this was done by a miracle, or by the common methods of nature, our answer is, ^m that in a soil impregnated with bitumen, the cities which are built thereon may be shaken by an earthquake, and swallowed by a sudden hiatus; that thunder-bolts too may fall, and set the veins of sulphur and bitumen on fire, which afterwards breaking out and mingling with the water, may, in a low valley, easily cause a lake full of asphaltus; all this is no more than what might be expected, as not exceeding the ordinary power of nature. But if these things were done before the natural causes were in a disposition to produce them; if they had not come to pass that instant, unless it had been for some extraordinary interposition of God, or his blessed angels; it ought to be reputed no less a miracle than if every particular in the transaction plainly surpassed the usual operations of nature. And, that the judgment now before us happened in this manner, ⁿ the two angels dispatched by Almighty God upon this important occasion, ^o God's foretelling Abraham his design, ^p the angels acquainting Lot with the errand upon which they came, and their urging and instigating him to be gone, ^q to make haste and escape to Zoar, because they could do nothing until he was come thither, are arguments sufficiently convincing that the thunder and lightning, I say, or (as ^r others will have it) the showers of liquid fire; ^s or rather storms of nitre, sulphur or bitumen mingled with fire, which fell upon these wicked places, were immediately sent down by the appointment of God, and by the ministry of his angels, who knowing all the meteors of the air, and their repugnant qualities can collect, commix, and employ them as they please, in the execution of God's just judgments upon a people devoted to destruction.

WITH what expedition and alacrity these ministers of heaven do the will of God, in the punishment of the wicked, as well as the preservation of the just, is apparent from this instance of their forcing as it were Lot and his family, while they lingered, out of the house; their laying hold upon his hand and hurrying him out of the town, and then giving him this hasty order; ^t escape for thy life, look not behind thee, stay not in all the plain, escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed; as if they had been impatient to have their charge safely disposed on, that they might the sooner set about the work which God had appointed them to do.

How far all this was miraculous.

The ready obedience of the angels.

THE

^m Le Clerc's Dissertations. ⁿ Gen. xviii. 22. ^o Ibid. ver. 17. ^p Ibid. xix. 13. ^q Ibid. ver. 22. ^r Howell's History of the Bible. ^s Patrick's Commentary. ^t Gen. xix. 16, 17.

THE destruction of one's native place, and of all one's kindred and acquaintance together, is certainly a very affecting consideration even to those that escape the calamity themselves: but our concern in such a case is to be proportioned, not according to the ties of affinity, but according to the quality of the people that undergo the punishment; and this was the thing which made the disobedience of Lot's wife so great a provocation to God. She ^u in all likelihood was a native of Sodom; and having heard what the angels were ordered to do, and seeing the heavens grow angry, and all their bolts pointed towards it, she turned about and stood still to see the fate of her father's house, or to bewail the loss of those she had left behind: for which contempt of the divine command, in expressing a concern for a people that deserved no consideration at all, the sacred historian tells us that ^x she became a pillar of salt; but whether in a literal or figurative sense, is a matter of debate among learned commentators.

Lot's wife,
who.

The different
senses
of the
word.

1. THE word which we render pillar ^y does properly signify two things; 1. An heap of any mighty bulk, raised in memory of some remarkable event, such ^z as Laban and Jacob erected in remembrance of the covenant made between them on mount Gilead; and from this signification of the word ^a some have imagined that Lot's wife was turned into an heap of stones: or, 2. it signifies either a statue or pillar, from which ambiguity of the word, some would have Lot's wife turned ^b into a pillar, without any resemblance of a feminine shape; while others understand it to be ^c the statue of a woman, wherein all the lineaments of her sex are plainly to be seen. But, besides these proper significations, the word may in a metaphorical sense be applied to denote any thing that is immoveable and hard, like a pillar or stone; and, according to this acceptance, they suppose that Moses might intend no more than that Lot's wife was struck dead with fear, or surprise, or any other cause, and so remained motionless like a stone.

2. THE word which we render salt, besides its obvious signification, sometimes denotes ^d a dry and barren soil (such as is found about the Asphaltite lake) and in this sense the word applied to Lot's wife intimates that the place of her death was a barren country, or the land of salt. At other times it signifies a long space and continuance of time; hence we find an everlasting covenant called ^e a Covenant of Salt (salt being therefore an emblem of eternity, because the things that are seasoned therewith continue uncorrupt for many years) and in this sense Lot's wife may be said to become an everlasting monument of the divine

^u So says the Targum of Jerusalem. ^x Gen. xix. 26, &c. and some have given her the name of Adith. Patrick's Commentary. ^y Le Clerc's Dissertations. ^z Gen. xxxi. 46, &c. ^a Inter alios, Sulpitius Severus. ^b So the seventy interpreters render it. ^c So St Jerome and Onkelos. ^d Le Clerc's *ibid.* ^e Numb. xviii. 19.

vine displeasure, without any consideration of the matter where-into she was changed.

THESE are the interpretations which arise from the various significations of the words; and, in order to know which sense we are to embrace, our business must be to consider whose arguments and testimony, in this case, are of greatest weight.

THOSE ^r that prefer the figurative sense of the words, do it, they say, for this reason, because they are loath to multiply miracles where they see no occasion. "It was enough for the justice of God, and all indeed that the angel seems to intimate, that this indiscreet woman should suffer death for her dilatoriness; but there needed no miracle to accomplish this. Instead of being turned into a pillar of salt, she might as well have been stupified with fear, or suffocated by some bituminous and sulphureous vapour. When she saw her native country destroyed by fire from heaven, heard the clouds roar, and felt the ground tremble under her feet; and at the same time recollected in her mind the sad destiny that befel all her friends and relations, except her husband and two daughters; what wonder is it if grief and fear so possessed her spirits that she immediately expired, or at least fainted away, and having none to assist her in that deliquium, died upon the spot. Or if we suppose that the woman did not only stop and turn her eyes to her native country, but (as soon as the angels were gone) went back to behold the burning of it nearer, and so was suffocated by some poisonous vapour (as Pliny the elder was when his curiosity led him too near the mountain Vesuvius) this is a conjecture that the words of our blessed Saviour seem not to discountenance; who, in the description of the suddenness of the destruction of Jerusalem, giving his disciples this advice, ^h he that is in the field let him not return back, immediately subjoins, by way of example, remember Lot's wife; whereby he seems to intimate that she returned back, and approaching too near the desecrated place, perished in the common conflagration. Thus, whether we suppose that the woman was stupified by fear, or suffocated by vapours, her death seems more natural, and answers the divine purpose of punishing her as well as if we should devise the prodigious event of her being turned into a pillar of salt, which hardly any reason can be given for; which we cannot say with certainty ever yet was seen; and which could not, without a miracle, have been preserved so long."

Arguments for the figurative,

THOSE that adhere to the literal sense of the words argue in this manner: That the vale of Siddim, ⁱ where Sodom and the other cities stood, was originally a very fruitful soil (as most

and for the literal sense.

VOL. II.

D

bituminous

^f Vatablus, Bodinus, Le Clerc, and Richard Simon, under the name of Sainjore, *Bibl. Crit.* Tom. IV. Let. 44. ^h Luke xvii. 31, 32. ⁱ Wells's Geography.

bituminous countries are) which induced Lot to make choice of it for the pasturage of his cattle, but is at present the very reverse, a poor barren land full of sulphur ^k and salt-pits; and hence they infer that all the sulphureous and saline matter, which is found in this tract of ground now, was the effect of divine vengeance, and showered down upon it in that day when God destroyed Sodom and the neighbouring cities. They suppose therefore ^l that this woman, standing still too long to behold the destruction of her country, ^m some of that dreadful shower, in the manner of great fleaks of snow fell upon her, and clinging to her body, wrapped it all over as it were in a sheet of nitro-sulphureous matter, which congealed into a crust as hard as a stone, and made her appear like a statue, or pillar of ⁿ metallic salt, having her body inclosed, and, as it were, candied all over with it.

IN this manner they suppose this miraculous event might have come to pass; and for the truth and reality of the thing they produce the testimony of the author of the book of Wisdom, who makes mention ^o of a standing pillar of salt as a monument of an unbelieving soul, and the authority of the seventy interpreters who expressly render it so. Among Jewish authors they produce the words of ^p Josephus, who tells us that Lot's wife in her flight, casting her eyes perpetually back upon the city, and being too much concerned about it, though God had forbid her so to do, was turned into a pillar of salt: I have beheld it myself, and it continues to this day: and among Christians, those of Clemens, in his epistle to the Corinthians, where he tells us that his wife went out along with him, but being of a different opinion, and not persisting in concord with him, she was therefore placed for a sign, and continues a statue of salt to this very day.

THE accounts which modern historians and travellers give us of this matter are so very different and uncertain, that we cannot so well tell where to fix our belief. Brocardus, in his description of the Holy Land, tells us, that he gave himself the fatigue of a very troublesome journey to behold this statue, but was not so happy as to satisfy his curiosity; for the inhabitants assured him that the place was inaccessible, or could not be visited without apparent danger of death, because of the prodigious

^k The whole land of Jewry is furnished with salt from hence. Heylin's Cosmography. ^l Patrick's Commentary. ^m Aben Ezra is of opinion that Lot's wife was burnt with fire, which had some salt mixed with it; so that she was, as it were, seasoned by that salt: for he endeavours to prove that salt fell down from heaven with the fire; which was likewise the sentiment of H. Grotius, from Deut. xxix. 23. ⁿ Interpreters have observed to us, that we must not take the salt here mentioned for common salt, which water soon dissolves, and could not possibly continue so long, being exposed to the wind and rain: but for metallic salt, which was hewn out of the rock like marble, and made use of in building houses, according to the testimony of several authors. Watsii Miscell. Tom. II. and Howell's History of the Bible. ^o Wisd. x. 7. ^p Antiqu. Lib. I. c. 12.

ous beasts and serpents that abounded there ; but more especially because of the Biduini who dwell near the place, and were a very savage and inhumane sort of people : and yet, if we will believe ^r other writers of this kind, they tell us expressly that there is still some part of it extant and plain to be seen between Mount Engaddi and the Dead-sea. We will suppose, however, for once (among ^r many other fabulous things) that the long duration of this monument is an imposition of the inhabitants upon the credulity of strangers, yet it will not therefore follow that there was never any such thing in being, unless we can think it inconsistent with the nature of God to work a miracle for the punishment of that woman. Miracles indeed are not to be multiplied, unless there be occasion for it : but where the plain sense of the words leads us to such a construction, it is a niceness, I think, no way commendable to endeavour to find out another, merely for the sake of avoiding the miraculousness of the fact ; as if the scripture were more valuable for containing nothing but obvious things, or the Majesty of God any way magnified, by seeming to exert as little of its omnipotent power as possible. The short of the matter is this, we have a clear account in a book, full of wonders, ^r of a woman, confusedly guilty of disobedience and ingratitude, struck dead by the hand of God, and turned into a statue of salt for a monument of terror to future generations : and is there any thing in this so repugnant to reason, or incongruous for God

Its reality
allowed.

to

¶ On the west-side of the sea is a small promontory, near which (as our guide told us) stood the monument of Lot's metamorphos'd wife ; part of which (if they may be credited) is visible at this day. Mr Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem. ^r Whether it was Tertullian or St Cyprian that was the author of these verses, but the poet has run together several potentous things :

In fragilem mutata salem stetit illa sepulchrum
Ipsaque imago sui, formam sine corpore servans.
Durat adhuc etenim nuda statione sub Athram,
Nec pluviis dilapsa situ, nec diruta ventis.
Quin etiam si quis mutilaverit advena formam,
Protinus ex sese suggestu vulnera complet.
Dicitur & vivens alio sub corpore sexus
Munificos solito dispungere sanguine menses.

Watſii Miscell. Sacra Tom. II.

¶ Watſius ibid. Bisselins in his Argonat. Americ. Lib. XIV. c. 2. has a very remarkable story to this purpose ; he tells us that Badicrus Almagrus, who was the first man that ever marched an army over the mountains between Peru and Chili, by the extremity of the cold, and unwholesomeoess of the air, lost, in that expedition, a great many men : being obliged however, some five months after, to return the same way, what the historian tells us upon this occasion is almost incredible. Stabant adhuc Equites peditesque, qui quinto ante mense obriguerant ; immoti, inconsumpti, situ, forma, habitu, quo repentina pestis quenque alligaverat. Alius pronus, humi stratus ; alius rectus ; non nemo videbatur inferta manibus frena quassare. Ad summam, inventi eos tales, quales reliquerat : odore nullo tetro, colore non solito Funeribus ; ac nisi quod anima dudum intercidisset, cætera spirantibus quam extinctis similiore. Which is enough to convince us that there is nothing so extraordinary in what the history tells us of Lot's wife, as to make us have recourse to a forced interpretation.

to do, that we must immediately flee to another interpretation, and to make the matter easy, resolutely maintain that the whole purport of the thing is only this, that the poor woman either suddenly died in a fright, or indiscreetly fell into the fire? May not God alter the course of nature, and work a miracle when he pleases? May not he punish those that have offended him in what manner he thinks fit? Is there any more wonderfulness in metamorphosing of Lot's wife than there was in changing the rod of Moses into a serpent? The same power might do both; and since the same history has recorded both, there is the same reason for the credibility of both. Nay, of the two, the transformation of Lot's wife seems more familiar to our conceptions, since we want not instances in history of persons struck with lightning, or killed with cold vapours, that have immediately been hardened like a piece of marble. Instead of disputing the fact therefore, our best way will be to make a wise improvement of it, and so to remember Lot's wife, as to withdraw ourselves as speedily as we can from the danger and infection of evil company; and when we have made our escape, never to return again, so much as in our heart and affections, lest we be involved in the punishment of their crimes.

S E C T. II.

Of ISAAC and JACOB.

Of the
World
2192, &c.
Before
Christ
1812, &c.
Jacob purchases the
birth-right
of his brother.

AFTER the death of Abraham, which happened in the 175th year of his age, Moses proceeds to the history of Isaac: but of him the most material thing that he has to say, is, that he married a wife out of his father's kindred and country, by whom he had two sons that were twins; Esau, whose posterity called Edomites, dwelt in the south border of Canaan, viz. Idumea; and Jacob, who though younger, was designed by God to inherit the promise, and was therefore permitted to get the birth-right from his elder brother, and the blessing from his father; and the manner in which he accomplished both, is thus related by the holy penman: "Esau and Jacob being now grown up to man's estate, it happened one day that Esau having fatigued himself extremely in the field, came fainting to Jacob, who, at that very time, had just made some pottage of lentils, * which happened to be of a reddish colour. Esau seeing the pottage, and being very hungry, desired his brother

t Gen. xxiv. u Howell's History of the Bible. x The original seems to imply, that Esau asked greedily for *some Red, some Red*, and for this reason, as some imagine, he was called Edom, which signifies red. Whence the city which he built, and the whole country his posterity inhabited, was called by the same name. Patrick's Commentary. St Austin upon Psalm lxx. says that they were Egyptian Lentils, which were in great esteem, and much commended by Athenæus and A. Gellius; and which gave the pottage very probably a read tincture. Ibid.

brother to let him eat with him, and, in order to move his compassion, told him, he was ready to faint: but Jacob knew how to take advantage of his brother's necessity; and therefore to inflame his desire, and make him more fond of the bargain by delays, he proposed to him to sell his birth-right. Esau, through eagerness of appetite, not considering the advantage of the thing, but only consulting his present necessity, carelessly answered, *Behold, I am ready to die, and what profit shall this birth-right do me?* Whereupon Jacob finding him so disposed was not content with his word, but, to make the bargain sure, would not part with his pottage till he had obliged his brother to confirm it with an oath; which Esau never scrupled, and so parted with his birth-right, together with all the excellent privileges belonging to it, for a mess of pottage; for which he is accounted ^z by the apostle a profane person; as well he might, if the advantages he parted with were such as these, viz. that the first-born of the family ^a was called to the priesthood, and consecrated to God; during his parents life, ^b was next in honour and dignity to them; and at their decease ^c had a double proportion of the inheritance; ^d succeeded to the government of the family or kingdom; and was ^e entitled to the promise of the Messiah to be born of his race.

If these were the rights of primogeniture, Esau was certainly culpable for parting with them upon any consideration whatever; but then neither is Jacob to be excused, who taking the advantage of his brother's hunger over-reached him in the bargain, and got that for a trifle which he knew to be of inestimable value. There is something so inhuman in denying an hungry person a little victuals; something so selfish in expecting a price, and an exorbitant price too from one's own brother for a mess of pottage, that (to give you the sense ^f of a great commentator upon the text) the one's covetous method of attaining, is not much better than the other's supine negligence in relinquishing this benefit. The only thing that can be said in favour of Jacob (though it be said without any positive or direct proof) is, ^g that he acted by special direction from God, who as sole lord and proprietor of all things can transfer human rights as he pleases; and that Esau, who had no such direction, acted in this particular without authority, and against the order of nature which had invested him with the birth-right. The whole therefore is to be resolved into the sole will and appointment of God; but neither could that be so well pleaded, ^h but that we have reason to suppose that Moses, who is so very concise in his account of things, has left out many circumstances which might be of use to clear up the patriarch's conduct, and to give

Both censured for it.

us

^y Gen. xxv. 32. ^z Heb. xii. 16. ^a Exod. xxii. 29. ^b Gen. xlix. 3. ^c Deut. xxi. 17. ^d 2 Chron. xxi. 3. ^e Vide Jurieu, Hist. des Dogmes, Part I. c. 9. ^f Le Clerc's Commentary. ^g Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^h Saun-
sin's Dissertations.

us a different notion of this, as well as of another action of the like nature.

His father Isaac, ⁱ being now grown old, and by the decay of nature deprived of his eye-sight, was desirous to bestow his paternal blessing upon his family before he died; and to this purpose, ^k ordered his son Esau to go out into the field and kill him some venison, and thereof to make him a favourable dish, such as might raise his feeble spirits, and enable him to deliver his last and solemn benediction with a suitable pathos. The last benedictions of these extraordinary men of old (besides ^l being forms of conveying their estates, and making those their heirs upon whom they bestowed such blessings) were likewise prophetic oracles, such as denoted infallible events, and extended to the most remote periods of time: and therefore we need less wonder that we find Rebekah, who always loved Jacob best, endeavouring to divert this important boon to the profit and interest of her favourite son, though we cannot so much admire the method she made use of to attain her end. The most candid construction is, ^m that Isaac had forgot, though Rebekah remembered, the prophecies which were made concerning their two sons (that ⁿ the elder should serve the younger) even before they were born; and therefore she only endeavoured to bring her husband to do that unwittingly which God had pre-ordained was to be done, but what she knew her husband would not do knowingly without much uneasiness: and to this purpose she advised Jacob by all means to get the start of his brother, and to present his father with such favourable meat as she could make out of the tenderest part of a kid, and prepare it in such a manner as would pass upon the good old man for venison. The only impediment to this her contrivance was, the different complexion of these two brothers, ^o the one being very hairy, the other a smooth man; and therefore, to obviate this inconvenience, she covered Jacob's hands with the skins of kids (which ^p in eastern countries have hair not unlike what grows on human bodies) and so sent him in to deceive his father, and intercept the blessing from his brother.

THE plot succeeded; but we must own ingenuously that Rebekah was guilty of a crime in suggesting such wicked advice to her son; and that Jacob committed another in permitting himself to be seduced by so bad a monitor; that both of them presumed to limit the power of God, by thinking that a complication of frauds was necessary for the fulfilling a divine prophecy; and that though he was pleased to ratify a blessing, which, by being extorted after such a manner, made him who received it unworthy of it; yet this he did for his own name's sake (as he says upon sundry like occasions) and to confirm his purpose

ⁱ An hundred thirty and seven years old, as many have demonstrated. ^k Gen. xvii. ^l Patrick's Commentary. ^m Saurin's Dissertations and Howell's History of the Bible. ⁿ Gen. xxv. 23. ^o Ibid. xxvii. 11. ^p Patrick, *ibid.*

Of the
World
2245, &c.
Before
Christ
1759, &c.

Supplants
him in his
father's
blessing.

Jacob and
Rebekah
censured.

purpose and decree, that in the line of Jacob all the families of the earth should be blessed. In short, ^q how excuseable soever Jacob may be supposed upon the right of primogeniture, which was fairly transferred to him by bargain; yet when he tells a positive lie in averring himself to be the man he really was not, there is no apology to be made for him; and though he obtained the blessing by such ways and means, as, if they may be excused in him, or he in using them, on account that God had appointed the blessing to him; yet are they not to be imitated, or drawn into example by any other. Which they would do well to consider who propose the whole scripture, and every part thereof, without distinction, for a standing rule both of faith and manners to all believers in all ages.

BUT to continue our story. Deceived by these stratagems, and persuaded by the many false assurances that Jacob had given him, the patriarch proceeds to pronounce over his younger son the blessing which he had reserved for the elder. He wishes, or rather prophetically promises Jacob, 1. Abundance of wealth; [†] God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. 2. Dominion and empire; Let people serve thee, and nations bow down before thee. 3. A superiority over the rest of his family; Let thy mother's son bow down to thee. And 4. Prosperity to his friends, and confusion to his foes; Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be every one that blesteth thee.

SCARCE had the good patriarch made an end of his good wishes, when Esau returning from hunting brought him some venison, and asking his father to rise and eat thereof, put him in a great disorder and surprize, when he found that his younger brother had been there and deceived him. It might reasonably be expected that the patriarch under such provocation might have recalled his blessing, and bestowed it upon Esau where he first intended it: but the [‡] Jews have a tradition that hell opened its mouth before his eyes, and by the dreadfulnes of the prospect, hindered him from pronouncing predictions contrary to the will of heaven. The more rational conjecture is, that some supernatural inspiration over-ruled the intentions of Isaac, and therefore some interpreters have thought that by [†] Isaac's trembling very exceedingly, we are to understand [‡] that he fell into a trance, and therein received instructions what to do.

To make Esau however some amends for what his brother had beguiled him of, he likewise gives him a blessing; but [‡] (according to the vulgar translation) the first clause of it especially seems to have too great an affinity with what he had given Jacob before, and therefore (considering Isaac's apology,

[‡] What

^q Howell's History of the Bible. ^r Gen. xxvii. 28, 29. ^s Jarchi. in Gen. xxvii. ^t Gen. xxvii. 33 ^u St Aug. Quæst. in Gen. Tom. IV. ^z Le Clerc's Commentary on Gen. xxvii.

Isaac's
blessing to
Jacob,

and to
Esau.

What shall I do for thee, my son? Thy brother I have made thy lord, and with corn and wine have I sustained him) it may more consistently be rendered, I think, ^z thy dwelling shall be WITHOUT the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven; for this certainly connects better with what follows, by the sword thou shalt live, and serve thy brother; but in time shalt thyself obtain dominion, and shake his yoke from off thy neck. The whole indeed is a prediction rather than a blessing; and was exactly verified in the posterity of Esau. Idumea, ^a the place where they dwelt, was a barren and mountainous country; the inhabitants a bold and warlike people; ^b in the reign of king David they were subjected to the Jews; ^c but in Jehoram's time they began to shake off the yoke: for the space of eight hundred years they lived in a kind of independency, ^d till Hircanus again subdued them; but in the reign of ^e king Herod (who himself was an Edomite, and whose posterity possessed the throne for a century and an half) they regained their liberty, if not a superiority over the Jews.

ESAU had conceived such hatred against his brother for supplanting him these two times, both in the birth-right and in the benediction, that he resolved to be revenged; and, supposing that his father would not live long, intended as soon as he was dead to murder him. But his mother Rebekah, being apprised of his design, acquainted Jacob with it, advising him to make the best of his way to his uncle Laban at Haran; and (to cover the thing) she pretended to her husband a mighty uneasiness, for fear lest Jacob should marry into an unbelieving family as Esau had done already. The contrivance, in short, was so managed that the patriarch willingly parted with his son, after he had renewed and confirmed the blessing he had given him before; and his mother took care to send him away privately for fear of some mischief from his brother's malice.

Jacob's
ladder,
and the
reason of
the vision.

To form a right notion of Jacob's condition at this time, and the protection of heaven extended to him, we must imagine that we saw the heir of a powerful family taking his leave of his aged parents, and for fear of his angry brother departing from his father's house; beginning a journey of four hundred and fifty miles into a strange country, all alone, on foot, and without any servant to attend him; walking all the day with a pensive heart, and forced at night to take up his lodging in the open air, with the sky for his canopy, and nothing better than an hard stone for his pillow. To suppose Jacob in this case, I say, we shall soon perceive the reason why he had the representation made to him in a dream ^f of a ladder, reaching from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

THE

^y Gen. xxvii. 37. ^z Gen. xxvii. 39, 40. ^a Heylin's Cosmography. ^b 2 Sam. viii. 14. ^c 2 Kings viii. 20. ^d Joseph. Antiq. Lib. XIII. ^e Ibid. ^f Gen. xxviii. 12.

THE ladder (according to the sense of the best ^s interpreters) is an emblem of divine providence which governs all things; its being set upon the earth, denotes the steadfastness of providence, which nothing is able to unfettle; its reaching up to heaven, signifies its universality, or that it extends to all things; the several steps of the ladder are the motions and actions of providence; the angels going up and down, shew, that they are the great ministers of providence; never idle, but always employed in the preservation of the just; their ascending, means their going up to receive the divine orders and commands; and their descending, their coming down upon earth to put them in execution. So that, in this hieroglyphic, God signified to Jacob, now full of cares and uneasy apprehensions, that the man, who was under the care and protection of divine providence, wanted not company in a wilderness; wanted not security in the midst of dangers; wanted not direction in his most difficult and momentous undertakings, since there were so many ministering spirits holding correspondence between earth and heaven, and daily and hourly sent forth from God's presence ^a to minister unto them, who shall be heirs of salvation.

DREAMS and nocturnal visions were common ways of God's revealing himself to the patriarchs of old; ⁱ whether it was to convince them of his omnipresence, that he was about their beds, and about their paths, and spied out all their ways: or to inform them of his constant care, and that he was not unmindful of them, even when they little thought of him, and were most absent from themselves; to convince them of his unlimited power over their souls, when even sleep itself could not hinder his access to them; or that the mind, in the dead and silence of the night, was fitter to receive divine impressions when nature was hush, and the passions asleep, and no variety of thoughts to distract its attention. However this be, the representation of the ladder, ^k and the comfortable words which God spake from the top of it, made such a lively impression upon Jacob, that he proceeded on his journey with cheerfulness, after he had performed his devotions, and made this solemn vow and protestation; ^l If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God. He went; he married; he prospered; ^m the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses. But, as he returned home, hearing that his brother Esau with four hundred men was coming out against him, his heart began to fail him. To fight, his forces were too weak; to flee, his retinue was too cumbersome, and therefore he took

Why God reveals himself in dreams.

VOL. II.

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g Maimonides More Nevoch. h Heb. i. 14. i Watsii Miscell. Sacra de Somnijs, Tom. II. k Gen. xxviii. 13. l Ibid. ver. 20. m Ibid. xxx. 43.

Jacob's
wrestling.

the method which prudence suggested; first to implore the divine assistance, and then to endeavour to pacify his brother with a present. His prayer was offered up, his present was sent, when ^a Jacob, being left alone (as Moses has given us the account) there wrestled a man with him till the breaking of the day: but who this man was, or what the intent of this mystical action might be, has been a matter of some perplexity to interpreters.

Who it
was with.

^o ORIGEN, I think, is a little singular, and no way to be justified in his conceit, when he tells us that the person, with whom Jacob wrestled, was an evil angel; in allusion to which, he thinks that the apostle grounds his exhortation; ^p Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness in this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places. But that Jacob, ^q who at this time was under the more immediate protection of heaven, should be submitted to the assaults of a wicked angel, much more, that so good a man as Jacob should ask a blessing of an evil spirit; should merit the name of Israel, *i. e.* a conqueror of the Mighty God, for overcoming such an one, or call the place of combat, Peniel, *i. e.* the face of God, in commemoration of his conflict with such an one, is a very absurd, if not impious suggestion.


It is the general opinion of the Jewish doctors, that the person with whom Jacob contended was a good angel; and as their settled notion is, that these heavenly spirits sing every morning the praises of God, at the approach of day; ^r so the request which this antagonist makes, ^s let me go, for the day breaketh, denotes him to be one of the angelic host, who had staid his prefixed time, and was now in haste to be gone, in order to join the heavenly choir. The prophet ^t Hosea, I think, has determined the matter very plainly, when speaking of Jacob, he tells us that he took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God, yea he had power over the angel, and prevailed; but then the question is, whether it was a created angel, as most of the Jewish doctors maintain, or ^u an uncreated angel, *i. e.* the Son of God in the appearance of an angel, as several both antient and modern divines have thought. It was the received opinion in the first ages of the church, that where-ever we find mention of God's appearing to

ⁿ Gen. xxxii. 24. ^o De Principiis, Lib. III. ^p Eph. vi. 10, 12. ^q Gen. xxxii. 28. ^r Jarchi in Gen. xxxii. ^s Gen. xxxii. 26. ^t Chap. xii. 3, 4. ^u The Son of God, says Tertullian, is stiled an angel or messenger, not as a name designing his nature, but his office; and they are superficially skilled in Philo the Jew, who know not that he calls the *Logos* both God's image and his angel. Justin Martyr also shews to Trypho the Jew, that the God who appeared to Abraham was the minister of the universal Creator; and he gives this as a reason why the *Word* is called an angel, *viz.* that he may be known to be the minister and substitute of the Father of all things. Tennison of Idolatry.

the patriarchs of old, the action must be ascribed to the *Logos*, or second person in the ever-blessed Trinity. * Thus, of the three which appeared in human shape to Abraham, the person to whom he personally addresses himself, calling him his Lord, is rightly supposed to be the Son of God, attended then only with two angels; and for the same reasons that we produced in confutation of Origen's vain conceit, the man that here strove with and blessed Jacob, was the same Divine Person, but unattended by any angel, and clothed in an human shape, the better to convince the patriarch of the unreasonableness of his fear and distrust. For, we must remember, † that when God made any promise to the antient believers, gave them any command which they were to impart to others, or was minded to convince them of certain truths which they were either ignorant or diffident of before; he generally made use of some visible sign or token (as the manner of the Oriental people was) to the end that their imagination being more strongly affected by such objects, they might more firmly believe the truth, or more gladly receive the promise, or more emphatically deliver the command which God communicated to them. Now this was the present condition that Jacob was in: he had offended his brother Esau in supplanting him, nor had twenty years absence assuaged his rage: his brother Esau, he understood, was coming out against him with four hundred armed men; and what to do in such circumstances he knew not. Under this perplexity of mind a person comes to him, wrestles with him, and lets him obtain the victory; and then tells him the meaning of this emblematical action, as the vulgar Latin (which is the clearest translation) expresses it, if thou hast been strong against God, how much more shalt thou prevail with men? And accordingly Josephus informs us ‡ that Jacob considered the victory he now obtained as an omen of great happiness, and as an assurance to his posterity, that no human force should overcome them.

Why they wrestled.

THERE is one passage more wherein this patriarch is concerned, and a very remarkable instance it is of the divine love and esteem for him, and that is the revelation which God vouchsafed him of the particular time when the Saviour of mankind, who was to spring from his loins, was to make his appearance in the world; which Jacob, in the benediction he bestows upon his son Judah, is supposed to express in these words: § the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet until SHILOH come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. But because the prophecy is supposed to have its difficulties, it will be proper to explain its terms, in order to discover the true sense and meaning of it.

Of the World 2315, &c. Before Christ 1689, &c.  Jacob's prophecy of the scepter explained.

THE

* Hilary, de Trinit. Lib. IV. † Saurin's Dissertations. ‡ Joseph. Antiq. Lib. I. c. 19. § Gen. xlix. 10.

THE word (*Schebet*) which we render sceptre, has both a literal and figurative signification. ^b In its literal, it denotes a rod, a wand, a sceptre, a shepherd's crook, &c. and in its figurative, it either implies that correction and punishment, whereof the rod, or that authority and kingly power, whereof the sceptre is the ensign. It cannot be doubted, I think, but that the words are to be taken in a figurative sense here; and yet it cannot be supposed to signify punishment, ^c because the tribe of Judah was so far from being in a state of affliction, that it always flourished exceedingly, and was honoured with many high privileges above the rest of the tribes: it must therefore, in this place, be put for regal power and dominion, whereof the sceptre, ^d in antient times, was thought a fitter representation than either the crown or diadem. 2. The word (*mechokek*) which we render law-giver, is not synonymous with the former, but has two distinct significations. ^e It sometimes signifies, not a person that has power to make laws himself, but only to teach and instruct others in those that are already made; and in this sense, it differs very little from the scribes, and doctors, and teachers of the law, which we find so much mention made of in our Saviour's time. At other times, it denotes a person invested with power and authority even to make laws, ^f but then this authority of his is inferior to that of a king; so that properly he may be called an inferior magistrate, or governor set over a people by the licence of some monarch, and by his commission appointed to rule. And in this sense the word should the rather be taken here, because there were such governors and deputies set over the Jews, after their return from the Babylonian captivity. 3. The phrase which we render from between the feet, ^g according to the modesty of the scripture-expression, means nothing else but of his seed and posterity, and whatever the original of the word *Shiloh* may be (which some translate ^h the sent, the son, the feed; others quiet, peaceable, prosperous; and others again, the august, the renowned, and the like) from which radix soever, I say, the word be derived, both Jews and Christians are agreed in this, that by the person to whom this title is applied, the patriarch intended the great Saviour of the world, who is called the Messias, or Christ. 4. By ⁱ Judah, there is not that necessity to understand the people of that tribe only, but all those who were afterwards called Jews, even though they belonged to Benjamin, or Levi; because, after the defection of the rest from the house of David, these two tribes, joining themselves to the other tribe of Judah, were incorporated together, and usually called the house or kingdom of Judah, in opposition to that of Israel. 5. There

^b Saurin's Dissertations. ^c Du Pin's History of the Old Testament. ^d Selden's Titles of Honour. ^e Kidder's Demonstration of the Messias. ^f Patrick's Commentary. ^g Mede's Discourses. ^h Patrick's Commentary. ⁱ *Ibid.*

5. There is but one expression more, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be; and herein there is no great difficulty, since all are agreed that it contains a prophecy of the conversion or obedience of the Gentiles to the kingdom of Christ; ^k only there is this to be observed, that, as the word (shall, or shall be) is not in the Hebrew, it ought to be left out of the translation, and will make the sentence run thus: The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, &c. until Shiloh come, and the gathering of the people be to him. So that these two events, the coming of Christ, and the conversion of the Gentiles, according to this part of the prophecy, were to precede the subversion of the Jewish government.

If then, by Shiloh, we are to understand the Messiah; by Judah, the people of the Jews; by the sceptre, the regal power; and by the law-giver, a subordinate magistrate or governor; then may the full sense of Jacob's prophecy be rendered in this short paraphrase: "The royal power and authority, which in
" time to come they shall enjoy, shall not be taken from them; The full sense of it.
" or, at least, they shall not be destitute of rulers and governors
" (though of an inferior degree) even in their most declining
" condition, until the Messiah and Saviour of mankind come
" into the world: but after he is come, then shall the posterity of Judah have neither king nor ruler of their own;
" for their whole commonwealth shall be dissolved, and never
" recover itself again. The nations that were aliens under
" former dispensations shall become obedient to the Messiah, and
" be made members of his mystical body, the church, whose
" bosom shall be open to receive all."^l For the mountain of the house of the Lord (as it is explained in an after-prophecy) shall be established upon the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and the people shall flow unto it. This seems to be a genuine sense of the words, and if we look into the state of history during that time, we shall find the exposition verified by the event.

FROM the time of David indeed, when the sceptre first came into the tribe of Judah, to the captivity of Babylon, which was four hundred and seventy years, the succession of kings in that tribe was uninterrupted; but after the seventy years of their captivity were expired, though they lived by their own laws, and in their own country, ^m yet they had no absolute and independent authority of their own, but were, first under the Persian monarchs, afterwards, upon the conquest made by Alexander, under the Greeks, and after that, under the kings of Asia and Egypt, until they were at last brought under subjection to the Roman yoke. and its accomplishment shewn from history.

IT must not be forgot, however, that all this while that they were under the dominion of others, they enjoyed rulers and
governors:

^k Mede's Discourses. 1 Isa. ii. 2. ^m Patrick's Commentary.

governors of their own, who administred their affairs by way of deputation from the several monarchs that held them in subjection. The first of these governors was Zerobabel, whom ⁿ the prophet stiles a captain, or prince of Judah; and though the sacred history gives us no account of his successors, yet, according to the ^o Jewish tradition, there were two, viz. Meshullam, the son of Nehemiah, and Hananiah his grandson. Nehemiah came afterwards and executed the same office; but, upon his decease, the government came into the hands of the high-priests. The sacerdotial government being always subordinate to some foreign power or other, ^p subsisted for above 400; and in Simon's time, who was called the prince and governor of the Jews, was raised to a very great splendor, so that his grandson Aristobulus took occasion from thence to assert the title of a king, though he had but a shadow of that power. His successors, however, continued the title, until Herod obtaining the kingdom of Judea from the senate of Rome, stripped them of their power, and destroyed their family. After the death of Herod ^q the kingdom was divided by Augustus into tetrarchies, giving Judea to Archelaus, and dividing the rest of the country between Philip and Antipas. But Archelaus, misbehaving himself, was deprived of his government; whereupon Judea was reduced into the form of a province, was ruled by Roman prefects, and never after that enjoyed the privilege of having either king or governor of its own. The Jews at last were utterly destroyed by Titus; their city and temple were burned to the ground; their form of government, both civil and ecclesiastical, quite extinct; and above seventeen hundred years are now past and gone, since all this happened to them, and yet there is not the least sign of their restoration.

The whole
summed
up.

To determine then the particular period of time when this prediction came to be fulfilled, we may say, with great justice, that though the sceptre or regal power never properly returned after the first captivity, yet the law-giver, or government by persons of their own nation, did not depart from the Jews until their utter excision by Titus. ^r The gathering of the Gentiles, as well as the coming of Shiloh, was to precede their deprivation; but, at the time of their first subjection to the Roman power by Pompey the Great, Shiloh was not come; at the time of their being reduced to a province under Archelaus, the nations were not gathered unto him; but at the final subversion of their state by Titus, when both these things were come to pass (Christ come, and the Gentiles converted) then did the law-giver (as the sceptre had done before) depart from Judah, and never since that time has there either been any form
of

ⁿ Hag. i. 1. ^o In Seder Olam Zuta, f 21. p. 1. ^p Lewis's Antiq. of the Heb. Repub. ^q Patrick's Commentary. ^r Mede's Discourses.

of government, or person invested with regal authority among them. May the sense of this their calamity and dispersion, be a means in God's hands to open their eyes, and turn their hearts !

S E C T. III.

Of JOSEPH and JOB.

OF all the children which Jacob had, Joseph was the dearest to him, and that not only because he was the eldest son of his beloved wife Rachel, but because he was a youth of a superior spirit and capacity. The love and partiality of the father, however, occasioned such envy and indignation in the rest of the brethren, that they once agreed in a design to have murdered him ; but, upon better consideration, thought it more adviseable to sell him for a slave to a company of Ishmaelites who were going with their merchandize down into Egypt. The preservation and protection of Joseph in Egypt, in order to the succouring his father and brethren in a time of famine, is a rich display of the goodness and providence of God. ^u That Joseph should be hated and sold by his brethren to the merchants who were travelling into Egypt ; that these merchants should dispose of him, not to a private person, but to a great officer of the king's court, which gave occasion to his future promotion ; that he should be preferred and esteemed by his master, yet, after that, cast into prison, and so (to all outward appearance) rendered incapable of making any farther figure in the world ; that during his confinement he should interpret his fellow-prisoners, the chief baker's and butler's dreams, just as they came to pass ; and, in some considerable time, be recommended to Pharaoh to interpret his dream likewise, and by him advanced and made ruler over all the kingdom ; here is such a variety of scenes of life, in the compass of a few years, as manifest the divine contrivance, and the skill of his inspired penman, in painting some of these scenes and their incidents, is not unworthy of our observation.

Of the World 2276, &c. Before Christ 1728, &c. Joseph's history.

THE lamentation ^x which Jacob makes upon the supposed loss of his son Joseph ; the refusal ^y which Joseph gives to the request and enticement of his enamoured mistress ; the severity ^z wherewith he seems to treat his timorous brethren, and the fear, sorrow, and self-condemnation ^a which all the while arises and struggles in their breasts ; ^b Jacob's denial to let Benjamin go, ^c and the grief and reluctance wherewith he is brought at last to consent ; ^d Joseph's inquiry concerning his father's health, and ^e the ready notice he takes of his brother Benjamin ;

Moses's elegance in expressing it.

^f Judah's

^s Gen. xxxvii. 3. ^t Ibid. ver. 28. ^u Collyer's Introduction to the Scriptures. ^x Gen. xxxvii. 33, &c. ^y Ibid. xxxix. 8, &c. ^z Ibid. xlii. 9, &c. ^a Ibid. ver. 22. ^b Gen. xlii. 36, &c. ^c Ibid. xliii. 14. ^d Ibid. ver. 27. ^e Ibid. ver. 29.

† Judah's confession of an unknown crime, † his humble representation of his sorrowful case, and † generous offer to become a bond-slave in the room of his brother, that his father's grey hairs might not go with sorrow to the grave, are all master-strokes in their kind, and related by Moses in a most inimitable manner. What can be more affecting than the words of Joseph upon the discovery? † I am Joseph. Does my father yet live? Come near to me, I pray you, I am Joseph, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. What can express more triumphant joy than those words of Jacob, upon hearing the unexpected news? † It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive, I will go and see him before I die; or more satisfaction than those upon the interview? † Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive. Never did any author exceed Moses in the easy and lively way (as we call it) of painting and delineating nature.

BUT our business is not to pursue the sacred writer through all the pathetic passages of this narration, nor can we consider Joseph in all the various transactions of his life: what this patriarch was more especially remarkable for was dreams, and the interpretation thereof; the one the occasion of his sufferings, and the other of his exaltation; and therefore it may not be improper in the first place to take some notice of them.

Dreams
natural,
how occa-
sioned.

DREAMS, ^m according to their common distribution, are either natural, or supernatural. Dreams that are natural arise from several causes; the temper and constitution of our bodies, the crisis and disposition of our blood and spirits, the nature of the meat we eat, and the drink we drink, ⁿ nay, the want sometimes of meat to eat, and drink to drink, contribute severally to produce them; but, above all, the accidents and occurrences of the day, the passions and affections of the mind, and ^o the business and employment of the man's life, are the things that occasion nocturnal images and representations. And as they proceed from such a variety of causes, there can be no dependence on them, nor any foreknowledge of future occurrences to be acquired from them; for which reason the wise son of Sirachi gives us this admonition concerning them, ^p Dreams lift up fools, *anaptreousin*, says the Septuagint, add wings to them (as some-
times

f Gen. xlv. 16. g Ibid. ver. 18. Philo, in the treatise which he calls Joseph, has put in the mouth of Judah a very long and elaborate speech upon this occasion; but though it is excellently well turned, it has not near the life of the original. h Gen. xlv. 33. i Ibid. xlv. 3, &c. k Ibid. ver. 28. l Ibid. xlv. 30. m Vid. Wafii Miscell. Sacra. Tom. 1. and Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. 1 p. 193. n Au hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth, a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh, Isa. xxix. 8.

o In somnis eadem plerunque videmus obire

Causidici causas agere et componere Leges.

Enduperatores pugnare, et prælia obire.—Lucret. Lib. IV.

p Eccclus. xxxiv. 1, &c.

times men dream they fly) and make them vainly expect great matters; whoſo regardeth them is like him that catcheth at a ſhadow, and followeth after the wind; and thereupon he adds, if they be not ſent from the moſt High in thy viſitation, ſet not thine heart upon them; for dreams have deceived many, and have failed thoſe who put their truſt in them.

THE wiſe man, however, acknowledgeth that dreams are ſome-^{Superna-} times ſupernatural, and ſent from the moſt High; and this in-^{tural.} deed was ſo common a means of revelation among the patriarchs of old, and among the Jewiſh people afterwards, that there is no gainſaying it. ^a God ſpeaketh once, yea, twice, ſays Elihu, in the book of Job, in a dream, in a viſion of the night, when deep ſleep falleth upon men, in ſlumberings upon the bed; for not only the peculiar people of God, ^r but even Pagans, and ſuch as were aliens to the covenant, have been ſometimes vouchſafed divine admonitions in their dreams: to which purpoſe Joſeph obſerves to Pharaoh, that ^v God, by his dreams, had ſhewn him what he was about to do; in like manner as Daniel does to Nebuchadnezzar, that ^t the great God had made known to the king what was to come to paſs hereafter.

How dreams, which were ſo common a method of God's ^{Why inter-} communicating himſelf to mankind, come now to be ſuperſeded, ^{mited.} can be no great difficulty to us, who have it recorded in the rule of faith, that ^u God, who at ſundry times, and divers manners, ſpake in times paſt unto the fathers, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son. The full and complete manifeſtation of his will, which he hath made to mankind under the goſpel, has taken away the neceſſity of inferior means; though it may not perhaps be amiſs to ſuppoſe (as ^x a great divine of our church has done) that the increaſe of wickedneſs in the world, multiplicity of buſineſs, ſollicitude of mind about worldly affairs, and men's too much depending upon politic devices to accompliſh their ends, are in a great meaſure the cauſes of the ceſſation of divine admonitions by true dreams. It is not to be queſtioned, however, but that, even in theſe days, and under this diſpenſation, in great exigences, or very momentous occurrences, under ſore grievances, or very difficult undertakings, God may ſtill comfort and encourage, direct and admoniſh, either by words or viſible repreſentations, good men in their dreams.

AND as dreams very often proceed from God, and are ſome-^{Interpreta-} times very myſterious and enigmatical; ſo the true ſenſe and ^{tion of} interpretation of them can only be derived from the ſame ſpirit ^{dreams,} whence.

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that

^q Job xxxiii. 14, 15. ^r Empedocles, Pythagoras and Plato were of opinion that dreams were ſometimes ſent by good dæmons: they talk much of *theioi oniroi*: they fancied there was ſome one particular God, who was employed in ſending them to men, whom they therefore call *oneiroponpos*; though Homer aſcribes them immediately to the ſupreme Jupiter—*Kai gar te onar ek Dios eſi*, Iliad I. ^s Gen. xli. 25. ^t Dan. ii. 29. ^u Heb. i. 1. ^x Jackson on the Creed, Lib. I.

that produced them. To which purpose we may observe, that Joseph reminds Pharaoh of a maxim not unknown to the Egyptians before, viz. that the art of divination does not proceed from men, but from God; or as Moses makes him speak, *y* It is not for me, God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace: and having thus made acknowledgement to heaven for the light and understanding which he received from thence, he gave the king the explanation of two of his dreams. He told him that both of them prognosticated the same event, that the *z* seven fat kine, and the seven full ears of corn, implied seven years of plenty which would begin presently; and that the seven lean kine, and the seven withered ears, denoted seven years of famine which would immediately succeed the former. The emblems, it is owned, were natural enough: the full ears did not improperly represent plenty, as the withered did famine: the cow or ox was a common hieroglyphic which the Egyptians made use of to signify food and agriculture; and the Nile, upon the banks of which Pharaoh imagined he saw these objects, was the general cause either of their want or plenty. But how resemblant soever these images might be, yet it certainly had been above the power of any man's conjecture to have applied them to so many years of plenty and famine, had not the Spirit of God suggested it to him.

DANIEL makes the same acknowledgement of divine inspiration, when he comes to explain Nebuchadnezzar's dream; *a* Art thou able, says the king, to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? To which Daniel answers, The secret, which the king hath demanded, cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets: and if we are minded to know by what method he obtained that revelation from heaven, the inspired history has acquainted us farther, that it was by prayer and intercession; *b* Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; and the secret was revealed unto him in a night-vision, for which he blessed the God of heaven. From which passage it seems reasonable to imagine, that the way of finding out the meaning and interpretation of a dream was not by devising any rules of art, or consulting with evil spirits (as it afterwards became a practice among the Pagan oneirotics) but by immediately addressing to God, who either for that time made to them (in their sleep) a fresh representation of the thing wherein they were consulted, together with its explanation, as it was in the case of Daniel; or gave them a permanent and inherent power and faculty of expounding dreams whenever they were proposed to them, as it seems to have been in the patriarch

y Gen. xli. 16. *z* *Ibid.* ver. 26, &c. *a* Dan. ii. 26, &c. *b* *Ibid.* ver. 17, &c.

patriarch Joseph; whose renown for divination was so great, even in the heathen world, that the abridger of Trogius Pompeius has given him a character (wherewith we conclude this patriarch's story) very much resembling what we read of him in scripture: "Joseph, the youngest of his brethren, says he, had a superiority of genius which made them fear him, and sell him to foreign merchants, who carried him into Egypt, where he practised the magic art with such success, as rendered him very dear to the king; he had a great sagacity in the explanation of prodigies and dreams; nor was there any thing so abstruse, either in divine or human knowledge that he did not readily attain. He foretold a great dearth several years before it happened, and prevented a famine's falling upon Egypt, by advising the king to publish a decree, requiring the people to make provision for divers years. His knowledge, in short, was so great that the Egyptians listened to the prophecies coming from his mouth, as if they had proceeded not from man, but God himself.

Joseph's
character
from
Justin.

NOT long after the days of Joseph, when the children of Israel sojourned in Egypt, there lived a person of great renown in the land of Uz (^a which some place in Arabia Deserta, and some elsewhere) whose patience and constancy under affliction is largely recorded in scripture, and recommended as a pattern to all succeeding generations. That Job lived in the days of the patriarchs, is very probable, from the long duration of his life, which ^c continuing an hundred and forty years after his restoration, could hardly be less in all than two hundred. That he lived before the law, may be gathered from his burnt offerings in the land where he lived, both commanded and accepted by God, though such offerings were by the law forbidden in any other place, but that which the ^e Lord had chose in some one of the tribes of Israel: and that he lived after Jacob, may be inferred from the character given of him by God, ^s that there was none like him upon the earth for uprightness, and the fear of God; which large commendation could not have been allowed to any while Jacob lived, who was God's favourite servant, and descended from the father of the faithful in a direct line; nor can it be supposed that it was proper to be given after Jacob to any while Joseph lived, who in moral virtues, and other excellencies, made as bright a figure as any in his time.

Job's coun-
try, and
when he
lived.

^b AFTER these conjectures, though the precise time of Job's birth cannot with sufficient ground be ascertained; yet there is a general concurrence in opinion, that he lived in the time of the children of Israel's bondage, since his birth is placed in the very same year wherein Jacob went down into Egypt, and the beginning

^c Justin, Lib. XXXVI. c. 2. ^d Wells's Geography. ^e Job. xlii. 16. ^f Deut. xii. 13, 14. ^g Job i. 8. ^h Howell's History of the Bible.

beginning of his trial in the year when Joseph died ; though it might probably be less liable to exception, if his birth were set a little lower, much about the time of Jacob's death ; and then Joseph, who survived his father about four and fifty years, will be dead about sixteen years ; at which time Job might justly deserve the great character that is given of him, and have no man then living in virtue and integrity, his equal or competitor.

Job a real person, and of what family.

THAT Job was a real person, * and not a fictitious character, and his story matter of fact, and not a parabolical representation, is manifest from all those places in scripture where we find mention made of him. His name, his quality, his country, the number of his children, and pedigree of his friends, do all denote the reality of his history ; though it must not be denied, that whosoever composed it, has dilated and adorned his narrative, to make it a more sensible and moving instance of perfect patience, and to give us more lively and particular instructions of the notions we are to entertain of prosperity and adversity. His family, however, is not so well agreed on, since some will have him to be descended from Terah, the brother of Abraham ; others from Esau, the brother of Jacob ; and others (with more probability) from Abraham by Keturah his second wife ; since he is said ^k to have been the greatest of all the men in the East, into which country Abraham sent the children ^l which he had by that woman.

His wealth, virtue and afflictions.

How considerable a figure Job made in the world, both in temporal and spiritual blessings, the vastness of his stock, ^m consisting of 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 yokes of oxen, and 500 she-asses ; the largeness of his family, consisting of seven sons

* Though the learned author of the Divine Legation of Moses has taken a great deal of pains to shew, that the book of Job is certainly a dramatic composition ; that, from several allusions and similar passages, it was written under the dispensation of the law ; within a short time after the return of the Jews from their captivity, and not improbably by Ezra himself ; yet nevertheless he plainly acknowledges the real existence of this holy patriarch, and the truth of this exemplary story ; for, " It is a general practice of dramatic writers, of the serious kind, to chuse an illustrious character and well known story, in order to give the piece its due dignity and efficacy ; and therefore it by no means follows, says he, that though we allow the book of Job to be dramatical, the person and history of Job should be fictitious." Vol. II. Lib. 16. As to the time when the author of the book of Job lived, several learned men seem in a great measure to be of the same sentiment ; for thus we find them represented : " Grotius croit, que cet Auteur est postérieur a David, & a Solomon, dont il semble qu'il ait imité divers endroits, & remarque fort judicieusement, qu'il y a dans ce livre des manieres de parler, qu'on ne trouve, que dans Esdras, dans Daniel, & dans les Paraphrases Caldaïques. Cadure, dans son Commentaire sur Job, a aussi remarque plusieurs Chaldaismes dans ce Livre ; & quelques personnes savantes fourtiennent, que les Arabismes, qu'on y croit avoir remarque, ne sont que des Manieres de parler Chaldeenens. On y trouve des Imitations de divers endroits des Pseaumes, &c. Ainsi lors qu'on dira que l'Auteur de ce Livre peut avoir vécu au commencement de la captivité, on ne dira rien que ne soit assez vraisemblable, & qui ne soit conforme au Stile de cet Ouvage." Vide Sentimens de quelque Theologiens sur l'Histoire Critique. Let. 9.

‡ Ezek. xiv. 14. and James v. 11. k Job ii. 3. l Gen. xxv. 6. m Job i. 3.

sons and three daughters; and the excellency of the ⁿ character which God has been pleased to give him, is a sufficient demonstration: and yet we see, that as soon as God was pleased to submit him to the devil's assaults, what a sad catastrophe befel him. The Sabeans ran away with his asses; the Chaldeans plundered him of his camels; a fire from heaven consumed his sheep and servants; a wind overwhelmed all his children; and, while the sense of these losses lay heavy upon his spirits, his body was smitten with a sore disease; insomuch that he, who but a few hours before was the greatest man in the country, in whose presence ^o the young men were afraid to appear, and before whom the aged stood up; to whom princes paid the most awful reverence, and whom nobles in humble silence admired; divested of all honour, sits mourning on a bed of ashes, and, instead of royal apparel, is overspread with sores and ulcers. Nay, and to add, if possible, to the weight of his calamity, the wife of his bosom, from whom, more than all the world, he might expect some comfortable assistance, instead of pitying him in his deplorable condition, treats him with the utmost scorn, and reproaches him with his virtue, ^p dost thou still retain thine integrity, curse God and die.

THE misfortunes and afflictions that befel Job were so remarkable, that they spread about the neighbouring countries, and from thence to more distant regions, till at last they reached the ears of his old friends, Eliphaz the ^q Temanite, Bildad the ^r Shuhite, and Zophar the ^s Naamathite, who no sooner heard of his sad condition, but they made an appointment to go together and pay him a visit, and comfort him. The unaccountable greatness of his calamities led them into a misconception of him, and made them suppose that it must be the vindictive hand of God, either for some deep hypocrisy, or some secret enormity that fell so heavy upon him: and therefore

Eliphaz

His conferences with his friends.

ⁿ Job. i. 8. ^o Ibid. xxix. 8. ^p Job ii. 9. The ambiguity of the equivocal word in the Hebrew, which signifies to bless as well as curse, has occasioned great disagreement among interpreters, who have thereupon given a quite different construction to the words. They that make Job's wife bid him curse God and die, suppose that Job lived after the law was given, which made it [Lev. xxiv. 15, 16.] death to curse God; and that his wife (an Arabian and heathen) knowing the law, and the punishment for blasphemy, spake thus to him, not to reproach but in pity to him, that he might be delivered from his pains. But all this supposition is overthrown, if, according to the general consent, Job lived before the delivery of the law. Others therefore suppose, that since it was the devil's design to make Job curse God, he instigated his wife to persuade her husband to it, not with respect to any penal law (for that is ridiculous to imagine) but in expectation, that so open and bold a blasphemy would provoke the divine justice immediately to strike him dead, and thereby deliver him from his intolerable miseries. But however it was, it is certain, by Job's answer, that she gave him no good advice, otherwise so meek and good a man would not have given her so sharp a reproof. Howell's History of the Bible. ^q So called from Temun, grandson to Esau by his son Eliphaz. Gen. xxxvi. 10, 11. ^r Descended from Shuah, the youngest son of Abraham by Keturah, Gen. xxxv. 2. ^s His descent is not easily traced without straining, though some would derive it from Esau. Howell, *ibid.*

Eliphaz in three orations, Bildad in as many, and Zophar in two, argue from common topics that such afflictions as his could come from no hands but God's, and that it was inconsistent with the justice of God to afflict without a cause, or punish without guilt; and thereupon charging Job with being a grievous sinner, and a great hypocrite, they endeavour by all means to extort a confession from him. But Job, immoveable in his sincerity to God, and innocence to man, confidently maintains his virtue, in responsory speeches to every one of theirs; refutes their unkind suggestions, and reproves their injustice and want of charity, but always observes a submissive stile and reverence when he comes to speak of God, of whose secret end, in permitting this trial to come upon him, being ignorant, he often importunately begs a release from life, lest the continuance of his pains should drive him to impatience.

God's justifying and rewarding him.

DURING these arguments between Job and his friends, there was present a young man, named Elihu, † who having heard the debates on both sides, and disliking both their censoriousness, and Job's justification of himself, undertook to convince him, by arguments drawn from God's unlimited sovereignty, and unsearchable wisdom, that it was not inconsistent with his justice to lay his afflicting hand upon the best and most righteous of men; and that therefore, when any such thing came upon them, it was the duty of all men to bear it without murmuring, and to acknowledge the divine goodness in every dispensation. When every one had spoken what he thought proper, and there was now a general silence in the company, the Lord himself took up the matter, ‡ and out of the whirlwind directed his speech to Job; wherein, with the highest amplifications, describing his omnipotence in the formation and disposition of the works of the creation, he so effectually convinced him of his inability to understand the ways and designs of God, that, with the profoundest humility, he breaks out into this confession and acknowledgement, × Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth: once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no farther; which acknowledgement pleased God so very well, that he declared himself in favour of Job against his injurious friends; and thereupon put an end to his sufferings, and rewarded his faith and piety with a larger portion of earthly felicity than he had before, and with the prolongation of his life, beyond the common extent of those times.

S E C T.

† Job xxxii. u Ibid xxxviii. x Ibid. xl. 4, 5.

S E C T. IV.

Of MOSES, and his Miracles in EGYPT.

AFTER the death of Joseph, the sacred history informs us that ^y there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph, who was either unacquainted with the benefits the crown had received from his service, or willing, upon political accounts to overlook them, and to treat his kindred with severity. Who this king was, the silence of Moses, and the defect of prophane history has made it almost impossible for us to know; unless the passage which ^z Josephus relates out of Manethon, the Egyptian historian, may be supposed to give us any intelligence. It tells us that under the reign of Timaus, a great army, composed of a people without any name, came from the East, and made themselves masters of Egypt; slew the princes, burnt the cities, destroyed the temples, carried the women and children into captivity, and made a man of their own nation, named Salatis, king. If this piece of history has any foundation of truth, then might the new king here mentioned possibly be this Salatis; and a fear, lest the Israelites might join with the natives of Egypt, to drive out those new conquerers, might perhaps have occasioned a great many cruelties both to them and Israel.

Of the World, 2433, &c. Before Christ 1571, &c.  The king of Egypt who oppressed Israel.

A LEARNED historian of our own nation is of the opinion, that the first king of Egypt who oppressed the Israelites was Buliris, both in the time of his regency under Sesostris the younger, and when he came into the possession of the throne himself. The vast increase of the people gave him an uneasy umbrage, lest, as they had already grown too numerous for one province to contain, they might in process of time elbow him out of his kingdom; and ^b a report (which was current in those days) that, in a short space, a child would be born among the Hebrews, whose virtue would be admired by all the world; who would raise the honour of his own nation; depress that of Egypt; and make his name and renown immortal, might be another inducement to use them cruelly, and make their lives bitter with hard bondage. Making of mortar and brick, and other rural labours, ^c making dikes and banks to stop the waters of the Nile, digging of canals and aqueducts to water the land, ^d building of forts, and ^e erecting of pyramids; these, and many more principal tasks were perpetually imposed upon them,

The manner of their oppression.

^y Exod. i. 8. ^z Contra Appian. Lib. I. c. 5. ^a Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World, p. 204. ^b Joseph. Antiq. Lib. II. c. 5. ^c Ibid. ^d Exod. i. 11.

^e The pyramids are vast piles of building, raised by the king's of Egypt, in testimony of their grandeur and magnificence, and to be the repositories of their bodies when dead. There are three now standing, not far from the place where Memphis formerly was situate, the largest of which is deservedly reckoned

Moses at
that time
born.

them, in order to impoverish their spirits, and infeeble their bodies. But when, through the blessing of God, the people rather grew than were diminished under these oppressions, effectual measures were taken at last, to bring about their utter extirpation; and in pursuance of these, an edict was put forth, that every son that was born unto them should be cast into the river. Under these unhappy circumstances Moses was born; by the cruelty of his prince destined to immediate death, but by the decrees of God reserved to be the glorious instrument who was to execute his all-wise purposes. All the care that could be taken by a tender mother of a loving child, was taken by the mother of Moses for his preservation; when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months: but it seems the enemy was as vigilant for his ruin, as his parents could be for his safety, and therefore the concealment of him was now no longer practicable. To God's providence therefore they commit him; and putting him into an ark, laid him in the flags by the river's brink. By an happy train of events, Pharaoh's daughter comes at that very time to that very place: she spies the ark; sends one of her retinue to fetch it; opens it; sees the child weeping; has compassion on it; discovers it to be one of the Hebrew children; sends for a nurse of the Hebrew women to nurse it, who happens to be it's own mother, and to whom she delivers it, with a charge to take care of it, and to bring it up at her expence.

His child-
hood.

THE sacred history leaves a great gap in the life of Moses; only it acquaints us that when the child grew, his mother brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, who made him her own son, and called his name Moses; whereupon Josephus tells

us

reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world. It is an exact square at the bottom; every square 704 feet in length; ascended by 210 (some say more) great stone steps, most of them above three foot high, and of a breadth proportionable. Its height is 616 feet, by degrees growing narrower and narrower till you come to the top, where there is a fine platform (consisting of ten or twelve great stones, each of sixteen or seventeen feet square) from whence you have a pleasant prospect of old Cairo, and the adjacent country. This pyramid (as the inhabitants of the country say) was built for the sepulchre of a king that was never buried in it, and the common opinion is, that the said king was that Pharaoh, who, by the just judgment of God, was drowned with all his army in the Red Sea. The curious that are desirous to know the inside of this vast structure, the chamber of the tombs, and the surprising ascent to it, &c. had best consult Thevenot's Voyage de Levant, or Le Bruyn, upon the subject. I shall only add from Pliny, that this pyramid was twenty years a building, though 370,000 men were every day employed in the work, and 1800 talents expended upon them, merely in radishes and onions.

f Exod. i. 22. g Ibid. ii. 2. h Ibid. ver. 3. i Josephus, and from him Philo, calls this royal princess Thermutis; and adds, that she was the king's only daughter and heir; and that having been some time married without any child, she pretended to be delivered of Moses, and owned him for her son, but it looks much more likely, that he came to be called her son, by way of adoption, as we said elsewhere, Vol. I. p. 39. k Exod. ii. 5, 6. l Ibid. ver. 10. m This name seems to be derived from the Hebrew word *Masbal*, which is never used in the Bible but for drawing out of the water; but some will have

it

us this story, that when Moses was three years old, Thermutis bringing him to her father one day, who took him in his arms, and put his diadem upon his head, the child pulled it off, threw it on the ground, and trampled it under his feet : and it is not improbable that the apostle might have some regard to this very action, when he says, that ^a Moses, when he came to years (intimating that he did not only trample upon the diadem of Pharaoh when he was a child, but when he was come to years, and was capable of judging better of those things) refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season.

THERE is no doubt to be made, but that in his minority, all the care was taken of his education ; but whether he made all the advancement in learning ^o as is pretended ; whether he was that complete poet, and excellent orator, as some would have him ; it is certain that he was an incomparable historian, and not unlikely, that he was very well versed in astronomy, at that time one of the most cultivated sciences in Egypt. His command of Pharaoh's army in his more advanced years, his exploits against the Ethiopians, ^p retaking the cities which Egypt had lost, penetrating into the enemy's country, and even reducing their very capital ; ^q together with his marriage to Tharbis, the king of Ethiopia's daughter, favour a little of the romantic, though they give us some reason to infer ^r that his name and several passages of his life (mixed as they are with some fables) were not only known to other nations, but by them highly admired and magnified.

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it compounded of *Mos*, which in the Egyptian tongue signifies water, and *hufes*, which signifies saved, because they think it not so very likely that this princess should give her adopted son a name that was derived from any other language but her own. The word *Misbal* however (from whence the name most naturally flows, and to which she herself said she had respect) might have the same signification in her language that it had in Hebrew ; there being a great affinity between the two tongues. Clem. Alexandrinus tells us, that the name he had given him by his parents, at his circumcision, was Joachim. Patrick's Commentary. ^p Heb. xi. 24, 25. ^o See the testimonies of Eupolemus and others related by Clem. Alex. Stron. Lib. I. ^p Joseph. Antiq. Lib. II. c. 5. and Philo, de Vita Moses, Lib. I.

^q This story is dressed up in a very gallant manner: Tharbis, daughter of this Ethiopian king, sees from the walls of the city, where she was besieged, this brave warrior doing actions more than human: she finds herself wounded with a dart different from those which flew from his arm; and being unable any longer to conceal her passion, she declares it to him who was the author of it: he, like a generous lover, makes a suitable return, and at last marries this Ethiopian princess; but because she opposed his return into Egypt, he who was well skilled in astronomy, causes two images to be engraven upon two precious stones, the one of which increased memory, and the other caused forgetfulness. These he set in two rings, giving that of oblivion to his wife; which after she had wore for some time, she began to neglect the love she had to her husband, and so he without danger returned into Egypt. Josephus and Eusebius tell this story out of Artapanus.

^r Patrick's Commentary.

Moses kills
the Egyptian,
how
justified.

* WHEN he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel; and seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian. The Egyptian † whom Moses slew was, we will suppose, one of those talk-masters whom Pharaoh had set over the children of Israel, and he falling upon the poor Hebrew in a most violent manner, beat him till he had almost killed him for not doing his work so fast as he would have had him: nay, supposing it true that Moses (according to the Jewish tradition) did not kill him with a sword, or any other weapon, but merely by the word of his mouth, pronouncing him dead, in the name of God; yet even thus he could not have justified the fact, had he not been moved and animated thereunto by a divine impulse, or invested before it happened (as † St Stephen's comment upon the place gives us occasion to think he was so invested) with the title and office of Deliverer of the People of God.

His manner
of life
in Midian.

BUT the time for their deliverance was not yet come: and therefore Moses having reason to apprehend that it would not be long before his killing the Egyptian would reach Pharaoh's ear, † thought it the safest way to withdraw into Arabia Petræa, and there wait until he had a farther commission from God. In this place he † providentially fell into the acquaintance of Jethro, a prince or governor of a province in Midian, with whom he contracted an intimacy, married his daughter, and served him in the capacity of a shepherd for forty years. It was here very probably † that in the leisure hours (whereof that kind of life afforded him plenty) he gave himself up to contemplation, and to perfect that knowledge which he had laid the foundation of in his youth. It was here very probably † that he composed some of those admirable books which he has transmitted to the church, † the book of Genesis, and that of Job,

s Acts vii. 23, 34. † Philo de Vita Mosis, Lib. I. Some of the Jewish doctors tell us that this Egyptian, whom Moses killed, had broken into the Hebrew's house, bound him, and ravished his wife, and was now going to murder him; but this looks too like a tale: nor is there much more probability in his slaying him with a word of his mouth; for then there would have been no need for his cautious looking about him, before he gave him his death's blow, or hiding him in the sand, after he was dead. Whether the Egyptian had almost killed the Jew, and that Moses could no other way than by force keep him off: or whether he might not attack even Moses himself, and force him to kill him in his own defence, are considerations that make a mighty alteration in the case. Patrick's Commentary, and Howell's History of the Bible. u Acts vii. 25. x Notwithstanding the flight of Moses is plainly affirmed, yet so fond are the Jews of their own conceits, and so bold in their inventions, that they say he was not only condemned to have his head cut off, but actually brought to suffer; but that when the executioner came to do his office, Moses's neck was, by a miracle, turned into a pilaster of marble, so that the sword would not enter, as the story is told by the author of Moses's life. Patrick's Commentary. y Exod. ii. z Saurin's Dissertations. a Sir Walter Raleigh, p. 211 from Pererius.

† Whether Moses wrote these books or no, it is certain that the matters treated

Job, as some imagine, that by the example of a patient man, he might strengthen the oppressed Hebrews, and by the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, give them assurance of their deliverance from Egyptian slavery; and it was most certainly here ^b that God appeared to him in the burning bush; gave him full power and authority to go and release the children of Israel from their slavery in Egypt, joined his brother Aaron with him in the commission, and prescribed them instructions how they were to proceed in that important affair. And with this epocha the theocracy of the Jews, ^c or God's visible government of that people, in like manner as other kings govern their subjects, and his appointment of Moses to be his deputy and viceroy over them, most properly did commence.

God had hitherto suffered his people to be oppressed with hard labour and cruel bondage, ^d in order to keep up a distinction between them and the Egyptians, which a friendly usage might have possibly destroyed; to cure them of their proneness to idolatry, by making oppression an incitement to their hatred of the gods, as much as the task-masters of the country; and by the hardships they suffered, to make them more willing to leave it whenever he should send them an order to depart. But now he thought it fit time to declare in favour of them, and accordingly sent his two ambassadors, Moses and Aaron, to demand of the king of Egypt the release of his people Israel, and, in case of his refusal, gave them power and authority to inflict upon the land many terrible plagues, until they compelled him to comply. ^e The ambassadors at first took all the measures that prudence suggested, not to provoke, but mollify the prince. They told him that the God of their fathers had appeared unto them, and required them to hold a solemn fast, and perform a course of religious worship in a certain place he had appointed them: they therefore asked leave for the Israelites to go three days journey into the wilderness, to offer unto God such sacrifices as would be an offence to the Egyptians, in case they were offered there; and they pretended to fear, that if they should neglect giving God this proof of their obedience,

The sufferings of the Israelites, why permitted.

Moses and Aaron's speech to Pharaoh.

treated in both, were very proper to be laid before the Israelites at this juncture. For, in one of them, they might have a full and clear view of the history of the world, so far as they were concerned in it; of the creation of mankind, of their own origin, and of the promises which God made to their fathers; so that it would give them the best account of their condition and expectations: and in the other they might see a very instructive pattern of patience and resignation to the will of God, in the life of a virtuous person, led, from a great share of worldly prosperity, into the most afflicting circumstances, and, after a due course of trial, brought back again to greater prosperity than ever. A subject very proper to be set before them in this time of their distress, that thereby they might be instructed to possess their souls in patience, until God in his great wisdom, should think proper to put a period to their troubles. Sluckford's Connection, Vol. II. Lib. IX.

^b Exod. iii. ^c Patrick's Commentary. ^d Sherlock of Providence. ^e Exod. v.

The
plagues
enum-
erated.

dience, he would chastise them with such plagues as might possibly be fatal to Egypt itself. With these, and such like arguments, they endeavoured to work upon Pharaoh; but when nothing of this nature would avail, they betook themselves to the other method that they were directed to, in order to force his consent. Ten judgments successively they brought upon the land: the first was a ^a change of the water into blood; the second, ^b a prodigious number of frogs; the third, ⁱ of lice; the fourth, ^k of flies; the fifth, a murrain, which destroyed all the cattle; the sixth, ulcers, both in men and beasts; the seventh, hail, which spoiled the fruits of the ground; the eighth, ^l locusts, which devoured what the hail had left; the ninth, darkness, which covered all the land; and the tenth, the slaughter and general destruction of their first-born. How Pharaoh's obstinacy and perverseness could be proof against these scourges (which affected the Egyptians only, but did the Israelites no harm) we have the less reason to admire, in that the holy scripture has told us, that some of these miracles his magicians imitated, and in others, God hardened him against conviction: but how either of these could be done, with the preservation of God's honour and goodness, is a matter of some inquiry among divines.

The Egyptian magicians, who.

1. WHO the magicians were that opposed Moses and Aaron in working their miracles, our sacred historian makes no mention;

^g This plague was the more remarkable, because, as Theodoret observes upon it, as they had drowned the Hebrew children in the river, God now punished them for it, by giving them bloody water to drink; according to the observation of the wise man, instead of a fountain of running water, their enemies were troubled with corrupt blood, which was to rebuke the commandment of killing the children, Wisd. xi. 6. ^h The river Nile naturally produces frogs, but so great an abundance appearing on a sudden, filling the country, and leaving the rivers and fields, to go into the cities and houses, made the thing miraculous. ⁱ Some would have the word [*Cinnim*] which we render Lice, to signify gnats. The Septuagint calls it *Knipes*, but what kind of creature it was is not certainly known. It seems more probable that it was some new sort of animal, called analogically by an old known name, and this might be some reason why the magicians could not counterfeit this miracle, because such creatures were not to be got; at least it is as good as the fancy of the Jews, that dæmons have no power over creatures so small as lice. Patrick's Commentary and Howell's History of the Bible. ^k The word [*Arôb*] which we render fly in general, is by the Septuagint called *kanomuis*, i. e. dog-fly, from its biting; for it fastens its teeth so deep in the flesh, and sticks so very close, that it oftentimes makes cattle run mad. Patrick's Commentary. ^l This is the creature which we properly call a grasshopper: and wonderful is the account which authors have given us of the armies of those creatures, and the order and regularity of their march; viz. That in the year of our Lord 853, an infinite number of these creatures were seen to fly over twenty miles in Germany in one day, in manner of a formed army, divided into several squadrons, and having their quarters apart when they rested; that the captains marched a day's journey from the rest, to chuse the most opportune places for their camp; that they never removed till sun-rising, at which time they went away in as much order as an army of men could do; that, at last, having done great mischief wheresoever they passed, (after prayers were made to God) they were driven by a violent wind into the Belgic-ocean, and there drowned; but being cast again by the sea upon the shore, they covered 140 acres of land, at a time, and caused a great pestilence in the country. Howell's History of the Bible.

tion; but several, both ^m Jewish and ⁿ heathen authors (from whom ^o St Paul, without doubt, borrowed their names) have informed us, that, among the Egyptians they were called Janes and Jambres, which, to give them a Latin termination, would be Johannes and Ambrosius, of whom Numenius (as he is quoted ^p by Eusebius) has given us this remarkable account, viz. that they were the scribes of religious matters among the Egyptians; that they flourished in Egypt at the time when the Jews were driven from thence, and did not give place to any body in the science of magical secrets. They were chosen unanimously by all Egypt, to oppose Museus, a leader of the Jews, and whose prayers were very prevalent with his God.

Now, in order to form a right notion both of the profession and abilities of these men, we must be careful to observe that magic is properly of three kinds, natural, artificial, and diabolical. ^q The first of these is no other than natural philosophy, but highly improved and advanced; whereby the person that is well skilled in the power and operation of natural bodies, is able to produce many wonderful effects, mistaken by the illiterate for diabolical performances, but such as lie perfectly within the verge of nature. Artificial magic is what we call Legerdemain, or slight of hand, and whose effects are far from being what they seem: they are deceptions and impostures, the merry tricks of jugglers (as we corrupt the word *joculatores*) far from exceeding the power of art, and yet what many times pass with the vulgar for diabolical too. Diabolical magic is that which is done by the help of the devil, who having great skill in natural causes, and a large command over the air and other elements, may assist those that are in league and covenant with him (in scripture called wizards, forcerers, diviners, enchanter, Chaldeans, and such as had familiar spirits) to do many strange and astonishing things. To deny that there ever were such men as these, is to slight the authority of all history; and to guess at the ^r probable rise and original of them, we may suppose it to be this, — that God, being pleased to admit the holy patriarchs into familiar conferences with him, the devil endeavoured to do the same; and, to retain men in their obedience to him, pretended to make discoveries of secret things, and that when God was pleased to work miracles for the confirmation of the truth, he in like manner directed those that were familiar with him how to invoke his help, for the performance of such strange things as might confirm the world in their error.

Different kinds of magic.

The original of them.

UNDER which of the denominations, natural, artificial, or diabolical, the magicians who set themselves in opposition to the servants of the most high God are to be ranked, we have no instructions,

^m Vide Talmud Babil. Tit. Menachos, c. 9. ⁿ Orig. contra Cels. Lib. IV. et Plin. Hist. Lib. XXX. c. 1. ^o 2 Tim. iii. 8. ^p Præp. Lib. IX. c. 8. ^q Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. ^r Patrick's Commentary.

The devil's
power.

How the
magicians
might do
what they
did.

structions from scripture; but it seems highly probable, that, neither would Pharaoh have called together those of the least capacity and repute, neither would the devil (as far as his power extended) have been backward to assist his votaries upon such a solemn and momentous an occasion as this. † Now there are two ways wherein the devil (as is agreed on all hands) may be supposed assistant to those that pretend to work miracles. The first is, by raising false images and appearances of things, which he may do either by affecting the brain, or confusing the optic nerves, or altering the medium which is between us and the object. ‡ That he did some such thing as this to our blessed Saviour, when from the top of an high mountain he pretended to shew him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them in a moment of time, is very plain from the convexity of the earth which bounds the horizon, and admits of no such unlimited prospect; so that all he could be presumed capable of doing in this case (and our Saviour was not insensible what he did do) was to make fictitious representations of gay and magnificent things in the air. Secondly, the other way wherein the devil may be supposed to be assistant to these forcerers, is § by making use of the laws of nature, in producing effects that are not above the natural power of things, though they certainly exceed what man can do. Thus to transport a body with inconceivable rapidity from one place to another; to bring together different productions of nature which separately have no visible effect, but, when united, work wonders; to make images move, walk, speak, and the like; these may come within the compass of the devil's power, because not transcending the laws of nature, though we cannot discern by what means they are effected. Nay thirdly, if we go a step farther, and ¶ with some learned men suppose that under the Almighty's permission, wicked spirits have power to work real miracles (and for this we have some intimations † in scripture, and in the nature of things no reason to the contrary) which of these suppositions soever we take, it will be no hard matter to account for the things which the magicians did, and, at the same time, distinguish them from the miracles which Moses wrought. For if we suppose a real power in the devil, the thing is done at once, without any sham or imposture; but if we deny him this power, our solution will then be this,—that a false medium might, through the whole scene, impose upon the spectators; the rods might be nimbly moved off, serpents and frogs introduced in a trice, and by a small injection of some other liquid, water converted into the colour and consistence of blood. Innumerable evil spirits might attend

† Saurin's Dissertations. ‡ Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. § Saurin, *ibid.* ¶ Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacre. p. 236. Le Clerc's Commentary on Exod. vii. † Deut. xiii. 1, &c. Matth. xxiv. 24. † 2 Thef. ii. 9. where Grotius makes this remark, Non sunt miracula falsa, sed quæ falsa doctrinæ serviunt. Le Clerc's Dissertations.

attend on this occasion, and every one have his appointed office ; especially if the wizards made use of the common rites and incantations, which might be of excellent service to give them an opportunity for trick and collusion.

^a A LEARNED author has given us another solution of this difficulty.—He lays it down as a position, that though no knowledge of the powers of nature, or study of occult sciences, can enable a man to work such wonders as were performed before Pharaoh ; yet, from what appears in the sacred history, the miracles which the magicians did, in producing serpents and frogs, and in turning water into blood, were as true and real performances as those which Moses did ; but then the question is, by what power or assistance did they do them ? They themselves could never think, that by all their arts and incantations, they should be able to perform such works as Moses and Aaron had done ; but, as the king's command was urgent, they were obliged to make the experiment, and God was pleased in some instances to give an unexpected success to their endeavours, in order to serve and carry on his own designs : just as he permitted the pythoness of Endor, ^b contrary to her own intention to raise up the ghost of Samuel, not by any power of her incantments, but by his own direction and appointment, to upbraid and rebuke Saul.

HOWEVER this be, and whether a divine or diabolical power interposed in this affair, the wisdom of God is not a little manifest in permitting these forcerers to proceed some time in their conflict with his servants, which added disgrace to the one's defeat, as it did no small glory to the other's conquest. ^c They turned their rods indeed into serpents, but these serpents were devoured by that which Moses and Aaron produced : some things they did, either in fact or appearance, such as Moses and Aaron did, but then these were things wherein art and fallacy might have some share. The storm and hail, thunder and lightning, and thick darkness, they never pretended to imitate ; nay, they themselves were involved in the same diseases which Moses and Aaron sent among the Egyptians : they were forced to acknowledge ^d the finger of God, and do homage to that supreme power by which Moses and Aaron acted ; and therefore the observation which the author of the book of Wisdom makes is both true, and severe upon them at once ; ^e As for the illusions of art magic, they were put down, and their vaunting in wisdom was reproved with disgrace ; for they that promised to drive away terrors and troubles from a sick soul, were sick themselves of fear, worthy to be laughed at.

2. THE other hindrance to Pharaoh's conviction upon the sight of these superior miracles of Moses, we may presume was the

And why God permitted them.

How Pharaoh's hardness might be occasioned.

^a Shuckford's Connection of sacred and profane history, Vol. II. Lib. IX. ^b 1 Sam. xxviii. 12. ^c Saurin's Dissertations, ^d Exod. viii. 19. ^e Wisd. xvii. 7, 8.

the hardness of his heart ; but whether this hardness was of God's infliction, or his own contraction, is the question. And here, besides the ordinary solutions given in this case, viz. that whatever God does in regard to the obduration of a sinner, he cannot but act after such a manner as is always wise, always just, always agreeable to the greatness of his perfections, and the rules of that order which he never departs from ; that in the heart of man there are springs of wickedness enough to produce such an obduration, without any need of supposing an immediate action from God ; and that perhaps the bare withdrawing the necessary assistances for the practice of virtue, may be enough to plunge any man into the greatest crimes : besides these solutions, I say, we may observe, ^f that not only in the Hebrew, but in most other languages, the occasion of an action, and what in itself has no power to produce it, is very often put for the efficient cause thereof. Thus, in the case before us, God sends Moses to Pharaoh, and Moses in his presence does such miraculous works as would have had an effect upon any other : but, because the Israelites were numerous, and serviceable slaves, and a terrible shock and diminution of his wealth and grandeur it would be to think of parting with them ; because some of the miracles which Moses did, he saw imitated by his own magicians ; and because the plagues which God sent, came gradually upon him, and, by the intercession of Moses, were constantly removed ; he thence took occasion, instead of being softened by this alternative of mercy and judgment, to become more fallen and unrelenting. When Pharaoh (as the text tells us) saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunder were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart : the mercy of God, which should have led him to repentance, had a contrary influence upon him, and made him more obstinate ; but all this while God had no farther hand in his obduration than as he was too kind and indulgent to him. God's clemency was, in some measure, the occasion of Pharaoh's hardness, but the true cause of it was in himself, and proceeded from his abuse of that clemency.

BUT, to go a step farther, I cannot see why we may not adventure to affirm ^g that God might, consistently with his sacred attributes, suffer this obdurateness to come upon Pharaoh as a consequence, or even inflict it as a punishment of the many crimes which he voluntarily incurred, and obstinately persisted in before. To exemplify this by some parallel instances, in the xxii. chapter of the first Book of Kings, the prophet relates a very strange vision : ^h I saw the Lord sitting upon 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,

Ahab's
case.

^f Le Clerc's Commentary on Exod. iv. ^g Saurin's Dissertations. h 1 King's, xxii. 19, &c.

Ahab, that he may go and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said 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, Where-with? And he said, I will go forth, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets: and he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; go forth and do so. This is somewhat odd and singular: from the throne of the Lord, founded upon truth and righteousness, and from whence proceeded laws of justice and equity, designed to establish good order in the world, come forth commands to lead a man into an error, that thereby he may fall into a snare; and from among the heavenly host of cour-tiers belonging to the Lord of the universe, all of them ready to fly at his word, all of them burning with the love, all of them animated with a spirit of imitating his perfections; out of this heavenly host, I say, comes forth a spirit, who undertakes (if with reverence we may use the expression) to inspire all the prophets of the king of Israel with a lie. But who was this Ahab, this king of Israel? Was he a man, who for the main of his life set the fear of God before his eyes; No, on the contrary, he was one of the most wicked kings that ever possessed the throne of Israel. A base and treacherous man, who abandoned himself to the councils and instigations of a proud and barbarous woman; an idolater, who was the first that in Samaria built altars unto Baal; an hypocrite, who humbled himself before God, when he apprehended his approaching wrath, and insolently raised his head, when the storm was over-past; an insatiable lover of blood, who had slain a great number of the Lord's prophets, and was then seeking after Elijah's life to destroy it; and an insatiable lover of unjust wealth, who could not be easy until he had added a poor man's vineyard to his immense possessions, and, to compass this end, slew the innocent owner of it by a false accusation. This was a man whom God ordered a spirit to deceive: and if it be demanded who this spirit was, the Jews have a notion very singular upon this occasion. They tell us that it was the soul of Naboth the Jese-reelite; but we should do them injury to take that in a literal sense which is capable of a very good meaning. The soul of Naboth, the innocent blood which Ahab shed, the altars of Baal, the murder of the prophets, his real wickedness, and counterfeit devotions, these were the spirits sent from God to mislead him; these were the fatal causes of his blindness, and of that impenitent and hardened state into which God permitted him to fall.

To apply this now to the case of Pharaoh. Whoever this king of Egypt might be, it is certain that his intolerable tyranny over the poor Israelites, and devoting himself to wicked and abominable arts, were far from being indications of a good man.

Pharaoh's
self only
blameable.

Before God ever is said to harden his heart, five times did he inflict, and as oft remove his chastisements, and twice it is said expressly that he sent for Moses and relented; but still, upon the removal of every plague, relapsed. His covetousness, and great advantage he made of the Israelites slavery, would not suffer him to think of releasing them in earnest. The magicians, perhaps, at first, were accessory to his obstinacy: they might persuade him that Moses, for the present, had found out a secret, yet it would come to their turn at last to vie miracles, if not get the better of him; or very likely himself might fondly imagine that God might in time grow weary, or his store-house of plagues become exhausted. Whatever might contribute to his obduration, it is plain, that even when * the magicians owned a divine power in what they saw done, and were quite confounded; when they perceived themselves smitten, and not able to stand before Moses because of the boils, and might thereupon very likely persuade him to a surrender, he is so far from relenting, that he does not so much as ask a removal of the plague. And therefore it was intirely agreeable to the rules of divine justice, when nothing would reclaim this wicked king, when even that which wrought upon the ministers of Satan made no impression upon him, to let his crime become his punishment, and to leave him to eat the bitter fruit of his own ways, and to be filled with his own devices.

S E C T. V.

Of the P A S S O V E R, and the Israelites leaving Egypt.

Of the
World,
2513, &c.
Before
Christ
1491, &c.
The pas-
sover,
what.

BEFORE God thought fit to give the great decisive blow to Egypt, which was to bring about the deliverance of his people, he established a memorial thereof, which was to continue until the coming of the Messiah should put an end to the old œconomy, and call off mens attention to a greater and more remarkable deliverance. This memorial, from the Hebrew word *Pesach*, is called the ^m Passover; because the angel, which slew the first-born of the Egyptians, passed over the houses of the Israelites, when he saw the blood of the lamb which was that day slain: and the manner of its institution was this.—On the tenth day of the month ⁿ Nisan (which answers our

ⁱ Exod. viii 8, and 25. ^k Ibid. ver. 19. ^l Exod. ix 11. ^m The word *passover* was likewise applied to the Lamb, which was offered in remembrance of this deliverance; to the other sacrifices which accompanied this Lamb, and were offered with it at the feast of unleavened bread; as it was likewise made to signify the whole term of that feast, but more especially the second day thereof, which was the fifteenth of the month. Lewis's Antiquities, and De Beaufobre's Introduction. ⁿ The names of the Jewish months are, 1. Nisan or Abib, which in some measure answers our March; 2. Jyar, our April; 3. Sivan, our May; 4. Samus, our June; 5. Ab, our July; 6. Elul, our August; 7. Tifri, our September; 8. Marchesvan, our October; 9. Cisleu, our November; 10. Tebeth, our

our March) every family of Israel (or if the family was too little, two neighbouring families joined together) was to take a male lamb, or kid (for the original words signify either) under a year old, and without blemish, and shut it up till the fourteenth, when it was to be killed ^o in the evening. They were then to take a bunch of hyssop, and dipping it in the blood, were ^p to strike it upon the two side-posts, and the upper door-posts of every house where they did eat it, and so not stir out until next morning. This lamb was to be dressed whole, not a bone of it was to be broken; it was to be roasted with fire; ate all at once with bread and bitter herbs; and if any part of it was left, it was to be burnt with fire: the habit, lastly, and posture in which it was to be ate, was with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staves in their hands, in the manner of travellers.

SOME are of opinion that a good many of these particulars were instituted purely in opposition to those impious rites which then prevailed, or in a short time were to prevail among the Egyptians and other nations where the Israelites were to dwell. Thus they tell us, ^q “ That God appointed a lamb to be slain and eaten, and the month Nisan, or March, to be the particular time of eating it, in contempt of the Egyptians, who, at that time, when the sun first entered into Aries, began their solemn worship and adoration of this creature, and that celestial sign: that he forbade the people to eat the flesh of the Paschal Lamb raw or sodden, to break its bones, or leave any fragments of it; because, in the profane feasts of Bacchus, it was a custom to eat the raw flesh of the victims they offered to that god, and to break all their bones; and in the adoration of the *hoorai*, whom the Egyptians (and from them the Athenians) reputed goddesses, they boiled all their sacrifices, and carried constantly some part of them home, as a good preservative against misfortunes.” Thus they oppose all the rites and ordinances of the passover to the superstition of heathen idolatry. But there is not that need, I think, for such elaborate explications; when, considering the situation the Israelites were then in, sorely oppressed by the Egyptians, but shortly to be released, and sent away with all speed and precipitation,

Its rites
not in op-
position to
heathen
idolatry.

our December; 11. Shevet, our January; and 12. Adar, our February. But it must be observed that the Jewish months being lunar, cannot exactly answer ours. Lamy's Introduction. ^o The Hebrew words are between the two evenings, the first of which began upon the sun's decline from its noon-day point, and lasted till sun-set, and then began the second, and lasted till night; accordingly Josephus tells us that the Paschal Lamb was slain between the ninth hour, *i. e.* our three in the afternoon, and the eleventh, our five. Patrick's Commentary, and De Beaufobre's Introduction. ^p This striking or sprinkling of the blood upon the posts, seems to have been peculiar to the first passover at their going out of Egypt, and not to have been used in after-ages, when there was not the same occasion for it. ^q Vide Spencer de Ritib. Heb. Tern. I. L. 2. c. 4.

pitiation, the nature and quality of the paschal sacrifice, as well as the manner of dressing, and manner of eating it, may, with other appendent circumstances, very pertinently be accounted for. † It was to be a male, because a more excellent species than the female; without blemish, to render it acceptable to God; under a year old, otherwise it could not properly be called a lamb; and set apart from the rest of the flock, that it might be in readiness when the people came in haste to offer it. Roasted it was to be, and not boiled, because roasting was the speedier way of dressing it; but roasted thoroughly, because the whole was to be eaten; and the whole was to be eaten, that none might be left for the Egyptians to profane. It was to be eaten standing and in haste, and with other circumstances of men every moment expecting to begin their journey; with bitter herbs, to put them in mind of their cruel servitude; and unleavened bread, in memory of their deliverance from it so suddenly, that they had not even time to leaven the bread for their journey. This is all that the Israelites understood, and perhaps all that God at that time intended they should understand, by the direction he gave them concerning this remarkable ordinance: but the christian doctrine does more than intimate, that God himself had all along a mystical meaning in each particular, not so much in opposition to heathen superstition, as in conformity to the death of his Son; for which reason, we find the apostles, in their writings, running the parallel between the Jewish and Christian passover in such terms as these: † Christ our passover, † a lamb without blemish, and without spot, is sacrificed for us; the very same day that the Jews ate the paschal lamb, made he his life an offering for the world, † by the sprinkling of whose blood, † we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins; † therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

its literal,
and mystical
meaning.

its modern
way of cele-
bration.

THIS was the passover which the children of Israel celebrated the night before they left Egypt; and this was the intent both literal and typical of the rites and ceremonies which God then appointed to go along with it. But the Jews afterwards made considerable alterations: they omitted some things, and added others, and carried the observation of it to such a degree of superstition, as was inconsistent with its first institution. † Two or three days before the feast began, they cleaned all the vessels and other furniture of their houses. Such as were too big to be dipped in water, they sprinkled and washed all over; and such as were able to bear the fire, they purified that way. † When the evening of the fourteenth day was come, they lighted wax-tapers, and, before they went to search whether there

† Patrick's Commentary. s 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. t 1 Pet. i. 19. n Ibid. ver. 2. and Heb. xii. 24. x Eph. i. 7. y 1 Cor. v. 8. z Saurin's Dissertations, a Lewis's Antiquities of the Jewish Republic.

there was any leaven in the house, the master of the family made this short ejaculation ; Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, the everlasting king, who has sanctified us by thy commands, and enjoined us to put away leaven from among us. All the domestics, except the women, joined in the search : they ransacked every hole and corner, not only in the dwelling-house, but even in the barns and stables ; and after the search was ended, the master made this denunciation : All the leaven that is in mine house, what I have seen, and what I have not seen, be it null, and like the dust of the earth. Nay, so very scrupulous were they in this respect, that for the whole seven days that the feast lasted, ^b they would not so much as name the word leaven, for fear of polluting their minds with the idea of bread.

BEFORE the passover was slain, ^c they first agreed and concluded upon the company that was to eat it, which was sometimes more, and sometimes less, in proportion to their eating ; for at this time there was no distinction ; for men, women, and children, masters and servants (if circumcised) were all entertained at the same table. The manner of eating the Egyptian passover was in a travelling posture, leaning on their staves, and standing all the while ; but, in process of time, this came to be altered into what we call discumbancy, when all the guests lean on their left arms, upon beds round the table ; ^d a fit emblem (as they pretend) of that rest and freedom, which God had vouchsafed the children of Israel. When the guests were thus placed round the table, the master of the family, or some other person of note, took a cup of wine and water ; and, after he had given thanks, Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast created the fruit of the vine, he drank it, and gave one round to the company, who were all obliged to drink of it. After this, they ate of the bitter herbs, and unleavened bread, which they dipped in ^e a thick sauce, made of sweet and four things pounded and mingled together, in memory of the clay wherein their forefathers laboured in the land of Egypt. Hereupon the master of the family drank another cup, which was accompanied with several thanksgivings ; and then they began to eat of the flesh of the paschal lamb, and drank a third cup, which was called the Cup of Blessing, because the blessing, or grace after meat, was said over it ; and so the whole ceremony concluded with the fourth cup, commonly called the Cup of Hallel, because ^f some select psalms were sung over it ; and then the master of the family, or whoever rehearsed the office of the passover, discontinued

^bLamy's Introduction. ^cLewis's Antiquities. ^dDe Beaufobre's Introduction. ^eThis sauce was not appointed by God, nor had it any foundation in the law of Moses. Lewis, *ibid.* ^fThe psalms that were sung upon this occasion were CXIII. and CXIV. which began to be sung over the second cup ; and the CXVI. CXVII. or CXXXVI. which were sung over the fourth ; which last singing was called Hallel, or Praise. The reader that is desirous to know more upon this subject, may consult at his leisure, Lamy's Treatise of the Passover, or Mr Lewis's Antiquities of the Jewish Republic.

dismissed the company with a blessing. Thus was this solemnity celebrated in the latter times of the Jewish republic, when innovations had crept in, and several rites foreign to the primitive institution were introduced.

BUT to return to the Israelites. While they were employed in eating the passover, and in expectation of the event; the Lord, at mid-night, smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on the throne, to the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle, so that there was a great cry in all Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

NOTHING surely can be more amazing to the imagination than such a dreadful spectacle as this; and therefore we need not wonder that the Egyptians should be so importunate with the Israelites, even before the morning-dawn appeared, to depart out of their country. The fate of those that had perished, made every one tremble for himself; but why the Israelites should take the advantage of their fears and consternation, to spoil and plunder them, is a question that admits of some dispute. The word which our translators have rendered *borrow*, is *Shaal*, which does not signify to borrow, but to ask one to give, by virtue of which interpretation, the Israelites are cleared from the censure of all injustice and wrong, because what was freely given them, they had doubtless a right to retain. And accordingly, we find Josephus representing this fact agreeably to the true sense of the sacred text, when he tells us, "that the Egyptians made the Hebrews considerable presents; some to induce them to be gone the sooner, and others in token of the acquaintance they had had with them." But, even if the word signifies to borrow only, it is a truth allowed on all hands, that God, who is the supreme Lord of all things, may, when he pleases, and in what manner he pleases, transfer the right of men from one to another. Considering then, that God was now become the king of the Israelites in a proper and peculiar manner, and considering withal, what insufferable wrongs the king and people of Egypt had done to this people

Why the
Israelites
spoiled the
Egyptians.

of
g Exod. xii. 29, 30. h It is no improbable conjecture, that the solemn feast among the Egyptians, wherein they went about with candles in the night in search of Osiris with tears and great lamentations, took its original from Pharaoh's rising up out of his bed at midnight, and all the Egyptians with him; who lighted candles, and finding their children dead, bewailed them with loud cries; nor is it unreasonable to think that Pharaoh's eldest son, who was now slain, had the name of Osiris, whose sudden death by this stroke was, every year, in one night universally lamented. Patrick's Commentary. i Antiqu. Jud. Lib. II. Cap. XIV. k In the Gemara of the Sanhedrim, there is told a memorable story concerning this transaction. In the time of Alexander the Great, the Egyptians brought an action against the Israelites, desiring they might have the land of Canaan, in satisfaction for all they had borrowed of them, when they went out of Egypt. To which Gibeah Ben Kofani, who was advocate for the Jews, replied that, before they made this demand, they must prove

of God, who were now become his peculiar subjects, or proprietary leiges: ¹ this fact of spoiling the Egyptians, even in the harshest sense of the word, was according to the laws of nations, more justifiable than royal grants of letters of mart, or other such like remedies as kings are accustomed to make use of against other powers that have wronged their subjects, or suffered them to be wronged by those under their command, without making a proper restitution. In short, whatever the Hebrews took from the Egyptians, they took and possessed it by the law of reprisals, *i. e.* by virtue of a special warrant from the Lord himself, who was now become not their God only, but their peculiar king.

BUT, because the exceptions to this action lie not against the doing, but against the fraudulent manner of doing it; it may therefore be observed, ^m that the providence of God designed by this means to make the Israelites some reparation for the tyrannical usage which they had received from the Egyptians, as is manifest from his giving them favour with the Egyptians, who indeed, for their own ends, and to get rid of such troublesome guests, were disposed to lend them any thing they had. Thus far all is right; here is nothing but fair borrowing and lending; and if the Israelites acquired a right to these things afterwards, there was then no obligation to restitution. Now that they acquired such a right, is manifest from the Egyptians pursuing them in an hostile manner, and with a purpose to destroy them, after they had given them free liberty to depart; by which hostility and perfidiousness, they plainly forfeited their right to what they had only lent before: for this hostile attempt (which would have warranted the Israelites to have fallen upon the Egyptians, and spoiled them of their goods) did certainly warrant them to keep them, when they had them; so that now they became the rightful possessors of what they had only upon loan, and could not have detained, without fraud and oppression before.

The action vindicated.

THUS

prove what they alledged, *viz.* that the Israelites borrowed any thing of their ancestors. To this the Egyptians thought it sufficient to say, that they found it recorded in their own books. Well then, said the advocate, look into the same books, and you will find the children of Israel lived four hundred and thirty years in Egypt (Exod. xii. 40.) Pay us then, said he, for all the labour and toil of so many thousand people, as you employed all that time, and we will restore what we borrowed; to which they had not a word to answer. Patrick's Commentary. It must be observed, however, that Moses does not affirm, that the Israelites stayed 430 years in Egypt (for it is certain they were but half that time) but his meaning is, that in all they sojourned so long; *viz.* that, from the time of Abraham's setting out from Mesopotamia, to his posterity's now leaving Egypt, included such a number of years. From Abraham's leaving Charran, to Jacob's going down into Egypt, was 215; and the time that he and his posterity abode there, was the like number of years: so that it is plain that Moses, in the place where he tells us that the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt (the Samaritan copy has it in the Land of Canaan and Egypt) was four hundred and thirty years, had respect to all the pilgrimages of Abraham and his posterity. Patrick, *ibid.* Jackson upon the Creed. ^m Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I.

The pillar
of the
cloud,
what.

THUS the Israelites having got their desire of their enemies, marched triumphantly out of the land of Egypt, six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, and a mixed multitude, which are supposed to be profelytes to the Jewish religion, conducted ^a by the Lord, as the text tells us, in a pillar of a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. This wonderful phænomenon, all dark on one side, and all shining on the other, in the shape of a pillar, is supposed by most interpreters ^o to be the SHECHINAH, or Divine Majesty, exhibiting ^p its presence by a train and retinue of angels: and therefore he, who in the 13th chapter of Exodus, is stiled ^q the Lord, in the very next chapter, is called ^r the angel of God; and they suppose farther, ^s that as the majesty of God appeared to Moses in the bush, when he gave him commission to bring his people out of Egypt, and directed him all along in his embassy to Pharaoh; so it appeared now in a glorious cloud, ^t to conduct the Israelites, and assure them of his special providence and superintendency for their safety and protection: but in opposition to all this, we are told, “ That there was no manner of miracle in this whole affair; that, as in waste and desolate countries, where there were no remarkable places for armies to form their rout by, it was a customary thing to carry a blazing fire, fixed upon a pole, before the first line, thereby to give signals to all the rest of the army; so this pillar of a cloud which attended the Israelites, was nothing else but one of these ambulatory beacons, carried by men, appointed for that purpose, when they were under march; and when they were to halt, fixed over the general’s tent; and, that such a portable fire as this, whose flame, but not its smoke, is very far seen by night, as its smoke, but not its flame, is perceived at a great distance by day, all the strange things which are said of the different phases of this pretended miraculous pillar, may, with great facility, be referred.”

An objection
against it.

Answered.

THAT in the deserts of Arabia, and such extended plains, where there were no cities, rivers, or mountains for signals and land-marks, it was a general custom (before the invention of the compass) to carry fire before armies, in order to direct their march; and that (notwithstanding the present use of the compass) such guidance of fire is still practised among the Caravans of the East; and the great number of pilgrims, who go every year from Grand Cairo in Egypt to Mecca in Arabia, cannot, by any one that is acquainted either with antient or modern history, be denied; and had the sole intent of the cloudy pillar been

ⁿ Patrick’s Commentary. ^o Mede’s works, p. 343. ^p Exod. xiv. 24. ^q Ibid. ver. 19. ^r Patrick, *ibid.* ^s The Jews are of opinion that this conductor of the Hebrews was either the angel Michael or Gabriel; but whichsoever of them it was, he was the only commander of that host which went before the Israelites. They call him by the proper name of Metraton, because he marked out their camp, where they were to stay, and directed their way in their journey to their several stations. Patrick, *ibid.* ^t Toland’s *Hodegus*.

been to guide and conduct the Israelites in their journeys, there might have been more grounds for asserting that it was a mere machine of human contrivance, and had nothing miraculous or supernatural in it : but, when it shall appear, that this pillar of a cloud was of much greater use to the children of Israel, than barely to conduct them ; that in it resided a superior power upon whom the name and attributes of God are conferred ; that from it proceeded oracles and directions every day what the people were to do, and plagues and punishments when they had done amiss ; and that to it are ascribed such motions and actions, as cannot, with any propriety of speech, be applied to any material fire ; it will from hence, I hope, be concluded, that this guidance of the cloud was a real miracle, its substance quite different from that of portable fires preceding armies, and its conductor something more than a mortal man.

THE first mention that is made of this phenomenon is in the 13th chapter of ^u Exodus, where Moses, describing the rout which the Israelites pursued, first to Rameses, and thence to Succoth, tells us that they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped at Etham, at the edge of the wilderness ; and the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire : and what we are to understand by the Lord, that went before them, we are advertised in another place ; ^w Behold I send my angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared ; beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not ; for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him, *i. e.* my name JEHOVAH, which is the proper and incommunicable title of God. The next place wherein we find this pillar of a cloud mentioned, is in the 14th chapter, ^x And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them ; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them, and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light to these. There is in the same book, another place where this pillar is taken notice of, and that is in the 33d chapter, where God, being highly offended at the people's impiety in making the golden calf, refuses to conduct them any longer himself, and proposes to depute an angel to supply his place. ^y Depart and go up hence, says he to Moses, thou, and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, and I will send an angel before thee, for I myself will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people, lest I consume thee in the way. When the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned, and no man did put on him his ornaments. And,

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I

when

^u Exod. xiii. 20, 21. ^w Ibid. xxiii. 20, 21. ^x Ibid. xiv. 19, 20. ^y Ibid. xxxiii. 1, &c.

when Moses went into the tabernacle, they all rose up and stood every man at his tent-door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle : and it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses ; all the people saw the cloudy pillar at the tabernacle-door, and they rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent-door. We have occasion to take notice but of one place more ; and that is in the 16th chapter of Numbers ; where the people murmured for the loss of Corah and his company. ^z And it came to pass, that when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation, and behold the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared ; and Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation, and the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them, as in a moment ; and they fell upon their faces ; and Moses said unto Aaron, take a censer, and put fire therein, from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them ; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord, the plague is begun.

Now, from a bare recital of these passages, we cannot but observe that the Israelites pillar made quite another appearance than any combustible matter when set on fire, and hoisted upon a pole, can be supposed to do ; that, in this pillar, resided a person of divine character and perfections, and therefore called the Lord, the Angel, the Angel of the Lord, and the Angel of his Presence, &c. that this person was invested with a power of demanding observance, of both punishing and pardoning transgressions, and to whom even Moses and Aaron, as well as the rest of the congregation, might fall down on their faces, and pay obeisance, without the imputation of idolatry. The whole tenor of the narration, in short, seems to denote, that every one in the congregation should look upon the pillar, as something awful and tremendous, and the person residing therein, above the rank and dignity of any created essence : and therefore the most general opinion is, that he, to whom the divine appellations, divine powers, and divine honours are, in so many places ascribed, was the eternal Son of God, with a troop of blessed angels attending him, in bright and luminous forms, and who, either by the display or contraction of their forms, could make the cloud they inhabited, either condense or expand itself, either put on a dark or radiant appearance, according as the great captain of their host signified his pleasure : for to suppose mere fire, without any supernatural direction, appearing in different forms,

darkness

darkness to one sort of people, and light to another, at the same time, is a thing incongruous to its nature.

FOR how many purposes this pillar of a cloud might serve the Hebrews, it would be presumption to determine: but this we may safely say, that, besides its guiding them in their journeys, ^a it was of use to defend them from their enemies, that they might not assault them; of use to cover them from the heat of the sun in the wilderness, where there were but few trees, and no houses to shelter them; and of singular use to convey the divine will, and to be, as it were, a standing oracle whereunto they might resort upon all occasions.

IN this cloud, we are told expressly, ^b that the Lord appeared in the tabernacle; from this cloud, ^c that he called Aaron and Miriam to come before him; and out of this cloud, again, that he sent forth the expresses of his wrath, as well as tokens of his love, among the whole congregation: and therefore this cloud could be nothing else but the vehicle of God, or the place of majestic appearance, at that time; nor is that conjecture very improbable, that from this very instance, the poets first took the hint of making their gods descend on a ^d cloud, and arrayed with a bright effulgence.

HOWEVER this be, it is certain that the Jews were persuaded of the divinity of their guide, otherwise ^e they would not have expressed such undissembled sorrow and concern, upon hearing the news of his intention to relinquish them; nor would they ever have submitted to wander so long in the wilderness, exposed to so many dangers and hardships, had it been a man only, with some fire elevated ^f upon a pole, that was their conductor. From Horeb to Kadeth-barnea (which was upon the borders of the land of Canaan) the way was not far, much about eleven days journey, and in a manner a beaten road, and almost impossible for them to miss; and therefore we cannot but suppose, that had they not been convinced of the miraculousness of their direction, even Moses himself, with all his authority, would not have been able to persuade them to take the compass we find they did, through an enemy's country, where they were to fight their way, instead of pursuing their direct road to the land of promise; but therefore they willingly followed the cloud, because they were sensible a divinity resided in it; and therefore that divinity led them in the wilderness so long, to inure them to hardships, and to prolong their stay, until that generation was dead, ^g of whom he had sworn in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest.

S E C T.

^a Patrick's Commentary. ^b Deut. xxxi. 15. ^c Numb. xii. 5. ^d Ad hoc exemplum credo poetas fancivisse, nullum nomen mortalibus apparere sine nimbo; est autem nimbus nubes divina, seu fluidum lumen, quod decorum capita cingit. Taubman upon Virgil. ^e Exod. xxxiii. 4, 6. ^f Lewis's Antiquities of the Hebrew Is. public. ^g Psal. xciv. 11.

S E C T. VI.

Of the ISRAELITES Passage over the Red-sea.

Why the Egyptians pursued the Israelites.

WHILE the Israelites continued their march, the impression which the late plagues had upon Pharaoh and his ministers began to abate. They knew, from the accounts they received, that the people intended something more than the celebration of a feast, for the space of three days in the wilderness; they began to consider what Egypt was like to lose by the revolt of so many useful slaves, and perhaps they likewise flattered themselves that the power of the God of Israel, as great as it appeared to be, might nevertheless have its bounds, as well as that of other gods: ^h for the Pagan theology allotted certain districts and provinces to their deities, making one supreme in the mountains, and another in the plains; one preside over the waters, and another over the dry land; and therefore, deluded with these notions, or rather judicially blinded by God, Pharaoh resolved to pursue the children of Israel; and, having got together what forces he could, came up with them as they were encompassed by the sea.

The distress the Israelites were in.

NEVER was poor people in a more dismal situation, hemmed in on the west by a ridge of mountains, pressed from the south by Pharaoh's army, and on the east and north shut up by the sea: the sea not to be passed without a good number of ships to contain such a multitude; the mountains not to be attempted with such a train of women and children; and the enemy not to be encountered for want of arms as well as courage. In these distressed circumstances what were they to do? * They had but one recourse, and that was to lift up their eyes and hearts to that cloud where their great captain sat, and to call to their assistance that arm, that invincible arm, which had already wrought such wonderful things for them. But instead of imploring the help of God, ⁱ they murmur against his servant Moses, so that Moses pours out his complaint before the Lord, and the Lord, to deliver an undeserving people, at the signal of his servant's rod, ^k caused the sea to go back by a strong east-wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided, so that the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left: and, at another signal given, ^l the sea returned to its strength, the roaring waves broke loose from their invisible chain, and swallowed up Pharaoh and all his host, so that there remained not so much as one of them.

▪ THUS

^h Vide 1 Kings xx. 25. * Saurin's Dissertations. ⁱ Exod. xiv. 10. ^k Ibid. xiv. 21, 22. ^l Ibid. ver. 27.

^m THUS the Lord saved Israel, says the sacred historian, but other people will tell us that he did it quite another way; "That the ⁿ Red-sea, especially in the extreme part of it, where the Israelites passed over, ^o was not above two miles broad, and very often quite dry by reason of the great reflux of the tide: ^p that Moses, who perfectly understood the country, and had observed the ebbing and flowing of the sea, led down his men at the time of ebb, and, being favoured by a strong wind blowing from the shore, and regarding the return of the tide, had the good luck to get safe to the other side; while Pharaoh and his army, hoping to do the same, but mistaken in their computation, had the misfortune to be lost: but in all this event what is there more ^q than in Alexander's passing the sea of Pamphilia? To be sure, had there been any appearance of miracle in the thing; had the water divided itself in two parts, and reared up on each side like walls for the reception of the Israelites, the Egyptians, mad as they were with rage, would never have been so desperate as to pursue them."

An objection against the miraculousness of their passage.

OF what breadth the Red-sea may be at the place of passage, is not so easy a matter to determine, ^r because both geographers and travellers mightily differ in their computation: but if (according to some of the lowest accounts) we suppose it to be much about two leagues, most writers agree that the sea in this place is very boisterous and tempestuous, which is hardly consistent with a shallowness, much less a total desertion of water upon any hasty reflux. The wind, it must be owned, if it blew from a right quarter, might both forward the ebb, and retard the flow; but the wind which blew at this time, we are told, was an east-wind, whereas it must have been a west or north-

Answered.

^m Exod. xiv. 30. ⁿ The Red-sea (called also by the ancients Sinus Adriaticus, and now Golfo di Mecca) is that part or branch of the southern ocean, which interposes itself between Egypt on the west, Arabia Felix and some part of Petraea on the east, the north bounds of it touching upon Idumaea, or the coast of Edom. Edom, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies red, and was the nickname given Esau for selling his birth-right for a mess of red pottage. The country which his posterity possessed was called after that name, and so was the sea which adjoined to it; but the Greeks not understanding the reason of the appellation, translated it into their own tongue, and called it *eruthra thalassa*, thence the Latins *Mare Rubrum*, and we the *Red sea*. The Hebrews call it the Sea of Suph or Flags, there being such abundance of this kind of weed in that sea, that the inhabitants of the coast pluck it up out of the water, and after they have dried it, make themselves huts of it. Vide Heylin's Cosmography, Wells's Geography, and Patrick's Commentary. ^o Le Clerc's Dissertations. ^p Vide Euseb. Præpar. Lib. IX. c. 27. ^q Joseph. Antiq. Lib. II. c. 7. ^r One affirms that the sea is six leagues wide in this place, another makes it but fifteen stadia or furlongs; one says it is narrow and long like a river, and another allows it but the breadth of one league. Vide Diod. Sicul. Lib. III. Strabo Lib. II. P. Belon's Observations, Lib. II. and Pietro della valle, Tom. I. Ep. 11. Thevenot makes it 8 or 9 miles in breadth, and tells us that the place where the Israelites came out of the sea is at present called Corondel. Voyage de Levant. But Andricomius will have it to be no more than 6. Theatrum Terræ Sacræ.

north-west wind to have driven the water away from the extreme parts into the main body of the sea; as any one that looks into a map may perceive. The east-wind blew athwart the sea, and cut it asunder, so that one part fell back towards the south and up the main channel, and the other part retired towards the north, where Sues is situated, and where the sea terminates in a point: and this very likely is the meaning (if there be an hyperbole in the expression) of the waters being a wall to the Israelites on their right hand and on their left; because they so defended them on both sides that the Egyptians could no way come at them, but by pursuing them in the same path which they took.

IT is not to be questioned but that Moses was a person of an excellent judgment: * by his being so long in the army he could not but know the proper advantages to be made in marches and retreats; and yet he seems to give us no great specimen of his skill by declining the mountains, which possibly were inaccessible to the chariots and horsemen, and betaking himself to the strand, where Pharaoh's army might make after him (as we find they did) and so trusting to the uncertain return of a tide, had not God both commanded him to take that way, and foretold him the event. He might not perhaps be ignorant of the course of the tide, and could easily discern the favourable disposition of the wind; but was there never a man in all the great army which Pharaoh brought with him of equal observation and skill? It is a thing incongruous to reason, † that the Egyptians, who excelled at that time all other nations in their knowledge and observation of celestial bodies, should be ignorant of the fluxes and refluxes of the sea in their own country, in their own coast, and in their own most traded and frequented ports and havens. But if they were not ignorant of the time of the reflux, it is hardly to be imagined that the eagerness of pursuit would have made them venture into the bay, when they could not but be sensible, that, in case they miscomputed, the returning waves would devour and swallow them up. Why they ventured to pursue the Israelites, the sacred historian seems plainly to intimate, when he tells us ‡ that the angel of the Lord, which went before the camp, removed and went behind them: it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and was a cloud and darkness to the one, but gave light in the night to the other. So that the true reason why the Egyptians went in after the Israelites into the midst of the sea, was, that they knew not where they were. They imagined perhaps that they were still upon the land, or at least upon the shore where the sea had retired: the darkness of the night, and the preternatural darkness of the cloud, not suffering them to see the mountains of waters on each

* Sir Walter Raleigh's History. † *Ibid.* ‡ Exod. xiv. 19, 20.

each side : but, * when the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire ; when he turned the bright side of the cloud upon them to let them see the danger they were in, and at the same time (as Josephus adds) poured out a storm upon them, with thunder and lightning, and hail-stones from the cloud, their common cry was then, † let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

THAT the Israelites went not quite cross the Red-sea, but only fetched a compass, as they found the waters cast up for them, and so came out upon the same shore from which they went in, there is not that reason, I think, to infer either from the length of the passage, or the place where they came out. For, taking the channel in its utmost breadth, and allowing the Israelites the lowest computation of time, yet we have still this to say, that, in a relation abounding with miracles, there can be no absurdity to suppose one more. ‡ Now, if God interposed his power to disable the chariots of Pharaoh, lest the return of the waters should excite their fears, and their fears, by improving their diligence, save them from destruction ; why might not God interpose the same power (if there was occasion) to quicken the Israelites, and enable them to perform their passage in the time appointed ? Nay, if we will allow his own words to be a good comment upon his actions, we cannot but suppose that he did so, when we find him, after all was over, recounting his kindness to them in this wise ; § Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings (where the expression certainly denotes some extraordinary assistance given them in their passage) and brought you unto myself. Though therefore some ambiguity may arise as to the place where the Israelites came on shore (since they were ¶ at Etham but two days before, and now landed in a wilderness of the same name) yet ¯ if we will but suppose that there were two Ethams, the one a town where they encamped on the Egyptian side, and the other on the Arabian side, a wilderness ; or (if we will needs have the wilderness of Etham denominated from the town) supposing ¯ the town was situated near the upper part of the Red-sea, and gave denomination to a great desert which surrounded the head of the bay, and reached down a considerable way on both sides, we may easily perceive, that though the Israelites marched from the wilderness of Etham cross the bay, they would only be in another part of the wilderness of Etham still. ¯ Now, if the Israelites crossed the sea in a direct line (upon the supposition that it was no more than an ordinary return
of

That they
went di-
rectly
cross.

* Exod. xiv. 19. † Ibid. ver. 25. ‡ Saurin's Dissertations. § Exod. xix. 4.
¶ See Numbers xxxiii. compared with Exodus xiv. † Wells's Geography
and Nicholls's Conference, Vol. I. ¯ Le Clerc's Dissertations. ¯ Sir Walter
Raleigh's History.

of the tide, which overwhelmed the Egyptians before they could recover their own coast) the Egyptians could not have been cast ashore (as the scripture testifies they were) on that coast of Arabia, where Moses landed; but must necessarily be carried away with the flood which runneth up to Sues, and the utmost point of the bay.

THESE are some arguments for the real passage of the Red-sea, in the manner that Moses has represented it: and though we have not time at present to examine † the several facts that are commonly alledged in contraposition to this, and shall therefore, for brevity's sake, allow them all to be true; † yet, if we reflect, as we ought, on the prediction of Moses concerning the event, the virtue of his rod, the facility of the Israelites passage, the rashness of the enemies following, and their * universal overthrow and tragical end, we shall find every thing concurring to render this an unparalleled instance; and that nothing but an immoderate desire of depreciating the miracles of the sacred history, can diminish the wonder of this famous passage into a comparison with what other men have done. I call it a famous passage, and that, not only because † both sacred and profane history make mention of it; not only because † the name of the sea records, and † the inhabitants of the coast transmit the remembrance

† Josephus has compared this passage of the Israelites over the Red-sea with what Alexander the Great did when he marched part of his army over the sea of Pamphilia; but there is little or no resemblance between them. Alexander was to march from Phaelis a sea-port, to Perga, an inland city of Pamphilia. The country near Phaelis, upon the shore of the Pamphilian sea, was mountainous and rocky, so that he could not find a passage for his army without either taking a large compass, or attempting to go over the strand between the rocks and the sea. Arrian hath observed that when the wind blows north (especially to any great degree) the strand is dry and passable; and therefore Alexander, taking the advantage of the wind thus blowing, sent some of his army over the mountains, and went himself, with the rest of his forces along the shore. But in this we can find no miracle, unless the wind's blowing opportunely for Alexander's purpose may be reputed one. Shuckford's Connection, Vol. II. Lib. IX.

f Saurin's Dissertations. g Apollonius, in the Lives of the Fathers, affirms, that those Egyptians who stayed in the country, and did not follow Pharaoh in the pursuit of Israel, did ever after that honour those beasts, birds, plants and other creatures about which they were occupied at the time of this general destruction. He, for instance, that was working in the garden, made a god of that plant or root he was then busied about, and so of the rest. But how those multitudes of gods came to obtain among them, we shall have occasion to observe elsewhere. h Vide Josh. iv. 23. Psal. lxxviii. 13. Ibid. cxiv. 3. 1 Cor. x. 1. Heb. xi. 29, &c. i The name which the Arabs give it is *Buhr el Cilzem*, the sea of drowning or overwhelming, in memory of that signal judgment of God upon Pharaoh and his army. Wells's Geography k The account of Orosius, who tells us that there still remain some monuments of that event, and that the tract of the chariots and wheels may be seen, not only on the shore, but also at the bottom, as far as the sight can reach, is a little too fabulous. Oros. Hist. Lib. I. c. 10. But there is credibility enough in what Diodorus Siculus relates, viz. that the Ichthuophagi, i. e. those that live upon fish, the inhabitants of the western coast of the Red-sea, have the following tradition, "That upon a great recess of the sea, the bottom of it was quite dry, and appeared green (from the weeds we may suppose that were in it) that it was divided into two parts, but returning back with a mighty force, the waters re-united, and regained their former place." Lib. III.


membrance of the fact; but because we find two renowned men in scripture, a mighty law-giver, and a mighty monarch, Moses and David, both exercising their poetic genius, to celebrate the miracle in such lofty strains as these, ¹ with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my lust shall be satisfied, and my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them, they sunk as lead in the mighty waters. ² For the waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, and were afraid, the depths also were troubled, the clouds poured out water, the air thundered, and thine arrows went abroad; thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Jewish LAWS, Moral, Ecclesiastical, and Civil.

AFTER the Lord had thus mightily delivered the children of Israel, and every day given them fresh instances of his miraculous care and providence; at Marah, ^a sweetened the water by the injection of a wood of a certain tree; in the wilderness of Sin, sent ^b quails for their meat, and ^c manna for their bread; and at Rephidim, given them ^d water out of the rock, and a perfect victory over their enemies; he intended now to reduce them to a regular society, and to give them a

Of the
World,
2513, &c.
Before
Christ,
1491, &c.



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system

¹ Exod. xv. 8, &c. ^m Psal. lxxvii. 16, &c.

^a We are not told what tree this was, whose wood, being thrown into the waters, took off their brackishness. But, to increase the miracle, the Jews will have it, that the wood of this tree (which they call Ardophne) was itself of a bitter taste, and would naturally have made the waters bitter, had they been sweet before. Patrick's Commentary, which seems to be quite contrary to the words of the wise man [Ecclus. xxxviii. 5.] Was not the water made sweet with wood that the virtue thereof might be known? ^b The Hebrew word [*S. luu*] which we, after the example of Josephus, render quails, is by different interpreters thought to signify thrushes, pheasants, sea-fowl; and by Job Ludolphus, in his learned Commentary upon his Æthiopic History, locusts; which he tells us were not only used for food, but in several countries were very delicious meat. See Patrick's Commentary on Numb. xi. who seems to be intirely of his opinion. ^c Le Clerc in his Commentary on Exod. xvi. tells us that the word *man*, signifies a gift, and that, when the Israelites said *man how*, it imported, is this the gift? For he makes it a question of scorn and contempt, as much as to say, is this little grain which covers the dew the gift which God promised us? And he intirely agrees with Cl. Salmasius, that it was the same with common manna, though differing from it in some properties. ^d Thevenot, in his Voyage de Levant, tells us that he was shewn the rock (as they called it) out of which Moses brought water; but that it was only a stone of a prodigious height and thickness rising out of the ground. He saw on each side of it several holes, out of which, it was plain, the water had issued by the marks and impressions that it had made; but at present, says he, no water comes out of them.

system of laws, both moral, civil, and ecclesiastical, such as might direct their conduct in all capacities; and to this purpose, in the space of seven and forty days after their departure out of the land of Egypt, he brought them into the wilderness of Sinai, to the mount of God.

The laws the Jews had before those given at mount Sinai.

THE people indeed hitherto were but poorly provided with laws: all they had were traditional, and consisted in some particular precepts that were not at all times so clearly conveyed; and therefore it was necessary (now, that he had taken them under his immediate care) to appoint them a complete system. "He gave six commandments to Adam," says ^e Maimonides (so that, according to him, Noah was not the first that received these famous precepts from God) "of which, the five first forbid idolatry, blasphemy, homicide, unlawful conjunction, and theft; the sixth commands the establishment of magistrates; and the seventh (which Noah received) inhibits the eating any animal until the blood be taken out of it. These, in all, I say, are seven, and were observed by the whole world. After this, God gave Abraham the commandment of circumcision, and it was by this patriarch that morning-prayer was instituted. Isaac established afternoon-prayer, and taught that the tenth of every thing must be set apart for an offering to God. Jacob forbade the eating the sinew which shrank, and composed the evening-prayer, and Amram added several other precepts to these; till at length came Moses, and he gave the utmost perfection to the law, by digesting the commandments, statutes, and judgments, which God delivered to him, into a code, and leaving it in the hands of the church for the instruction of all succeeding ages."

BUT before we come to an immediate discussion of these laws, it will not be improper to say something concerning the difference of laws in general, the better to perceive the particular nature of such as are to come presently under our consideration.

Of laws in general.

Now all laws in their primary view are either divine or human, *i. e.* either from God or men. ^f Divine laws are either eternal, such as we suppose are in the nature of God, and the unvariable rule of his actions; or natural, such as are inwardly implanted by God in men; or revealed, such as he has prescribed them in the declaration of his will. As for human laws, they are either such, as relate to mankind in general, and are agreed upon by people of all nations; or such as concern the government of the church, being canons and constitutions made at several times, either in general councils, or in national or provincial synods; or such as concern the government of civil communities, being the secular and political constitutions of particular

^e In his Treatise of a Profelyte, c. 4. ^f Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

ricular kingdoms and commonwealths, for the establishment of peace, order, and religion.

ALL people and nations claim the right and privilege of making such laws for themselves as they think fit; and for this reason, there must be as great a variety of laws, as there are different forms of government in the world, or indeed different humours in the legislators. * But now, amidst this diversity of laws, depending either upon the constitution of governments, or the arbitrary choice of those that govern, there is an universal law which is the foundation of all others, and that from whence they derive their authority. This we call natural, because it flows immediately from nature, which, being in all men the same, universally prescribes the same rules. It is indeed nothing else but reason itself; and reason, though in some countries more improved than in others, every where speaks the same thing. She speaks distinctly to some people who study and observe her carefully; to others she but lisps (as we may call it) nor can they well understand what she says, for want of being accustomed to hear her; but to others she is quite struck dumb, as it were, nor can they hear her language at all, by reason of those obstructions which stupidity and a prostitution to the most infamous vices has placed betwixt them and her gentle whispers. But notwithstanding this, reason has always a right to rule, and is appointed and authorized by God to give laws to all the nations in the world. God at first placed it in the soul of man: for divers ages it supplied the place of every other law; and when he thought fit to add unto it the laws which he pronounced from his own mouth, and wrote with his own finger upon the tables in mount Sinai, it was only to lay before the eyes of the Jews the same law he had originally engraved in the heart of all men; according to these remarkable words to the Romans, that ^b the Gentiles, who had not the law (as the Jews had) written by God upon tables of stone, did by nature, or the sole impression of the law of nature, the things contained in the law, *i. e.* the very things commanded by the written law; because, says he, these having not the law, were a law to themselves, and shewed by their sentiments, which their philosophers, their poets and orators, clearly explained, and by the esteem they testified for virtue, that there was a law written in their hearts, from which they formed all their great notions and laudable maxims. Thus ⁱ when the Roman orator comes to speak, in one of his most beautiful philosophic works, of the wicked action of the son of Tarquin against the chastity of Lucretia, he says, “ That indeed there was no written law among the Romans against such outrages, but that the action of the young Tarquin was nevertheless flagitious on his score, because there was an eternal and immutable law against these

The law of nature.

Its universal extent and obligation.

^g Martin, of natural religion. ^h Rom. ii. 14. &c. ⁱ Tully de Legibus, Lib. II. Vid. Towerison's Explic. of the Decal.

“ these enormities, and this eternal law, or law in force from
 “ all times (says he) is reason itself which we have from na-
 “ ture ; a law which does not begin to have the force and
 “ authority of a law, when it comes to be written, but has it
 “ originally.” Whereupon he concludes, “ That the true
 “ law, which is our sovereign, and has a proper power of com-
 “ manding and forbidding, is right reason, which is derived to
 “ us from the most High God.”

IT is to this original law, descending from God, and naturally engraved in every man’s breast, that all particular laws both of God and men should conform, and are to be referred. * God himself, sovereign as he is, without restriction, and without controul, and having consequently an incontestible right of commanding or forbidding whatever he pleases, never yet made any ordinances contrary to the law of nature, which would be acting contrary to himself, since himself is the great and immediate author of that law. Opposite indeed, we allow, they are to the corruption of human nature, because they were designed to rectify the disorder which sin had brought upon it ; but this we account a matter of their commendation, and a sure argument, that whenever they come to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary (as we are now going to examine into them) they will ever be found to be true and righteous altogether.

The several kinds of laws given to the Jews.

THE laws which God was pleased to give the children of Israel were, as we said before, of three kinds, moral, civil, and ecclesiastical. † By the moral law, we understand those precepts and commands whose observance have a tendency to make men good and virtuous. The civil law contained the constitutions and orders which respect public justice, and the administration thereof ; and the ecclesiastical directed the Jews in their external behaviour in religious worship, and appointed what rites and usages they were to observe. The first of these are such precepts and prohibitions as are good in themselves ; the second are of a mixed nature, being partly in their own nature good, and partly indifferent ; and the third are in their own nature indifferent, but so far good, as they are commanded by a positive law of God.

The number of them.

THE whole number of these commands (according to the computation of the Jews) amounts ^{nt} to six hundred and thirteen in all ; and these they divide into two classes, affirmatives, of which they reckon two hundred and forty-eight ; and negatives, whereof they make three hundred and sixty-five ; and their Rabbins (according to their custom of finding wonders in every thing) pretend to affirm that the number of the affirmative commandments answers to that of the parts of an human body, and that of the negatives to the number of the days of the solar

* Martin, of natural religion. † Edwards’s Survey, Vol. I. m Lamy’s Introduction.

solar year, or, as others will have it, to that of the veins. Whether they are exact in their anatomy or no, is not so easy a matter to determine; but this is obvious to our first conceptions, that such a multitude of precepts could not but be a very heavy yoke, which neither they, nor their fathers were able to bear; and yet it was in some sort necessary for that stupid and carnal people, in order to shew them their obligations in every minute particular, because the grossness of their understandings disabled them from supplying any thing which was not expressly commanded in the law.

BESIDES this written law, the Jews do likewise acknowledge ^{Their oral law.} another, which they call the Oral Law; and the account that they give of it is this,—ⁿ That as soon as Moses returned from conversing with God, and retired into his tent, he called Aaron, and first delivered to him the text, which was to be the written law, and after that the interpretation of it, which was to be the oral, in the same order as he had received both from God on the mount; after which Aaron rose up, and placed himself on his right hand. After Aaron, came in Eleazar and Ithamar his sons, and Moses repeated to them the same things which he had done to Aaron; whereupon they arose and seated themselves, one on the left hand of Moses, and the other on the right hand of Aaron; and then the seventy elders who constituted the sanhedrim, or great synod of the nation came in, and being taught by Moses both these laws in the same manner, they also seated themselves in the tent; and then entered all the people, or such of them as were desirous to know the law of the Lord, and its interpretation. So that Moses repeated both these laws four times to Aaron, three times to his sons, twice to the elders, and once to the people. After this he withdrew, and Aaron having repeated the same to the congregation, he likewise withdrew; after him his sons stood up, and repeated the same; and, upon their withdrawing, the seventy elders did the same; so that each of them heard both the law and its interpretation four times. The law was written, but the interpretation of it was preserved by tradition, and from hence it is that their doctors have generally divided the law into two kinds, the one written, and the other oral.

So great is the honour which the Jewish doctors give to their ^{Whence it arose.} traditions, that they attribute them, we see, as well as the law, to God himself; and the only difference they make is, that the law was written, and the traditions conveyed down by word of mouth from one generation to another; but whether this be matter of fact, or not rather a fiction, spun out of the fertile invention of the Talmudists, is very much a question. What is

ⁿ Prideaux's Connection, Vol. II. p. 1. where he has given the reader that desires to know more of it, a long and learned account of the true original of the Jewish traditional law.

is certain and indisputable is this,—• That the respect which the Jews had for the majesty of God, from whom they received the law, and the punishments which were annexed to the breach of it, inspired them with a fervent desire of being acquainted with it, and observing it. Above all things, they were afraid of breaking it through ignorance; and Moses having commanded that, in all things, the priests, *i. e.* the sanhedrim, should be consulted, it is highly probable that the oral law is nothing but the decisions of this assembly, which, in process of time, were revered, and, by a perpetual addition of new observations, became a sort of barrier against the violation of the law of the Lord.

General observations upon the ten commandments.

AMONG the many commandments that God gave Moses to deliver unto the people of Israel, there are ten that excel the rest, as containing the most essential duties of morality, and were therefore not only pronounced by God himself, but by him engraven likewise on two tables of stone, in order to set before their eyes what sin had blotted out of their hearts. And of these we have some observations to make in general, before we come to a particular explication of them.

Mount Sinai described.

SINAI ^p, which is the same with Horeb (only two different heads or risings of one and the same mountain) is a hill situated in Arabia Petraea, so very high and lofty, that both shores of the Red-sea may be seen from thence. It is at present called the Mount of Moses; and, besides the top of Horeb, has another head or rising, called the Mountain of St Catherine; on the top of which there is a dome, and under it the body of that saint (which, as they tell us, was brought thither by angels immediately after she was beheaded at Alexandria) lies interred.

^o Lamy's Introduction. ^p Thus the covenant which God made with the Israelites on mount Sinai, is also said to be made with them at Horeb, and the decalogue or ten commandments which are set down in Exod. xx. as delivered from mount Sinai, are repeated Deut. v. as delivered from mount Horeb. ^q Heylin's Cosmography, and Wells's Geography. At the bottom of the mount Sinai stands, at present, the monastery of St Catherine, a very large and beautiful building, from which there were formerly steps up to the very top of it, and computed to be 14,000 in number. There are two churches on it, the one for the Greeks, and the other for the Latins; near that for the Latins, there is a little mosque, and by the side of it a little cave, where Moses (as they tell you) fasted forty days, and not far from it a small grot, where he is said to have hid himself, when he desired to have a view of God's face, and was permitted only to see his back-parts. Near mount Horeb stands the monastery of the forty martyrs, a neat building, with a large garden, and a fair church, dedicated to the blessed Virgin. Here is the stone, or rock, out of which Moses brought water; and not far from hence, is the place where they tell us the golden calf was molten. There is to be seen indeed a great head of a calf, cut to the life in stone; but this (as Thevenot observes) looks like a contrivance of the Greeks, to impose upon travellers. Voyage de Levant. ^r The St Catherine, from whom this mount is denominated, is said to be the daughter of one Costa, a king of Cyprus, who, in the time of Maxentius, converted many unto Christ. Before she was beheaded, she was for some time tortured on a wheel, whence comes the Catherine-wheel to be used for a sign in this very kingdom, to this very day. Wells's Geography.

interred. As soon as the Israelites were arrived at this place, Moses was called into conference with God, and had directions given him, in what manner he was to prepare the people, that they might see, without profanation, the visible tokens of his presence upon the mount. Two days were spent in conferences between God and Moses, and between Moses and the people; and on the third day God came down in the sight of all the people upon the mount. The royal prophet has given a very lofty description of God's descent; ' He bowed the heavens, and came down, and it was dark under his feet; he rode upon the cherubims and did fly, he came flying upon the wings of the wind; he made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him with dark water and thick clouds to cover him. At the brightness of his presence the clouds removed, hail-stones, and coals of fire. There went a smoke out of his presence, and a consuming fire out of his mouth, so that the earth trembled and quaked, and the very foundations of the hills shook and were removed. And so analogous is all this to what Moses says of the descent upon mount Sinai, ' That the mountain was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; that the smoke thereof ascended, as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly; that no room would be left to doubt, whether it was God himself who descended and pronounced the decalogue, had not the New Testament told us expressly, that ' the law was ordained by angels, that it was * an angel who spoke to Moses on mount Sinai, and comparing the law and gospel together, that the one was spoken by angels, but the other by Jesus Christ.

THE pomp however of this appearance seems to be too great for angels only: the holy mount covered with smoke, thunder ready to break out, and lightnings darted forth with a dismal brightness; formidable barriers not to be passed, without expiating the rash attempt with immediate death; the earth trembling, and, as it were, shrinking into its foundations; six hundred thousand men shaking for fear, and begging that ^z God would not speak to them lest they die; and Moses himself, though habituated to the Divine Majesty, terrified at this spectacle, and crying out, I exceedingly fear and quake: these, and some more instances that might be collected from the narration, together with the incommunicable title of JEHOVAH affixed to the very preface, seem to portend a great deal more than the presence of angels; and are not therefore badly explained by another passage or two, wherein the same fact is recounted; ^a The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them; for, ^b the

^s Exod. xix. 11. ^t Psal. xviii. 9, &c. ^u Exod. xix. 18. ^w Gal. iii. 19
^x Acts vii. 38. ^y Heb. ii. 2. ^z Exod. xx. 19. ^a Deut. xxxiii. 2.

^b the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, and the Lord is among them, as in Sinai : and therefore to make the whole sense consistent, when St Paul opposes the law and the gospel, upon account of their different manner of promulgation, what we render given by angels, must be understood, in the midst of angels ; and so the meaning will be—That, when God gave the law, he was surrounded with a most dreadful equipage ; proclaimed it in thunder and lightning, in flames of fire, and clouds of smoke, raised by the angelical host attending his throne : ^c but that, when he promulged the gospel, all things were transacted in the most easy and familiar method, and with all possible marks of kindness and condescension ; he assumed our nature, and adapted himself to our infirmities ; not disdainng the conversation of the vilest, provided they were vile in their own eyes, and applied to him for instruction and amendment.

Not a complete system.

BE it allowed then, that the commandments were given by God himself, attended with all these ensigns of terror ; yet it will not therefore follow, that they were ever designed ^d for a perfect compendium, much less a complete system of the whole moral law. They contain indeed some of the most momentous precepts, but (without taking a vast scope in our exposition) they omit many material duties, both towards God and man. That we should not worship other gods, is an express injunction, and an obvious inference it is, that we should worship that God who is the maker of us, and of all the world ; but then, in what manner we are to worship him, either as to the ritual service, or moral affection of the heart, is no where told us in the decalogue. No mention is made of praise and thanksgiving, of confession and prayer, of faith and hope, of reliance and resignation, and other spiritual graces, which alone can make our homage acceptable. Our duty to ourselves is almost totally omitted : sobriety, abstinence, and modesty, &c. are not once taken notice of, nor can they, without drawing the most distant consequences, be inferred : and though great care is taken of our neighbour's life and property, yet what benevolence and kindness, what forbearance and forgiveness of injuries we are to extend to him, we have no certain direction given us. To supply this defect therefore, there are other precepts included in the body of the law, which properly relate to the commandments ; and are, as it were, the sequel and explanation of them. Of this kind with relation to the first table, are the commands given to the Jews, ^e not to offer sacrifice to strange gods ; ^f not to offer up their children in sacrifice to the idol Moloch ; ^g to break down the statues of false gods ; ^h to destroy diviners ; and ⁱ not

Additional moral precepts.

^b Psal. lxxviii. 17. ^c Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. I. ^d Le Clerc's Commentary. ^e Exod. xxii. 29. ^f Lev. xviii. 21. ^g Exod. xxiii. 24. ^h Lev. xix. 31. ⁱ not

not to swear by strange gods. And in relation to the second table, they are such as follow: ^k all those which regulate the punishments of murder and uncleanness; ^l all those which relate to the respect due to the sovereign, and the aged; ^m that of not suffering a daughter of Israel to prostitute herself; ⁿ that of not requiring usury of their brethren; that of relieving their neighbour; ^o that of bringing back a wandering ox into the way; ^p that of helping up the ass that lies under his burden; ^q that of not giving false witness with the wicked; ^r that of not following a multitude to do evil; ^s that of not retaining the hire of a stranger; ^t that of leaving gleanings in their estates and vineyards, when they gathered in the harvest and the vintage, for the widows, the orphans, and the strangers, &c. These and such like precepts, being of moral intendment, are a kind of appendix to the ten commandments, and a very good comment to explain and illustrate them.

THERE is a farther expedient for enlarging the sense of the ten commandments, and that is, the method and rules which are generally prescribed us in the exposition of them, viz. ^u That where any duty is enjoined, there the contrary practice is forbid, and where any vice is forbid, there the contrary virtue is commanded; that where a virtue is required, there all the ways that lead to it, all the means, and helps, and instruments, that may be serviceable to attain and advance it, are likewise commanded; and where a sin is forbidden, there all the causes, and occasions, and invitations to it are, at the same time, prohibited; that whatever is implied in the commandment, or follows by natural consequence, is to be reckoned as a part of it, *i. e.* something enjoined or forbidden in it, though it be not expressly mentioned; that, under one kind of duty or vice, all others of the like nature, yea, all the species and sorts of it, are comprehended: that where one relative duty is prescribed, there the other is always to be understood; that whatever we are to do ourselves, that we are to take care that others, under our charge, perform in their place and stations; and lastly, that the intent of these commandments is, not only to forbid the outward act of vice, but the inward desire of it; and, on the contrary, not only require the external performance of religious duties, but that internal and vital principle likewise from whence they proceed, and are animated. These are some of the received rules for the exposition of the ten commandments, by virtue of which, they are made to comprehend, not only all the duties of moral religion, but some of the great precepts of evangelical righteousness; as indeed our blessed Saviour, ^x in his excellent comment upon them, has sufficiently informed us, that

The method of explaining them.

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ⁱ Exod. xxiii. 32. ^k Lev. xx. 10, &c. ^l Ibid. xix. 32. ^m Exod. xix. 29. ⁿ Deut. xxiii. 19. ^o Exod. xxiii. 4. ^p Ibid. ver. 5. ^q Ibid. ver. 1. ^r Ibid. ver. 2. ^s Lev. xix. 13. ^t Ibid. ver. 9, 10. ^u Tower on the Decalogue, and Edwards's Eody of Divinity, Vol. II. ^x Matth. v.

they are larger and more extensive in their signification, than what they were supposed to be at their first promulgation.

Their
order,

THE decalogue (as these ten commandments are called) were, ^z by God himself, ^a divided into two tables; the first table contains four commandments. 1. That of worshipping one God only. 2. That of abstaining from idolatry. 3. That of not taking the name of God in vain. And, 4. That of hallowing the sabbath-day. But the second table has six. 1. That of honouring father and mother. 2. That of not committing murder. 3. That of not committing adultery. 4. That of not stealing. 5. That of not bearing false witness. And, 6. That of not coveting any thing that is our neighbour's: and it is worthy our observation, ^b that as the commandments have their place according to the dignity of the duties commanded, *i. e.* those which have regard unto God, have the pre-eminence of those that relate to men; so are they ranked and disposed according to the heinousness of the sins that are forbidden. Thus the offences against God, being more grievous than those against men; the neglect of divine worship, prostration to images, profanation of God's name, and violation of his sabbath are mentioned before the transgressions of the other table: and then as to the commandments which it contains, because it is more heinous to offend our parents (whether natural or civil) than any other persons, the prohibition of doing that, is therefore put in the first place, and the others follow according to their order. For since there are three degrees of sinning, in deeds, in words, and in desires; and these differ as to their guilt (it being more criminal to offend in actions than in words, and in words than in bare desires) according to the gradual defilement of these sins, we are forbid, first, to hurt our neighbour by

^y Lamy's Introduction. ^z Deut. v. 22. ^a The division of the ten commandments, as it is with us, is what the most learned of the Jews and Christians always received, and is certainly very right, not only from the different matter of them, but because our Saviour seems to confirm this distribution of them when he mentions the first and the second commandments (Matth. xxii 38, 39.) by which he means the first and the second table, and reduces the duties we owe to God to the one, and those that are due to man to the other. Some of the Rabbins indeed (to make the tables even) put five commandments in one, and five in the other; but we never heard that they were for expunging any. St Jerome (in his Comment upon Hosea x.) makes four commandments have respect unto God, and six to our neighbours; but his division of the former is very strange; for the first commandment, he says, is, I am the Lord thy God; the second, Thou shalt have no other gods but me; the third, Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image; and the fourth, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: so that he leaves out the precept of observing the sabbath, and makes the first commandment out of the preface to it. But in this he is singular, and not a little culpable. The church of Rome has struck the second commandment quite out of the decalogue, and, to make up the number, split the tenth into two: but the reason for their doing so is plainly this, that they are willing to conceal a commandment which so expressly forbids the use of images in the worship of God. They must not let the people see, and take notice, that these are positively forbidden by a divine law. Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^b Edwards's, *Ibid.*

by any act, whether it be killing, or adultery, or theft; next by our words, in bearing false witness; and then by our thoughts and desires in coveting any thing that is his. Nor is the same order neglected as to the sins of the first class; for though stealing is a very great crime, yet adultery is more heinous than that, and killing more flagitious than this, and therefore, first killing, then adultery, and after that stealing, are made mention of and forbidden.

I HAVE but one observation more to make, and that is—That and univer-
sally. though these commandments were primarily intended for the use of the Jews (for which cause the deliverance commemorated in the preface, the reason alledged in the fourth, and the promise annexed to the fifth commandment, are apparently peculiar to that people) yet, considering that the children of Israel were at this time the only church of God, and that, in speaking to them, God addresses himself to the household of faith in all succeeding generations, there is no one precept which may not in a larger and spiritual sense (at least by good analogy and parity of reason) concern us; and though the motives of our obedience may vary from theirs, yet the matter of the injunction is to all of us the same.

“ I am the Lord, JEHOVAH, ^a the only true God, eternal, The pre-
face to the
decalogue.
 “ independent, and unchangeable in essence; true and infallible
 “ in word; constant and immutable in purpose; and firm and
 “ faithful in the performance of whatever I promise or threat:
 “ that same God, who, under this appellation, discovered my-
 “ self to thy fore-fathers, enacted a special covenant with them,
 “ received their homage and engagements, and promised espe-
 “ cial favour and protection to them and their seed: for I am
 “ thy God, and, though the universal Lord and Father of the
 “ world, yet to thee I bear a peculiar relation, as having chosen
 “ and avouched thee to be a special people to myself, above all
 “ the people that are upon the face of the earth; promised to
 “ make thee high above all nations in praise, and in name, and
 “ in honour; and, by many signal demonstrations of favour and
 “ mercy, confirmed to thee the performance of my covenant
 “ and promise. For I brought thee out of the land of Egypt
 “ in a manner so full of wonder in itself, so full of grace to-
 “ wards thee, delivering thee from the saddest oppression and
 “ slavery in the house of bondage, and translating thee into
 “ a desirable state of present liberty, and of sure tendency to-
 “ wards the enjoyment of rest, of plenty, and of all joy and
 “ comfort in the promised land. And therefore I, who am the
 “ only true God, doing what I please in heaven and earth,
 “ and thy God, by a particular engagement and endearment,
 “ do, ^c upon the score of former favours, and future expect-
 “ tancies,

^a Le Clerc's Commentary. ^d Barrow's Exposition of the Decalogue. ^e Le Clerc's, *ibid.*

“ tancies, the sense of my love, and the dread of my power,
 “ call upon, and require you to listen to my words, and let
 “ these my commandments sink down into your minds.”

Its relation
 to us.

Now what God, in a direct and literal sense thus speaks to the Jewish people, may, by parity of reason (especially in a mystical and spiritual sense) be applied to us; ^f for to us he is the same Jehovah, whose nature is eternal, and power infinite, and to whom the highest respect and observance is due, as being the essential author, Lord, and governor of all things. He likewise, in a nearer relation, is our God, having chosen us, and consecrated us to himself; received us into a closer alliance, a new and better covenant, established upon better promises, and obliged us, by the grant of nobler privileges, and the dispensation of more excellent benefits. Nor must it be forgotten, that he has brought us up out of a spiritual Egypt, rescued us from the tyrannical dominion of Satan, freed us from serving sin in our souls and bodies, and is now conducting us in the way, and has conferred on us an assured hope (if we be not wanting to ourselves and our duty) of entering into the heavenly Canaan, a place of perfect rest, and inconceivable bliss; for ^g he hath delivered us (as the apostle expresses it) from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his most beloved Son; and therefore, according to a spiritual intent, he may well be supposed here to speak in an higher strain to us, and to exact a more punctual and accurate observance of his commandments.

S E C T. I.

TABLE I. First Commandment.

Thou shalt have no other gods but me.

THES E words are delivered in the form of a prohibition (as most of the other commandments are) * and yet in the natural design and sense of them, they (as well as the rest) suppose and require ^b something positive, and may therefore be resolved into these two propositions.

I. THAT we should not worship any ^c false or foreign gods. And,

II. THAT we should worship the true God only.

I. THAT

^f Barrow's Exposition of the Decalogue. ^g Col. 1. 13. * Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^h This was accounted so much the sense of the command, that we find Josephus making mention of no other *didaskai ho prootus logos, hoti Theos esin eis, kai dei touton sebasthai monon*. The first commandment teaches us, that there is but one God, and him only we ought to worship. Ant. 1. 2. c. 5. ⁱ It is observable, that the word *achadim*, which we translate *other*, is sometimes by the Septuagint rendered *albi, alii*, and sometimes, *allo:riai, alieni*, and so in this latter acceptation, it denotes those strange gods so often mentioned in scripture, accounted and called gods by the heathen, but such as, in reality, were not so,

I. THAT there is a God, *i. e.* an eternal, infinite, and Almighty Being, the creator and governor of the universe, all perfect himself, and the author of all perfection in others, is what we have sufficiently shewn already from reason, from scripture, and (what is the plainest proof of all) ^k from the visible works of the creation: and that there is but one such Being, [†] the voice of reason, as well as the testimony of scripture, the essential perfections of the divine nature, as well as the frequent declarations of God himself, [†] I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no god besides me, I am the Lord, and there is none else, is an abundant conviction.

The unity of God, proved from reason and scripture.

^m THE unity of the divine nature indeed is a notion, wherein the greatest and wisest part of mankind did always agree, and is so very congruous to the frame and government of the world, wherein we see all things conspiring to one end, and continuing in one uniform order and course (which cannot reasonably be ascribed to any other but a constant and uniform cause) that it seems a principle, if not innate, yet arising from the contemplation of the works of the creation, to believe that there is no other god but one; ^{*} and had not persons of vain and conceited imaginations, professing themselves wise, become fools; had not men of corrupt manners, disliking to retain God in their knowledge, and having their foolish hearts darkened, filled the minds of the ignorant, and deluded the vulgar with a superstitious belief of many gods, having rule over particular places and countries; the true notion of God, so agreeable to the plain and natural dictates of reason, might have been preserved amongst all nations. For the plain connection and dependence of one thing upon another through the whole material universe, through all parts of the earth and in the visible heavens; the disposition of the air, and sea, and winds; the motion of the sun, and moon, and stars, and the useful vicissitudes of seasons, for the regular production of the various fruits of the earth, have always been sufficient to make it evidently appear, even to mean capacities, that all things are under the direction of one power, under the dominion

^k See Vol. I. Page 7, &c. [†] The most obvious notion we have of God is, that he is a Being of all possible perfections; now, upon the supposition of two Gods, either they must have several perfections, or the same; but to suppose two gods with several perfections, some belonging to one, and some to another, will plainly prove, that neither of them can be God, because neither of them have all possible perfections. To suppose two Gods of the same and equal perfections, would likewise prove that neither of them can be God, *i. e.* not absolutely perfect, because it is not so great a privilege to have the same equal perfections with another, and in a kind of partnership, as to be alone, and superior above all others; and yet to suppose one of them inferior, in any respect, is to evince that he cannot be God, because not supreme. The truth is, God, in the conception we have of him, is an infinite Being: but now nothing is more evident than that one infinite Being is sufficient to all purposes whatever; and therefore to suppose more gods than are necessary, whether of the same, or separate perfections, whether agreeing or disagreeing with each other, is the height of absurdity. Wilkins's Principles of Natural religion, Lib. I. Chap. 5, 6. ^m Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. ^{*} Clark's Sermons, Vol. I.

dominion of one God, as the wisest and best men in all heathen nations, upon mature deliberation, have always declared.

‡ ORPHEUS indeed, was the first who attempted the genealogy of the gods, and reduced their number to 360: but he was afterwards so sensible of his impious folly, that in a particular discourse to his son Musæus, and his other friends, he retracts these wild and absurd fables, and having admonished them in the first place, that there is but one God, by whom all other things were made, and on whom they depend, he then goes on to shew that though this God is invisible, yet he sees and knows all things, and that as he is merciful, so is he likewise just, and the author of all those judgments which befall wicked men, &c. Homer, though he follows Orpheus too closely in his fictions concerning a multitude of deities, yet, when he is most serious, he supposes but one, *eis Koironos esto*; and therefore we find Pythagoras, and several others after him, styling God by the name of Monas or Unity: for “ though men differ
“ much in their opinions about other matters (says an antient
“ author ||,) yet in this they all agree that there is one God,
“ the king and father of all, under whom there are subordinate
“ deities, his offspring, who are admitted to some share of go-
“ vernment with him. In this the Grecian consents with the
“ Barbarian, the inhabitants of the continent with the islanders,
“ the wise with the unwise.”

BUT though the belief of one supreme God seems to be fixed upon the foundations of right reason, and confirmed by names of great authority; yet the gross idolatry of the heathen world plainly shews, that, in process of time, it came to be greatly corrupted.

The primary meaning of the commandment.

THE Chaldeans, from whom the Israelites originally descended, worshipped the sun, moon, stars, and all the host of heaven: the Egyptians, from whom they were now departed, made them gods, not of animals only, but of any inanimate creature they either accounted hurtful or beneficial to them: the Canaanites, and other nations among whom they were now going, made their adorations to devils, and even some times offered their very children in sacrifice to them: nay, the Israelites themselves were too prone to idolatry: soon after the delivery of the law they gave a lamentable instance of this in the matter of the golden calf, and in length of time became so infected with the customs of the nations among whom they lived, that according to the number of their cities were their gods (° as the prophet tells them) and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem, did they set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal: so that the chief and

‡ Wilkins's Principles of Natural Religion, Lib. I. || Maximus Tyrius. Different. I. n Beveridge on the Church Catechism. o Jer. xi. 13.

and primary intent of this law was to prohibit the Jews from paying any religious worship to Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, to Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, or to any of the gods of the nations among whom they either had, or were to sojourn; and it was highly agreeable to the wisdom of God, in order to retain the people in his service, that he should caution them against this idolatrous worship which they were so much addicted to; a crime usually expressed in scripture by the metaphor of adultery, as denoting not only a desertion of the true God, but a desertion in direct breach of faith, and the solemn covenant wherein they were engaged with God.

BUT, because all people naturally conceive of God as a Being of supreme excellency, justice, goodness, and power over them; and so, whatever it is that they imagine to be God, that they honour and fear, and love, and trust on, as if it were really so; therefore the prohibition may be extended to such sense as this; “ * Thou shalt not think, believe, or own any thing to be God but Me: Thou shalt not ascribe supreme authority, power or goodness, or any other divine perfection, to any but Me: Thou shalt not regard them that have familiar spirits, nor seek after witches, nor wizards, nor use divinations or enchantments, or any such like abominations: thou shalt not put any trust or confidence in any creature that is in heaven or earth: Thou shalt not love, nor respect, nor value, nor desire any thing in comparison of Me: If thou doest any of these things, thou hast other gods before Me, or in my sight, who am the searcher of all hearts, and to whom all thy secret sins and imaginations lie open and detected.”

II. THE positive proposition contained in the commandment is, that we should worship the true God only. It is a piece of justice generally acknowledged, that all beings should have a regard paid them in proportion to the dignity of their nature, the advantages we receive from them, and the jurisdiction they have over us: neither ought we only to have a true apprehension of these distinctions in our minds, but declare it visibly in our actions, that others may perceive our notions are right, and our dispositions virtuous: that we are willing to pay an esteem to abstracted excellency, a submission to authority, and a recognition of the benefits we receive. Now the perfections of God are transcendent, and peculiar to himself: the most glorious creature falls infinitely short of him; he is the original cause of all being and blessing, the creator and supreme lord of heaven and earth. And since the excellencies of God are of a peculiar and super-eminent nature, our acknowledgements of them ought to be so too. The design of public worship is to make a visible confession

p 2 Kings xxiii. 13. * Beveridge on the Church Catechism. q Lev. xix. 31. and Deut. xviii. 10, 11. r Jer. Collier's Sermons.

confession of our dependence upon God; to own him as the maker of the world, and praise him for all the advantages we enjoy; and to make our acknowledgements of God rational, they ought to be proportioned to his nature, and such as we give to no other being. Since no person helped him to create the world, nor joins with him in the preservation of it, but all things are made by him, and supported by his sole power, we cannot be said to worship him aright, unless there be something proper and distinguishing in our adorations of him; unless our service has some circumstances of advantages, and extraordinary veneration which we never shew upon any other occasion.

IF the vulgar should see their prince no better attended and observed than themselves, they would be apt to overlook his quality, and suspect he never had any commission from heaven; and therefore the splendor of the court is designed to keep up the reputation of the government, and to put subjects in mind of their inferiority. The greatest part of mankind must have remote truths, especially those which relate to the perfections of spiritual beings, conveyed by sensible objects; their organs must be struck as well as their understandings; for if these invisible things are only represented in their naked essences, the impression will not be distinct and durable enough to affect their minds, and govern their practice.

In what manner it is to be performed.

THIS is a good reason for the institution of the public worship of God; and as it is a rule in princes courts, and that rationally settled, that subjects, though of the first quality, should not be taken notice of in their presence; so, if our worship be not appropriated to God Almighty; if our religious solemnities (which are done in his presence) are not intirely reserved to his honour; if we communicate the adoration we offer him to any of his servants; this weakens the notion of a supreme Being, confounds the difference between finite and infinite, and sets the creature and Creator almost upon terms of equality. Upon this account, we find in the next commandment (which some have thought only an appendix to this) God declaring himself to be a jealous God, and that will allow of no rivals in adoration, that expects our affections should not be divided between him and his creatures, but that our religious services should be wholly devoted to him: and therefore, in respect to our inward homage and adoration, our worship of God imports the highest esteem, honour, and awe of him; an intire dependence on his wisdom, and submission to his will, whether in the active or passive instances of obedience: it requires that we should consider him as the most excellent and perfect of beings in himself, the most amiable and beneficial in relation to us, and that every thought of our minds, and every motion and affection of our hearts should be perfectly, and at all times, conformable to these sentiments:

sentiments: and in respect to our outward homage, our worship of him is expressed by acknowledging and invocating him; by offering up our praises, our prayers, and thanksgivings to him; and by expressing a due reverence to every kind of matter which bears any special relation to him, whether things, or persons, or places of worship; in a word, by shewing ourselves ready on all occasions, both in the easy and difficult instances of our duty to obey him, and to do all those things without reserve or reluctance which he has in general commanded us; submitting ourselves wholly to his will and pleasure, and studying to serve him in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.

THIS is the full extent of the command, both in its negative and positive signification; and from hence we may observe, that ^u all those who deny the being of a God, whether in speculation or practice, whether they really believe that there is no God, or live as if they did, without any regard to his honour or worship; all those who believe and worship a multiplicity of deities, ^x or ascribe the essential properties of God to any created being, as the heathen world in many places do; all those who, together with the worship of the true God, admit other beings into a partnership with him, paying religious adoration to saints and angels, as the church of Rome is known to do; ^y all those who frame in their fancy an idea unworthy of that most excellent Being, and, to such a phantom of their own creation yield their best affections and highest esteem; and lastly, all those who set their hearts upon any creature (whether themselves or any other thing) trusting in it, and relying on it, making it the chief delight of their eyes, and concern of their life, are guilty of a violation of this command. In short, if we regard or esteem, if we seek and pursue, if we confide and delight in wealth, or honour, or pleasure, wit, wisdom, strength, or beauty, ourselves, our relations, or any other creature, we have another god, which is against the negative meaning; and, if we do not with all our hearts reverence and love the most wise and powerful, the most just and holy, the most good and gracious God; if we do not trust and hope in him as the foundation of all good; if we do not diligently worship and praise him; if we do not humbly submit to his will and obey his laws, we have not him for our God, which is against the positive intent of this most holy law.

The transgressors of this command.

Second Commandment.

Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, &c.

THIS commandment, which states the manner (as the former did the object) of religious worship, consists of two parts, viz. a precept, and its sanction. ^z 1. The precept is expressed

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^u Wake's Commentary on the Church Catechism. ^x Edwards's Body, Vol. II. ^y Barrow's Exposition of the Decalogue. ^z Tower-son on the Commandments.

pressed in negative terms, that we should not make or worship any carved image; but it includes in it likewise a positive duty that we should worship and serve the Lord in a manner suitable to his divine excellencies, and according to what himself has appointed. 2. The sanction is of two sorts; 1. By way of commination, denouncing a severe punishment against the transgressors of the command, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third generation of them that hate me. And, 2. By way of encouragement, making a gracious promise to the careful and conscientious observers of it, shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

The primary meaning of this command.

WHENCE the humour arose, and afterwards prevailed in the heathen world, of representing their deities in corporeal shapes, and in yielding such expressions of respect to their images, as they conceived were agreeable to the deities themselves; and how far the devil's malice, and some mens fraud conspiring with other mens ignorance, concured in the production of this kind of idolatry, we shall have occasion to consider at large in a proper place: this only we need remark at present, that as the Egyptians, among whom the Israelites had lived a long while, were notoriously addicted to all sorts of idolatry, worshipping the sun and moon, and several kinds of birds which were in heaven above; the images of men and of brute beasts which were in the earth beneath; of fishes, and snakes, and crocodiles which were in the waters under the earth; so the design of this commandment was to restrain the Israelites from such practices as they had beheld among the Egyptians, but whether it was intended to inhibit them the use of all images in general, is not so well agreed among the learned.

^c TERTULLIAN was of opinion that this commandment forbade all images whatever, more particularly all protuberant ones; and ^a Origen seems to denote the same thing, when he tells us that a painter or statuary was not permitted to live in the Jewish republic, that no occasion might be given of drawing away mens minds from the worship of God. ^e From the time of the Macabees to the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews indeed thought themselves

a Omnis illa idololatria orta est ex fallace sacerdotum gente, quæ, ut angustiora sacra faceret, nihil aperte dicebat, sed sub symbolis abscondebatur. Cum autem symbolica illa significatio ex arbitrio, fingentium penderet, paulatim factum, ut rationes Symbolorum Oblivioni mandarentur, plebisque animus in iis solis, quæ sensus, percellerant, afficeretur, ac tandem crederet sub iis Figuris, aut vivis, aut mortuis, habitare numen. Sic cum Osirin, Agriculturæ, deditum Regem, Symbolica Juvenci Imagine designasset, tandem ejus animum in bove Api esse crediderant. Statuis etiam consecratis crediderunt adesse Numina. Summa itaque ratione vetuit Sui, aliorumque omnium simulacra fieri, Deus Opt. Max. ne iis cultus Religiosus haberetur; nec minus prudenter fecerunt, qui, superstitione plebis Christianæ animadversa, Imagines in Religionem temere illatas eliminandas censerunt, cum iislem incommotis laborent. Le Clerc's commentary. b Particularly the hawk and the ibis. Tully, de Nat. Deor. Lib. I. c De Spectaculis, c. 23. d Contra Celsi Lib. IV. e Patrick's Commentary.

themselves forbidden by this law to make the image or figure of any living creature, especially of a man; but that this was not its original intent, is manifest from God's appointing the cherubims over the mercy-seat, and the serpent in the wilderness to be made; which questionless he would not have done, could we suppose that this command previously prohibited the making of the likeness of any such thing. It is allowed indeed that God might dispense with his own command; but as we have no intimation of any such dispensation, and can hardly believe that he would have dispensed with it so soon; † so it seems more reasonable to suppose that the cherubims, the brazen-serpent, the bulls; and other images in Solomon's temple, were no breaches of the second commandment, but that himself waved the observation of his own precept in these particulars; and consequently, that the second commandment was never intended to forbid the making of images in general, but only the making of such images as were designed to represent the Divine Majesty; for so the reason which Moses gives for the observation of the precept seems to imply: † Take heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude in the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female; which plainly shews that the design of the command was to forbid such images as were made with a purpose to represent God; since the prohibition is founded upon their not seeing any similitude, but only hearing a voice.

THE ^h prophet Isaiah, having set off the incomparable power and majesty of God in great and lofty strains, as measuring the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meting out heaven with a span; as comprehending the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighing the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; before whom all nations are nothing, and are counted to him less than nothing and vanity: having, I say, in this, and more such language as this, endeavoured to describe the might and majesty of God, he then asks the question, To whom will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? And thereupon proceeding to discourse of the folly and mad presumption of making images for religious uses, he concludes at last, † Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity; to whom then will ye liken

The folly, sin, and stupidity of image-making.

† Thorndike's Weights and Measures, c. 19. g Deut. iv. 15. h Isa. xl. 12, &c. i Ibid. 21, &c.

likened me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One? Nothing certainly can be more senseless in itself, or more disparaging to God, than to pretend to resemble him by any corporeal thing. * For, as it must be confessed, that there is a great disproportion between God, who is not only a Spirit, but an infinite and incorruptible Spirit, and an image, which is both corporeal and corruptible; so that disproportion cannot but be thought to make it both impious and incongruous to form any such representation of him; because, in effect, it is destroying the ¹ spirituality and incorruptibility of his nature, which we so take upon us to represent.

THE man who should form the image of a serpent, a toad, or any other detestable creature, and exhibit it as the similitude of a king, would certainly derogate much from his esteem and majesty; but infinitely more must he detract from the dignity, and impair the reverence due to that immense, almighty, all-wise, and all-perfect Being, who shall presume to present any sensible, any finite, any corruptible thing, as a resemblance of him, changing (as St Paul expresses it) the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things: and therefore we need less wonder, that they, who used such expressions of their religion, should have such contemptible opinions of the deities they adored, as to suppose them liable to such unruly passions, and guilty of such abominable actions, as even human nature detests; making them as vile in their dispositions and doings, as they represented them in their outward figures and shapes. The wisest of the heathens, however, were of another sentiment; they conceived ^m that their gods were not visible to the eye, but only to be seen by the thought; and therefore they advise against making gods of silver or gold; ⁿ for of such materials, say they, cannot be made an image like unto God, and give us this account of the institution of image-worship, “ That the antient Romans did, more than an hundred and “ seventy years, worship their gods without images, and that “ those, who first set them up for the people’s use, did it with “ a bad intent, viz. to diminish the awe and reverence due to “ the gods, and possess them with false and erroneous conceits “ about the divine nature; rightly judging, ^o as they express it, “ that, in the foolishness of images, the gods might easily come “ to be despised.”

TOGETHER with the folly of making such images, the prophet Isaiah has, in another place, handsomely exposed the stupidity, as well as great wickedness of falling down before them, and worshipping

^k Towerson on the Commandments. ^l Barrow on the Decalogue. ^m Effugit Oculos cogitatione visendus est. Sen. Quæst. Nat. 13. ⁿ Finges autem non Auro aut Argento, non potest ex hac materia Imago Dei fingi similis. Sen. Ep. 31. ^o Varro, as he is quoted by St Austin, De Civitate Dei, Lib. IV. c. 31.

worshipping them. The idolater, saith he, ^p planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it : then shall it be for a man to burn ; for he will take thereof and warm himself ; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread ; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it ; he maketh a graven image, and falleth down thereto : he burneth part thereof in the fire ; with part thereof he eateth flesh ; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied ; yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha ! I am warm, I have seen the fire ; and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even a graven image ; he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god ; all this while, never considering in his heart, nor having knowledge or understanding to say, I have burnt part of it in the fire, yea also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof, I have roasted flesh, and eaten it, and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination ? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree ? It is not to be conceived, however (according ^q to Maimonides) that any of these men worshipped an idol with this persuasion, that there was no other God but it : there never was, nor ever will be, any so sottish, as to fancy that the figure which he knows he made of metals, or wood, or stone, either created the heaven and the earth, or at present governs them ; but they therefore worshipped these images, because they looked upon them as things intermediate between God and them. In them they paid their adorations to God ; and the very formality of their idolatry consisted in having such devices to remind them of God, and in using such postures and religious deportment before them, as he had made peculiar, and appropriated to his own worship. An idol, ^r as the apostle tells us, is nothing in the world ; of what materials soever it be composed it availeth nothing : but when it comes to be made an instrument of devotion, and employed in the service of God ; when before it men bow, or prostrate themselves, or do any other acts of religious homage, it then becomes an abomination, or (according to the expression that God is pleased to use) the object of his jealousy. And, ^s as it would be no very grateful excuse to tell a jealous person, that the woman he is jealous of, did not go so far as to commit adultery with her paramour, or, that if she did, it was only because she fancied a similitude between them ; so all the apology that can be made for the worship of images, from their being good expedients to raise our imagination, and by sensible representations to invigorate our devotion, will be but sorry evasions when they come to be compared with the denunciations of him, who hath told us expressly, ^t that he will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images, but will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto

In what
sense men
did it.

^p Isa. xlv. 14, &c. ^q More Nev. c. 36. ^r 1 Cor. viii. 4. ^s Towerfon on the Commandments. ^t Isa. xlii. 8.

unto the third and fourth generation of them that in this manner hate him.

The meaning of the sanction and its equity.

2. BUT here it may be asked, "How can God visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, when, " in so many places, " he assures us that the soul which sinneth it shall die; that the " son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the " father bear the iniquity of the son, but that each man shall " have the reward of his righteousness, or bear the punishment " of his own iniquity: for this the very heathens could infer; " x that to punish one man for the sin of another, could not be " consistent with the justice of God." Now in answer to this, the common reply is, y that God may so punish a man for his sins, that the temporal evil of it shall reach, not to himself alone, but to his posterity also; that, as in the case of high-treason, the father by forfeiting his honour and estate, and the prince by exacting the penalty of the law, bring the ill consequence of the crime upon the whole family (nor is this thought unjust in the courts of human judicature) so in the case of idolatry (which is no less treason against the Divine Majesty) there is no reason to complain, if the Judge of all the earth deals after the same manner with the posterity of wicked men, though they be not guilty of their ancestors crimes. " In our Gothic constitutions " (says z a learned author) the throne being the fountain of " honour, and source of property, lands, like titles, come from " it, and are held as fiefs of it, *i. e.* under perpetual condition " of service: which condition being violated by high-treason, " those privileges and possessions, with perfect equity, become " forfeit, and revert to the crown, how much soever the for- " feiture may affect an innocent posterity in those their fortunes, " which arose not from any natural right, but from free grace, " and arbitrary compact." Just so was the case with the Israelites. They lived under a theocracy; and God, who was their king, by an extraordinary administration of his providence supported them, and gave them great temporal blessings (to which they had no natural claim) upon condition of their obedience: and therefore their violating this condition by falling into idolatry (which was declared rebellion, and high-treason against their king) under this œconomy at least, is enough to justify him, in withdrawing those extraordinary favours, and, by that means, in visiting the sin of a wicked father upon his innocent children, in like manner as is done by modern states, in the taint of blood and confiscation. But there is a farther solu-
tion

n See Deut. xxiv. 16. Ezek. xviii. 17. to 25. &c. x O miram equitatem Dei! (ut habet Cotta apud Ciceronem contra Stoicos qui, eam vim esse Dei, affirmarunt, ut etiam si quis morte, pœnas effugerit, expetantur eæ pœnæ a liberis Nepotibus, a Posteris) O miram equitatem Dei! ferretne ulla Civitas Latorem ejusmodi Legis, ut condemnaretur Filius, aut Nepos, si Pater, aut Avus delin- quisset? De Nat. Deor. Lib. III. y Wakes Explanation of the Church Catechism. z Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses, Vol. II. Lib V.

tion of this difficulty : for ^a others have imagined, that, as no man is absolutely innocent, but has faults of his own, and transgressions enough to answer for, if God will be extreme to mark what he has done amiss ; so (to testify his indignation against idolatry) God takes occasion to exact a punishment on the children of idolaters, for their own personal offences, which otherwise perhaps he would have either overlooked, or not so rigidly considered. In this sense the children are supposed to bear the punishment, not of their parents sins, but of their own ; and the cause of their suffering is their personal guilt, though the occasion of their suffering, at such a time, in such a manner, in such measure, and with such circumstances, arises from their fore-fathers impieties. It is, in this respect (as ^b one happily compares it) as it is with a man, who, being full of malignant humours, happens to ride abroad in wet weather, and so taking cold, falls first into a shaking fit, and then into a dangerous fever : for, as in this case, the peccant humours which the person had contracted, were the true cause and root of his distemper, and his taking cold the occasion only of its breaking out ; so the personal sins of the son are the cause of his punishment, the father the occasion only of the inflicting of it ; ^c which is so far from inferring God's punishing one man for another's transgression, that it plainly denotes no more than that, by the occasion of the father's sin, the son may sometimes be punished according to the demerit of his own ; which ^d sufficiently vindicates our church, in using the petition in her common liturgy, conformable to the doctrine of this commandment, Remember not, Lord, the offences of our fore-fathers : for, though these offences shall never be charged upon us, yet they may move God to inquire into what we ourselves have done amiss, and to punish us for our own transgressions.

THIS is the full scope of the doctrine contained in this negative precept, which includes (as we said) a positive duty likewise : and, from a survey of the whole, we may easily perceive who are the transgressors, and consequently liable to the penalty, and who the observers, and thereby entitled to the promises of this great command. ^e Those who make or assist in the making or maintaining of any idol, in building any temple or altar to it, in offering any sacrifice or incense, any prayers or oblations of any kind, or in contributing any thing towards its having any signs of religious honour and worship performed to it, as the heathens did formerly, and in many places do still : those who make use of any corporeal similitude of God, or the likeness of any other creature, to represent him by in their religious offices ; that in public places of divine worship, set up the images of saints

Who the transgressors.

and

^a Le Clerc's Commentary, and Towerson on the Commandments. ^b Sanderson, in his third Sermon on Kings iii. 21, 22. ^c Towerson, *Ibid.* ^d *Ibid.* ^e Beveridge's Explanation of the Church Catechism,

^b Sanderson, in his third Sermon on Kings iii. 21, 22. ^c Towerson, *Ibid.* ^d *Ibid.*

and who
the per-
formers of
this com-
mand.

and angels, and, with great semblance of devotion, † salute them, casting themselves before them, carrying them in procession, and making long pilgrimages to them, as ‡ those of the Roman communion are known to do: or lastly, those who in their thoughts entertain any corporeal conceptions of God; who think that he, like bodies, is confined to a certain place, and can know or act nothing beyond his own heaven; that his arm (like theirs) is shortened that it cannot save, his ears (like theirs) cannot hear the softest whispers, and his eyes (like theirs) are to be blinded by the darkness of the night, or imposed upon by any specious appearances, as too many inconsiderate people of all denominations seem to do: those, I say, who are guilty of these notions or practices, live in the violation of this command: as, on the contrary, those that in the presence and worship of God, study to glorify him with their bodies, and with their spirits, which are his; † that use such gestures and adorations before him, as a due sense and holy fear of his Divine Majesty and supreme authority over them require; that make the solemnity of their worship chiefly consist in the sincerity of their desires, the purity of their affections, and contriteness of their hearts; that make it their endeavour to serve him, and promote his glory and honour in the world, by defending and enlarging his church, where only he is known and worshipped upon earth; by making all their prayers and solemn addresses to him, as the giver of all good gifts; by praising and magnifying his name in the great congregation; by building and adorning places where to do it; by observing the times which he hath set apart for his worship and service; by celebrating the sacraments that he has ordained; by keeping his laws themselves, and persuading others to do the like: those that do these things, I say, perform the positive part of the commandment; and, for so doing, shall receive of God a recompence of spiritual and temporal blessings, both to themselves and their posterity, for a thousand generations; so infinitely does God's justice fall short of his mercy to those that love him and keep his commandments!

Third Commandment.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, &c.

WE have here again, 1. a negative precept (which includes in it a positive duty) and, 2. a commination added to enforce it. † The precept relates to the act of swearing; but because some have taken it in so strict a sense as to exclude all kind of oaths whatever, it will be necessary, before we proceed

† Barrow on the Decalogue. ‡ Towerson on the Commandments. h Beveridge's Explanation of the Church Catechism. i By the name of the Lord, in scripture, is meant the Lord himself; and to take, or lift up his name, is to swear by it, because he who did so, was wont, while he did it, to lift up his hand to heaven. Patrick's Commentary.

ceed to the consideration of the sins forbidden in it, to premise something concerning the lawfulness of oaths in general, and the conditions requisite to make them so.

^k AN Oath is an appeal to God, either upon a testimony that is given, or a promise that is made, confirming the truth of the one, and the fidelity of the other. It is an appeal to God who knows all things, and will judge all men; and is consequently a religious act, wherein we give praise and honour to his infinite knowledge and wisdom, by owning that he is privy to what we say; to his holiness and veracity, that he loves truth and abhors falsehood; and to his power and justice, that he both can and will avenge the later. ^l Thus, if we consider the matter upon the principles of natural religion, swearing is not only an act of worship and homage done to God, but a powerful means likewise for the preservation of justice; and, upon this score, has possibly been in use from the foundation of the world, as it certainly was practised in the days of the patriarchs, and long before the delivery of the law. At the delivery of the law, the commandment only prohibited false and profane swearing, without determining any thing concerning the lawfulness of an oath; but the very prohibition, in the natural reason and propriety of it, did imply, that the taking of an oath in a due and solemn manner, was all along an allowed action, as we find afterwards, God expressly commanded it as a part of religious worship; ^m Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name; and the form and import of this oath is more particularly described in another place, ⁿ Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness, and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory; which last words seem very strongly to imply, that this precept refers to the state of the gospel; ^o so that an oath, religiously taken, is represented as a part of that worship which all nations were to offer up to God, under the new, as well as the old dispensation. The gospel indeed affords us no express command of this duty. ^p Our blessed Saviour did not suppose that any reasonable man would make a scruple of taking an oath upon lawful occasions: he therefore only set himself to reprove and restrain that intolerable custom which the Jews were then addicted to, of swearing by the name of God, and several other things in their ordinary conversation; but the author to the Hebrews shews us plainly the lawfulness of oaths, as well as their expediency, when he tells us ^q that an oath for confirmation puts an end to all strife, which he is so far from taxing as a fault that he makes use of it to prove the immutability of God's council, and the sure dependence we have upon his promises,

VOL. II.

N

mises,

The lawfulness of oaths.

From scripture.

^k Burnet on the Articles, and Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^l Burnet, *Ibid.* ^m Deut. vi. 13. ⁿ Jer. iv. 2. ^o Burnet, *Ibid.* ^p Nourse's Practical Discourse on the Church Homilies. ^q Heb. vi. 16.

mises, since he has condescended to confirm them to us by an oath, and † because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself.

From ex-
amples.

AFTER the example of God himself, were it not needful to produce any other, we find that oaths, upon fit and important occasions, were in frequent use among the best of men; † that Abraham swore to Abimelech, and required an oath of his servant concerning the marriage of his son Isaac; that † a covenant of the Lord, which was nothing else but an oath, in confirmation of their mutual friendship, passed between David and Jonathan; that, in attestation of his veracity, St Paul makes use of the common forms of swearing, † I call God for a record upon my soul; and again, † the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not; that, in the vision of St John, an angel is represented as † lifting up his hand, and swearing by him that liveth for ever and ever; and (what is a more home-example than any) that our blessed Saviour, † when he was put upon his oath by the high-priest, † and adjured to tell whether he was the Messias or not, immediately spake out, and owned himself to be what he truly was, though he had been all along silent, and made no reply to any thing before.

From rea-
son.

THESE are some of the precedents and precepts we have in scripture; but if even we were destitute of these, yet considering how instrumental to the benefit of mankind oaths may be made; † how necessary for the support of justice, and the preservation of peace and good order in societies; how necessary for the decision of controversies, not only in ordinary judicatories, but even among states and sovereign princes, for the confirmation of their treaties and alliances, as well as the contracts and covenants among private men; how necessary for the defence of the fatherless and widows, in their just rights, against those that would otherwise defraud and oppress them; for the restraint of violence, for the detection of villainies, and bringing those that are guilty of any flagitioufness to condign punishments: considering, I say, the great serviceableness of oaths to the ends of justice and good order, we cannot but suppose (even though we had not all this evidence from scripture) that their

† Heb. vi. 13. † Gen. xxiv. † 1. Sam. xx. 8. † 2 Cor. i. 23. † Ibid. xi. 31. † y Rev. x. v. † z Among the Jews, the form of giving an oath to witnesses, and others, was not by tendering a formal oath to them, as the custom is among us, but by adjuring them, *i. e.* requiring them to swear upon oath; as it is plain from Lev. v. 1. If a man hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of such a thing, if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity. If he has heard the voice of swearing, *i. e.* if, being adjured, or demanded to answer upon oath concerning what he hath seen or heard, he do not utter the truth, he is perjured. Now to this adjuration of the high-priest, our Saviour answered, Thou hast said; which words were not an evasion (as some have thought) but a direct answer, as if he had said, It is as thou sayest, it is even so, I am the Son of God. Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. a Matth. xxvi. 63, 64. † b Nourse's Practical Discourses.

their first institution was from God; nor can they fail of being acceptable to him when they are conversant about momentous affairs, about what is right and lawful, what is possible and within our power; and if they be but taken with caution and deliberation, in simplicity and sincerity, in justice and impartiality, and at the call and command of such as have authority; for these are the scripture-conditions, Thou shalt swear, the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.

Under what conditions.

“ BUT how shall we reconcile all this with the words of our blessed Saviour, ^c Swear not at all, neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by Jerusalem, nor by the head; but let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. If swearing were a thing allowable, why does the apostle repeat the prohibition? ^d But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation: if it be allowable, I say, why did the primitive christians, by the force of these prohibitions, and even some honest heathens, by the mere dictates of the

An objection.

“ law of nature, so totally abstain from it?” Now, in order to discern the sense of our Saviour’s prohibition, we must consider that it is no usual thing in scripture to express that in absolute terms which is yet to be understood in a limited sense. ^e Thus, when our Saviour tells us ^f that all who came before him were thieves and robbers, the general expression must be restrained to those that gave out they were the Messiah, otherwise St John Baptist, and all the prophets of old, must be comprehended under the notion of thieves and robbers: thus when St Paul says, ^g All things are lawful unto me, it must necessarily be restrained to things not forbidden, otherwise an inference might be drawn from the words, that St Paul thought lying, and stealing, and fornication, &c. was lawful to him: and, in like manner, the words of our blessed Lord, Swear not at all, must not be extended to the utmost latitude they will bear, but restrained to the scope and design of his discourse, and the sins he primarily intended to reprove. ^h That therefore our Saviour intended to limit this prohibition to our ordinary methods of commerce and discourse, and not to extend it to judicial cases, is plain both from the word communication, which, according to the usual forms of speech, can hardly be applied to any deposition in a court of judicature, and from the nature of the oaths themselves, by heaven, by the earth, by Jerusalem, &c. which were frequent with the Jews in their common discourse and ordinary negotiations, but never used upon such public occasions; for then their custom was to swear by the great Creator of hea-

Answered

The meaning of our Saviour’s words.

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^c Matth. v. 34. ^d James v. 12. ^e Horneck’s Sermons, Vol II. ^f John s. 8. ^g 1 Cor. vi. 12. ^h Fiddes’s Body of Divinity, Vol II.

ven and earth, as the Lord liveth, and God do so to me and more, &c. The truth is, the Jews had got a very wicked and pernicious custom of swearing by heaven, by the earth, and several other creatures, which, because God's name was not expressed, they thought were harmless forms, and such as left no guilt, nor laid any obligation upon them: and therefore our Saviour, in these words, endeavours to convince them of their mistake; and to shew them that their excuses and pretences of not taking the name of God in vain, when they made use of such evasive oaths, were impertinent and frivolous; that, in swearing by the creatures, they did in effect swear by the maker of them; that in swearing by heaven, they swore by him whose throne it is; in swearing by the earth, they swore by him whose footstool it is; in swearing by Jerusalem, they swore by him who had taken that city into his peculiar care and protection; and in swearing by their heads, they swore by their Creator, whose power and goodness appeared in every thing about them. This is the matter which Christ declares to the sinners of this age; and the ground of his assertion is plainly this,—that, in an oath, not pretences and evasions, but the nature and import of the thing are considered by Almighty God. Men always swear by a greater, viz. a supreme Being; this is an eternal rule, and whatever trivial things are made the expressions of an oath, they do not alter the nature of it, which has still a relation to God who is the maker and preserver of all the lesser things men swear by, and is as much profaned and provoked by such disguised oaths as if he were particularly named in them.

Of the apostles.

THE apostles words are much of the same nature, and are therefore to be taken in the same sense: this however we cannot but infer from the repeated prohibition, * that though swearing itself be not disallowed under the gospel, yet the frequency of it certainly is; and therefore every good christian should avoid it, if he can, altogether; if not so, as much as he is able. Candour and ingenuity, love of truth, and hatred of falsity, is the proper badge of christians; and therefore, as we profess to be such, we should use no asseverations, much less any oaths and imprecations in our discourse: our Yea should be Yea, and our Nay Nay: simple affirmations or negations should only pass between us; for it becomes christians to be of such integrity and faithfulness that their bare word should be as valid as an oath.

The primitive fathers.

THIS is the whole sense of our Saviour and of his apostles: and accordingly, if we look into the words * of those primitive writers

i Horneck's Sermons, Vol. II. k Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II.
 * St Jerome [Comment on Matth. v.] Chrysostome [Homil. 15, in Gen.] & Basil [Homil. in Psal. xiv.] seem to assert that oaths are unlawful under the gospel. Gregory Nazianzen (as it is related in his life) as soon as he was baptized, made a vow not to swear as long as he lived, and kept it even to the last. According to his own judgment and practice he advised others to refrain from oaths; as there are many passages in Epiphanius, Theodoret, Theophylact, Origen,

writers who are said to deny the lawfulness of oaths, and observe the particular scope and intendment of their discourses, we shall soon perceive that their design is not to condemn all swearing, but only the frequent use of it. They saw how oaths were abused, either by mens rashly or falsely swearing; they expressed their dislike and abhorrence of it; and advised their hearers to shun all swearing as much as they could, and admit of no oaths but when there was an absolute necessity for them. This is all they meant; and this is that which every conscientious man should do at this day; for it is indeed no more than what some of the wisest heathens have prescribed to their disciples, when they tell them † that the best way to preserve the reverence due to an oath was not to use it frequently, or upon trifling occasions to fill up the vacuities of our discourse, or procure credit to a tale; but, as far as they might, to use it only in things necessary, and when there was no other way to secure themselves but by the help of an oath.

I. THIS being sufficient to prove the lawfulness of oaths, we come now to consider what kinds are accounted unlawful; and of this nature, what we conceive to be primarily intended in the commandment, is the great sin of perjury.

The prohibition itself, as extending to unlawful oaths, as I. perjury.

I. PERJURY is the solemn invocation of God to the attestation of what we assert or promise of any kind, at the same time that we know what we assert is a direct falsehood, and what we promise, we neither can nor intend to perform¹; which is one of the highest affronts we can offer to God, and an act of most injurious consequence to men. ^m He that calls God to witness to a lie, either imagines that the Divine Being knows not the truth, and so imputes ignorance to him, or that he is not displeas'd with falsehood, and so denies his holiness, or that he is not able to avenge the indignity, and so derogates from his power: ⁿ so that the sin is not only an horrible abuse of the name of God, an open contempt of his judgment, and insolent defiance of his vengeance, but a very near approach to atheism itself; since the difference is but little between believing there is no God, and believing there is one whose omniscience and purity, and whose power and majesty, deserve no regard at all. ^o In respect of other men, it is not only a wrong to this or that particular person who suffers by it, but a kind of treason against human society, as it subverts the foundations of public peace and justice, and the private security of every man's life and fortune; for so the wise king has expressed it; ^p a false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow; intimating, that, among all the instruments of ruin and mischief that have been devised by mankind, none is of more pernicious consequence

The great impiety of it.

Origen, Cyprian, and Athanasius, that seem intirely to condemn the use of them. Edwards, *Ibid.*

† Hierocles in Pythag. *Aur. Car.* I Tillotson's Sermons. Vol. I. ^m Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ⁿ Tillotson, *ibid.* ^o *Ibid.* ^p Prov. xxv. 18.

sequence to human society than perjury, or the breach of faith : and in respect of the person himself, besides the waste that it makes in his conscience, ^a it brings disgrace and infamy upon him if he comes to be detected ; or, if he escapes the censure of the world, entails a curse upon him and his posterity, which will not easily be removed. For so in the vision of the flying roll, ^r I will bring the curse forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name, and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and it shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof.

2. Profane swearing.

2. WICKED and profane swearing in common discourse and conversation is another thing prohibited in this commandment. For ^s oaths are solemn things and reserved for great purposes, to give confirmation to our words in some weighty matters, and to put an end to controversies which cannot otherwise be peremptorily decided, and are not to be used upon trifling occurrences without expressing great impiety and irreverence towards God. And yet ^t whether it be that men think oaths set off their passion better, and make it more terrible and impressive, or that they fancy their words and sentences have not their due accent and cadence without them, or that they believe their mirth and jollity is not modish enough, except it be accompanied with them ; or whether it be merely custom and a vice that they play with purely for company's sake ; but so it is that no sin is more frequently committed by men of all ranks and distinctions, even though it has no profit nor pleasure attending it, and may really puzzle a wise man to give any tolerable reason why it is ever committed at all ; ^u though it be a great incivility in conversation, as it offends and grates upon all sober and considerate persons, who cannot be presumed (with any manner of ease and patience) to hear God affronted, and his great and glorious name treated with so much contempt and irreverence upon every slight occasion ; though it be so far from being any commendation to him that uses it, that it argues in him a perpetual distrust of his own reputation, and is an acknowledgment that he thinks his bare word not worthy of credit ; and so far from being an ornament to his discourse, that it makes it look swollen and bloated, and more bold and blustering than becomes a man of good breeding.

The folly of it.

3. Other kinds of unlawful swearing.

BUT besides these grosser profanations of God's name, there are several other kinds of oaths, which, though they sound not so heinously, are not without their guilt and condemnation : * Such as, 1. Swearing by any creature, by the heavens, by the light, by the light that shines, &c. which, according to our Saviour's interpretation, is implicitly swearing by God himself, since all these were created by him, depended intirely upon him,

q Horneck's Sermons, Vol. II. r Zech. v. 4. s Tillotson, *ibid.* t Horneck, *ibid.* u Tillotson, *ibid.* * Horneck, *ibid.*

him, and are nothing at all without him. * 2. Swearing by any gifts or endowments of the body or mind, by the life or soul of ourselves or others, by our faith, by our troth, &c. because our Saviour assured us, that, if we swear by any thing which belongs to God (as every gift and faculty we have cometh from him) it is swearing by God himself, though the name of God be not expressly mentioned. † 3. Using such minced and disguised expressions as the wit (shall I say, or rather folly) of mankind hath devised to evade the scandal of bare-faced profaneness. For all these, however palliated, are nevertheless oaths, and will accordingly be charged upon us at the great day of accounts, when inquiries shall be made what observance we have paid to that precept of the apostle, above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath.

BESIDES these oaths, whether open or disguised, there are several other ways of taking the Lord's name in vain, as † when men, 1. in their prayers run on without ever attending to what they are about, pray for what they ought not, or use vain repetitions of God's name without need, and against reason. 2. In their promises undertake to do that which afterwards they neglect to perform, not for want of power, but for want of will, and a due regard to their oath. 3. In their vows oblige themselves to what they either are not able to fulfil, or may not lawfully fulfil, or might much better and more prudently have been let alone: and, 4. In their ordinary conversation † are frequently pronouncing the name of God, by way of admiration, exclamation or expletive, but without any due and suitable reverence. To these instances we may adjoin † all cursing and imprecations, which have malice added to their profaneness; all lewd and atheistical discourses; all blasphemy and speaking reproachfully of God; all murmuring and repining at his providence; all ridiculing and profaning his holy word; all despising and exposing his ministers on account of their function; all irreverence in his public service, in the use of his prayers and sacraments; and, in short, all contemptuous treating of any thing wherein his name and honour are concerned.

SUCH are the things which this commandment forbids; and the duties which it implies are the very reverse to these; hal-

The duties implied in the commandment.

which
 † Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. † Gardener's Sermons, Vol. II.
 † Wake's Explanation of the Church Catechism. † Gardener's Sermons,
 Vol. II. † Wake, *ibid.*

which we bring upon ourselves by so sacred a tie, at all times, and in all places, speaking honourably of God's word, his sacraments, his ministers, and whatever relates to him; ^c and using our utmost endeavours that all minds may entertain good and worthy thoughts of him; all tongues may bless and praise him; and all creatures yield adoration to his name, and obedience to his will.

The commination annexed to the command suitable to the customs of all nations.

II. BUT to proceed now to the sanction of the command, which is a commination added to enforce it; God will not hold him guiltless, *i. e.* he will look upon him as a very guilty person, and accordingly pursue him with great severity, both in this life and that which is to come. To express the lawfulness of an oath, and the great guilt and penalty incurred by the violation of it, the wisdom of most nations has appointed very significant ceremonies, which the juror is obliged to observe when he comes to the reception of it. ^d The antient Phœnicians, in taking an oath, held a lamb in one hand, and a stone in another, to intimate their wishes that God might strike them dead, as they were ready to do the lamb, if they swore not according to truth. The old Romans, upon the like occasion, took up a stone and cast it from them, imprecating to themselves that God might cast them away, as they did that stone, if there was any falsity in what they swore. The Jews in taking or administering an oath ^e slew a calf and cut it asunder, and the person that was to swear walked through the dissected parts, to convince the spectators that he wished God in like manner might cut him asunder in case he falsified his oath. Lifting up their hands to heaven in the act of swearing (we ^f find it practised among the angels themselves) was an antient custom among many nations, in order to shew that they engaged all the powers of heaven against them, if the things they confirmed were not true; and the custom among us of swearing upon the holy gospel, is no bad representation of the tremendous nature of oaths. In that book are contained all the benefits and privileges of our redemption, all that we can hope for from the merits and sufferings of Jesus Christ, the pardon of sin, the promises of grace here and of salvation hereafter: so that he who affirms in his oath what is not true, renounces all claim and title to the promises, and publickly devotes himself to all the curses and threats contained in that book: and what then can the forsworn wretch expect but to fall under the speedy vengeance of God, if his declarations of this kind be not true? ^g I will come near you to judgment, and will be a swift witness against the forcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers.

The great guilt and danger of perjury,

and profane swearing and cursing.

THE like heavy sentence has the royal Psalmist denounced against every vile wretch that indulges himself in profane talking, in

^c Barrow on the Lord's Prayer. ^d Horneck's Sermons, Vol. II. ^e Jer. xxxiv. 18. ^f Dan. xii. 7. and Rev. x. 5. ^g Mal. iii. 5.

in cursing and execrations. ^b He delighted in cursing, says he, and it shall happen unto him, it shall come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones; it shall be unto him as the cloak that he has upon him, and as the girdle that he is always girded withal: and therefore, to conclude with those excellent sayings of the wise son of Sirach, ⁱ Accustom not thy mouth to swearing, neither use thyself to the naming of the Holy One; for he that useth much swearing shall be filled with iniquity, and the plague shall never depart from his house; and if he swear falsely, he shall not be innocent, but his house shall be full of calamities: there is a word that is cloathed about with death; God grant that it be not found in the heritage of Jacob!

Fourth Commandment.

Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy, &c.

THIS commandment consists, 1. of a precept, and, 2. a reason enforcing it; and the most material points in our treating of it will be to shew, 1. how far it is of moral obligation; and, 2. in what manner it is to be observed and sanctified.

1. **O**F all the commandments in the decalogue, this is the only one wherein we are bid to remember our duty: ^k the reason is, because all the other precepts were written at first upon the table of our hearts, and engraven as it were in our very nature; so that having a connatural sense of them upon our minds, we cannot so properly be said to remember as to feel them, being conscious to ourselves of our duty and obligation to observe them; whereas this is a precept of a positive nature, not imprinted in man's heart, but given to him after he was made, and might therefore be forgotten without such a call and admonition as this to remind us of it. The dispute indeed among divines has been very great concerning the nature of this commandment, some affirming that it is intirely ceremonial, and peculiar to the state of the Jewish church, while others have asserted the moral and perpetual obligation of it as equally incumbent upon every christian now. A middle opinion however has prevailed; and it is now become the general and received doctrine that this precept is of a mixed nature, partly moral, and partly ceremonial; that as to its substance, viz. that God should be solemnly and publickly worshipped, and at some set time more especially it includes a moral duty, but as to its circumstances, viz. the determination of the time and manner of performing this worship, it is purely ceremonial, and obliges christians no farther than by parity of reason it may be supposed to do it.

The nature of this precept.

^l THAT we should frequently, and with a grateful and joyful sense, reflect upon the glorious works of God, especially that

The moral part of it.

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great

^h Psal. cix. 17, &c. ⁱ Eclus. xxiii. 9, &c. ^k Beveridge's Explanation of the Church Catechism. ^l Barrow on the Decalogue.

great and fundamental one, the creation of the world, wherein the wonders of his goodness and wisdom and power were so illustriously displayed; that we should not be unmindful of the special favours of God's providence to our country, our relations, ourselves, especially such signal ones as that delivery vouchsafed the Israelites from Egyptian slavery; that we should not spend ourselves and our time in perpetual carking and labouring about worldly affairs, but assign some competent portion of it both for the relaxation of our minds and our attendance on the concerns of our immortal souls; that we should allow fit times of respite and refreshment to such as divine providence has placed about us in the condition of servants, that both their lives may be made more comfortable, and themselves enjoy the opportunity of serving God, our common master, and regarding the welfare of their souls, no less precious than our own; and lastly, that we should shew some mercy and kindness even to our very beasts, allowing them some ease and refreshment from the painful drudgeries they undergo for our sakes; these are all of them things which reason evidently dictates, and which common sense must needs admit as duties of piety, justice and humanity: and, to secure the performance of these, even common prudence seems to suggest that set times should be appointed wherein they may be discharged in a manner pleasing and acceptable to God. And accordingly if we consult the practice of the world, we find that in all wise and civil societies some provision has ever been made, by the appointment of festival times, for the observation of such duties; that the founders of all laws (according to ^m Seneca) did institute festival days, that men might publicly be constrained to cheerfulness; and that the gods (according to ⁿ Plato) pitying mankind, born to painful labour, appointed, for an ease and cessation from their toils, the returns of festival seasons.

The ceremonial.

THUS the worship and service of God, an intermission of labour to attend it, and the appointment of proper times to perform it in, are the moral parts of the Sabbath, which every one, both Jew and Gentile, is bound to observe: the circumstantial determination of the measure and manner of the performances; that a seventh day precisely, rather than a sixth or an eighth, should be assigned, and a total cessation from labour both for man and beast prescribed; this is a matter of positive institution, whose only foundation was in the will of God, and whose obligation extended to the Jews only: for so the account of it seems to imply, ^o The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath and observe it throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant; it is a sign between me and the children of Israel for

^m Legum conditores festos instituerunt dies, ut ad hilaritatem homines publice cogerentur, tanquam necessarium laboribus interponentes temperamentum. Sen. de Tranq. Ant. n De Leg. 2. ^o Exod. xxxi. 16, 17.

for ever : ^p for as the covenant between God and the Israelites included none but such as were of their nation and religion, so the Sabbath, being a sign of that covenant, was to extend no farther (as to the ceremonial part of it at least) than the covenant did, and was therefore confined to themselves only.

^q So little did the apostles and first disciples of Christ think themselves obliged by the ceremonial part of this law, that, immediately after his ascension, they forbore to keep the Sabbath any longer upon the same day with the Jews. They held it very reasonable indeed to follow the example of God himself in setting apart one day in the week to rest from worldly labours, the better to attend upon the duties of religion, as after six days he rested from the works of the creation ; they thought it a great disparagement to the holiness and perfection of their religion, if they did not allot as much time for God's public worship as the Jews did : and, though they did not fulfil the letter of the commandment, they accounted themselves bound by the intent and equity of it ; and therefore they appointed one day in seven to be kept holy, to be employed in prayers and praises, in hearing and meditating on God's word, in receiving the sacraments, and exercising all the pious acts of charity and devotion ; but they thought fit to alter the day from the Jewish Sabbath to the first day of the week : and this they did upon very good grounds and authority.

No obligation to christians, as to the day.

THE Jewish Sabbath was at first instituted in memory of God's creation of the world, but afterwards we find this reason omitted, and another made mention of : ^r Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and a stretched-out arm ; therefore the Lord thy God commands thee to keep the Sabbath-day : from whence it is evident ^s that the Sabbath was to be kept for another reason besides that of the creation, even in memory of God's delivering his people out of their bondage and slavery in Egypt : which deliverance, being a type of our redemption by Christ, makes it no obscure intimation that when our redemption should be accomplished by him, the Sabbath should be kept in memory of that. ^t To change an institution, which, in a great measure was but ceremonial, was certainly as much in our Saviour's power (who for this reason calls himself the Lord of the Sabbath) as it was in God's to appoint it at first : and if our Saviour had power to abrogate the old and institute a new day, we have presumption enough to suppose that he did so, not only ^u from his rising from the dead, ^v from his appearing to his disciples, and ^w sending down the Holy Ghost, by which events he consecrated this new day ; but

The Jewish Sabbath. why changed.

^p Towerson on the Commandments. ^q Nourse's Practical Discourse of the Church Homilies. ^r Deut. v. 15. ^s Beveridge on the Church Catechism. ^t Taylor's Practical Catechism. ^u Matth. xxviii. 1. ^v Luke xxiv. 1. ^w John xx. 26. ^x Acts ii. 1.

but (what is our best evidence in this affair) from the constant practice of such as must be allowed to understand their master's mind in this particular best, his apostles and immediate successors, who always made the day, which is now become the christian Sabbath, the most solemn time of their public worship and devotions.

ON the Sabbath, immediately before the resurrection, the women that attended Christ from Galilee are said ^y to rest indeed according to the commandment, and in several places we find that the apostles frequented the synagogues on the Jewish Sabbath; but, after the knowledge of their Lord's resurrection, it is never more said that they did it according to the commandment, but only ^z according to custom, or as the manner was. ^a They complied no doubt with the Jews, for some time, in many things that were really abrogated, to try if they could win them by prudential condescensions; but when this time was in a good measure expired, and ignorance of the liberty procured by Christ from the ceremonial part of the law became less excusable, then the Jewish Sabbath was by degrees declared an antiquated rite, and the christian Sabbath universally received in its stead, so universally that we can scarce forbear thinking that it was one of those precepts which our blessed Saviour, after his resurrection, or at least the Holy Ghost after his descent, left in the hands of the apostles to be transmitted to succeeding ages, according to that known maxim of St Austin, ^b that what is held, and always was held by the universal church, and was never instituted by any council, is rightly believed to have been delivered by apostolic authority.

Or, as to the manner of observing it.

AND as there is no obligation upon us to keep our Sabbath upon the same day with the Jews; so neither are we tied to their strict and rigorous manner of observing it. Our blessed Saviour gives us the true notion of our duty with respect to this commandment, when he tells us that ^c the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. ^d God intended it for our good, and to be the most profitable part of our whole time;

^y Luke xxiii. 56. ^z Acts xvii. 2.

^a It is true that for some time, in the eastern parts Saturday was kept holy; yet this was merely for the sake of the Judaizing converts, and at the same time the Lord's day was also observed: but in the western churches Saturday was not observed at all as a festival; yea, it was sometimes made a fast-day, and Sunday was the only day that was kept holy, as a day that succeeded in the place of the Jewish Sabbath, and in remembrance of Christ's resurrection. Pursuant to this we may observe that the apostles did not only make this the day of their religious assemblies, Acts xx. 7. but that Ignatius, the contemporary as well as successor of the apostles, in his epistle to the Magnesians, exhorteth them to lay aside the observation of the Sabbath, and to keep the Lord's-day for a festival, wherein our life rose with Christ: and Justin Martyr, the nearest to him and the apostles, tells us that upon Sunday Christians assembled together out of all cities and villages for divine service, which consisted in reading the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, preaching, praying, and other such religious exercises. Apol. 2. See Towerson on the Commandments.

^b Quod universa tenet Ecclesia, nec conciliis institutum, sed semper retentum est, non nisi autoritate apostolica traditum rectissime creditur. ^c Mark ii. 27.

^d Mourfe's Practical Discourse on the Church Homilies.

time; and therefore we should be careful so to employ it as may best promote our true interest and happiness. And as the concerns of our souls are of infinitely greater moment to us than those of this life, it should on this day be our chief care and business to provide for them; yet not so as to forget that whilst we are in the body, necessary provision must at all times be made for it: and likewise, as long as we converse among men, there will be frequent need of our charitable help and assistance, which must at no time be neglected when we have it in our power to afford it them. In another place our Saviour tells the Jews, *‘ my Father hitherto worketh (meaning on the Sabbath-day) and I also work thereon; and therefore as God ceaseth not on the Sabbath-day to exercise the works of providence, but then as at other times looketh after the support and sustenance of all his creatures: on that day as well as any other openeth his hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness; so should we, on our Sabbath, provide those things which are necessary for ourselves and families, and all those that have their dependence upon us. For works of charity and of necessity in us answer to the works of providence in God, and his carrying on the one upon the Sabbath is a sufficient warrant and encouragement to us that we should never intermit or neglect the other. It is part of our christian liberty then, wherewith Christ has made us free, that we are not obliged to the observation of the Sabbath with all that strictness that was incumbent on the Jews; but yet the equity of the precept requires thus much of us, that we should not follow the works of our ordinary employ, much less run into a course of riot and excess on the day which God has sanctified. Pride or wantonness, or extravagant eating or drinking, and what commonly attends it, *‘ foolish talking, or jesting, which the apostle says are not convenient, do ill become a christian at any time; but the unseemliness of them is greatest, and their guilt is much aggravated, if men chuse the Lord’s day to indulge themselves in them: for whether it be considered as a memorial of God’s goodness in the creation, or of his infinite mercy in the redemption of us, the expostulation which Moses makes upon a like occasion will be very apposite to such impious profaners of it; *‘ O ye foolish people and unwise, do ye thus requite the Lord who bought you, and him who made you and established you? Which leads us in the next place to observe,***

2. IN what manner it is to be observed and sanctified. The Jewish Sabbath was ordered to be kept with great strictness from work and bodily labour; *‘ thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor the cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; and the profanation of it (which consisted in doing any little*

‘ John v. 17. *‘* Eph. v. 4. *‘* g Deut. xxxii. 6 *‘* h Exod. xx. 10.

little thing, even to the kindling of a fire in order to dress their meat) was accounted a sort of sacrilege, and the offender was commanded to be stoned to death. Nay, so great was the rest enjoined them on this day, that they seemed not only to be restrained from all kind of labour, but even from moving from their places; ⁱ for abide ye (says God when he appointed the observation of it) every one in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day: for though there is no doubt but that this was ^k to admit of some relaxation, otherwise it would have hindered them from resorting to the solemn assemblies; yet it is apparent enough, from the end of its institution ^l as well as the practice of the Jews hereupon, that there was something more than ordinary intended, even as to their not stirring from their habitations.

Why enjoined: viz. for the sake of rest,

Now if it be inquired for what reason God enjoined the Jews so very strict a rest on the Sabbath-day, the reply may be, in the words of Justin Martyr ^m, that he did it because of their irregular dispositions, and the hardness of their hearts. They were a people extremely addicted to all the methods of thriving in the world; to this purpose they inured their domestics, their dependents and animals fit for service, to very hard labour all the week. ⁿ Nay, since every seventh year brought with it a general release from servitude, the covetousness of their masters, as they saw that year approaching, would have quite destroyed their servants with perpetual toil, had it not been for the happy intervention of this day of rest every week: and ^o therefore, in compassion to these as well as to take off the others thoughts from the world, and turn them in some measure upon spiritual objects, God strictly prohibited them all bodily labour or drudgery on the Sabbath, and even such distant appearances of them as are not necessary to be observed by persons under different circumstances, and possessed of a better disposition. This reflection will be farther confirmed if we observe how often the Jews are reprimanded by the prophets for the profanation of the Sabbath, for polluting it, and for exacting their own labours in it; as if the work of the six days had not been sufficient to satisfy their worldly ends, and to provide for the common occasions of life. There is a passage to this purpose in the prophet Amos, which plainly shews that the people thought either the returns of the Sabbath too frequent, or the manner prescribed

ⁱ Exod. xvi. 29. ^k This precept, the Jews say, is not violated if a man did not go above two thousand cubits from the city where he dwelt, which they called a Sabbath-day's journey. This was the distance between the ark and the camp when they marched, and probably the same proportion was observed when they rested, and is commonly computed to be about the space of a mile. Now if (according to their manner of arguing) they were allowed to go from their tents to the tabernacle to worship upon the Sabbath-day, which was the distance of two thousand cubits, it could be no breach of the Sabbath to go so far upon that day on any other occasion. Lewis's Antiquities of the Hebrew Republic. ^l Acts i. 12. ^m *Dicitur anomias, kai ten sabbatikon.* Dial. cum Tryp. ⁿ Le Clerc's Commentary. ^o Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II.

scribed for the observation of it too severe: Hear this, saith the prophet ^r, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes? And from hence we may gather that the design of God, in giving so strict an injunction concerning the Sabbath, was to cure this worldly and avaritious spirit in the Jews, or at least to prevent their cruel usage of the poorer sort; and by such intervals of ease and relaxation, to enable them to live with some sort of comfort in their mean condition.

BUT the cessation from labour was not all. ^a The Jews, and religious offices. though they had no express order in this commandment concerning any natural or moral services they were to perform to God, yet were themselves sagacious enough to understand such duties couched in the sanctification of the day. Accordingly, in every place of their habitation they settled synagogues and oratories, whereunto they resorted at such times to offer up their devotions to God, to hear the Scribes ^b read and expound the law, and to join in the offices of prayer and thanksgiving; and for their encouragement herein the prophet is directed to acquaint them, ^c If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words (which is the form prescribed for the observation of the Sabbath-day) then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

WE, indeed, who live under an easier dispensation, are happily exempted from the rigid observation of the Sabbath; ^d We are not to be judged by any man, as the apostle tells us, for meat or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath-days, which are a shadow of the things to come; ^e but still, as to all things relating to the honour of God, and the advancement of true piety and holiness, we are under greater and stricter obligations than the Jews themselves were: so that, though we christians are not bound to keep the Sabbath upon the same day with them, or in the same manner that they did; yet, since we have one day in the week appointed for a religious rest, we ought to answer the ends of it, and make it a day of rest from our ordinary labours, for our better attending upon the solemn worship of God, and employing ourselves in the exercise of all things which pertain to spiritual life and godliness.

^y How

^p Amos viii. 4, &c. ^q Barrow on the Decalogue. ^s Acts xv. 21. ^t Isaiah liiii. 13, 14. ^u Col. ii. 16, 17. ^x Nourse's Practical Discourse on the Church Homilies.

And man-
ner of do-
ing it.

How zealous and punctual the primitive christians were to sanctify this day with their public devotions, we have the general suffrage of all ecclesiastical history. They did not think it enough to read, and pray, and praise God at home, but made conscience of appearing in the public assemblies, from which nothing but sickness and an absolute necessity did ever detain them. Yea, and when persecution at any time forced them to keep close, yet, if it were possible, they would assemble in the night, or early in the morning; and no sooner was there the least mitigation, but they presently returned to their open duty, and publickly met altogether, so that a Sabbath without public worship seemed un sanctified. When therefore this day of the Lord approaches (to conclude with a few directions concerning it) that we may thus keep it holy, and make it a religious rest (according to the present intendment of the law) it will become us to rise as early to the service of God as we were wont on other days to our worldly employments; to betake ourselves in secret to the supplication of the divine aid and benediction; to raise our affections to a suitable degree of love and reverence, by reading and meditation; and to allow as little time as may be to other necessary or convenient avocations from such exercises, until we repair from our closets to the church. When we are come to the house of the Lord (which should always be at the beginning of service, and with our whole family attending us) prostrating ourselves before the Divine Majesty, to implore his blessing upon our endeavours, we must join in the public worship, in prayers and praises with all fervour, in hearing the word read and preached with all diligence and attention; and in receiving the holy sacrament, if it be administered, with all affectionate thankfulness. When the public worship is done, and we are returned from the solemn assembly, we must not think ourselves discharged from any other duty: our children and servants require then our care, who, on this day especially, are to be instructed in the principles of religion, have their proficiency inquired into, and themselves advised and encouraged severally, according to their needs and capacities, in their respective duties. When this is done, we must spend the rest of the day in religious and charitable offices; in a loving and christian communion with one another; in a thankful enjoyment of the good creatures of God; and finally shut up the whole with prayer and thanksgiving; with imploring forgiveness for all the failings of the day, and begging that our imperfect services may be accepted for the perfect righteousness, and meritorious intercession of Christ Jesus.

S E C T.

y *Cave's Primitive Christianity.* z *Newcomb's Catech. Sermons, Vol. I. and Tower's on the Commandments.*

S E C T. II.

TABLE II. Fifth Commandment.

Honour thy father and thy mother, &c.

THIS is the first commandment of the second table, and is very properly set here in the front of all; for as honouring of God was the first commandment of the former table, so is it fit that the honouring of our parents should have the pre-eminence in the latter; since, next to God himself (according ^a to the sense of the wisest law-givers and instructors) our parents are chiefly to be respected and obeyed. And therefore the sense and meaning of honouring our parents, together with the nature of the promise annexed to the duty, will be the two things to be considered in the explanation of this precept.

I. ^b HONOUR signifies a great many things, and takes its sense especially from the person it relates to: to honour God is one thing, to honour the king another, and to honour our equals or inferiors is a different thing from all the rest: and therefore the word must not be taken in the same sense wherever we meet it, but the party to whom it is addressed must determine its meaning and extent. Since then the intent of the commandment is to secure the duty of children to parents, all the several duties of love, of respect, of obedience, and of support, which children owe to their parents, are comprehended in the word *honour*.

Duties of
children to
parents.

I. FIRST then, we are commanded to love our parents. ^c But because, properly speaking, it is not in our power (whatever we may think) to love or hate, to hope or fear, when, or what, or whom we will, but according as we apprehend the thing or person desirable and lovely; by being commanded to love our parents, we are more especially to take such courses and considerations as may increase our natural affection to them, and to avoid all such things as may any ways diminish it. ^d How far the consideration of their being, under God, the authors and originals of our life and existence may contribute to the exciting of this affection, is not so easy to determine; because life, according as it is happy or miserable, is differently to be represented; but parental love which exerts itself in a constant care and preservation of us is a real good, which deserves to be repaid with all the love we can. It is this that supplies all the wants of helpless infancy, secures from all the hazards of heedless childhood, and giddy and unthinking youth; that shapes the body, keeps the several limbs in order, and makes the person beautiful and comely. It is this that informs the mind and regulates the

Love, and
how to be
promoted.

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P

manners,

^a *Athanasius men proota Theous, &c. Pythag. Aur. Car. Proota Theon tima metapeita de seio geneas. Phocyl.* ^b Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^c Fleetwood's Relative Duties. ^d *Ibid.*

manners, that trains up the reason, that exercises the memory, that instructs them to argue and understand their little affairs, and takes care to educate and fit them for great matters. It is this that brings them first to God in baptism, and keeps them afterwards in the ways of goodness and religion, by instilling into them wise and virtuous principles, by reminding them constantly of their several duties, encouraging them in good by favours and rewards, and reclaiming them from evil by reproofs and corrections.

THESE and a thousand more are the ways which parents take to make their children happy; besides those endless and innumerable labours, watchings, and sollicitations, which consume their whole life to make an handsome provision for them of the good things of this life. So that, whatever benefits can be the ground and foundation of love in children, the care and love of parents abundantly afford them; and therefore they are obliged to take the remembrance of these frequently into consideration, in order to excite and stir them up to love their parents who have done so great things for them; who, next under God, were not only the authors of their being, but of their well-being likewise, and present happiness.

Respect,

2. ANOTHER duty which children owe to their parents is respect, *i. e.* all external honour and civility, whether in words or actions; by virtue of which they are obliged to be submissive in their behaviour, and mannerly and dutiful in their speeches and answers to them; to say things honourable and commendable of them, to pry as little into their failings and infirmities as they can themselves, and to extenuate and conceal them as much from others. And for this there is so much reason and decency in nature, that it shocks us unavoidably to hear one reproach his parents with vices or infirmities, though what he says be true, unless it be done with great concern and tenderness, with grief and pity; but when it is done with contempt and pleasure of telling, we cannot help abhorring such impiety: for the hearts of all men go along with Noah, in laying punishment upon Cham for his unnatural and profane derision, and love the memory of those sons that would not see themselves, nor suffer others to be witnesses of the miscarriages of, their father.

now to be procured.

THAT therefore children may discharge this part of their duty better, and in every gesture, word, and action, shew all due honour and respect to their parents; as it is partly in their parents power, so should it be their care and concern to promote it. And to this purpose, they must be careful how they live and behave in the sight of their children; for if they make themselves vile and cheap in their eyes by too much familiarity, by light and indiscreet carriage, they will in vain expect the reverence and respect that is due to their character. The foundation of respect is some supposed excellence and worth, and, in consequence

consequence of this, some kind of superiority ; but when parents either admit their children to an equality, or make them privy to their follies and indiscretions, they do, in effect, invite contempt. And therefore all due care should be taken that the domestic differences, the idle and unseemly quarrels and debates, the simple and unkind words and actions, which too commonly pass between parents, should be concealed and hidden from children ; for they observe and treasure up these follies, and secretly, at least, side with the one, and learn to hate and despise the other, or entertain, too soon, a mean opinion of both, which destroys all manner of esteem and dutiful observance.

3. ANOTHER duty which children owe their parents, and without which, all their honour and respect is mere shew and formality, is obedience to their lawful commands. I say, lawful commands, ^e otherwise we have our Saviour's warrant not to obey them, ^f If any one love father and mother more than me, he is not worthy of me ; which, in another place, we find expressed thus, ^g If any one hate not his father and mother, he cannot be my disciple : the meaning of which is, that God is to be loved and obeyed above all, and that we may very justly withdraw our obedience from our parents, rather than abandon our duty to God. Thus, if parents should be so wickedly inclined as to command their children to lie, to steal, to do violence and injustice, &c. the children are not at liberty to obey, because they have an antecedent obligation, and are tied by God to truth, and honesty, and justice. ^h Children obey your parents in all things ; for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord, says St Paul in one place ; but then he explains himself in another, ⁱ Children obey your parents in the Lord ; for this is right, *i. e.* according to God's commandment and will ; for to obey them against God, can neither be right nor pleasing, and so we should have understood him, had he not given us this explication.

Obedience when to be refused.

AND as we are not bound to obey our parents when they command us any thing contrary to the laws of God, so neither are we, when their injunctions are contrary to the laws of the land : the reason is, because the authority which enacts these laws is superior to that of our parents ; nor may any one's private good be considered in competition with the public. If a father therefore should command his son to betray his country, to set the capital on fire, or be any way instrumental to the overthrow of the constitutions of the kingdom, he must not so far honour his father as to obey any such commands : but then, even when he disobey, he must do it with great modesty and tendernefs ; not with upbraidings and reproaches, not with high and scornful refusals, but by declining and avoiding such commands with all the gentle arts and methods of submission possible ;

^e Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^f Matth. x. 37. ^g Luke xiv. 26.
^h Col. iii. 20. ⁱ Eph. vi. 1.

sible; for even in a righteous cause the language of children must be humble to their parents.

AND as our obedience to parents is to cease where the authority of God or the government has laid a prohibition, so it is supposed not to be required, where the thing under command carries an invincible antipathy to our inclinations. The common instance of this kind is in the case of marriage, which being a state and condition upon which the happiness or misery of life depends, cannot be enterprized with any hopes of felicity, without a real affection on the one side, and a good assurance of it on the other. But now when a parent, overlooking all this, will enjoin a child upon mere motives of advantage to marry, where there is no foundation of love, nor prospect of content; it is hardly to be thought that such instances are to be complied with. Parents, indeed, are supposed to have a great hand in this affair: ^k the examples in scripture, as well as ^l the laws of most nations favour their direction in this case; and therefore they are to take all due care to see their children well disposed of, according to their age, quality, and tempers, and not let the prospect of fortune and estate preponderate all other considerations of form and favour, birth and education, virtue and good qualities; and when they have done this, the children are to obey as far as possibly they can, and give up the little objections of fancy to the more mature deliberations of their parents: but when, on the contrary, parents offer to their children what they cannot possibly like, and what all wise and considerate people cannot but disapprove, there is no doubt to be made, but that in such a case children may refuse, and, if their refusal be made with decency and humility, that it will not fall under the head of sinful disobedience.

And how to
be promot-
ed.

WITH reserve to these, and such like cases then, our obedience to parents is founded upon their greater knowledge and experience, the sense of their love and good intentions towards us, and their earnest and daily sollicitude for our welfare. And therefore, if children, when any severe injunction that thwarts their natural inclinations comes from their parents, would but reason thus with themselves; ^m “ These are the counsels and
“ commands

^k The examples of the patriarch Isaac, Gen. xxiv. and Jacob, Gen. xxviii. who were directed by their parents in their marriage; and that text in Numb. xxx. 3, 4. If a maid vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, and her father shall hold his peace at her, her vow shall stand; but if her father disallow her, in the day that he heareth her, not any of her vows shall stand. ^l seems to intimate, that the parents consent should be obtained in order to the marriage-vow, which is the most solemn of all. *Edwards's Body of Divinity*, vol. II. ^l The laws of the Greeks and Romans, two of the wisest people in the world, and the canons and judgments of the best writers, make the consent of parents requisite: Nay, the canons of our own church say expressly [Canon 101.] that it is not lawful for any children (unless arrived at the age of 21) to make a marriage-contract without the consent of their parents, and, in case they are dead, of their guardians and governors. ^m *Electwood's Relative Duties*.

“ commands of people that have lived a great while longer in
 “ the world than I : I am but of yesterday, and know little ;
 “ but sure my parents have not lived so long for nothing : their
 “ age has taught them experience, and the wisdom and know-
 “ ledge which commonly attends it has qualified them for
 “ counsellors : and as they are fit to advise me, so I have all
 “ the security imaginable of their affection and good will, nor
 “ can I suspect the least design they can have upon me, unless
 “ it be to do me good, and to prevent my falling into any
 “ miscarriage, which I find affects them rather more than it
 “ does myself. They have made me their pride and glory :
 “ they have placed all their happiness and content in my wel-
 “ fare ; and therefore I cannot but believe that these counsels
 “ and commands are the best that (considering all circumstances)
 “ they can give, and the safest for me to follow :” if children,
 I say, would but reason thus with themselves, and, at the same
 time, reflect upon the ties and obligations they have to be obe-
 dient to their parents, the reasonableness, the pleasure, and se-
 curity of being so, the approbation of all good people, and the
 blessing of God that goes along with it, they would soon bring
 themselves to a ready disposition of obedience, even though
 there were some things not so agreeable to their own desires in
 what their parents might enjoin.

4. THERE is one duty more included in the commandment, Support-
 and that is the support and sustenance of our parents, or our
 administering to them in their wants and weaknesses. ^a For con-
 sidering the care and pains which our father, and the sleepless
 nights and homely offices which our mother underwent for us ;
 how tender they both were of us in our infancy, when we were
 incapable of helping ourselves, and how liberal of their sub-
 stance, to give us an education, and settle us in a station of life to
 the utmost of their abilities ; we cannot but think it incumbent
 on us to requite their care, and ^o make them a suitable return
 (as the apostle words it) when either poverty, which is an
 heavy load, and requires our support, or old age, which is a
 second childhood, and requires our attendance, comes upon
 them. Upon the whole, ^p parents, in respect of their children,
 do bear the signal stamp and image of God himself, not only as
 he is their maker, but as he is their preserver and benefactor ;
 and therefore we may observe ^q, that as the duties to other
 men are termed kindness, or charity, or courtesy, or liberality,
 &c. those towards our parents in every language (I suppose)
 are stiled piety, which implies something divine in the object of
 them, and denotes that the offences of children, in this respect,
 are grievously enhanced ; that to slight our parents is more than
 unkindness ; to refuse them succour is more than uncharitable-
 ness ;

^a Fowerfon on the Commandments. ^o 1 Tim. v. 4. *amobus opationis*.
^p Edwards's Body Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^q Barrow on the Decalogue.

ness; to be unmannerly to them is more than discourtesy; and in their necessity to be illiberal is more than sordid avarice; it is an high impiety and flagitiousness against heaven; † For he that forsaketh his father is a blasphemer; and he that angreth his mother is cursed of God; but he that honoureth his father shall have long life. Which brings us

The encouragement to this duty.

II. To the nature of that encouragement which God has annexed to the performance of this commandment, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Now that this promise was peculiar to the children of Israel is evident from its being limited to the land of Canaan, where they only were to inhabit; and therefore from hence it cannot in the least be concluded, either that obedient children shall always inherit long life, or that they who arrive at old age, have therefore been obedient children, since every day's experience shews the contrary: but the encouragement which children have from hence is this,—That if long life be most convenient for them (all circumstances considered) they may expect it; but if it will not prove a blessing (as of itself it seldom does) then is not God unfaithful to his promise, if the best and most obedient children are translated betimes into that better and heavenly country, whereof the land of promise was confessedly but a poor type and shadow: and therefore we find the son of Sirach exhorting, children to honour and observe their parents from motives of an higher consideration than what are promised the Jews: † My son, help thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth; and if his understanding fail, have patience, and despise him not when thou art in thy full strength; for the relieving of thy father will not be forgotten; in the day of thy affliction it shall be remembered, and make thy sins melt away as the ice in the fair warm weather. By parity of reason, we might reduce to this commandment our obligation to honour all those who perform such beneficial offices to us, as we receive from our natural parents; those who afford us maintenance or education; those who instruct and advise us; such as our governors and magistrates, whether civil or ecclesiastical, our patrons and benefactors, our tutors and schoolmasters, but especially our faithful friends: but as we shall have a proper opportunity to treat of these relative duties separately, we shall only observe, at this time, what this commandment is more immediately supposed to imply, viz. the reciprocal duties of parents towards their children.

Duties of parents to their children.

Instruction.

I. Now one great duty incumbent upon parents, after the tender and careful nursing of their children (which is properly the mother's business, and must not, without sickness or inability, be neglected) is to teach and instruct them in the laws of God, and in the ways of religion. † This duty God has particularly charged

† Eccles. iii. 16. † Ibid. ver. 12, &c. † Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. 4.

charged upon his own people, speaking of the laws which he had given them; ^u Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up: and that this work ought to be begun very early, even upon the first budding and appearance of reason and understanding in them, the prophet hath informed us, ^{*} Whom shalt he teach knowledge? Whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast; for precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little. Nor is the gospel in this particular less pressing than the law: ^x Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, *i. e.* in a literal sense, bring them up in the christian religion: ^y Teach them their duty, what they are to believe, and what to practise: instruct them in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ: shew them in what condition they are by nature, and to what they are advanced by grace: let them know, that without believing in Christ they can reap no benefit from his meritorious undertakings; that without holiness there can be no happiness; and that therefore they must be careful to keep a good conscience towards God and man, and by a blameless conversation to adorn the doctrine of the gospel. ^z Above all, inform and endeavour to convince them that there is a life after death, wherein men shall receive from God a mighty and eternal reward, or a terrible and endless punishment, according as they have done, or neglected their duty in this life; and ^a therefore urge it upon them as an undeniable truth, that if they live unholy lives, they shall die miserably; and that, though their lives be never so long and prosperous, yet, if they die in their sins, it would be better, far better for them they had never been born.

And as it is the business of parents to instil into their childrens minds the principles of religion; so should it be their care to frame their lives according to the rules and precepts of it: ^b to train them up in the exercise of obedience and modesty, of diligence and sincerity, of tenderness and humanity, as the general dispositions to religion; to accustom them to the government of their passions and tongues as the foundation of it; and to inure them to the practice of piety and devotion towards God, of sobriety and chastity with regard to themselves, and of justice and charity towards all men, as the principal parts of it.

2. ANOTHER duty incumbent upon parents is to reprove and correct their children when they do amiss: for so the wise king

Reprove
and cor-
rection.

^u Deut. vi. 7. ^{*} Isa. xxviii. 9, 10. ^x Eph. vi. 4. ^y Fleetwood on the Relative Duties. ^z Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. ^a Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^b Tillotson, *ibid.*

king has determined the matter; ^c The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame: where he mentions the mother emphatically, because she many times is most faulty on the side of fond indulgence. The apostle indeed enjoins parents ^d not to provoke their children to wrath; but where there is manifest hazard of their falling into wicked courses, there they are not to stand considering, whether what is proper to reclaim them, and prevent their ruin ought to be applied. ^e Such a restraint, reproof, admonition, or correction, as is in reason, and all probability likely to procure the amendment of children, though it will certainly provoke them to all the anger and impatience possible, is not here advised to be forborn; but only such a constant, rigorous, and austere treatment as makes children look upon their parents as their tyrants, and accordingly resent their usage of them. It is said indeed of Adonijah, the son of David, ^f that his father had not displeas'd him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so? But, as David himself had sufficient reason to repent of such indulgence, his example can be but a bad precedent to other parents, unless their children behave so as not to need any check or reproof. His son Solomon was a great deal wiser than his father; and he advises parents never to regard the cries, the pain, and grief of their children under their punishments, when there was just occasion, and when they were in danger of miscarriage; ^g for he that spareth the rod, saith he, hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes: he chasteneth him while there is hope, and lets not his soul spare for his crying.

THERE is a lenity then to our children that is culpable; and in case of a wilful and heinous sin, especially if it be exemplary and of public influence, we must not use mildness. ^h To rebuke gently, upon such an occasion, is rather to countenance the fault: it seems to argue, that we are not sensible enough of its enormity, and have not a due dislike and detestation of it: it looks like old Eli's reproofs to his sons, even when they were become scandalous to every body else; ⁱ Why do you such things, for I hear of your evil-dealing by all the people? Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear, you make the Lord's people to transgress: and, as this was a rebuke of no proportion to their crimes, God accordingly resents it in the revelation he made to Samuel; ^k I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not; nor shall the iniquity of Eli's house be purged with sacrifice or offering for ever.

THERE is an error, on the other hand, which parents often incur in the education and government of their children, and that

Errors in
too much
lenity.

Too much
severity.

^c Prov. xxix. 15. ^d Eph. vi. 4. ^e Fleetwood on the Relative Duties. ^f 1 Kings i. 6. ^g Prov. xiii. 24.—xix. 18. ^h Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. ⁱ 1 Sam. ii. 23, 24. ^k *Ibid.* iii. 13, 14.

that is, too much rigour and severity. In the matter of reproof and correction, parents are allowed indeed to do that with their children which they may not do to other people; but it is always upon this presumption, that what they do will tend to their benefit. For this reason the laws of God and man have left children to their parents discretion, and will not punish them for doing that to them which would be punished if done to strangers; but neither do the laws of God and man allow parents to do any thing truly injurious to their children, nor does nature indulge them in such power. ¹ She only gives them power to do them all the good they can, and allows them the liberty of hurting and afflicting them only for a time, in order to their amendment: and therefore, where a parent's conscience tells him that the affliction he is laying upon his child is neither designed, nor likely to do him any good, it tells him, at the same time, he has no authority to do it; it tells him he is unnatural in doing it; and though no human laws take cognizance of such severity (unless the commonwealth be found to suffer by it) yet the man cannot chuse but know that he is cruelly injurious all the while, and usurps a power which does not naturally belong to him. A parent therefore must be very careful that he mistake not the silence of God's word, nor the permission of human laws, nor the dictates of his own severe and rugged temper for the power and authority which nature gives him; for he may be unnatural to his children, though God's word prescribes him no rule how far he may go; though human laws will allow of what he does, and his own temper prompts him to it.

ABOVE all, he must have a strict guard upon himself, that, when the nature of any crime calls for chastisement, he do not correct his child in a passion; for this will look more like revenge than good-will, and exasperate the offender, rather than reform him. ^m The first experiment proper to be made upon children should be to allure them to their duty, and, by reasonable inducements, to gain them to the love of goodness by praise and reward, and sometimes by shame and disgrace; and where this will do, there will be no occasion to proceed to severity, especially to great severities which are very unsuitable to human nature. A mixture of prudent and seasonable reproof and correction (when there is occasion for it) may do well; but whips are not the cords of a man: human nature may be driven by them, but it must be led by sweeter and more gentle methods.

3. ANOTHER duty of parents to their children is to make provision for their maintenance and support; but in what measure and proportion they are to do this, it is not so easy to determine. The benefit of a moderate fortune seems to be recommended in that request of Agur's; ⁿ Give me neither poverty

Support
and main-
tenance.

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nor

¹ Fleetwood on the Relative Duties. ^m Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. ⁿ Prov.

xxx. 8, 9.

nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me : lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain. By the food that is convenient for us, he means all the necessaries and accommodations of life ; but these (as to their quantity at least) must be supposed to differ according to the state the children are in, and the condition they are born to. ° If children are in a state of infancy, wherein they can provide nothing for themselves, there is no doubt but that the provision of parents ought to be as large as the necessities of their children. ¶ If children have some natural defect, either in their bodily or rational faculties, though they are arrived even to maturity of age, yet are they as much children as those of younger years, and have consequently an equal interest in their parents care and provision : if children have arrived to years of ability and discretion, so as to be able to provide for themselves, there is no doubt to be made but that their father may oblige them to it, and subtract so much of his maintenance from them, as they for themselves are in a condition to acquire. ¶ The poorest parents in the world are obliged to provide for their children according to their best abilities ; but then, as they can provide for them no otherwise than by inuring them to labour and industry, they must be careful to accustom them to it from their youth up, that they may be enabled to undergo fatigue, and to gain an honest livelihood by the sweat of their brow. The richer and better sort of people are to make provision for their children according to the rank and condition whereunto they are born ; and persons of high extraction are to consider, not only what is necessary for a son, but what is requisite for the son of such a father, and one descended from such a family.

¶ NOR should the parent's care only provide for his children during his own life, but, as much as in him lies, afterwards ; especially when the necessities of his children (which is the ground of providing for them) are, after his decease, like to be greater than they were before. And therefore every parent should, before he dies, either train up his children in some useful calling and employment, whereby they may be able to provide for themselves (which indeed is an excellent portion) or, if that will not suffice, or be not so suitable to their rank and condition, provide for them such competent estates as may support the dignity of their family when they die, and consist with the rules of justice and charity to acquire while they live.

A good example.

4. ONE duty more which parents owe their children is to set them a good example. ° Example is the most lively way of teaching, and, because children are much given to imitation, it is likewise a very delightful way, and best adapted to their capacity.

° Fleetwood on the Relative Duties. ¶ Towerfon on the Commandments.
 q Fleetwood, *ibid.* r Towerfon, *ibid.* s Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I.

capacity, as being soonest understood, and fittest to make a lasting impression upon them; and therefore 'above all things, as the antient moralist expresses it, Parents ought to behave blamelessly, and shew themselves an evident example to their children; that they, looking upon their lives, as in a glass, may be drawn off from all base actions and words, and know how to dress and compose their own lives by that mirror.

THESE are some of the chief duties which parents owe to their children, a sufficient maintenance and provision, seasonable reproof and correction, a religious institution, candid usage, and a good example: and to engage the performance of these, let parents consider that such a form of education will not only be a great blessing to their children, and the very best inheritance they can leave them; but a standing comfort and consolation to themselves, both in this life, and in that which is to come. A wise son, says Solomon, maketh a glad father. Nothing, certainly, can yield a greater satisfaction to a man than to see one that is so near and dear unto him take good courses; and, under God, to be able to impute the virtue of his conduct, and the goodness of his reputation, to the care he took of him, and the instructions he gave him when he was young. This certainly must fill the father's heart with joy and comfortable reflections every time he looks upon his son, or hears him mentioned with praise; and when, at any time, he himself comes to want his assistance, in the time of sickness, or decline of life, surely there is no greater external comfort in the world than a good and dutiful child. * He then will be the light of his eyes, and the cordial of his fainting spirits; and, as he is decaying and withering away, in him he shall flourish again, and have the pleasure to see his youth, as it were, renewed; for so the son of Sirach has expressed the comfort which a good father has of a well-educated son; * though he die, yet he is as if he were not dead; for he hath left one behind him that is like himself: while he lived, he saw and rejoiced in him, and when he died, he was not sorrowful; and the reason is, because he was conscious that good children, who by their parents institution became such, were not only a present satisfaction, but would be an unspeakable matter of joy to their parents in the life which is to come.

An exhortation to these duties.

WHEN we come to appear before God at the day of judgment to be able to say to him, Lo! here am I, and the children which thou hast given me; how will this comfort our hearts, and make us lift up our heads with joy! On the contrary, * when God shall arise terribly to judgment, and shall say unto us, Behold the children which I gave you; they were ignorant,

^t *Pro pantoon dei teus pateras enarges beoutous paradeigma tois teknois paretchein*, &c. Plut. *Peri paideias*. u Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. * *Ecclus. xxx. 4, 5.* x Tillotson, *ibid.*

norant, and you instructed them not; they made themselves vile, and you restrained them not; nay, instead of being teachers and examples of holiness, you were their chief encouragers and patterns of vice. Unnatural wretches! that have thus destroyed those whose happiness by so many bonds of duty and affection you were obliged to procure. Behold the books are open, and there is not one prayer upon record that ever you put up for your children; not an hour seriously spent in acquainting them with the knowledge of their duty; but, on the contrary, it appears that you have many ways contrived their misery, and helped forward their damnation: when God, I say, shall bring this heavy accusation against us, and our conscience, at the same time bear testimony to the truth of it, in what a lamentable condition must we be! That therefore neither our children may be made miserable by our fault, nor we, by the neglect of so natural and necessary a duty; let us all consider ourselves as responsible to God for their education, and, in the sense of that terrible day of accounts, make it the matter of our care and assiduity to train them up in their tender years in the way which they should go, that, when they are old, they may not depart from it.

Sixth Commandment.

Thou shalt not kill.

TO kill, in the sense of this commandment, is to take away another man's life: and, because there are some cases wherein another man's life may be taken away without the violation of this precept, it may not be improper to say something concerning these, before we come to examine into the nature, the extent, and sundry aggravations of the crime that here is forbidden.

Exempted
cases.
Killing in
execution
of justice.

IT has been the opinion of some, in all ages of christianity, that there is a certain cruelty in all capital punishments which is inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel; and that God has so absolutely reserved to himself the disposal of man's life, that the civil magistrate, without an express commission from him, is not to interfere in it. ^a But when we consider that God, in that very law which himself delivered to the Jews by the hand of Moses, did appoint so many capital punishments, even for offences against positive precepts, we cannot think that these are contrary to justice or true goodness, since they were dictated by God himself, who is eternally the same, and unalterable in his perfections. The precedent which God set in the Mosaic law, seems to be a full justification of the like punishments under the gospel; for the charity which the gospel so strongly recommends does not take away the rules of justice and equity, by which we are allowed to

maintain

^a Burnet on the Articles.

maintain our just possessions, or recover them out of the hands of violent aggressors; only it obliges us to make use of them in a soft and gentle manner, without rigour, and without repentment. We owe to human society, and to the safety and order of the world, our endeavours to put a stop to the vice and wickedness of mankind: and this a good man may do with great inward tenderness to the souls of those whom he prosecutes. And as it is probable (considering the degeneracy of human nature) that nothing besides such a method could stop the progress of injustice and wickedness; so nothing can be so likely a means to bring the criminal to repent of his sins, and fit him to die a christian, as to condemn him to die for his crimes; insomuch that it may be affirmed, with some certainty, that a man who can harden himself against the terrors of death, when they come upon him so solemnly, so slowly, and so certainly, would scarce be brought to any manner of reformation by a longer continuance of life.

^b If then government be the institution of God, and if the ends of government cannot be attained without a power in the magistrate to inflict capital punishments, which many times are real blessings to those on whom they fall, then is there a clear and just foundation for the claim and exercise of such a power, in the case of all such crimes which the safety, and other ends of government, require should be punished with death. For this reason the magistrate under the gospel, as well as under the law, is the minister of God, and an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil: ^c and therefore, when he condemneth a man according to the directions of the law, he does it only as God's minister, and they who put the sentence in execution, do it only in obedience to the authority that is set over them; nor is either of them guilty of breaking this command, which looks upon killing as an exempted case, where the authority is competent, the manner legal, and the person that is killed deserves to die.

2. ANOTHER exempted case is the killing an enemy in a just war. ^d That God has not forbidden sovereigns (in cases of necessity, and where amicable means will not prevail) to maintain the safety and welfare of the societies intrusted to their care, even by armed violence against such as wrongfully invade them; ^e nay, that he has allowed sovereigns to assist such other princes as are unjustly invaded, and may be devoured by ambitious and encroaching neighbours, is plain from the laws of humanity and self-preservation, as well as his permission and encouragement given to wars in the Jewish polity, which he himself instituted. And that in such cases a soldier's employment is no illegal profession, is manifest from the answer which John Baptist gives them,

An enemy
in time of
war.

^b Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^c Beveridge's Explanation of the Church Catechism. ^d Barrow on the Decalogue. ^e Burnet on the Articles.

them, wherein he does not require them to relinquish their course of life (which he certainly would have done, had it been unavoidably sinful) but only to do violence to no man, to accute no man falsely, and to be content with their wages. † There are some wars indeed so apparently unjust that no subject can abet them with a good conscience; but for the generality it is not necessary for the soldier to be convinced of the justness of the war wherein he is engaged: it is enough for him to know that it is not absolutely unjust, and that he is commanded by his prince to assist him in it; and though, by this means, he may sometimes be engaged in an unjust quarrel, yet the blame thereof will not fall upon him, who is neither concerned nor qualified to judge of it, but upon the prince by whose authority the war is levied: only he is to take care that, as his prince's commission is his only warrant to concern himself with war, so his private revenge should not push him on to do more mischief than his prince intended he should do: and if he behaves in this manner, his killing and slaying, upon a just provocation and according to the established laws of arms, will not fall under the design and meaning of this prohibition.

In one's
necessary
defence.

3. ANOTHER exempted case is, when we are constrained to kill another in the necessary defence of our own lives: ‡ for self-preservation (as we suggested before) is an inviolable principle of nature; and this dictates that we may repel an invader, an assailant, an assassin, any man that intends to bereave us of our life; and if, in repelling and resisting him, it happens that we kill him, the thing is done in prosecution of that natural principle of self-preservation, which makes it not an unlawful act to take away that man's life, who would otherwise certainly take away ours by violence. And as we are permitted to do it in the necessary defence of our own, so may we lawfully do it in defence of an innocent neighbour's life, against any unjust invader. We may kill the aggressor, if we know he comes with an intention of murder; and for this ^h we have the warrant of the law of God, as well as a licence from the law of reason and nature to secure us; and that partly because, in the case of a sudden onset, either upon ourselves or others, we can have no recourse to the ordinary means of defence, I mean the patronage of the magistrate; and partly because those whom God has intrusted with the power of vengeance give private persons, on such occasions, a licence to slay the invader, and deliver the sword of justice into their hands.

Chance.
medley.

4. THERE is one exempted case more, which we call chance-medley, when a man kills another without having any enmity against him, or design to do him any harm; upon which occasion God appointed ⁱ cities of refuge for the man-slayer to flee unto,

† Towerson on the Commandments. g Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. h Exod. xxii. 2, 3. i Ibid. xxi. 12, 13. Numb. xxxv. 6, &c.

unto, but still with this restriction, that he was to abide there in nature of a prisoner, and not have his perfect liberty ^k till the death of the high priest, to put him in mind that though he was not properly guilty of murder, yet, by being accessary to another man's death (though it was only for want of due care and consideration in him) he had contracted so much guilt that he could not be fully pardoned but by the death of Jesus Christ, the true high-priest. So that from the whole we may infer, that, he who kills another by chance or misadventure, meaning no harm; he who kills another in a way not irregular, as a minister of justice; he who kills another in a lawful war, as a soldier authorized by a sovereign power; or, lastly, he who kills another in his own just and necessary defence, does not lie under the censure of this law, since what he does, he only does as the instrument of God, who is incontestibly the Lord of life and death.

IT is not simply killing then, but killing in a private capacity, and without any legal commission, that is the subject-matter of this prohibition; in what manner soever it be done, whether ^l precipitately, or after deliberation; ^m upon what motive soever it be done, whether hatred, envy or revenge, our presumed safety, or pretended reparation of honour; and by what means soever it be done, whether by direct violence or fraudulent contrivance; in an open or clandestine manner, immediately by ourselves, or by means of others; by advising, encouraging, or any wise becoming instrumental or accessary thereunto. What it properly is.

THIS is properly the sin which is forbidden; and though it may admit of aggravations according to the circumstances of the dignity, relation or office that the sufferer enjoyed while he lived (as to kill a father, mother, or children, is a more horrid and unnatural, to kill a magistrate, judge or public minister, but especially a king or prince, is a more flagitious transgression of this command than to slay a private person who stood in no such eminence or relation :) though it admits of aggravations, I say, from these and several other circumstances; yet in itself, and abstractly considered, it is certainly great and grievous enough.

IT is an heinous offence against God, as being not only a violation of his command, but a wrong done to his property, ⁿ by robbing him of a child, a servant, a subject; one whose life The heinousness of it.

was

^k Numb xxxv. 28. Our law distinguishes between man-slaughter or simple homicide (which is killing another in heat of blood, or out of a sudden anger) and that which in a more restrained sense is called murder, which (according to our lawyers) is killing a man with malice prepened or forethought: but in divinity both these methods of killing are murder, and properly so called. For though it be true that this latter way is more heinous of the two, because deliberation adds to the guilt; yet the former is an unlawful killing, and no less than murder, because it is a voluntary taking away a man's life without just cause and reason, without any necessity compelling him to it, and without any licence from public authority. These things make it an unlawful and sinful shedding of blood, though it be not accompanied with deliberation and premeditated malice. Edwards, *ibid.* ^m Barrow on the Decalogue, ⁿ *Ibid.*

was precious to him, and to whom he had a tender regard, as having created him after his own image: and therefore excellent are those words of Philo, in the beginning of his discourse upon this commandment • Murder has indeed the name of man-slaughter, says he, because man is the person slain, but it is in reality sacrilege, and one of the greatest sacrileges, because there is not any thing more sacred than man, or what is a more express image of the divine reason and perfection. It is a sin against nature ^p which has established a common relation between us; designed us for society, and in order thereunto made it one of its fundamental laws, that we should love, and protect, and do good to one another, which murder totally destroys; a sin against the civil society, by depriving it of one of its members, and by its evil example encouraging others to do the like; a sin against the magistrate, by invading his right and prerogative, who alone, under God, has the power of life and death; a signal offence against the relations of him who is cut off, who perhaps in him lose all their support and comfort of life; and an irreparable injury to the person himself, who by this stroke loses not only the advantages of this world, but (if surpris'd in his sins) a possibility of repentance, and consequently all happiness in another. And ^q surely no one, that has the bowels of a man can think on this without horror, viz. that by this means, and perhaps without any provocation, men are deprived not only of the present life without remedy, but condemned to endless torment and perdition.

God's abhorrence of it.

It is part of the catholic law which God gave the patriarch Noah, ^r 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, and at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. ^s Beasts indeed are not capable of sin, because whatever they do, they do it by the force of that natural instinct which directs them in all their actions; and yet so sacred a thing is the life of a man in the eyes of God, and so severe his resentment against every thing that invades it, that ^t if an ox (or, by parity of reason, any other creature) gored a man that he died, the ox itself (according to the law of his own institution) was to be slain, and the flesh thereof cast away as an abomination; and that even ^u his altar, which in other cases and crimes was a sanctuary to fly unto, yielded no shelter and protection to the wilful murderer. His sin was pursued by the avenging hand of God, which in all ages more visibly and apparently concerned itself in making ^v wonderful discoveries of it, and in bringing the

^o *Onoma men androphonia kata tou kleinantos anthroopon epiphemizzetai to de alethes ergon estin hierosulia, &c.* De Spec. Legibus. ^p Wake on the Church Catechism. ^q Towerson on the Commandments. ^r Gen. ix. 5. ^s Towerson, *ibid.* ^t Exod. xxi. 28. ^u *ibid.* ver. 13. ^v We have a very odd discovery of this nature in our chronicles, which tell us, that in the second year of king James the First's reign, when a woman had killed a person, and buried

the actors therein to condign punishment. For this of all other sins is the most clamorous, and calleth loudest to heaven. * The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground, says God to Cain, † as if heaven itself had been filled with the outcries of the murder, to solicit and importune the divine justice to avenge it.

WHAT is it then that the man of blood promises himself by committing a crime of such a complicated guilt? The gratification of a malicious and revengeful temper, or the acquisition of a little wealth, are the usual baits which the devil throws in his way. But what are these to that dread and distraction of mind which will necessarily seize the wretch when he comes to reflect in cold blood, and his conscience begins to murmur and remonstrate? ‡ Other sins may in some measure be palliated, and the guilt of them alleviated by excuses; but no man can flatter or excuse himself so as to quiet his mind after the commission of murder. The burden of this confounds and breaks the mind and conscience to pieces, and fills it so full of horror and disturbance, by frightful remembrances and continual representations of the murdered person's ghost, and cries of his blood for vengeance against him, that it has sometimes extorted a confession, even when there has been no other evidence of the fact; and many times forced the guilty to put an end to the terrors he was not able to endure, by becoming his own executioner. So uneasy is the state of the murderer, that, rather than bear the lashes of his own mind, he ventures upon the pains of hell!

How the opinion has prevailed, whether from false notions of courage and liberty, or § from the examples of some great men of antiquity, who have unhappily thought themselves masters of their own lives; but so it is that some have been averse to believe that the sin of self-murder is included in this commandment, and that the rather, because they find no particular prohibition against it in the word of God. Now the true reason, in the first place, why self-murder is not expressly forbidden in scripture is this—¶ That whatever sins and offences God as a law-giver prohibits, he prohibits with a penalty; he affixes such a punishment to such a crime, and he who commits the crime is to undergo the punishment in this world, whether it be restitution, loss of limb, or loss of life itself. Now this can never happen in the case of self-murder, because it prevents all punishment (the man is dead before you can take cognizance

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of

buried him under a dunghill, one of the town dreamed that this man, his neighbour, was strangled, and buried under such a dunghill; whereupon the dead body was found, the woman apprehended, and at her execution confessed the fact. Baker.

x Gen. xiv. 10. y Towerfon, *ibid.* z Newcomb's Catechetical Sermons. a Among the antient Greeks self-murder was very frequent, yea, their greatest philosophers, such as Empedocles, Chryippus, Cleanthes, Zeno, &c. are instances of it, and among the old Romans, Cato, and many others. Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. b Fleetwood against Self-murder.

And uneasiness of its guilt.

Self-murder.

Why not expressly forbidden.

of his offence) and therefore prevents all laws concerning it. In a word, as no law can be enacted to any purpose without a penalty, so, where there can be no penalty, there can be no law: but now self-murder prevents all penalty; and therefore as it wants no particular prohibition, it can only be included under general commands, and forbidden as a sin, whereof God alone can take cognizance in the other world.

Included
in the sixth
commandment.

Now that self-murder is included in the sixth commandment, is evident both from its plain and literal sense, and the reason which is given to enforce it in another place. The commandment prohibits murder; and it is certainly as much murder to kill ourselves, as to kill another man. The reason which the scripture gives, why we are not allowed to do it in both cases is the same, because ^a in the image of God made he man: for if I must not shed the blood of another man, because he is made in the image of God, I must not shed the blood of my ownself, because I also am a man, and made in the image of God, as well as he. Nay, the more unnatural the sin is, or the greater obligations we have to preserve the life of the person whom we kill, the greater is the breach of this commandment. ^c To murder a kind friend or a bounteous benefactor, is a greater evil than to murder one who is a stranger to us; to murder a parent or a child, a wife or an husband, is still a greater evil, because they are so much nearer ourselves; and if the nearness of the relation increases the sin, nobody is so near to us as ourselves, and therefore there is no such unnatural murder as this.

Itsheinousness.

BESIDES all the guilt then which attends simple murder, as being a breach of God's command, a destruction of his image, an offence against the community, and an injury to the kindred and dependents of the sufferer; there is something in this sin not only abhorrent to the principle of self-love, and self-preservation, but monstrously cruel and destructive: since by making repentance impossible (unless men can be supposed to repent of a sin before they have committed it) it takes an effectual course to ruin and undo both soul and body together. What allowances God may make for some mens opinions of the lawfulness of this deed, and for the distraction of other mens thoughts and passions, through a settled melancholy, or some violent and overbearing temptation, we cannot tell; our business is not to limit the sovereign prerogative and grace of God, but to declare the nature of the thing, according to the terms of the gospel, which certainly denote that to murder ourselves is the most unnatural murder, a damning sin, and such as no man can repent of in this life; ^e and therefore unless God forgive it without repentance (and this the gospel of Christ gives us no authority for) it can never be forgiven. The gospel-grace, which only forgives penitents,

^c Fleetwood against Self-murder, and Kidder's Demonstration, page 137. ^d Gen. ix. 6. ^e Sherlock on Death, f *ibid.*

nitents, cannot save such men; and therefore that man is very bold, and presumes very far upon unpromised and uncovenanted mercy, who will venture to commit a sin which the grace of the gospel cannot pardon.

IF, however, we will determine the question more peremptorily, the different fate of such as destroy themselves, seems in a great measure to depend upon the difference of the cause from whence the fact arises; * insomuch that those who out of pride and haughtiness, fear of miseries to come, or impatience under present sufferings, distrust of God's providence, or despair of his mercy, lay violent hands upon themselves, give us not the least hope of their salvation, because their act was both voluntary and vicious, and not to be amended by repentance; whereas we are to conceive much better of such as owe that violence to a distempered body and a disordered mind. For, considering the mercy and infinite goodness of God, it is most congruous to think that no man shall answer for any miscarriage that is wholly caused by the power of a disease, or the distraction of the brain; the reason is, because whatever fault is committed in such a case, is not a man's free and voluntary act, and consequently not to be charged upon him.

The final state of those that commit it.

i WHETHER it be our climate, our diet, our complexion, or manner of life that produces more matter for melancholy to feed upon; but so it is, that this nation of ours furnishes, almost every day, more examples of violent and unnatural deaths, than any other of its extent, perhaps under the face of heaven. And therefore I cannot with decency part with this subject without suggesting some farther considerations against it: that how well soever we may think of those antient Greeks and Romans, who either fell by their own hands, or in their writings defended the practice; yet, if we examine their character, we shall find that they either were atheists, or men that believed in so many gods, as almost came to the same thing, and that consequently their example is no precedent to us, who believe in the one true God, the sole author and giver of our lives, and upon that account cannot suppose ourselves at liberty to throw them away at pleasure, and without his direction: that whatever pretence * their withdrawing from life (as they used to call it) might make to magnanimity and courage, it was in reality no more than an effect of fear and cowardice, and † a mark of a poor im-

Farther considerations against it.

patient

g Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. i Fleetwood against Self-murder. k *Eulogios te phasin exaccin beauton tou biou tou sophon.* Laert. i Gen. and to the same purpose Seneca: *Exerce te ut mortem excipias, et si ita res suadebit, accersas.* Interest nihil, an illa ad nos veniat, an ad illam nos. Epist. 70. l Si rationem rectius consulas, nec ipsa quidem animi magnitudo recte nominatur, ubi quisque, non valendo tolerare vel quæque aspera, vel aliena peccata, seipsum interemerit: magis enim mens infirma deprehenditur, quæ ferre non potest vel durum sui corporis servitutem, vel stultam vulgi opinionem; majorque animus merito dicendus, qui vitam ærumnosam magis potest ferre, quam fugere. Aug. de Civit. Dei, Lib. I. c. 22.

Rebus in angustiis facile est contemnere vitam,

Fortiter ille facit, qui miser esse potest.——MART. Epig.

patient spirit that sunk under the common calamities of life, and knew not how to bear misfortunes: that as we are men, we are born to sorrow as the sparks fly upwards, and must not therefore expect more from life than what is in it; that as we are christians, we have the promise of God that ^m he will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it; that, as the soldiers of Christ, we are to bear afflictions manfully, ⁿ and not desert the station which our great commander has given us to maintain; and as possessors of immortal souls, to make the consideration of their fate deter us from doing any thing that may endanger their eternal welfare.

More especially christian.

AN ignorant heathen that thought this life the only one he was to experience, and death the expiration of his being and sorrows together, might think of dispatching himself without much inconsistency; but ^o that a christian who believes a God, the immortality of the soul, and the life of the world to come; that the divine wrath is revealed against all unrighteousness; that without repentance there is no pardon, and that after death there can be none: that such a man as this, professing the faith of Christ crucified, and covenanting with God in baptism to take up the cross and bear it, if need be, even unto death, should, in the impatience of his soul, and pressed by some calamity a little more than ordinary, deliberately chuse to throw this burden off, by committing what he knows to be a sin, of which he knows he can never repent, and venture the most dreadful consequences of that to everlasting ages, is what nobody would ever reason themselves into a belief of, did not the frequent practice of some unhappy people convince us that it might be done by letting us see it was. ^p Did but men seriously consider this however, it is impossible that the greatest shame, infamy, want, or suffering, or whatever it is, that makes men weary of life, should be thought so intolerable as to make them force their passage into the other world to escape it, when such a violent and unnatural escape will cost them their souls, and consign them to the wrath of God, and miseries inconceivable as long as God endures.

Duelling.

ANOTHER practice which falls under this prohibition of murder, and yet has run away with the vogue of something gallant and honourable, is duelling: for when men have such a resentment of injuries and affronts as to revenge themselves with their swords, and to venture killing or being killed in the decision of their quarrel, they certainly have the hearts of murderers; they would kill if they could, at least would venture killing their brother, to appease their resentment: and therefore, if such men fall in the quarrel (as too frequently they do) without time to ask God's pardon with their last breath, they die

^m 1 Cor. x. 13. ⁿ Vetat Pythagoras injussu imperatoris, *i. e.* Dei, de præsidio & statione vitæ discedere, Cic. de Senect. ^o Flectwood, ubi supra. ^p Sherlock on Death.

under the guilt of murder unrepented of. Though they do not kill, but are killed, they die with a mortal hatred and revenge, and he that hateth his brother, says St John, is a murderer; and as we know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him, we cannot but conclude, that whatever fine names or plausible descriptions the laws of honour may have made of such actions, he that kills another in a duel, though he gets a pardon of his prince, will be arraigned at the last day among the murderers, who shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.

I KNOW very well what is usually pleaded in defence of this practice; “That it is impossible to live in the world without
 “injuries, but base and inglorious not to resent them; that to
 “decline a challenge favours of cowardice, and to put up af-
 “fronts is unbecoming a man of honour: it is a sign of a low
 “and abject spirit, and no man that has any generous blood in
 “his veins (unless he would have him trampled upon) would
 “ever advise his friend to do it.” Thus a false notion of
 honour and bravery deludes the duellists into a dreadful action, which by long impunity is become reputable, and the refusal to engage in it ignominious; as if every affront unrevenged drew upon a man that wears a sword the imputation of cowardice; or, as if that could be an honourable achievement, which the civil magistrate punishes as a capital crime, and Almighty God threatens with damnation.

BUT whatever high pretences of honour the practice of duelling may make, it is much to be feared that drinking, gaming, and whores are those rotten bones (as * an ingenious author expresses it) which for the most part lie hid under this painted sepulchre and title of honour: or, if this be not the case, it may not be improper to consider that this custom of fighting is of heathenish extract, and † derived from those barbarous nations, who in any dubious and controverted matter, were appointed by their governors to decide it by single combat; but that, as christianity prevailed, the custom was laid aside as savage and inhuman, and such as died in the enterprise were denied christian burial; that according to the sentiments and decision of the best judges of honour and generosity, ‡ there is no disgrace in refusing

q 1 John iii. 15. r Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. s Spectator, No. 85. and 98. where the sin and madness of this practice is handsomely exposed. t Dr Waugh's Assize-sermon at Kingston, 1717. * Hale's Sermon of Duels, p. 95. of his Remains. u The northern inhabitants used to try their rights to their estates and goods by single combat: the Germans, about the tenth century purged their innocence and ended their quarrels this way; for he that was worsted was always held the guilty person; and upon the conquest here, the Normans renewed this way of trial, but it was soon disused and deemed unchristian. † To this purpose we read that the French king Frances I. gave the emperor Charles V. the lie, and challenged him to fight; but the emperor (and we know what a warrior and man of arms and honour he was) refused it: nor do we want a later instance in the marshal Turenne, who, though a professed soldier and man of honour, refused the challenge to a single combat, given him by the prince Palatine of the Rhine.

Excuses:

Answered.

To resist a challenge not dishonourable.

fusing a challenge, or turning it off with a just contempt; that when Augustus was challenged by Mark Antony, he returned him in answer, that if Antony was weary of life, and had a mind to die, there were ways enough to death without duelling; and that, in short, instead of being a disparagement to a person of honour to pardon injuries and affronts, it is an argument of a great and generous mind, and a true proof of christian gallantry so to do. The sentiment of the ^x heathen moralist is very just upon this occasion, "We ought to despise calumnies and injuries, says he, whether they be offered to us deservedly or not: if deservedly, they are no dishonour and reproach; if undeservedly, then are they a shame and reproach to him that offered them, not to him that bears them." But christian morality carries the point much higher: ^y Be angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil: be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good; for this is the will of God concerning us, ^z that being reviled, we should bless; being persecuted, we should suffer, being defamed, we should intreat, and not let go our patience and meekness of temper, though some reproachful and abusive tongues may endeavour to make us the filth of the world, and off-scouring of all things.

Causeless
anger and
reproach-
ful lan-
guage.

OUR blessed Master, in the explication he gives us of this prohibition, has extended the sense of it still farther; ^a Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment, and whosoever shall say to his brother ^b *Raca*, shall be in danger of the council, but whosoever shall say, thou *Fool*, shall be in danger ^c of hell-fire; whereby he gives us to understand that all unreasonable and excessive passion, all abusive and censorious lan-

guage,

^x Seneca. ^y Eph. iv. 26. ^z 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. ^a Matth. v. 21, 22. ^b The word *Raca* is used to signify a silly, vain, contemptible fellow, and denote some imperfection in mind or body; and the word *Fool*, in scripture-language, does usually represent to us a very wicked and abandoned sinner; which term of reproach is more heinous than the other, as it is a worse evil to be wicked than unfortunate, and to lead a bad life than to have a weak understanding. Gardener's Sermons. ^c Among the Jews there were three degrees of public infamy, according to the nature of the punishments inflicted on men for their crimes. If an offender was brought before the court of three and twenty, (which in the text is called being in danger of the judgment) and there condemned, he was accounted infamous, but his disgrace was in a lower degree: if he were brought before the Sanhedrim, or great senate of the nation, consisting of LXX elders (which is being in danger of the council) and by them adjudged to death, his disgrace was greater: but if, lastly, he was condemned to be burnt in the Valley of Hinmon, or Tophet, where was a perpetual fire to consume all the filth, and whatever was offensive and nauseous in Jerusalem, and which the Jews themselves looked upon as an emblem of hell, the infamy was greatest of all. In allusion therefore to these three degrees of infamy among the Jews, our Saviour shews that there will be different kinds of punishment for the several degrees of anger and virulence in the world to come. Horneck's Sermons, and Whitby's Annotations.

guage, all looks and gestures of scorn and ridicule, and whatever else it is, whereby we mean to expose and vilify our neighbour, falls under the sixth commandment, Thou shalt not kill.

THE foundation of mischief and the seeds of violence are laid in the first emotions of the soul; nor is there much ground to believe that they who indulge the beginnings of passion, will be disposed, out of any true principle, to prevent the fatal consequences of it. But admitting they were so disposed, yet, when the fire is kindled, every thing helps to blow it up, and it may not afterwards be in their power to get it under, would they never so fain. The beginning of strife (as Solomon wisely observes) is, as when one letteth out water: as long as the dams and banks are well fenced, it runs in the proper channel; but when once these give way, a stream, otherwise small, bears down all before it, and makes a vast inundation. Thus one resentment opens the passage to a greater, and one word draws on another, till at last all end in revenge and blood. They, therefore, that attend to the constitution of mankind, and how the sensual part and passions of the soul push us upon all manner of extravagance, cannot but see the necessity of keeping a strait rein, and that the only way to govern these is to prevent their flying out at first. And they who reflect upon anger in particular; how this above all other passions blinds the reason, and carries the man out of himself; what furies and devils it makes where it hath got possession; what heart-burnings and contentions, what tumult and confusion it creates; must needs allow, that the peace and safety of the world could never be secured, but by crushing this venomous cockatrice in the egg. Religion therefore had not answered its end, nor been a competent guard to human society, without leaving men answerable for the very tendencies and occasions, and for wilfully taking the first steps towards such pernicious wickedness. For the hands of men could not be tied up from cruelty, without tying up their tongues from exasperation and bitterness; nor could their tongues again be withheld from evil-speaking, without a restraint from evil-thinking, laid upon that part, ^e out of whose it is that the mouth speaketh.

IT is to be observed however, ^e that as anger is one of the passions implanted in us by nature, whose first motions seem to be mechanical, and to depend upon the temper of the body, and complexion of the animal spirits, it cannot be altogether sinful; nay, that there are some cases wherein the honour of God and the love of virtue are concerned, in which to be angry is not only an innocent, but a commendable accomplishment. The example of Moses, that man of meekness, ^h whose anger waxed hot at the molten calf which the Israelites had made to dishonour God and themselves in the wilderness: the example of our

Anger,
when law
ful.

d Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. III. e Prov. xvii. 14. f Stanhope, *ibid.* g *ibid.* h Exod. xxxii. 19.

our blessed Saviour, the exact model of all perfection, who was not only grieved, but looked upon the Pharisees with anger, because of the hardness of their hearts, justify some resentments of this kind, where the glory of God, and the good of others is the occasion; and that precept of St Paul's, be angry and sin not, seems to imply that they may be warrantable, even with regard to private injuries and affronts, provided always, that due care be taken to restrain their excesses, and to conquer and subdue them by times.

When not
fo.

UPON some occasions, and in some degrees then, our anger may be lawful; and therefore it is not an anger of this kind that our Saviour brands with the imputation of murder, but it is an anger that is without cause, and ⁱ such as men fly out into upon little or no provocation; when for mere trifles, for any thing, for nothing; for groundless suspicions, and jealous whimsies of their own, they work themselves up to all the extravagancies of rage and passion; when they swell and grow choleric, ^k because their honour and reputation is touched, or other secular interest not promoted as they expected; when they disorder themselves, because their vain desires are not cockered, or something that gratifies their lusts is withheld from them; when they fret and become uneasy that such a person has not given them the title and respect they looked for; when they are ruffled with the reproofs of a teacher, or the admonitions of a friend, and grow hot and outrageous, because every one in company cannot give into their sentiments, or conform to their humour, when, in these or such like cases, a man feels himself to be provoked above measure, and suffers his resentment to rest upon his mind, and settle into secret grudges, he then is guilty of the murder of the heart, and lives in danger of the judgment.

Reproach-
ful words,
when law-
ful.

IT is to be observed again, with relation to our Saviour's words, that terms of disparagement and reproach are not universally, and upon all occasions, unlawful. From the mouth of a superior they are often of use, sometimes of necessity, to awaken stupid men, and to make them at once, both sensible and ashamed of their folly; to expose the absurdity of pernicious opinions, and the flagrant enormity of wicked practices. Thus the very term of fool is applied by David and Solomon to the obstinate sinner, times without number; as that of Raca is, by St James, ^l to such as rested upon faith without works: ^m A child of the devil, is the appellation which St Paul gives Elymas the forcerer; ⁿ a generation of vipers, is the Baptist's character of the Scribes and Pharisees; and a greater than all these, even the pattern and perfection of all meekness is not, upon some occasions, ashamed to call them ^o fools, and blind, hypocrites, and children of hell. These instances make it plain that

ⁱ Horneck's Sermons. ^k Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. III. ^l James ii. 20. ^m Acts xiii. 10. ⁿ Matth. iii. 7. ^o Ibid. xxiii. 15; 16.

that words of reproach are, in some cases, allowable where charity is at the bottom, and an high authority in the reprovor gives such language countenance. But such examples are not to be drawn into precedents without great caution, and almost absolute necessity: otherwise, when we intend not the party's or the publick's good by thus rousing and exposing him, but do it purely to vent a rage which boils over, and to do all the mischief that ill words can do; when, upon every slight provocation, or presumed affront, we run into such contumacious and reproachful language, as is contrived only to spit the venom of a furious undisciplined mind out of a filthy and licentious tongue, shooting out our arrows, even bitter words (without any regard to truth) to gaul our enemy, and wound his reputation; we then become guilty of the murder of the tongue, and live in danger of the council, and hell-fire.

When not so.

I MENTION but one sin more, which seems to come within the compass of this prohibition, and that is, the murder of our neighbour's soul. For though the soul be naturally immortal, and so incapable of ceasing to be; yet, since it may be robbed of its comforts, and made more miserable than if it were not at all; since, by the intoxicating pleasures of sin, it may lose all its feeling, and be deprived of its spiritual life; it may at least, in a metaphorical sense, be said to be murdered; and God, who in his commandment has taken such care for the security of the body, cannot be supposed to have excluded or omitted the safety of the soul, which is by much the better and more valuable part, as well as liable to greater and more imminent dangers. For there are many ways whereby the souls of men may be undone, by poisoning them with wicked principles; by suggesting evil counsels; by tempting them to wickedness; by setting them bad examples; by withholding such good advice as is necessary for their preservation; by using, in short, any means to induce them to sin, and by not using all of those means which are in our power to reclaim them from it. It is the admonition of St Paul; Take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours (viz. in things of an indifferent nature) become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. For if any man see thee, which hath knowledge, sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols? And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But, when ye sin against the brethren, and wound their weak consciences, ye sin against Christ. Nor if those who do things in themselves innocent, are said to lay a stumbling-block in the way of such, as through weakness, may take occasion from thence to do things forbidden; if they are accused of sinning against Christ, of sinning against their brethren, of wounding their consciences, and

The murder of the soul.

of destroying their brethren, for whom Christ died : how much more deservedly may this accusation be brought against such as lay stumbling-blocks in the ways of others, by doing actions, and propagating notions notoriously and confessedly sinful ; and how justly may they be charged with being coadjutors to Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning, in compassing the destruction of the souls, as well as copartners with him, in those things which other men commit through their instigation.

Positive duties included.

THESE are some of the sins, together with the springs and passions that engage us in them (such as pride and covetousness, lust and jealousy, malice and revenge) forbid in this commandment ; and the positive duties which it requires of us ^s are, to do all we can for the safety and preservation of our own and our neighbour's life ; if they are sick, to advise and assist them with our money and our service ; if they are well, to prevent their quarrels, and make up their differences ; if they are needy, to feed and clothe them ; if we have injured them, to make them all reasonable satisfaction ; if they have injured us, freely to forgive them ; if they are good men, to encourage them in the ways of virtue ; if they are bad, to endeavour to reclaim them ; ^t putting on bowels of mercies (as the apostle's exhortation is) kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing and forgiving, and ^u restoring one another in the spirit of meekness, considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted.

Seventh Commandment.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

THE word *adultery*, in this commandment, must be understood ^{*} in its most extensive signification, as including all acts of uncleanness under this grossest and most pernicious instance of it : and therefore, after we have considered the nature and flagitiousness of this in particular, we shall take a cursory view of the rest, and so proceed to treat of them all together.

Adultery, what.

ADULTERY is properly a violation of the marriage-bed, when either one or both of the married parties commit folly in Israel, either with a person married to another, or with one that is not married. Custom indeed, which gives a currency to words, has in a manner appropriated the title of adultery to the falseness of the wife, and the wickedness of him who deludes her to it ; but, ^x since the terms of the matrimonial covenant are equally obligatory, and the wife, according to the divine charter, has no less power over her husband's body, than her husband

^s Wake on the Church Catechism. ^t Col. iii. 12, &c. ^u Gal. vi. 1. ^{*} The original word, which our translators restrain to committing adultery, comprises all kinds of lewdness ; and even *moicheuein*, in the Greek, imports not only adultery, in the strictest sense, but fornication likewise. Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. and Horneck's Sermons, Vol. II. ^x Towerfon on the commandments.

band has over her's; the husband's offence must be equally chargeable with the violation of the contract, which was mutual; and consequently, with the sin of adultery; though it cannot be denied, but that the consequences of the wife's perfidiousness are much more fatal.

IT can hardly be thought, but that the solemnity of the rite of marriage which was instituted by God in the state of man's innocence should make every infraction of it detestable, did not the shameless iniquity of the age seem to make nothing of it, unless it be now and then to furnish out a subject for banter and ridicule. But (to consider the thing, with relation to the married parties) ^y is it nothing, nay rather, is it not a crime of a very flagitious nature to despise the institution of Almighty God, and to make a separation there, where he intended the strictest unity? Is it nothing to violate that faith, without which the peace of families, and in them the peace of human societies, cannot subsist? Is it nothing to rob one another of that comfort and communion which they have so mutually, and so inseparably made over, that there is no transferring it elsewhere? Is it nothing to give the greatest occasion to grief and uneasiness, the greatest temptation to malice and revenge, where love and tenderness only should interfere; and where the greatest honour should be shewn, there to expose each other to reproach and infamy, to their rival's scorn, as well as the drunkard's jest? And, lastly, is it nothing on the man's part to divert his substance from its proper channel to the maintenance of a strange woman, and the product of her lust; and, on the woman's, to make a bastard-brood inherit the estate of the legitimate, and, by her loose conduct, to bring those that are legitimate under the general suspicion and neglect of their father; to say nothing of the profanation of the greatest mystery of our holy religion, even the union of Christ and his church, which is represented by marriage? Men may extenuate this sin as they please, scorn the shame, and stupify the sense of it, as Solomon brings in the adulterous woman, * wiping her mouth, and saying, What evil have I done? But he that considers things without prejudice, must needs conclude, that the crime must be very black, and the falsehood very foul, which is the unhappy parent of so much injustice, fraud, and cruelty, breach of oath, and breach of modesty, and what brings ruin and destruction upon so many worthy families.

The heinousness of it.

NOR is the sin less, if we consider it, with relation to such as tempt others to violate their conjugal faith. For, besides that, they give occasion to all the evils which are the consequents of the married person's falsehood; they not only injure the woman, ^z by engaging her in a course of injustice and perjury, wherein

^y Towerson on the Commandments. ^z Prov xxx. 20. ^z Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II.

The danger of it.

wherein she may continue to the end of her days perhaps, and then certainly to the ruin of her immortal soul; ^a but do the greatest wrong to the man, by depriving him of that love and affection to which both divine and human laws have given him an unalienable right, and wherein perhaps he places the chief of his contentment and felicity. The misfortune is, that though this be one of the greatest and most irreparable wrongs that can be done to any man, yet such is the humour of this wicked generation, that it is least of all commiserated. The adulterer applauds himself, and makes it a matter of his triumph and happy acquisition; and the world is generally malicious enough to impute it to some hidden default, and throw the blemish upon the sufferer's reputation; and therefore well it were, if (where all sense of injury fails) the fear of punishment, which by the Jewish law was ^b capital, with us is penal, ^c in the primitive times was hardly pardonable, and, ^d even among heathen nations, has been attended with circumstances more terrible than death itself; nay, well it were, if the terrors of the Lord, who has threatened to maintain the honour of his own institution, and all bold contemners of it ^e to exclude from the kingdom of heaven; would restrain men from a sin which involves them in endless snares and troubles, the sufferance of affronts, agonies of fear, and amazements of discovery; which wastes the substance, blasts the reputation, very often sears the conscience under a state of final impenitence here, and (without great regret, and a very severe repentance) ^f leads down to the chambers of death and hell hereafter: so true is that of the wise man, ^g who so committeth adultery lacketh understanding: he that doeth it, destroyeth his own soul: a wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.

Other kinds of uncleanness.

It will not, I hope, be expected that we should descend to a minute examination of the sin of polygamy, fornication, concubinage, rape, incest, self-pollution, such excessive and preternatural lust, as either is transacted between any person and a beast, or between two persons of the same sex; for which the names of Sodom and Goinorrah are only remembered, as justly destroyed by the divine vengeance for their horrid obscenity. What can hardly be mentioned without a blush, cannot well be explained with decency: and therefore (to comprize them all under the general head of uncleanness, and treat of them in scripture-language, which is singularly chaste and modest) ^h let fornication and all uncleanness not once be named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, hath any inheritance in the

^a Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^b Lev. xx. 10. ^c Cave's Primitive Christianity ^d Towerson on the Commandments. ^e 1 Cor. vi. 9, &c. and Gal. v. 19, 21. Heb. xiii. 4. ^f Prov. v. 5. ^g Ibid. vi. 32, 33. ^h Eph. v. 3, &c.

the kingdom of Christ and God, : let no man deceive you with fair words (let wits say what they will in defence or mitigation of this crime) ye know, that because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. For did not he, before the law, destroy the cities of the plain, and ⁱ set them forth for an example, making them, in some sense, a figure and representation of hell, even because they gave themselves up to fornication, and going after strange flesh? Did not he, under the law, command the rulers and princes of Israel to be ^k hung up against the sun, because they themselves committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab, or connived at those that did so? And does not he, under the gospel, declare (charging us at the same time not to be deceived) that ^l neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God?

The judgments of God upon them.

^m THE Jews indeed, with their false glosses and interpretations, adulterated this very command, and gave a great latitude to lust and lasciviousness; among the Gentiles, not only their poets represented their gods in a lewd and wanton dress, but even ⁿ some of the greatest and gravest of their philosophers favoured incontinence both in men and women; and it is too well known that the Mahometan religion is the great mistress and patroness of uncleanness, insomuch that the chief part of its heaven and paradise is placed in carnal embraces: but the religion we profess is of a quite different complexion; it allows of none of these things, but enjoins the most spotless purity both of body and soul. We are not called to uncleanness, but unto holiness, and are therefore required, not only ^o to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; but to ^p mortify our members which are upon earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, and evil concupiscence; not only ^q to flee fornication, and to have no familiarity with any immodest person, but even to carry our niceness so far as not to touch a garment polluted with the flesh; to keep our body in subjection to the spirit, and carefully to avoid all temptations and incentives that may have a contrary tendency; and for this reason the catholic exhortation is, ^r let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Their repugnancy to christianity.

THAT lust and intemperance ^s emasculate mens minds, enfeeble their bodies, propagate sickness and infirmities to their posterity, and

Some particular argument against them.

ⁱ Jud. ver. 7. ^k Numb. xxv. 1, &c. ^l 1 Cor. vi. 9. ^m Edwards's Body of Divinity. Vol. II. ⁿ Thus Tully defends meretricious amours, in his Oration P. M. Caelio. Plutarch has his *eroticos*, or Love-discourse, not besiting so grave an author; and Plato's *Eros pailikos*, or, Love for Boys, though it be dressed up sometimes in a kind of chaste and Socratic way; yet, at others, it appears open and barefaced, and is, indeed, unsufferable. Edwards, *ibid.* ^o 1 Pet. ii. 11. ^p Col. iii. 5. ^q 1 Cor. vi. 18. ^r Rom. xiii. 13, 14. ^s Wake's Exposition of the Church Catechism.

and are enemies, in short, to all serious counsels and generous actions, are arguments which heathen moralists have sometimes made use of against such enormities: but the apostle has advanced considerations that are intirely new, and such as the world knew nothing of before the coming of Christ. † Every sin, says he, that a man doeth, is without the body, *i. e.* all other sins (such as theft, murder, &c.) are acted outwardly, have something without for their objects, and the body only for their instrument; but he that committeth fornication, or any other act of carnality, sinneth against his own body, ^u or (as it is better rendered) sinneth in his own body. *i. e.* the body itself is the individual part which is injured and abused; whereupon he argues, * Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? (by that mystical union which is between him and his church) Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid: know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost? And shall we take the temples of the Holy Ghost, and make them dens of impure lusts? God forbid. Other people, that are not acquainted with the nature of the christian covenant, may think it left to their liberty to dispose of themselves and their bodies as they please; but ye are not your own, but bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Inward lust
forbid.

OUR blessed Saviour has carried the sense and import of this commandment, even to the hidden desires and purposes of the heart, when he tells us, ^x ye have heard what has been said by them of old time, *i. e.* the Scribes and Pharisees, who, by their traditions and narrow explications, contracted the seventh commandment, vainly supposing that where there was no outward act of lewdness, there could be no adultery; but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart, *i. e.* † “Who-
“foever allows his eyes the liberty of gazing upon a woman,
“with an intention of kindling in himself, or her, lascivious and
“unchaste desires; or whatsoever woman adorns herself out
“of a design of raising an unlawful passion in the breast of a
“beholder; he or she, though they only indulge themselves
“in lustful wishes and imaginations, without proceeding to any
“unlawful act, are adulterers in the esteem of God, and will
“accordingly be punished.”

IT must be observed, however, with relation to these words and their explication, that as bare looks cannot well be avoided, and the passions which God hath implanted in us are not originally sinful, no nor the first rising of an impure thought, supposing it to be instantly suppressed; so what our Saviour here speaks of is not any natural desire, or unavoidable infirmity, but a lustful

† 1 Cor. vi. 18. u For *eis* is here opposed to *ektos*, without. * 1 Cor. vi. 15, &c. x Matth. v. 27, 28. y Gardener's Sermons.

lustful inclination, blown up into a flame by our own encouragement and fond indulgence. ^z When a man, for instance, purposes to solicit a woman to that which God accounts an abomination, or wishes to enjoy the dangerous love of a person to whom he has no matrimonial relation; when his desires languish, because he cannot gratify the base lust which the naughtiness of his heart, and the temptations of the wicked one suggest; when he feeds himself with impure imaginations, with obscene pictures and images of the person upon whom his heart is set; he then becomes a secret adulterer or fornicator, and must expect the same condemnation with those that are outwardly so. It is the act of the will which makes any thing sinful; and therefore, when a loose heart sends out the eye to pimp for its debauched desires (as ^a one expresses it) and a roving imagination pleases and entertains itself with the speculation of a vice which it wishes for an opportunity of practising; in this case, fornication and adultery are really committed in the heart: so far as the sinner dares to go, he goes; he has the enjoyment of a corrupt fancy, and the defilement sticks upon his conscience: his spirit, the best part of him, is debauched; and no thanks to any virtue in him, if his body is not so too.

If therefore we would preserve ourselves from the violation of this command, we must, in the first place, follow the wise man's advice, ^b keep your hearts with all diligence, because out of them are the issues of life; then, fortify our minds with proper considerations, how great, how dreadful, how heinous, how dangerous, adultery, fornication, lasciviousness, and all manner of uncleanness is; and so keep a strict guard upon our eyes, and, according to holy Job's expression, ^c make a covenant with them, lest at any time they draw us into these commissions: avoid, with abhorrence, all unclean thoughts, all obscene books, or pictures, or whatever else may raise unchaste ideas in the mind: ^d let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouths: stop our ears to all lewd talk, amorous songs, or indecent jests, and shun the company of such as are addicted to them; avoiding, at all times, ease and idleness, luxury and drunkenness, and whatever tends to nourish and inflame the passions; and betaking ourselves constantly to prayer, to working, and fasting, and whatever other severities are of use ^e to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, ^f to keep under the body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means we should become cast-aways.

Eight

Preservatives against it.

^z Horneck's Sermons, Vol. II. ^a Gardener's Sermons. ^b Prov. iv. 23.
^c Job xxxi. 1. ^d Eph. iv. 29. ^e Gal. v. 24. ^f 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Eighth Commandment.

Thou shalt not steal.

The foundation of property.

IN this commandment our civil rights and properties are guarded against all open or secret invasions, as in the two foregoing ones, our persons, and the persons of such as are related to us are secured against violence and lust. But because some have made it a question whether there is any such thing as right and property in the world, it may not be amiss to premise; that ^s whereas Almighty God, by the word of his power, at first created, and still preserveth all things; all things that are, must needs be his, and submitted to his disposal: and therefore whatever any man has, whether houses, or lands, or cattle, or money, the goods and riches (as men call them) of this life; or howsoever he came by them, whether by inheritance, gift, or purchase, by his wit or valour, by any office or calling, by his care or industry, or any other lawful way, they must be supposed to come originally from God: and though God reserves to himself his own propriety in them, so that he may take them away again when he pleases; yet, whenever he gives any man the possession of them, he thereby gives him such a right and title to them as makes them his own, in respect of all other men; inasmuch that no man has any thing to do with them but only he; and he alone is to give an account of the use of them to God, from whom he received them, and under whom he holds them.

The different kinds of theft.

As therefore God is the great proprietor of the world, and our possessions are the fruit of his donation; so, to secure and confirm to every one the civil right and use of what he has put in his hand, he has been pleased to make and publish this law, to be observed by all mankind, *Thou shalt not steal*: that is to say, ^h thou shalt not take from another man any thing that is his, or what God has given him: thou shalt not take it by force or by fraud, openly or clandestinely; for we must not understand the prohibition to relate only to what we commonly call theft or robbery, but to every unlawful and indirect way, whereby we intrench upon our neighbour's right; whether it be by forgerie, perjury, or the subornation of witnesses in the courts of judicature; by lying, dissembling, or concealing the truth; by defrauding, cheating, or over-reaching in any contract or bargain; ⁱ by borrowing or otherwise contracting debts we never intend to pay; by engaging for others above what we are able or is fitting for us to answer; by oppressing the needy, and extorting from such as we know we have power to over-bear; by with-holding the wages of the hireling, and any ways wear-

^g Beveridge on the Church Catechism. ^h Ibid. ⁱ Wake's Exposition of the Church Catechism, and Towerson on the Commandments.

ing those out by delays that have a just claim upon us. To this we may add the whole mystery of ruining estates and families, by the exorbitant rates of procuring, continuing, and advancing of money and interest; the trade of pawns, as it is commonly managed, and the exactions depending thereupon; and, lastly, all such trades as live upon the vices and extravagancies of men, together with all other wicked and injurious ways of gain. These, and whatever other practices are subservient or accessory to the foregoing methods of injustice and wrong, are violations of this command, and fall under the denomination of stealing.

* Let no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter, is the exhortation of the apostle, and the reason he assigns is this, because the Lord is a revenger of all such. And well may he be a revenger of a crime, which is not only a violation of his authority, and a contradiction to the essential properties of his nature, but a bold usurpation of his prerogative, and invasion of his province of bestowing his own where he pleases. The disturbance and overthrow of human order and happiness, the ruin and destruction of mutual trust and confidence (whereof justice is the main pillar and support) are reflections that perhaps seldom enter into the thoughts of such as make haste to be rich; but well it were if they would consider their own interest in the pursuit, and the wise man's assertion concerning the event of it; ¹ He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him. To better their condition and improve their fortune, to build their nests on high, and raise themselves above the contingency of want, is perhaps the chief design of such as pursue any unjustifiable methods of gain; and yet, whether it is that God, in his righteous judgment, permits them to fall into the hands of cheats and oppressors, and as they ^m have spoiled many people, themselves to be defrauded and circumvented by others; or that there is a secret curse attending all unjust gains, which (as the prophet expresses it) ⁿ enters into the house of the thief, remains there, and consumes the very timber and stones thereof; but so it is that the holy scriptures have assured us that ^o he who oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, shall surely come to want; and that, ^p as the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at the end shall be a fool: a fool, when amidst his ill-gotten possessions, he shall find his conscience exposed to perpetual trouble and disquiet, while every thing he sees about him throws guilt in his face, and awakens some dire reflection in his breast: a fool, when upon his bed of sickness, his last will and testament shall present him with a catalogue of uncancelled crimes, and almost every penny he bequeaths put

The folly and wickedness thereof.

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him

k 1 Thef. iv. 6. l Prov. xxviii. 22. m Hab. ii. 8, &c. n Zech. v. 3, 4. o Prov. xxii. 16. p Jer. xvii. 11.

him in mind of his approaching doom : and, lastly, a fool, when on the great day of accounts his sly tricks and stratagems of injustice shall be exposed, and himself forced to acknowledge the hard bargain of all unjust acquisitions in this life, sure to incur the penalty of damnation in the other : for such is the will and decree of God, that † neither thieves, nor covetous, nor oppressors, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of heaven ; whereupon the position of the wise man must needs be a true inference and conclusion, that ‡ better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.

The contrary duties.

As therefore we would not provoke God, injure our neighbour, or undo ourselves, it concerns us nearly to be true and just in all our dealings, not willing to wrong or be accessory to the wronging of any ; † to render unto all their due ; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour ; to be careful to provide a competent subsistence for our families, and, in order thereunto, to be diligent in the pursuit of some honest and useful calling ; to be frugal and saving of what God has given us, moderate and prudent in our expences, punctual in the payment of our debts, and charitable in our relief of the poor ; in all our intercourses, in short, with other men to adhere to that standard of righteousness which our great master has given us, * of doing to others as we would they should do unto us ; or if in any other instance we have transgressed against it, to have recourse to that other rule which his apostle has set us, ‡ let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Ninth Commandment.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

The sense of the words.

THE word *witness*, in its primary sense, † is a judicial term, importing the testimony which is given in courts of judicature for the decision of controversies in matters of capital or high concernment : and to bear false witness against our neighbour is to depose any thing upon oath, or ‡ by way of solemn affirmation in legal proceedings to the prejudice of his life or fortune, when we know very well that such our deposition is contrary to the real sentiments of our minds, and given with a purpose to impose on those whom it may concern. But since there is a farther meaning of the words, wherein they are often used to signify all extrajudicial testimonies (in matters of less moment and common converse) in some degree affecting the interest

q 1 Cor. vi. 10. r Prov. xvi. 8. s Rom. xiii. 7, 8. † Matth. vii. 12. ‡ Eph. iv. 28. u Newcombe's Catechetical Sermons, Vol. II. x An indulgence which the law allows the people called Quakers.

reft and reputation of our neighbour; after we have confidered what is the principal intendment of the precept, viz. the forbidding falfe evidences in judiciary proceedings, we fhall examine into fome farther instances wherein it is equally violated.

¶ I. THE use, or rather the neceffity of witnesses in cafes of judicial inquiry, is abundantly manifelt from a natural unwillingness in moft men to confels what oftentimes they have not the grace to abstain from committing; and an inability in the wifeft judges to make a right determination, without a full knowledge of the state of the controversy, which can only be attained by the information of indifferent persons: and therefore for a man (when ^a convened before a competent authority to declare what he knows) either to attest a thing that is falfe, or conceal any thing that is true, when it tends to clear up and determine the matter in question, is a crime attended with the aggravations of being done in the moft solemn manner; in contempt of the laws and of the reasons upon which persons are empowered to take cognizance in fuch cafes; in prejudice to the common good and happiness of society, which can never be preserved without a due and conscientious regard to truth; and in violation of the highest and moft authentic sanction that can be given to any testimony, the last ^a confirmation for an end of strife: besides the ruin ^b that it many times brings upon the person against whom it is levelled; the assistance it lends his adversary to accomplish his wicked designs upon him; and the obstruction it gives the magistrate (upon whose lips mens lives and fortunes very often depend) in the just and impartial administration of justice. For this reason the tongue that bears falfe witness is commonly called by the Rabbins the triple tongue; for, according to them, it kills three; him that speaks, him that hears, and him that is spoken of: and for this reason their law gives them these injunctions; ^c be not witness against thy neighbour without a cause; ^d put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness; and, upon the discovery of any fuch injustice, allows of the penalty of retaliation: ^e if a falfe witness rise up against any man, and testify against him that which is wrong, the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and behold, if the witness be a falfe witness, and hath testified falfely against his brother, then shall ye do unto him, as he thought to have done unto his brother.

THE truth is, there is fuch a complication of injustice and villainy, of boldness and impiety; fuch a bafe prostitution of conscience, and destruction of the very use and ends of judicatures in this practice, ^f that every falfe and suborned witness ought to be looked upon and detested as a public enemy, and common disturber

A falfe witness a public evil.

^y Towerfon on the Commandments. ^z Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. a Heb. vi. 16. ^b Towerfon, *ibid.* Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. c Prov. xxiv. 28. ^d Exod. xxiii. 1. ^e Deut. xix, 16, &c. ^f South's Sermons, Vol. I.

disturber of the peace and welfare of mankind; and since there is no particular person but what has his private interest concerned, and endangered in the mischief, that such a wretch does to the public, no punishment can well be too severe for him; nor can any court be too solemn in the admission, or too nice in the examination of such as seem to be too forward in the manner of offering themselves to be witnesses.

Others concerned in this command.

IT is usually observed farther, that though witnesses are chiefly concerned, yet all persons that have any business in public courts, and do any way appertain to the law, come within the compass of this commandment. And therefore, the plaintiff, when he raises a false accusation, or mixes true and untrue reports together in his plea; the defendant, when to retard justice he denies that in judgment which his adversary justly charges him with; the advocate, when he defends a wrong cause, or makes false representations to the judge and jury; the judge, when he suffers himself to be bribed, or seduced, or importuned to give a wrong sentence; or the jury, by any of these means, to give a wrong verdict: all these are guilty of bearing false witness, and a great crying sin it is, when in any of these persons, or by any of these methods, justice is perverted, and judgment (as the prophet elegantly expresses it) springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field. This seems to be the primary intention of the precept: But,

II. IN a civil and extrajudicial sense (as we said) it may not improperly be extended to the prohibition of all falsifications whatever; more especially lying and slandering, as they are sins which affect the interest and reputation of our neighbour.

Different opinions of the nature of a lie.

I. LYING is so frequently condemned in scripture, and liars so often numbered amongst the most profligate sinners, that there is no question to be made of its enormity, were but men agreed wherein its nature does consist: but herein both divines and moralists are greatly divided. ^b Some have made the essence of a lie to consist in our thinking one thing and speaking another: but since there lies no obligation on any one to tell always what he thinks; since thus to discover all our thoughts is in many cases highly imprudent, and in some circumstances uncharitable and unjust; a man may certainly, without lying, without sin, without offending God or wounding his own conscience, think of those things that he does not speak of; provided he be careful to speak nothing but what he really thinks. Others therefore, by a lie, understand a voluntary declaration of what is false; but it is a mistake to think that the falsehood of what is spoken is essential to a lie, since though a man should speak that which is really true, yet if, when he speaks it he thinks it to be false, he is without doubt guilty of the sin of lying;

^g Towerison on the Commandments, and Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. h Hof. x. 4.

lying; as, on the contrary, he that speaks what eventually proves false, if, when he speaks it, he thinks it to be true, is certainly not chargeable with this crime: and therefore others with more justness have concluded that the nature of lying consists in the intention of the speaker to deceive by his speech; and that whether what is said be in itself true or false; whether it agrees with the thoughts of him who speaks it or not; yet, if it plainly tends to deceive the hearer; if he who speaks it perceives the tendency and uses it to this end; however disguised it is, or under whatsoever forms it be expressed, it is to all intents and purposes a lie, involving the speaker in the guilt of lying, and exposing him to the punishment threatened against liars.

Wherein
its nature
really lies.

* No benefit would accrue to society by speech, unless men by an express or tacit covenant had agreed, or unless by some superior and antecedent law they were obliged, whenever they profess to open their minds one to another, to do it with sincerity. They may conceal their sentiments indeed when no one has a right to know them by silence; but whenever they make use of words, they pretend thereby to discover their thoughts, and are therefore false to their brethren if they do not really perform what they pretend. † Every man has a natural right to truth; and to communicate in our real sentiments, if so be we think it fit to reveal our sentiments at all: and therefore when in our declarations, promises, or professions, there is a repugnancy between what we say and what we think; ‡ when by our speech we intend to impose upon the credulity of others; when we abuse the trust and confidence that they have in us, so far as to deceive them at the very moment we pretend to inform them aright; when we willingly, knowingly and deliberately, under a pretence of disclosing our thoughts unto them, study to mislead and misguide them; such a foul prevarication as this is inconsistent with the laws of God, and with the rules of common honesty; it is an act of great baseness and dishonesty with regard to ourselves; of great injustice and uncharitableness to our neighbour; and of great boldness and presumption against the omniscient God, who searches our reins and hearts: and therefore the scripture assures us that § as a lie is a foul blot to him that uses it, so it is ¶ an abomination to the Lord, and † a matter of detestation to the righteous: that, consequently, ‡ it excludes from happiness and consigns † to the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; for † a false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.

Its heinous-
ness.

“ BUT

i South's Sermons, Vol. I. and Smallridge's Sermons. k Smallridge, *ibid.*
l The Whole Duty of Man. m Smallridge, *ibid.* n Ecclus. xx. 24. o Prov.
xii. 22. p *Ibid.* xiii. 5. q Prov. xx. 15. r *Ibid.* xxi. 8. s Prov. xix. 5.

An officious lie.

“BUT may not he escape † who, to do a kind office rather than an injury; to appease (for instance) those that are angry; to comfort those that are dejected; to dissuade wicked men from evil purposes; or to excite good men to commendable actions; to save the life of a dear friend, or preserve an excellent person from perishing; may not he, I say, now and then deviate from truth, and speak otherwise than he thinks, in order to attain these good and commendable ends?” A very learned and judicious † divine of our church gives us a full and peremptory answer to this question. We know not a greater good, says he, (for there is not a greater good) than the glory of God; we scarce know a lesser sin (if any sin can be accounted little) than an harmless officious lie: yet may not this be done even for the sake of that. Wilt thou speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him? says Zophar to Job; (where the question certainly implies the full force of a prohibition) and if we may not speak deceitfully for the glory of God, then certainly not for any other inferior end: not for the saving of a life; * not for the conversion of a soul; not for the peace of a church; and (if even it were possible) not for the redemption of the world: for no intention of an end can warrant the choice of sinful means to compass it. * Officious lies are, without all doubt, much less flagitious, much more excuseable than mischievous ones; but they may still be sins, though not so heinous: they are certainly faults if they want to be excused. And therefore, though we are disposed easily to forgive those who never allow themselves to speak what is false, but when they may do their neighbour a good turn by it; yet we cannot but esteem and commend, and reverence those persons, and pay a more intire deference to their word, who think it not allowable to speak that which is false in any case, or for any end whatever.

Not allowable, tho' not so sinful.

Evil-speaking, the several kinds of it.

2. ANOTHER instance of bearing false witness is such evil speaking in general, as tends to lessen the reputation and increase the reproach and disparagement of our neighbour: And this, † whether the things related be true or false; spoken to the face or behind the back; in exprefs terms, or by way of insinuation; in a serious or in a jocular manner. If the thing be false and we know it, it is downright calumny; if we know it not, but only take it upon the report of others, it is nevertheless slander. If the thing be true and we know it, it is defamation, as prejudicing our neighbour's good name; if spoken to his face (which seems to be more generous) it is reviling; if behind

† The Papists are of opinion that officious lies are venial sins; the Socinians that they are allowable, because they hurt nobody, and many times do a great deal of good; and some of our own divines, that in some cases, and for some ends they are justifiable; but all this seems to be a gross mistake. Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. † Sanderson ad Clerum, Ser. II. * Ad Sempiternam salutem nullus ducendus est, opitulante mendacio. Aug. de Mend. C. 19. and Rom. iii. 8. † Smallbridge's Sermons. † Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I.

hind his back (which is vile and base) it is what we properly call slander or back-biting. In what manner of address this evil speaking is conveyed does not much alter the case, so long as it has the effect to defame; only it may be observed that many times the deepest wounds are given by the smoothest and most artificial ways of slander.

^z MANY have fallen by the edge of the sword (says the wife of Sirach, describing the mischiefs of slander and defamati-^{The mischief of it.} on) but not so many as have fallen by the tongue. Well is he that is defended from it, and hath not passed through the venom thereof; who hath not drawn the yoke thereof; nor been bound in its bands: for the yoke thereof is a yoke of iron, and the bands thereof are bands of brass; the death thereof is an evil death; and the grave were better than it. The truth is, ^a since all men (especially men of honour and honesty) do, from a necessary instinct of nature, esteem a good name beyond all temporal enjoyments, and hold it more dear and precious than their very lives; the man that either openly or clandestinely deprives them of it, does them as much wrong as if he had robbed them of their substance or maliciously taken away their lives. Since ^b all men (especially men of merit and abilities) desire to be useful and considerable in the society wherein they live, and can hardly attain to that end without preserving a fair reputation in the world, the man who sullies or defaces that, puts so many bands and yokes upon them; he lays an embargo upon their promotion, and cramps the sinews of their endeavours to rise. For it is impossible that the greatest merit should shine forth with a due lustre when calumny and reproach have effectually obscured it.

BE the report never so unjust, all men have not time, and few will give themselves trouble to inquire into the grounds of it: many will be pleased with the misrepresentation from some agreeable humour or turn of wit in it; and some from a natural inclination to depreciate superior merit, sometimes from a motive of envy or revenge, and on certain occasions of interest and competition, will not dislike it. Thus the story will have a free passage given it; ^c and, as a poisonous vapour sometimes infects a whole city or country, so a calumny, once set forward and meeting with so general an encouragement, will be apt not only to spread itself wide, but the wider it spreads the more to increase its malignity. Little therefore does the first author of it know to how vast an account the injury he has done may swell; and less is he able to make a valuable satisfaction to the sufferer for an indignity, that not only lies heavy upon the person himself while he lives, but ^d descends to his children and posterity: because the good or ill name of the father is derived down

^z Ecclus. xxviii. 18, &c. ^a Barrow's Works, Vol. I. ^b Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^c Fiddes's Sermons. ^d Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I.

down to them, and many times the best thing he has to leave them is the reputation of an unblemished virtue and worth, which the mouth of the slanderer labours to destroy.

The mad-
ness of it.

THE wise king of Israel, therefore, considering the lasting and irreparable injury and injustice which slander and defamation bring upon any person, compares men, whose pleasure lies that way, to those that are really distracted; ^e as a madman, says he, who casteth out fire-brands, arrows and death: so is he that ^f defameth his neighbour, and saith, Am I not in sport? It is wild mirth, however, which is the mother of grief to those whom we should tenderly love; and a cruel and unnatural sport it is to play with a man's good name, and expose his character to be baited as it were for the laughter and entertainment of the company. The reputation is too noble a sacrifice to be offered to raillery; ^g and a good too dear and precious, and withal too tender and brittle to be handled with levity, or prostituted to any one's diversion.

Other in-
stances of
it.

3. THERE are some other instances of bearing false witness against their neighbour reducible to this commandment; such as, 1. detraction, ^h which consists in representing his person and actions in the most disadvantageous view; impairing his good qualities, improving his defects, and interposing exceptions to all his commendations. 2. Flattery, the opposite extreme, which hides and palliates his vices, and raises and enhances his virtues, in order to sooth his vanity, and increase his self-conceit. And, 3. All falsification of our words, either in contracts or promises, which cannot but have a manifest tendency to his prejudice and disappointment.

and the po-
sitive du-
ties arising
from it.

THESE are some of the principal transgressions against this precept; and the positive duties that seem to be included in it are; ⁱ to be religiously strict, both in civil and judicial matters; to speak nothing but the truth; and be very exact in our delivering and descending upon it, that we give no occasion to mistakes; to allow every one their due; to report nothing that may tend to their disgrace, nor detract any thing from their just esteem; to vindicate their reputation, as far as we fairly can, and to hold our tongues, at least not to aggravate their faults, where we cannot; to be sincere in our promises and contracts, in our praises and commendations, as well as our admonitions and reproofs; bearing always in mind that solemn, that awful declaration of our Lord and Master, ^k Every idle word (and much more every slanderous and detracting, every hurtful and pernicious word) that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof at the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Tenth

^e Prov. xxvi. 18. ^f So the LXX render it. ^g Barrow's Works, Vol. I. h Ibid. ⁱ Wake on the Church Catechism. ^k Matth. xii. 36, 37.

Tenth Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, &c.

THIS commandment is the last of the second table; and as the other (which, in some respect, are reducible to it) do, in their literal sense, relate only to our external actions: in this we are directed how to regulate what is the internal spring and movement of all we do, our desires and inclinations: and the wisdom of God thought proper to place it here, not only to be a supplement and recapitulation, but a security and guard, as it were, to the rest; being well aware, that, as no man can keep the other except he keep this; so a due sense and observation of this, would make the performance of all the other easy.

Why this commandment last.

THERE seems however to be a mistake in those who imagine that this precept is chiefly intended to restrain the first motions and stirrings of sin (called by the divines concupiscence) which arises in the sensual appetite, previously to any deliberate act of the intellect, or consent of the will. Whether the first motions of concupiscence which arise in our minds suddenly, and without any previous or subsequent consent, are, in a proper sense, criminal, is not so well agreed: but admitting they be sinful, and that, by an easy way of arguing, they may be reduced to this commandment; yet, since the other commandments which forbid all sensual acts do equally forbid the principle from whence they arise: the thing which seems here chiefly and properly to be prohibited is an unlawful and inordinate desire of that which by right and property belongs to another: and in contraposition to this, the thing that seems chiefly to be recommended is to be content, and fully satisfied with that portion of outward things which the good providence of God has been pleased to bestow on us, without envying, or greedily desiring the possessions that are our neighbours. So that the commandment, both as to its negative and affirmative sense, resolves itself very properly into this double exhortation of the apostle; ⁿ Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have.

COVETOUSNESS indeed is an odious name, which most men are ashamed to own; but all covetousness is not criminal, neither is the desire of what is another's, so long as it keeps within due bounds, unallowable. ^o It is a natural, it is a necessary passion in us; and we may as well expect light not to shine, or fire not to burn, as that the representation of a good which we want, and may have from another, should not affect us, and

All covetousness not sinful.

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make

¹ Barrow on the Decalogue. ^m Sanderfon ad Aulam, Ser. 5. ⁿ Heb. xiii. 5. ^o Newcome's Catech. Sermon's, Vol. II.

make us wish and desire to obtain it. The profit of commerce, the income of industry, the reward of arts and sciences, are the common spur and incentive to mens endeavours: these things they present to their thoughts, and set before their expectations; and yet these things, for the most part, are the property of another.

When, and in what case it is.

IT is not therefore the desire, but the inordinacy of the desire, that falls under the prohibition in this precept. † When men give up their minds and affections to such things, as, by the laws of God and man, the proprietor cannot alienate; to such things as are so necessary and beneficial to him, that without manifest detriment, he cannot part with; to such things as are the peculiar objects of his esteem and affection, and without great grief and trouble of heart, he cannot forego; or, when they suffer their ill-grounded desires to proceed so far as to discompose their minds, and devour their ease and self-enjoyment; to raise turbulent thoughts, and anxious resentments in their breast: In short, when they have so far set their hearts upon what is another's, as to be restless till they have it, and discontented if they have it not, they then incur the sin of covetousness, properly so called, even though they meditate (as yet) no unlawful methods to obtain it. For this seems to be Ahab's sin, in coveting Naboth's vineyard, that he could not rest himself satisfied with all his own abundance, but set his mind upon his neighbour's plot; † which, living so commodiously for him, irritated his desires to such a degree that, unless he might have it, he could no longer enjoy his own. † He had not as yet (as far as it appears from the history) any settled purpose or design to wrest it from him by force, or to weary him out of it by unjust vexations: he offered fair terms, either by purchase or exchange, to obtain it of him: here was neither fraud, nor violence, nor threatenings used: the whole outward carriage was civil, and the proposals reasonable: all the fault was within, and that fault consisted in his inordinate desire of what was not his own; which inordinacy discovered itself afterwards in the signs and effects of a discontented mind: † he came into his house, heavy and displeased, laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

Ahab's case.

The mischievous consequences of covetousness.

THIS farther lesson we may learn from Ahab's subsequent behaviour, that when once the spirit of covetousness has taken possession of a man, it will not be long before it stupifies his conscience, and goads him on to the perpetration of any wickedness, in order to accomplish his desires. “ If Naboth will part with his vineyard, he shall have his price; but, if he will not, another expedient must be found out: letters must be

p Towerson on the Commandments.

q — — — — — O si angulus ille

Proximus accedat; qui nunc denormat agellum!—HOR. Sat. Lib. II.

r Sanderfon ad Aulam, Ser. 5. s 1 Kings xxi. 4.

“ written,

“ written, witnesses suborned, justice perverted, and an innocent person (had not the situation of his vineyard made him guilty) under a mock form of trial and much base hypocrisy, accused, condemned, and executed.” To such lengths of mischief and flagitiousness will the indulgence of a vicious inordinate desire lead us, when the object we covet blinds our eyes, and the instigations of Satan prompt us on !

Good reason, therefore, had our blessed Saviour to give us so strict a caution against this sin above all other ; take heed, and beware of covetousness ; for look upon all the frauds that are practised every where among the sons of men ; take a survey of all oppressions, the greater and the less oppressions that are done under the sun, and you will find that most of them owe both their first birth and after-growth to this cursed root of covetousness. Extortion, bribery, flattery, calumny, perjury, simony, sacrilege, unjust wars and suits, false weights and measures in markets, false lights and wares in shops, false pleas and oaths in courts, the coldness of charity, and perfidiousness of friends, the want of bowels, and bloodiness of mind, do they not all come from hence ? And does not the frequency of these in the world unanswerably convince the men of this generation of much injustice and uncharitableness, in coveting other mens goods, and not being content with their own ?

CONTENTMENT is such an acquiescence of the mind in that portion of outward things which we possess, upon a persuasion of its being sufficient for us, * as makes us well pleased with the condition we are in, and suffers not the desire of any change, or of any particular thing we have not, to trouble our spirits, or discompose our duty. And to bring ourselves to this frame of mind, it may not be improper to consider,—^x That, as God is the creator and preserver, and consequently the lord and governor of all things, his right and prerogative it is to assign every man his station, and allot every man his portion, as he judges most convenient : that, as he is infinite in wisdom, and boundless in goodness, ^y he both knows better than we do ourselves what condition is fittest for us, and will be sure to appoint us what he esteems to be so : ^z that we ourselves, as God’s creatures, have no just claim to any thing (all we have, or can have, coming from the bounty of heaven) and therefore, how little soever is allowed us, have no wrong done us, nor any right to complain : that, as we are his servants, our work, our garb, our diet, how we are to be employed, and how accommodated,

Contentment, what.
 Considerations leading to it.
 1. From God.
 2. From ourselves.

t Sanderfon ad Aulam, Ser. 5. u Towerson on the Commandments. * Patrick on Contentment. x Barrow’s Works, Vol. III. Sermon 6.

y Permittes ipsis expendere numinibus, quid Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris : Nam pro jucundis aptissima quæque dabunt Dii. Charior est illis hominibus, quam sibi.--J. v. Sat. x.

z Barrow, ubi supra

is intirely at our master's discretion ; and, as we are sinners, any allowance is good enough, and better than we deserve : that this world, at best, is but ^a a short scene, where every one is to act such a part as the great master of the drama thinks fit to give him ; and that it matters not much, whether it falls to our share to act the prince or the peasant, so long as we perform but handsomely what we are to do : that ^b this world is but an inn, and ourselves but passengers, and therefore it need not much disturb us if our accommodations happen to be mean, since it is but for a very short stay we have to make, and heaven, our native home, will make us a full amends when we come to our journey's end. What should we think on more ? Even what every day's experience teaches us, that ^c our life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that we possess : that contentment is rarely, more rarely to be found in a splendid, than in a moderate fortune : ^d that the things we naturally enjoy are greater in value, as well as more in number, than those we fancy we are in need of, to our happiness : that the gaieties we so much admire, and without which we can hardly be easy, are attended with a proportionable number of inconveniencies ; and that more cares, and fears, and dangers wait upon the sceptre than upon the spade. What shall we think on more ? Even the sure promises of God recorded in the scriptures, that he will support us under our humble fortunes, or else make them advantageous to us : that ^e his eyes are upon them that fear him, to deliver their souls from death, and to feed them in the time of dearth ; that ^f though the lions do lack and suffer hunger, yet they who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good ; and in fine, ^g that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose. What shall we think on more ? Even the great examples that have gone before, to teach us the lesson of contentment : that some of the ^h heathen moralists, by the bare contemplation of the nature of God, and the state of their own dependence, have wrought themselves up into a spirit of resignation and resolved acquiescence deserving our christian emulation :

3. From the world.

4. From different conditions in life.

5. From scripture promises.

6. From examples of others.

a Memneso hoti hypokrites ei dramatos hos an sele ho didaskalos, &c. EPIC. Enchir. c. 23. *b* Sherlock on death. *c* Luke xii. 15. *d* Patrick on Contentment. *e* Psal. xxxiii. 18, 19. *f* Ibid. xxxiv. 10. *g* Rom. viii. 28. *h* There is a very remarkable passage to this purpose in Epictetus. " This is my business, says the philosopher, to be found always void of passion.—That I may have it to say to God; Have I transgressed at any time thy commandments? Have I abused the faculties thou hast given me to other purposes? Did I ever accuse thee? Did I find fault, on any occasion, with thy administration and government; I was sick, because it pleased thee to have it: others were sick too; but I willingly I was poor, because thou wouldest have it so: others were poor too, but I joyfully. I was not advanced to be a ruler, because thou wouldest not have me; but did I ever desire empire? Didst thou ever see me the sadder for want of it? Did I ever approach thee with a less cheerful countenance?—I give thee all thanks that thou countest me worthy of the honour to see thy works, and to understand thy administrations." Arabian, Lib. III. c. 3.

tion: that the great apostle of the Gentiles, ⁱ in whatever state he was, had learned to be contented; every where, and in all things, being instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need; and that our blessed Saviour, the great Lord of the universe, when found in the fashion of a man, was never known to discover the least uneasiness, ^k though foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, while himself had not where to lay his head. The proper result of all these considerations is, that ^l we be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let our requests be made known unto God.

THESE are the commandments of the second table; and to enforce their observance, as well as enable us to discharge them with more ease and readiness, I know no rule so proper to be recommended as that which our blessed Saviour has given us; ^m all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; for this is the law and the prophets. To restrain our minds from all covetous desires, so as to settle our contentment in what is our own; to keep our tongues from all evil-speaking, so as not to offend against truth and charity; to keep our hands from all violence and wrong, so as not to offend against mercy and justice; to keep our bodies from riot and uncleanness, so as not to offend against modesty and temperance; to regulate our conduct with relation to our neighbour, either in traffic, or any other intercourse; either as to his bed, his life, or any other part of his property; to regulate our conduct with relation to our parents, our governors, our superiors, our equals, our inferiors; and, in short, to go through the whole compass of what we owe towards one another, what expedient can be devised more proper than to bear always in mind this short epitome of our duty, doing to other men as we would be done by? * Let but a child, for instance, a subject, or a servant, ask himself without partiality, what honour, what submission, what obedience he would think was due to him, were he himself a father, a magistrate, or a master; and his answer to this will be a rule for his own behaviour towards those that are so related to him. This would restrain us from an insolent or surly carriage towards any one, from despising and ridiculing, from upbraiding and provoking our neighbour, if we do but seriously consider how ill we ourselves would bear this from another. It would teach us to forbear and forgive, because we desire, in our turns, to be forborn and forgiven; and it would make us candid and good-natured, in putting the best interpretation upon the words and actions of others, if we reflect but how reasonable we think it that another should deal so candidly with us.

A general rule for the easier observance of these commandments.

The excellency of it.

IN

ⁱ Phil. iv. 11, 12. ^k Matth. viii. 20. ^l Phil. iv. 6. ^m Matth. vii. 12.

* Gardener's Sermons.

IN a word, this is a rule particularly fitted for practice, as it involves in the very notion of it a motive stirring us up to do what it enjoins; and as it offers itself to our thoughts, and is ready for present use upon all exigencies and occasions; inso-much that no necessity of acting can be so immediate but that there may be time for a short recourse to it; room for a sudden glance as it were upon it in our minds, where (as ^u one elegantly expresses it) it rests and sparkles always, like the Urin and Chummim on Aaron's breast.

* HUMAN laws are often so numerous as to escape our memories; so darkly sometimes, and inconsistently worded as to puzzle our understandings; and their original obscurity is many times improved by the nice distinctions and subtle reasonings of those who profess to clear them; but this is a law attended with none of these inconveniencies. The grossest minds can scarce misapprehend it: the weakest memories are capable of retaining it: no perplexing comment can easily cloud it: the authority of no man's gloss upon earth can (if we are but sincere) sway us to make a wrong construction of it: ^y It is, in short, an highway (according to the prophet's expression) and the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err in it. And as it is adapted to all capacities, so it extends to all ranks and conditions of men, to the prince as well as the peasant; and to all kinds of acts and intercourse between them, to matters of charity, generosity, and civility, as well as justice; to negative no less than positive duties; and in this respect our blessed Saviour pronounces it to be the law and the prophets; for such is its compass and extent, that whatever rules of the second table are delivered in the law of Moses, or in the larger comments and explanation of that law, made by the other writers of the Old Testament, they are all virtually contained in this precept, wherein every line of our duty relating to our neighbour centers; and under which, as under one common head and principle, they may be all reduced and ranged.

IF therefore we are desirous to fulfil all the duties of righteousness, our surest and most compendious way will be to have this one precept engraven upon the tables of our hearts (as the wise heathen emperor had it on the walls of his palace) that from thence upon every occasion we may transcribe it into our practice: for the practice of this will answer all; since, ^z If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, and deal with him as thou wouldest have thyself dealt with; for love is the fulfilling of the law.

S E C T.

^u Aiterbury's Sermons, Vol. I. ^x Ibid. ^y Isa. xxxv. 8. ^z Rom. xiii. 4, 10.

S E C T. III.

Of the CIVIL LAWS.

THE next sort of laws which God gave the Jews are commonly called civil or judicial laws, and were appointed for the rule of political government, the preservation of peace, and the administration of justice in that nation. But before we come to speak of these, it will be proper to premise something concerning the several forms of government which at different times obtained among the Jews, in order to perceive both how agreeable to such constitutions their political laws were, and how far they may be supposed to affect christian nations ever since.

WHETHER we suppose civil government to be a positive institution of God, or only founded in the natural order and reason of things, it cannot otherwise be but that the first form of it was paternal, and that Adam, while he lived, was, both in right, and, so far as appears to us, in fact universal monarch. Upon his death the sovereign power devolved to the next in blood, and so successively followed the right of primogeniture. After the flood, and upon the dispersion of the sons of Noah, the patriarchal authority was still asserted and preserved, and several parts of the habitable world were at that time divided to every one after his own tongue, after their families, in their nations. Upon the usurpation of Nimrod, and much more after the confusion of languages, though there were frequent infractions made upon this order of succession, yet the patriarchal right was still recognized till the time of Abraham, who by God's appointment removed into the land of Canaan, and there governed his family and dependents with a full authority; as indeed the patriarchal power was all along of as wide a scope as any regal or sovereign power needed to claim; for it consisted in the right of blessing, of cursing, of casting out of doors, of excluding from the common right of inheritance, and in case of heinous offences of inflicting capital punishments; as appears in the sentence of Judah against Thamar, upon an accusation of her having committed adultery; bring her forth, and let her be burnt. During the time that the Jews sojourned in Egypt, there were some remains of this patriarchal authority in the heads of the tribes, and therefore they are called the elders of the children of Israel, whom Moses was commanded to gather together; but when Israel came out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from among strange children, God himself vouchsafed then to be their immediate head and king, and appointed Moses to be his deputy; so that from this time

The patriarchal government.

of a
estate.

When ex-
pired.

a Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. b Gen. x. 5. c Ibid. ix. 26. d Ibid. ver. 25. e Ibid. xxi. 10. f Ibid. xlix. 27. g Ibid. xxxviii. 24. h Exod. iii. 16.

time forward the patriarchal power was happily lost in the theocracy.

Theocra-
cy.

THAT God was related to the Jews in a peculiar manner, and not as he is the universal ruler of the world, is manifest from the distinguishing marks and glory of a sovereign which he was then pleased to assume. The tabernacle which was placed in the middle of their camp in the wilderness had thereby as much the appearance of a general's tent as of a temple; that pillar which was sometimes dark and sometimes luminous was as it were the signal which he gave them; for they marched at the commandment of the Lord, and at his commandment they pitched and kept guard about him. When the temple was built the Jews gave it the name of Hekal, which signifies a palace: the ark that was in it was the throne whereon he sat; and the manner wherein he caused himself to be served gave him still a greater appearance of sovereignty. As a king he had his captains, his soldiers, his guards; he established officers of all kinds; reserved to himself the tenths and first-fruits of all things; imposed a tribute upon every head; made laws for no other end but his own worship: appointed priests and Levites almost innumerable to attend his service; and required that all the first-born should be devoted to him: in short, the most powerful monarch upon earth cannot be attended with more order and magnificence than God was served with in the temple.

Aristocra-
cy.

¹ BUT though this republic had at this time no other sovereign but God, yet the Israelites who could not bear the glory of his presence, and were terrified at the noise and thunder in the midst of which he shewed himself to them on mount Sinai, prayed him that he would not speak to them himself, but make use of the ministry of Moses, that he might be the interpreter of his will. Moses accordingly (as the author to the Hebrews ^m tells us) discharged this important office with faithfulness; but, to ease the burden of the administration, God commanded him to chuse out seventy aged and experienced persons, who were afterwards called The Great Sanhedrim, to whose authority the tribes, the prophets and high-priests were subject, and whose business it was not only to determine the weightiest civil causes, but to arbitrate likewise in what related to religion; so that by this distribution of the authority, the government put on the face of aristocracy.

Judicial.

AFTER the Jews were in quiet possession of the land of Canaan, they were governed by judges, ⁿ the tenor of whose commission was different in this respect, that, as they were called to the administration upon some extraordinary exigence; so when the end for which they were called was effected, their power expired; like that of the Roman dictators, who, when the particular

ⁱ Lamy's Introduction. ^k Numb. ix. 18,—23. Vulgat. ^l Lamy, *ibid.* Chap. iii. 2. ⁿ Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II.

ticular occasion upon which they were created was over, returned again to their former, and very often to a private manner of life. During their regency they were absolute and independent, invested with an authority equal to kings, but without the royal state and equipage. Their power, • in short, was like that of a general of an army, rather than the governor of a nation; and for this reason their office was not hereditary, but conferred upon the person who was best accomplished, and most likely to answer the exigencies of state. ^p This high and dictatorial power being but temporary, and having so frequent interruptions in it, gave the ordinary and inferior judges an opportunity of growing remiss in the discharge of their duty, not to say corrupt. ^q Samuel indeed (who judged Israel all the days of his life) was a good and vigilant magistrate; but, in the decline of his age, being less capable of the administration, he made his sons judges, who committed great disorders, and gave such offence to the elders of Israel that they assembled together, and came to Samuel, at once remonstrating against the male-administration of his sons, and addressing him to make them a king who might judge them in the manner they saw other nations governed. Samuel, with some reluctance, and God, with some resentment, complied with the people's humour; and so a monarchy was introduced, but exceedingly mild and temperate in its kind, if so be the prince ruled according to the established laws. This form of government however expired, when the king and kingdom were subdued, and the inhabitants carried to Babylon, after it had subsisted about five hundred years.

Regal,

UPON the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, ^r the government was no longer regal, but rather sacerdotal, for the high-priest had the chief authority, though the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, retained a great share of the power. This form continued, without any noted intermission, about the space of four hundred and twenty years, and then the regal government was again introduced by Aristobulus, one of the successors of the Maccabees, but continued free and independent not above forty-six years, when Pompey the Great, then general of the Roman army, coming down like a torrent upon the East, subdued the country, and made Palestine a province of the Roman empire.

and sacerdotal government.

FROM this short review of the different forms of government which obtained in the Jewish state, we may better perceive the great wisdom of those laws which were enacted for the safety and preservation of it. ^s With regard to the sovereign, as he is the head of the state, upon whose conduct the safety of the subject depends, Moses took all the precaution imaginable to

The wisdom of the laws, in relation to the king,

VOL. II.

X

prevent

^o Lewis's Antiquity of the Hebrew Republic. ^p Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^q 1 Sam. viii. 15. ^r Lewis, *ibid.* ^s Lamy, Introduction.

prevent any one's being admitted to that dignity who was not a lover of virtue, and a stranger to all vice. "It is sufficient for you, says he to the people, 'in the words of Josephus, that God be your sovereign; but, if you should ever desire to have a king, take care to chuse one of your own nation, and one whom you see inclined to justice, and all other virtues. Whoever he be, let him have a greater regard to God and his laws than to his own understanding: let him do nothing in opposition to the high-priest and the senate: let him avoid having a great number of wives, great state and equipages, and heaping up immense riches; * lest his heart be lifted up above his brethren; and let him, in short, not turn aside from the commandment, to the right-hand, or to the left."

to the administration of justice,

As to the administration of justice, the rules which Moses gave were excellent in their kind; that * judges should not suffer themselves to be corrupted with presents; † should not receive a false report; ‡ nor respect persons in judgment, not † countenance a poor man in his cause: as to witnesses, † that one was not sufficient, but that three, at least two, were required in any point of important controversy, and these not women, because of their natural levity; nor slaves, because of the baseness of their minds; but persons of integrity, and whose good conduct of life might give a proper sanction to their testimony: and, in case of any one's being deprehended a false evidence, the law of retaliation took place; for they were ordered † to do to him, as he thought to have done to his brother, that those which remained might hear, and fear, and thenceforth commit no more such evil among them.

the national interest,

As to the general interest of the nation, God commanded the Jews to look upon themselves as brethren, and members of the same family. Upon this account the land of Canaan was equally divided among them, and, lest avarice should destroy that equality, † the law of jubilee restored every man to what he had at first. The prohibitions † against usury, and † against removing land-marks, the laws † for securing things entrusted with others, † and for regulating the justice of weights and measures, as well as the strict provision made against theft (for it was † lawful to kill a thief who was taken in the act of stealing, or breaking through a wall) were a good fence to the properties; and then † the law of retaliation, and † the punishments annexed to murder, were a great security to the lives of the people. For the prevention of accidental deaths, the law required † that all wells should be closed in, and the roofs of all houses

t Joseph. Antiq. Lib. IV. c. 18. u Deut. xvii. 20. * Exod. xxiii. 8. x Ibid. ver. 1. y Deut. i. 17. z Exod. xxiii. 3. a Deut. xix. 15. b Ibid. ver. 19, 20. d Deut. xxv. e Exod. xxii. 25. f Deut. xxvii. 17. g Exod. xxii. 7. h Deut. xxv. 13, &c. i Exod. xxii. 2, 3, &c. k Ibid. ver. 24. l Lev. xxiv. 17. m Deut. xxii. 8.

houses have battlements; and, in case one man had slain another unawares, ^a it appointed places of refuge to screen him from the revenge of the deceased's relations.

IN point of prudence, nothing escaped Moses. As children are the support, and what we may call the nursery of the state, ^b he proscribed eunuchs who defraud the public of those pledges; he commanded, ^c that whoever debauched a woman should marry her; and that ^d the woman who pretended to be a virgin, and upon her marriage was found otherwise, should be stoned. Adultery, the great reproach of the marriage-state, was tried by a miracle; ^e the woman accused of it was obliged to drink some waters in the temple, in scripture called the Waters of Jealousy, which, if she was guilty, killed her, but in case she was innocent, did her no harm. Polygamy, as well as divorces, was permitted the Jews, for the hardness of their hearts, ^f as our Saviour tells them, *i. e.* to prevent poisonings and murders; the desire of having children, which nature inspires, was encouraged ^g by the reproaches which the law throws upon the barrenness of women; and, in order to preserve both the names and estates of families among them, if a woman had no children by her husband, she, after his death, was to marry his brother, ^h and the children of the second marriage were esteemed the descendants of the first.

THESE are some of the civil and judiciary laws which God appointed the antient Hebrews, and which were of excellent use and contrivance to that people; but whether, or how far they ought to oblige other political societies, has been a question controverted among divines. The resolution however, seems to lie ⁱ in distinguishing between such laws as have respect to the particular condition and circumstances of the Jews and their polity, and such as are not peculiar to them, but, with parity of reason, may be equally applied to other nations. ^k The Jews, who at their first institution were a society separate from the rest of the world, were, by the special command of God, ordered to drive out and destroy a wicked race of people, and after their destruction, to make an equal division of the land among them, which division was to be a perpetuity to each family as long as their state endured. ^l For this reason the law of jubilee, and the prohibition of usury was enacted, as a means to preserve that equality, to keep some from being excessively rich, and others from being miserably poor: but this by no means is to be applied to other constitutions, where men are left to their industry, and neither have their inheritance by a grant from heaven, nor by any special appointment of God, are put all upon a level. What was peculiar to the state of the Jews there-

How far they oblige other people.

^a Numb. xxxv. 11. ^b Deut. xxiii. 1. ^c Ibid. xxii. 28. ^d Ibid. ver. 21. ^e Numb. v. ^f Matth. xix. 8. ^g Exod. xxxij. 26. ^h Deut. vii. 14. ⁱ Deut. xxv. 5, 6. ^k Edwards's Survey, Vol. I. ^l Hilder's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^m Burnet's Exposition of the XXXIX Articles.

fore is not of any obligation to other nations : but this regard we conceive is due to those politics which were the invention and appointment of heaven, that, where they are of common use and equity, and founded upon some general reason, there other nations ought to conform, as much as they can, to the model proposed to them : ^z particularly as to judicial proceedings, in awarding punishments, and especially capital punishments ; for the power of inflicting them being derived from God, the measures and regulation of them (wherein some difficulty often occurs) cannot be better determined than by those precedents which God left us concerning them when he condescended to be a civil legislator himself.

The nature
of their
sanctions.

WHAT sanctions God gave to these laws, and whether the promises and threats, whereby he was pleased to enforce the observance of them, were only temporal, or of a larger extent and continuance, is another point not so well agreed on among divines. The truth is, ^a if we take the words of the covenant which Moses made between God and the people of Israel strictly, and as they stand, they import only temporal blessings and punishments ; ^b for the law of Moses, being a political law, was not intended for the government of all mankind, but of one particular nation only ; and therefore was established (as political laws are) upon temporal promises and threatenings : but, that under these temporal promises and threats, rewards and punishments of an higher nature were intended, the tenor of the promises made to their forefathers, as well as the general principles of natural religion, not yet quite extinguished among them, were a sufficient indication. That Abraham, and the patriarchs before him, had a true and full notion of a life after this, ^c looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ; confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and embracing the promises which they saw at a distance, and were persuaded of, we are certain from the testimony of the author to the Hebrews ; and that the Jews were all along instructed herein by their forefather Abraham, we have an equal, if not a greater certainty from the character which God gives that patriarch, ^d I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. ^e The business of the law, therefore, was not to establish an eternal state of happiness, [†] wherein the Jews were sufficient-
ly

^z Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. ^a Burnet's Exposition of the XXXIX Articles. ^b P'ocock on Hosea ii. 3. ^c Heb. xi. 10, 13. ^d Gen. xviii. 19. ^e Collier's Introduction. [†] The author of the Divine Legation of Moses has taken great pains to prove, that, as temporal rewards and punishments were the proper sanction of the Jewish law, so there were no other : that as Moses purposely omitted the doctrine of a state of future rewards and punishments, so neither had the ancient Jews any knowledge of it, which he endeavours to demonstrate from passages taken from the books both of the Old and New Testament, and by answering the objections that are generally produced from thence. Vol. II. Lib. V. and VI.

ly instructed already ; but, as the people of all nations are encouraged in their obedience and subjection to governors, from the benefit of safety and protection under them ; so the Israelites were to be settled into a regular method of life, both religious and civil, and temporal rewards and punishments were appointed by Moses to encourage their obedience, and deter them from the contrary ; † though men of more discerning thoughts understood them, no doubt, as pledges and types to represent and prefigure the rewards and punishments of a future state. For the end of the law, ‡ says a great Jewish expounder of it, is not to make the earth fructify to give men their lives ; but that by all these things they may be encouraged to perfect their obedience, thereby become worthy of the life of the world to come.

S E C T. IV.

Of the Ecclesiastical Laws.

WE come to the ceremonial or ecclesiastical law, which contains those precepts that God gave the Jews, concerning such external rites as belong to religion, and relate either to the time, or place, or offices, or officers of religious worship.

I. ^h THE solemn times of worship, appointed to the Jews in the Mosaic law, were by a general name called feasts, though (to speak properly) some of them were fasts : but because the word *feast* is frequently taken by the Jews for any solemn time of religious worship, whether it be accompanied with rejoicing or mourning, that term is applied to them all : and, according to this latitude, ⁱ festivals are solemn days set apart for the honour and service of God, either in commemoration of some special mercies received from his bountiful hand, or in memory of some punishments which he, in former times, had inflicted on them, or in hopes of averting such as at the time of their institution hung over their heads. Those of the first kind (which at present we are to speak of) were attended with rejoicings, feasting, hymns, concerts of music, eucharistical sacrifices, and a total exemption from labour ; upon which account they were termed Sabbaths, ^k and are properly of three sorts ; 1. Such as were common, and returned oft in the same year : 2. Such as were extraordinary, and returned but once in a certain number of years. And, 3. Such as were annual, or returned once every year.

1. OF those that were common, and returned oft in the same year, the Sabbath was the chief, a festival instituted by God, not only in commemoration of the creation of the world, and with a purpose to prevent idolatry, or the worshipping of crea-

tures,

^f Jenkins's Reasonableness, Vol. II. ^g Maimonides in his Preface to Perck. Cheleck. ^h Edwards's Survey, Vol. I. ⁱ Beausobre's Introduction. ^k Lamy's Introduction.

Times of
worship.

The feast of
the Sabbath.

tures, by setting it apart for the service of the great Creator of all things; but, in a peculiar manner, to give both man and beast one day of rest and relaxation every week: and accordingly we may observe, that though religious exercises, such as reading the law, praying, and blessing, &c. were reckoned necessary on the Sabbath-day, yet were they not prescribed by the law. Rest was the only injunction, and it was required with so much strictness, that ¹ even the most necessary works were forbidden upon pain of death; such ^m as gathering manna, or wood, baking bread, or lighting a fire, &c. Not only sowing and reaping were then reckoned unlawful, but ⁿ even plucking any ears of corn, ^o carrying any thing from one place to another, or ^p going above two thousand paces or cubits, which in scripture is called ^q a Sabbath day's journey. Nay, to such a degree did the Jews carry their scruples as to this particular, that they imagined they were not so much as allowed to fight in defence of their lives on the Sabbath-day; ^r for which they paid dearly, during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, but came to be convinced of their error in the time of Mattathias.

Of the
new moon.

EVERY new moon, or the first day of every month, was another festival among the Jews; not that it was directly of divine institution, but, because God having commanded them ¹ to offer up a burnt-sacrifice to him at the beginning of every month, they therefore thought themselves concerned to cease from the works of their ordinary employments on that day, and to be very exact in their observations and discovery of the new moon. ² The antient Jews, who were not much acquainted with astronomical calculations, began their month, not from the first conjunction of the sun and moon (which could only be known that way) but from the first phasis, or appearance of the moon, which required no learning to discover. To this purpose they appointed men of strict probity to go to the top of the neighbouring mountains in the time of the conjunction, and, as soon as ever they perceived the new moon appear, to come with all speed (even though it were the Sabbath-day) and acquaint the sanhedrim with it, who, upon examination into the matter, pronounced these words; The feast of the new moon, The feast of the new moon, whereupon the trumpet sounded, and acquainted

¹ Numb. xv. 32, &c. Exod. xxxi. 14. ^m Exod. xxxv. 3. Ch. xvi. 23. ⁿ Matth. xii. 1, 2. ^o John v. 10. ^p Acts i. 12. ^q A Sabbath-day's journey was much about one of our miles, and the reason of their thinking themselves allowed to go so far on this day of profound rest was founded on this; that, in their marches after they came out of Egypt, the ark was carried always at this distance from the tents of the Israelites, Josh. iii. 4. And therefore, being permitted to go, even on the Sabbath-day, to the tabernacle to pray, from thence they inferred, that the taking of the same journey, though on another account, could not be a breach of the Sabbath-day. Lamy's Introduction. ^r Joseph. Antiq. Lib. XII. ^s Numb. xxviii. 2. ^t Lamy and Beausobre's Introduction.

quainted all the people with it; and unto this ceremony David no doubt alludes, when he says, " Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast-day.

2. AMONG extraordinary festivals, which happened but once in some considerable time, was the Sabbatical year, which returned every seventh year, and was indeed one continued feast. The Sabbatical year. * The ground remained untilled, and whatever it produced of itself was left to the poor: servants were set at liberty, unless they desired to continue with their masters; and † all debts that were contracted during the six preceding years were remitted; ‡ but it may be questioned, whether the creditor was not allowed to demand his debt at the end of the Sabbatical year? The Talmudists are not agreed about it, but thus much is certain, that this year was at least a time of acquittance for creditors.

THE jubilee, which was celebrated every fiftieth year, had the same privileges with the Sabbatical year, that the land was untilled, and slaves set at liberty; but over and above this, § that all debts were cancelled, all captives released, all prisoners set free, all controversies and law-suits ended, and (what ¶ was an excellent law to preserve the antient division of the tribes, to suppress the greediness of heaping up wealth, and prevent the poor from sinking into misery) all mortgaged and alienated estates were returned to their antient owners. This however was not done until the tenth day of the month Tifri: during the nine preceding days, the Jews decked themselves in flowers and garlands, and thought indeed on nothing but mirth and diversions; but on the tenth (which was the feast of the expiation) the sanhedrim blew their trumpets, and then immediately were the prison-doors set open, slaves released, and each man restored to the quiet possession of his estate. The jubilee year.

AMONG annual festivals, or such as were celebrated once every year, the most solemn and renowned was the passover, which the Jews were to keep in remembrance of their great and happy deliverance from Egyptian bondage, when the destroying angel passed over their doors which were sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, appointed to be slain that evening, and killed the first-born of Egypt. But of this we have said enough in another place. The passover.

FIFTY days after the passover, fell the feast of pentecost, instituted in memory of the delivery of the law on mount Sinai. It was likewise called the feast of harvest, because on it were the first-fruits of the harvest offered up to God, which oblation was accompanied with several sacrifices and libations, and the whole feast celebrated with abundance of mirth and rejoicing. The feast of pentecost.

THE

u Psal. lxxxi. 3. x Exod. xxiii. 11. y Deut. xv. 2. z Beaufobre's Introduction. a Edwards's Survey, Vol. I. b Lamy's Introduction. c Lamy, *ibid.*

Of tabernacles.

THE feast of tabernacles was instituted by God, in remembrance of the Israelites having dwelt so long in tents and tabernacles while they sojourned in the wilderness: besides, that it was farther designed for a time of returning thanks to God for the fruits of the vine, as well as other trees that were gathered about this time, and of begging his blessing upon those of the year ensuing. No feast was ever attended with more rejoicing than this. ^a During the whole solemnity (which lasted eight days) the Jews dwelt under tents made of branches of trees; they offered every day abundance of sacrifices, besides the usual ones; carried always in their hands branches, or posies of palm-trees, olives, citrons, myrtles, &c. and expressed their joy in feasting, dancing, music, and illuminations; all which was owing, some say, to the expectation they then had ^e of the Messiah's coming, and for which, on that festival, they prayed with the utmost earnestness and importunity.

Of trumpets.

ANOTHER annual feast of God's appointing, was the feast of trumpets; not but that other festivals were ushered in by the found of that instrument, but because this was introduced with a greater solemnity of this kind than usual. ^f It was instituted, as some think, in memory of the loud sounding of the angelic trumpets on mount Sinai, before God's declaration of the law; and, as it was the first day of the year (according to the æra that they computed their civil year by) it was commanded to be solemnized by a cessation from all work, ^g and by a particular burnt-offering appointed for that day.

Other feasts of human institution.

BESIDES these festivals, commanded in the Mosaic law, there were others of human institution; such as ^h the feast of lots, in remembrance of the signal deliverance of the Jews, which Esther obtained of Ahafuerus, when they were just going to fall a victim to the pride and cruelty of Haman; that of dedication, mentioned by St John, and appointed by Judas Maccabeus, for a thankful remembrance of the cleansing of the temple and altar, after they had been profaned by Antiochus; that of the sacred fire, which was miraculously rekindled after the captivity; that of Judith, for having killed Holofernes; and that wherein was commemorated the victory over Nicanor.

The great day of expiation.

THE Jews had but one solemn fast of divine institution, which, because they ⁱ were to do no manner of work thereon,

^{is,}
^d Lamy's Introduction. ^e This festival Christ honoured with his presence at Jerusalem, coming thither on purpose to bear a part in the solemnizing, which implied his approbation of it; and from hence Grotius very justly infers, that festival days, in memorial of public blessings, may piously be instituted by persons in authority, without a divine command. Prideaux's Connection, Part II. ^f Edwards's Survey, Vol. I. ^g Lev. xxiii. 24, 25. Numb. xxix. 1—6. ^h The feast of lots is so called from Haman's inquiring by lot, Esth. iii. 7. when it would be the fittest time for destroying the Jews. It was celebrated two days together, in which Esther was read out, and, as often as the children heard the name of Haman, they struck the benches of the synagogues with as much joy as they would have struck Haman's head, if it had been before them. Lamy, ⁱ ibid. ⁱ Lev. xxiii. 34.

is, a little improperly, called the Feast of Expiation; on which day ^k the high-priest brought a young bullock, and the people two she-goats, over which he made a public confession, in the presence of God, both of his own sins, and of all the sins of the people. When this was done, they cast lots upon the two goats, to know which of them was to be sacrificed, and which driven into the wilderness. The high-priest sacrificed the bullock and one of the goats for a sin-offering, and, mixing the blood of these two victims together, went into the temple, and sprinkled it upon the altar of incense; and the veil, which was before the holy of holies, into which, on this day only of all the year, he was permitted to enter. ^l Upon the head of the other goat, which was not sacrificed, the high-priest laid both his hands, and having confessed over it the sins of the whole people, and laid them, as it were, upon it, he had it conveyed by a fit person into the wilderness; all which was a very expressive ceremony. The sins of the people were done away by the sacrifice of the first goat, and, to shew they would no more be had in remembrance, the second was loaded with them, and carried them with him into the wilderness, ^m the usual abode (as the opinion then prevailed) of devils, the authors and abettors of all sin and iniquity. And this was a fit prefiguration of what our Saviour has done for us, ⁿ who took upon himself the sins of the whole world; was condemned to death by the priests in the temple; was carried out of Jerusalem, and crucified upon mount Golgotha; and there, by his own blood, opened for us an entrance into heaven, where he now lives, and is for ever making intercession for us.

BUT besides this great day of expiation, there were other ^{Other fasts} fasts among the Jews, which, though not commanded by the law ^{fasts.} of Moses, were by the authority of the church enjoined to be observed. ^o The fast of the fourth month, or our June, in remembrance of the time ^p when Jerusalem was invaded, the tables of the law broken, and the book of the law burnt; the fast of the fifth month, or July, ^q for the destruction of the temple; the fast of the seventh month, or September, ^r for the killing of Gedaliah; and the fast of the tenth month, or December, ^s in commemoration of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. On all which stated fasts, as well as on those which were enjoined in the time of any general calamity, ^t the custom was, first to give notice by the sound of a trumpet, that the

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people

^k Lamy's Introduction. ^l This goat was called Azazel, *i. e.* (according to some) a devil, because it was sent away with the sins of the people. ^m The LXX have rendered it by a word which signifies to remove, or turn away evil. But it may likewise signify an emissary, or scape goat, from the word [az] which signifies a goat, and [azal] to separate. Prideaux's Connection, Part II. ⁿ It was a common opinion among the antient Hebrews, that deserts and uninhabited places were the haunt and habitation of devils. See Matth. xiii. 43 and Rev. xviii. 2. ^o Lamy, *ibid.* ^p Zech. viii. 19. ^q Jer. lii. 6, 7. ^r Zech. vii. 3. ^s 2 Kings xxv. 25. ^t Jer. lii. 4. ^u Beaufovre's Introduction,

people (who on this occasion were obliged to appear in sack-cloth) might gather themselves together, and then was the ark, wherein was the law, brought forth covered with ashes, in token of sorrow and affliction, and one of the presidents of the synagogue made a speech suitable to the day and occasion, which was accompanied with several ejaculations and prayers.

Places of
worship.

The taber-
nacle de-
scribed.

II. THE next thing which the ceremonial laws took notice of was the place of divine worship, and the vessels and utensils thereunto belonging. The tabernacle was a kind of portable temple, that might be pulled down or set up upon occasion, and was therefore very easily removed from place to place. * It was in length thirty cubits, *i. e.* fifteen yards (for the cubit by which this fabric and the temple are measured, is but half a yard) and in breadth ten cubits. Whenever the Israelites changed their camp, the tabernacle was taken down, and ^x the Levites (as it was their office) carried some one part of it, and some another; and, when they came to a station, ^y it was always placed in the midst of the camp, with the tents at a proper distance from it; which made it a saying among the Hebrews, that the tabernacle was, at the same time, both the temple of their God, where he was to be worshipped, and the palace of their king, where he sat to rule and govern his people. ^z Before the tabernacle there was an open area of an hundred cubits long, and fifty broad, inclosed with pillars fixed at equal distances, and curtains to fill up the spaces. This area was divided into two courts, the exterior was for the people to meet at divine service: hither they brought all their offerings, and here they prayed, and heard the word, and stood all the while that the priests sacrificed. The interior court, or that which was next the body of the tabernacle, was the place where the sacrifices were offered. Here stood the great brasen-altar, which was exactly four-square, five cubits long, and five broad, but only three cubits high, having four horns, at every corner one, whereunto the sacrifices were tied, and whereupon such persons as fled for refuge were wont to lay hold: and not far from hence was the brasen-laver, wherein the priests washed their hands and feet before they offered sacrifice, or went into the holy place (for so they called the nave, or body of the tabernacle) or undertook any other holy work. In the body of the tabernacle, close by the entrance into the holy of holies, stood the golden-altar, called the Altar of Incense, one cubit square, and two cubits high, whereon was burnt frankincense, and other rich perfumes (highly necessary to take away the ill smell, occasioned by the perpetual burning of flesh on the great altar) every morning and evening; and to it belonged a golden-censer, or perfuming-pan, to transmit and scatter all around the scent of the sweet incense

^u Lewis's Antiquities, Vol. I. ^x Numb. iv. ^y Ibid. i. 50, 53. ^z Vid. Lewis's Antiquities.

incense and other perfumes. On the north-side of this altar stood the table of shew-bread, whereon were six loaves piled upon one another in one dish, and six in another, which loaves were every Sabbath-day taken away, and new ones put in their place; and on the south-side was placed the golden-candlestick with seven branches, which were so many lamps of oil burning all night, and in the morning extinguished.

IN the holy of holies, which seems to answer the chancels of our churches, and had a veil between it, and the nave of the tabernacle was the ark, wherein were laid up the pot of manna, Aaron's rod, and the two tables of stone, wherein were the ten commandments written by God himself. It was in length two cubits and an half, in breadth one cubit and an half, and one cubit and an half in height. Its covering (which was of gold) was called the Mercy-seat, or Propitiatory, and from this propitiatory, especially from the uppermost part, and where the wings of the cherubims hovered over it, God was wont to give the oracle, or answer to what the high-priest came to inquire of him. † What these cherubims were, the diversity of opinions has made it not so easy to determine; only as the holy of holies was an emblem of heaven, and the mercy-seat denoted the throne of God, they are not improperly supposed to be images and representations of the angelic host, those servants and attendants of the heavenly king; as the cloud which † at first filled the whole tabernacle, but afterwards resided most constantly on this ark of the testimony, with a great lustre shining from between the cherubims (which the apostle therefore calls † the cherubims of glory) were a manifest indication of his majestic presence.

THESE were the several things belonging to the tabernacle of Moses, and in what manner they were made, as well as what mystical meaning they had, the author to the Hebrews has sufficiently instructed us. They were made exactly † according to the pattern which God shewed Moses in the mount; but whether this pattern was a lively description and enumeration of every particular, or rather a real plan and model of the whole represented to his sight, is not so material to inquire; since what ever it was, God must be supposed to have acted upon his imagination in a supernatural manner, otherwise he would not have

† It is in Hebrew, the bread of faces, because being placed before the ark, where God was present, it was, as it were, set before God's face, looking from the mercy-seat. Edwards's Survey, Vol. I. † Some have thought that they were images in the shape of boys; others in the likeness of oxen or calves; because cherubim in Chaldee and Syriac, is *Bos*, and so is taken in Ezek. x. 14. compared with Ezek. i. 10. Others again think that they had not one shape, but many, viz. the upper parts of a man, the wings of eagles, the backs of lions, and the thighs and legs of oxen; while others, lastly, were of opinion that they were winged creatures of such a shape as never was known. Joseph. Antiq. s. Exod. xl. † Heb. iv. 5. See Levit. xvi. 2 and † Saut. iv. 22 † Heb. viii. 5.

have been capable of retaining the exact figure and dimensions of every thing he was to relate to the several workmen.

and their
mystical
meaning.

THAT all this rich furniture of the tabernacle was * but a shadow of heavenly things, and had great and worthy mysteries couched under it, the same sacred author testifies; and as he particularizes some of them, we may, without forcing the illusion, suppose that the altar of burnt-offering x signified the great expiatory sacrifice of Christ upon the cross; the altar of incense, and the golden-censer, his powerful intercession at the right hand of God; the laver, and table of shew-bread, the two christian sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and the candle-stick, and lamps, y the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, with that abundant light which is the peculiar blessing of the gospel. More especially the inmost part of the tabernacle, wherein to the high-priest only entered, was a more lively representation of the great mysteries of the gospel; z the holy of holies was a type of the celestial mansions above; the veil, was the flesh of Christ, which, when rent, signified his death which opened us a way into them; the ark represented the Divine Presence, residing in human nature; the oracle was the Word incarnate, revealing the will of God; the mercy-seat, the merits of Christ, shielding us from the condemnation of the law, and consequently, from the divine displeasure; and the cherubims hovering over the ark, and looking down with their heads towards the mercy-seat, God's protection of his church, by the ministry of his blessed angels, a who are desirous to pry into the mysteries of the gospel. In a word, the presence of God with his people, the glorious undertakings of his Son, the gracious influence of his blessed Spirit, and the state of the christian church both here and hereafter, are set forth in the several things contained in the different partitions of the Mosaic tabernacle; b and though other spiritual meanings may possibly be affixed to them, yet that the explication which we have offered is not precarious and fanciful, we have the Epistle to the Hebrews to produce, where we find most of these sacred mysteries thus unfolded and explained.

2. THE tabernacle wandered with the children of Israel in the wilderness until they arrived at the land of promise, and, for almost four hundred years, was the only place of divine worship that the Jews had to resort to; but, in process of time, king Solomon, by God's appointment, began to build a temple c on mount Sion (a principal part of Jerusalem) which, in the space of seven years, he finished, with vast expence and magnificence. We should, however, mistake the matter much, if we think that the temple

* Heb. viii. 5. x Heb. xiii. 10. y Rev. i. 4. and iv. 5. z Heb. ix. 24. a 1 Pet. i. 12. b Edwards's Survey, Vol. I. c Mount Sion and mount Moriah are the same, as Josephus testifies. Antiq. Lib I. c. 14.

temple of Jerusalem was made like one of our churches; ^d it did not consist of one single edifice, but of several courts and buildings, which took up a great deal of ground, and was large enough to contain the ministers, and all the people, *i. e.* more than two or three thousand men. The outward inclosure, which went by the name of the Mount of the Temple, was a square of five hundred cubits every way, which contained several buildings for different uses, and was surrounded with cloisters, supported with marble pillars. Next to this space was the court of the Gentiles, ranged all round with cloisters, and separated from the other courts with stone balustrades three cubits high, with pillars at certain distances, upon which were engraven in Hebrew and Greek, exhortations to purity and holiness, ^e and a prohibition to all the Gentiles, and such as are unclean, to advance beyond them: in this place stood the shops, and tables of money-changers. The court of the women was the next, and was so called, not because women only were suffered to go into it, but because they were allowed to go no farther; it was one hundred and thirty-five cubits square, with a balcony round it, from whence the women might see what was doing in the great court. In this place stood the treasury, wherein was repositied the money which the people gave towards repairing the temple, relieving the poor, and providing the sacrifices. From the court of the women there was an ascent of fifteen steps into the great court, which was divided into two parts, the Israelites court, and the court of the priests. The court of the Israelites had seven gates, one to the east, which was called the Beautiful, as likewise the Corinthian, because it was covered with Corinthian brass: three to the south, and three to the north, and a great number of apartments, into which several pious people retired; and, having conveniencies of lodging, are said to continue in the temple day and night. The priests court was next the body of the temple, and in it was the brazen-altar of burnt-offerings, a great deal larger than that of the tabernacle; two brass pillars called Jachim and Boaz, which were not in the tabernacle; ten brazen-lavers, whereas the tabernacle had but one; and a sea of brass, which was supported by twelve oxen; all these courts were uncovered, and lay open to the sky. From the priests court there was an ascent of twelve steps to what we may strictly call the temple which consisted of three parts, the porch, the sanctuary, and the holy of holies. The porch was about fifteen or twenty cubits long, and as many broad, with a large portal, which instead of folding-doors, had only a rich veil. Here hung up several valuable ornaments, ^f the presents from kings and princes, and what were carried away by Antiochus Epiphanes. The sanctuary, or nave of the temple, was twenty cubits broad,

A description of the temple. The several courts.

The temple itself.

^d Lamy's and Beaufobre's Introduction. ^e The prohibition was to let no alien enter into the holy place. ^f 2 Mac. iii. 2.

broad, and forty in length and height, having in it the altar of incense, and the table of shew-bread; but because the temple was larger, and wanted more light than the tabernacle, instead of one, it had ten golden-candlesticks. The holy of holies was twenty cubits long, wherein was the ark of the covenant, containing the two tables of stone, but instead of two cherubims, (as were in the tabernacle) in the temple there were four.

Its glory.

^s BUT the glory of Solomon's temple was not in the temple itself, much less in the bigness of it (for that alone was but a small pile of building, as containing no more than an hundred and fifty feet in length, and an hundred and five in breadth, taking the whole of it together, from out to out, which is exceeded by many of our parish-churches) but the main grandeur and excellency of it consisted in its out-buildings and ornaments, its workmanship being every where exceedingly curious, and overlaying vast and prodigious; for the overlayings of the holy of holies only (which was a room but thirty foot square, and twenty foot high) amounted to six hundred talents of gold, which comes to four millions, three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of our sterling money.

The second temple.

^b IT is a point of history sufficiently known, what was the end of this noble building, and how God was pleased to permit it to be destroyed and laid waste, because it had been polluted and profaned. Zerobabel, however, obtained leave of Cyrus, at the people's return from captivity, to re-build it; but though he built it upon the same place, yet it fell far short of the magnificence of the former. It cannot be denied indeed, but that Herod the Great very much improved and embellished it, and yet it still wanted those extraordinary marks of the divine favour, wherewith the other was honoured. 1. The ark of the covenant and mercy-seat. 2. The Shechinah, or Divine Presence. 3. The Urim and Thummim. 4. The spirit of prophecy. And, 5. The fire from heaven which often came down and consumed their burnt-offerings. In this, however, the prophet is sent to assure them that the latter temple should have a pre-eminence; that, during its standing, the Messiah should be born and abundantly over-balance these defects by his gracious and divine presence; ⁱ I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.

Oratories.

3. ANOTHER place of divine worship, very antient among the Jews, though not instituted by the law of Moses, was their *profeuchæ*, or praying-places, which were a kind of courts, encompassed only with a wall, or some other inclosure, and left open

^a Prideaux's Connection, Part I. ^b Beaufrere's Introduction. ⁱ Haggai ii. 7, 8.

open above-head. * The chief place where the Israelites met together for the worship of God was the temple at Jerusalem, and before that was built, the tabernacle; and the open court before the altar was, in both of them, that part where the people assembled to offer their prayers unto God: but those who lived at a distance from the tabernacle, while it was in being, and afterwards from the temple, when that was built, not being able at all times to resort thither, built courts, like those in which they prayed at the tabernacle, and at the temple, therein to offer their prayers to God. Of what form and use these pro-

Their form

seuchæ were, we have a notable passage in ¹ Epiphanius, who himself was a Jew, and born in Palestine, that acquaints us: for, after he had said that the Massalians built themselves certain broad places, in the manner of forums, which they called Proseuchæ, he goes on thus; and that the Jews of old (as also the Samaritans) had certain places, without the cities for prayer, which they called Proseuchæ, is apparent from ^m the Acts of the apostles, where Lydia, a seller of purple, is said to have met with the apostle St Paul, and to have heard him preach in a place, whereof the scripture says, *edokei topos proseuches einai*, it seemed to be a place of prayer, or (as our translation has it) where prayer was wont to be made. There is likewise, at Sichem, which is now called Neapolis, says he, above a mile without the city, a proseuchæ, or place of prayer, like a theatre, which was built in the open air, and without a roof, by the Samaritans, who in all things affected to imitate the Jews.

and art. equity.

ⁿ SICHEM indeed was the place where God appeared to Abraham after he had left Haran, promising to give the land of Canaan to his posterity, and where Abraham, in memory of that vouchsafement, built an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him. This gave a kind of sanctity to the place: and therefore, we need less wonder that we find one of these proseuchæ (called ^o by the name of the Sanctuary of the Lord, where Joshua, not long before his death, assembled all the tribes of Israel, and made a solemn covenant between them and the Lord) erected in this place, ^p and surrounded with a grove of oaks, even during the time of the tabernacle. There is great reason to believe indeed that these proseuchæ were the very same with those in the Old Testament that are called high places; for though these high places were often employed in idolatrous worship, or in a schismatical way, by setting up altars in them, in opposition to that at Jerusalem, and are therefore frequently condemned; yet we meet with several instances in scripture, ^q wherein prophets and good men are said to make use of them; and it may not be an improbable conjecture, ^r that our blessed Saviour

k Prideaux's Connection, Part I. Lib. VI. 1 In Tract. de Massalianis Hæreticis. m Chap. xvi. 13. n Gen. xii. 6, 7. o Josh. xxiv. 29. p See Mede's Discourse 13. q 1 Sam. ix. 9.—x. 5, &c. r Mede, ibid.

Saviour himself did the same, when it is said that he went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night, *en te profouche tou Theou*, *i. e.* in the oratory, or praying-house of God; for why should it not be as likely that our Saviour might pray in the Jewish oratories, as teach in their synagogues?

Syna-
gogues.

THESE oratories however, being, as we said before, open to the sky, were not so commodious in the winter and stormy seasons of the year; and therefore, to remedy this inconvenience, in process of time, but, not till after the Babylonish captivity (as 'most learned men agree) they erected houses and tabernacles, wherein to meet for the purposes of God's worship; and this was the original of their synagogues. In every town where there were ten men of some learning, fashion and quality, that had time, and were piously disposed to attend upon divine service (for less than ten such did not make a congregation, and without such a congregation present, no part of the synagogue-service could be performed) they were allowed to build a synagogue, but not otherwise. And though at first, the number of them was but small; yet, in a short time, they multiplied in the manner as our parish-churches have done, to such a degree, that in our Saviour's time, there was no town of any note in Judea, but what had one or more of them.

Their
form.

THESE places of worship were so framed and contrived, as to bear a resemblance of the temple at Jerusalem, towards which they always pointed. They consisted of two parts, which may be called the Chancel, and the Church: the chancel they called the Temple, and it stood west-ward, as did the sanctum sanctorum in the tabernacle and temple; and in this they set an ark or chest, made after the model of the ark of the covenant, with a veil before it, representing the veil which separated the holy place from the holy of holies, in which was laid up the book of the law, *i. e.* the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses. In the body of the church the congregation met, and this was the manner of their sitting. The elders, *i. e.* persons of more gravity, prudence and authority than others, † sat in a semi-circle near the chancel with their faces down the church, and the people sat, one form behind another, with their faces up the church towards the chancel and the elders. Between the people and the elders, thus facing one another, there was a space left where the pulpit and desk stood, in which the person, who either read or expounded the law, stood raised above the rest. The women were not admitted into the congregation with the men, but placed in a separate balcony or gallery, where they could

s Spencer de Leg. Heb. Lib. I. c. 4. Vitringa de Synagoga veteri, Lib. I. Part II. c. 9. Relandus in Antiq. Sacr. Part I. c. 10. Prideaux's Connection, Part I. Lib. VI. † Prideaux, *ibid.* u Lewis's Antiquities of the Hebrew Republic. † The seats of the elders were the *prootokathedriai* *teon synagogoon*, affected by the Pharisees, for which our Saviour condemns them, Matth. xxiii. 2. Lamy de Taber. Lib. IV. c. 8.

could see into the body of the church, and hear divine service: and (to particularize no farther) over the gate of the synagogue was generally written this inscription, * This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter into it; and upon the walls, these, and the like sentences, Remember thy Creator. Enter the house of the Lord thy God with humility. Prayer, without attention, is like a body without a soul. Silence is commendable in the time of prayer.

γ WHAT the service, both stated and occasional, performed in these synagogues was, we shall have occasion to take notice elsewhere, and at present, shall only remark that they differed from the above-mentioned *proseuchæ* in these three particulars, 1. The synagogues were covered houses, but the *proseuchæ* were courts, built in the manner of forums, which were open inclosures, were antiently at Rome, and in other demotaical cities, the people assembled for the transaction of public affairs. 2. Synagogues were built within the cities whereunto they belonged, but the *proseuchæ* without, and commonly on high places, with groves either within or without them. 3. In the synagogues the prayers were offered up in public forms in common for the whole congregation, but in the *proseuchæ* they prayed (as in the temple) every one apart for himself. But to return.

III. ANOTHER part of the ceremonial law related to the manner and offices of worshipping God in oblations and sacrifices, joined with prayers, for favour and pardon; and praises, in acknowledgment of the divine goodness. ² Sacrifices, properly so called, were animals killed, and then burnt. He who presented the sacrifice, led up the animal before the altar, laying his hand upon its head, and leaning upon it with all his weight, to denote that he loaded the creature with his iniquities, and deserved the death which it was going to suffer. The animals which were thus offered were of five sorts; oxen, sheep, goats, turtle-doves, and pigeons; and the sacrifice of these was either stated or occasional. Stated sacrifices were some of them anniversary, such as those which were offered on the great day of expiation, at the yearly commemoration of the passover, and on other solemn feast-days; some monthly, viz. the sacrifices offered constantly at the new moons; some weekly, viz. such as were the oblations made on every Sabbath-day; and some that were offered every day, as a lamb every morning ³ at the third

Sacrifices of several sorts.

Stated,

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Z

hour,

² Psal. cxviii. 20. γ The reader that is impatient to know what the synagogue-service consisted in, may find it largely explained in Lewis's *Antiquities of the Hebrew Republic*, Lib. III. c. 22. or *Prideaux's Connection*, Part I. Lib. VI. ² *Edwards's Survey*, Vol. I. ³ The Jews and Romans divided the day, *i. e.* the space between the rising and setting of the sun, into four parts, consisting each of three hours; but these hours were different from ours in this, that ours are always equal, being the four and twentieth part of the day, whereas with them the hour was a twelfth part of the time which the sun continued above

and occa-
sional.

hour, *i. e.* at nine o'clock, and another at the ninth hour, *i. e.* at three o'clock in the afternoon. These daily sacrifices, which were always attended with a meat-offering of flour and oil mingled, and were never without a drink-offering of wine, were called ^b *Holocausts*, or burnt-offerings, because they were wholly consumed by fire; whereas, in other offerings, a part only was burnt, and the rest was divided between the priests and the persons that brought them. Occasional sacrifices, which had no determinate time of being offered, were either after the commission of some sins, or the receipt, or expectation of some particular mercies. Those that were offered upon the commission of offences, were either called [*Chattah*] sin-offerings, because they were appointed for the expiation of the sins of ignorance, infirmity, and inadvertency; or [*Asham*] trespass-offerings, because they were commanded to be offered for the expiation of more enormous transgressions, of voluntary and deliberate sins, and therefore required a more costly sacrifice than the other. Those that were offered upon the receipt or expectation of some particular mercies were called [*Shelamim*] peace-offerings, and were either eucharistical, *i. e.* designed to be a testimony of their thankfulness to God for the benefits they had already received; or euctical, *i. e.* such as were attended with wishes and supplications to God for the blessings which they stood in need of. Both these were called *Free-will-offerings*: and we have only to observe farther of them, that, whereas the holocaust was all of it consumed in the fire, and nothing left, and whereas part of the sin-offering was burnt, and the other part given to the priest, here it was otherwise disposed of; for these sacrifices were distributed into three parts, one of which was burnt to God upon the altar for a sweet savour, another was given to the priest, and the third was reserved for the person who brought the offering, and such as he pleased to invite to partake with him: so that always after a peace-offering there followed a feast, made of the remainder of the sacrifice; and to this the apostle seems to allude, when he tells us ^d that Christ our passover, and peace-offering with God, is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast.

BUT,

above the Horizon: and as this time is longer in summer than in winter, their summer-hours must therefore be longer than their winter-ones. The first hour began at sun-rising; noon was the sixth, and the twelfth ended at sun-set; so that the third hour divided the space between sun-rising and noon, as the ninth divided that which was between noon and sun-set. Lamy's Introduction, Lib. I. c. 5. ^b Numb. xv. 3, &c. ^c Maimonides was of a quite contrary opinion, viz. that *Chattah* was a sacrifice offered for the expiation of faults of an high nature, and *Asham*, for those of an inferior kind. More Nev. Part III. c. 46. Our learned Mede is of opinion, trespass-offerings were for sins against the first table, and sin-offering for those against the second; and that, as our internal sins, or sins of infirmity, are *peccata jugia*, continual and daily sins; so the holocaust, or burnt-offering was continual, and daily offered; whereas the sin-offering and trespass offering were not so. Mede's Dis. 51. ^d 1 Cor. v. 7.

BUT, besides these sacrifices of animals, there were likewise, as was said, some oblations among the Jews which were made of bread, wine, oil, incense, or any of the fruits of the earth; and these were of three kinds, viz. such as were common, such as were voluntary, and such as were prescribed. The common and ordinary oblations were either of a certain perfume (called *Thumiana*) burnt every day upon the altar of incense; or of the shew-bread, which was offered new every Sabbath-day, and the old taken away and eaten by the priests. Free and voluntary oblations arose from the vows and promises (which the Jews were apt to make either in their prosperity or distress) of devoting something to God, which neither was to be of a mean value, nor of a polluted nature; for so the injunction is, * thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow. The prescribed oblations were either the first fruits, or the tenths. The first fruits of animals, if males, were offered to God; if men, or unclean creatures, were redeemed with money, to be expended in charity, or the reparation of the temple. The first fruits of the field were required in token of their thankful acknowledgment of God's inexhaustible goodness, and, according to the difference of gesture used in presenting them, were either called heave or wave offerings. Lastly, the tenths which the Jews were obliged to pay † were of four kinds; such as were paid to the Levites by the people; such as were paid by the Levites to the priests; such as were reserved for the banquets which were made within the verge of the temple; and such as were paid every three years to the poor.

Oblations

Their different kinds.

THESE were some of the sacrifices and oblations which God appointed to the Jews: and, considering the great number and expensiveness of them, it may well be inquired, for what ends they were instituted, and of what efficacy they were towards the atonement of sin. ‡ The most probable account of the original of sacrifices is, that they were at first of divine institution, and appointed soon after the fall of man as types of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, who was promised to be sent into the world, in order to die for the expiation of sin. For though there be a natural reason why we should † not offer unto the Lord our God of that which doth cost us nothing, but should ‡ honour the Lord with our substance, and present some part of the best we have in devotion and gratitude to him, from whom we have received the whole: yet no sufficient reason can be given, why beasts should be slain in sacrifice before they were used in food; why God should accept of the blood of any creature, or be pleased with taking away the life which he had given it; or why a peculiar efficacy towards the expiation of sin

The ends of their institution to typify Christ's death.

e Deut. xxiii. 18. f Jerome's Comment upon Ezek. liv. g Jerins's Ecclesiastical History of the Christian Religion, Vol. II. c. 2. p. 255. § 1. ¶ 1. p. 255.

sin should be supposed to reside in the blood, more than any other part, unless it had been upon the account of the blood of Christ, which was typically prefigured by the blood of beasts: unless, I say, we are prepossessed of this truth, that the sacrifices of the antient law were prefigurative of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, ^k we can look upon the tabernacle and temple of Jerusalem no better than so many slaughter-houses, and the blood and fat, and continual burning of flesh will be a means to incite our disgust, rather than religion.

^l To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, and of rams, and of he-goats: these are the words of God, commanding the people to bring no more vain oblations to him. But how came God to reject the sacrifices, which he himself had instituted? Did that which pleased him at one time, displease him at another? We cannot charge God with such inconstancy; but we see by these exprobrations, that, when he commanded the sacrifices of the antient law, he did it not out of any desire ^m to drink the blood of goats, or to eat the flesh of bulls (as David speaks) but only to typify thereby the great and precious sacrifice which his Son should one day offer up; and that as soon as these sacrifices ceased to be animated by this spirit (as those did which the carnal Jews offered up) they became insupportable to him.

To be of
moral in-
tendment,

THERE were other ends of a secondary nature which God might have in appointing these ordinances to the Jews. Oblations of all kinds were federal rites, and designed to signify the covenant and agreement between God and them. The continual morning and evening sacrifices were symbolical of his divine presence residing among them; the blood of the substituted victim was declarative of the heinous nature of sin; the fruits of the earth which they brought were acknowledgments of God's bounty and liberality to them; and every pigeon or turtle-dove which they presented, reminded them of the acceptable sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart; and whispered the words of the wise son of Sirach in their ears, ⁿ he that keepeth the law, bringeth offerings enough; he that taketh heed to the commandment, offereth a peace offering; he that requiteth a good turn, offereth fine flour; and he that giveth alms, sacrificeth praise; to depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord; and to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation.

and to at-
one for
sins.

THERE is one end more which God might design in the institution of these sacrifices, and that was the remission of sin. ^o Some indeed are of opinion that the Jewish religion allowed of no expiation, but for legal impurities, and involuntary trans-

^k Lany's Introduction. 116a. i. 11. ^m Psal. 1. 13. ⁿ Eccles. xxxv. 1, &c. ^o Volkelius, de Nat. Relig. Lib. II. c. 12. Tilletson's Sermon on 2 Pet. i. 4; Scott's Christian Life, P. II. Vol. II. c. 7.

gressions, such as proceeded from ignorance and inadvertency, but not for sins of presumption, and such as were committed with an high hand. “If men sinned wilfully, there was no sacrifice appointed by the law for such offences; and this they seem to prove from the very authority of the law itself, viz. ^r that the priest shall make atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, but the soul that does ought presumptuously shall be cut off from among the people.” Now ^q it is generally confessed that God appointed sacrifices and propitiations for the worst of mental sins, such as unbelief, blasphemous thoughts, uncleanness of the heart, &c. because it is hardly supposable, but that the best men were not altogether free from these; and though the Mosaic law seems to have made no provision for visible and outward gross enormities, such as idolatry, murder, blasphemy, &c. because the offenders were presently punished with death; yet it does not follow from thence that there was no expiation for these enormous crimes. Upon sincere repentance they might be expiated, though the persons that committed them underwent the penalty of the law, it being necessary to animadvert severely upon them, lest impunity should give encouragement to vice, and thereby endanger the commonwealth.

IT cannot but be granted (because it is manifest from several instances) that the crimes of persons have been forgiven and pardoned, though they themselves were not exempted from punishment. Moses’s death was the recompence of his unbelief, though there is no doubt to be made of his dying in the divine favour; and Josiah was justly snatched away in battle, because he engaged in it against the divine will and command; but yet he died in peace and reconciliation with God, and was transmitted to the place of everlasting bliss: and from hence we may gather, that though death was, by Moses’s law, made the penal consequence of adultery, disobedience to parents, violation of the Sabbath, &c. yet whoever, among such criminals as these, turned unto God by an unfeigned detestation of the sins they committed, had without doubt, the benefit of legal sacrifices, which expiated the offences of all true penitents, though they were never so great and grievous. The reason is, ^r because this institution and ordinance of sacrificing was the standing means of salvation in the Jewish dispensation; and therefore it was requisite that the influence of it should extend to all sinners that were heartily sorry for their offences, abhorring their past crimes, and themselves for committing them. But still it must be owned that these oblations and sacrifices did not of themselves, or by their own worthiness atone for the guilt of sin, but only by virtue of the expiatory sacrifice of the Messiah to come, whereof they were but types and shadows. And therefore,

fore, to speak strictly and properly, they did not really and formally, but typically and mystically expiate, *i. e.* they did not pacify God's anger, and satisfy his justice, and take away sin, and justify persons by their own force and efficacy: but as they were figures and significations of that universal sacrifice, which, in the divine intention, was slain from the foundation of the world, and in the fulness of time was to come down from heaven in order to fulfil the great undertaking of making atonement for the sins of all mankind.

The several sorts of Levites and their office.

IV. THERE is one thing more which the ecclesiastical law took under its consideration, and that was the order and office of such as attended upon divine service. The lowest of this order were the Levites, so called, because they were of the tribe of Levi, one of the twelve sons of the patriarch Jacob. Moses is very particular ¹ in giving an account of what each Levite was to carry upon the removal of the tabernacle: for to carry about the ark and tabernacle, and take care of the several things which appertained unto them, was, at their first institution, their proper employment; but this part of their office, after the conquest of the land of Canaan, subsisted no longer. David, after he had settled the ark and the priesthood, ² established a new order among the Levites, whereby ³ some were appointed to guard the gates, ⁴ some to sing psalms, and ⁵ some to take care of the treasures of the temple: he likewise divided them into different classes, whereof Maimonides reckons twenty-four, and each of these were to serve a whole week. The head of each class divided again those that were under him into different families, and chose out every day a certain number of them who were to serve, assigning every one his proper office. Nor must it be forgot that David chose out two hundred and eighty-eight Levites ⁶ to be masters of music; so that as there were four and twenty classes of singers, and each class had twelve masters, who in their performances mixed vocal and instrumental music together, it is very probable that out of this order of men were chosen the *Strategoi*, or *Military officers* (which ⁷ St Luke makes mention of) whose business it was to give notice of the time for solemnities, of the day and hour of the sacrifices, and to set the guard; and who besides this had committed to their charge and inspection the music, the instruments, the libations, the sick, the waters, the shew-bread, the perfumes, the oils, and the sacerdotal habits. The Levites, in short, after the temple was erected, had their office much altered and advanced, and instead of being lacqueys and porters to the tabernacle, were appointed to assist at the altar in the time of sacrifice; to help in the service of the temple, to teach and instruct

¹ Numb. iv. ² Lamy's Introduction. ³ 1 Chron. ix. 17, 26. and Chap. xxvi.
⁴ Ibid. xxv. ⁵ Ibid. ix. 29. ⁶ Ibid. xxv. 7. ⁷ a Luke xxli. 52.

instruct the people publickly, and to be assessors sometimes with the priests in the courts of judicature.

As to the function of the priests, their business was ^b to keep up the fire upon the altar of burnt-offerings that it might not go out; to guard the sacred vessels; to wash the victims; to make the aspersions whether of blood or water, either upon the victims or the book of the law; to ^c burn the incense upon the altar; to place the new shew-bread upon the table, and remove the old; and (what peculiarly belonged to them) to catch the blood of the victims and sprinkle it upon the altar. In a word, the superior part of the priest's office and employment was ^d to offer sacrifices for the people of God; ^e to bless the people; to intercede for them with God; ^f to teach and expound the law, and ^g to judge and determine causes, both civil and ecclesiastical; for which reason they were to addict themselves to study, ^h that their lips might keep knowledge, when the people sought the law at their mouth; for they were the messengers of the Lord of Hosts.

Priests and their office.

The high-priest and his office.

ALL the priests had over them an high-priest. Aaron was the first in that office; to his house it was tied by divine institution, and was to have descended in an hereditary succession, but it did not continue long in that state. Eleazar indeed came after his father; and upon his death three priests of his family successively were high-priests: after that the office went out of the house of Eleazar, and came to Eli, of the family of Ithamar, but it was not long before it reverted into its former channel, and then generally descended lineally and continued for life, until the Jews became subject to the Greeks and Romans, and then the duration of that venerable office depended upon the will of their princes and governors: but as long as it continued, the person invested with it had the singular honour of being metropolitan of the Jewish church, and president of their grand council or sanhedrim. As to religious matters, his office was much of the same nature with the priests, to instruct and bless, and pray for the people; but as his habit was more splendid, and his consecration more solemn than theirs, so his peculiar province was to preside over them and other inferior officers of the church; ^k to take care that they discharged their functions right; and his distinguishing administration was to go into the Sanctum Sanctorum once a-year, and there make atonement for his own sins, and the sins of the people; and to ask counsel of God in the great and weighty affairs of state, by way of Urim and Thummim; the nature of which politic oracle (as we may call it) we shall here take occasion to explain.

Urim and Thummim what.

In order to this we must observe that the high-priest, besides other his rich attire, had a sort of garment which he wore

outmott,

^b Lev. iv. 5, &c. ^c Exod. xxx. 7. ^d 2 Chron. xxvi. 16—19. ^e Numb. iii. and iv. ^f Ibid. vi. 23. ^g Lev. x. 11. ^h Ibid. x. and xiii. Deut. xvii. 8, &c. ⁱ Mal. ii. 7. ^j Lamy's Introduction. ^k Edwards's Survey, Vol. I.

outmost, not much unlike a waistcoat without sleeves, called by the Hebrews ¹ an ephod, and by the Latins a superhumerales, because it was fastened upon the shoulders; that upon each shoulder he had a precious stone, in which were engraven the names of the children of Israel; in that on the right shoulder the names of the six eldest, and in that of the left those of the six youngest; and that upon his breast he sometimes wore a square piece of stuff about a span broad, set with twelve precious stones, upon which were likewise engraven the names of the twelve sons of Jacob. This breast-plate (as the Hebrew word signifies) wherein was contained the Urim and Thummim (light and perfection, as the two words denote) the high-priest was used to put on when he consulted God upon any occasion: but what this Urim and Thummim was, and in what manner God answered the high-priest, whenever he came to consult him with this ornament on, has been a matter of much speculation and debate among the learned.

Different
opinions
concerning
it.

THE general opinion seems to be, that this Urim and Thummim were one and the same thing; ^m but an ingenious writer of our own nation conceives them to be two different oracles, and applied to different purposes; that the Urim was the oracle whereby God gave answer to those that consulted him in difficult cases; and Thummim that, whereby the high-priest knew ⁿ whether God did accept the sacrifice or no; and therefore the former is called Light, as giving knowledge, which dispels the darkness of our minds; and the other Integrity, or Perfection, because they whose sacrifices God accepted, were accounted Thummim, *i. e.* just, and righteous in the eyes of God. The Jewish doctors are mostly of opinion that Urim and Thummim were nothing else but the precious stones which were set in the breast-plate, and ^o that, by the shining, and protuberating of the letters in the names of the twelve tribes, graven on the twelve stones, the high-priest, when he came to consult God, did read his answer. ^p Others will have them to be the tetragrammaton, or the ineffable name of God, which being written, or engraven, in a mysterious manner, and put into the breast-plate, gave it an oracular power: but, instead of the name of God, ^q an author of our own nation will needs have it to be no more than the two words, Urim and Thummim, written or engraven, as we said, and so put in the hollow of the breast-plate, under the precious

¹ The Hebrew word is *Hofchen*, *i. e.* a pectoral or breast-plate, because it was worn upon the breast; but the Greeks call it *logion*, and the Latins from them *rationalis*. The Greek word may be translated by the Latin one, but I think it would be better rendered *oraculum*, because this was, as it were, the oracle, by which God gave his answers. Lamy's Introduction. ^m Mede's Discourse 35. ⁿ He supposes farther, that both these oracles were in use among the patriarchs, and that by some such means as this Abel knew that God had accepted his offering, and Cain that he was refused, *ibid.* ^o Prideaux's Connect. P. I. Lib. 3. ^p Paraphrasis Jevathanis in Exod. xxviii. 39. ^q ^{Edwards} upon the Subject.

ious stones; and that the high-priest was instructed in his answer by a certain difference he observed in the letters made by God's own disposal. Christophorus a Castro, and from him, Dr Spencer tells us that they were two little images, much of the same nature with the Gentile Teraphim, which, being shut up in the folding or doubling of the breast-plate, did from thence give the oracular answer by a voice. But, besides that this favours more of heathenism and idolatry than of the pure institution of a divine law; to think that God, who declares himself so positively against the idolatrous practice of the Gentiles, should by these images of Pagan invention, take the ready way to give them countenance and encouragement; or, to think that the Jews, who were particularly commanded not to learn the ways of the heathen, but to avoid them, and act contrary to them, were permitted, nay commanded and encouraged to make use of this magical and superstitious rite, is such an heap of odd and wild conceits, as no unprejudiced mind can entertain. And therefore the most common, and indeed the only probable opinion is, that Urim and Thummim were not any corporeal things, but a certain virtue and power given to the breast-plate at its consecration, of obtaining an oraculous answer from God, whenever counsel was asked of him by the high-priest with it on, in such manner as his word did direct; and that the names of Urim and Thummim, light and perfection, were given herunto, only to denote the clearness and perspicuity which these answers of God had, viz. that they were not like heathen oracles, enigmatical and ambiguous, but plain and manifest, and such as never fell short of perfection, either of fulness in the answer, or certainty of the truth of it.

WHETHER this oracle was only consulted in the great and important affairs of state, or might be advised with in questions of a lower nature, is not intirely determined by the learned: but the most prevailing opinion is, that the high-priest was not allowed to address it for any private person, but only for the king, the president of the sanhedrim, the general of the army, or some other great prince, or public governor in Israel; and that, not upon any private affairs, but such only as related to the public interest of the nation, either in church or state. When therefore any such matter happened, wherein it was necessary to consult God, the custom was for the high-priest to put on his robes, and over them his breast-plate, in which the Urim and Thummim were, and so to present himself before God. The

When, and how consulted.

VOL. II.

A a

place

r De Vaticinio. s Dissert. de Urim & Thummim. t Edwards's Survey, Vol. I. Pocock in his Comment on Hosea iii. 4. u Hence it possibly is that the LXX translate Urim and Thummim by the words, *D:loofin kai aletheian* Manifestation and Truth, because all these oracular answers, given by Urim and Thummim, were always clear and manifest, and their truth ever certain and infallible. Prideaux's Connect. P. I. lib. 3. x Mr Mede and Dr Edwards seem to be of opinion, that it might be consulted in matters of a private nature.

place where he presented himself was before the ark of the covenant, not within the veil of the holy of holies (for thither he never entered but once a-year, on the great day of expiation) but without the veil, in the holy place: and there standing with his robes and breast-plate on, and his face turned directly towards the ark and mercy-seat, whereon the divine presence rested, he propounded the matter, and at some distance behind him (but without the holy place) stood the person on whose behalf the counsel was asked, in devout expectation of the answer; which (as ^y it seems most congruous to the thing) was given him by an audible voice from the mercy-seat, which was within, behind the veil. Here it was that Moses went to ask counsel of God in all cases; and from hence he was answered by an audible voice: and, in like manner, whenever the high-priest presented himself before God, according to the prescription of the divine law, it is reasonable to believe that God gave him an answer in the same way as he did Moses, *i. e.* by an audible voice from the mercy-seat; and for this reason it is that such address for counsel is called ^z Inquiring at the mouth of God; and the holy of holies (the place where the ark and mercy-seat stood, and from which the answer was given) is so often, in scripture, ^a styled the Oracle, because from thence the oracles of God were uttered and delivered to those that asked counsel of him.

The ceremonial law, why instituted at first.

THESE, and such like, were the rites and ordinances of the ceremonial and ecclesiastical law which God gave the Jews. And, before we dismiss this argument, there are but two inquiries more we think ourselves concerned to make; 1. For what reason God instituted it at first. And, 2. Of what continuance he intended it to be. ^b That all the legal rites and ceremonial worship of the Jews were but shadows, and types, and figures of Christ, and of that redemption, righteousness, and sanctification, which was to be wrought by him; that their incense and oblations, their legal uncleanness and purifications, their distinction of meats, their fastings and festivals, and other ordinances enjoined them by the law of Moses, were not required for their own sakes, or any virtue or efficacy supposed to be in the things themselves to recommend men to God's favour, but were instituted to signify the inward purity and integrity of the heart, and by outward observances, and sensible things, to lead a carnal and sensual people to the knowledge and practice of things spiritual, we have, in some measure, proved before; and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has shewn enough to supersede any farther inquiry. ^c That they were ordained likewise for the prevention of idolatry, and to keep the people from

^y Prideaux's Connect. P. I. lib 3. ^z Josh. ix. 14. ^a Psal. xxviii. 2. ¹ Kings vi. 5, &c. ² Chron. iii. 16. Chap. iv. 22, &c. ^b Jenkin's Reasonableness, Vol. II. ^c Collier's Introduction.

from hankering after the ways and customs of the religious worship performed to idols and false gods, either by the Egyptians, from whom they came, or the inhabitants of Canaan, whither they were going, or any of the idolatrous nations about them, is what ^a the learned among the Jews, and ^e the antient fathers of the christian church have not been wanting to observe. Maimonides was the first who opposed and confuted that received opinion of some Jewish doctors, that there was no reason to be given for the ritual law, which was wholly to be ascribed to the sovereign will and pleasure of God. He, by his acquaintance with the rites and ceremonies of the Zabii, an antient sort of idolaters in the East, came to perceive that most of the Jewish rites were instituted in direct opposition to the superstition of that people. The Jewish prohibition ^f of cutting or mangling their flesh, of shaving the corners of their heads, ^g of wearing a garment of linen and woollen, ^h of sowing the ground with different seeds, ⁱ of seething a kid in his mother's milk: ^k of a woman's wearing the armour of a man, and a man's wearing the garments of a woman: these, and several other precepts of the law of Moses, are reduced by that learned Rabbin, from idolatrous customs, as the occasion of them; and his conjectures seem to have more weight, because God, in general, did so strictly forbid the Jews to imitate the practices of other nations; ^l after the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, ye shall not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, ye shall not do; I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which words seem to imply, not only that the idolatrous rites of the Gentiles were forbidden, but that those of God's appointment were made in direct opposition to them: and, accordingly, we find the Roman historian representing the Jews ^m as a people, whose religious rites were contrary to all the world besides; that what to others was most sacred, they accounted profane; and allowed as lawful, what other nations were wont to abominate.

If then the Mosaic laws and ceremonies were given the Jews as barriers against idolatry, and formally repugnant to the practice of the Gentiles; it would sound but very oddly, one would think, ⁿ to be told, “ That most of them were of heathen original; and that to cure his people of idolatry, God had borrowed the institution of new moons and Sabbaths, “ of

Dr Spencer's opinion on censured.

^d Maimon. More Nev. P. III. c. 29. ^e Prima legis nostræ intentio idolatriam tollere, & quæ illi adhærent, & occasionem præbent. Irenæus Lib. IV. c. 28. Facilem ad idola reverti populum erudiebat per multas avocationes, &c. Tertull. contra Marc. Lib. II. c. 18. ^f Lev. xix. 28, 29. ^g Ibid. xix. 19. ^h Deut. xxii. 9. ⁱ Exod. xxiii. 19. ^k Deut. xxii. 5. ^l Lev. xviii. 3, 4. ^m Profana illis omnia, quæ apud nos sacra, rursus concessa apud illos, quæ nobis incesta. Tacitus Hist. Lib. V. c. 4. The like representation is made of them by Dion Cassius, Lib. XXXVII. ⁿ Spencer de Legibus Hebr. L. III.

“ of tithes and first-fruits, of oblations and sacrifices, of Urim
 “ and Thummim, of the ark and cherubims, and almost of all
 “ the other ordinances of the tabernacle and temple-worship
 “ from idolatrous nations.” But ^o here we may appeal to any
 sober and considerate man, whether it be consistent with good
 sense, or congruous to truth and reason, that God should make
 laws exactly contrary to the Chaldeans and Egyptians, and other
 Pagan nations, shewing thereby, that he hated the very sem-
 blance of their rites; and yet, at the same time, take the rise of
 its institutions from the customs and practices of these Gentiles:
 nay, whether it gives us not such an idea of God (as reverence
 to his tremendous Majesty will not suffer us to name) to repre-
 sent him raking up all the vain, ludicrous, superstitious, impious,
 impure, idolatrous, magical, and diabolical customs, which had
 been first invented, and afterwards practised, by the most bar-
 barous nations; and, out of all these, patching up a great part
 of the religion which he appointed his own people. But I for-
 bear exaggerations; and shall only observe, that, as many pre-
 cepts of the ceremonial law were not so much founded on any
 unalterable reason, as instituted in bar and opposition to the
 idolatrous customs of the nations among whom the Jews then
 dwelt, and to distinguish them from the rest of mankind; so do
 they seem, in their primary intendment, not to have been de-
 signed for any longer continuance than the reason which at first
 occasioned them, should remain in force. And therefore, when
 the prophecies should be fulfilled, and ^p the desire of all nations
 was come; ^q when the mountains of the Lord’s house should
 be exalted; and all nations flow into it; so that, ^r from the
 rising of the sun, unto the going down thereof, God’s name
 should be exalted among the Gentiles, and, in every place, in-
 cense should be made unto him, and a pure-offering; then
 should the ceremonies, which made a separation between God’s
 people and other nations, and ^s the sacrifice and oblation, which
 were of peculiar use and institution, and not adapted to an uni-
 versal dispensation, be caused to cease.

When to
 cease.

C H A P. V.

The most memorable Transactions from the giving of
 the Law to the building of the Temple.

Before
 Christ.
 7491, &c.
 Of the
 world,
 2713, &c.

WHILE Moses was on the mount, receiving these laws
 from the mouth of God, the people below soon forgot ^a the
 promises of obedience they had made, and fell into a sad apostacy.
 Moses, at his going up into the mount, appointed ^b Aaron
 and

^o Edwards’s Survey, Vol. I. ^p Hag. ii. 7. ^q Isa. ii. 2. ^r Mal. i. 11. ^s Dan.
 ix. 27. ^a Exod. xxiv. 3. ^b Ver. 14.

and Hur to be the rulers of the people, during his absence; but his absence being longer than was expected, the children of Israel began to be uneasy. They saw the glory of the Lord, which was like devouring fire, on the top of the mount, and thereupon they concluded, that Moses, who tarried so long, was certainly destroyed in the flames: they saw too, that the pillar of the cloud, which used to rest upon the tabernacle, and conduct them in their marches, was gone, and in no likelihood of returning again; and hereupon, having lost their leader, as they thought, and the visible token of God's presence among them, they come unto Aaron, and in a tumultuous manner, demand of him to make them another representation of the divine presence, in the room of what was departed from them. *Up*, say they, and make us gods (or as the Hebrew text will bear it) make us a god which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him: *a* not that they were so stupid as to imagine, that the true God could be made by any man, or that any image could be a means of conducting them; but what they wanted was, some outward object, to supply the want of the cloud, by being a type and symbol of the Deity, and where they might deposite the homage which they intended to pay to the supreme God; for so *c* some of the Jewish doctors have expounded the text of Moses, they desired a sensible object of divine worship to be set before them; not with an intention to deny God, who brought them out of Egypt, but that something in the place of God, might stand before them, when they declared his wonderful works.

The golden calf why made.

THE commandment against making images had so lately, in so terrible a manner, been enjoined by God himself, that though some reason may be given, why the children of Israel were so forward to make the demand, yet none can be imagined, why Aaron should comply with it, without remonstrance; and yet we meet with no refusal recorded by Moses; all that we have, in extenuation of Aaron's fault, is from the suggestions of the Rabbins, *f* who pretend, that Aaron's compliance proceeded from his fear; that the people had murdered Hur, the other deputy, for opposing their desire; that *g* to discourage them from pursuing it, Aaron demanded all their golden ear-rings, *h* hopes that they would not insist upon having an idol, which would cost them so dear; but that, when nothing would avail, he took their gold, and cast it into the fire, and contrary to his intention, *i* by some magical and diabolical art, there immediately came

Why Aaron did it.

c Exod. xxxii. 1. *d* Saurin's Dissertation, and Patrick's Commentary. *e* R. Jehudah, in Lib. Cozri, P. 1. Sect. 97. *f* Vid. Semoth Rabba, Sect. 41. Fol. 136. *g* Vid. Augut. Tom. 4. Quæst. 41. in Exod. *h* The ambiguity of the words wherein Aaron excuses himself, I cast it, *i. e.* the gold which they gave me, into the fire, and there came out this calf, Exod. xxxii. 24 gave occasion

came forth a calf, which much increased the people's superstition. But this, and ⁱ abundance more of the like nature seems to be conceits, invented for the excuse of Aaron, who is plainly enough said to have ^k made this molten calf, which he could not have done without designing it, and running the gold into a mould of that figure.

Why a calf
made an
emblem of
the Deity.
Different
opinions.

BUT here a famous question does arise. "For what possible reason Aaron should make choice of the image of a calf to be an expressive emblem of the Deity?" What we here render *calf*, is, ^l in other places of scripture, called an *ox*, and as an ox's head was, in some countries, ^m an emblem of strength, and the horns, a common sign of kingly power; ⁿ a learned prelate, out of a desire to apologize for Aaron, tells us, that his intention in making an ox the symbol of the divine presence, was, to remind the Israelites of the power of God, and to express the great tokens they had seen of it in their wonderful deliverance from the land of Egypt, ^o But how ingenious soever this opinion may be, yet it wants this foundation for its support, that this hieroglyphic was in use, in the time of Moses, which will hardly be proved; nor can we well imagine, why Aaron should forget to plead this in excuse for himself, when he is called to an account by Moses, or why God should have been so highly incensed against him, had his design been only to exhibit a symbol of the divine power and authority to a people of too gross sentiments, without such a visible representation, ever to comprehend it.

^p ANOTHER learned prelate of our own nation, equally inclined to excuse this action of Aaron's, supposes, that he took his pattern from part of what he saw on the holy mount, ^q when the Shechinah of God came down upon it, attended with angels, some of which were cherubins, or angels appearing in the form of

occasion to this conceit; whereas his intent only is, to plead, in mitigation of his fault, that he was not actually the maker of the image; and therefore he represents, that they required him to make them a God; that thereupon he asked them for materials; that they brought him their gold; Then, says he, I cast it into the fire, I delivered it out of my hands to the use it was designed for, into the furnace in which it was to be melted, and there came out this Calf, *i. e.* "I was no further concerned in what was done; the next thing I saw was a calf: what was done farther was done by others, not by me; and the workmen made the calf, and brought it to me." Exod. xxxiii. 24. And therefore, to make this his excuse consistent with what went before, the words in the fourth verse of this chapter, he received them at their hands, and he fashioned it, &c. by a small emendation in the text, may be rendered, not in the singular, but in the plural number thus.—And he received it [*i. e.* the gold] at their hands; and they formed it into a mould, and they made a molten calf, and they said, This is thy God, O Israel. Vid. Shuckford's Connect. Vol. III. Lib. 11. ⁱ Nay, some of the Jews go a great deal farther, and say, that the devil entered into this calf, and made it roar like a bull, to strike the greater awe into the people, as K. Judah saith in Pirke Eliezer, C. 45. and in Tanchuma, they say, it not only roared, but danced also. Patrick's Commentary. ^k Exod. xxxii. 4. ^l Psal. cvi. 20. ^m So it was among the Phœnicians, the Egyptians, and the Romans, as Patrick shews in his Commentary. ⁿ Patrick, *ibid.* ^o Saurin's Dissert. ^p Tennison, of Idolatry. c. 6. ^q Exod. xxiv. 10.

of oxen: but this opinion is inconsistent with the great care that was taken on Sinai, not to furnish any pretext for idolatry, and the caution that Moses gives the people to that purpose, Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves (for ye saw no manner of similitude, on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire) lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image; the similitude of any figure, the likeness of any male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish, &c. Where the holy Spirit enumerates animals of all kinds, and positively assures us, that none of their forms or figures appeared upon the mount.

THE generality of interpreters who are not so inclined to excuse Aaron's fault, have run into this opinion, that he made choice of the figure of an ox or a calf, in compliance to the prejudice of the people, and because that creature was worshipped in Egypt. That the Israelites were sorely infected with the idolatry of the Egyptians, we have many plain proofs † from scripture to convince us; that all sorts of animals were worshipped by the Egyptians, and among the terrestrial, more especially the ox, † is what the several authors who have treated of the affairs of Egypt do abundantly testify; and that the idolatry of animals, and more especially of the ox, was established in Egypt during the sojourning of the Israelites in that land, is more than probable from those words of Moses to Pharaoh, † if we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, *i. e.* † if we sacrifice to our God oxen, sheep and goats, which the Egyptians worship and adore, and consequently make an abomination to the Lord, will they not stone us? So that it seems most rational to suppose, that this image was made in compliance to the giddy humour of the people, and in imitation of the Egyptians, who worshipped their idol Apis, or Serapis, not only in a living ox, but in an image made after the similitude of an ox, with a bushel on his head, in memory (as some say) of Pharaoh's dreams, and Joseph's provision against the dearth that ensued them; if it were apparent that the worship of the Egyptian Apis was prior to the formation of this golden calf, which happens to be a point wherein w the learned are not so well agreed.

HOWEVER this be, it is a great instance of the clemency of God, as well as † the prevalency of a great man's prayers, that
Aaron,

† Vid. Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 7, 8. Chap. xx. 2. † Vid. Strab. Lib. 17. de Egyptiacis Templis. Herod. L. 2. Diodor. L. 1. & Plutar. Mor. Lib. de Iside & Osiride. t Exod. viii. 26 † u The Chaldee interpreters, the Syriac, and others take the passage in this sense, which seems indeed to be the most obvious. † w Vid. Jer. Voss. de Idolat. C. 6. Bochart. Hieroz. P. 1. L. 2. 2. and Tennison of Idolatry. x In the prayer which Moses makes for the forgiveness of this offence, there is this expression of a particular vehemence: But yet if thou wilt forgive their sins,
and

Aaron, who upon all accounts cannot but be thought guilty of a great offence, upon the intercession of his brother Moses, was not only pardoned, when 7 others were devoted to destruction, but both he and his sons not long after admitted to the honour of the priesthood, and to have that honour settled upon his family in an hereditary succession. Two of his sons, however, Nadab and Abihu, were scarce invested in their office before they violated the obligations of it, and incurred a severe penalty for so doing: 2 they took their censers (as Moses has related the fact) and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not; and there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them. Now, in order to know what this offence of offering strange fire before the Lord was, we must observe, that after the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priestly office, a miraculous fire from the Lord, *i. e.* a fire which either came down immediately from heaven, or out of the cloud which covered the tabernacle, consumed the first victims which Aaron offered for a burnt-offering: that God had expressly commanded b that the fire which was upon the altar should not be suffered to go out, which (according to the consent of most interpreters) signifies that the said miraculous fire, which had confirmed the installation of Aaron and his sons, after so surprising a manner should be kept alive, and burning with the utmost care; and that, as it was required c by another law, that at this very fire Aaron was to kindle the incense he offered to God in the most holy place, on the great day of expiation; so we may take it for granted that the like law was imposed on the inferior priests, with relation to the incense which they were to offer every day before God in the holy place. We have indeed no mention made of such a law, but the history we are commenting upon gives us strong presumption that the use of this fire only was prescribed; and therefore the words, which he commanded them not, are thought to imply an express prohibition of any other.

Of the
World,
2514, &c.
Before
Christ
1497, &c.

Nadab and
Abihu's
crime.

Different
opinions
concerning
it.

THE crime then of Nadab and Abihu consisted in their kindling with fire (different from that which was continually on the altar of burnt-offerings, and consequently different from that which God had appointed them to use) the incense which their office of priests obliged them to offer up to God, every morning and

and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written. Exod. xxxii. 32. Whereby Moses does not (as some imagine) with damnation to himself, but only to be excused from living any longer, if God shall refuse to grant him his request: for the expression has a manifest reference to the numbering the people of Israel, whose names were thereupon written in a register, and as they died blotted out every year: and therefore we find him, upon the like occasion, praying in the same sense; if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand. Numb. xi. 15. y Exod. xxxii. 27, &c. z Lev. x. 1. a Ibid. ix. 24. b Ibid. vi. 12. c Ibid. xvi. 12.

and evening, in the holy place. * Other offences indeed have been laid to their charge; ^d some pretending that they endeavoured to intrude into the most holy place (which was not permitted them to enter) because immediately after the recital of their death, in another place, Moses relates how God commanded him to speak unto Aaron, ^e that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy-seat, that he die not: and ^f others insinuating that they were guilty of intemperance at the entertainment made at their installation; because after the relation of their fatal end, Moses by God's order gives this injunction to Aaron and the remainder of his sons; ^g do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever through your generations, that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, between unclean and clean: but these are no more than bare surmises that have no proper foundation in the foregoing texts; nor is there any occasion to hunt out for passages to augment these offenders crime.

NADAB and Abihu had not only been admitted, in common with the rest of their brethren, to the honour of the priesthood, which among the Jews was a dignity of no small esteem, ^h but had particular motives, which the others had not, to the observance of all God's precepts; ⁱ as having had the privilege of seeing the symbols of the divine presence on that formidable mount, from whence his laws were promulgated, without being consumed. The higher therefore their station was, and the more distinguishing the favours they had received, the more provoking was their affront in attempting to adulterate an ordinance of God's institution. Common fire they thought might serve the purpose of burning incense, as well as that which was held more sacred; at least in the gaiety, or rather naughtiness of their hearts, they were minded to try the experiment, even in opposition to the divine command; and therefore it was just and requisite in God (especially ^k in the beginning of the priesthood, and when one alteration in a divine precept might, in process of time, be productive of many more) to inflict an exemplary punishment upon them, that others might hear, and fear, and not commit the like abominations.

IT may be imagined perhaps that the injunction was a little too severe, ^l which upon pain of death forbade Aaron to shew

The heinousness of it.

Aaron's behaviour upon it.

VOL. II.

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any

* Le Clerc, in his Commentary upon Lev. xix. 23, is of opinion, that when Aaron came down from the altar, after he had offered the appointed sacrifices, and went with Moses into the tabernacle of the congregation, it was to have Moses shew him how he was to burn the incense according to the commandment of God, Exod. xxx. 7, 8. And that Aaron, when he was instructed by Moses, ordered his sons Nadab and Abihu to do the same, which they badly obeyed. ^d Le Clerc on Levit. x. ^e Lev. xvi. 1, 2. ^f Patrick on Lev. x. ^g Lev. x. 9, 10. ^h Saurin's Dissert. ⁱ Exod. xxiv. ^k Le Clerc's Comment. ^l Lev. x. 3, 6.

any tokens of sorrow for so great a loss. “What, should not a father, in such circumstances, be permitted to devote some time to grief, which the fatal end of two of his children did so justly call for? Should religion restrain our tears, when we see those whom nature has so closely united to us die impenitent? Can any consolation be a balance to this reflection, or any grief excessive, which is caused by the loss of a soul?” † Now, though we are not allowed to judge, or determine any thing concerning the eternal fate of mens souls; and our religion, which requires us to tremble for our own salvation, requires us to hope always for that of others; yet in case we were assured even by a divine revelation, that those to whom we were united by the most tender bands of nature, were for ever sentenced to the divine wrath; even then it would become us to resign them to the will of God. Aaron, however, had no such revelation: he might presume that the justice of God, being satisfied with the temporal punishment of his sons, might be appeased with relation to their eternal state, and that † the flesh being destroyed, their spirits might be saved in the day of the Lord. He knew too, how much himself had lately offended in the matter of the golden calf, and might justly think that God had called his sin to remembrance in the destruction of his sons: he acknowledged therefore the righteousness of God, in all that he had brought upon him: he wisely adored the divine hand, which, though armed with thunder, was not less worthy of homage; ^m he was dumb (as the scripture expresses it) and opened not his mouth, because it was the Lord’s doing.

The Israelites manner of encamping,

WHILST the children of Israel lay before the holy mount, but were now upon their removal from thence, their encampments and marches, by the special order of God, were disposed in this manner. ⁿ In their encampment they were formed into four battalions, each under one general standard; and these were so placed that they inclosed the tabernacle. ^o The standard of the camp of Judah was first, which consisted of the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zabulun, the sons of Leah; and was pitched over-against the tabernacle, on the east-side of it, or towards the rising of the sun. On the south-side was the standard of the camp of Reuben; under which were the tribes of Reuben and Simeon, the sons of Leah likewise, and of Gad the son of Zilpah her maid. On the west-side was the standard of the camp of Ephraim; under which were the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin: and on the north-side was the

† Saurin’s Dissert. † 1 Cor. v. 5. ^m Psal. xxxix. 9. ⁿ Howell’s History of the Bible. ^o Each standard had the sign of some creature engraven on it: that of Judah had the image of a lion; Reuben, a man; Ephraim, an ox; and Dan, an eagle. For what reason these hieroglyphics were appointed, it is not so easy to discern, though some have imagined that the man denotes wisdom, the lion, power; the ox, assiduity; and the eagle, expedition in the execution of God’s commands. Howell, *ibid*.

the standard of the camp of Dan; under which were the tribes of Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid, and of Asher the son of Zilpah. ^p Between the four great camps and the tabernacle were pitched four less camps, consisting of the priests and Levites, near to the tabernacle where their service lay. On the east-side encamped Moses and Aaron, with Aaron's sons, who had the charge of the sanctuary. On the south-side were the Kohathites, a part of the Levites descended from Kohath, the second son of Levi. On the west-side, behind the tabernacle, stood the Gershonites, another part of the Levites, descended from Gershon, Levi's eldest son; and on the north-side were placed the Merarites, the remaining part of the Levites, who were sprung from Merari, Levi's youngest son.

THIS was the order of their encamping; and the manner of ^{and march} their dislodging and marching was thus. ^{ing.} When they were to remove (which was when the cloud was taken off the tabernacle) the trumpet was sounded, and upon the first alarm, the standard of Judah being raised, the three tribes which belonged to it set forward. Then the tabernacle being taken down, the Gershonites and Merarites attended the waggons with the boards and staves of it. When these were on their march, a second alarm was sounded; upon which the standard of Reuben's camp advanced, with the three tribes under it. After them followed the Kohathites bearing the sanctuary; which being more holy and less cumbersome than the heavy boards and pillars of the tabernacle, was not put into a waggon, but carried on their shoulders. Next followed the standard of Ephraim's camp, with the three tribes belonging to it; and last of all the other three tribes, under the standard of Dan, brought up the rear.

IT will not be expected that we should follow these people in all their marches and encampments, and take notice of every accident that befel them in the wilderness, before they arrived at the land of promise: let it suffice, that in this and other parts of their history, we animadvert only upon such occurrences as are most remarkable, and have been the subject of some theological disquisition.

THE long stay which the Israelites had made in the wilderness of Sinai, had so accustomed them to ease and indolence, that a march of three days (and that not without some rest and relaxation to be sure, otherwise they could not have gathered the manna, which fell every night about their tents, and ^{The fire from God, what.} would keep no longer than one day) made them murmur and complain. God had heretofore pardoned their offences of this kind, and even indulged them in every thing they murmured for; but since

^p Between each tribe, in every one of these quarters, as Josephus tells us [in *Antiq.* l. 3. c. 11.] there were distant spaces like streets, where there was buying and selling, as in a market, and tradesmen in their shops, in the manner of a city. ^q Howell, *ibid.* ^r Saerlin's *Dissertations.* s. *Exod.* xvi.

since the promulgation of the law, he began to treat them with more severity, and to punish their refractoriness in proportion to the knowledge that he had given them: and therefore a fire, which the scripture calls the fire of the Lord, as either coming immediately from heaven, ¹ like lightning, or from the pillar of the cloud, and fire over the tabernacle, burnt among them, and consumed ² some in every part of the camp; or, if the words (as they are in our translation) be rendered in the utmost parts of the camp, then may the supposition ^{*} of a learned commentator seem not improbable, viz. that which is here called fire was an hot burning wind, in these desert places not unusual, and many times very pestilential, but on this occasion preternaturally raised in the rear of the army, to punish the stragglers, and such as out of pretence of weariness lagged behind.

Moses's
Diffidence.

THIS disaster, instead of terrifying them into their duty, did but increase their murmuring. They began now to impute their debility and weariness in marching to the poverty of their diet; to upbraid Moses with the plenty of strong food they had in Egypt; and with vehemence and importunity enough to clamour for flesh. Here it was that Moses's faith failed him: for God having promised to give the people flesh in abundance, even for the space of a whole month, the holy man, as in a sudden lapse of mind, seems to forget the miracles which God had formerly wrought: ^x the people, says he, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month; shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them? These are supposed to be some of the words which Moses ^y spake unadvisedly with his lips, and for which God gave him this gentle rebuke, ^z Is the Lord's hand waxen short? Thou shalt see whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not. Accordingly there arose a mighty wind, which brought vast numbers of ^a quails from the sea-coast within a mile of the

camp;

^t 2 Kings i. 12. ^u So Bochart has demonstrated that the word which we translate the utmost parts, signifies in all, or throughout. Hieroz. P. II. L. I. c. 34. ^{*} Le Clerc's Commentary on Numb. xi. ^x Numb. xi. 21, 22. ^y Psal. cvi. 33. ^z Numb. xi. 23. ^a These quails must be supposed to come from the Arabian or Red Sea; and, as Paran and Kibroth Hattaavah were north or north-east of the Red-sea, it must be a southerly wind that brought them thither. Whether they were quails or locusts, is a matter of great dispute among the learned. The great Bochart in his Hierozoicon [P. II. L. i. c. 15] has produced many weighty arguments and authorities to prove they were the former; but the learned Ludolphus (whom we mentioned before on this subject) in his Commentary upon his Ethiopic History [L. I. c. 4] is supposed by some to plead, with more justice and truth of reason, for the latter; however that be, they both agree that quails and locusts were bred in great plenty about the banks of the Red-sea; Bochart proves from Josephus [Antiq. L. iii. c. 1.] and Pliny [L. x. c. 23] as to quails; and Ludolphus from Strabo [L. xvi.] and Diodorus Siculus [L. iii.] as to Locusts; so that, which soever they were, it is very presumable that they came from the Red-sea.

camp; which the people, still diffident of God's providence, fell greedily to gathering, as if they were never to have any more. However, while they were regaling themselves with these dainties, the scripture tells us that God sent ^b a great plague among them: but of what particular kind that plague was, it is not so well agreed among commentators.

^c SOME, from the words of the Psalmist, ^d a fire was kindled in Jacob, have been apt to imagine that the plague here spoken of was that same fire which is mentioned in the beginning of the eleventh chapter of Numbers; and therefore they suppose, that, in the three first verses of it, Moses but just touches upon what he afterwards re-assumes, and, in the rest of the chapter, treats of it more copiously: but, seeing there are so many incidents intervening between the third and the thirty-third verse of that chapter, ^e it seems more likely that there was a double murmuring among the people, and a double plague inflicted on them. ^f Stomachs that for a whole year had been accustomed to the digestion of no other food than the light nourishment of manna, may well be supposed not so able to bear what was more heavy and solid; and therefore others have thought that this was the only punishment which God sent upon them. The words of Moses may indeed be understood in this sense, as well as any other, while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague; which may properly enough signify a death occasioned by their eating of the said food to excess; or, if we will needs have it, some particular disease, ^g the import of the words seems to remit us to the squinancy, or some such suffocating distemper, which choaked them, even while they were eating, or soon after. And to this the account of the Psalmist gives some countenance and confirmation; ^h so they did eat and were well filled; for he gave them their own desire, they were not disappointed of their lust: but while the meat was yet in their mouths, the heavy wrath of God came upon them, and slew the choicest of them; insomuch that they, from their lusting after flesh, gave to the place where they were ⁱ buried a name that signifies the Graves of Concupiscence.

The plague upon sending the quails, what.

AT what time, or in what encampment the rebellion of Korah and his adherents happened, the sacred history has not informed us; but in this all interpreters agree, ^k that the cause of the mutiny was his resentment, upon the advancement of Aaron and his family so high above the rest of the Levites. It may be thought likewise that he did not digest ^l the late preferment of Elizaphan the son of Uzziel, who was the youngest son of Kohath, to be chief of the family of the Kohathites, which of

Korah's rebellion, upon what pretences

right

^b Numb. xi. 33. ^c Bochart and Menochius. ^d Psal. lxxviii. 21. ^e The Clerc, ubi supra. ^f Saurin's Dissertations. ^g Howell's History of the Bible. ^h Psal. lxxviii. 29, &c. ⁱ Kibroth Hattaavah. ^k Patrick's Commentary on Numb. xvi. ^l Numb. iii. 30.

right ⁿ he thought belonged to him; and therefore finding himself too weak to make an insurrection alone, he persuaded Dathan and Abiram, of the tribe of Reuben, and those in whom they had an interest, to join him upon another pretence, viz. that they were descended from the eldest son of Israel, to whom the chief authority in the nation (which Moses had usurped) belonged; that he had preferred the tribe of Judah to ⁿ the principal place or post of honour in their encampments; and in the choice of the seventy elders to be his assistants in the government, had left them out of the number.

UPON these, and such like grounds, the heads of the faction may be thought to have proceeded, Korah seeking the priesthood, and the sons of Reuben the civil dignity. To justify himself therefore, as well as his brother Aaron, as to the administration of the government, both civil and ecclesiastical, which God had entrusted them with, Moses puts the matter upon this issue: • “Hereby ye shall know, that the Lord hath commissioned me to do what I have done, and that I have undertaken nothing in gratification of my own pride or ambition: “if these men die the common way of nature, and be visited like other men, then may it be taken for granted, that the Lord hath not sent me; but, if he deal with them after a “strange and unusual manner, and the earth opening her “mouth swallow them up alive, then shall ye understand, “that these men have provoked the Lord.” ^p And no sooner had he spoken these words, but terrible convulsions heaved the labouring earth, and its surface cleaving asunder, Korah and his faction, ^q with all their goods and families were swallowed up alive, and, the ground closing upon them, perished. The other leaders in this rebellion, to the number of two hundred and fifty men, who had profanely attempted to offer incense contrary to the law, were destroyed by a miraculous fire; and when, the next day, the people murmured against Moses and Aaron, as if they had been the authors of these mens death, God sent a pestilence among them, which, in an instant of time (as it were) carried off fourteen thousand and seven hundred of them; and would have proceeded farther, had not the incense of the high-priest made atonement for the people, and put a stop to the mortality.

^r A CERTAIN doctor of the Jewish church, upon this occasion, applies to Aaron the following words of the prophet: ^s He poured out his soul unto death; he was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. ^t But had that Rabbin been instructed in a better school, and thereby enabled to penetrate farther in-

to

^m As being the second son of Kohath. ⁿ Numb. ii. 3. ^o Ibid. xvi. 28, &c. ^p Howell's History of the Bible. ^q Except some of Korah's sons. See Numb. xxvi. 11. ^r R. Menachem on Numb. xvi. Parafche Korah sub fin. ^s Isa. liii. 12. ^t Saurin's Dissertations, and Patrick's Commentary on Numb. xvi.

to the meaning of the prophets, he would have perceived that Aaron, in this circumstance, was a type and figure of him whom Isaiah speaks of in that mysterious chapter; and who represents himself in another book (rejected indeed by the Jews, but dictated by the same unerring Spirit) as "holding a golden-censer, in which he offered incense, whose smoke ascended up before God, being mixed with the prayers of the faints, which, by that mystical union, were made more efficacious.

THE acceptance of Aaron's office, in putting a stop to the plague, was a sufficient testimony of his right to the priesthood, by God's appointment; but to put the matter past all controversy for the future, God commanded Moses to take a rod from each tribe, and to write, or engrave upon it, the name of the prince of that tribe, to which it belonged; on the rod of the tribe of Levi, to write Aaron's name, as being the prince thereof; to lay up all these rods together in the tabernacle; and to let the people know, that God would cause the rod of that man, whom he intended to honour with the dignity of the priesthood, to blossom. Why God made choice of a rod for the instrument of the miracle he was about to work, is a matter that has been disputed by commentators; but the most probable opinion is, * that for this reason he did it, because the princes of the tribes were used to carry rods in their hands, as badges of their authority. * Some will needs have this rod of Aaron to have been the same with that of Moses, wherewith he wrought so many miracles in Egypt, and at the Red-sea; and concerning it, the Cabalists tell us many strange stories, viz. that it came originally from a branch of the Tree of Life, which an angel gave to Seth, who planted it in the wilderness, where Moses found it grown to a tree, and, by God's direction, cut this rod from it: while others pretend, that it was given to Adam, and by him to Enoch, till it came to Joseph, in whose house the Egyptians found it, when he died, and brought it to Pharaoh; from whom Jethro stole it, and gave it to Moses; with abundance more of the same romantic stuff. But, as there is not the least intimation of its being the rod of Moses, on the contrary, it is expressly called † the Rod of Aaron; † so it had not been a sufficient argument to convince the infidelity of the Israelites, if Aaron's rod had not been of the same kind with all the rest. For they might have ascribed what came to pass to the singular quality and virtue of that rod (especially had it been Moses's wonder-working rod) and not to a special hand of God, appearing to establish the authority of Aaron: whereas, on the contrary, we find that the miracle had its intended effect. For no sooner was Aaron's rod, whereon were the buds, and blossoms, and fruit of an almond-tree, produced, but the

Aaron's
rod blossom-
ing

Not the
same with
that of
Moses.

u Rev. viii. 3. * Ainsworth on Numb. xvii. x Vid. R. Simon apud Galatin. L. VI. c. 15. y Numb. xvii. 6. z Patrick's Commentary on Numb. xvii.

the people immediately acknowledged their error, and from that time forward, we hear no more of any disputes with the tribe of Levi, concerning their privileges, nor any repining at the superior authority of Aaron.

Of the
World,
2552, &c.
Before
Christ,
1452, &c.
Water out
of the rock.

BUT it was not long, before they gave an instance, in another kind, of their mutinous and rebellious temper, which proved of fatal consequence to Aaron and Moses both. The waters which Moses, above thirty-eight years before, had made to come out of the rock at Horeb, had hitherto followed the Israelites in the wilderness, which way soever their orders were to march; but, ^a whether God was minded, at this time, to try the faith of this new generation (for most of their fathers, for whom the waters of Horeb were provided, were dead) or that he intended very speedily to bring them into a country, wherein they might be supplied without a miracle; so it was, that the waters (as we said) which all along followed them in their journeys, began now to fail, being either stopped in the rock from whence they issued out, or falling into the Red-sea (as some imagine) at Ezion-gaber, ^b the place of their last encampment, were there swallowed up. Upon this occasion the people, as usual, began to murmur; Moses, as his custom was, makes his address to God; and God, as he never failed to do, promised them relief: ^c Take the rod, says he, and gather the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; so that thou shalt give the congregation, and their beasts, drink. This was the order God gave Moses, and this the promise of the miracle he intended to work. How it was, commentators are at variance to determine; but certain it is, that there was some great default, both in Moses and Aaron, either in not giving sufficient credit to the miracle, or not executing the order, as God appointed; because we find him decreeing, that they should not live ^d to bring the congregation into the land that he had given them; because they believed not, to sanctify him in the eyes of the children of Israel; which accordingly happened, for Aaron ^e was gathered to his people, the very next station they came to, and Moses not very long after.

Moses's
offence
hereupon,
what.

Several
opinions
concerning
it.

THE Talmudists have a very odd conceit, that the great sin, for which Moses and Aaron were hindered from going into the land of Canaan was, because they called God's people ^f Rebels; and from hence they have formed a maxim, that he, who treats the church, which ought to be honoured, with contempt, is, as if he blasphemed the name of God. But in opposition to this, it should be considered, ^g that Moses, on this occasion, uses the very same language that God himself does, when he bids

^a Patrick's Commentary on Numb. xx. ^b Numb. xxxiii. 36. ^c Ibid. xx. 8. ^d Ibid. ver. 12. ^e Ibid. ver. 24. ^f Ibid. ver. 10. ^g Patrick's Commentary.

birds him lay up the rod of Aaron, ^h as a token against the rebels; and that, if this was the thing wherein he offended God, he, not long after, committed the same in an higher degree again (which nobody can think he would have done, had it already cost him so dear) when he told the people plainly, ⁱ Ye have been rebellious against the Lord, ever since I knew you. Several christian, as well as Jewish expositors, think, that the transgression of Moses lay in smiting the rock, when he was only ordered to speak to it: and, for the support of this, they alledge ^k that God is an absolute sovereign, expecting an absolute obedience, and exacting punishment, even of his greatest favourites, when they pretend to vary from his commands, or to mix their own conceptions with his directions. But though there seems something in this, yet it is not easy to conceive for what purpose God appointed him to take the rod, if he was not to smite the rock with it, as he had done before. It is certain ^l that ^{The most probable.} the divine writers, who have touched upon this history, have made mention of two defaults in Moses, his impatience, and his infidelity; and therefore we may suppose, that, the water now ceasing ^m at the time when his sister Miriam died, he was exceedingly troubled on both these accounts; that, unexpectedly assaulted by the people, who ought to have paid him more reverence, especially in a time of mourning, he fell into a greater commotion of anger and indignation than was usually in him; and that this anger gave such a disturbance to his mind, and so disordered his thoughts, that, when God bade him take his rod, and go, and speak to the rock, he fell into some doubt, whether the divine goodness would grant the people the same favour he had done before; that therefore he struck the rock with diffidence, believing it improbable that such worthless and rebellious wretches should deserve a miracle; and that the water, not issuing at the first stroke, his diffidence increased into unbelief, and a settled persuasion, that they should have none at all. Another conjecture ⁿ of a very learned man (which I mention, that the reader may judge which has the best appearance) is,—that Moses and Aaron began to distrust God's promise of entering into the land of Canaan, at the end of forty years, and to imagine, that, if they brought water again out of the rock, it must follow them as long as the other had done, and engage them again in the like wanderings: and therefore the comment he makes upon their words is this: What, ye rebels, must we bring water out of a rock, as we did at Horeb? Are all our hopes and expectations of getting out of the wilderness come to this? We never fetched you water out of the rock but once, and that was, because we were to stay a long time in the wilderness,

VOL. II.

C c

dernefs,

^h Numb. xvii. 10. ⁱ Deut. ix. 24. ^k Howell's History of the Bible. 1 Psal. cvi. 32, 33. and Numb. xx. 10. ^l Numb. xxi. 1. ^m Lightfoot's Chronica Temp. in Numb. xx.

dernefs, and muft we begin our abode here again, when we thought we had attained to the end of our travels? O ye rebels, have ye brought it to this pafs by your murmurings? Whereupon he prefently fmote the rock in a paffion twice, whereas God commanded him only to fpeak to it. But which foever of thefe conjectures we are inclined to think moft plaufible, there are few writers, but who are difpofed to extenuate the fault of Mofes and Aaron, ° as not deferving fo fevere a punifhment, had not God, in paffing their fentence, confidered the excellency and dignity of their perfons, in whom a fault of this nature was far more grievous, and inexcufeable, than in ordinary men.

S E C T. I.

Of the fiery Serpents, Balak, and Balaam, &c.

Of the
World,
2552, &c.
Before
Christ,
1452, &c.
The fiery
serpents.

THE wildernefs, wherein the Israelites travelled, was full of all kinds of ferpents; and Mofes represents it as one of the greateft mercies and miracles, vouchsafed that people, that God p led them through it, all along protecting them from thefe venomous creatures, until they began to complain q of the tediousnefs of their journeys, and their want of provifions, even when they were fupplied by a miraculous providence every day; and then he withdrew that protection, and fent ferpents among them, r whose biting raifed fuch inflammations in their bodies, as occafioned the death of fome of the moft guilty, and violent pains in all of them. Upon their repentance, however, and the interceffion of his fervant Mofes, he appointed a remedy of a particular nature, s the figure of one of thefe ferpents, made of polished brafs, and fixed upon a pole, to cure all that were bitten, as oft as they looked up to it. Whether the fight of brafs (as fome naturalifts fay) be hurtful or no, in fuch cafes, t this is certainly a prefcription of phyficians, that fuch people as are bitten with any venomous beaft, fhould be kept from the fight of the very image of the beaft from which they received fuch hurt; and therefore God might take occafion, from the contrariety of means, to make ufe of this kind of remedy, that the Israelites might know and be perfuaded, that both their difeafe, and their medicine came from him.

The brafs
ferpent,
why made
choice of.

u A talifman,

o Patrick's Commentary. p Deut. viii. 15. q Numb. xxi. 4. 5. r Gerard Voffius is of opinion, that the fiery ferpents, of which Mofes fpeaks, were of the fame kind with thofe which the Greeks call *Proferes* and *Kayfoones*, and Pliny reckons among the *Sceleratiffimi Serpentes*, the moft pernicious ferpents, Lib. XXIV. c. 13. But the famous Bochart, has, by many arguments, proved, that they were a fort of ferpents, called *Hydri*, becaufe, in winter, they lived in fens and marthes; but thefe fens and watry places being dried up in the fummer, they then living in dry places, were thereupon called *Cherfydri*, and, in the hot feafons of the year, had a moft fharp and ftinging poifon, Boch. Hieroz. Part II. Lib. III. c. 13. Now, it being the latter end of Auguft when they infested the Israelites, they could not but be very venomous. Patrick's Commentary. s Numb. xxi. 8. t Patrick, *ibid*.

* A talisman, which (according to the common account) is a certain piece of metal, made under the influence of such and such planets or constellations, having wonderful qualities, to beget love, and overcome enemies, to drive away noxious animals, and cure some kinds of diseases, is a chimerical notion; and those who pretend to resemble the figure which God appointed Moses to set up, to any of these vain devices, deserve our scorn, more than our confutation. The author of the book of Wisdom, addressing himself to God, and speaking of the Israelites, has imputed the virtue of this serpent to its true cause, * he, that turned himself toward it, was not healed by the thing which he saw, but by Thee, who art the Saviour of all; and therefore he calls it, in the foregoing verse, a Sign, or Symbol of Salvation, to put them in remembrance of the commandment of the law. The only considerable difficulty in the whole transaction is, why God, who had forbidden all manner of images, should, on this occasion, command one to be made. This the Jewish doctors (as Justin Martyr x observes in his days) could give no account of; but had they known Jesus Christ, and him crucified, they might have soon perceived y that God intended it for a type of the death of Christ, and the manner in which he was to die; and that the effects of the brazen serpent, upon them who looked on it, did represent the virtue received by true believers from the death of their Redeemer: for so we find Christ himself explaining the mysterious meaning of it; z as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoso believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Its virtue,
whence.

A type of
Christ.

THE history of the brazen serpent carries our thoughts, naturally enough, to that of the serpent of Æsculapius. It is pretty remarkable, that the same creature, whose aspect served to cure the Israelites, should be made the symbol of the god of physic among the heathens; but, a whether that, which we find recorded by Moses concerning the brazen serpent, be the origin of what the heathens tell us of Æsculapius, is a question yet undecided, and may possibly deserve the elucidation of the learned. What we have further to observe of the Mosaic serpent is, that it remained among the Jews above seven hundred years, even to the time of Hezekiah, king of Judah; but, when it came to be made an object of idolatry, and the people for some time had paid their incense and adorations to it, b that

pious

u Saurin's Dissertations. * Wisdom xvi. 7. x Contra Tryph. p. 322, 323. For there insisting upon it, as a type of Christ, and appealing to the company, what reason (excluding that) could be given of this matter; one of the Jews confessed that he was in the right, and that he himself had inquired for a reason among the Jewish masters, and could meet with none. Kidder's Demonstration, p. 73. y Ibid. z John iii. 14, 15. a The reader that desires to know what several authors have said upon this subject, will find them collected by Saurin, in his 634 Dissertation. b 2 Kings xviii. 4.

pious king caused it to be broken to pieces, and, by way of contempt, called it *Nehushtan*, *i. e.* a lump of brass only.

LONG had the Israelites travelled in the wilderness; but approaching now to the promised land, and having defeated, and utterly destroyed the Amorites, and their king, who obstructed their passage thither; by the rumour of their arms, and rapidity of their conquests, they put Balak, king of Moab likewise, and his people, ^c into a terrible consternation. Balak, knowing himself too weak to engage the mighty force of Israel, advised with the chiefs of Midian, his neighbours and confederates, to whom he proposed the common danger of these invaders; and the result of the consultation was, that he should send † messengers to Balaam, the son of Beor, who lived at Pethor, a city of Mesopotamia, by presents and promises to invite him to come and curse the Israelites: for so great an opinion had they of this man's skill and power in divination, ^a that by his benedictions or imprecations, they thought he could turn the fate of war, which way he pleased.

Balak sends
to Balaam,
and why.

SOME Jews are of opinion that this Balaam was a sort of astrologer, who observing when men were under a bad aspect of the stars, pronounced a curse upon them, which sometimes coming to pass, in the neighbouring nations gained him a great reputation.

^c If the Moabites had known the protection they were under, they needed not to have been afraid: for, had they been quiet, they were particularly exempted from the sword of Israel, as being descended from Lot by his eldest daughter. Deut. ii. 9. † Here in the Old Testament, Balaam is called the son of Beor, but St Peter in the New (2 Pet. ii. 15.) styles him the son of Bofor: Beor and Bofor however, are both the same name in the original, only differently pronounced. But then it looks a little strange, that the Midianites and Moabites should trust so little to their own gods at home, as to send, as far as Mesopotamia, for a prophet to assist them. But perhaps they imagined, that the gods of their own country were not able to defend them against the God of Israel, having so lately seen what the Israelites had done to the Amorites, their neighbours: or they might fancy, that Balaam had an interest with all kinds of gods, and might engage them all to come in to their assistance, or rather, they might know, that he was a prophet of the same God whom the Israelites worshipped; and that therefore, by his means, they hoped to draw off the God of Israel from assisting them, and to incline him to favour their cause. *Waterland's Sermons*, Vol. II. ^d It was a received opinion among the Gentiles, that some peop^l had power, especially prophets and diviners, by the help of their gods, to blast, not only private persons, but even whole armies, so that they should not be able to effect their design. *Macrobius* has preserved us a very remarkable form of such imprecations, and brings in the priest, that officiates, speaking thus: *Dis pater, si ve Jovis mavis, si ve quo alio nomine fas sit nominare, ut omnem illam urbem, exercitumque, quem ego me sentio dicere, fuga, formidine, terrore, compleatis; qui que adversus legiones, exercitumque nostrum, arma telaque serent, uti vos, eos exercitus, eos hostes, eosque homines, urbes, agrosque eorum, & qui, in illis locis regionibusque, agris urbibusque habitant, lumine supremo privetis, &c. uti vos urbes agrosque eorum, quos ego me sentio dicere, capita, ætatesque eorum devotas consecratasque habeatis — Uti me, meamque fidem, imperiumque, legiones, exercitumque nostrum, qui in his rebus gerendis sunt, bene suos sinatis esse. Si hæc ita feceritis ut ego sciam, sentiam, intelligamque; tum quisque votum hoc faxit, recte factum esto, ovibus atris tribus, tellus mater, teque Jupiter, obtestor.* *Macrobius Saturn. Lib. III. c. 9. ex Sammonico Sereno: and Patrick's Commentary on Numb. xxii*

reputation. Several of the antient fathers suppose him no more than a common soothsayer (for so he is ^c somewhere called) who pretended to foretel future events and discover secrets, &c. but by no good and justifiable arts. Origen will needs have it, that he was no prophet, but only one of the devil's forcerers, and that of him he went to inquire, but God was pleased to prevent him, and to ^e put what answer he thought fit into his mouth. It cannot be denied however, but that ^f the scripture expressly calls him a prophet; and therefore ^h some later writers have imagined that he had been ⁱ once a good man and a true prophet, till loving the wages of iniquity, and prostituting the honour of his office to his covetousness, he apostatised from God, and, betaking himself to idolatrous practices, fell under the delusion of the devil, of whom he learnt all his magical enchantments; though at this juncture, when the preservation of his people was concerned, it might consist with God's wisdom to appear to him, and vouchsafe him revelations.

^k BALAAM indeed was a man of no great probity, and might by profession be a diviner; but by the free access he had to God, it seems to be apparent that he was no common forcerer, or prophet of the devil. ^l For did ever any forcerer address his prayers to and receive answers from the supreme God? Did ever any forcerer prescribe a law to himself, to say nothing less or more than what the Spirit of God should dictate? The Spirit of God, when did it ever ^m come upon an enchanter? Or was it ever known that an oracle upon a remote event, and what God alone was capable of revealing, should be declared by a mere magician? Bad therefore though he was, a slave to his passions, and an enemy to the people of God, yet it must be acknowledged that this Balaam was a prophet. "But if he was ^{*} a prophet and servant of the true God, why did he ^{*} seek for enchantments? Or what service could he think to receive from them?" Now in answer to this, it may be considered [†] that the arts of magicians, and their enchantments to procure prodigies and oracles, though the vulgar people did not understand the foundation they were built on, were to the wise men and philosophers that produce of learning and natural science, falsely indeed so called, but really esteemed by them to be true: and therefore as Saul, though he had before ^{||} put away those who had familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land, was induced, [‡] when the Lord answered him neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets, to go to a woman that had a familiar spirit, and to inquire of her; so Balaam, finding nothing but a full

That Balaam was a prophet.

^e Josh. xiii. 22. ^f This Balaam himself plainly discerned, and therefore calls himself, he who heard the words of God, Numb. xxiv. 1. ^g 2 Pet. ii. 16. ^h Vide Patrick's Commentary on Numb. xxii. ⁱ For this reason some have supposed that he was the same person who in the book of Job is called Elhan. Patrick's Commentary. ^k Vide Witsii *Collect. sacra*, Lib. I. c. 16. ^l Saurin's Dissertations. ^m Numb. xxiv. 2. ^{*} *Ibid.* ver. 1. [†] Shuckford's Connection, Vol. III. Lib. XII. ^{||} 1 Sam. xxviii. 3. [‡] *Ibid.* ver. 6, 7.

full disappointment of all his views in the several revelations which God was pleased to make to him; and being warmly inclined to purchase (if he might with any colour be able to do it) the advancement which Balak had offered him, was tempted to try what might be the event, if he used some of the arts which the most learned nations held in the highest repute, and esteemed to be of the greatest efficacy. To these he was no stranger, and therefore he attempted to try them, but found to his sorrow that § there was no enchantment against Jacob, nor was there any divination against Israel. To illustrate this part of the history which Moses hath given us of him, it may not be improper to lay down the following observations :

Some observations hereupon.

I. THAT before the giving of the law and the conquest of the promised land, ^a there were other true worshippers of God besides the descendants of Abraham dispersed over the face of the earth. 2. That this worship of God ^o was frequently mixed with superstition and idolatry even among them, who professed to adore the one God of heaven and earth. 3. That this odious mixture did not hinder God ^p from revealing himself to those who practised such a monstrous and motley religion. 4. That supernatural gifts in general, and those [†] of prophecy in particular, though they enlightened the minds of the prophets, ^q yet many times did not sanctify their hearts and affections. And, 5. That the greatest weakness or wickedness of prophets never went so far as to make them pronounce oracles contrary

§ Numb. xxiii. 23. ⁿ Thus Job and his friends dwelt in Arabia, Jethro and his posterity in the country of Midian; and Abraham's abode in Mesopotamia might leave behind him some proselytes to the true religion. The Moabites and Ammonites, it is certain, were the descendants of righteous Lot, who was of the same religion with Abraham: the Midianites too (of whom most probably Balaam was) were the posterity of Abraham by Keturah, and therefore, for some time at least, could not but retain the knowledge of the true God; which makes it not improbable that God might plant some prophets among them in those early days, in order to preserve the true religion and worship which they had received from their progenitors. Waterland's Sermons, Vol. II. ^o The Teraphims of Laban prove this. ^p Abimelech and Nebuchadnezzar are instances of this. Gen. xxvi. and Dan. ii. 1.

† Balaam had certainly the gift of prophecy, even while he was doing amiss and tempting Almighty God, for the Spirit of God came upon him (Numb. xxiv. 2.) and made use of his organs in delivering several remarkable prophecies, fulfilled in their season: such as the rising strength and growing greatness of the Israelites: the destruction of Amalek which came to pass in king Saul's time: the fall of Moab and of Edom, which was effected by king David: the overthrow of the Kenites, which was done by the Assyrians; and what is more than all, the conquest of the Assyrians themselves by the power of Chittim, i. e. of the Macedonians, which was executed under the conduct of Alexander the Great. These were great and valuable prophecies: and from these we may learn that the Spirit of God may sometimes vouchsafe to come upon a very wicked man (so far as concerns the extraordinary gifts) without reforming or influencing him, as to his life and morals in the way of ordinary operation. Waterland's Sermons, Vol. II.

^q For so we read, The heads of God's people judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money. Micah iii. 11.

contrary to what was dictated by the holy Spirit; † if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord to do either good or bad of my own mind, but what the Lord saith, that must I speak.

‡ THE speaking of Balaam's ass is a known passage in his history; but the Jews have not been able to persuade themselves that an event so extraordinary really came to pass. Philo in his life of Moses passes it over in silence, and † Maimonides pretends that it only happened to Balaam in a prophetic vision: but least of all should these men, who are so apt to fancy marvellous events without the least necessity, and to give mystical interpretations to the most obvious occurrences, deny their assent to this miracle. The severest philosophy cannot deny but that God is as able to make creatures destitute of understanding, pronounce articulate and rational words, † as it is for a musician, by the different touches he gives any instrument, to make it express a variety of notes; nor can the heathens reproach us with any absurdity in this story, * since they themselves relate so many of the like nature, but not near so well supported. It may seem a little strange indeed that Balaam should show no kind of surprise when he heard his ass speak like an human creature: but to this † some reply that Balaam had probably imbibed the doctrine of transmigration of souls (which they prove to be very common in the east) and from thence might be less astonished to hear any brute speak: whereas † others suppose that he was in such a rage and fury at the supposed crossness of the beast, crushing his foot and falling down under him, that for the present he could think of nothing else; though the conciseness of Moses's narration, that † must be presumed to have omitted many circumstances, which if rightly known, would dispel this and many more difficulties, does certainly, in my opinion, furnish us with a better and more satisfactory answer.

Balaam's
ass speaking
not in-
credible.

Why Ba-
laam was
not sur-
prised at it.

AMONG

‡ Numb. xxiv. 13. There is a remarkable passage in Josephus to this purpose, where he brings in Balaam speaking to Balak in the following manner. “ Can you then imagine, that in the business of prophesying it depends on us “ to say or not say what we think fit? It is God who makes us speak as he “ pleases, without any voluntary concurrence of our own. I have not forget-
“ the request which the Midianites made me: I came with a design to satisfy
“ them; and thought of nothing less than of proclaiming the praises of the
“ Hebrews, or relating those favours which God has determined to heap upon
“ them: but he has been more powerful than I, who intended to have pleased
“ men, even against his will. When he enters into our hearts he makes him-
“ self absolute master of them; and because he has decreed to make this people
“ happy, and to crown them with immortal glory, he has therefore put into
“ my mouth the words which I have now pronounced. Antiq. Lib. IV. c. 4.
‡ Numb. xxii. 28. † More Nevoch. P. II. c. 42. † Le Clerc's Commentary
on Numb. xxii. * Witness what they say of the ass upon which Bacchus rode,
of the ram of Phryxus, the bull of Europa, the horses of Achilles and Adrastos,
the elephant of Porus in India, and the lamb in Egypt, when Bocchoris reigned
there. Patricks Commentary. † Le Clerc, *ibid.* † Patrick, *ibid.* † Gaurin's
Dissertations.

Balaam's
prophecy
of Christ.

AMONG the many prophecies which God put into the mouth of Balaam, there is one of a more eminent and peculiar nature ; * I shall see him, but not now, I shall behold him, but not nigh. There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth. All opinions agree in this, that Balaam here speaks of a king and conqueror ; and perhaps in calling him a star he accommodates himself to the long established notion, that the appearance of comets denoted either the exaltation or destruction of kingdoms ; but the great question is, of what king or conqueror it is he speaks ? ^b Some have applied it intirely to David, the most illustrious of the Jewish monarchs, who extended his conquests, and might very justly be said to verify that part of the prediction, he shall smite the corners (or ^c as some render it) the princes of Moab. ^d Others have referred it as intirely to the Messiah, supposing that the metaphor of a star comports better with him and his celestial origin than with David, and the main strokes of the prophecy resemble an heavenly more than an earthly conqueror. The matter however may be compromized, if we will but allow of ^e a learned man's observation, viz. that the most remarkable prophecies in the Old Testament bear usually a two-fold sense, one relating to the times before the Messiah, and the other either fulfilled in the person of the Messiah, or in the members of his body, the church : and of this kind we may justly esteem the preceding prophecy. For though its primary aspect may be towards David, yet whoever considers it attentively will perceive that its ideas are too full to extend no farther ; and must therefore, in a secondary and more exalted sense refer us to Christ, whose kingdom ruleth over all, and to whom all things are put in subjection under his feet. In this sense the generality of Jews as well as christians understood it : and it is no improbable conjecture (whatever ^f some may think of it) that by the strength of this prophecy, kept upon record among the oriental archives, the magi of that country were directed to Jerusalem at our Saviour's nativity, inquiring ^g where is the king of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the east.

Balaam's
wicked
advice.

THE prophetic benedictions which Balaam, though fore against his will, poured out upon the children of Israel, so provoked Balak, that, being no longer able to restrain his rage, he bade him hast and begone ; ^h I thought to promote thee to great honour, but lo! the Lord hath kept thee back from honour. Whereupon, vexed at his disappointment, and resolving to revenge himself on God's people as the occasion of it, the prophet

a Numb. xxiv. 17. b Le Clerc's Commentary. c So the LXX. *tous archegous Moab*, which alters not the sense. d Vide Patrick's Commentary on Numb. xxiv. e H. Grotius ad Matth. i. 22. f Witsius, in his Miscell. Sacra. Lib. I. c. 16 seems to explode this conjecture of Origen's, but not upon sufficient grounds. g Matth. ii. 2. h Numb. xxi: 11.

phet ⁱ instructs their enemies in a wicked artifice, which was to send their daughters into the camp of Israel, in order to draw them into fornication, and thence into idolatry, as a sure method to deprive them of the favour of that God whose assistance had made them so formidable. The artifice succeeded: for the next thing we hear is ^k that Israel joined himself to Baal-peor. But what this Baal-peor was, is a question as yet undecided.

THE antient Jews generally suppose that he was no other than a Priapus, and that his worship consisted in such obscene practices, or postures at least, as are not fit to be named. But others have thought that as Baal is a general term which signifies Lord, Peor might possibly be the name of some great prince translated into the number of the gods; (as ^l it was a known custom among the heathens to deify the souls of men, and canonize them after death) and to this the Psalmist may be supposed to allude, where he tells us that when the Israelites worshipped Baal-peor, ^m they ate the offerings of the dead. ⁿ Others have imagined that as Peor is the name of a mountain in the country of Moab, where the temple of Baal (by whom ^o they understood the sun) was situated, from hence he might be called Baal-peor, even as Jupiter was called Olympius, because he was worshipped in a famous temple built upon the mountain Olympus. Either of these conjectures seem more probable than the other, because ^p the antienter the books are which treat of these matters, the less mention they make of any impurities in the worship of Baal.

BUT whatever this Baal-peor was, it is certain that the crime of worshipping him was very enormous, since it drew upon the Israelites so severe a punishment. A thousand ^q principal men

Baal-peor,
what.

Phinehas's
act of zeal.

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D d

that

ⁱ This indeed is not mentioned in Numb. xxiv. where the interview between Balaam and Balak ends, but Moses (Ch. xxxi. 16.) plainly refers to the counsel of Balaam, and lays the whole blame on him. St John likewise in his revelation (Ch. ii. 14) speaking to the church of Pergamos in the name of Christ, takes notice of this wicked advice. I have some few things against thee, because thou hast those that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication: where the persons pointed to were a wretched sect of false teachers, which started up in the very infancy of the christian church. They held it lawful to follow carnal lusts, to commit fornication, adultery, incest and other impurities. This palatable doctrine suited the taste of the voluptuous, and brought the teachers in much applause, and many a fair present from their carnal hearers: and therefore, because their doctrine was very like Balaam's, and the principal motive to it was avarice, and a design of flattering and pleasing others in their lusts, as these teachers were compared to Balaam, and their doctrine to his, so they obtained the Hebrew name of Balaamites, as their Greek name was Nicolaitans, both of the same signification, *i. e.* lords and leaders of the people. Waterland's Sermons, Vol. II. k Numb. xxx. 3. l Mede's Discourses, Lib. III. c. 4. m Psal. cvi. 28. n Selden, de Diis Syris, Synt. I. c. 5. and Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries. o Vide Fenshon of Idolatry, c. 4. p Patrick's Commentary. q Thus the LXX. the vulgar, and several other interpreters understand it. And there is reason for this acceptation,

that had been guilty of this foul idolatry, were, by God's appointment, publicly executed, and three and twenty thousand destroyed by a pestilential disease, which was going to spread itself farther, † had not Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, and grandson of Aaron (by the command of Moses, says Philo, but should rather have said by a divine impulse and intigation) at one bold stroke, killing both Zimri and his Midianitish paramour, put a stop to its progress.

An objection.

* "BUT was not Zimri † a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites, an head of a powerful family at least, and consequently not accountable to Phinehas for his behaviour? How then could he have a right to execute this vengeance upon him? Or what could be the safety of even the highest magistrates in this œconomy, if private men put on an officious zeal, and assassinate at pleasure those whose actions were unjustifiable and deserved punishment?" Zimri indeed was a

Answered.

great man; the prince of a tribe (as || Josephus makes him) and one of the supreme judges, whose right it was to be assessors with Moses and Aaron in the government of the people, and consequently could not be regularly brought under the judgment of any inferior authority. Moses had ordered just before, that all the people who had joined themselves to Baal-peor should be proceeded against according to law, and punished by their proper officers; but so far was Zimri from paying any regard to this, that we find him acting in open defiance to it; and, instead of appointing the judges of his tribe to punish those who were under their jurisdiction, openly, and in the face of the congregation, abetting, by his own practice, what he ought to have used his authority to correct and suppress ‡. He brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle: so that something extraordinary was here necessary to be done, in order to punish a crime which appeared too daring to be corrected, in the practice of a person who seemed too great to be called to an account for it. God indeed is the fountain of all power, and whoever has a right to command or punish another, must derive it either by way of delegation from those whom he has appointed to preside, or by an immediate revelation and commission from heaven: and therefore, to justify Phinehas in this warm expression of his zeal, we may observe, that God had not only commanded that the persons who had committed these abominations should be punished with death, but had enjoined Phinehas, in particular, even before he attacked Zimri, to cut off that bold offender;

tation, if what the Samaritan chronicle tells us be true, viz. that the daughters of the chief men of Moab were sent, finely dressed, to allure the Israelites, and one of the king's daughters among the rest. Patrick, *ibid.* † Numb. xxv. 8. ‡ Shuckford's Connection, Vol. III. Lib. 12. † Numb. xxv. 14. || Antiq. Lib. IV. c. 10. ‡ Numb. xxv. 6.

offender; for so the divine declaration seems to import, || Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath not only turned away my wrath, but because he was zealous for his God, has made an atonement for the children of Israel. But what merit could there be in the death of Zimri? How could that expiate the sins of the congregation? Or what had Phinehas to do to pretend to make atonement, unless God had appointed him, since †† no man taketh this honour to himself, nor can perform this office to any effect, but he who is called of God, as was Aaron? All this is resolved by what God orders Moses to declare to the people; wherefore say unto them, Behold it was I (for so the Hebrew should be rendered) who gave to him my covenant of peace: intimating that Phinehas had not done a rash action, moved to it by an impetuous spirit, but that God^d himself had directed him to what he had performed; made him an express covenant upon his performing it; assured him that the doing it should obtain pardon for the people, and that upon the death of the two miscreants, slain by his hand, the wickedness that had been committed in the camp, should be forgiven. In this view of the fact all things are clear; and the behaviour of Phinehas in it appears to be nothing more than a zealous and intrepid performance of what God by an express revelation had required him to do.

IT must not be dissembled however, that upon this fact the Jews found what they call the judgment of zeal, which authorised such as were full of this holy fervour, to punish any violent offenders, those that blasphemed God or profaned the temple, &c. in the presence of ten men of Israel, without any formal process. But the example of Phinehas countenances no such practice; nor can this action, done upon an extraordinary occasion by a person in a public authority, moved thereunto by a strong divine impulse, if not express revelation, (and what is a circumstance that some^r people add) in a commonwealth not perfectly settled, be made a precedent for private men, under a different situation, to invade the office of the magistrate without manifest danger of enthusiastic violence and outrage, even against those that are most innocent; as we plainly find it happened among the Jews, when, in the latter times of their government, they put this precedent in execution; ^r of which St Stephen, whom they inhumanly stoned, and St Paul, whom they vowed to assassinate without any form of justice, are notorious instances.

No precedent for others.

^u WHETHER this Phinehas was sent to command the troops, which were instantly appointed by God, to take vengeance of the Midianites, for having seduced his people into whoredom and idolatry; or whether he went along with the army, only to perform such sacred offices as should be required by the general,

Israel's general, and victory over the Midianites.

|| Numb. xxv. 11. || Heb. v. 4. s Le Clerc's Comment. on Deut xxv. t Acts vii. 58. and xxiii. 12. u Saurin's Dissertations.

neral, * who, with more probability perhaps, is thought to be Joshua, are questions arising from the silence of scripture, concerning the chief commander. At this time indeed, it was not usual to set priests at the head of armies, but, in the time of the Maccabees (who were of the sacerdotal line) the troops of Israel were commanded by them : and * therefore some have supposed that Phinehas being an extraordinary person, of great courage, and signalized by his late magnanimous action, might possibly recommend himself (even contrary to the common custom) to the chief command, in order to complete the revenge he had begun. But whoever it was that headed the small army of Israelites, it is certain, they obtained an absolute and complete victory over their enemies, and (what made it more wonderful) † without the loss of one man on Israel's side, as appears from the report of the officers, made upon a muster.

Moses's last
admonitions to the
people.

THIS is the last memorable action which the Israelites did under the administration of Moses ; for their forty years travels were just now expiring, and consequently, the time of his dissolution drawing near. Being sensible of this therefore, and willing to take his last leave of them, in a manner suitable to the care and affection he had all along expressed for them ; he called them together, in the plain of Moab, by Jordan, and there † briefly reminded them of all that had befallen them, and their fathers, since they left Egypt ; how graciously God had all along dealt with them ; and how manifold their rebellions and provocations had been. † He repeated the chief injunctions of the law ; exhorted them to a strict observation of it ; promised they should soon enter into the land of Canaan, and commanded them to destroy the idols, and extirpate the inhabitants thereof. † He encouraged them to be faithful to God, upon assurance, that, if they kept his commandments, blessings would be showered down upon them ; but, if they neglected them, curses and calamities. He renewed the covenant with them in the name of God ; ordered the division of the land, whereinto they were passing, among their several tribes ; and, after he had recorded all these things in a book, which he committed to the care and custody of the Levites, and, by the divine direction, composed an hymn for the people to learn, in commemoration of God's favours, and their ingratitude ; he appointed Joshua, a man every way qualified for so high a trust, to succeed him in the government.

Of the
World.
2553. &c.
Before
Christ.
1451, &c.

HAVING thus discharged the office of a faithful ruler, and left them the best legacy that he could, laws for the direction of their lives, and a man of worth and ability to be their leader ; † he

* Patrick's Commentary. x Patrick, *ibid.* y Vid. Numb. xxxi. 49. z His speeches, upon this occasion, are the matter and substance of that book which is called Deuteronomy, *i. e.* a second law, or repetition of the law. Vid. Howell and Dupin's Histories of the Bible. a Vid. Deuteron. passim. b Deut. xi.

• he took a solemn farewell of them, in a prophetic blessing, which he pronounced upon each tribe, as Jacob had done before his death; and so went up to the top of ^d Pisgah, from whence he might • take a full view of the countries round about. Here he feasts his eyes with the prospect of that good land, which he is not permitted to enter; views the delightful town and plains of Jericho; sees Lebanon's fair cliffs and lofty cedars; and then ^f resigns his soul into the hands of angels, waiting, some of them, to convey it to an happier Canaan than what he had just before surveyed, and others, ^e to enter his body in the valley of Beth-peor, in the land of Moab; but (to ^h prevent all superstitious adoration of him) of the place of his sepulchre knoweth no man, even unto this day.

His last
farewell,
death, and
burial.

S E C T. II.

Of the passage of Jordan, and taking Jericho.

UPON the death of Moses, Joshua, by the command of God, succeeded to the government. He had been prime minister to Moses for the greatest part of those forty years that the Israelites wandered in the wilderness; had seen the wonderful works which God wrought by his hand; understood well the nature and disposition of the people; was one of those twelve spies which were sent to search the promised land; and one of the two that gave a just report of it: and for these, and some other qualifications, he was installed into his office with great solemnity. After this ceremony was over, the great expedition the people were to go upon, was, to take possession of the land of Canaan: but because it was bounded by the river Jordan, they were first to pass that, in order to invest its chief frontier-town, which was Jericho.

Of the
World,
2553, &c.
Before
Christ,
1451, &c.

JORDAN,

^c Deut. xxxiii. ^d Pisgah was the very top of mount Nebo, as Nebo was the highest part of the mountain Abarim, which is a long ridge of hills between the river Arnon and Jordan, situate in the plains of Moab. Wells's Geogr. The Jews have a notion, that God set before Moses a complete map of Canaan, wherein, every part of it was exactly described; but as this might have been done on the plain of Moab, without ever going up into the mountains, it seems more reasonable, that he strengthened his eyes with a greater vigour than usual, to enable him to take a larger prospect of the country, than otherwise he could have done. Patrick's Commentary. ^f The Jews have a saying of Moses, that his soul departed with a kiss, because he is said to die Alpi, at the mouth (as it is literally in the Hebrew) *i. e.* according to the word of God. But, if there be any sense in the expression, it must be, that he parted with his soul with great cheerfulness and serenity of mind. Witius Miscel. Sacra, C. 17. ^g Since the circumstances of Moses's death are so fully recorded, it seems to be a frivolous notion of the Jews, though supported by Josephus [Antiq. L. IV. c. 8.] and followed by some christian fathers, that he did not die, but was translated into heaven, where he stands, and ministers before God. Patrick and Witius, *ibid.* ^h This very reason we have in **R** Levi. Ben. Gerson: *Fortale si innotuisset locus, errando erravissent generationes sequentes, & ita cessaret ex eo Deum, per claritudinem miraculorum, quibus excelluit. Nonne vides quod in serpente Enco, quem fecerat Moses, erraverint quidam Israelitarum?* Witius, *ibid.*

The passing
of Jordan.

JORDAN, according to the account of ⁱ Josephus, was the largest and most celebrated river in the Holy Land. Its head was antiently thought to be Panion, but in truth it passes thither under ground; for the first source of it is Phiala, an hundred and twenty furlongs from Cæsarea Philippi, a little on the right-hand, and not much out of the way to Trachonis. From the cave of Panion, it crosses the bogs and fens of the lake Semechonitis, and, after a course of an hundred and twenty furlongs farther, passes under the city of Julius (or Bethsaida) then over the lake of Gennezareth, and so running a long way through a wilderness, or desert, it empties itself at last into the lake Asphaltites, or the Dead-sea. In the whole, it is about an hundred miles long; but, at present, not above * twenty yards broad; though certainly it was much larger at the time when the children of Israel passed over it. It was then ^k the time of barley-harvest, or (as ^l it is expressed in another place) in the first month, *i. e.* the month of March, when the snow upon mount Lebanon used to dissolve, and swell the adjacent rivers to a considerable degree. But how large soever it then was, as soon as the priests, who carried the ark, and went first in the procession, approached the river, its waters were parted; and whilst the waters above forgot to flow, and stood still, as if they had been congealed, those below ran down the channel towards the Dead-sea, as usual, and so left the ground dry for the people to pass over. The Jewish doctors have a tradition, that the vast heaps of waters, piled one upon another, while the Israelites passed over the river, being seen to the people of Jericho, and other adjacent places, occasioned a general consternation. Jericho, ^m according to Josephus, is distant from Jordan about seven miles and an half, and the intermediate country was a plain; but whether this circumstance be true or no, we shall not contend; all that we shall say upon the whole is this—
ⁿ That they who look upon this part of the divine history as improbable, if not incredible, should do well to consider what shame it is to have less faith than the heathens; who, lest their gods should be thought less powerful than the God of Israel, forged ^o those stories which the Persians tell us of, Zoroaster's passing over rivers, and the Greeks, of Neptune's drying up Inachus,

ⁱ De Bell. Jud. L. 3. * This is Maundrell's account of the river; [Journey from Aleppo, p. 83.] but it is very certain, that, as the courses of rivers are liable to great alterations, Jordan was a much larger stream, when the Israelites came into Canaan, than it is now. In Pliny's time, it filled a larger channel, and therefore he styles it *Annis ambitiosus* [Nat. Hist. Lib. V. c. 19.] when Strabo wrote, vessels of burden were navigated in it; [Geogr. Lib. XVI.] and therefore the same ingenious traveller observes, that antiently it had covered a large strand, and washed up an outer bank, about a furlong from the common channel. Maundrell, *ubi supra* ^k Josh. iii. 15. 11 Chron. xii. 15. ^m This agrees very well with Mr Maundrell's account, who tells us that he arrived at the river Jordan, from Jericho, in two hours. ⁿ Patrick's Commentary ^o These are collected by Muetius, in his *Quæstiones Aluetanæ*, L. II. c. 12.

Inachus, &c. why then should they call in question the power of the true God ; since it cannot be contended, but that, either by himself, or by his angels, he could easily stop the course of a river, make its waters rise up in an heap, as high as he pleased, and so stand reared in firmness and solidity, as if they were congealed?

THIS wonderful passage of the river Jordan so alarmed the neighbouring people, that they flocked in great multitudes to Jericho, as the strongest and most tenable place in the country, there to wait for Joshua's approach, and to put a stop to his intended conquest. It was not long before Joshua came up with his army ; and, while he was considering with himself in what manner he was to attack Jericho, there appeared to him, in a martial habit, a very extraordinary person, who gave him instructions what to do : but who this person was, it is not so well agreed among the learned. Several, both Jewish and christian authors, are of opinion, that the person who stiles himself here the Captain of the Host of the Lord was an angel, and particularly, the angel Michael, who in the prophet Daniel, is stiled one of the chief princes of the people of God, and supposed to have had the presidency over them, after that God (incensed against them for making the golden calf) withdrew his immediate presence from them. It is evident however, that Joshua conceived an higher opinion of him, because he fell on his face and worshipped him, which he would not have done, had he supposed him to be an angel only ; nor can we imagine, how the other could have accepted his worship, much less why he should command him to put off his shoes (which was the highest acknowledgment of a divine presence, that was used among the eastern nations) had he not been a divine person : and therefore, the more probable opinion is, " that this captain, or guardian of the Lord's host, who suffered himself to be worshipped, and by whose presence the place where he appeared was sanctified, was no other than the Son of God, whom all the angels in heaven are commanded to worship and adore."

The person that appeared to Joshua.

ACCORDING to the instructions of this divine person, Joshua caused all his forces to march round the place six days successively, and, on the seventh day, when (after seven times surrounding the city) the priests blew with the trumpets, and the people shouted with a loud voice, the wall thereof fell down flat, so that the army marched directly up to it, and took it, and put all to the sword (Rahab and her family only excepted) both man and beast. It would be madness to repeat what some authors (in order to depreciate this miracle) have told us of a certain

The taking of Jericho.

p Josh. vi. 2. q Saurin's Differt. Vol. II. r Josh. v. 15. s Vid. Dr Alix's Book on this argument, p. 234. t P. Merfenne, in his Comment on Genesis, and D. Geo. Morhof. de Scypho vitreo, per certum humane vocis sonum, fracto.

certain fitness there is in sounds, to break and demolish solid bodies; and how, from the violent effects of subterraneous eruptions, or the blowing up of some magazines of powder, they have supposed that the fall of the walls of Jericho might be imputed to a natural cause. The number of the trumpets we find was but seven, and these made of rams horns, which could not be of the shrillest sound; and though the noise of so great a number of people might be very loud, yet still it would require a miracle in Joshua to know, what the just proportion was between their noise, and the strength of the walls of Jericho. This is however but mere trifling with matters of fact. The sacred history has represented the whole event, as an extraordinary act of the divine power, exerted for the encouragement of the Israelites, and the confusion of their adversaries: and accordingly, if we peruse the account of the conquest of the land of Canaan, we shall find, that this was not the only instance of the divine interposal.

Of the shower of Hail-stones, and the Sun's standing still.

NOT long after the taking of Jericho, all the people of that country (except the Gibeonites, who, pretending to come from afar, drew Joshua and the heads of the tribes unwarily into a league) confederated together, in order to defend themselves against the Israelites: but Joshua, coming upon them suddenly, put them to flight, and, to complete the victory, God did two great miracles for Israel that day; he 1. cast down great stones from heaven upon their enemies, as they were running away: and, 2. stopped the course of the sun in the firmament, that his people might have the longer space to destroy them as they fled.

The shower of hail-stones.

1. THE learned Calmet, in a Dissertation before his Commentary upon Joshua, has taken great pains to shew, that the stones, which the Lord is said to cast down upon the Amorites, were not common hail-stones, but real solid stones; which he supposes may be ingenerated in the air, by a whirlwind's carrying up sand or gravel into a cloud, and there mixing it with some such oily or nitrous matter, as may consolidate it; that so, when it comes to be fired, it may burst through the cloud, and, scattering itself upon the explosion, descend in the nature of a perfect shower of stones. ^u But besides the difficulty of conceiving, how such a quantity of stones, as this passage in scripture seems to intimate, could, for any time, be sustained in a cloud; there seems to be no necessity for having recourse to such an uncommon solution, when the thing is so notorious, that hail-stones have frequently fallen, large enough to destroy ever so great a number of men, when naked and defenceless against their blows. A shower of hail indeed, may be supposed to proceed

from

from a more natural cause; but when the event happened at the very instant, wherein God promised to assist his people against their enemies; when, though it might have annoyed either army, it fell only on that which God had before determined to ruin, and fell so very heavily upon it, as to destroy more than the sword of the conquerors had done; such an event as this, I say, cannot but be looked upon as a miraculous interposition of providence, how fortuitous soever the concurrence of second causes may seem to be. And much more than may we say so,

2. OF God's stopping the course of the sun at Joshua's request. * Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, *i. e.* † stand immovable in that part of the heavens where I now see thee shining upon Gibeon; and thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon, *i. e.* of Ajalon ‡ in the tribe of Dan, which was farthest remote from Gibeon: for we must suppose that these two places were at some considerable distance, otherwise Joshua could not see the sun and the moon both appear at the same time, as it is probable they were both now in his eye, when he spake these words. It is to be observed, however, that (even upon the hypothesis of the motion of the sun) the Jewish general cannot be supposed to speak in a proper and philosophic sense; for since the sun is almost a million of times bigger than the earth, and some millions of miles distant from it, to justify the strict sense of the words, a line, drawn from the centre of the sun to that of the earth, must exactly pass by Gibeon, which we know it cannot do, because no part of the Holy Land lies between the tropics: and therefore we may, with less scruple, be bold to conclude that the words of Joshua (even with relation to the motion of the sun) are to be taken in a sense accommodated to the notions of the astronomy that then prevailed, rather than according to the reality of the thing. The most superficial reader cannot but observe, that in scripture nothing is more common than to express things, not according to the strict rules of philosophy, but according to their appearance, and the vulgar apprehensions concerning them. The sun and moon, for instance, are called † two great lights; but, however that title may agree with the sun, it is plain that the moon is but a small body, the least that has yet been discovered in the planetary system, and that it has no light at all, but what it borrows and reflects from the rays of the sun; and yet, because it is placed near us, it appears to us larger than other heavenly luminaries, and, from that appearance the holy scripture gives it such an appellation. And, in like manner, because the sun seems to us to move, and the earth to be at rest; the scriptures speak a great deal of the pillars, and basis, and foundations of the earth, of the sun's † rejoicing like a giant to run his race, and of † his

The sun's standing still, in what sense to be understood.

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E e

arising,

* Josh. x. 12. † Patrick's Commentary, in locum. ‡ Josh. xiv. 42. Judg. i. 25. a Gen. i. 16. b Psal. xix. 5. c Eccles. i. 5.

arising, and going down, and hastening to the place where he arose, &c. whereas it is certain, ^d that if the sun were made to revolve about the earth, the universal law of nature would thereby be violated; the harmony and proportion of the heavenly motions destroyed; and no small confusion and disorder brought into the frame of the universe. But, on the contrary, if the earth, turning upon its own axis every day, be made to go round the sun in the space of a year, it will then perform its circulation according to the same law which the other planets observe, and, without the least exception, there will be a most beautiful order and harmony of motions every where preserved through the whole frame of nature. As therefore the scriptures were designed to teach us the art of holy living, and not to instruct us in the rudiments of natural knowledge; it can be deemed no diminution, either to their perfection, or divine authority, that they generally speak ^e according to the common appearance of things, and the vulgar notions and opinions which the world have of them, not according to their reality, or philosophical verity.

Of the
World
259, &c.
Before
Christ,
1414, &c.
Joshua's
final exhortation,
and death.

UNDER this miraculous assistance of divine providence, it was not long before Joshua conquered most of the land of Canaan; and, having divided it among the people, reaped, for some years, the fruits of his victories in a quiet enjoyment of peace; till, at length, finding himself grow old, and his death approaching, he assembled all Israel together, and, having set before them the many great blessings which God had vouchsafed them and their ancestors, he thereupon exhorts them to have no communication with the Canaanites; to have their idolatrous practices in detestation; to ^f serve the Lord in sincerity, and in truth; and to be ^g courageous to keep all that was written in the book of the law of Moses. Upon this condition, he promises them an intire conquest over all their enemies; that, by God's help and assistance, ^h one of them should chase a thousand, and no man

^d Keill's Astronomical Lectures. Besides this general argument of Mr Keill's, Mr Whiston has one, which he accounts no less than a demonstration. "If the earth, says he, have an annual revolution about the sun, it must affect
" the aparent motions of all the other planets and comets, and, notwithstanding the regularity of their several motions in their own orbits, must render
" the regular motions, as to us living upon the moving earth, sometimes direct, and that swiftly or slowly; sometimes stationary, and sometimes retrograde, and that swiftly or slowly also; and all this, at such certain periods, in such certain places, for such certain durations, and according to such certain circumstances, as geometry and arithmetic will certainly determine, and not otherwise. Now that this is the real case in fact and that every one of these particulars are true in the astronomical world, all, that are skilful in that science, do freely confess, even those, who do not think fit to declare openly for this annual revolution of the earth, which yet is the natural and certain consequence of that concession." Whiston's Astronomical Principles of Religion. The reader that is desirous to know more upon this subject, may consult Mr Derham's Preliminary Discourse to his Astro-Theology. ^e Derham's Astro-Theology. ^f Josh. xxiv. 14. ^g Ibid. xxiii. 6. ^h Ibid. ver. 9, 10.

man should be able to stand before them; and, in the conclusion, renews the covenant between God and them: and so having done all that could be required of a wise governor, towards the welfare of a people committed to his charge, he took his final leave of them, and after he had ruled them ⁱ seventeen years (as the best interpreters account) in the hundred and tenth year of his age, died, and was buried in ^k Timnath-herah, which is in mount Ephraim, the city which (upon the division of the land among the tribes) the children of Israel gave to him, in token of gratitude for the many services and benefits which they had received by his administration.

S E C T III.

The Government of the Judges.

AFTER the death of Joshua, we read of none that was appointed to succeed him, and therefore the general opinion is, that every tribe was governed by their respective heads, or ^l elders; but how long this form of government subsisted, has not so well been determined by chronologers, though (according to the best computation) it seems to have been no less than thirty years; for so the word *generation*, in the sacred history, is thought by some to signify: and, accordingly we read, that ^m Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders which out-lived Joshua; ⁿ but, when all that generation were gathered to their fathers, there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. However this be, it is hardly to be imagined, but that, in such a loose kind of government, several corruptions should spring up; and, accordingly, the history takes notice, that, in this period of time, the people did not destroy the inhabitants of the land, as they were commanded, but, contenting themselves with making them tributary, suffered them to live promiscuously among them; that they not only shewed them this indulgence, but entered into close alliances, and made intermarriages with them, which thing God had expressly forbidden; and, in consequence of this familiarity, fell gradually into the same crimes, and the same kind of idolatry with them: for so we find it related, that ^o the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, &c. that they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and that they forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Incensed at these provocations, God left

Of the
World,
2592. &c.
Before
Christ,
1412, &c.
Judges in-
stituted.

ⁱ Patrick's Commentary, Vol. II. ^k This is also called (Judg. ii. 9) Timnath-heres, because of the image of the sun which is engraven on Joshua's sepulchre, in memory of that famous day when the sun stood still till he had completed his victory. ^l Patrick, *ibid.* ^m Joshua, *ibid.* ⁿ Joshua ii. 10. ^o Josh. iii. 5, &c.

left them to themselves, who, without his care and protection, made but a poor defence against their enemies; for, upon the king of Mesopotamia's invading them, they were sorely defeated, and enslaved for eight years; and it was on this unhappy conjuncture that the office of judges was first instituted.

The nature
of their
office.

THE judges were a kind of magistrates, not much unlike the Archontes among the Athenians, and the Dictators among the Romans. Grotius compares them to those rulers that were in Gaul, in Germany, and Britain, before the Romans introduced another form of government. Their honour lasted for life, but their succession was not always continued; for there were frequent interruptions in it, and the people lived often under the dominion of strangers, without any government of their own. According to the common custom, they were generally appointed by God; but, in cases of extreme exigence, the people made sometimes choice of such as they thought best qualified to rescue them out of their oppression, without waiting for any divine designation. Their authority was not inferior to that of kings; they arbitrated in all affairs of war and peace; had an absolute power to determine all causes, but none at all to make any new laws, or to lay any new taxes upon the people. They were, in short, the protectors of the laws, the defenders of religion, and the avengers of crimes, especially of that of idolatry: but then, even during this their power, they lived without any pomp or splendour; had no guards, no attendance, no equipage, no certain revenue, nor any other emolument, wherewith to support their dignity, but what arose from the voluntary contributions of the people.

THIS form of government (if we reckon from the death of Joshua to the beginning of Saul's reign) was about three hundred and thirty-nine years. The first of this order was Othniel. He defeated the king of Mesopotamia, and restored peace to Israel for the space of forty years: but after him, we shall think ourselves concerned to take notice of such only as are the most remarkable in sacred history: and therefore, to say nothing of ^p Ehud, who assassinated Eglon king of the Moabites, an action no ways to be justified, but upon the supposition that he did it by God's express order; nothing of ^q Shamgar, who slew six hundred Philistines with an ox-goad, that no weapon might be thought insufficient in the hand of one excited by the mighty power of God; nothing of ^r Deborah, who, together with Barak, vanquished the mighty army of Jabin king of Canaan, and all his nine hundred chariots of iron; nothing of ^s Jael, the wife of Heber, who, in murdering Sisera, captain of Jabin's army, then in amity with her house, did an act which cannot be warranted ^t upon any other supposition, but her being moved thereunto

^p Judg. iii. 21. ^q Ibid. ver. 31. ^r Ibid. iv. 14, &c. ^s Ibid. ver. 13.

^t Vide Patrick, in Locum; but Mr Saurin, in his Dissertation upon the defeat

thereunto by an immediate impulse from God: to say nothing of these, and several other judges of lesser note, the characters and exploits that seem to deserve our more particular attention, during this period of time, are those of Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, and Samuel; which we shall now consider in their order.

GIDEON'S Exploits.

I. **AFTER** the death of Deborah and Barak, the people fell again into their old apostacy; and by their crying sin of idolatry provoked God to deliver them into the hand of their enemies. The Midianites were a people situate beyond the river Jordan, whom the children of Israel in their passage to the land of Canaan ^u had destroyed; ^x but it is not improbable that some of that nation, saving themselves by flight into other countries, and, after the Israelites were settled in Canaan, returning again, might in the space of two hundred years re-people the land where they dwelt before, and still retain the name of Midianites. These people, together with their neighbours the Amalekites, for seven years kept the Israelites in such subjection, that they were forced to betake themselves to dens in the mountains, and caves in the earth, and to their fortified places, from whence, as the spring came on, they stole out to sow and cultivate their land; but always towards the time of harvest these enemies made inroads into their country, and tarrying there till they had devoured all the provision and forage they could find, they then returned home, and left the poor Israelites nothing to support life. Under this sore calamity, the people began to be sensible of their wickedness, and to humble themselves under the afflicting hand of God; who upon their humiliation provided them an instrument for their deliverance in the person of Gideon, the son of Joash, and, to encourage the under-
taking

Of the
World,
2739, &c.
Before
Christ,
1265, &c.
Gideon's
designation
to be judge.

feat of Jabin and Sisera, has another way of justifying this action, which seems not so very consonant either to the laws of God or nations. For having proposed some suppositions mentioned by Puffendorf and other civilians, which he rejects, his next words are these: "Il me semble, qu'on prout trouver dans le
" Caractere meme de Jabin, & de ses Ministres, l'apologie de Jabel. Jabin
" etoit un Tyran; Sizera etoit le principal Fauteur de ses Tyrannies. Les
" hommes, les plus fourbes, & les plus cruels, ont besoin que leurs Alliez soient
" droits & bienfaisans. Mais devons nous avoir de la bonne foi & de l'humanité
" pour ces personnes execrables, qui n'exigent ces vertus de nous, que lout-
" qu'elles leur fournissent les moyens de les violer eux-mêmes impunement,
" de manquer a leurs promesses, de porter par tout le Sang & le Carnage.
" J'avoue que je ne comprends pas sur quoi cette obligation seroit fondee,
" Il y a certains Monstres dans la Nature, a la perte desquels toute la Societe
" est interessee. Concourir a les conserver, refuser meme de se prevaloir des
" occasions, qui s'offrent pour en purger la Terre, c'est (quelque Liaison qu'en
" ait d'ailleurs avec eux) sous pretexte de fidelite envers un Allie, etre per-
" sive a ce qu'on doit a tous ces hommes, qui tot ou tard deviendroient les
" victimes de ses concussions & de ces Barbaries: C'est manquer a ce qu'on
" se doit a soi-meme, & s'exposer a etre immole a ce monstre, qu'on se fera
" un scrupule d'etoufer, pour arreter le progres de ses Cruautes, &c."

^u Numb. xxxi. 7, &c. ^x Vide Patrick, on Judges vi. 1.

taking, sent an angel to him to Ophrah while he was threshing wheat privately, in order to conceal it from the enemy. Convinced by the discourse, as well as by the actions of the person that conversed with him, that he was in reality an angel sent from God, Gideon began to take courage, and that very night (as the angel very probable had ordered him) demolished the altar of Baal, which in those corrupt times had been erected; cut down the grove thereof, and, building another altar to the Lord his God on the top of the rock, where the angel had appeared to him, he there offered a burnt-sacrifice with the wood of the grove, which he had cut down. But this was not all.

His victory
over the
Midianites.

IT was now about the time when the Midianites, passing over Jordan to ravage and plunder the country, came and encamped in the valley of Jezreel; whereupon Gideon, inspired with more than ordinary courage, summoned all those of his own family to come in to his assistance; and, sending messengers through the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, which lay towards the north of the land of Canaan, he soon collected an army to the number of two and thirty thousand men, though much inferior to what the enemy had brought against him. As soon as all the forces were come together, Gideon (to satisfy them that he did not act this on his own head, but was the person appointed by heaven to be their leader and deliverer) desired of God to give them some token of his commission. The token that he instanced in was—that, upon laying a fleece of wool upon the ground, the dew might be upon the fleece only, and the earth round about it dry, which accordingly happened; and then, inverting the former manner, he desired that the fleece might be dry while the ground about was wet, which accordingly came to pass.

ENCOURAGED by this double token, the Israelites were immediately for attacking the enemy; but God, knowing the folly and ingratitude of the people, and rightly foreseeing that, if with this army they should conquer the Midianites, they would vainly impute it to their own courage and numbers, and not to his assistance, ordered Gideon to make proclamation in the camp, that whoever was diffident of the undertaking should have liberty to return home; whereupon two and twenty thousand quitted the field, and only ten thousand remained with Gideon. This was a very inconsiderable number in comparison of the numerous host of the Midianites; but still, as few as they were, it came within the verge of possibility that their foes might be defeated with such an handful of men; and therefore God, thinking them too many, and resolving that the whole action and victory should appear to be his doing, ordered Gideon to bring his soldiers down to the water, where he would give him a signal what men were fit for his business; and the signal was

was—that they who took up water in their hands and lapped it, should go with him; but they who lay down to drink, should not go; which experiment reduced the men to three hundred only.

INTERPRETERS are at a sad puzzle to conceive for what possible reason God made a distinction between the soldiers that lapped water in their hands, and those that laid themselves down to drink. Some of the ² Jewish doctors are of opinion that all except the three hundred who lapped, had been accustomed to the worship of Baal, which they unwarily discovered by their bowing down their knees to drink; but this is a groundless and far-fetched conceit. The notion of ³ those who impute the three hundred mens lapping, some to their sloth and laziness, and others to their timorousness, and the great fear they were in of being surpris'd by the enemy, is not of more validity: for though God, if he had thought so fit, might have employed the most dastardly among them upon this expedition, that the glory of the victory might intirely redound to himself; yet since (as we are told) all the fearful persons were dismissed before, and since it but badly befits the character of the courageous to be lazy; this action of lapping, as I take it, is rather to be accounted a token of their temperance, and of the nobleness of their spirit, which made them so desirous to engage the enemy, that they would not stay to drink, but (though they were very thirsty) contented themselves to moisten their mouth (as we say) with a little water; whereas the rest indulged themselves so far as to drink their belly-full.

WITH this small number of men however God promised to deliver into Gideon's hand the whole host of the Midianites; but then he directed him to observe this stratagem—that each man should have a trumpet and a pitcher with a burning torch in it, and so march up to the enemy's camp; which when they had done, they were all at once to break their pitchers, found their trumpets, and cry with a terrible shout, the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. The thing was accordingly executed; and ^b the blaze of so many torches, the sound of so many trumpets, the clattering of so many pitchers, all increased by the shouts

² Salom Jarchi, in Judges vii. 5. ^a Josephus & Theodoret. secundum Patrick, in Locum. ^b Plutarch, in his Life of Fabius Maximus, tells us of a stratagem which Hannibal made use of, not altogether unlike this, when his guides, instead of conducting him to Castinum, by mistaking his orders, led him to Cassinum, where Fabius had gained the advance ground, and posted his men so advantageously, as in a manner to hem in Hannibal and all his army. Upon which occasion Hannibal caused 2000 head of oxen which he had in his camp, to have torches and dry bayes fastened to their horns, and lighting them in the beginning of the night, ordered the beasts to be fairly and softly drove on towards the passages that the enemy had seized, and at the same time made his army with great silence march after them. The oxen at first kept a slow and orderly pace; but when the fire began to burn their horns to the quick, they no longer preserved their regular motion, but ran about at a wild rate, tossing their heads and scattering the fire
where-ever

shouts and horrors of the night, put the enemy, just awakened out of sleep, and fancying an infinite number breaking in upon them, into such a fright and consternation, that, mistaking their own party, they fell on each other's swords: so that Gideon and his army obtained an easy victory, and after the Midianites had quitted their camp, had nothing to do, but to call in their friends, to pursue and slay them.

THIS victory raised Gideon's name to such an height that the people came voluntarily, and offered to settle the government upon him and his family; which he modestly and generously rejecting, and desiring only as an acknowledgment of his service, to have the ear-rings taken in the plunder of the Midianites given him; the people readily consented, and over and above the ear-rings, threw in the rich ornaments and robes of the kings, together with the chains of gold which were upon their camels necks, and with these it is said that he made an ephod; but what that ephod was, and for what purpose it was made, has been a matter of much perplexity to commentators.

The ephod which he made, what.

AN ephod we know was a common vestment belonging to priests in general, but that of the high-priest (which we had occasion to describe elsewhere) was of very great value. This vestment however was not so peculiar to the priests, but that sometimes we find the laity (as in the case of David ^a bringing home the ark of God) allowed to wear it; and therefore some have imagined that the ephod which Gideon made was only a rich and costly robe of state, which, on certain occasions, he might wear, to denote the station he held in the Jewish republic. But, if his only intent was to distinguish himself from others by such a particular vestment, how could this give occasion to the people's falling into idolatry, or any way become a snare to Gideon and his house, we cannot perceive. Others therefore suppose that the word ephod, is a short expression, to denote the high-priest's breast-plate, together with the Urim and Thummim; and hence by an easy figure they are led to think, that to make an ephod, is to establish a priesthood, and hereupon conclude ^a that Gideon's crime in making this ephod was, not to give divine honour to any but God, but to institute another kind of priesthood besides that which God had appointed in Aaron and his posterity. And to this purpose they suppose that he erected likewise a private tabernacle with cherubims; that, being now made the supreme governor, he might consult God at his own house in such difficult points as might occur in his administration. But, besides that it is not easy to imagine that

where-ever they went. Alarmed at this spectacle, the Romans, who guarded the passes, and were at some distance from the main body, thinking that the enemy was coming upon them to surround them, quitted their posts, and with great precipitancy, fled to the army. This gave Hannibal an opportunity to secure the passes, by that means to gain the advance-ground, and to extricate himself from the present difficulty. c Vide page 183. d 2 Sam. vi. 14. q Vide Spencer de Leg. & Rit. Hebr. & M. Le Clerc in Judg. viii. 7.

that a man familiar with God, and chosen by him (as Gideon was) should, after so signal a victory, as he had obtained, immediately apostatize, as he must have done, had he set up an oracle in his own house; there seems to have been no manner of necessity for it, because Shiloh, where the tabernacle stood, was in the tribe of Ephraim, which adjoined to that of Manasseh, whereunto Gideon belonged. † And therefore the most probable opinion is, that this ephod was designed for nothing more than to be a simple monument of his victory, in the manner that other conquerors had done before him; only that as the common custom was to erect a pillar, or hang up trophies upon the like occasion, he chose rather to make an ephod, or priest's habit, as a token that he ascribed his victory only to God, and triumphed in nothing so much as in the restoration of the true religion by his means. This was an action of no bad intent in Gideon; though in after times, when the people began to return to idolatry, and had this fancy among others, that God would answer them at Ophrah, where this ephod was, as well as at his tabernacle in Shiloh where he dwelt, it proved a snare (as the scripture expresses it) both to his family, and the whole house of Israel.

JEPHTHAH'S rash Vow.

II. **T**HE children of Israel had not long been delivered from the oppressions and depredations of the Midianites, before they fell into the same apostacy again; whereupon God let loose the Ammonites upon them, until, by their repentance and renunciation of idolatry, they pacified his displeasure; and then he raised up Jephthah, the Gileadite, a man of great courage and conduct, to be their chieftain and deliverer. Jephthah, as the text tells us, was the son of an harlot: but several interpreters are of opinion, that his mother was only a woman of another tribe, or of another nation at the most; and therefore they observe, that he resents the injury which his brethren, by another wife, had done, in expelling him his father's house. Being however thus expelled, he retired into the land of Tob (very likely the same country where his mother was born) which was not far from Gilead, upon the borders of the Ammonites, in the entrance of Arabia Deserta; and here, getting together a band of young fellows like himself, he lived by the plunder he got in making incursions upon the public enemy. Renowned for his valour, and perhaps respected for the service, which, by this means, he did his country, he was at length invited to take upon him the command of the army, which was intended to be raised against the Ammonites, and,

Of the World, 2834, &c. Before Christ, 1170, &c. Jephthah's condition, and vow.

VOL. II.

F f

upon

† Patrick's Commentary on Judg. viii. s Judg. xi. 1. † Josephus himself seems to think so; for he calls him, *Xenos peri tou metero*, a stranger, as to his mother's side. u Judg. xi. 7.

upon the condition of his being made governor, in case he succeeded in the war, he accepted it. He is represented in scripture as a man of some fire and passion, and such was his zeal to avenge his country's wrongs at this time, that, when he went out to war, * he vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt, without fail, deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house, to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering. He went; he fought; he conquered the children of Ammon: but, when he returned to his house, behold his daughter came out to meet him, with timbrels and with dances, and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his cloaths, and said, alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, my father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth, forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon; only let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. And he said, go: and he sent her away for two months, and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass, at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow, which he had vowed, and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah, the Gileadite, four days in the year.

I HAVE set the whole passage before the reader, that he may the better judge of the depending controversy; for a great controversy there is among commentators, whether this daughter of Jephthah was really sacrificed, or no. * The plain narration, as it stands in our version, without consulting any comment upon it, would really induce one to think that this virgin was certainly sacrificed, and the concurrent testimony of y Jews, as well as antient fathers of the christian church, do contribute not a little to the confirmation of this opinion. But then, on the other hand, z to find a man, and that not a wild barbarian, but an Israelite, offering for a burnt-sacrifice a young, innocent, and, no doubt, beautiful and virtuous maid: to find an indulgent fond father burning the fruit of his own body, his own child, nay, and his dutiful and obedient child too, the object of his hopes, and present comforts: to find him, whom the apostle

The arguments of those who maintain the negative of it.

* Judg. xi. 30, &c. x Smalridge's Sermons. y Josephus and Philo are both of this opinion. z Howell's History of the Bible.

lists in the catalogue of the most pious and faithful worthies of the Old Testament, vowing to offer an human sacrifice to God, at the very time, in which the scripture says, ^a the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; and putting his vow afterwards in execution, though human sacrifices were hateful to the Lord, provoked him utterly to destroy the Canaanites, and kindled his indignation against Israel, when they brought the king of Moab to the sad necessity ^b of offering up his eldest son for a burnt-offering upon the wall of his city: I say, to find all this is very puzzling and unaccountable; and therefore, the interpreters that take the negative side of the question, have devised a more harmless and less offensive way of expounding the words. They tell us, 1. That the word which we render *door* [Judg. xi. 31.] signifies likewise a *gate*; and that the house is not to be strictly taken, but in a sense that comprizes the precincts, and places adjoining, even as the temple, and the courts belonging to it, are frequently included in the denomination of the house of God. So that, by whatever cometh forth out of the doors of my house, to meet me, we are to understand, whatsoever, coming out of Jephthah's gate, or any place adjoining to his house, should happen to meet him in his return, that he would sacrifice; but then it was upon the supposition that the beast (if it happened to be one) was a clean one, because an unclean beast he was not permitted to offer. 2. They observe, that the word [*vab*] in the same verse, which our translation makes *and*, in a great many places of scripture signifies *or*; and that it should rather be taken in this sense *here* they imagine, because the preceding words, it shall be the Lord's, *i. e.* dedicated, and set apart for God's special service, or I will offer it up for a burnt-offering; and in this they are the rather confirmed, because, where Jephthah is said to have ^c done with her according to his vow, it is immediately subjoined, that she knew no man, which would have been superfluous, had not celibacy been the thing to which she was devoted. 3. They observe, that the word which we render *lament* [ver. 40.] signifies every whit as properly (and as the marginal note indeed has it) to *talk* or *converse* with. ^d In some places it imports to *speake* or *rehearse*; and from hence an ^e interpreter of no mean note makes it in this place signify, to *praise* or *celebrate*; and thereupon it is inferred, that this daughter of Jephthah's was not slain, but only devoted to a state of perpetual virginity, in some solitary and retired place; whither the daughters of Israel went up four days in the year, *i. e.* one day every quarter, either to converse with her, and comfort her, or to celebrate her fame, with verses composed in her praise. According to these explanations, the full purport of Jephthah's vow will be this,—“ That if God
“ would

^a Judg. xi. 29. ^b 2 Kings iii. 27. ^c Judg. xi. 39. ^d Especially in Judg. xi. 37. ^e Lud de Dieu

“ would bless him with the victory over his enemies, the Ammonites, the first thing that should meet him upon his return home, if it belonged to him, and was fit to be sacrificed (were it never so precious) he would offer it to the Lord immediately; but that, if it happened to be such, as was not proper to be sacrificed, he would nevertheless devote it to his service for ever, in commemoration of his great mercy towards him.” So that, according to this sense of the words, there was no necessity for him to sacrifice his daughter, when resigning her up, as a perpetual virgin, to the service of God, answered the whole purpose and obligation of his vow.

An objection.

“ **BUT**, if consecrating his daughter to a state of perpetual virginity was all that Jephthah intended by making so solemn a vow, what cause was there for his renting his cloaths, and bemoaning himself, as we find he does? Is the being shut up as a recluse, and entered into the list of perpetual virgins, a matter of such bitter complaint and lamentation? Was this so fore an evil, an affliction so extraordinary, that, not only before she underwent it, she and her companions should for two months together be allowed to bewail it, but that (after she had undergone it) the daughters of Israel should be required to lament it four times a year? If she was actually put to death, in execution of her father's vow, it is easy then to understand, why the particular circumstance of her dying without issue, when she was the only daughter of her father, and he had no other prospect of posterity to keep up his family, should be represented, as a fore aggravation of her violent and untimely death; but it seems very difficult to account for that bitter lamentation made by her father, by herself, by her companions, and by all the daughters of Israel, in succeeding times, if she suffered no other, no severer punishment, than that of being devoted to a single life †.”

THIS

f Smalridge's Sermons. † A very learned prelate of our own, who has examined this vow of Jephthah to the full, and seems plainly to be of the affirmative side, sums up his arguments against the contrary opinion in these words: “ Since therefore this explication is novel, and therefore, not to be over hastily embraced by those, who have a reverence for antiquity; since it is chiefly advanced by popish writers, in favour of the doctrine of perpetual celibacy, and for that reason justly to be suspected by us protestants; since moreover it renders the relation of this matter confused, unintelligible, and unaccountable, and for that cause deserves to be rejected by all who profess an esteem and veneration for holy writ; I think we have sufficient grounds to conclude, that when it is said in the text, that Jephthah did with his daughter according to the vow, which he had vowed, we can understand no less, than that he did actually put her to death.” This is the unanimous opinion of the antients, and with these agree the compilers of the homilies of our church, as to the substance of the fact, where we read, that Jephthah, when God had given him victory over the children of Ammon, promised, of a foolish devotion unto God, to offer for a sacrifice unto him that person, which of his own house should first meet him after his return home; by force of which fond and unadvised oath, he did slay his own and only daughter, which came out of his house, with mirth and joy, to welcome him home, Smalridge's 22d Sermon.

THIS is the great argument against such as suppose that this virgin was really sacrificed : but to this it is replied, ^e that, from several places of the Old Testament, it appears, that, the being without children, and consequently, in perpetual virginity, was looked upon as a curse and reproach ; so that it is no way strange to find Jephthah troubled, and renting his cloaths, when his only child was to live and die under this reproach ; when he saw his family extinct (for in her celibacy he had the same prospect as in her death) and himself excluded from all hopes of posterity, and particularly from the hopes of having the Messiah to come of his seed, which was the general hope and desire of all the Israelitish women. It may be alledged, perhaps, that Jephthah had no right to oblige his daughter to perpetual virginity ; but then it will follow, that, if the want of right to do a thing be an argument that the thing is not done, the more degrees of injustice and unlawfulness there is in any thing, the more boldly we may conclude, that it has not been done. If therefore it follows, that Jephthah did not oblige his daughter to perpetual virginity, because he had no right to do so, then much more will it be evident, that he did not sacrifice his daughter, because such an action was impious, and barbarous, contrary to the laws of God, of nature, and humanity. Her embracing perpetual virginity however was an act of her free choice, not inflicted on her against her will, but done with her consent, and at her own entreaty : in which (says ^h the annotator above-cited) she deserved greater commendation than her father. For he, as soon as he saw her come to meet him, repented of the vow, he had rashly made, and tore his cloaths, lamenting the miserable condition into which he had brought himself, and her : but she most courageously comforted her father, and, congratulating his victory, desired him not to be troubled about her ; for she was ready to submit to what he had vowed.

BUT whether it was death, or perpetual virginity, to which Jephthah had devoted his daughter, since it is agreed on all sides, that his vow in itself was unlawful ; that his child was intirely innocent, and had done nothing deserving such hard treatment ; that her running out to meet him, with joy and congratulation, was an act of piety, that properly entitled her to his love ; and that his giving her up either to the altar, or a cloister, either to be sacrificed, or abdicated from his presence and society for ever, was cruel usage to a loving child, and a thing abhorrent to the natural affections of a tender parent. The lesson we are to learn from the great imprudence of his example is this, —that, though * when we vow a vow unto God, we should not defer to pay it, yet, in cases of this nature,

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we should not be rash with our mouths, nor let our hearts be hasty to utter any thing before God.

SAMSON'S Exploits.

Of the
World,
2864. &c.
Before
Christ,
1140. &c.

III. WHETHER Samson was really the judge and supreme magistrate of Israel, or only a man of great might, born of an eminent family in the tribe of Dan, as the Jewish writers tell us, and raised up by God, when Eli the high-priest had the civil administration, to be a scourge to the Philistines, who at that time sadly oppressed his countrymen, is a matter wherein commentators are not so well agreed. It is certain, that he was a very extraordinary person; for ^k his birth, we find, was predicted by an angel, and himself ordained from the womb to be a Nazarite unto God.

His Naza-
ritism, of
what kind.

^l A NAZARITE was one, who, under the Levitical law, either to attain the favour, or avert the judgments, or acknowledge the mercies of Almighty God, vowed a vow of particular purity, and separated himself (for so the word signifies) in an extraordinary manner to the service of God. The time of this vow lasted usually for eight days; sometimes for a month; and, in some cases, for the person's whole life. During this time, the persons (for women, as well as men, might enter into this engagement) bound themselves to abstain from wine, and all strong liquors; not to cut the hair of their heads; not to come near a dead corpse, nor assist at any funeral; nay, the matter was carried so high, that if any happened to die suddenly in their presence, the whole ceremony of this their separation was to begin a-new. After the time of their separation was expired, they were to offer such sacrifices as the law appointed, and then, being absolved from their vow by the priest, they might drink wine, and use the same freedom that other people did.

SAMSON'S Nazaritism was to last the whole term of his life: ⁿ but his frequent intercourse with the Philistines, and the great havock and slaughter that he so often made among them, may induce us to think that he had a particular dispensation, exempting him from a rigorous observation of the law: in this one circumstance however he was very punctual, that till he was infatuated by Delilah, ⁿ he suffered not a razor to come upon his head. What the adventures and exploits of his life were: how, when he grew up, he killed a lion; slew thirty Philistines at one time; at another, no less than a thousand with the jaw-bone of an ass; burned their standing corn with foxes and fire-brands; carried away the gates of Gaza; and did many strange and prodigious things, till, at length, discovering to De-
lilah

^l Josephus and Philo. ^k Vid. Judg. xiii. ^l Vid. Numb. vi. and Calmet's Dictionary. ^m Saurin's Dissertations, Vol. II. ⁿ Numb. vi. 5. and Judg. xiii. 5.

lilah where his great strength lay, by her he was betrayed, and delivered into the hands of his enemies; who, putting out his eyes, loaded him with irons, and shut him up in prison, till, in time (his strength returning with his hair) he was sufficiently avenged, by pulling the house of their god Dagon upon them, though he himself perished in the ruins: these things are so fully recorded in the book of Judges ^o, that there is no occasion to relate them here: only we may take notice, that (what has been so common a subject of ridicule) the three hundred foxes ^{His foxes,} which Samson is said to have caught, is not so incredible a thing as some may imagine. For we are to consider (as the learned Bochart ^p evinces) that the whole country, especially that part of it, which belonged to the tribe of Dan, abounded so with foxes, ^q that from them several places took their names: that, under the name of foxes, may not improperly be comprehended a creature, very much like them, called Thoos, which go in such herds, that two hundred of them have been seen together at once; that the manner of catching them, was not (as we imagine) by hunting only, but by snares and nets, as our author plainly demonstrates; and that Samson did not this alone by himself in a day and a night's time; but that, being assisted by his servants and neighbours (as he was a man of considerable eminence in his country) he might possibly be some weeks in accomplishing a design, whereby he both injured his enemy, and benefited his own country, by freeing it of so many noxious animals; for that possibly might be a secondary reason for his getting together such a multitude of foxes. "How impious then, as well as incongruous is it, says our author, for men, who profess to believe the divine authority of the scriptures, to make a jest of this transaction; when, at the same time, they both believe and read with admiration, what Pliny tells us of Lucius Sylla, that when he was prætor, he ordered to be shewn on the amphitheatre a thousand lions at once; and Julius Cæsar, when he was dictator, four times as many; when they believe what Vopiscus testifies, that the emperor Probus exhibited, at one spectacle, a thousand stags, three hundred bears, an hundred Libyan, an hundred Syrian leopards, and an infinite number of other strange creatures, and yet are staggered at the account of Samson's taking three hundred foxes?"

THE like is to be said of his killing a thousand men with the jaw-bone of an ass, that whatever the instrument be in the man's hand, when God inspires him with courage against those whom he intimidates, it is the same thing: but in this case it is presumeable enough ^r that the Philistines, seeing Samson first break the cords wherewith he was bound so easily and suddenly, and

killing so many with the jaw-bone of an ass.

^o From Chap. xiii. to Chap. xvii. ^p Hieroz. lib. iii. c. 13. ^q Judg. i. 36. and Josh. xix. 42. ^r Patrick's Commentary on Judg. xv. ^s Vid. Judg. xv. 14, &c.

and then coming upon them with so much fury, might be put into no small confusion, and, straggling about in their flight, give him the advantage of slaying them one by one as he came up to them, till they amounted to the number of a thousand. This indeed is the highest instance of personal prowess that we read of, and yet profane historians inform us of other men, who by their mere natural courage, unassisted by any divine power (as the scripture informs us Samson was) have made great havock among their enemies. For the above-cited author reports, that in the Sarmatic war, Aurelian slew forty-eight men in one day, and in several days a nine hundred and fifty; which diminishes the wonder not a little, that a man assisted by God, who could raise his powers to what degree he pleased, and equally enfeeble the spirits of those that were his adversaries, should be able to destroy so many.

And his strength in his hair accounted for.

* WHETHER Samson's hair was the physical or only the moral cause of his strength, needs not, I think, be made any question. For, though plenty of hair may be a natural indication of bodily strength; yet since he that is naturally strong becomes not less so by having his hair cut off (though this was certainly the case of Samson) it must follow that his hair was no natural cause of his strength, which was a supernatural and miraculous gift, * not perhaps always inherent in him, but only dispensed at certain times, when the Spirit of God came upon him. † It depended indeed on the covenant made between God and him, the sign of which covenant was his hair; and therefore when, in compliance to his harlot, he suffered his hair to be cut off, he broke the covenant with God, and forfeiting the spirit of strength and courage, was left to his own natural weakness, and so became an easy prey to his enemies.

Samson and Hercules compared.

WHAT resemblance soever there may be imagined between the perfidy of Delilah, and that † which is fabled of the daughter of Nisus king of Megara, the fate of whose empire depended upon one particular hair of his head, which she, enamoured with his enemy Minos, then besieging him in his capital, impiously cut off, and sent for a present to engage his affections to her: whatever there is in this, I say, there is certainly so near a similitude between the heathen Hercules and the Jewish Samson, that in all probability they were one and the same person. And to this purpose some critics have observed, that not only † their names, † their epithets, and the time of their appearance

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 † Vopiscus. † Upon this occasion the boys made a song (not much unlike what Samson made of himself, Judg. xv. 16.) which, after a military manner, they shouted in their dances, mille, mille, mille, mille, mille, mille decollavimus unus homo; mille, mille, mille, mille decollavimus. Mille, mille, mille, vivat, qui mille, mille occidit. Tantum vini habet nemo, quantum effudit sanguinis. * Calmet's Dict. † Vide Patrick's Commentary. † Collier's Introduction. † Vide Ovid's Metam Lib. VIII. † a The word Samson means the sun, and Hercules is derived from the two words *Our* and *Coll*, which signify all light. † b The Persians call Hercules, Sandes, which signifies terrible, which exactly agrees with Samson. Saurin's Dissertations, Vol. II.

in the world were much the same, but that Samson's killing a lion, slaying the Philistines, carrying away the gates of Gaza, &c. were exemplified in other instances by Hercules; and, above all, that the predominant passion of their complexions, an immoderate love for women, was in both the same, attended with the same effects, and the same sad catastrophe in both; that which tarnished the glory of both their great exploits, and brought them both at last to an untimely end. And therefore, to conclude these reflections in the words of the wise man, *Hearken unto me, says he, O ye children, and attend unto the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart lead thee to the ways of a strange woman, even of a stranger who flattereth with her mouth, which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God; for her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. With fair words she will cause thee to yield; with the flattery of her lips she will force thee; thou shalt go after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks; but none that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life; for she hath cast down many wounded, and many strong men have been slain by her.*

Of SAMUEL and the Prophets.

DURING the administration of Eli, the affairs of Israel ran into great disorders. His two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, led very loose and irregular lives: himself, by reason of his age, had lost all power and authority over them; the Philistines had vanquished their armies in the field, and, when the ark of the covenant was brought into the camp, in hopes ^a that it should save them from the hand of their enemies, their enemies still prevailed against them; slew thirty thousand of them in a pitched battle, and took the ark of the covenant at the same time. How the ark of the covenant was removed from Ebenezer to Ashdod, from Ashdod to Gath, from Gath to Ekron, and all along carried heavy judgments and destruction to the places where it came, till at length the Philistines were glad to get rid of it, and sent it back honourably to the children of Israel; all these particulars are so fully recorded in ^e the first book of Samuel, that it were in vain to pretend to enlarge upon them: only we may observe, ^f that it was a custom among the ^g antient heathens to consecrate unto their gods such monuments of their deliverances as represented the evils from which

Of the
World,
2974, &c.
Before
Christ,
1100, &c.



VOL. II.

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they

^c Prov. ii. 16. and vii. 21. &c. ^d 1 Sam. iv. 3. ^e Ch. vi. and vii. ^f Patrick's Commentary on 1-Sam. vi. 4. ^g That this is still a practice among the modern Indians, we may observe from what Tavernier relates in his Travels to their country, viz. That, when any pilgrim goes to a Pagod for the cure of any disease, he brings the figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality; which he offers to his god, and then falls a singing, as the custom is.

they were freed: so the Philistines, hoping shortly to be delivered from the emroids and mice, wherewith they were sorely afflicted during the stay of the ark among them, sent the images of these things to the God of Israel. ^h If peradventure (as their priests advised them) he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your lands.

The schools
of the pro-
phets in-
stituted by
Samuel.

AFTER the death of Eli, the government came into the hands of Samuel, who judged the people for twenty years: but, as he was a prophet as well as a governor, it is in this light that at present we consider him; and shall hence take occasion to add something to what we have said ⁱ in the beginning of this work concerning those schools or colleges of the prophets, which in all probability were of his institution. ^k Some of the modern Jews indeed carry the account of these schools much higher than they have any authority for, pretending to trace them to Abraham, to Noah, to Seth, nay even to Adam himself: but though it be granted that the spirit of prophecy did more or less reside among the patriarchs and others from the earliest ages; yet we meet with no instance in scripture of any society formed, or method of education instituted, in order to attain it, but what was of much later date. The first mention indeed that we have of this is, when Saul is said to meet and join himself to ^l a company of prophets at the hill of God, as they came down from the high-place with music before them. ^m What the text expresses by a company of prophets, most commentators, both Jewish and christian, agree to interpret of a society of students devoting themselves to the attainment of prophecy. Where and what the Hill of God was is disputed by interpreters; but the most probable conjecture is, that it was in Gibeah of Benjamin, the place where Saul's father dwelt, and that it was called the Hill of God, both because it was an high place whereon the people were used to offer sacrifice, as also because here dwelt a company of prophets who had addicted themselves to the service of God. After this we read of a like ⁿ company of prophets at Naioth in Ramah, prophesying with Samuel, who stood as appointed over them; of the sons of the prophets who were ^o at Bethel; of others ^p at Jericho; of others ^q at Gilgal; and of others ^r at Jerusalem: so that it seems as if they were dispersed about all the cities of the Israelites, that they might be every where at hand to instruct and admonish them. Nay, so very numerous were they in the days of Ahab, that ^s one good man (Obediah by name) is said to have hid an hundred of them by fifty in a cave, to preserve them from Jezebel's persecution, even after she had taken off their main body.

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^h 1 Sam. vi. 5. ⁱ Vide p. 48. Vol. I. ^k Vide Jacob. Alting. de Republica Hebræorum, and Abenda, of the Ecclesiastical and Civil Polity of the Jews. ^l 1 Sam. x. 5. 10. ^m Wheatley on the Schools of the Prophets. ⁿ 1 Sam. xix. 20. ^o 2 Kings ii. 3. ^p Ibid. ii. 5. ^q Ibid. iv. 38. ^r Ibid. xxii. 14. ^s 1 Kings xviii.

IN these several places the prophets had convenient colleges built for their abode; and, living in communities, had some one of distinguished note, very probably by divine election, set over them to be their head and president. Here it was that they studied the law, and learned to expound the several precepts of it: here it was that by previous exercise they qualified themselves for the reception of the spirit of prophecy, whenever it should please God to send it upon them: but (what is the most remarkable part of their employment) here it was that they were instructed in the sacred art of psalmody, or (as the scripture calls it) in prophesying with harps, with psalteries, and cymbals; and the end of their using so much music was to keep themselves continually in such a due temper of mind, as might the better dispose them for the divine breathings of the prophetic spirit, which being of a mild, and free, and gentle nature, would not consort with sadness or melancholy, or turbulent passions, but always chose an easy, calm, and chearful disposition.

Their manner of life and education.

FROM these schools of the prophets, when any blessings were to be promised, any judgments to be denounced, or some extraordinary event to be predicted, the messengers were generally chosen, as being by their preparatory exercise and discipline more susceptible of the divine impulse: and though Amos declares of himself, that he ^a was neither a prophet, nor a prophet's son, but an herdman and gatherer of sycamore fruit, when the Lord appointed him to that office; yet this seems to be a particular case, because, generally speaking, the prophets of whom we have any remains in sacred record, have discovered themselves to be men of a good education. The elegance of Isaiah, the rhetoric of Jeremiah, and the skill of Ezekiel in architecture and geography are very remarkable; nor is there any ground to imagine that these endowments were inspired, or that they received them together with the extraordinary influence or operations of the spirit, since ^{*} it appears by the practice of Daniel in particular, that even those who were actually endued with the Holy Ghost, still used the same diligence, or rather more than before, to gain what knowledge and assistance they could by the use and help of ordinary means: and this seems to point out the reason why St Paul advises Timothy, a man extraordinarily endowed with the gift of the spirit, and marked out by prophecy as one that would prove eminent in the work of the ministry, ^{*} to give attendance to reading, to exhortation and to doctrine; and why St Paul himself, who could boast of visions and revelations, and of spiritual gifts, beyond all the apostles, writes to Timothy to bring him his ^z book-case (for ^z so the word

t 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 7. u Amos vii. 14. * Vide Dan. ix. 21, 22, 23. and chap. x. 11, 21. x 1 Tim. iv. 13. y 2 Tim. iv. 13. z I am very sensible that in our English translation it is called a Cloak; but it may as well be interpreted a book-case or scripture. Phavorinus is of opinion that it signifies

word *phailones* should be rendered) his books and his parchments, or common-place-book; because he wanted to make use of them, as never thinking that his abundance of spiritual gifts superseded all necessity to study.

S E C T. IV.

SAUL and his Actions.

Of the
World,
2944, &c.
Before
Christ,
1060, &c.

THE misconduct of Samuel's sons, whom he had appointed to be judges of Israel, gave the people a fair pretence to demand a king to be set over them, as other neighbouring nations had; and God so far complied with their request (though with some signification of his displeasure) as to order Samuel to anoint Saul the son of Kish, ^b a man of a tall and majestic stature and appearance, but not so well qualified in his mind to sustain that important office. For, though in the beginning of his reign, in two or three actions, he behaved himself very well; yet he soon forgot his duty to the God who had raised him to that high honour, and in the matter of his sparing Agag and the best of the spoil, contrary to his express command, provoked him to that degree that his prophet is commissioned to tell him, that because he had rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord had rejected him from being king over Israel; and had given his kingdom to a neighbour of his, that was better than he.

THIS ill news made such an impression upon Saul, that it was not long before he fell into a deep melancholy. The scripture expresses it by an evil spirit's being sent by the Lord to trouble him; but this spirit (according to Josephus and others) was no more than a mind sadly distracted with the several passions of jealousy, envy, grief, despair, anger, and other anxieties, which, ^c in the opinion of many learned writers upon the sub-

ject, folded vellum or parchment; and therefore Dr Hammond thinks it all one with the *membrana* mentioned afterwards, because the *malista de*, but more especially, seems to denote something mentioned before. Hammond, in locum. a 1 Sam. viii. 7. ^b This was reckoned so necessary a qualification in a king, that the Lacedæmonians (as Plutarch tells us in the beginning of his book *Peri Paidon agogēs*) set a fine upon their king Archidamus for marrying a wife of a low stature, who was likely to bring them *ou basileas alla basilikous*, not kings, but kinglings to reign over them. And therefore remarkable are the words in Pliny's panegyric to Trojan, "that the strength and tallness of his body, the nobleness of his aspect, the dignity of his countenance, the gracefulness of his speech, &c. longe lateque, principem ostentant, do every where proclaim a prince." ^c All authors are full of the praise of the power of music, both to stir up passions and to allay them, according to the several kinds of it. Athenæus [Lib. XIV.] praises it for the virtue that is in it, to regulate mens manners, and to calm and soften the furious, and those that are disturbed in mind. Gerh. Vossius [in his book de Artibus Popularibus, c. 3.] shews how diseases of the body have been cured by music, as well as those of the mind. Bochart reckons up many famous artists among the antients, besides Orpheus and Amphion, that are celebrated not only by poets, but by very good historians, for their wonderful skill in moving mens passions by music: and (to name no more) the great Erasmus hath observed the force of music in curing diseases,

ject, are often known to be dissipated and appeased by music; and accordingly, the text tells us, that when the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, David, who was an excellent musician, took an harp and played with his hand; and Saul was refreshed and was well.

How ungratefully Saul requited David for all his good offices, especially for his defending, in several engagements, his throne with the manifest hazard of his life, is so particularly related in ^d the first book of Samuel, that thither we may refer our reader, who, as he cannot but suppose that such wicked proceedings could never be attended with the blessing of God; so will he soon find this malicious and bloody-minded king, reduced to the last extremity, forsaken by God, and betaking himself to the powers of darkness for counsel and relief. For this is what the text informs us, that ^e when Saul inquired of the Lord, and the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets, then said he unto his servants, Seek me out a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. His servants accordingly inform him where there was one; and he, putting on a proper disguise, went to her, and requested of her to bring up Samuel, who had been dead for some time: but whether it was really Samuel, or only a cheat and deception of the woman; or, if it was Samuel, whether he was made to appear by her incantations and the power of the devil, or by the interposition of divine providence only, are questions that have long exercised the pens of the learned.

SAUL and the Witch of ENDOR.

THOSE who imagine that the whole was a cheat and a juggle of the woman, take notice ^f that the sacred story never once makes mention of Saul's seeing Samuel with his own eyes. It tells us indeed that he knew him by the description which the woman gave, and that he held some considerable discourse with him; but, since it is no where said that he really saw him, "Why might not the woman counterfeit a voice, and pretend it was Samuel's? When he told her he would have Samuel brought up to him, she might withdraw from his presence into her closet or cell, and there having her familiar, *i. e.* some crafty confederate knave, to assist her in making proper responses, might easily impose upon one who was distracted with uneasy thoughts, and had already shewn sufficient credulity, in thinking there was any efficacy in magical operations to evocate the dead."

BUT

diseases, and quite altering the passions of mens minds, in his preface to Arnobius upon the Psalms. Patrick's Commentary on 1 Sam. xvi. 23. ^d From ch. xviii. to ch. xxvii. ^e 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 7. ^f Scot and Webster upon witchcraft.

Of the
World,
2959. &
Before
Christ,
1051. cc. 1



That Samuel's appearance was real.

BUT, ^g besides that we find no mention of a closet, or any other place, whereinto the forcerests might retire, in order to impose upon Saul, it is very plain, from the whole narration, that he actually did see Samuel; not so soon as the woman did, we own, because probably the woman's body, or some other object might interpose between him and the first appearance; but that he did see him is manifest, because, when he, perceiving (which word in the original signifies *seeing so*, as to be assured of our object) that it was Samuel himself, he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself, which a man is not apt to do to bare ideas, or imaginations, and much less a person of Saul's undaunted courage, to a creature of a silly woman's contrivance. For whatever uneasy thoughts the king might be under, as to the event of the ensuing battle, it is plain, that, upon this occasion, he had not lost his presence of mind. His words to the Pythonefs, Bring up Samuel to me, manifestly shew, that he had no apprehension of fear from the thought of seeing him; and, when the woman was frightened, and shrieked at the sight of the apparition, it is evident, that Saul was not; for he bids her not be afraid, and desires to know what it was that occasioned her consternation. The whole tenor of his discourse with Samuel indeed, is a sufficient indication, that he was under no deliquium, or disturbance of mind at this interview; but that the woman should be surpris'd, and cry out, with a loud voice, when she saw Samuel appear, or that the sight of him should convince her that the person, who was come to consult her, was the king, is no wonder at all. For though, at first, she might not suspect it, from his requiring her to raise up Samuel; yet when, without the aid of incantations Samuel appeared, she might well be amazed and affrightened. ^h She saw an apparition she did not expect; she knew the prophet; she knew the veneration Saul had for him; she knew that prophets were only sent to kings; she knew, the poor deluded mortals she had to do with, had no notion of having any commerce with persons of sacred character; and she knew her art (whatever that was) had never exhibited a person of that figure to her; so that, as soon as she saw him, the importance of his appearance, and the relation he had to Saul, brought the king presently to her mind, and with him, her fears; and, that this was the true cause of her crying out, is plainly intimated by what she says, Why hast thou deceived me? Thou art Saul.

ⁱ HERE was undoubtedly then, something more in this transaction, than a bare contrivance of the woman to impose upon Saul; ⁱ since, be the apparition what it will, it certainly foretold him more than any human penetration could find out.

^k Because

^g Glanvil's Sadducismus Triumphatus. ^h Historical Account of the Life of King David, Vol. I. ⁱ Saurin's Dissertations, Vol. II.

* Because thou obeyest not the voice of the Lord, nor executeft his fierce wrath upon Amalek ; therefore the Lord will deliver Israel, and thee, into the hand of the Philiftines, and to-morrow shalt thou, and thy fons be with me. The Lord alfo fhall deliver the hoft of Israel into the hand of the Philiftines : in which words, there are three feveral predictions ; the firft, concerning the victory of the Philiftines over the Israelites : the Lord fhall deliver Israel and thee into the hand of the Philiftines ; the fecond, concerning the death of Saul and his two fons ; to-morrow thou and thy fons fhall be with me ; and the third, concerning the plunder, and advantage, which the enemy fhould make of their victory ; the Lord fhall deliver the hoft of Israel into the hand of the Philiftines : and, accordingly, if we attend to the fequel of the hiftory, we fhall find, that exactly thus it came to pafs. For ^l when the Philiftines fought againft Israel, fays the text, the men of Israel fled before them ; this is the accomplifhment of the firft prediction : ^m the Philiftines followed hard upon Saul, and upon his fons, and they flew Jonathan, and Amnadbab, and Malchiffhua, his fons, whilst himfelf fell upon his own fword ; this is the accomplifhment of the fecond : ⁿ and when the men of Israel that were on the other fide of the valley, and they that were on the other fide Jordan faw, that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his fons were dead, they forfook the cities, and fled, and the Philiftines came and dwelt in them ; this is the accomplifhment of the third : nor were ever predictions more clearly expreffed, or more exactly fulfilled ; which is enough to convince us that there was fomething more than human forefight concerned in them both ways. The truth is, had there been only the witch and her accomplice concerned in this affair, it is certain, that they, knowing nothing of futurity, can only be fuppofed to have ventured at a bold conjecture ; and, if they ventured to guefs only, it feems more confiftent to reafon, that they fhould have prophesied grateful and pleafant things to the afflicted king. ^o The woman, by her courteous entertainment of the king, and according to the character which Jofephus gives of her, feems to be a perfon of no bad nature ; and therefore it is improbable, that either fhe, or her confederate fhould agree to lay an additional load of trouble and defperation upon him, when he was in fuch diftrefs before. It is improbable, ^p that a little contemptible juggler, or a poor dafardly woman, fhould ever dare to treat the king of Israel with that air of fuperiority and contumely, wherewith Samuel treats Saul upon this occafion. It is improbable, that any fuch impoftor fhould be fo zealous (as we find Samuel here was) for a ftrict obfervance of the commands of God, and fo

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k 1 Sam. xxviii. 18, 19. l Ibid. xxxi. 1. m Ibid. ver. 2. n Ibid. ver. 7.
 o Glanvil's Sadducifinus Triumphatus. * Historical Account of the Life of King David, Vol. I.

rigid in pronouncing divine vengeance upon the violation of them.

† EVERY one knows, that the business of impostors is to flatter, to delude, to deceive, to answer doubtfully, to promise good, and put off the evil: and therefore it was the woman's province, in a particular manner, to act her part in this manner. Had she promised Saul victory, and the success had answered, she was then sure of considerable advantage: had the fate of the day turned against him, and he himself been slain in battle, all then was safe: as no one was privy to the affair, the falsehood of the prediction, upon his death and defeat, must of course have been buried with him: nay, had he escaped, and yet been worried, her foretelling success would have passed for an indication of her good will, and good wishes to the king, and his people, and so have been overlooked; whereas by prognosticating evil to the royal family, if the event did not justify and save her, she ran a manifest hazard of being undone for ever.

And occasioned not by the power of the devil, but by the appointment of God.

FOR these, and several other reasons that might be produced, we think it evident, that there was no cheat and imposture in this appearance of Samuel, as it is recorded in scripture; but then, whether it was effected by a diabolical power, or by the sole appointment of divine providence, is a farther question that deserves to be considered. Some of the fathers of the christian church were of opinion, that the devil had a certain limited power over the souls of the saints, before Jesus Christ descended into hell, and rescued them from the hands of that prince of darkness. † St Austin, in particular, thinks there is no more absurdity in saying, that the devil was as able to call up Samuel's soul, as he was to present himself among the sons of God, or to set our Saviour on one of the pinacles of the temple.

‡ A LEARNED doctor of the Jewish church seems to be persuaded, that devils have such power over human souls, for the space of a year after their departure, that they can make them assume what bodies they please; whereupon he supposes, that it was not a year from the time of Samuel's death to his appearance. But these are wild and extravagant fancies, not deserving a serious confutation. † It is absurd to say, that the souls of saints (such as we are now speaking of) were ever in hell; and more absurd to say, that if they are in heaven, it is in the power of any magical incantations to call them down from thence. Great, without all doubt, is the power of apostate angels; but miserable, we may say, would the state of the blessed be, if they had any licence to disturb the other's happiness, when, and as long as they pleased: God forbid then, says † Tertullian, that we should

† Historical Account of the Life of King David, Vol. I. p Calmet's Dictionary on the word Samuel. q Justin Mart. in Dial. cum Tryph. and Origen in 1 Reg. Cap. xxviii. r De Diver. Quæst. Lib II. Q. 4. s R. Manaf. Ben-Israel, de Resurrectione Mortuorum, L. III. c. 6. t Saurin's Dissertations, Vol. II. u De Anima, c. 57.

should believe the soul of any holy man, much less of a prophet, should be so far under his disposal, as to be brought up, at pleasure, by the power of the devil. It cannot be denied indeed, that the devil's knowledge is vastly superior to that of the most accomplished human understanding; that his natural penetration, joined with his long experience, is such, that the greatest philosophers, the subtlest critics, the most refined politicians, or the most profound divines, are but mere novices, in comparison of him; yet what genius (however exalted and improved) without a divine revelation, can be able to foretel things that were lodged in God's own breast, viz. the precise time of two armies engaging, the success and consequence of the victory, and the very names of the persons that were to fall in the battle. This is what the apparition plainly revealed to Saul; and yet this, we dare to maintain, is more than any finite understanding, by its own mere sagacity, will ever be able to find out. None but God himself could reveal this secret; * none but he is capable of seeing into futurity, and of pronouncing upon it: and therefore we find the prophet Isaiah giving this challenge to all false gods and devils: Let them bring forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be that we may consider them: let them declare the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that they are gods: which plainly implies, that the fore-knowledge of future events is an incommunicable attribute, and prerogative of the true God only.

UPON the whole therefore, we may conclude, that the most natural, and indeed the most probable opinion is—That it was the real soul of Samuel, clothed in some visible form, that was sent to the king of Israel, not upon the call of any magical operations, but by the order and appointment of Almighty God, to tell him his doom, and pronounce that sentence upon him, which afterwards came to pass. To this purpose we may observe, that, through the whole narration, Samuel is the only thing that is mentioned. † It is Samuel, whom Saul desires to be called up; Samuel, who appeared to the woman; Samuel, whom the woman describes; Samuel, whom Saul perceives and bows himself to, with whom he converses so long, and, because of whose words, he was afterwards so sore afraid. The scripture indeed, we own, speaks often according to the misapprehensions of men; but when it is so, there is usually something in the context, or nature of the thing, that leads us to make this judgment, which cannot, I think, be pretended in the case now before us, because we find the wise son of Sirach (an excellent interpreter of canonical scripture) telling us expressly, that Samuel, after his death, prophesied and shewed the king his end. Unless there were therefore a cogent reason

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* An Historical Account of the Life of King David, Vol. I. y 1 Sam. xxviii 11, &c.

to the contrary, the plain and literal sense of the words must here be admitted.

An objection.

“ BUT is there not reason enough to the contrary, may some say, when the very text tells us, that Saul was become so reprobate a man, that God had wholly withdrawn himself from him; ^z would neither answer him by prophets, nor by dreams, nor by Urim and Thummim: and can we imagine, that he would send Samuel to him from the dead (or that Samuel would be so ready to come, and that at the call of a witch) when he would not favour him with any revelation from a living prophet, or any other method of inquiry?”

Answered.

That the souls of men departed have life, and sense, and motion; have a capacity, and, no doubt an inclination to be employed in the service of men alive, as having the same nature and affections, and being more sensible of our infirmities than any pure and abstracted spirits are, can hardly be contested; that, in their absent state, they are embodied with aerial or ætherial vehicles, which they can condense, or rarify at pleasure, and so appear, or not appear to human sight, is what some of the greatest men, both of the heathen and ^a christian religion, have evinced; and that frequent apparitions of this kind have happened, since the world began, cannot be denied by any one that is conversant in its history. But, at the same time that we assert all this, and are verily persuaded that the apparition of Samuel was no fictitious thing, we utterly deny that it was any ways occasioned by the woman's magical incantations. ^b It was indeed sent immediately from God: and for this reason perhaps, we find the woman struck with horror and amazement (as we said before) because the prophet might appear contrary to her expectation, and before he had performed her spells.

HAD the prophet appeared to give Saul comfort and consolation in his affliction, this might have been thought a favourable vouchsafement of God; but, when he appeared to the very contrary purpose, it seems to be rather an instance of his continued displeasure, and a judgment perhaps, to which his justice was farther provoked by this his fresh sin, in dealing with a forceress. Since the wisdom of God however thought proper to dispatch a messenger to him upon this occasion, there is some reason to be given, why the soul of Samuel should be thought most proper, and (upon the supposition it were left to his option) should rather be desirous to be sent upon that errand. Samuel, in his life-time, had denounced God's judgments against Saul for his disobedience to the divine command, in the case of Amalek; and, when he did so, we are informed, that he was ^c clad in a mantle; and therefore it cannot but be thought expedient,

^z 1 Sam. xxviii. 6. ^a This our learned Dr Cudworth, and Dr More have largely shewn to be consonant to the doctrine of the greatest philosophers, and most antient learned fathers, as well as agreeable both to the scriptures and reason. Glanvil's Sadducismus Triumphatus. Ibid. ^b 1 Sam. xv. 27.

pedient, that he, more especially, should now be sent to repeat and ratify the sentence then denounced, and, to strike him with fuller conviction (as some † observe) should appear in the same dress, the same mantle, in which he had denounced that sentence before.

HOWEVER this be, it is certain, that whatever may be said in diminution of Saul's religious character, it is certain, that he was a brave prince and commander; and lived in a strict intimacy with Samuel, professed a great esteem for him in all things, and was by Samuel † not a little lamented, when he had fallen from his obedience to God. Upon these considerations we may imagine, that the soul of Samuel might have such a kindness for him, as to be ready to appear to him in the depth of his distress, in order to settle his mind, by telling him plainly the upshot of the whole matter, viz. that he should lose the battle, and he and his sons be slain, that so he might give a specimen (as the Jews love to speak) of the bravest valour that ever was achieved by any commander, in that he would not suffer his country to be over-run by the enemy, while he was alive, without resistance; but, though he knew certainly he should fail of success, and he and his sons die in the fight, yet, in so just and honourable a cause, as the defence of his crown and country, would give the enemy battle in the field, and sacrifice his own life for the safety of the people: which gave occasion to David, in the lamentation which he makes over him, and over Jonathan his son, to express himself in these terms; † the beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places; how are the mighty fallen! From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul turned not empty; how are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!

Of the Actions of DAVID and SOLOMON.

DAVID was much about fifteen years old when Samuel privately anointed him king of Israel, after God had rejected the house of Saul, and intended to make him his successor. There is one remarkable action however, among many more, preceding his reign, but after his anointment, which must not be passed by without some observation, and that is † his killing Goliath in so wonderful a manner. For, while the Israelites and Philistines were encamped near each other, there came every day out of the camp of the Philistines a champion of a prodigious size, to challenge any in the camp of Israel that durst engage him in single combat. Offended at this insolent challenger, and seeing his men all fearful and dismayed, the king made public proclamation, that whoever should encounter and slay him should be amply rewarded; † should have the king's daughter

*His slaying
Goliath.*

† Historical Account of the Life of King David, Vol. I. c. 1 Sam. xvi. 1. & 1 Sam. i. 19. c. 1 Sam. xvii. 1. Ibid. ver. 25.

daughter in marriage, and for ever be exempted from paying any taxes or tribute, just as David was coming to the camp to bring his brethren some provision; * for in those days the custom was for men to go to war at their own expence. David seeing the champion, and hearing the conditions of the victory, was moved by a divine impulse to accept of the challenge: but with what strange disparity did the two combatants meet! The Philistine, a man of gigantic stature, inured to war from his youth, and with arms and armour proportionable: the Israelite, a young stripling, accustomed to a shepherd's life, and without any weapon but a sling and a stone; and yet such was the direction of divine providence, that the stone when flung, ^b smote the Philistine on his forehead, and sunk into it: so that David prevailed over him with a sling and a stone. It would be injurious to the power and glory of God to exclude him from an action of this importance, or otherwise we might say that, upon a probable supposition or two, all the stupendousness of it would vanish, and nothing remain in it exceeding human strength. It is but supposing that this arrogant champion, in disdain of his inferior combatant, might come negligently toward him, ^c with his helmet turned back, and his forehead bare: or, if this will not do, it is but supposing that David might level his stone so right as to hit the place which was left open for his adversary's eyes, or throw it with such force as to penetrate both helmet and head together. And to convince us of the probability of these suppositions, we need only remember (what we read in sacred history) of no less than ^k seven hundred men in one place, who were so expert with their left-hands that every one could sling stones at an hair's breadth and not miss; or (what we read in ^l profane history) of some slingers who threw stones with such a violence that nothing could resist their impression; and that, when they made use of lead instead of stone, the very lead would melt in the air as it flew, by reason of the rapidity of the motion which they gave it.

And the reasons of his being not known to Saul afterwards.

THIS then is easily accounted for: but then there is another difficulty relating to this action, which some cavillers eagerly lay hold on. For, "whereas it is said, that before this combat with Goliath, David was well acquainted at Saul's court, as being not only his musician in his melancholy fits, but, in reward for that service, promoted likewise to be ^m his armour-bearer; how comes it to pass, say they, that, now he is going out against the Philistine, Saul should know so little of him as ⁿ to ask Abner the captain of his host, whose son is this youth? and Abner should answer, as thy soul liveth, O king,

^g Vide Patrick's Commentary, in locum. ^h 1 Sam. xvii. 49, 50. ⁱ Kimchi has a fancy that when Goliath said to David, Come and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air, he looked up to heaven, and his helmet then fell off his head. Patrick's Commentary, in locum. ^k Judg. xx. 16. ^l 1 Diod. Sicul. Lib. V. ^m 1 Sam. xvi. 21. ⁿ *Ibid.* xvii. 55.

“king, I cannot tell. That Abner, a military man from his youth, who had all along lived in camps, should not have seen David when he was at court, is no wonder at all; but that Saul, who had received such signal benefit from the charms of his music, should so soon forget him is a thing incredible.” It is to be observed however, ° that the question which Saul puts is not who David himself was, but who his father was; for it is not incongruous to suppose that the king, though he remembered his person, might have forgot his parentage, which now he was desirous to be better informed in, when he saw him adventuring upon an action, wherein if he succeeded, he was by agreement to be his son-in-law. However this be, he certainly must be a stranger to courts, to the hurry of business, and the variety of new faces that are every day seen there, who thinks it any wonder at all that Saul should have lost the remembrance of David, after he had been some time absent, and was now dressed in his rough shepherd’s coat and habit. The place of armour-bearer, which he held, might be honorary only, and require no attendance, or perhaps be officiated by several. It is certain from David’s absence that it required no constant residence at court; and therefore suppose him gone but for the space of six months, yet this is enough to account for the forgetfulness of a king, who not long before was under a melancholy disorder, and even then, besides the distractions inseparable from his high station, had the concern and fatigue of a very troublesome and dangerous war lying heavy upon his spirits.

AFTER the death of Saul David was only anointed king of Judah, till † upon the murder of Ish-bosheth, Saul’s son, who reigned over the other tribes, all Israel fell under his government; and, when the whole force of the kingdom was thus happily united, it was not long before he did many great exploits. He took the † fortrefs of Zion, which was the citadel of Jerusalem, where the Jebusites had fortified themselves; he † routed the Philistines in the vale of Ateroth, and obtained several other victories over them; he subdued the Moabites; gave battle to Hadad-ezer; and the Syrians who came to his assistance he quite vanquished and made tributary. All Edom he brought under his subjection, and the king of the Ammonites, † who had grossly affronted his ambassadors, he besieged in his royal city; took him, and slew him, and destroyed all his people. † Thus, as the text tells us, the Lord preserved David whither soever he went, and he reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice unto all the people; and his felicity doubtless would have been complete, had he not sullied his reputation with an action unbecoming a just prince. What we mean

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o Saurin’s Dissertations, Vol. II. p. 2 Sam. iv. q Ibid. chap. v. r Ibid. chap. viii. s Ibid. chap. x. t Ibid. viii. 14, 15.

is that, wherein the unhappy Uriah was so highly injured, whose wife Bath-sheba he first drew into his unlawful embraces, and then, to conceal their mutual shame, perfidiously destroyed her husband.

His sin and the aggravations of it.

THIS mournful story is so fully related ^u in the second book of Samuel, that there needs no enlarging upon it: only we shall take notice of what moralists have made the aggravations of the crime, as well as for what reasons the Spirit of God hath recorded it. And to this purpose some have observed, 1. that, as ^{*} David tarried at Jerusalem, at the time when kings went forth to battle, he there indulged himself in ease and luxury, which is the bane and rust of the mind; and so insensibly fell into those loose desires, which drew him into such vile perpetrations: so that idleness was the first cause of his sin. 2. They observe it as an aggravation of his sin, ^x that he certainly knew she was another man's wife, and yet deliberately and advisedly committed the sin; nay, that she was the wife of one who was a profelyte to the Jewish religion, and therefore added scandal to his wickedness; or, as the text expresses it, ^y gave great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. 3. They observe that there was peridy added to his guilt and sinful contrivance ^z in causing Uriah to be sent for home, in receiving him with great tokens of his favour, and in entertaining him with good cheer and great plenty, that he might be the more desirous to enjoy the company of his wife; and so have the child, which was got in adultery, reputed his own. 4. They observe, ^a from Uriah's answer, that had not David's heart been seared, it could not but have felt a strong remorse upon thinking how he had abused so brave a man, and how vilely he indulged himself in sinful pleasure, whilst this man and the rest of the army gloriously endured all manner of hardships, and refused the most innocent pleasure for the service of their country. 5. They observe, ^b from his design upon Uriah's life, when he could not otherwise conceal his lewdness, how naturally one sin paves the way to another, and how, in a small process of time, the fascination of sensual appetites is enough to change the very nature of mankind; since even he who formerly spared Saul unjustly seeking his life, when he could have destroyed him without any one's privity, is now put upon contriving the death of a very faithful servant, in a very base and unworthy manner. 6. They observe it as a farther aggravation of his crime of murder, that he not only exposed an innocent and faithful servant to be killed, but that together with him ^c several more brave men, set in the front of the battle, where the service was hottest, must necessarily have fallen in the attack. 7. They observe, from his answer to the messenger sent by Joab to acquaint

^u 2 Sam. xi, &c. ^{*} Ver. 1. ^x Ver. 3. ^y 2 Sam. xii. 14. ^z *Ibid.* xi. 6, &c. ^a *Ibid.* xi. 11. ^b Ver. 15. ^c Ver. 17.

quaint him with Uriah's death, ^d the sword devoureth one as well as another; the vile hypocrisy and obdurateness of his heart, in imputing that to the chance of war, or rather to the direction of divine providence, which his conscience could not but tell him was of his own contrivance. 8. And, lastly, they observe ^e from his marriage with Bath-sheba, even before her husband was cold in his grave, how the eagerness of his indulged appetite had now extinguished (what in some sinners is last of all parted with, and for which he himself had so lately embued his hands in blood) all sense of shame, and regard to reputation or decency.

THESE are some of the aggravations observable in David's crime; which, besides its lust and cruelty, is loaded with too just an imputation ^f of perfidy, of ingratitude, of hypocrisy, of deliberation, of obstinacy and of shamelessness in sin: and for these purposes were they recorded in scripture, that they might caution us against sloth and idleness, being always employed, and not giving ourselves liberty to gaze upon any objects that may endanger our innocence; and that they might remind the very best of men how much they stand in need continually of the divine assistance; and therefore how much they are concerned to pray, with all prayer and supplication, and to watch as well as pray, that they fall not into temptation.

How long it was that David continued in this sinful lethargy, the scripture has nowhere informed us; God however, thought it expedient at last to send his prophet [†] Nathan to awake him out of his sleep, and to give him some sense of his sins; which was done ^g in so apposite a parable, that many have very justly observed

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d 2 Sam. xii. 25. e Ver. 27. f It has been a matter of surprize to some, why David, who was guilty of sins of such an heinous nature, should be styled in scripture, as we find he is [1 Sam. xiii. 14. and xv. 28] the man after God's own heart: but if we consult the occasion of that expression, we shall find that it ought to be taken in a comparative sense only, and in derogation indeed to Saul, whose transgression in invading the priestly office, and in sparing Amalek, the prophet Samuel was then reproving. It is only in these two respects then that the prophet may be supposed to call him a man after God's heart, or one that would execute his decrees, in abstaining from the priestly office, and in destroying the idolatrous nations round about him; which David effectually did, though Saul was found culpable in both respects. But this I advance only as a probable conjecture, and not in opposition to the received solution, that the severity of his repentance cleared him in the sight of God, and made an atonement for the grievousness of his transgression.

† Who this Nathan was, we learn little more from the sacred writings than that he was David's prophet, intimate counsellor, and historiographer. Josephus says of him, that he was a polite and prudent man, who knew how to temper the severity of wisdom, with the sweetness of good manners. and Grotius compares him to Manius Lepidus, who had a talent of turning away the emperor Tiberius's mind from such cruel purposes as the vile flattery of others was apt to incline him to; but it must be owned that Nathan knew how to do more than this: he knew how to reprove princes with authority and yet without offence, without being impaired in any degree, either of favour or affection with his king: so far from this that he increased in both; insofar that (as tradition tells us) David named one son after him, and commended another, even his favourite and successor, to his tuition and instruction. *Historical account of the Life of King David, Vol. III. g Vide 2 Sam. xii. 7.*

observed from hence, that there is never more need for wisdom and discretion than in the contrivance of reprehension, especially when it is intended for princes and great persons. It is not necessary to apply every word of the parable to David's case, but (to give the reader the common explication of it) "The rich man plainly signifies David; his flocks and herds are his wives and concubines; the poor man represents Uriah; his ewe-lamb is his wife Bath-sheba; the traveller denotes David's inordinate affection, which he suffered to wander from his own home; and the rich man's taking the poor man's lamb, is his taking Bath-sheba and lying with her." Thus far the parable goes, and it would have made the resemblance more complete, if the prophet had added that the rich man killed the poor man from whom he took the lamb; but it is therefore omitted in the parable, that David might not so readily apprehend Nathan's meaning, and so might be induced unawares to pronounce a sentence of condemnation upon himself. For hereupon the prophet had a fit opportunity to shew him, that if the rich man, who took away the poor man's lamb, deserved death according to his own judgment; how much more did he deserve it, who had not only taken another man's wife, but also caused her husband to be slain by the enemies of Israel? And accordingly we may observe, that when the prophet begins to make his application, he deals very roundly with the king, and is not afraid to declare any of those fore judgments wherewith God had ordered him to threaten David and his house for his crying sin. And as he threatened, so the event was: for, if we look into the sequel of the history, ⁱ the death of the child begotten in adultery; ^k the rape of Amnon upon his sister Tamar; ^l the murder of Amnon by his brother Absalom; ^m the rebellion of Absalom against his own father; ⁿ Shimei's curses; ^o Absalom's death; and ^p Sheba's insurrection, are all the declared punishments of David's adultery and murder. Nay, it is not unlikely that ^q the dreadful pestilence, wherein God smote the children of Israel not long after (if not wholly derived from the same fountain) ^r yet had some spice and tincture of it, which might add to the sin of numbering the people, and improve its heinousness to deserve so severe a punishment.

David's death.

DAVID being now waxen old, and willing to prevent all confusion in the succession, appointed Solomon, whom he had by

h 2 Sam. xii. 7. i Ver. 18. k Chap. xiii. l Ibid. m Chap. xv. n Chap. xvi. o Chap. xviii. p Chap. xx. q Chap. xxiv. r For this conjecture there is the more reason, considering that except the pride and ostentation of the thing, no one interpreter has given us one probable reason, why God should be so highly exasperated at David for numbering the people: for David's forgetting the half shekel that was due to the service of God upon such occasions, Exod. xxx. 13. his numbering those who were under twenty years old, contrary to the order of the law, Exod. xxx. 14. his covetous design herein to lay a capitation-tax upon the people, together with several other things of the like nature, are all crude and groundless conjectures.

by Bath-sheba, to be anointed king in his life-time : and not long after, finding his end approaching, he called the young king to him, and, having given him his instruction concerning the government of the state, he recommended him to God : in a prayer which is indeed a kind of prophetic declaration of the greatness and prosperity of his ensuing reign ; and so dying in the seventy-first year of his age, and the forty-first year of his reign, he was buried in that part of the city he had formerly taken from the Jebusites, which from him was called the City of David.

SOLOMON had no sooner taken possession of his father's kingdom, than he established himself in his throne, by cutting off all his enemies. * Adonijah, his brother, he put to death for pretending to marry Abithag, his father's concubinary wife : Abiathar, the high-priest, he deposed and banished, for adhering to Adonijah's party : Joab, the old bloody general, who had fled to the foot of the altar, he commanded there to be slain ; and Shimei, who had cursed his father, and upon pain of death, was confined to Jerusalem, he ordered to be killed for transgressing that injunction. Having thus taken off the heads of the faction which was against him, he thought it adviseable to enter into alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt, by espousing his daughter. And it is upon the celebration of these nuptials (as some imagine) that * the song which goes under his name, as well as the forty-fifth psalm, which seems to have an aspect that way, were certainly composed. But how well pleased soever Solomon might be with this new alliance, it proved of fatal consequence to him, as well as the whole nation. * The holy scripture ranks the daughter of Pharaoh among the number of those strange wives which perverted him from the worship of

Of the World, 299, &c. before Christ, 107, &c. Solomon's actions.

His song.

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s The prayer makes up the whole seventy-second Psalm. t Josephus [Antiq. Lib. VII. c. ult.] tells us that Solomon laid up a vast treasure in his father's tomb, which Hircanus the high-priest, three hundred years afterwards, when he found himself besieged in Jerusalem by Antiochus, and knew not what to do for money, that he might bribe him to raise the siege, made hold to open, and took thence three thousand talents, a good part of which he gave to Antiochus. The same author adds, that several years afterwards Herod the Great broke open the said tomb, and took away a large quantity of wealth ; but what authority he has for all this, unless he met with some in the records of his own country, we cannot tell. Calmer's Dictionary. We read indeed in the Arabick memoirs, published in M. le Jay's Polyglotts, that, when Hircanus was besieged by Antiochus Sidetes, he opened a treasure which belonged to one of the descendants of David, and after he had taken a good deal of money thence, and left some behind, he closed it up again. But this is nothing to Josephus's story, which the reader will find abundantly confuted in Dr Prideaux's Connection, Part II. Lib. V. u 1 Kings ii. • The song indeed is in the form of an epithalamium. It is distinguished into seven days or nights, according to the time appointed for the celebration of nuptials, and recounts the several adventures of each ; but then it is written in a lofty and poetic stile, and to enter into the mystical sense of it, we must carry our conceptions above flesh and blood, and therein contemplate the marriage of Jesus Christ with human nature, with his church, and with every pious and faithful soul. Calmer's Dictionary. x 1 Kings xi. 1, &c.

the true God; which seems to intimate, that though she might seem a convert at first, she returned in time to the old idolatry, and by her allurements engaged her husband in the same abominable practice.

His great wisdom and knowledge.

NEVER prince certainly came to a crown with a better disposition, both to wisdom and religion, than did Solomon. The judgment he gave between the two lewd women is a memorable instance of his wisdom in the administration of justice: the great care he took of building the temple, and of establishing in it the true worship of God, is a sufficient argument of his sense of religion: and what vast proficiency he had made in all natural, moral and polite knowledge, the scripture gives us this honourable testimony, when it tells us that ^z he spake three thousand proverbs, so that he was an excellent moral philosopher; that he wrote a thousand and five songs, so that he was a very considerable poet; that he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall, so that he understood the nature of all plants; and that he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes, so that he understood the nature of all animals: and therefore no wonder if persons from all nations, among whom we read of one whom the scripture stiles the Queen of Sheba, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon; but who this queen of Sheba was, interpreters are not so well agreed.

The queen of Sheba, who.

^a JOSEPHUS (and with him many more) is of opinion, that Sheba was the antient name of Meroe, an island, or rather peninsula in Egypt, before Cambyfes in complement to his sister gave it her name. The natives of the country have a tradition that this queen's name was Marqueda (Josephus calls her Nicaula) that she had a son by Solomon, whose posterity reigned there many years, and to this very day have preserved a continual list of their names and successions; nor can it be denied but that it was usual in these parts for women to have the supreme command: and yet I cannot but think that those who suppose that this princess came from some place in Arabia Felix, have a fairer probability on their side, not only because it is generally allowed that the Sabæans and Ethiopians lived in Arabia, and that ^b women were allowed to reign there; not only because our Saviour calls her ^c the queen of the south, as Arabia certainly lies south of Judea, and says that she came from the uttermost parts of the earth, as Arabia towards the south is bounded by the ocean, ^d which the antients knew no land beyond; but more especially, because the presents which she made

Solomon,

^y 1 Kings iii. ^z Ibid. iv. 32, &c. ^a Vide Calmet's Dictionary, on the word *Saba*, viz. la Reine, and Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings x.

^b ————— Medis levibusque Sabæis

Imperat hic sexus; reginarumque sub armis

Barbariæ pars magna jacet.

Claud. in Eutrop.

^c Matth. xii. 42. ^d Terra, finesque, quæ ad orientem vergunt, Arabia terminantur. Tacit. Lib. V.

Solomon, ^e such as spices, and gold, and precious stones, were certainly the product of Arabia Felix, though rarely to be found in the place which Josephus assigns.

NOR was it only to hear the wisdom of Solomon that this princefs took so long a journey, but to see likewise the splendour and magnificence wherein he was reported to live; for, after he had finished the house of the Lord, ⁱ he built stately palaces, rebuilt several cities, and fortified others. And well might he be sufficient to do all this, since his own annual revenue, without reckoning the tribute of other nations, or the subsidies of his own subjects, was ^h six hundred threescore and six talents of gold. The bounds of his kingdom he extended from the river Euphrates to the country of the Philistines, and to the borders of Egypt. All neighbouring princes paid him tribute. He had a numerous court, a splendid equipage and a sumptuous table. ^k The throne whereon he sat was overlaid with gold; ^l the guard that attended his person had their shields and targets made of gold; every dish and plate that was served up to him was of solid gold; nor was there ^m any vessel in all the house in the forest of Lebanon but what was of pure gold; none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. And if we should inquire what might be the possible occasion of all this redundancy of wealth, we shall find that it chiefly arose from the importation which Solomon's navy so frequently made from the gold mines in Ophir; but in what part of the world this Ophir lay, the conjectures of the learned have been in a manner infinite.

His vast riches.

ⁿ MOST people agree that the trade to Ophir and Tarshish was the same that is now in the hands of our East-India merchants, and hereupon some will have it to be the same with the island Zocatora, which lies in the eastern coasts of Africa, a little without the streights of Babel-mandel; whilst others rather think it to be the island antiently called Tapobrana, now Ceylon. The rule which ^o Grotius lays down upon this occasion, I think is not amiss: he tells us that there is no better way to guess where this place was than by considering what commodities were brought from thence, and inquiring of merchants (who have been in the remote parts of the world) where not only gold and precious stones, but ivory likewise, and almug-trees, and whatever else was brought from Ophir is now to be found. ^p Now it is to be observed, that though from Eloh in the land of Edom (where the king's fleet set out) to Tarshish was ^q a voyage of three years going and coming, yet it is no where said in what compass the voyage to Ophir

The gold of Ophir, whence.

^e 1 Kings x. 2. ^f 1 Kings vii. ^g Ibid. x. 14. This amounts to four millions, seven hundred ninety five thousand, two hundred pounds of our sterling money. ^h 1 Kings x. 13. ⁱ Ibid. ver. 16. ^k Ibid. ver. 21. ^l See Pridcaux's Connection, Part I. Lib. 11. ^m Vide Epist. 453 secundum Patrick. ⁿ Pridcaux, *ibid.* ^o 1 Kings x. 22.

Ophir was compleated; and therefore Tarshish might be somewhere in the East-Indies, though Ophir might be any where nearer home within the reach of those seas: so that any place in the southern or great Indian sea that can best furnish merchants with gold, precious stones, ivory, and almug-trees, and with gold in such plenty as Solomon brought home in one voyage, may well be supposed to be the Ophir which the holy scriptures make mention of. ^p Only thus much I cannot forbear saying, that if the southern part of Arabia did in those times furnish the world with the best gold, and in the greatest quantity (as good authors seem to say) they that would have the Ophir of the holy scriptures to be there situated, seem of all others to have the best foundation for their conjecture.

Solomon's
character.

THUS great and glorious was Solomon in all his actions for a considerable time of his reign. ^a How wise wast thou in thy youth (as the son of Sirach handsomely epitomizes Solomon's perfections) and as a flood filled with understanding! Thy soul covered the whole earth, and thou filledst it with dark parables. Thy name went far into the islands, and for thy peace thou wast beloved. The countries marvelled at thee, for thy songs, and proverbs, and parables, and interpretations. By the name of the Lord God, which is called the Lord God of Israel, thou didst gather gold as tin, and didst multiply silver as lead. This was his character at first: but the latter scenes of his life spoiled and disfigured all. For he not only gave himself up to the wanton embraces of many women, but of many strange women, such as were not Israelites by nature or profession, but of idolatrous nations, with whom the Lord had expressly prohibited Israel in general, but more especially their king, to contract marriage; and by their allurements he was seduced to worship filthy and abominable idols, such as ^t Astaroth, the goddess of the Sidonians; ^u Moloch, the god of the Ammonites; and ^x Chamos, the god of the Moabites. And, in these impieties

^p Prideaux's Connection, Part I. Lib. II. ^q Eccus. xlvii. 14, &c. ^r 1 Kings xi. 1. ^s Deut. vii. 3. ^t Astaroth, in the Syrian tongue, signifies *sheep*, particularly *ewes*, when their dugs are turgid, and they give milk; and from the fecundity of these creatures, which in Syria breed a long time, the Tyrians and Sidonians framed the notion of a deity, which they called Astarte, and must, without dispute, be the Venus of the Syrians; for so Cicero, in his book de Natura Deorum, tells us, that the fourth goddess is Venus, who was conceived at Tyre, and is called Astarte. ^u Moloch, both in the Hebrew and Ethiopic, signifies a king, denoting the sun, which the heathens called the King of Heaven. See Calmet's Dissertations before Leviticus. It is represented by a large statue made hollow, into which, some say, they put their children, and burnt them; others, that they put the children into the arms of the statue, and then set fire to the combustible matter within it. But, be the manner of sacrificing children to this idol how it will, it is certain that they offered them to him by fire. See 2 Kings xxiii. 10. Jer. xxxii. 35. ^x Chamos, in Arabic, signifies to make haste; and from hence some have imagined, that he is the same with the Sun, whose motion is supposed to be so rapid. From the near resemblance between the Hebrew word, Chamos, and the Greek, Comos, others have thought him the same with Bacchus, the god of drunkenness; but Calmet,

pieties he continued so long, that it is now become a famous question, whether he be in a state of salvation or no; though considering the promise God makes to his father concerning him, I think it more rational, as well as more charitable to conclude, that God's mercy did not finally depart from him; but that, in his old age, he was brought to a sense of his transgressions, and humbling himself before God, wrote his book called Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, as an acknowledgment of his own apostacy, and a warning and admonition to all others; that, however they might think of doing (as he had done) whatever their eyes desired, to keep nothing from them, and not to withhold their heart from any joy; yet in the event, they would find, what his experience had taught him so late, that all was vanity and vexation of spirit; and that there was no profit in any kind of wickedness under the sun.

C H A P. VI.

The most memorable Transactions from the Division of the Kingdom to the End of the Captivity.

HOWEVER God might be pleased, upon Solomon's repentance, to forgive the eternal punishment due to his transgressions; yet the temporal punishment which he threatened to inflict in his son's days, by rending the kingdom from his posterity, and giving it to his servant, he thought fit no longer to defer. For, immediately upon his death, when Rehoboam his son refused to hear the petitions of his subjects, and was resolved to impose more burdensome taxes upon them than his father had done; all the tribes, except those of Judah and Benjamin, unanimously revolted, and chose Jeroboam his father's servant to reign over them. No sooner was Jeroboam promoted to this honour, but, fearing lest his subjects, if permitted to go up to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice, might, in time, return to their former allegiance, he erected two golden calves, in the two extreme parts of his kingdom, one at Bethel, and the other at Dan, with two altars belonging to them, such as he had seen consecrated to the god Apis in Egypt; and then published a proclamation, forbidding all his subjects to repair any more to Jerusalem, and enjoining them to pay their adorations, at the places which he had appointed: and, to give the better sanction to this new institution, he ordained a solemn festival, and himself

Of the World, 3029, &c. Before Christ, 975, &c. The division of the kingdom.

in his Dissertation before Numbers, has sufficiently evinced, that he is no other than Adonias. y 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. z Eccles. ii. 10, 11. a 1 Kings xi. 11. b He was a bold and daring man, and therefore Solomon made him the collector of the tribute, which the house of Joseph, i. e. the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasse, were to pay. Camet's Dictionary. c For thither he had fled, being in rebellion against Solomon, before his death. 1 Kings xi. 40.

went up to Bethel to attend the ceremony, and countenance the impiety by his own example. But while he was standing at the altar to offer incense, ^d a prophet that came from Judah, ^e foretold him, that the altar should one day be destroyed by a child of the house of David, Jofiah by name, and, as a proof of the truth of his prediction, he added, that it should instantly be split. Provoked at this freedom of speech against his new religion and altar, Jeroboam stretched out his hand, and called to some of his people to seize the prophet: but, to his great surprize, he found his hand withered, *i. e.* the muscles and sinews thereof so shrunk, that he perfectly lost the use of it, and, at the same time, saw the altar split asunder. Upon the prophet's prayer however the king's hand was restored; and, when the king hereupon invited him to dine with him, and to accept of a reward, he absolutely refused both; urging the command of the Lord to the contrary. But though he declined Jeroboam's invitation, yet his easy credulity betrayed him to his ruin: for an old prophet, who lived at Bethel, hearing which way he took, went after him, and, with false assurances, prevailed with him to go back and refresh himself. But for this compliance he paid very dear, having not been far gone, before a lion, out of the wood near Bethel, fell upon him, and slew him.

The death of the prophet that came to Bethel accounted for.

THAT the death of the prophet was not a matter of chance, but occasioned by the interposition of divine providence, is apparent from the circumstances of the story. For, that a lion, contrary to his nature, ^f should not eat his dead body, nor kill the ass whereon he rode, nor meddle with the travellers that passed by, nor molest the old prophet when he came to take the carcase away; but, on the contrary, should stand quietly by it, until this strange news was carried into the city, as if he was set to guard it against the violence of any other creature; this plainly shews the hand of God in the whole transaction, by whose appointment the lion was sent to execute what he had threatened, but could not move one step beyond his commission. And, that it may not seem too great a severity in this dispensation, that one prophet, ^g deluded by another, equally pretending to a divine revelation, and a revelation seeming to supersede the injunction he lay under, should come to so untimely an end, merely for refreshing himself a little at a brother's house; it may not

^d Josephus, St Jerom, and others would fain have this prophet to be Iddo, who wrote the acts of Solomon, 2 Chron. ix. 29. but this is very unlikely: for, besides the variation of the name, which they mangle very much to make it like Iddo, there is this circumstance, which plainly shews it could not be Iddo; because this prophet died too soon, to have time to write the acts of Solomon, being instantly killed by a lion; whereas the Iddo, who wrote Solomon's acts, lived at least seventeen years after Solomon, because [in 2 Chron. xiii. 22.] he is said to have wrote the acts of Abijah king of Judah. Howell's History of the Bible. ^e This was prophesied three hundred and fifty years before it came to pass; and the prediction is more wonderful, because it expressly names both the family, and person. Howell, *ibid.* and Patrick, in *locum.* ^f 1 Kings xiii. 24, &c. ^g *ibid.* ver. 18, &c.

not be improper to confider, ^h that whenever God, in an extraordinary manner, discovers his will to a prophet, he always makes fuch a fenfible impreffion upon his mind, that he cannot but perceive himfelf actuated by a divine fpirit, and confequently, cannot but be affured of the evidence of his own revelation. This evidence, the prophet that was fent to Bethel had: for as he was able, by the power that was given him, to work miracles, he could not but be fenfible of his divine miffion, and that the particular injun^{tion} of his not eating nor drinking in the town of Bethel, was as much the will of God, as any other part of his commiffion.

Now the defign of God in this prohibition was, to exprefs his abhorrence of that idolatrous place; and therefore, the other pretended revelation of the old prophet, who lived therein, was juftly to be fufpected, not only becaufe it was repugnant to God's main defign, but becaufe it came from a perfon who had given no great teftimony of his fincerity, in chufing to live in a place, notoriously infected with idolatry, and yet making no public remonftrances againft it. The confideration of this one circumftance, fhould have made the young prophet diffident of what the other told him, at leaft, till he had fhewn him fome divine teftimony to convince him; for it argued a great deal of levity, if not infidelity of his own revelation, to liften to that of another man, in contradic^{tion} to what he had abundant reafon to believe was true: and the leffon we are to learn from God's feverity in this inftance is, — not to fuffer our faith to be perverted by any fuggeftions that are made againft a revelation, that is of uncontefted divine authority; but ⁱ if an angel from heaven (as the apoftle words it) fhould preach any other gofpel than what we have received, to deteft, and denounce him accurfed.

S E C T. I.

E L I J A H's A c t i o n s.

AFTER five reigns from Jeroboam (wherein no great matter of theological inquiry occurs) Ahab fucceeded to the crown of Ifrael, a prince that furpaffed all his predeceffors in wickednefs: for he not only walked in the fins of Jeroboam, but (to complete his crimes) married Jezebel, the daughter of Eth-baal, king of the Zidonians, whereby he introduced all manner of idolatry among the Ifraelites. Provoked at thefe abominations, the Lord fent ^k Elijah the Tifhbite, whom, next

Of the
World.
3. Ge. &c.
Before
Chrift,
9. 6. &c.
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to  
<sup>h</sup> Stillingfleet's Origines Sacrz. i Gal i. 8, 9. <sup>k</sup> The name Elijah, which in Hebrew is Eljahu, carries fomething divine in it: for it is compounded (as Ægid Camartus imagines) of three of the names of God, viz. Eli, Jah, and Hu. He was indeed an eminent meffenger fent from God. but thofe Jews carry the matter too far, who fay that he was no mortal man, but an angel, fent

to

to Moses, the Jews stile the prince of the prophets, to remonstrate his iniquity to him, and to denounce this judgment against the land, that, for some years, <sup>1</sup> there should be neither dew nor rain, but according to his word; and having delivered his message, he withdrew, and, as he was ordered by God, went and lived by the brook Cherith, where the ravens <sup>m</sup> brought him food twice every day.

Elijah's being fed by ravens.

RAVENS, as naturalists relate, are creatures so destitute of any concern for their young, that they forsake them before they are fledged, and therefore providence has taken care to feed them with worms, which are produced by their dung, and out of the carcasses that have been brought into their nests, until they are able to fly, and to provide for themselves; and to this the Psalmist is supposed to allude, when he tells us, <sup>n</sup> that the Lord giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry. The greater therefore was the interposition of providence, in overruling these creatures to such a degree, as to make them more subservient to his prophet than they are to their own young: but <sup>o</sup> those Jews seem to carry the miracle needlessly too high, who pretend that the provision, which these ravens brought, came either from Ahab's house, or from Jehoshaphat's, as if the prophet was fed with nothing but royal dainties. It is sufficient for us to say, in the words of the Psalmist, <sup>p</sup> that the whole world is the Lord's, and all that is therein; that he knows the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are in his sight; and therefore, if any man be hungry, and he is minded to provide for him, he need not tell any one thereof; for he can either send us sustenance by unknown and unexpected hands, or enlarge the <sup>q</sup> handful of meal in our barrel, and the little oil in our cruse (as in the case of the Sareptan widow) to a long subsistence.

His contest with the prophets of Baal.

THE drought, which occasioned the famine, continued as Elijah had foretold; but, <sup>r</sup> in the third year, God, being willing

to reduce them to the true religion, because his original is unknown; there being no mention made of his father or mother in holy writ. Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings xvii. 1. <sup>m</sup> This seems so very strange, that some will have the word Orebim, not to signify Ravens, but merchants, as others will have it to be Arabians. But, besides that the word (as Bochart observes) never signifies Merchants, and the thing is notorious, that there were no Arabians inhabiting in the country, where Elijah now was, there is this one argument, sufficient against all suggestions of this nature, viz. that Elijah's retreat would have soon been discovered to Ahab, if merchants, or any other people, that travelled that way, had been acquainted with it. Those therefore, who make such loud outcries upon hearing this miracle, should do well to remember what the heathen stories tell us, of Jupiter's being fed in the cradle by bees, Æsculapius nourished by a goat, Janus, the son of Apollo and Evadne, by dragons, that brought him honey, and the like; and then they will less wonder at the miraculous care which God took of his faithful servant, in a time of general famine. Vid. Bochart, Hieroz. Part II. Lib. II. c. 13. Huetii Quæst. Alnet. Lib. II. c. 12. and Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings xvii. n Psal. cxlvii. 9. and Job xxxviii. 41. <sup>o</sup> In Gemara Sanhedrim, c. 11. <sup>p</sup> Psal. l. 11, &c. <sup>q</sup> 1 Kings xvii. 12. <sup>r</sup> Ibid. xviii. 1. It is very certain, that both

to withdraw this heavy judgment, sent his prophet to Ahab with some intimations of relief, upon condition that he would order his subjects, and especially the prophets of Baal, and of the groves, to meet him at mount Carmel. When all the people were come together, Elijah proposed to the idolatrous priests, that, since there was a manifest difference between them, in point of religion, and the people now assembled might possibly desire to know who was in the right; though he was but one, and they many, he would put the whole stress of the cause upon this one issue — That two bullocks should be brought, and slain, one of which they should lay upon wood, without putting any fire under it, and that he would do the like by his; that they should then call upon their gods, and he would call upon the name of the Lord; and that the Deity which should make it appear he heard their prayers by consuming the sacrifice with fire the same should be owned as God. This proposition was generally liked: whereupon the priests of Baal fall to work, make ready their altar, kill their bullock, lay it upon their altar, and then begin to invoke their gods. But all in vain: their gods are deaf, and cannot hear. Whereupon they dance and caper round the altar, slash themselves with knives, and by their many wild and extravagant freaks give the prophet an handsome opportunity of banter; Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth.

ELIJAH having allowed them sufficient time to try all their inventions to no purpose, invited the people at last to draw near to him; and taking twelve stones, according to the number of the twelve tribes, he built an altar, made a trench round it, laid the bullock on the wood, and poured water on the sacrifice, the wood, and the altar three times, until the trench was quite full; and then drawing near to the altar, he implored of God, by some visible instance, to demonstrate to the people that he

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was

our blessed Saviour [Luke iv. 25.] and his apostle St James [Chap. v. 17.] do assure us, that this drought continued three years and six months; and yet this does not disagree with the Lord's sending his prophet to Ahab in the third year. At the beginning of this drought, very probably Ahab might impute the want of rain to natural causes, and thereupon not seek to lay Elijah: but, after six months, neither the former nor the latter rain falling in their seasons, he began to be enraged at him, as the cause of the drought, which forced Elijah, at God's command, to save himself by flight; and, from that time, the three years, here mentioned, are to be computed. One year he was at the brook Cherith, and two years he lived with the widow of Sarepta; at the end of which, God took pity upon the land, and sent his prophet to Ahab. Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings xviii. s By the prophets of the groves (as we translate it) Mr Selden understands the prophets of Astarte, the great goddess of the Zidonians, which he proves by comparing many places of scripture together. De Diis Syris, Syntag. 2. c. 3. But Maimonides has a peculiar notion, that the prophets of Baal and of the groves were such, as had imbibed the opinions of the antient Zabii, who made images to receive the influences of the stars, golden ones for the sun, silver ones for the moon, &c. whereby they attained the gift of prophecy. More Nevech. Part III. c. 27. t 1 Kings xviii. 27.

was the only true God, and himself no more than his minister, acting by his authority, and according to his injunctions. Whereupon immediately fire fell from heaven, and consumed, not only the burnt-offering, but the wood and stones, nay, the very dust and water that was in the trench about the altar. This struck the people with such admiration, that, falling on their faces, they devoutly acknowledged the God of Elijah to be the only true God: whereof the prophet taking the advantage, ordered them to seize the idolatrous priests, and put them all to death; and then, going up to the top of the mountain, he prayed to God with great earnestness, that he would be pleased to send rain upon the land, and he did so.

IT may well exercise our wonder, why God should so far listen to the prayers of a man, as to suffer him to lock and unlock (as it were) the store-houses of heaven, at his pleasure; but that wonder will begin to abate, when we come to consider, that he was in so great esteem with God, as to be vouchsafed <sup>u</sup> the sight of his glorious and majestic presence; as to have <sup>\*</sup> angels sent to comfort and refresh him, when he was weary; as to have <sup>x</sup> fire sent down from heaven to avenge him of his enemies, when they came to apprehend him; and, at last, by the ministry of angels, in the form of a bright chariot and horses, <sup>y</sup> to have his body translated into heaven, without undergoing the common fate of mortals: whereupon the son of Sirach has given us this epitome of his actions, in commemoration of God's vouchsafements to him: <sup>z</sup> Elias, says he, stood up as fire, and his word burned like a lamp. He brought a sore famine upon the people, and by his zeal he diminished their number; by the word of the Lord he shut up the heavens, and also three times brought down fire. O Elias! How wast thou honoured in thy wondrous deeds! and who may glory like unto thee! who didst raise up a dead man from death, and his soul from the place of the dead, by the word of the Most High: [this he speaks of the widow of Sarephtha's son] who broughtest kings to destruction, and honourable men from their bed to the grave: [this he means of Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jezebel] who anointedst kings to take vengeance, [viz. Jehu and Hazael] and prophets, [viz. Elisha and his brethren] to succeed after thee: who wast taken up in a whirlwind of fire, and a chariot of fiery horses. Blessed are they that saw thee, and slept in love; for we shall surely live.

#### ELISHA'S ACTIONS.

Of the  
World,  
3108, &c.  
Before  
Christ,  
896, &c.

**A**FTER the assumption of Elijah into heaven, Elisha succeeded him both in the gift of prophecy, and in that of working miracles. He divided the waters of Jordan, <sup>a</sup> by striking

<sup>u</sup> 1 Kings xix. <sup>\*</sup> Ibid. ver. 5. <sup>x</sup> 2 Kings i. 10, &c. <sup>y</sup> Ibid. ii. 11. <sup>z</sup> Eclus. xlviii. 1, &c. <sup>a</sup> 2 Kings ii. 14.

Elisha's  
miracle,

ing them with the mantle which Elijah had left him; he <sup>b</sup> cured the unwholesome waters of Jericho, and the barrenness of the soil, with nothing else but a little salt; and, as he went up to Bethel, <sup>c</sup> he cursed the children that insulted and reviled him, and immediately two she-bears came out of the wood, and revenged his quarrel. He <sup>d</sup> multiplied the oil for one of the minor prophets widows to such a quantity, as abundantly enabled her to pay her debts; and <sup>e</sup> for the Shunamite-woman, that entertained him hospitably, he first procured a son, and, upon his death, restored him to life again. At Gilgal, <sup>f</sup> he sweetened the bitter herbs that had been dressed for the sons of the prophets; and, in the time of great scarceness, <sup>g</sup> fed a great number of persons with a small quantity of bread. In Samaria, <sup>h</sup> he cured Naaman's leprosy, by ordering him to wash seven times in the river Jordan, and <sup>i</sup> inflicted it upon his own servant, for his fraud and covetousness, for ever. In Jordan, <sup>k</sup> he made iron swim; and, when the king of Syria sent to apprehend him, <sup>l</sup> he struck all the forces which came on that errand with blindness, and delivered them up into the hand of the Israelites, their enemies.

<sup>m</sup> THE generosity of the Israelites however, in letting the Syrians go, was not long remembered by Benhadad their king. For he not long after, raising a great army, laid close siege to Samaria, and <sup>n</sup> reduced the city to such distress by famine that an ass's head was sold for fourscore <sup>o</sup> pieces of silver, three quarters of a pint <sup>p</sup> of pulse for five; and those that were not able to procure such provisions, were driven to the last extremity, and forced to eat their own children. In which disconsolate circumstances the prophet foretels that in one night's time there should be such a plenty of all things, that a measure of fine flour should be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for the same price, which accordingly came to pass: for God had so ordered the matter in the night, that, by the ministry of angels, he made such a rattling like that of chariots and prancing of horses, that the Syrians imagined a great army was not only marching

and predi-  
tions.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Kings ii. 19. <sup>c</sup> Ibid. ver. 23, &c. <sup>d</sup> Ibid. iv. 3. <sup>e</sup> Ibid. ver. 16. 36. <sup>f</sup> Ibid. ver. 38. <sup>g</sup> Ibid. ver. 42. <sup>h</sup> Ibid. v. 1. <sup>i</sup> Ibid. ver. 27. <sup>k</sup> Ibid. vi. 6. <sup>l</sup> Ibid. ver. 18. <sup>m</sup> Ibid. ver. 22. <sup>n</sup> Ibid. ver. 25. <sup>o</sup> Reckoning these pieces of silver or shekels at fifteen pence a-piece, they come to five pounds sterling. Howell's History. <sup>p</sup> What we in this place call pulse, our translation has rendered doves dung: but interpreters have been at a great loss to let us know upon what account the inhabitants of Samaria should be obliged to buy so small a quantity of it at so great a price. For salt, for food, for siring, for dunging their gardens within the walls, several interpreters have severally applied it: but upon a small examination it will appear that none of these uses could suit with the circumstances of a city so straitly besieged; and therefore the learned Bochart has observed that the Arabians give the name of dove's dung, or sparrows dung to two several things, viz. to a kind of moss which grows on trees and stony ground, and to a sort of pease or pulse which was very common in Judea, as may be seen in 2 Sam. xvii. 28. and therefore he supposes that the word *chirsanim* may very well signify fitches or pulse, which, though very ordinary food, were sold at so high a rate. Nile Microz, P. II. L. c. 7. and Howell's History of the Bible.

marching towards them, but ready to fall upon them; which put them into such a consternation, that it immediately spread through the whole army, and leaving their camp standing, every man shifted for himself, and made the best of his way home. Whereupon the Israelites had nothing to do but to go out and plunder the tents of the Syrians; in which they found such store of provision as made the sudden alteration in the price of corn which the prophet had foretold.

NOT long after this defeat, Benhadad king of Syria fell so ill that † Hazael, one of his prime ministers, was sent with a costly present to consult Elisha whether his master would recover of his sickness. His sickness, as Josephus tells us, was no more than a deep melancholy, occasioned by the shameful flight of his army from before Samaria; and therefore the prophet told him, that though his distemper was not incurable, yet he foresaw he was not to live, because Hazael himself would speedily murder him, usurp his throne, and commit great outrages against the people of Israel; † which accordingly came to pass. These and several others were the predictions and miracles which Elisha performed in his life-time; and even after his decease a divine power did not depart from him: for, when the Israelites going to bury a certain person in the country, saw a band of Moabites, who at that time invaded the land, coming upon them, they rolled away the stone from Elisha's sepulchre, and laid the dead corpse by his, which no sooner touched the prophet's bones, but immediately the person revived, and was restored to his perfect health: whereupon the son of Sirach has this short descant in commendation of the prophet: Elisha was filled with God's spirit; while he lived, he was not moved with the presence of any prince; and after his death his body prophesied; *i. e.* by reviving the man, gave testimony of a future resurrection. He did wonders in his life, and at his death his works were marvellous.

## S E C T. II.

### The State of the Kingdoms of JUDAH and ISRAEL.

Of the  
World,  
3120, &c.  
Before  
Christ,  
884.

The revolutions in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

**E**LISHA before his death knowing that the time was now come for Ahab's family to be extirpated, and Jezebel punished for her wickedness, ordered one of the sons of the prophets to go and anoint Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, king; and to give him at the same time full instructions what he was to do upon his advancement. How ready and punctual Jehu was to execute God's judgments upon the whole house of Ahab; how he slew Jehoram king of Israel, and Ahaziah king of Judah; ordered Jezebel to be thrown down

down from a window, and all the princes of the blood to be beheaded: how in his way to Jerusalem he slew the brothers and kindred of Ahaziah; and, when he came thither, cut off all that remained of Ahab, without sparing one; how he destroyed the priests of Baal, pulled down and burnt his images, and demolishing his temple, made it no better than a common draught-house: and while these things were transacting in Israel, how Athalia, the queen-dowager of Judah, and mother to the late king Ahaziah, hearing that her son was slain, usurped the government of Judah; and, in revenge of the death of her father Ahab's family, murdered all the blood-royal, in order to extinguish the race of the good Jehoshaphat, and secure to herself and her other children the succession of the kingdom; but how God disappointed her, and brought her to punishment, by the wonderful preservation of young Joash, to succeed in the throne of his ancestors; and how, in the beginning of his reign, this Joash behaved like a just and religious prince, restored the worship of the true God, and greatly reformed the ecclesiastical state; but, when his good friend and counsellor Jehoiada the high-priest was dead, the princes of Judah soon drew him over to the worship of idols, insomuch that when Zachariah the son of his friend Jehoiada went about to reprove him, at his command he was stoned to death in the porch of the temple, for which heinous act, neither he nor his people went unpunished: these things, I say, are so fully recorded \* in the second book of Kings, that it would be tedious to the reader to detain him, either with a repetition, or any jejune reflections upon them. The state of the kingdoms both of Judah and Israel was for some time after this so torn with convulsions, the murders of their princes were so many, their successions so quick, and so frequently interrupted, while all manner of violence, and especially superstition and idolatry, like a common deluge, overflowed the land; that we have little or nothing but accounts of this kind (which furnish no matter for theological inquiry) until we come to the reign of good Hezekiah king of Judah.

ABOUT the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah, † Sabacon the Ethiopian having invaded Egypt, and taken Boccharis king of that country prisoner, caused him with great cruelty to be burnt alive, and then seizing his kingdom, reigned there in his stead. He is the same who in † scripture is called So: and, having thus settled himself in Egypt, he soon grew so powerful that Hoshea king of Samaria entered into confederacy with him, hoping by his assistance to shake off the yoke of the Assyrians; and in confidence of this withdrew his subjection from Shalmanezzer, and refused to pay him any more tribute. But Shalmanezzer soon

Of the  
World.  
3278. &c.  
Before  
Christ.  
726. &c.

The Israeli-  
tes made  
captive by  
Shalmanczer.

\* From 2 Kings ix. to xiii. † Prideaux's Connection, P. I. L. I. u 2 Kings  
xvii. 4.

soon marched against him with a powerful army, and, having subdued all the country round about, pent him up in Samaria, and after a siege of three years continuance took the city, and putting Hoshea in chains, shut him up in prison all his days, and carried the people into captivity.

The book  
of Tobit.

IN this captivity Tobit was taken out of his city of Tesbe, in the tribe of Nephthali; and with Anna his wife and Tobias his son carried into Assyria, where his piety was conspicuous to all, and so won upon the conqueror Shalmanezzer that he made him his purveyor, with liberty to go whither he pleased, which gave him an happy occasion to visit and relieve his distressed countrymen: but of this we may read at large in the book which goes under his name. The book indeed, in its original draught, seems to have been the memoirs of his family, first begun by Tobit, then continued by Tobias, then finished by some other of the family; and at last digested by some Babylonian Jew in the form wherein we have it. It is generally looked on, both by Jews and christians, as a genuine and true history, though there seems to be good reason for \* our not placing it among the canonical books of scripture, † because there are some matters in it (such as that of the angel's accompanying Tobias in a long journey under the shape of Azarias; the story of Raguel's daughter; the frightening away the devil by the smoke of the heart and liver of a fish, and curing of Tobit's blindness by the gall of the same) which are not so reconcilable to a rational credibility. They look indeed more like the fictions of Homer than the writings of a sacred historian, and give such an objection against this book as does not lie against any other; though it is certainly of great use to represent to us the duties of charity and patience, in the example of Tobit's ready helping his brethren in distress to the uttermost of his power; and his bearing with a pious submission the calamities of his captivity, poverty and blindness, as long as they were inflicted on him.

The Samaritans,  
whence.

SHALMANEZER, having thus carried away the Israelites into Assyria, drew out several colonies of his own people from Babylon and other provinces, and sent them into Canaan, where they took possession of the cities and dwelt therein: but as they polluted the holy land with their idolatries, † the Lord sent his lions among them, which destroyed them. The people imputing this affliction to their not adoring the god of the country in such a manner as he might desire, sent into Assyria for one of the priests of the Israelites, who coming and dwelling at Bethel, taught

\* The church of Rome has received this book into their canon, but without a sufficient warrant: for even supposing the historical ground plot of the book to be true, (which is the most that can be said of it) yet it is certainly interarded with many fictions, which are purely the invention of him that wrote it. Prideaux's Connection, Part I. Lib. 1. † x Prideaux, *ibid.* y 2 Kings xvii. 25



taught them how to worship the God of Israel. <sup>a</sup> But then they only took him into the number of their former deities, and worshipped him jointly with the gods of the nations from whence they came; so that what with worshipping their own idols and the true God at the same time, they fell into a strange and unaccountable mixture of religion, which was the first beginning of that mungrel set of people which were afterwards called Samaritans.

THE kingdom of Judah was of a longer duration, and at that time was governed by Hezekiah, a truly religious prince, who allowed of no other worship through all his dominions but that of the Lord only, and as it was appointed in the law of Moses. To this purpose <sup>a</sup> he caused the gates of the temple, which his father Ahaz had shut up, to be opened, and its fabric to be repaired; ordered the priests and Levites to cleanse it; and, when it was sanctified, renewed the usual sacrifices, celebrated the passover, and, in short, restored the antient worship in all its former solemnity. Nay, not only so, but he destroyed the altars of the false gods; removed the high places, cut down the groves where the people went to worship, and <sup>b</sup> brake in pieces the brazen serpent which Moses had set up in the wilderness, because until that time the children of Israel had burnt incense unto it. This piety his God rewarded with a prosperous reign, and a very signal deliverance from the violent attempts of Sennacherib king of Assyria. For, while he was on his full march towards Jerusalem, the very night (as some think) that his army came before it, with a thorough purpose to destroy the place, and all that was therein, <sup>c</sup> an angel of the Lord went forth, and in one night smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore

Hezekiah's piety.

Sennacherib's army destroyed, and how.

<sup>a</sup> 2 Kings xvii. 33. <sup>b</sup> 2 Chron. xxix. 3. <sup>c</sup> Notwithstanding this positive declaration of the holy scripture, that the brazen serpent was in this manner destroyed by Hezekiah; in the church of St Ambrose in Milan, the Romanists at this day shew a brazen serpent, which they pretend is the very same that Moses set up in the wilderness; and upon this belief the ignorant pay an idolatrous devotion to it; though it must not be dissembled that among their learned men there are some that acknowledge the cheat, and disclaim it. Prideaux's Connection. <sup>c</sup> 2 Kings xix. 25. Herodotus, from the relation of the Egyptian priests, gives us [Lib. II.] a kind of disguised account of this deliverance from the Assyrians, in a fabulous application of it to the city Pelusium, instead of Jerusalem, and to Sethon the Egyptian king, instead of Hezekiah; by whose piety he saith it was obtained, that while the king of Assyria laid siege to Pelusium, a great number of rats were miraculously sent into his army, which in one night did eat all their shield straps, quivers and bow-strings; so that on their rising the next morning, finding themselves without arms to carry on the war, they were forced to raise the siege and be gone. Now it is very remarkable that Herodotus calls the king of Assyria, to whom this happened, by the name of Sennacherib as the scriptures do; which plainly enough shews that this is the same fact, though it be disguised in the relation. And that it should be thus disguised we need not wonder, when we consider that it comes to us through the hands of such as had the greatest aversion both to the nation and religion of the Jews; and therefore would relate nothing in such a manner as would give a reputation to either. Prideaux's Connection, Part 1. Lib. i.

score and five thousand men; so that, when he arose, he found almost all his army dead corpses. This was so terrible a judgment upon him, that he fled out of Judea in the utmost confusion, and made all the haste he could back again to Nineveh, where, by the tyranny and cruelty of his government, he became at last so intolerable to his own family, that even <sup>d</sup> two of his sons conspired against him and slew him. Some of the Jewish doctors are of opinion that this destruction upon Sennacherib's army was occasioned by lightning; but it seems most likely that it was effected by bringing on them an hot pestilential wind, which <sup>e</sup> is frequent in those parts; and often, when it lights among a multitude, destroys great numbers of them in a moment; as it frequently happens in those vast caravans of the Mahometans, who go their annual pilgrimages to Mecca.

The sun's  
recess up-  
on Ahaz's  
dial.

BUT by what means soever this deliverance was effected, it was certainly done by the interposition of providence, as was likewise his recovery from a dangerous disease, whereof he had assurance by the recess of the sun, as it appeared, upon the dial of Ahaz: but of what nature this recess was, there is some uncertainty among commentators. Most of the moderns are of opinion, that, whereas in the twentieth Chapter of the second book of Kings (wherein this event is particularly related) no mention is made of the sun's going back, but only of the shadow upon the dial, which is repeated three several times; and whereas the degrees, or lines in the dial, may denote either hours, or half hours, or (<sup>f</sup> as some think) minutes; they from thence conclude, that the miracle was wrought upon the dial only, and not upon the body of the sun, or that God, upon this occasion, made no alteration in the motion of the heavens, but only, <sup>g</sup> by the means of some extraordinary meteors or refractions, so disposed the rays of the sun, and directed its light, that no shadow should be projected, but where the prophet foretold. The prophet however, where himself gives the account of the miracle, tells us expressly, that <sup>h</sup> the sun returned ten degrees; and from hence the opinion of the antients, both Jews and christians, has been, that the miracle was not wrought upon the shadow, but upon the body of the sun; or, that the sun (as <sup>i</sup> our excellent Bishop Usher, in his Annals, expresses it) and all the heavenly bodies went back, and as much was detracted from the next night, as was added to this day. <sup>k</sup> The retrogradation however was not of so long a continuance, as to make any considerable

<sup>d</sup> Some commentators will have it that he had vowed to sacrifice his two sons Adrammelech and Sharezer, in order to appease his gods, and make them the more favourable to him in the restoration of his affairs; and that to prevent this they made bold and sacrificed him first: but for this there is no foundation, except that no other thing can be thought on to excuse so wicked and detestable a parricide. <sup>e</sup> Prideaux's Connection. <sup>f</sup> Vide Thevenot's Travels, Part II. Lib. I. c. 20. <sup>g</sup> Vid. Vessl. de Orig. & Progress. Idol. Lib. II. c. 9. <sup>h</sup> Derham's Astro-Theology. <sup>i</sup> Isaiah xxxviii. 8. <sup>j</sup> A. N. 4001. <sup>k</sup> Patrick's Commentary on 2 Kings xx. 11.

considerable alteration in the heavenly bodies. As soon as the miracle was exhibited, we may suppose, that they all returned to their proper stations, though, for the present, the change was remarkable enough to raise the wonder of the neighbouring countries, especially such as had any skill in astronomy; for which reasons we read, that Berodach Baladan, king of Babylon, sent ambassadors unto Hezekiah, not only to congratulate him upon his recovery, but <sup>1</sup> to inquire likewise of the wonder that was done in the land.

Thus favoured and beloved of God, Hezekiah reigned in peace, and at his death was highly honoured by all Judah and Jerusalem: for they buried him with great solemnity in the chiefest and highest place of <sup>m</sup> the sepulchres of the sons of David, expressing thereby their opinion of him, that he was the worthiest and best of all that had reigned over them, of that family, since him that was the founder of it.

It was the misfortune of king Hezekiah to be succeeded by a son, who was the wickedest, and worst of all his race: for after him reigned <sup>n</sup> Manasseh, who being a minor of twelve years old only when he came to the crown, had the misfortune to fall into the hands of such of the nobility, for his guardians and chief ministers, as being ill-affected to his father's reformation, took effectual care to breed him up in the greatest aversion to it, and to corrupt his youth with the worst of principles, both as to religion and government; insomuch, that when he grew up, he proved the most impious towards God, and the most tyrannical and wicked towards his subjects of any that ever reigned either in Jerusalem, or Samaria. For he not only restored all kinds of idolatry, but converted the house of God into an idol-temple, set up an image in the sanctuary, erected altars to Baalim, and all the host of heaven, in both the courts; made his children pass through the fire to Moloch; and, in short, brought in all manner of idolatrous profanations, whereby the

Of the  
World,  
3396, &c  
Before  
Christ,  
68 &c.



Manasseh's  
wickedness  
and reform-  
ation.

VOL. II.

L 1

true

1 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. <sup>m</sup> This burial-place, which is called the sepulchres of the kings of the house of David, is a very sumptuous and stately work. It lies now without the walls of Jerusalem, but (as it is supposed) was formerly within them, before the city was destroyed by the Romans. It consists of a large court, of about one hundred and twenty foot square, with a gallery or cloister on the left hand, which court and gallery, with the pillars that support it, were cut out of the solid marble rock. At the end of the gallery, there is a narrow passage or hole, through which there is an entrance into a large room or hall, of about twenty-four foot square, within which, are several lesser rooms, one within another, with stone-doors, opening into them; all which rooms, with the great hall, were likewise cut out of the solid marble rock. In the sides of these lesser rooms are several niches, in which the corpse of the deceased kings are deposited in stone-coffins; and in the innermost, and chiefest of these, was the body of good Hezekiah laid, in a nich cut out on purpose, in the upper part of the room, to do him the greater honour. The whole seems to have been the work of king Solomon: for it could not have been made without vast expence. It is still intire to this day; and is the only true remainder of old Jerusalem now to be seen in that place. Pideaux's Connection, Part I. Lib. I. p 2 Kings xx. 21.

true religion might be most corrupted, and all manner of impiety the most promoted in the kingdom. And, to this purpose, he not only practised these abominations himself, but raised a terrible persecution against all that would not comply with them; whereby he filled the whole land with innocent blood, and put many of the prophets, who adventured to reprove him (and, among these, the prophet Isaiah, who was fawn asunder) to violent and very barbarous deaths. Provoked at these horrid impieties, God solemnly declared that he would stretch out over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and wipe Jerusalem clean of all its inhabitants, as a man wipeth a dish, and turneth it upside down: which, in process of time, was fully executed; but, for the present, he only stirred up the Assyrians to make an incursion into Judea, who committed great outrages in the country, and, seizing the king, put him in irons, and, with a great number of his people, carried him away prisoner to Babylon. But, when his chains and prison had brought him to himself, he repented of his sins, and (God mollifying the heart of the king of Babylon towards him) was restored to his liberty, and returned to Jerusalem; where he destroyed the idolatrous worship he had before established, and, for the remainder of his days, devoted himself intirely to the service of God, for which he vouchsafed him a very signal deliverance.

NEBUCHODONOSOR, king of Assyria, having defeated and taken Arphaxad, king of the Medes, proposed to himself to subdue the nations of Asia to the west-ward. On which expedition he sent his general Holofernes with a mighty army, who, spreading terror in all parts, made himself master of Mesopotamia, Syria, Libya, and Cilicia; and, at length, coming into Judæa, and laying siege to <sup>p</sup> Bethulia, was there destroyed, and all his army cut to pieces, in such a manner, as is related at large in the Book of Judith: but whether this book be true, or feigned history only, is what learned men are not so well agreed in.

The Book  
of Judith  
considered.

THE Romanists indeed will have it to be all true; for they have received it into the canon of divine writ: but many protestant writers <sup>a</sup> account it rather a parabolical, than real history,

<sup>o</sup> 2 kings xxi. 13. <sup>p</sup> Bethulia, according to Calmet [before his Commentary on the Book of Judith] was the same with Bethul, [Josh. xix. 4.] a city in the tribe of Simeon, where stood a famous pantheon, or temple dedicated to all the gods, situate on a rising hill, and so overlooking the whole city; from whence, very probably, the place was called Bethul, i. e. the house of God. Travellers indeed tell us of another place, called Bethulia, situate in the tribe of Zebulon, to the north of Scythopolis: but that is of too modern a date, to be the place here intended, since neither Joshua, nor Josephus, nor Eusebius, nor St Jerome, make any mention of it. <sup>q</sup> What hath led these men to account the whole an allegory is its utter inconsistency (if taken in a true and literal sense) with all the times, where it has been placed, either before or after the captivity of the Jews: but the objections, brought to this purpose, are all taken off, by our placing it in the latter part of Manasseh's reign. Priebeaux's Connection, P. I. L. I.

tory, designed for the comfort and instruction of the Jews under a figure or allegory, but not to be a narrative of any thing really done. † Grotius, in particular, is very positive that this book was written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, when he came into Judæa to raise a persecution against the Jewish church; and that the design of it was to confirm the Jews, under that persecution, in their hopes that God would send them a deliverance. He tells us, “that therein by Judith, is represented  
 “Judæa; by Bethulia, the temple or house of God; and by  
 “the sword, which went out from thence, the prayers of the  
 “saints; that Nebuchodonosor doth there denote the devil;  
 “and the kingdom of Assyria, the devil’s kingdom, pride; that  
 “by Holofernes is meant the instrument of the devil in that  
 “persecution, Antiochus Epiphanes, who made himself master  
 “of Judæa, that fair widow, so called, because destitute of re-  
 “lief; and that Eliakim signifies God, who would arise in her  
 “defence, and at length cut off that instrument of the devil,  
 “who would have corrupted her.” All this explication is very ingenious; but then it must be owned, that, as there is not much of the air of a fiction or parable in the book, so both the Jews and antient christians always looked upon it as a true history, and have accordingly quoted it, though the former never admitted it into the number of their canonical and inspired writings.

AFTER Manasseh, reigned † Amon his son, who imitating the first part of his father’s reign, rather than the latter, gave himself up to all manner of wickedness and impiety; whereupon the servants of his house conspired against him, and slew him, so that after two years reign, he was succeeded † by his son Josiah, who was then but eight years old: but having the happiness to fall under the conduct of better guardians in his minority, than did Manasseh his grandfather, he proved, when grown up, a prince of very extraordinary worth, and not only equalled, but even excelled, in all kinds of piety and goodness, the very best of his predecessors. For immediately, upon his accession to the throne, he not only destroyed the idols, and altars of Baal, but that of Bethel likewise; and those that were in the high-places, together with all other things that tended to idolatry. Nay, himself visited Bethel in person, caused the bones of the idolatrous priests to be dug up, and burnt upon one of the altars according to the predictions that had been made of him some hundred years before: and, in this manner, carried on a general reformation through all the cities of Samaria that were subject to his dominion. In the mean time, he ordered the temple at Jerusalem to be repaired and beautified, which while the high-priest was narrowly surveying, in

Josiah’s  
great  
piety.

A copy of  
the law  
found in  
the temple.  
order

† In Præfatione ad Annotationes in Librum. s 2 Kings xxi. 19. † Ibid chap. xxii.

order to see what was proper to be done, he found the authentic copy of the law of Moses, which ought indeed to have been laid up on the side of the ark of the covenant, in the most holy place, but was taken out from thence, and hid elsewhere in the reign of Manasseh (as is conjectured) for fear it might be destroyed by him in the time of his impiety. <sup>u</sup> By the behaviour of the high-priest, as well as the king, at the finding of the book of the law, it plainly appears, that neither of them had seen any copy of it before; which shews into how corrupt a state the church of the Jews was then sunk, until this good king reformed it. For, though Hezekiah <sup>\*</sup> kept scribes on purpose to collect together, and write out copies of the holy scriptures; yet, through the iniquity of the times that afterwards followed, in the reigns of Manasseh and Amon, they had either been so destroyed, or else so neglected and lost, that there were none of them left in the land, unless in some few private hands, where they were kept and concealed, till this copy was found in the temple: and therefore, after this time (by the care, we may be assured, of this religious prince) were transcribed those copies of the law, and other holy scriptures then in being, out of which Ezra, after the captivity, made his edition of canonical books, as we shall take notice of hereafter.

Of the  
World,  
3392, &c.  
Before  
Christ,  
612, &c.



The de-  
struction of  
Nineveh.

IT was in the twenty-ninth year of the reign of Josiah, that Nabopollaser, king of Babylon, having made an affinity with Astyages, the eldest son of Cyaxares, by the marriage of Nebuchadnezzar, his son, with Amyitis, daughter to Astyages, entered into a confederacy with him against the Assyrians: whereupon, joining their forces together, they besieged Nineveh, took it, and slew the king thereof; and then, to gratify the Medes, utterly destroyed that great and antient city. For, <sup>x</sup> though there was another erected out of the ruins of it, which, for a long time, bore the same name; yet it never attained to the grandeur and glory of the mother city. It is, at this time, called Mosul, and is situated on the west-side of the river Tigris; whereas the antient Nineveh stood on the east-side of it, where are to be seen some of its ruins, of great extent, even to this day. And indeed the extent of it could not but be very large, when, according to the account of <sup>y</sup> an author of good authority, the circuit of it was four hundred and eighty furlongs, which, in our computation, make sixty miles; and when, even in Jonah's time, the number of those who <sup>z</sup> could not discern between their right hand and their left, *i. e.* of infants, that had not yet attained to the use of reason, being more than sixscore thousand persons, could not fail <sup>a</sup> of making the whole amount to above six hundred thousand souls.

THE

<sup>u</sup> 2 Kings xxii. 8, &c. <sup>\*</sup> Prov. xxv. 1. <sup>x</sup> Thevenot's Travels, P. II. L. I. c. 11. <sup>y</sup> Diodorus Siculus, L. II. <sup>z</sup> Jonah iv. 11. <sup>a</sup> Calmet's Dictionary on the word Nineveh.

THE Babylonians and Medes having thus destroyed Nineveh, became so very formidable, that they raised the jealousy of all their neighbours; and therefore, to put a stop to their growing greatness, Necho, king of Egypt, marched with a great army towards Euphrates, with a design to make war upon them: but, taking his way through Judæa, and desiring of Jofiah a free passage, which Jofiah refusing, and posting his army at proper places, in order to obstruct his march; they soon came to an engagement, wherein the king of Judah received a wound, of which he shortly died. The death of so excellent a prince was deservedly lamented by all his people; and by none more than by Jeremiah the prophet, who, having a thorough sense of the greatness of the loss, as well as a full foresight of the fore calamities which were afterwards to follow upon the whole people of the Jews, while his heart was full with the view of both these, he composed the greatest part of that mournful song, which is called the Lamentations of Jeremy.

The death  
of Jofiah,

IT is the notion of many, that Jofiah engaged rashly and unadvisedly in this war, upon an over-confidence in the merit of his undertakings. But this would be a presumption very unbecoming so religious a person, and what there is no occasion for supposing, so long as there is a much better reason to be given for what he did. <sup>b</sup> From the time of Manasseh's restoration, the kings of Judah were homagers to the kings of Babylon, and bound by oath to adhere to them against all their enemies, and especially to defend that border of the empire against the Egyptians: for which purpose they seem to have had a concession of the other parts of the land of Canaan, which were inhabited by the children of Israel, before their captivity; as it is certain that Jofiah exercised a jurisdiction over them. And therefore had Jofiah, under such an obligation, permitted an enemy of the king of Babylon to pass through his country to make war upon him, without any opposition, it would have amounted to the breach of his oath, and a violation of that fidelity, which he had, in the name of his God, sworn unto him; and this, so good and just a man as Jofiah was, could not but absolutely detest. It was not from any presumption of his own merit therefore, but from a real sense of his duty, that he engaged in this war, wherein he unhappily fell, and with him fell all the glory, honour, and prosperity of the Jewish nation. For, after this time, nothing else ensued but a dismal scene of God's judgments upon the land, till, at length, all Judah and Jerusalem were swallowed up by a woeful destruction.

and why  
occasioned,

FOR (not to mention the intermediate reigns, which were remarkable for nothing so much as for their wickedness) soon after Jehoiakim came to the throne, <sup>c</sup> Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, invaded Judæa, besieged Jerusalem, and took it, and carried

The capti-  
vity of Ju-  
dah, and  
destruction  
of Jerusa-  
lem.

<sup>b</sup> Pridcaux's Connection, P. I. L. IV. <sup>c</sup> 2 Kings xxiv. 12.

carried away the king, and part of the vessels of the temple, into Babylon; but afterwards, upon condition that Jehoiakim should become tributary to him, he released him, and restored him to his dominions. It was not long however before Jehoiakim revoked his subjection; whereupon Judæa was again invaded, Jerusalem again besieged, and Jehoiakim in a sally taken and slain; and when Jehoichin his son surrendered the town, he obtained no other favour, than barely to save his life: for he was immediately put in chains, and carried to Babylon, and with him a vast number of captives, his mother and wives, his officers and princes, the mighty men of valour to recruit the king's army, and artificers of all kinds to carry on his building at Babylon, together with all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and all the riches that were found in the king's house. He left, in short, none behind, but the very refuse of the people; yet over these he made Mattaniah (giving him the name of <sup>a</sup> Zedekiah, and requiring an oath of subjection of him) king. But, after some time, Zedekiah, having entered into a league with Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt, and thereupon broken his oath to the king of Babylon, the king of Babylon drew together a great army; and, in a short time, coming before Jerusalem, he so closely begirt it, that the people were reduced to the last extremity, and forced to feed upon one another for want. In this sad condition the city was taken by storm, and when the king, with some of his best forces, had broken through the enemy's camp, and endeavoured to escape over Jordan, he was soon overtaken in the plains of Jericho, where the few that were with him, were dispersed, and himself being made prisoner, was carried to Nebuchadnezzar, then residing at Riblah in Syria, who (to augment his grief) having caused his sons, and all the princes that dissuaded the surrender of the town, to be put to death before his face, commanded his eyes to be put out, and, binding him in fetters of brass, carried him in triumph to Babylon, where he died in prison. Soon after this, Nebuzaradan, captain of his guards, having plundered the house of the Lord, and every house in Jerusalem, of all the wealth that he could any where find, set the temple and the city on fire, overthrew the walls, fortresses, and towers belonging to them; and utterly razed every building therein, until he had brought it to a perfect desolation. And in this condition it remained for fifty-two years after, when, by the favour of Cyrus, the Jews were released from their captivity, and, returning to their own land again, repaired these ruins, and rebuilt their holy city.

S E C T.

<sup>a</sup> Zedekiah, in the Chaldee tongue, signifieth the justice of the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar, in giving Mattaniah that name, intended to remind him continually of the vengeance which he was to expect from the justice of the Lord his God, in case he violated that fidelity which he had in so solemn a manner sworn unto him. Prideaux's Connection, P. I. L. I.




## S E C T. III.

## Occurrences during the Captivity.

**N**EBUCHADNEZZAR returning to Babylon after the end of the Jewish war, and the full settlement of his affairs in Syria and Palestine, out of the spoils which he had taken in that expedition, made a golden image to the honour of Bel his God, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits, which he set up in the plains of Dura, with a positive injunction for every one of his subjects to worship it. The whole story is at large related in the third chapter of Daniel; but how Daniel escaped the fiery furnace, to which his three friends upon this occasion were condemned, is made a matter of inquiry by some. That he did not fall down and worship the idol is most certain, because such an impious act could no where comport with the character of so religious a man: and therefore we must say that either he was absent, or else, being present, was not accused. Nebuchadnezzar, we read, had summoned all his princes, counsellors, governors, captains, and other officers and ministers to come to the dedication of this image: and therefore it is hardly supposable that Daniel, who was become one of the chief of them, should be absent. That he was present therefore seems most probable; but his enemies thought it not adviseable to begin with him, because of the singular esteem which the king had for him, for having so lately interpreted his dream of the image made up of different metals, which all the magicians, and astrologers, and forcerers, and Chaldeans that were in his kingdom could not do. They thought it more proper therefore to fall first on his three friends, and by that means to pave their way to the other's destruction afterwards. But the miraculous interposition of providence

Of the  
World,  
3:17, &c.  
Before  
Christ,  
557, &c.



Why Daniel was  
not thrown  
into the  
fiery furnace  
with his three  
friends.

e Bel, or Baal, is the same with Belus, who, being the first king of Babylon, had after his death divine honours paid him, and a noble temple built in that city, and consecrated to him; which stood until Xerxes in his return from his Grecian expedition, demolished and laid it in rubbish, after he had plundered it of its immense riches. Vide Calmet's Dictionary on the word Bel, and Prideaux's Connection, Part I. Lib. I. f When this image is said to be sixty cubits, *i. e.* ninety foot high, it must be understood of the image and pedestal all together: for since it is but six cubits broad or thick, its height (if sixty cubits) must have been ten times its breadth or thickness, which exceeds all the proportions of a man; because no man's height is above six times his thickness, measuring the slenderest man living at the waist. It is very likely therefore that this image was the very same with that which, as Diodorus Siculus tells us, was set up in the temple of Belus, and was no more than forty foot high or thereabouts; for this makes the proportion between its height and breadth very just: besides that the same Diodorus tells us that this of forty foot high contained a thousand Babylonish talents of gold, which amounts to three millions and an half of our money, and therefore to advance the height of the statue to ninety foot, without the pedestal, will increase the value to a sum utterly incredible. Prideaux, *ibid.*

vidence in behalf of his friends quashed all farther accusations about this matter, and so Daniel's name was not once called in question.

DANIEL, who was descended from the royal race of David, was one of those noble youths, <sup>s</sup> who, at the first captivity of Judah, was made choice of for his wit and beauty and carried away to Babylon with his three companions, to be instructed in the language and learning of the country, in order to qualify them to stand before the king and serve him. He had made great proficiency in all the arts and sciences of the Chaldeans; but Nebuchadnezzar, perceiving that there was a power superior to all sciences communicated to him, advanced him to be <sup>h</sup> chief of the governors of the wise men, and ruler over all the province of Babylon. With him he lived in great credit and esteem: and, when he had interpreted his dream concerning the great and spacious tree that was hewn down, so as to import his own approaching calamity, he had nevertheless that authority with him as to interpose this wholesome counsel: <sup>i</sup> Wherefore, O king, break off thy sins with righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, if peradventure there may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

Nebuchadnezzar's being turned into a beast, and the occasion of it.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR, who had seen the verifying of Daniel's prophecies, and likewise been eye-witness of God's great power and providence, might have been depressed in mind, one would think, upon the apprehensions of such an impending judgment: but instead of humbling himself and deprecating it by repentance, as he was walking, not long after, in his palace at Babylon, most likely in his hanging gardens, and in the uppermost terraces of them, from whence he might have a full prospect of that vast and overgrown city, he ostentatiously said, <sup>k</sup> Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? But while the words were yet in his mouth, there came a voice to him from heaven to rebuke his pride, which told him that his kingdom was departed from him, and that he should be driven from the society of men, and thenceforth for seven years have his dwelling with the wild beasts of the field, there to live like them in a brutal manner. Immediately hereupon he fell into a distemper, which made such a change in his imagination, that he thought himself transformed into an ox: and accordingly assumed the same inclinations and manner of life, eating grass as oxen do, and taking his lodging on the ground in the open air, <sup>l</sup> until his hair (as the text expresses it) was grown like eagles feathers, and his nails like birds claws.

SEVERAL interpreters indeed impute his absenting himself from all human society, and retreating into the fields in this manner, not to any distemper of his own, but to a compulsion

put

put upon him by his subjects rebellion; who, weary of his tyranny, conspired against him and forced him to fly, placing in the mean time his son Evil-Merodach upon the throne. But though it seems not unlikely that, during his distraction, his son might be admitted to the administration of the government; yet at the end of the seven years, when his understanding returned to him again, his subjects we find were so far from being offended at any misconduct of his, that they sent a deputation of his lords and counsellors to recal him, and re-establish him in his kingdom with more glory and majesty than ever; whereupon he extolled and honoured the king of heaven, <sup>m</sup> whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, whose works are truth, and his ways judgment, and to whom all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and by a public decree made acknowledgment hereof through all the Babylonish empire, praising the Almighty Power, and magnifying the Divine Mercy and Goodness in his late restoration: and in this good disposition it is presumeable he died; because one of the last acts of his life <sup>n</sup> is said to have been his foretelling his subjects of the coming of the Persians to destroy the Babylonish empire; <sup>o</sup> wherein he testified the faith and confidence he had in what the God of heaven had declared unto him by the mouth of his prophet Daniel.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach, who took compassion on Jehoiachin the captive king of Judah, and releasing him from his imprisonment, in the seven and thirtieth year of his captivity, treated him with great respect, and allowed him an honourable maintenance, with the right of precedence before all other princes in Babylon. He reigned but two years, and was succeeded by his son Belshazzar, a profane and luxurious prince, who, in the midst of his rioting and drunkenness, fell a sacrifice to the Medes and Persians, when they took his royal city by a stratagem (which we shall shortly have occasion to mention) and at the same time destroyed the Babylonish empire, after it had continued from the beginning of the reign of Nabonassar (who first founded it) two hundred and nine years. After Belshazzar, Cyaxares, whom the scripture

Daniel delivered from the lions.

calls Darius the Mede, assumed the throne, and bestowing great marks of his favour on Daniel, intended to have made him his prime minister, as he had been in some preceding reigns; but the thoughts of this stirred up so great envy against him among the other courtiers, that they laid <sup>p</sup> such a snare for him as cast him into the lions den. But the providence of God appeared so visibly in his preservation from all harm, that this malicious contrivance ended in the destruction of its authors, the mani-

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<sup>m</sup> Dan. iv. 34, &c. <sup>n</sup> Abydenus apud Euseb. Præp. Evan. Lib. IX. <sup>o</sup> Prie-  
deaux's Connection, Part I. Lib. i. <sup>p</sup> Dan. vi.

festation of God's glory, and the establishment of Daniel in the prince's favour.

His prayers  
to God,

THE time which the prophet Jeremiah had prefixed for the continuance of Judah's captivity being now drawing towards a conclusion, Daniel thought it his duty to humble himself before God, and to make his ardent supplications to him <sup>q</sup> that he would remember his people, and grant a restoration to Jerusalem, and make his face shine again upon his holy city, and upon his sanctuary which was desolate. Whereupon he had in a vision assurance given him by the angel Gabriel, not only of the deliverance of Judah from their temporal captivity under the Babylonians; but also of a much greater redemption which God would give his church in his delivering them from their spiritual captivity under sin and Satan, to be accomplished at the end of seventy weeks, from the going forth of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem. The words of the prophecy are these: <sup>r</sup>

and famous  
prophecy  
stated and  
explained.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand, that, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and to the end of the war desolations are determined; and he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate; even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured out upon the desolate. Now to set these words in a right light, we must consider,

1. That the main purport and intendment of them is to foretel the coming of the Messiah, his abolishing the Jewish, and setting up a new and more perfect religion; which is so manifest to every common reader, that the Jews (to avoid the force of this one prophecy) have adventured to exclude the whole book of Daniel from the number of inspired writings. 2. It is agreed by most interpreters <sup>s</sup> that the seventy weeks here spoken of (according to the prophetic stile) are to be taken for weeks of years, every one of which contains seven years, and so the seventy weeks will amount to four hundred and ninety years: at the expiration of which term the matters contained in this prophecy were to have their accomplishment. But then the question

<sup>q</sup> Dan. ix. <sup>r</sup> Ibid. ver. 24, &c. <sup>s</sup> Prideaux's Connection, Part I. Lib. V.

tion is, at what point of time these seventy weeks, or what is all one, these four hundred and ninety years, either began or expired; for if we can happily find out one of the periods, there will be less difficulty in stating the other. Now, 3. It seems pretty plain that the several events specified in the beginning of the prophecy, viz. 1. to finish or restrain transgressions; 2. to make an end of sins; 3. to make expiation or reconciliation for iniquity; 4. to bring in everlasting righteousness; 5. to seal up or complete, and fulfil the vision and prophecy; and, 6. to anoint the most holy, were all accomplished in that great work of our salvation, by the death and passion, and by the doctrine and resurrection of our Saviour Christ. For, being born without original, and having lived without actual sin, he truly was the most holy of all that ever bore our nature; and, being thereby fully qualified for this great work, he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power to be our priest, our prophet, and our king. As our priest he offered himself a sacrifice upon the cross, and thereby made atonement for our sins, which is making an end of them, by taking away their guilt; and in so doing working reconciliation for us with God. As our prophet he gave us the gospel, a law of everlasting righteousness, and the only revelation we are to expect; and as our king he sent his holy Spirit into our hearts, to guide and influence us according to this law; whereby he has taken an effectual method to restrain and extinguish in us all manner of transgressions; and in doing all this he hath sealed up, *i. e.* fulfilled and thoroughly finished all that by visions and prophecies had been before revealed concerning him. Since therefore all these events were brought to pass and accomplished at the time of Christ's death, this must determine us where to fix the end of the weeks wherein the events were to be accomplished: and if the end of these weeks is to be fixed at the death of Christ; then, 4thly, This will determine us where to place the beginning of them, viz. four hundred and ninety years before; which is the very year and month wherein Ezra had his commission from Artaxerxes Longimanus king of Persia, for his returning to Jerusalem, there to restore the church and state of the Jews.

The only objection against this computation is, "That the words of the prophecy seem to denote a real building of the city, since it makes mention of its streets and walls; whereas that work was executed upon the decree granted by Cyrus, several years before Ezra was in commission." But this objection will appear of little force if once it be considered that figurative

An objection against this explanation answered.

Most learned men agree that the death of Christ happened in the year of the Julian period 4746, and in the Jewish month Nisan, and therefore, if we reckon 497 years backward, this will lead us up to the month Nisan in the year of the Julian period 4256, which, according to Ptolomy's canon, was the seventh year of Artaxerxes's reign, in which the scripture tells us [Ezra vii. 1] that his commission was granted.

figurative expressions are in a manner necessary in prophecies, and that nothing is more common in scripture than, by Jerusalem in particular, to mean the whole political and ecclesiastical state of that people. The commission itself however determines the controversy. For if we look into it we shall find that the king gave Ezra full power and authority to restore the law of Moses, and fully re-establish it both in church and state; to appoint magistrates and judges; to govern the people according to it; and to punish all such as should be refractory and disobedient, either by death, banishment, imprisonment, or confiscation of goods, according to the nature of their crimes; which is restoring and building Jerusalem in a figurative sense.

THERE is another difficulty observable in this prophecy which deserves our attention, and that is the division of the seventy weeks into three distinct periods, *i. e.* into seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week; to each of which a different event is assigned. In the seven weeks, or forty-nine years, from the going forth of the commandment, the streets and walls of Jerusalem, *i. e.* the restoration and establishment of the church and state of the Jews is to be accomplished. In the sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and thirty-four years more, the Messiah is to come and make his appearance in the world; and in one week, or seven years after this, he is to confirm a covenant with many, and cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease: all which was literally fulfilled. For in the space of forty-nine years, which answers to seven weeks, the reformation and establishment of the Jewish church and state was carried on and completed; first by Ezra, in virtue of a decree granted him in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, and afterwards by Nehemiah, in virtue of another granted him by the same prince in the twentieth year of his reign. From that time, in the space of four hundred and thirty-four years, which answers to sixty-two weeks, our blessed Saviour appeared in the world as the Messiah, and for seven years after that, first by his forerunner John the Baptist, for the space of three years and an half; and then by himself in person for three years and an half more, (which being put together make up the last week in the prophecy) he confirmed the covenant of the gospel with as many of the Jews as were converted, and embraced those laws of everlasting righteousness which he published: and, at length, by the sacrifice of his most precious blood, made all other victims and oblations, which were but types and emblems of his, for ever cease and be abolished.

As to the other part of the prophecy, it relates so evidently to the destruction of Jerusalem that it needs no explanation. Whoever has read Josephus cannot but observe, that by the destruction of the city and sanctuary by the people of the prince that was to come, who with their armies and desolating abominations, should invade Judea as with a flood, and by a terrible  
and

and consuming war bring utter ruin and desolation upon it, and upon all the people of the Jews that should dwell therein, can be meant nothing but Titus at the head of a Roman army, executing the wrath of God for the murder of his Son our Saviour upon that devoted city and people, in such a terrible and tragical manner as their historian has related it. But to return.

AFTER the death of Darius the Mede, Cyrus, who by the death of his father Cambyfes was already become king of Persia, returned to Babylon, and taking upon him the government of the <sup>u</sup> whole, was the first founder of what was called the Persian empire. He was indeed a very extraordinary person in the age wherein he lived, for wisdom, virtue and valour. His assisting his uncle Cyaxares, and vanquishing his enemies, when the king of Babylon and other confederate powers had conspired his ruin; his subduing Cræsus king of Lydia, and afterward receiving him into his most intimate counsels; and his taking the great city of Babylon by draining the Euphrates in a manner almost incredible: these and many more of his martial exploits are recorded by the \* authors that have inquired into his life: but what makes him so famous in holy writ is his being appointed by name to be the restorer of the state of Israel above an hundred and fifty years before he was born. \* The prophecies relating to this matter, Josephus tells us he had read, as indeed we find them recited <sup>v</sup> in the decree for rebuilding the temple. So good a man as Daniel, who had the restoration of his brethren so much at heart, and, in the station he filled, so easy an access to this prince, can hardly be supposed to be backward in employing the credit and interest he had with him to persuade him to a thing so good in itself, and so highly conducive to his immortal honour. But whatever second causes might contribute hereunto, it was God's over-ruling power which turneth the hearts of princes which way he pleases, that in the first

Of the  
World,  
3:167, &c.  
Before  
Christ,  
537, &c.  
Cyrus's  
actions and  
decree for  
the restora-  
tion of the  
Jews.

<sup>u</sup> *i. e.* Of all Media, Persia and Assyria.

\* The two chief are Herodotus and Xenophon, whose relations are very different. Herodotus's account of him contains narratives that are much more strange and surprising, and consequently more diverting and acceptable to the reader; and for this reason more have chosen to follow him than Xenophon. But though Xenophon (as being a great commander as well as a great politician) has certainly grafted many maxims of war and policy into his history; yet where nothing of this appears, I take him to be an historian of much better credit, in matters of fact, than Herodotus. Herodotus having travelled thro' Egypt, Syria, and several other countries in order to the writing of his history, did, as travellers use to do, put down all matters upon trust, and in many no doubt was imposed on. But Xenophon was a man of another character: he wrote all things with great judgment and due consideration; and having lived in the court of Cyrus the younger, a descendant of the Cyrus whom we now speak of, had opportunities of being better informed of what he wrote of this great prince, than Herodotus was; and confining himself to his argument only, no doubt he examined all matters relating to it more thoroughly, and gave a more accurate and exact account of them than could be expected from the other, who wrote of all things, at large, as they came in his way. Prideaux's Connection, part I. Lib. II.

<sup>x</sup> Isa. xliij. 28. and xlv. 1. y Ezra i. 2.

first year of his monarchy over the east put it in his royal breast to issue out a decree for the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, and the return of the Jews to their own country. Whereupon he restored to them all the sacred vessels and utensils which had been brought to Babylon in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and gave them all the farther encouragement that their rulers could request.

## S E C T. II.

### Occurrences after the Return of the J E W S.

Of the  
World,  
3468, &c.  
Before  
Christ,  
536, &c.

**W**HEN the Jews were returned from their captivity, under the conduct of their chief leaders Zerubbabel, and Joshua, they immediately set about the building of the temple; <sup>z</sup> but the Samaritans coming, and offering their assistance, as well as to join with them in the same religious communion (which the Jews, for good reasons, thought fit to reject) they became their utter enemies: and though they could not procure a revocation of the decree which Cyrus had granted, yet, by bribes and underhand dealings with his ministers, they put such obstructions to the execution of it, that, for several years, the building went on but very slowly. Nay, the Jews themselves, considering what a poor figure the temple, they were erecting was like to make, in comparison of that splendid one which Solomon had built, began to be dejected and despond; whereupon the prophet † Haggai was sent with this message of encouragement: Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I will shake all nations, *i. e.* I will stir up in all nations, by signs, by prophecies, and by mighty wonders, a general expectation of the Messiah, and, in the fulness of time, will send him who can answer all their wants and wishes; who will be a prophet to instruct them, a priest to make atonement, and an advocate to make intercession for them; and may therefore deservedly be stiled the desire of all nations: and I will fill this house with glory: for, though the former temple was very famous for many extraordinary things, for the ark of the covenant, the Urim and Thummim, a vast profusion of silver and gold, and above all, for the angelical appearance on the mercy-seat; yet, all these shall be nothing, in comparison of that glory which shall redound upon this present temple when this divine person shall vouchsafe to grace it with his presence, as he certainly shall do, during its standing. In other ornaments, saith the Lord, I could make the splendor of this temple, as well as Solomon's, consist; for gold is mine, and silver is mine; but in this particular I will have it distinguished, that in this place I will give peace, that, during its standing, the desire of all nations shall come, upon

Haggai's  
prophecy  
expound-  
ed.



upon whose account, the glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former : wherefore be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord, and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech the high-priest, and be strong all the people of the land, saith the Lord, and work ; for I am with you.

THIS was a very gracious exhortation from God, but at this time perhaps the more necessary, because it is very probable, that, much about this time, Daniel died, who, during his life, was in great favour with the several princes he had the honour to serve, and a powerful advocate for his countrymen the Jews.

Daniel's death, character and writings.

<sup>a</sup> He was (as we hinted before) a very extraordinary person both in wisdom and piety, and, for this reason, was both favoured by God, and honoured by men, beyond any that lived in his time. His prophecies, concerning the coming of the Messiah, and other great events, are so very clear and full, that <sup>b</sup> Porphyry, in his objections against them, will have them to be written after the facts were done ; for to him they seemed to be rather a narration of matters already transacted, than a prediction of things to come. The Jews indeed think fit to place them only among their hagiographia, because, say they, he lived not in the prophetic manner of life, but was conversant in courts, and a prime minister to the kings of Babylon : and though he might be vouchsafed some divine discoveries, yet they were but by dreams and visions of the night, which they account the most imperfect, and below the prophetic manner of revelation. It is to be observed however, that <sup>c</sup> Josephus, who was one of the antientest writers of that nation, reckons him among the greatest of the prophets ; telling us, that he had familiar converse with God, and not only foretold future events, as other prophets did, but determined the very time when they were to come to pass. Our Saviour, we all know, gives him the title of <sup>d</sup> a prophet, though all things that go under his name must not be accounted canonical writings. The book, wherein his predictions are contained, is originally written in the Chaldee language, *i. e.* from the fourth verse of the second chapter, to the end of the seventh (for there he treats of Babylonish affairs) but all the rest is Hebrew. The Song of the three Children, and the History of Susannah, and of Bell and the Dragon (though allowed by the church of Rome to have the same authority with the rest of his writings) are neither extant in the Hebrew, nor Chaldee language ; were never received into the canon of holy writ by the Jewish church ; and are too manifestly the work of some Hellenistical Jew ; because, in the History of Susannah, Daniel, in his replies to the elders, <sup>e</sup> alludes to the Greek names of

<sup>a</sup> Prideaux's Connection, Part I. Lib. iii. <sup>b</sup> Hieronymus, in Proæmio ad comment. in Daniëlem. <sup>c</sup> Antiq Lib. X. c. 12. <sup>d</sup> Matth. xxiv. 15. <sup>e</sup> Thus, in the examination of the elders, when one of them said that he saw the adultery committed *hypo schinon*, *i. e.* under a mastich tree Daniel answers in allusion

of the trees, under which they said the adultery wherewith they charged her was committed, which allusions cannot hold good in any other language.

The death  
of Cyrus,  
and man-  
ner of it.

NOT long after the death of Daniel, the Jews had another great loss in the death of Cyrus, their great benefactor, after he had reigned, from his first taking on him the command of the Persian and Median armies, thirty years; from his taking of Babylon, nine years; and from his being sole monarch of the East, seven years: but, as to the manner of his death, there are different accounts among historians. Some tell us that he lost his life in a sea-fight with the people of Samos; others will have it that in a war with the Scythians he was taken prisoner, and had his head cut off by their queen Thomyris: but the most probable opinion is, <sup>r</sup> that he died peaceably in his bed amidst his friends, and in his own country. For, besides, that it is by no means likely that so wise a man as Cyrus was, and in so advanced years as he then must be, should engage in any hazardous undertaking; we can hardly conceive how his son Cambyfes could have settled himself so easily in this new-erected empire, holden it in such quiet at home, and enlarged it with such conquests abroad, had not his father left it to him in the utmost tranquillity.

The temple  
finished.

CAMBYSES's reign however was not <sup>s</sup> long: and when after a short <sup>h</sup> usurpation, Darius Hyftaspes came to be chosen king,

allusion to *schinon*, the angels of God have received sentence of God *schisai se meson*, i. e. to cut thee in two; and, when the other elder said that it was *tyo prinon*, i. e. under an holm-tree, Daniel answers, in allusion to the word *prison*, The angel of the Lord waiteth with the sword *prisai se meson*, i. e. to cut thee in two. Prideaux, *ibid.* f Xenophon's *Cyropæd.* Lib. VIII. Besides, all authors agree, that Cyrus was buried at Pasargada in Persia, where Xenophon saith he died, and where his monumens was standing in the time of Alexander: but, had he been slain in Scythia, and his body there mangled, by way of indignity, in such a manner as Herodotus and Justin relate, how can we suppose it could ever have been brought thence out of the hands of those enraged barbarians to be buried at Pasargada? Prideaux's *Connection*, Part I. Lib. iii. g He reigned but seven years and five months.

<sup>h</sup> The manner of which usurpation is thus related by most historians. Cambyfes had an only brother, whom Herodotus calls Smerdis, and Justin Mergis, whom he, conceiving some jealousy of, caused to be murdered privately. He had, when he went upon the Egyptian expedition, left the supreme government of his affairs in the hands of Patizithes, one of the chief magians, who likewise had a brother very much resembling Smerdis the son of Cyrus, and, for that reason perhaps, called by the same name. Patizithes, hearing of the young prince's death, and supposing that the extravagancies of Cambyfes had made him detested by his subjects, placed this brother of his on the throne, pretending that he was the true Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, and so sent heralds through the empire to proclaim him king. It was the custom of the Eastern kings, in those times, to live retired in their palaces, and there transact all their affairs by the intercourse of their eunuchs, without admitting any else, unless those of the highest confidence, to have access to them. This conduct the pretended Smerdis exactly obeyed: but Otanes, a noble Persian, having a daughter, who had been one of Cambyfes's wives, and was now kept by Smerdis in the same quality, and being desirous to know whether he was the real son of Cyrus or no, sent her instructions, that, the first night she lay with him, she should feel whether he had any ears (because Cambyfes, for some crime or other,

king, and the Jews, who had been obstructed before, began now to renew the building of their temple, the Samaritans betook themselves again to their old malicious practices; and applying to Tatnai, whom Darius had made prefect, or chief governor of Syria and Palestine, they insinuated, that the Jews proceeded herein without any authority from the king. ( If this Tatnai sent information to Darius, who, examining the imperial records, and finding that, in the first year of Cyrus, a decree had been granted to the Jews to return, and rebuild their temple (as he had lately married two of the daughters of Cyrus, the better to fortify his title to the crown) thought it concerned him to do every thing that might tend to support the honour and veneration due to the memory of such a prince; and, accordingly, revoked the decree which Smerdis the Magian (by Ezra called Artaxerxes) had made against building the temple, and confirmed that which Cyrus had granted some eighteen years before: whereupon the building went on with success, and in less than four years more was completed.

THE rest of the acts of Darius, his war against the Scythians, The acts of Darius. wherein he had not so very good success; his invasion and conquest of Judea, from whence he received a tribute of three hundred and sixty talents of gold every year; his long engagement in war with the Grecians, which on both sides was attended with various success; and, a little before his death, his appointing his son <sup>k</sup> Xerxes to be his successor; these, and many more incidents of his life, are so largely recorded by Herodotus, that to him we refer our reader, and shall only take notice of one remarkable person that, during his reign, appeared in Persia, viz. the famous prophet of the Magians, whom the Persians call Zerdusht, or Zaratuth, and the Greeks Zoroastres. And, to this purpose, we must observe, that all the idolatry of the world was, at this time, divided into two sects; that of the Sabians, who first worshipped the planets, and then images; and that of the Magians, who worshipped fire only. The Magians The principles of the Magians began first in Persia, and made these the chief articles of their faith; — “ That there were two principles or gods, the one

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“ the

ether, had cut off this magian's ears) and she acquainting her father that he had none, immediately he took six others of the Persian nobility with him, and, entering the palace, slew both the usurper and his brother. Prideaux's Connection, P. I. L. III.

j Which, according to the number of the days in the then Persian year, was a talent every day, and according to the standard of the Euboic talent, amounted in whole to one million and ninety-five thousand pounds of our money. Prideaux, *ibid.* k Darius had three sons by his first wife, the daughter of Gobrias, all born before his advancement to the throne; and four others by Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, who, having an absolute power over her husband's inclinations, prevailed with him to settle the succession upon her son. This however bred no ill blood between the two brothers; for Artabanes (so was the elder named) cheerfully submitted to his brother's government, and at last died in his service, as he was fighting for him in the Grecian war; an example very rarely to be met with, where so great a prize as a crown is at stake. Prideaux, *ibid.*

“ the cause of all good, and the other the cause of all evil ;  
 “ that between these two there is a continual opposition, and  
 “ so will be until the end of the world ; but that then, the  
 “ good god having overcome the evil, they should each of them  
 “ have his world to himself, the good ruling over all the good,  
 “ and the evil over all the wicked. They imagined that  
 “ darkness was the truest symbol of the evil, as light was of  
 “ the good god, and therefore they always worshipped him  
 “ before fire, as being the cause of light ; and especially before  
 “ the sun, as being, in their opinion, the perfectest fire, and  
 “ causing the perfectest light. But they always hated dark-  
 “ ness, because they thought it a representation of the evil god,  
 “ whom they ever had in the utmost detestation.” This sect  
 was once in good reputation ; but, after the usurpation of  
 Smerdis, they fell into great contempt, and must have utterly  
 been extinguished, had not Zoroastres revived their credit again.  
 He was sprung but from a very mean parentage ; by birth and  
 education was very probably a Jew ; and, as some suppose, the  
 servant of the prophet Daniel, because he was certainly a man  
 of great learning, and thoroughly acquainted with the books  
 of Moses. As soon as he took upon him the prophetic office,  
 he retired into a cave, and there lived a long time, as a recluse,  
 pretending to be abstracted from all worldly considerations, and  
 to be given wholly to prayer, and divine meditations. In this  
 retirement he composed <sup>l</sup> the book wherein all his pretended re-  
 velations are contained. <sup>m</sup> The first part of it consists of a  
 liturgy, which the Magians, in all their oratories and fire-  
 temples, make use of to this day. The rest is an historical ac-  
 count of the life, actions, and prophecies of its author, the several  
 branches and articles of his superstition, together with rules  
 and exhortations to morality, wherein he is very pressing and  
 exact, except his allowing of incest : and the whole, being in-  
 terspersed with several things taken out of the Old Testament,  
 abundantly shews that his original was from the Jews. Upon  
 leaving his retirement, he went into India among the Brach-  
 mans, where having learned all their knowledge in mathematics,  
 astronomy, and natural philosophy, he came back, and taught  
 his disciples these sciences, which gained them so great a repu-  
 tation that, for many years after, a learned man and a Magian  
 became equivalent terms. Nay, he pretended, that, once  
 upon a time, he was taken up into heaven to be instructed in  
 those doctrines which he was to deliver unto men ; that there he  
 heard God speak out of the midst of a great and bright flame of  
 fire ;

An account  
 of Zoroas-  
 tres,

<sup>l</sup> This book is called Zendavesta, and by contraction Zend, which signifies a *fire-kindler*, such as a tinder-box is with us ; and this fantastical name the impostor gave it, because, as he pretended, all that would read this book, and meditate thereon, might from thence kindle in their hearts the fire of all true love for God and his holy religion. Prideaux's Connection, P. I. L. III. in Ibid. L. IV.

fire; and, for this reason, he taught his followers that fire was the truest representation of the divine presence, and the sun (as the most perfect fire) the most immediate throne of his glory; that, of the fire, from whence God spake, he, upon his return, brought some with him, and placed it on the altar of the first fire-temple that he erected; from whence, as they say, it was propagated to all the rest: and this is the reason they give for keeping it so carefully, and treating it with so much superstition.

HAVING thus qualified himself to be a prophet, he made his first appearance in Media, in the city of Ziz, say some, or in Ecabatana, now Tauris, according to others; where the principal doctrines that he professed (as a refinement upon what the old Magians maintained) were these—"That there was one supreme Being, independent, and self-existing from all eternity; that under him there were two angels, one the angel of light, who is the author and director of all good, and the other the angel of darkness, who is the author and director of all evil, and that these two, out of the mixture of light and darkness, made all things; that they are in perpetual struggle with each other, and that, where the angel of light prevails, there the most is good, where the angel of darkness, there the most is evil; that this struggle shall continue unto the end of the world, when there shall be a general resurrection, a day of judgment, and a retribution to every one according to his works; after which, the angel of darkness and his disciples shall go into a world of their own, where they shall suffer, in everlasting darkness, the punishments of their evil deeds; and the angel of light and his disciples shall go also into a world of their own, where they shall receive, in everlasting light, the reward due unto their good deeds: whereupon they shall remain separated for ever, and light and darkness be no more mixed together to all eternity:" and all this the remainder of that sect, which is now in Persia and India, do, after so many ages, still hold, without any variation, even to this day.

AFTER Zoroastres had acted the part of a prophet in Media, and there settled all things according to his intentions, he removed from thence into Bactria, the most eastern province of Persia, and there settling in the city of Balch, which lies on the river Oxus in the confines of Persia, under the protection of Hytaspes, the father of Darius, he soon spread his imposture through all that province with great success. From Bactria he went next to the royal court at Susa, where he managed his pretensions with so much address and insinuation that he made Darius likewise a profelyte; and, from his example, drew over the courtiers, nobility, and great men of that city into the same profession. But when, upon his return into Balch, he attempted

and his tenets.

His actions, and violent death.

tempted the like upon Argasp, king of the Oriental Scythians (who was a zealous Sabian) and pretended an authority from Darius to that purpose, the Scythian prince resented it with such indignation that he invaded Bactria with an army, and, having there defeated the forces that opposed him, slew Zoroastres with all the priests of his patriarchal church, which amounted to the number of eighty persons, and demolished all the fire-temples in the province; but it was not long before Darius fell upon him, and revenged the injury.

Of the  
World,  
3522, &c.  
Before  
Christ,  
482, &c.  
Darius's  
character.

Xerxes's  
actions.

DARIUS was a prince of great wisdom, clemency and justice, and hath the honour to have <sup>n</sup> his name recorded in holy writ for a favourer of God's people, a restorer of the temple at Jerusalem, and a promoter of his worship therein, for all which God was pleased to make him his instrument; and therefore I make no doubt but that upon this account he blessed him with a numerous issue, a long reign, and great prosperity. He was succeeded by his son Xerxes, of whom the prophet Daniel gives this account: ° There shall stand up three kings in Persia (viz. Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius Hystaspes) and the fourth shall be far richer than they; and by his strength, through his riches; he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. His prodigious expedition into Greece, and almost innumerable number of forces; his passage of the Hellespont over a bridge made of boats, and for some time carrying all before him like a torrent; the resistance that his army met with at Thermopylæ from an handful of men commanded by the gallant Leonidas; the defeat of his fleet at the streights of Salamis, and the overthrow of his confederates at the isle of Sicily; his loss of the great battle at Plataea, and, <sup>p</sup> on the same day, his loss of another at Mycale, so that his vast army, which but a year before marched so proudly over the Hellespont, was now in a manner totally destroyed; after these defeats, his precipitate flight into his own country; his plundering the temples of Greece and Babylon, to repair the losses of this expensive war; his incestuous attempt upon his brother's wife, and at length most inhuman murder of him and all his family; his giving himself up to ease and pleasures,

<sup>n</sup> Ezra v. and in the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. ° Dan. xi 2, 3.  
<sup>p</sup> The battle of Plataea was fought in the morning, and that of Mycale in the afternoon of the same day; yet it is commonly said by the Greek writers that they had an account of the victory of Plataea at Mycale before they began the battle there, though the whole Ægean sea (which was several days sailing) lay between. But Diodorus Siculus (Lib. XI.) clears this matter: for he tells us that Leotycides, finding the forces that followed him in great pain for the Greeks at Plataea, lest they should be overpowered and vanquished by the numerous army of Mardonius; the better to encourage and enhearten his men for the battle, just before he made the first onset, he caused it to be given out through all the army that the Persians were defeated, though he knew nothing of the matter. But what he then feigned happened to be true, and done like wise on the same day; this gave occasion for what is said of that quick intelligence, which was utterly impossible to have come in so short a time from so distant a place by any human means; and to suppose a miracle in this case there is no reason. Prædcaux's Connexion, P. I. L. IV;

pleasures, lust and luxury, whereby he became contemptible to his subjects, and fell at last a sacrifice by the hand of the captain of his guards: these and many more passages of the like nature are so fully related by Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch, in the lives of those Grecians that were employed against him, that to them I must refer my reader; and shall only observe that upon the death of this prince Artaxerxes Longimanus (who in the book of Esther is called Ahasuerus) having cut off his father's murderers, and vanquished his brother Hytaspes, and settled himself in the quiet possession of the whole Persian empire, appointed a solemn rejoicing on that account to be continued for an hundred and fourscore days; at the end of which he made a great feast for all his princes and people that were at Susa for seven days. On the seventh day (his heart being merry with wine) he sent for his queen, that he might shew to the princes and people her beauty; but, upon her refusing to come, he for ever repudiated her; and in a short time made choice of Esther the niece of Mordecai the Jew, to be his queen. And it is to her solicitation we must impute it, that his favour and kindness to the Jews was so extraordinary as to grant appointments out of his treasures for the service of the temple, and to send Ezra, a very learned and religious man, with so full and ample a commission to Jerusalem in order to restore the state, and reform the church of the Jews; to correct all abuses in both, and regulate and govern them according to their laws.

Of the  
World,  
3531, &c.  
Before  
Christ,  
473.

Ezra's  
commission  
from Aha-  
suerus.

## C H A P. VII.

The most memorable Transactions from the End of the  
Captivity to the coming of CHRIST.

**A**FTER the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, there was one great abuse crept in among them, which Ezra at first, and after him Nehemiah, endeavoured to reform. Their law strictly forbade them to make intermarriages with any foreign nations, either by giving their daughters to them for wives, or by taking their daughters to themselves: but since their return, people of all conditions had paid so little regard to this command, that even the pontifical house, which of all others ought to have set a better example, was become polluted with such impure mixtures. Jojada was then high-priest, and one of his sons (whom Josephus calls Manasseh) having

Of the  
World,  
3667, &c.  
Before  
Christ,  
327, &c.

The temple  
of Samaria,  
and Manasseh's  
idolatrie.

q Esther i. 3, &c. r This is her Persian name, the sense of which is not known: her Jewish name was Hadassah. Prideaux's Connection, P. I. L. IV. a Prideaux's Connection, P. I. L. VI. b Some authors will have it that he was the brother of Jaddus the high-priest, and colleague with him in that office.

having married Nicafo the daughter of Sanballat, and by the elders of Jerufalem being ordered either to difmifs his wife or depart the country, fled to Samaria with many others that were in the like circumftances, and there fettled under the protection of his father-in-law, who was governor of the place. Upon this occafion Sanballat applied to <sup>c</sup> Darius, who had all thofe parts then under his dominion, and fo far infinuated himfelf into his favour as to obtain a grant for building a temple on Mount Gerizim near Samaria, and for making Manaffeſh his fon-in-law high-prieft of it. The Samaritans originally were the Cutheans, and fuch other of the eastern nations as Eferhaddud, upon the deportation of the Ifraelites, planted there; but after this temple was built, and Samaria became a common refuge and afylum to all refractory Jews, this mixture of inhabitants in a ſhort time produced a change in religion: for whereas thefe Samaritans had hitherto worſhipped the God of Ifrael in conjunction with the gods of the eaſt, from whence they came, when once the Jewiſh worſhip came to be fettled, and the book of the law of Moſes to be read publickly, they conformed themſelves wholly to the worſhip of the true God, and, in their performance of it, were as exact as the Jews themſelves. The Jews however looking on them as apoſtates, hated them to ſuch a degree as to avoid all manner of converſe and communication with them. <sup>d</sup> Their hatred firſt began from the oppoſition the Samaritans made againſt them, at their return from the captivity, both in their rebuilding of the temple, and their reparation of the walls of Jeruſalem. It was afterwards much increaſed by this apoſtacy of Manaffeſh, and thoſe that joined with him in it, and by their erecting an altar and temple in oppoſition to that at Jeruſalem; and it was all along kept up <sup>e</sup> on account of their differing in ſome points of religion, with the utmoſt rancour and malice, even to the time of our Saviour's coming; for this is the ground of the Samaritan woman's aſking our Saviour, <sup>f</sup> How is it that thou, being a Jew, aſkeſt drink of me

The hatred  
between  
the Jews  
and Sama-  
ritans.

<sup>c</sup> Not to Alexander, as ſome hiſtorians will have it, for this tranſaction was prior to Alexander's coming into theſe parts. Prideaux's Connection, Part I. L. VI. <sup>d</sup> Prideaux, *ibid.* <sup>e</sup> The particulars wherein the Samaritans differ from the Jews are chiefly theſe, 1. That the Samaritans receive no other ſcriptures than the five books of Moſes, rejecting all the other books that are in the Jewiſh canon. 2 That they diſallow of all traditions, and adhere only to the written word. 3. That they aſſert and maintain that mount Gerizim, whereon their temple was built, was the only proper place for the worſhip of God, becauſe there Abraham (Gen. xii. 6, 7.) and there Jacob (Gen. xxxiii. 20.) built altars unto God; and by offering up ſacrifices on them, conſecrated that place in a peculiar manner: and to this the woman of Samaria, in her diſcourſe with our Saviour alludes: Our fathers worſhipped in this mountain, but ye (meaning the Jews) ſay, that in Jeruſalem is the place where men ought to worſhip, John iv. 20. The temple of Gerizim is ſaid to have ſtood about two hundred years, and though it was then deſtroyed by Hircanus, one of the Maccabees, yet the Samaritans ſtill continued their worſhip and ſacrifices on the mountain where their temple had been. <sup>f</sup> John iv. 9.



me who am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews (as the sacred historian has observed) have no dealings with the Samaritans.

THE Jews for some time after their return from the captivity were governed by their own laws, and practised their own religion, under the administration of the high-priest, assisted by the Sanhedrim; but remained still subject to the dominion of the Persians as long as that empire lasted. When Alexander the Great had given Darius a defeat, and was now set down before Tyre, he sent out his commissaries requiring the inhabitants of Judea to submit to him, and to furnish him with all necessaries for the support of his army. The Jews pleaded for themselves their oath to Darius, whereby they thought themselves obliged to own no new master; and therefore, as long as he lived, they could not obey his commands. But Alexander, flushed with his late success, could bear no such contradiction: and therefore, as soon as he had done with Tyre, he resolved to march immediately against Jerusalem, and to punish the Jews as severely as he had done the Tyrians, for not obeying his injunctions. While he was on his way breathing out revenge against the people of God, Jaddua the high-priest, and all Jerusalem with him, were in great perplexity; but having nothing to trust to but God's protection, they made their addresses to him with sacrifices, oblations and prayers; whereupon, being moved with compassion towards them, he directed Jaddua, in a vision of the night, to go out and meet the conqueror in his pontifical robes, with the priests in their proper habits attending him, and all the inhabitants of the city in white garments. Jaddua next day, with the priests and people habited as the vision directed, went out of the city to a certain eminence called Sapha, which commanded the prospect of all the country round, and there waited the coming of Alexander. As soon as the high-priest saw him coming, he moved forward in this solemn pomp; which struck the king with such an awe, that, as he drew near, he bowed down to him, and saluted him with a religious veneration, to the great surprize of all that attended him. While every one stood amazed at this behaviour, Parmenio took the freedom to ask him, how it came to pass that he whom all mankind adored, paid such adoration to the Jewish high-priest? To which his answer was, "That he did not pay such adoration to him, but to the God whose priest he was; that, while he was at Dio in Macedonia, and deliberating with himself how to carry on the war against Persia, this very person, and in this very habit, appeared to him in a dream, encouraging him to pass boldly over into Asia, and not to doubt of success, for that God would be his guide in the expedition, and give him the empire of the Persians; and that therefore from hence he was assured he made the present war under the conduct of that God, to whom, in the person of the priest,

Of the  
World,  
3672, &c.  
Before  
Christ,  
342, &c.  
Alexander  
the Great's  
coming to  
Jerusalem.

treats the  
high priest  
and people  
very bold-  
ly.

“ he

“ he paid his adoration.” And hereupon turning to Jaddua again, he kindly embraced him, and so going into Jerusalem with him, offered sacrifices to God in the temple; where the high-priest shewed him the prophecies of Daniel, predicting the overthrow of the Persian empire by a Grecian king. This pleased Alexander much, so that he returned highly satisfied, and full of assurance of success; leaving behind him great immunities to the people, the freedom of their country, laws and religion, and an exemption every seventh year from paying any tribute, because in that year, according to their law, they are not permitted to till the ground.

Of the  
World,  
3681, &c.  
Before  
Christ,  
323, &c.

<sup>h</sup> UPON the death of Alexander, the vast empire which he had acquired was divided among his four generals; whereof Syria, Phœnicia and Judea fell to Laomedon's share. But Ptolemy, son of Lagus surnamed Soter, having got Egypt, and (for the security and defence thereof) coveting to make himself master of Laomedon's countries, offered him at first vast sums of money for them; but not prevailing that way, he sent Nicanor, one of his captains, with an army into Syria, while himself with a fleet invaded Phœnicia; and so having vanquished Laomedon and taken him prisoner, he made himself master of these provinces. The Jews however for some time stood out against him, and upon account of the oath they had taken to the former governor, refused to submit. Whereupon he marched into Judea, and, having got possession of most of the country, laid siege to Jerusalem. The place was strong enough both by nature and art to have made a considerable defence against him; but that the Jews had then such a superstitious notion for the keeping of their Sabbath, that they thought it a breach of their law even to defend themselves on it; which when Ptolemy understood, he made choice of that day to storm the place, and in the assault took it, because there were none that would defend the walls against him. At first he dealt very hardly with the inhabitants, and carried above an hundred thousand of them captives into Egypt; but afterwards, considering how faithful they had been to their former governors, he employed many of them in his army and garrisons, and granted them all large immunities

Jerusalem  
made sub-  
ject to  
Egypt.

<sup>g</sup> Viz. What is written of the ram and he-goat (Dan. viii.) where the he-goat is interpreted to be the king of Grecia, who should conquer the Medes and Persians (ver. 21.) and also what is written by the same prophet of the said Grecian king; [Ch. xi. 3.] for both these prophecies foretold the destruction of the Persian empire by a Grecian king. Prideaux's Connection. <sup>h</sup> Some authors are of opinion that he died of poison, but the true account of the matter is this—That having set out one long drinking-bout, he was immediately invited to another; at which, there being twenty in company, he drank to every one of them in their order, and pledged each of them again; and then calling for the Herculean cup (which held six quarts of our measure) he drank it full to Proteas a Macedonian, and not long after pledged him again in the same: whereupon he dropped down upon the place, and then fell into the violent fever of which he died. Prideaux, *ibid.*

ties and privileges : and thus the whole nation of the Jews was made subject to the power and dominion of the kings of Egypt.

PTOLEMY Philadelphus, son and successor to Ptolemy Soter, being very intent on making a great library at Alexandria, and desirous of getting all manner of books into it, committed the care of that matter to Demetrius Phalereus, a noble Athenian, then living at his court. Pursuant to the king's orders, Demetrius made search every where ; and being informed, that, among the Jews, there was a book of great note, called The Law of Moses, he acquainted the king with it ; who, signifying his pleasure to have it sent for from Jerusalem, and interpreters from the same place to render it into Greek, was put in mind, that it would be in vain to expect from the Jews either a true copy of their law, or a faithful translation of it, so long as he kept so many of their countrymen in slavery ; and therefore it was proposed to him, first to release all the Jews, who, at different invasions, had been brought away by his father, and then to send to Jerusalem about this matter. The king approved of the proposal ; and accordingly published a decree for the release of all the Jewish captives in Egypt, and ordered a vast sum of money to be issued out of the treasury, for the payment of those that had them in servitude, as the price of their redemption. When this was done, a letter was written in the king's name, to Eleazar the high-priest, requesting him to send the book, and with it six elders out of every tribe (such as he should judge most competent for the work) to translate it into Greek. The messengers, that were sent upon this errand, carried with them many rich presents for the temple ; and, coming to Jerusalem, were, with great honour and respect, received both by the high-priest, and all the people ; and, having received a copy of the Law of Moses, all written in golden letters, and six elders out of every tribe (*i. e.* seventy-two in all) to make a version of it into the Greek language, they returned with them to Alexandria. Upon their arrival, the king, calling these elders

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i This is the account of the affair, as we have it in a book still extant under the name of Aristeas ; but the learned author [Dr Prideaux] from whom we have extracted it, for very good reasons that he gives (page ii. lib. I.) seems to distrust the genuineness of that book. He allows however, that there was a translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek, made in the time, very probably, of Ptolemy Philadelphus, but seems to assert that the true cause of that translation was for the use of the Jews then inhabiting Alexandria, who, by mixing with other nations, had forgot their own language, and understood Greek only ; that, at first, the law was only translated, but afterwards, when the prophets came to be read in the synagogues of Judea, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Jews of Alexandria, following their example, were induced to do the same ; which occasioned the translation of the prophets likewise : that Ptolemy Philadelphus, as soon as the Greek version was made at Alexandria, had, no doubt, a copy of it put up into his library, which copy continued there, but without any great notice taken of it, until that noble repository of learning, containing four hundred thousand volumes, was accidentally burnt by Julius Cæsar, in his wars against the Alexandrians, forty seven years before Christ.

Of the  
World,  
3<sup>d</sup> 27, &c.  
Before  
Christ,  
277 &c.  
The ver-  
sion of the  
Septuagint.

to his court, proposed to each of them a question ; and finding, by their answers, their learning and abilities, he sent them into Pharus (an island joining to Alexandria) to an house appointed for the purpose, where they immediately betook themselves to the business of translation. As they agreed in the version of each period, Demetrius wrote it down : so that, in the space of seventy-two days, the whole work was compleated, and afterwards repositied in the king's library ; who, for the reward of their labour, gave each interpreter three rich garments, two talents in gold, a cup of gold of a talent weight, and so sent them home to their own country.

Of the World, 3328, &c. Before Christ, 176, &c.

Judea becomes subject to Syria.

AFTER the Jews had been about an hundred years subject to Egypt, there happened a war between Ptolemy Epiphanes, king of Egypt, and Antiochus the Great, king of Syria ; wherein the Jews, whose country lay between the two kingdoms, like a ship tossed in a storm, which is battered and dashed between two billows, suffered very much ; till at length, Antiochus getting the better, the Jews submitted to him ; and, receiving him with his army into their city, assisted him in the recovery of the citadel, which was then held by a garrison of Ptolemy's army. Seleucus Philopater, who succeeded his father Antiochus in the kingdom of Syria, at first favoured the Jews, and supplied them with all things for the service of the temple at his own expence.

But being, some time after, informed by one Simon a Benjamite that there were great riches in the temple, he sent his treasurer <sup>k</sup> Heliodorus to make seizure of them, and bring them to Antioch : but Heliodorus, going into the temple for that purpose, and entering into the sacred treasury, was stopped in his attempt, by an apparition of angels, armed, as it were, to defend the place against his sacrilegious hands. For these are the words wherein the history of the Maccabees relates the matter : <sup>m</sup> There appeared unto him an horse, with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran fiercely, and smote at him with his fore-feet, and he that sat upon the horse, seemed to have complete harness of gold. Moreover, two other men appeared before him, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on either side, scourging him continually, and giving him many fore stripes, insomuch that he fell to the ground ; but being taken up by those that attended him, and carried off in a litter, he continued speechless, and without all hope of life for some time, till, at the intercession of his friends, the high-priest prayed to God for him, and so he recovered.

NOT long after this, Heliodorus, aspiring at the crown, murdered his master Seleucus, in hopes of succeeding him ; but Eumenes and Attalus, kings of Pergamus, obstructed his design, and

<sup>k</sup> 2 Maccab. iv. <sup>l</sup> He who gave information to Seleucus is by Josephus called Apollonius ; but this is a mistake ; for Apollonius was the governor of Cælia Syria and Palestine. Prideaux's Connect. <sup>m</sup> 2 Maccab. iij. 25, &c.

Heliodorus hindered by an apparition from plundering the temple.

Antiochus Epiphanes persecutes the Jews.

and placed Antiochus Epiphanes, son to Antiochus the Great, upon the Syrian throne, who proved a terrible enemy and persecutor of the Jews. For when, upon a false rumour of his death, the people of Jerusalem (as he was informed) had made great rejoicings, he was so provoked at it, that immediately marching into Judea, and taking Jerusalem by force, he slew of the inhabitants, in three days time, forty thousand persons, and taking as many captives, sold them for slaves to the neighbouring nations. Nor did this satisfy his rage, for he afterwards forced himself both into the holy place, and also into the holy of holies; sacrificed a great sow upon the altar of burnt-offerings; caused the broth, which was made of some part of the flesh, to be sprinkled all over the temple, to pollute it as much as possible; and having done this, he took away the altar of incense, the shew-bread table, the candlestick of seven branches, and several other golden vessels, utensils, and donatives of former kings, to the value of eighteen hundred talents of gold; and making the like plunder in the city, he returned to Antioch, leaving behind him Philip a Phrygian, a man of a cruel and barbarous temper, to be governor of Judea, and Andronicus, another of the like disposition, to be governor of Samaria.

BUT this was but the beginning of sorrows. About two years after, he sent Apollonius, one of his generals, with an army of two and twenty thousand men, and an express order to kill all the men that remained in Jerusalem, and to sell the women and children for slaves. On his first arrival, Apollonius carried himself peaceably, concealing his intent, and forbearing all hostilities till the return of the Sabbath, when he put his bloody commission in execution; for, falling upon the city while the people were at their devotion, he massacred many of the inhabitants, plundered the place, led away the women and children captives, and forced the few that escaped, to flee to the caves and deserts for shelter. Nor was this all; for, in a short time after, he issued out a decree, commanding all nations to leave their former rites and usages, and to conform to the religion of the king; which, however expressed in general terms, was chiefly designed against the Jews. The officer, who was sent to see this decree put in execution, was one Athenæus, a man well versed in all the rites of the Grecian idolatry, and therefore thought a proper person to initiate the people into the observance of them. On his coming to Jerusalem, all sacrifices to the God of Israel were made to cease; and all the rites of the Jewish religion suppressed. The temple itself was polluted, being dedicated to Jupiter Olympius (whose image was set up on the altar of Holocaust) and all the people, upon pain of death, were obliged to sacrifice to it. Those who met in caves to keep the Sabbath, if they happened to be discovered, were burnt; the book of the law was cast into the fire, the circumcising

circumcising of infants was forbid, and women, accused of having circumcised their children, were led publickly about the city, with their infants hanging at their breasts, and then cast headlong from the walls. In short, no manner of cruelty was omitted to compel the Jews to abandon their religion; and it is to their persecution, at this time, that the author to the Hebrews chiefly alludes, when he tells us that some <sup>n</sup> were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might receive a better resurrection; that others had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, <sup>o</sup> were scorched to death, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

Some principal martyrs.

IN this terrible persecution, some of those wretched people yielded to violence, but many chose rather to die than forsake the law of their God. Among the latter sort, those of the most memorable note were Eleazar, a prime doctor of the law, and that heroine Solomona and her seven sons. Eleazar was a very aged man; yet, when his persecutors would have compelled him to eat swine's flesh (which they forced into his mouth) he spit it out; and even when some, in pity to his age, would have given him leave to illude the sentence, by taking a piece of any other flesh, and eating it as swine's flesh, he scorned to purchase his life at so fordid a rate, desiring them to dispatch him rather than let him be guilty of dissimulation, and stain the honour of his grey hairs with so mean an act. Nor were the seven brothers, and their mother, inferior to him in a religious courage and magnanimity: for, being put to the most exquisite tortures to oblige them to renounce their religion, they, with a wonderful constancy, endured all that the rage of their persecutors could invent, and through a sea of blood and torments (as <sup>p</sup> one expresses it) waded to the happy port of eternal rest.

S E C T.

<sup>n</sup> Heb. xi. 35. <sup>o</sup> The word, in our common copies, is *epeirasthesan* they were tempted; but that this is not the right reading is easy to be gathered from this one consideration, that, after two such great punishments, as stoning, and being sawn asunder, it is very proper to introduce their being tempted, which signifies no certain punishment at all, and is included in the other punishments here mentioned. Some therefore read *epyraasthesan*, some *epyroothesan*, and some *eprethesan*, all signifying, they were burnt, which agrees very well with the story of the Maccabees (Ch. vi. to Ch. xii.) where they bring Eleazar and the young men *epi to pyr kataplogontes autous* to the fire, and burnt them. Whitty's Annotations. <sup>p</sup> Howell's History of the Bible.

## S E C T. I.

The JEWISH State under the M<sup>A</sup>CCABEES.

**I**N this calamity and distress, God raised up Mattathias, \* a Mattathias, a priest of the course of Jehoiarib, and the head of the family of the Asmonæans, to assist and protect his brethren the Jews. Mattathias asserts his country's cause. Fired with a religious zeal, like that of Phinehas, he bravely killed an apostate Jew that was going to offer sacrifice upon an heathen altar erected for that purpose: he fell likewise on the king's commissioner that came to compel men to such idolatry, and, by the assistance of his sons and others that joined him, slew him and all his retinue. After this, getting together his own family, and inviting all that were zealous for the law to follow him, he retired into the mountains, in order to make the best defence he could: but the Jews had one principle, which, at the beginning of their resistance, had like to have destroyed them quite; and that was their scrupulous observation of the Sabbath, even to such a degree, as not to esteem it lawful to defend themselves on that day; whereof their enemies taking the advantage, destroyed great numbers of them, without making the least opposition: but, finding the frailty of their mistake in this particular, Mattathias and his followers made a decree (which was confirmed by the unanimous consent of all the priests and elders among them) that whenever they were assaulted on the Sabbath-day, it was lawful for them to fight for their lives, and to defend themselves in the best manner they could, which afterwards became a general rule in their wars.

MATTATHIAS, having acted the part of a brave and prudent general, was forced at last to submit to the weight of an hundred and forty-six years; when, taking leave of his friends and countrymen, he exhorted them to defend their nation and religion, and declared his son † Judas Maccabæus his successor in the command of the forces. Judas had no sooner taken the field, than having defeated the Syrians in several engagements, and quite driven them out of Judea, he went about all the cities, pulling down the altars and destroying every where all the utensils and instruments of idolatry, and then came up to Jerusalem to recover the sanctuary out of the hands of the heathen, and to cleanse and dedicate it anew for the service of God.

Of the World, 3838. &c. Before Christ, 166. &c. Judas succeeds him.

\* The course of Jehoiarib was the first of the twenty four courses of the priests that served in the temple, 1 Chron. xxiv. 7.

† The motto which Judas had upon his standard was the Hebrew sentence in Exod. xv. 11. *Mi Camoka Pallim Jehovah*, *i. e.* Who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah? Which, taking the initial letters only (as on the Roman Ensign, S. P. Q. R. stood for *Senatus Populusque Romanus*) made the artificial word Maccabi; and from hence all that fought under that standard were called Maccabees, or Maccabæans, and he, in an especial manner, had that name above the rest, by way of eminence, as being their captain. Pridæaux's Connection.

¶ The solemnity of this dedication was continued for eight days together : It was celebrated by the Jews with great joy and thanksgiving for the deliverance that God had given them ; and for the more solemn acknowledgment thereof, a decree was made, that the like festival (under the name of <sup>r</sup> the Feast of Dedication, or (because their houses were at that time illuminated) called by some the Feast of Lights, should ever after be annually kept in commemoration of it.

God's judgment upon Antiochus.

IN the mean time Antiochus, hearing that the Jews had defeated his forces, recovered the temple of Jerusalem, pulled down the images which he had erected there, and restored the place to its former worship, was so enraged thereat, that he commanded his charioteer to double his speed, threatening as he went that he would make Jerusalem a sepulchre for the whole Jewish nation. But, while he was uttering these proud words, the judgment of God overtook him ; for a great pain (which no remedy could abate) immediately seized his bowels, and not long after falling from his chariot, his body was so bruised, and his limbs so mangled, that he could proceed no farther ; but putting in at a town called Tabæ in the confines of Persia and Babylonia, he there betook himself to his bed ; and, <sup>r</sup> having languished out a while under horrid torments both of body and mind, stung with remorse for his wicked deeds, and almost consumed with rottenness and ulcers, he concluded a life remarkable for its cruelty and God's vengeance upon tyrants.

The acts of the rest of the Maccabees.

AFTER the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, Antiochus Eupator continued the war, and <sup>r</sup> by the advice of Lysias, who had then the direction of affairs, gave all the molestation he could to the valiant Judas. But the rest of the acts of that Jewish general, and how he warred with the Syrians, and the neighbouring nations that assisted them ; how he made the first alliance with the Romans, and through a scene of different successes, came at last to fall gallantly in the defence of the religion and liberties of his country : <sup>u</sup> the succession of Jonathan the brother of Judas to the command of the army, and the gallant acts he did against Bacchides, who had slain his brother, and against Apollonius, governor of Cælo-Syria ; <sup>\*</sup> how he destroyed the temple of the god Dagon ; repaired the walls of Jerusalem, built castles and fortresses in Judea ; renewed the league with the Romans and Lacedæmonians ; and at last with two of his sons was perfidiously

<sup>q</sup> 1 Maccab. iv. 59. Joseph. Antiq. Lib. XII. c. 11. <sup>r</sup> This festival our Saviour honoured with his presence at Jerusalem, which shewed his approbation of it. <sup>s</sup> A filthy ulcer broke out at his secret parts, wherein were bred an innumerable quantity of vermin, and such a stench proceeded from thence as neither those who attended him nor he himself could well bear ; and in this condition he lay languishing and rotting till he died. Prideaux's Connexion. <sup>t</sup> 1 Maccab. v. <sup>u</sup> Ibid. ix. <sup>\*</sup> Ibid. x, &c.



ously put to death \* by a villainous traitor : † the succession of Simon to his brother Jonathan, and all the remarkable occurrences of his short reign : ‡ how he enlarged the bounds of his nation, and recovered all the strong holds in the country ; how he defeated the Syrian armies, and delivered his countrymen from the yoke of all the Gentiles round about them ; how by a general decree he was made prince as well as high-priest to the Jews ; had that double honour entailed upon his posterity ; but, not long after, with two of his sons was barbarously murdered by a treacherous kinsman ; § though his kingdom and priesthood descended to his remaining son John, who had likewise the name of Hircanus, a bold and daring prince that enlarged his dominions, and intirely threw off the yoke of the Syrians : these, and many more worthy deeds of the Asmonæan race, are fully recorded in the ¶ two books of the Maccabees, to which we remit our reader without troubling him with vain repetitions. What is more suitable to our present purpose is to make some few observations upon the several sects of religion, that in this period of time began to make their appearance, and not long after made a considerable figure in the Jewish church.

## S E C T. II.

### The Original and Tenets of the JEWISH Sects.

**I**N those happy times, says Cuneus, wherein the prophets lived, When sects first began. who, by their converse with God, learned his will immediately from himself, there could no disputes arise about religion ; for their authority was so well established that it would presently have decided all difficult questions, and put an end to every controversy. But when these prophets disappeared, and that sovereign authority ceased, then every one gave himself the liberty of reasoning, inquiring and disputing, and by this means they wandered in the ways of vain curiosity, and fell into

\* This man was at first called Diodotus, but afterwards Tryphon ; who having a design to make away with Antiochus, and seize the crown of Syria, and foreseeing that Jonathan would never be brought to suffer so great a villany ; under a pretence of putting Ptolemais into his hands, he decoyed him into the city, where he made him prisoner ; and then, under a farther pretence of having two of his sons as hostages for their father's fidelity, as soon as he had got them into his possession, he murdered them altogether. *Prideaux's Connection.* † 1 Maccab. xiii. ‡ Ibid. xiv. 6. § Ibid. xvi. ¶ The former of these books is an accurate and excellent account of things, coming nearest to the stile and manner of the sacred historical writings of any book extant, and is supposed to be composed by this John Hircanus, the son of Simon, seeing he was prince and high-priest of the Jews near thirty years, and began his government at the very time when this history ends. The other, for the most part (except two epistles in the beginning of it) is an abridgment of the history of Jason, an Hellenist Jew of Cyrene, who wrote in Greek the history of Judas Maccabæus and his brethren, together with their wars against Antiochus Epiphanes and Eupator his son, in five books. *Prideaux's Connection, Part II. Lib. iii.*

to darknefs. Soon after the return of the Jews from Babylon, and the full fettlement of their church again, there arofe two parties of men among them; the one, who adhered to the written word only, were of opinion that in the obfervance of that, they fulfilled all righteoufnefs, and were entitled to the name of Zadikim, *i. e.* the righteous: the other, over and above the written law, fuperadded the traditional conftitutions of the elders and other religious obfervances, to which, by way of fupererogation, they devoted themfelves, and from hence, being efteemed more holy than others, had the name of Chafidim, *i. e.* the pious. So that from the former of thefe the Sadducees, and from the latter the Pharifees and Effenes feem to have proceeded.

Sadducees,  
their origi-  
nal.

THE moft antient feft among the Jews was that of the Sadducees, which took its name from Sadock the founder of it. This Sadock, as the Talmudick ftory is, was the difciple of Antigonus Socho, who lived, according to the Jewish calculation, about three hundred years before Chrift, and ufed often to inculcate into his difciples that they ought to ferve God difinterestedly, and without any view of compenfation, not like flaves who only ferve their mafter for the fake of a reward: and from hence his difciples Sadock and Baithus made this wrong inference, that there was no reward to be expected in another world, and confequently that the foul dies, and the body will not rife again. Whether this miftake of the doctrine of Antigonus, or (as others fuppofe) the diffolutenefs of manners, which at that time might prevail, gave occafion to the opinions of the Sadducees, but fo it was, that in procefs of time they grew to be very impious and deteftable.

Their opi-  
nions.

THEY denied the refurrection of the dead, the being of angels, and the exiftence of the fpirits or fouls of men departed. Their notion was that there was no fpiritual being but God only; that as to man this world was his all; that at his death his foul and body died together, never to live any more; and that therefore there is no future reward or punifhment. They acknowledged indeed that God made this world by his power, and governs it by his providence, and for the carrying on of this government hath ordained rewards and punifhments; but then they fuppofe that thefe rewards and punifhments are in this world only, and for this reafon alone it was that they worfhipped him, and paid obedience to his laws. All unwritten traditions, as well as all written books, except the five books of Mofes, they abfolutely rejected; and the probable reafon why they did fo is, that they could not fo well maintain thefe opinions which are not fo flatly contradicted in the Pentateuch as in other facred books, if once they admitted thefe books to be canonical. All fupernatural helps to their duty they utterly denied;

c Vide Prideaux's Connection. Lamy and Beaufobre's Introductions.

denied; for their doctrine was, that God had made man perfect master of all his actions, with a full freedom to do either good or evil, as he thinks fit, without any assistance to him for the one, or restraint upon him as to the other; and for this reason, because they looked upon all men to have an inherent power to make their condition better or worse, according as they took right or wrong measures, whenever they sat in judgment upon criminals, they were remarkable for passing the severest sentences; as indeed their general character was, that they were a very ill-natured sort of men, churlish and morose in their behaviour even to each other, but cruel and savage to every one besides. Their number was the fewest of all the sects of the Jews, but they were men of the best quality and greatest estates; and, as all those who were of the greatest power and riches were cut off in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, it is generally supposed that this whole sect then perished with them.

THE Pharisees were so called from the Hebrew word *Pharas*, The Pharisees. which signifies to separate; because the prevailing passion, or rather ambition of this sect was, to distinguish and separate itself from the rest of the people, by a greater degree of holiness and piety, but accompanied with very much affectation, and abundance of vain observances. <sup>a</sup> At what time this sect began first to appear, is no easy matter to determine. Josephus makes mention of them in the reign of Jonathan, an hundred and forty years before Christ, as a very powerful body of men at that time: nor is it improbable, that their origin was somewhat earlier, and that, as soon as the Sadducees discovered their principles to the world, these men of different sentiments might, not long after, rise up in opposition to them: for it is evident, from the character which the Jewish historian gives of them, that, in the main article of their belief, they were intirely repugnant to the Sadducees. <sup>b</sup> “The Pharisees believe in a fate, Their opinions.” says he, and attribute all things to it, but nevertheless they “acknowledge the freedom of man.” They teach that God will one day judge the world, and punish or reward men according to their deserts. They maintain that souls are immortal, and that, in the other world, some will be shut up in an eternal prison, and others sent back again; but with this difference, that those of good men shall enter into the bodies of men, those of wicked men into the bodies of beasts, which exactly agrees with the famous transmigration of Pythagoras. Their adherence to the law was so exact, that, for fear of violating the least precept of it, they scrupulously observed every thing that had the least relation to it, even though the law had neither commanded nor forbidden it. Their zeal for the traditions of

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<sup>a</sup> Vid. Lamy's Introduction and Prideaux's Connection. <sup>b</sup> Jos. de Bello Jud. Lib. II. c. 12.

the elders was such, that they derived them from the same fountain with the written word itself, pretending that Moses received both of them from God on mount Sinai, and therefore ascribing an equal authority to both. They had a notion that good works were meritorious, and therefore they invented a great number of supererogatory ones, upon which they valued themselves more than upon a due observance of the law itself. Their frequent washings and ablutions, <sup>f</sup> their long prayers in public places, their <sup>g</sup> nice avoidance of reputed sinners, their often fasting and great abstinence, <sup>h</sup> their minute payment of tythes, their <sup>i</sup> strict observance of the Sabbath, and <sup>k</sup> ostentatious enlargement of <sup>l</sup> phylacteries, were all works of this kind; which, nevertheless, gained them such esteem and veneration, that while the common people loved, the greater ones dreaded them; so that their power and authority in the state was considerable, though generally attended with pernicious consequences, because their hearts were evil.

The  
Scribes,  
who.

IN conjunction with the Pharisees, the Scribes are often mentioned in the scriptures of the New Testament. They were not however any particular sect, but a profession of men, of diverse kinds, following literature: for generally all that were any way learned among the Jews, were, in the time of our Saviour and his apostles, called Scribes; but especially those who by their skill in the law and divinity of the Jews, were advanced to sit in Moses's seat, and were either judges in the sanhedrim, or teachers in their schools or synagogues. They were chiefly of the sect of the Pharisees, because all the learning of the Jews, in those times, lay in their Pharisaical traditions, and their way of interpreting (or rather perverting) the scriptures by them: and, because they were the men that dictated the law both of church and state, it hence came to pass, that lawyers and scribes are convertible terms in the gospel, and denote both of them the same sort of men.

IT

<sup>f</sup> Matth. vi. 5, &c. <sup>g</sup> Luke vii. 39. <sup>h</sup> Matth. xxiii. 23. <sup>i</sup> Ibid. xii. 2. <sup>k</sup> Ibid. xxiii. 5. <sup>l</sup> The word *Phylactery*, in the Greek, signifies a place to keep any thing in; in the Hebrew it is called *Tephillin*, which signifies prayers, because the Jews wear them chiefly when they go to their devotion. It is a common opinion, that these phylacteries were long pieces of parchment, whereupon were written certain passages out of Exodus and Deuteronomy, which they tied to their foreheads, and left arm, in memory of the law; but a late explainer of the Jewish customs assures us that they were parchment-cases forned with great nicety into their proper shapes; that the case for the head had four cavities, into each of which they put a piece of parchment rolled up, wherein were written some sections of the law; but that which was for the arm had but one cavity, and into it they put one piece of parchment, wherein four passages of scripture are written. Lamy's Introduction, Lib. I. c. 16. The whole of this custom is founded on Exod. xiii. 9. and Deut. vi. 8. but the words are only metaphorically to be understood, as a command to have God's laws perpetually before our eyes, and his deliverances always in remembrance: it cannot be denied however, that these phylacteries were generally wore by the Jews in our Saviour's, and were not disused so late as St Jerome's time. Lamy, *ibid.*

IT is supposed (with a good deal of probability) that the sect The Ef-  
fenes. of the Essenes began during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, when great numbers of Jews were driven into the wilderness, where they inured themselves to an hard and laborious course of living. Philo, who gives us a full account of them, tells us that they were called Essenes from the Greek word *Osius*, which signifies Holy, and that there were two sorts of them; some, who living in society, and marrying, though with a great deal of wariness and circumspection, inhabited villages, and applied themselves to husbandry, and other innocent trades and occupations, and were therefore called Practical; and others, who living a kind of monastic life, gave themselves wholly up to meditation, and were therefore called the Contemplative Essenes: but however they differed in their manner of life, they were both of the same belief, and followed the same maxims.

THEY had not indeed the like traditions with the Pharisees, Their opi-  
nions and  
principles. but, as they were allegorists, they had several mystical books, which served them for a rule in explaining the sacred writings, all which, contrary to the Sadducees, they acknowledged and received. They believed that God governs the world, but by such an absolute predestination of every thing, as allowed mankind no liberty of choice in all their actions. They acknowledged a future state, thinking that the souls of good men went into the fortunate islands, while those of the wicked were shut up in subterraneous places; but, as for the resurrection of the body, and the soul's returning to it again after they were once parted, of this they had no manner of notion. All practical religion they reduced to these three heads: 1. The love of God. 2. The love of virtue. And, 3. The love of mankind. 1. Their love of God expressed itself in their accounting him the author of all good, and consequently applying to him every morning and night for the blessings they wanted; in their abstaining from swearing, from lying, and all other sins that are abhorrent to his nature; and in their strict observance of the Sabbath, and all other holy rites, except sacrificing: for, though they sent their gifts to the altar, yet they themselves went not thither, presuming, that the sanctity of their lives was the purest and most acceptable sacrifice to God that they could offer. 2. Their love of virtue was shewn in the government of their passions, their refraining from pleasures, their contempt of riches, their abstinence in eating, their continence, their patience, the simplicity of their speech, and the modesty of their carriage. And, 3. Their love of mankind appeared in their great benevolence, and strict justice; their charity to the poor, and hospitality to strangers; and there needs no other proof of their love to one another than the union in which they lived; for they had the same houses, the same provisions, the same habits, the same tables;

tables; their gains were put in the common stock; they divided the care of the sick among them; and honoured the elder men of their society with the same reverence as if they had been their fathers.

The form  
of their ad-  
mission.

THIS strictness and regularity of theirs gave them a great character, and made it a matter of no small consequence to be admitted into their society. For when, after a due course of probation, any one presented himself for that purpose, they bound him under the most solemn vows and protestations, “to love and worship God, and do justice to all men; to profess himself an enemy to the wicked, and a friend to the lovers of virtue; to keep his hands from theft, and all fraudulent dealings, and his soul unpolluted with the desire of unjust gain; not to usurp upon his inferiors, nor distinguish himself from them by any ornaments of dress or apparel; not to conceal any of the mysteries of religion from his brethren, nor to disclose any to the profane, though it were to save his life; but to preserve the doctrine he professed; the books that were written of it; and the names of those from whom he had it.” This was the form of admission into their communion, which whoever violated in any gross instance, was immediately excluded, and never received again, without the deepest humiliation and repentance. And if such was the religion and manner of life of the Essenes, we have the less reason to be surpris’d at our finding some authors so much extolling their courage and magnanimity upon several occasions; as persons, who under distresses and persecutions, suffered death, and the most grievous torments, even with joy and cheerfulness, rather than say or do any thing contrary to the law of God.

The Hercu-  
dians, who.

THERE was another sect among the Jews, <sup>n</sup> mentioned in the gospel, which, though of later original, may not improperly be considered in this place; and that is the Herodians, who, <sup>n</sup> in their main principles, were not very different from the Sadducees: they sprang up, no doubt, in the time of Herod the Great, some twenty or thirty years perhaps before Christ, and had their denomination from him, but upon what account it is not so well agreed. The common opinion is, that they looked upon Herod as the promised Messiah; but it is a very improbable thing that any Jews should, in the time of our Saviour’s ministry, above thirty years after the death of Herod, hold him to have been the Messiah, when they had found no one of these particulars, which they expected from the Messiah, performed by him, but rather every thing quite contrary. <sup>o</sup> Others therefore suppose that they were called Herodians, because they constituted a sodality, or club (as we call it) in honour of Herod,

Why so  
called.

at  
<sup>m</sup> in Matth. xxii. 16. Mark iii. 6. Ch. viii. 15. Ch. xii. 13. <sup>n</sup> Accordingly St Mark (Ch. viii. 15.) calls that the Leaven of Herod, which Christ stiles the Leaven of the Sadducees, Matth. xvi. 6. <sup>o</sup> Scaliger in animadvert. ad Eusebii Chron. & Casaubon Exercit. &c.

at Jerusalem; as there were several in Rome, in honour of their <sup>p</sup> emperors. But since the earliest of these sodalities in Rome were not instituted till after the death of Augustus, who outlived Herod sixteen years and upwards, this could be no pattern or foundation for the institution of the like in memory of Herod, who died so long before.

HEROD, no doubt, came into the government with great opposition; and, as he was by birth a foreigner, and had made his entrance with much blood, his title was not acknowledged by the greater part of the Jews, especially as long as Antigonus was alive. Those therefore that would own his title, and espouse his interest, might for this reason, perhaps, go under the name of Herodians; but this seems not to be the whole of the matter. Our blessed Saviour cautions his disciples <sup>q</sup> against the leaven (*i. e.* against the evil and erroneous tenets) of Herod; <sup>The true occasion.</sup> which seems to imply, that Herod himself was the author of some false notions which constituted a particular sect, differing from the other sects of the Jews; and that his followers, imbibing these principles from him, had the denomination of Herodians. <sup>r</sup> For as much then <sup>s</sup> as Herod, the better to secure himself on the throne, had put himself under the Roman protection, <sup>t</sup> contrary to an express precept of the law; and, to ingratiate himself with the great men at Rome, built temples, and erected images in them for idolatrous worship, excusing himself to the Jews, that all this he did purely in compliance to the commands which he was necessitated to obey; and might probably lay it down for a maxim in religion, that, in case of compulsion, it was lawful to submit to unjust injunctions: there is no wonder at all that some bold men should rise up to justify the king's practice, and (by the royal permission) call themselves by his name; whose distinguishing tenet might probably be, "That, although  
 " they professed the Jewish religion, and abominated idolatry in  
 " their hearts; yet, to humour the Romans, and make them-  
 " selves easy with their governors, it was not unlawful to com-  
 " ply sometimes with their demands, and at least outwardly  
 " to become Occasional Conformists."

ANOTHER sect, mentioned by <sup>u</sup> Josephus, as arising after this time, was that of Judas of Galilee: for when Archelaus, <sup>The sect of Judas.</sup> son of Herod the Great, was sent into banishment, and Judea reduced to a province of Rome, Judas, a native of Galamala, took occasion, from some new exactions, to exhort his countrymen to shake off the Roman yoke, pretending that, to pay tribute to any foreign power was a shameful badge of their slavery. An aversion to the Roman dominion, and an hatred of the Publicans (who had the care of receiving the taxes and tributes)

was

<sup>p</sup> Such were the Augustales, Adrianales, Antonini, &c. constituted in honour of Augustus, Adrian, and Antoninus, and the rest of the emperors, after their death. Pridcaux's Connection, P. II. L. V. <sup>q</sup> Mark viii. 15. <sup>r</sup> Pridcaux, *ibid.* <sup>s</sup> Joseph. Antiq. L. XV. c. 12. <sup>t</sup> Deut. xvii. 15. <sup>u</sup> Antiq. Lib. XVIII.

was natural enough to all the Jews; but they, whose zeal led them to join Judas, and form a particular sect, valued themselves upon their holiness and justice, because they would not acknowledge any other sovereign but God, and, rather than submit to the dominion of man, or give him the title of Lord, they chose to subject themselves, and their dearest friends and relations, to any torments, or even to death itself. These seem however either to have been at first, or afterwards to have grown into a sect so famous in the Jewish history, which calls them Zelots, as they were likewise commonly called THE JUST; and, accordingly, \* some have thought that they who insidiously asked our Saviour the question, x Whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar (supposing him to be no well-wisher to the Roman government) pretended to be of this sect; for instead of *who feigned themselves to be good men*, the passage ought to be translated, *who feigned themselves to be THE JUST*.

The Karra-  
ites,

I MENTION but one sect more, whereof we have no notice in scripture, because it had no beginning till after the Talmud was finished, and that is the Karraites: for when, about the beginning of the VIth century after Christ, that vast voluminous book, containing the traditions of the Jewish church, came to be published, and a great deference and veneration was required to be paid to it; men of judgment and learning looking into it, and finding it stuffed with trifling and incredible stories, rejected its authority as not deserving their belief, and betook themselves wholly to such as were of undoubted credibility, the writings of the law and the prophets: in consequence of which there arose two parties, one standing up for the Talmud and its traditions; and the other disavowing both, as containing, in their opinion, the inventions of men, and not the doctrines and commands of God. Those who stood up for the Talmud and its traditions, were chiefly the Rabbins and their followers, from whence this party had the name of Rabbinitis: and the other, who were for the scripture only, which, in the Babylonian tongue, is called *Kara*, had, for this reason, the name of y Karraites, as much as to say Scripturalists; under which two names, the controversy was from that time carried on between them, and so continues even to this day.

why so  
called.

## S E C T.

\* Vid. Lamy's Introduction, L. I. c. 9. x Matth. xxii. 17. y This sect is still in being in Poland and Russia: there are some, but not a great many, in the Eastern countries, and wherever they are, they are reckoned men of the best learning, and greatest probity of all the Jewish nation. Prideaux's Connection.



## S E C T. III.

## The JEWISH State under the ROMANS.

AFTER the 2 Maccabees had continued in the government of Judea above an hundred years, and for some time of late ruled in the capacity of sovereign princes, there happened a great change in the affairs of that nation, occasioned by a quarrel between Hircanus II. and Aristobulus, two brothers sons of Alexander Jannæus, and princes of the Maccabæan race. When their father Alexander was besieging Ragaba on the other side of Jordan, and found his life declining, he ordered his wife Alexandra (whom he left regent of the kingdom) to conceal his death from the army, that it might not retard the siege; and, when she had taken the place, to return in triumph to Jerusalem; where the chief thing he advised her to do was to court the Pharisees, the sect that had then the prevailing power among the Jews, and who by their interest could advance or depress whom they pleased.

Of the World, 3926, &c. Before Christ, 76, &c.  
  
 Hircanus and Aristobulus disaffected,

As soon as the siege was over, she returned to Jerusalem and punctually obeyed her husband's directions; which succeeded so well that she caused herself to be declared queen, but committed the government of all things to the Pharisees; made Hircanus high-priest, and left Aristobulus, a prince of an active spirit, to lead a private life. He towards the end of the queen's reign, taking the advantage of her sickness and his brother's indolence, seized several strong holds with a purpose to have himself declared king after her death; and accordingly, as soon as his mother was dead, he made war with his brother Hircanus, and obliged him to yield up the kingdom: but it was not long before fresh contests arose between them.

THE power of the Romans was at this time become very formidable, and the fall of Mithridates had eased that republic of every enemy that was able to contend with it. Pompey, their victorious general, came not long after this into Cælo-Syria; and, as the Maccabæan family had all along courted the alliance of Rome, these two contending brothers sent to him both their deputies, praying his protection and determination of the controversy between them. Pompey having heard what was said on both sides, ordered the two brothers to appear in person before him, promising that he would then take a full cognizance

and appeal to Pompey.

2 Simon, the last of the Maccabæan brothers, when he and his two eldest sons were basely murdered by Ptolemy his son-in-law, was succeeded by his third son John Hircanus, who destroyed the temple of the Samaritans, subdued the Idumeans, and opened David's tomb, from whence he took 3000 talents. He was succeeded by his son Aristobulus, who first took upon him the title of king; and he by his brother Alexander Jannæus, a cruel prince, the father of this Hircanus and Aristobulus. Du Pin's History of the Old Testament.

nizance of the cause, and determine it as justice should direct. When therefore he was come to Damascus, Hircanus and Aristobulus waited upon him to receive his decision; and at the same time several chief men of the Jews came to remonstrate against them both. The Jews pleaded, "That it had been formerly the usage of their nation to be governed by the high-priest of the God they worshipped, who without assuming any other title administered justice to them, according to the laws and constitutions transmitted down to them from their forefathers: they owned indeed that the two contending brothers were of the sacerdotal race; but then they alleged that they had changed the old, and introduced a new form of government in order to enslave the people; and therefore they prayed they might not be governed by a king." Hircanus on his part urged, "That being the elder brother, he was unjustly deprived of his birth-right by Aristobulus, who, leaving him only a small portion of land for his subsistence, had usurped all the rest; and, as a man born for mischief, practised piracy at sea, and rapine and depredation at land upon his neighbours:" and for the attestation of all this there appeared above a thousand of the principal Jews. What Aristobulus had to say in answer to this was, "That Hircanus was superseded in the government by reason of his incapacity to rule, and not through any ambition of his; that his sloth and inactivity had brought upon him the contempt of the people; and that therefore he was forced to interpose, merely to preserve the government from falling into other hands." And for the witnessing of this, he produced several young gentlemen of the country, who, by the gaudiness of their dress, and levity of their carriage, did no great credit to the cause they pretended to abet.

Pompey  
takes Jeru-  
salem.

UPON this hearing, Pompey referred the full determination of the matter till his coming to Jerusalem: but Aristobulus, perceiving that his violent proceedings were not approved of, hasted back to Judea, and shut himself up in the strong fortress of Alexandrion; which offended Pompey so highly that, taking the army which he intended against the Nabatheans, and some auxiliary troops of Syria, he marched directly against him. Upon his approach to Alexandrion, Aristobulus surrendered himself, and had a guard set over him; but his party at Jerusalem having seized the mount of the temple, cut down the bridges over the deep ditches that surrounded it; and in the cause of their captive king made preparation for a vigorous defence. Pompey himself with his whole army went up against them, and, after a siege of <sup>a</sup> three months, wherein twelve thousand Jews

were

<sup>a</sup> It is supposed by the Jewish historian, that the mount of the temple would have hardly been taken so soon by the Romans, had it not been for the superstition of the Jews in their observation of their Sabbath. For though they now thought

were slain, took the place. After this, going up into the temple with several chief officers attending him, he caused the most sacred parts of it to be opened, and himself entered also into the holy of holies, where none by the law were permitted to come, but only the high-priest once a-year on the great day of expiation. In the treasuries he found two thousand talents of money, besides vessels and other things of a prodigious value, all which he left untouched: but Crassus, soon after coming that way, not only extorted the two thousand talents, and a large bar of gold, by way of bribe to restrain him from farther plunder; but, contrary to the promise he had given upon oath, ransacked the temple all over, and robbed it of every thing he thought worth taking away; so that the whole of his sacrilegious plunder amounted to the value of ten thousand talents, which is above two millions of our money. "Thus Jerusalem became a prey  
 " to every hungry general of Rome, and, from the dissention  
 " between these two brothers (says <sup>b</sup> the historian) may be  
 " dated the ruin of the Jewish nation, with the loss of their  
 " liberty to the Romans, the imposition of above ten thousand  
 " talents, and the translation of the sovereign power, which  
 " had ever till then descended in the priesthood to the com-  
 " monalty."

IN this condition remained the Jewish state, deprived of its regal power, and subjected to the tribute and government of its conquerors; until Herod, commonly called the Great, by his interest with Antony, and his close practices with other great men at Rome, from being tetrarch of Judea, obtained a decree for the royal dignity thereof, by the unanimous suffrage of the whole senate. This Herod was the son of Antipas, a noble Idumean, and of Cyprus, a woman descended from an illustrious family among the Arabians. Antipas (who to bring his name to a Greek termination, called himself Antipater) was a person of great wisdom and sagacity, and had thereby acquired such an interest in Judea, Arabia, Syria, and all Palestine, that he made himself necessary to all the Roman governors who came into those parts; and by this means had frequent opportunities of promoting the fortunes of his family. He had by his wife

Herod obtains the kingdom of the Romans.

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Cyprus

thought it lawful to defend themselves vigorously on that day; yet they would not stir an hand to annoy the enemy, or obstruct them in any of their works. This Pompey observing, ordered his men to employ the Sabbath-day in nothing else but in making their approaches; in which the besieged giving them no molestation, their engines of battery were brought forward, and without opposition placed just as they pleased, and so being fired and played to advantage, soon made a breach in the wall large enough for an assault. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. L. I c. 5. <sup>b</sup> Joseph. Antiq. L. XIV. c. 8. <sup>c</sup> These Idumeans were not Jews by birth, but only profelytes to the Jewish religion, from the time that John Hircanus, son to Simon, one of the princes of the Maccabees, obliged them to embrace it, on the peril of quitting the country they had possessed about 129 years before Christ: so that king Herod was of the Jewish religion, though not of the family or country of the Jews. Joseph. Antiq. L. XIII. c. 17

His character.

Cyprus <sup>a</sup> four sons, now grown up to maturity of age, whereof Herod was the second. He is represented by Josephus as a man of courage and resolution, extremely generous to ingratiate himself with the great ones at Rome, magnificent in his buildings, liberal, and even extravagant in his public expences. and in all appearance disposed to do good to every one; but still, in all his actions and behaviour, attending only to the procurement of his own honour and greatness, of which he was immoderately covetous: and for this reason he became very burdensome to his subjects for the supply of his extravagancies, and inexorably cruel and oppressive whenever he was opposed; a slave, in short, to his passions, and sticking at no means, how unjustifiable soever, to attain his desires.

Of the World, 3974, &c. Before Christ, 30, &c.

His application to Augustus.

DURING the Roman civil war, he had always followed Antony's party: but after the fatal battle at Actium, though he had reason to fear that Augustus would deprive him of his kingdom for being so firm a friend to his enemy; yet he was resolved to wait upon him as soon as he could. But as he suspected that in his absence some intestine disturbances might arise, he confined his wife Mariamne, and her mother Alexandra, in the castle of Alexandrion, with a strong guard under the command of Joseph and Sohemus, two of his most trusty confidants, with this positive order, that in case they found things went amiss with him at Cæsar's court, they should destroy them both, (that none of the Asmonæan family might be left alive) and preserve the kingdom for his sons and his brother Pheroras; and so he set forward on his journey to meet Augustus. Augustus was then at Rhodes, where Herod, having obtained audience, as he entered into his presence laid aside his diadem, and in his speech of address freely owned all he had done for Antony, and what he was farther ready to have done, had he required it of him. "This, he said, he thought himself obliged to by the friendship that was between them, which, would he be pleased to think worthy his acceptance (since Antony was lost, quite lost) he would not fail to serve him with the same zeal and fidelity." This Herod delivered with such an intrepidity that Cæsar, pleased with the spirit of the man, caused him to put on his diadem again, accepted of his friendship, and confirmed him in the kingdom of Judea.

His speech to him.

He puts Mariamne his wife to death.

HEROD, being highly pleased with this good success, returned home with much joy: but on his arrival found all his felicity soured with the troubles of his own family. \* Mariamne, the wife that he loved most, having bribed the secret out of Sohemus,

d The eldest was Phasæ'us, the third Joseph, and the youngest Pheroras. He had also by the same wife, a daughter called Solome, who by her intrigues was continually creating divisions in the family, whereby she very oft perplexed her brother Herod's affairs, and yet maintained an interest with him to the last. Prideaux's Connection, P. II. L. VII. e Vide Du Pin and Howell's History.

mus, conceived thereupon such a strong hatred and aversion to her husband, that she not only refused his embraces with scorn, but (concealing the true cause of her resentment) was perpetually upbraiding him with the murder of her own relations, and the meanness of his birth and extraction; insomuch that one time he could hardly forbear laying violent hands upon her. This opportunity his sister Solome, her implacable enemy, took to send in his butler (whom she had before suborned for that purpose) to accuse the queen of having tempted him to give the king poison; whereupon he ordered her favourite eunuch (without whose privacy he knew she did nothing) to be put upon the rack; but all he confessed was, that something Sohemus had told Mariamme was the cause of her being out of humour. Upon hearing this, Herod fell into a rage of jealousy, and supposing that Sohemus would never have been induced to betray this secret to her, but at the price of an adulterous conversation, he ordered him immediately to be put to death; and then calling together a council of his own friends, and accusing her of an intention to take away his life, had her condemned, but without a design to hasten her execution. Solome, however, knowing very well her brother's temper, and fearing, that, so long as Mariamme lived, he might easily relapse into his former fondness, urged the necessity of her speedy execution, and had that influence over her brother, that he commanded her immediately to be put to death; but he soon repented of his rashness: for after his rage was quenched with her blood, his love revived, and the consideration of what he had done filled his mind with the agonies of remorse (which almost ran him distracted) and regret for her loss as long as he lived.

A GREAT part of the rest of his life was spent in acts of cruelty; for he put to death Costobarus, husband to his sister Solome, his two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, whom he had by Mariamme; and not long before his own death, another son, named Antipater, whom he had by a different wife. Macrobius, a writer of the Vth century, tells us that among the infants whom he put to death at Bethlehem he slew a young son of his own, whereupon Augustus made the reflection, that it was better to be Herod's hog than his son. It is not however so likely that Herod, at that age, should have a son so young as these innocents were, as that the death of Antipater, together with that of Alexander and Aristobulus, might give the occasion for this sarcasm.

BUT whatever opinion Augustus might have of Herod, it is certain that Herod had no small veneration for him, or at least carried his compliment very far: for he not only built two stately cities, and called them both after his name, but, in the very city of Jerusalem, built a theatre and an amphitheatre; and

and in the honour of Augustus celebrated games, and exhibited shews, which gave great disgust to the Jews, as things inconsistent with the legal constitutions and religion of their country. Nay, to such a degree of compliance proceeded he, as not only to set up the Roman ensign, which was the figure of an eagle, over one of the gates of the temple; but even to raise a sumptuous temple all of white marble, in memory of the favours which Augustus had conferred on him; by which idolatrous flattery he alienated the hearts of the Jews, and raised some conspirators against his life: but to recover their good opinion again, and make some amends for these breaches upon their law, in the nineteenth year of his reign, he formed a design of rebuilding the temple, which by the length of time (having now stood five hundred years) as well as the violence of enemies, was in a very decayed and ruinous condition. In two years time he got together all proper materials, and, in nine and an half more, had it so far finished as to make it fit for divine service, though, to carry on the out-buildings, workmen were continued about it till the time of our Saviour's ministry and longer; in which sense we find the Jews telling him, <sup>s</sup> forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? When the temple was finished, it was consecrated with great pomp and solemnity, but still retained the same name, and was called the second or latter temple, because this rebuilding of Herod's was only by way of reparation, not of restoration, and new erection after a long and total demolition, as was the case of the temple which Zerubbabel raised.

The time  
of the birth  
of Christ.

WHILE these things were doing in Judea, the temple of Janus was shut at Rome. In times of war, the custom was to have its gates laid open, but shut in the time of peace; and it was now the fifth time since the building of the city that the gates of this temple had been shut. The first time was in the reign of Numa; the second after the end of the first Punic war; the third after Augustus's victory over Antony and Cleopatra; the fourth upon his return from the Cantabrian war in Spain; and the fifth in the twenty-sixth year of his reign, and the thirty-third of Herod's; when a general peace, which lasted for twelve years together, prevailed all over the world, and was a proper prelude for ushering in the coming of the Prince of Peace, even Christ our Lord, who, according <sup>h</sup> to the exactest computation, was born in the four thousandth year from the creation, falling in exactly with the time where <sup>i</sup> an old tradition of the Jews places the beginning of the days of the Messiah.

#### C H A P.

<sup>g</sup> John ii. 20. <sup>h</sup> That of Archbishop Usher. <sup>i</sup> The tradition says, that the world was to last six thousand years; two thousand years of which were before the law, two thousand under the law, and the last two thousand under the Messiah; which tradition is of great antiquity among the Jews, and still retains much veneration, as one of the most authentical of this sort. Prideaux's Connection, Part II. Lib. ix.

## C H A P. VIII.

## The State of Religion, and of the Idolatry, and Polytheism of the Heathen World.

WE have hitherto considered the state of the Jewish church, and gone through the several remarkable occurrences recorded in the holy scriptures, relating to the people of God. It remains now, that we take a short view of the rest of mankind, and inquire a little, how those nations that were aliens to the covenant, and destitute of divine revelation, conducted themselves in matters of religion.

\* THAT the wisest, and most thinking part of the heathens, acknowledged but one eternal, independent, and self-existent Being, the Creator and Governor of the universe, from whom all other inferior divinities derived their essence and original, is manifest from the testimony of both heathen and christian writers: and by what steps they might arrive at this knowledge, the apostle to the Gentiles has, in some measure, informed us; <sup>b</sup> For the invisible things of God, says he, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. They might argue, from the light of nature, that, as it is a contradiction for any thing to be the author of its own existence, so all the visible parts of nature were produced by some cause; and, considering the spaciousness of their extent, and curiousness of their texture, by some infinite and almighty cause; that, as less than an infinite and almighty Being was able neither to create, nor govern the innumerable parts of the universe, so more than one Being of that kind, would both be superfluous and repugnant; superfluous, because one would have all imaginable perfections, and leave the other in a state of inferiority; and repugnant, because, supposing them of equal perfections, they might nevertheless disagree in their administrations and counsels, and therefore, <sup>c</sup> since the heathens observed such an exact harmony in the frame and government of the world, all things conspiring to one end, and continuing in one uniform course, it was not so great a stretch of reasoning for them to conclude, that a plurality of gods was no more than a fiction, since all things were certainly made and governed by one great, and good, and wise principle.

The wisest heathens believed in one God only.

*Ouk agathon polykoiranie eis koiranos esoo*

is a verse of Homer, <sup>d</sup> which Socrates, the wisest head of Greece, used frequently to have in his mouth, against the vast

number

<sup>a</sup> King's Crit. Hist. of the Creed, c. 2.    <sup>b</sup> Rom. i. 20.    <sup>c</sup> Tillotson's Sermon Vol. I.    <sup>d</sup> Edward's of the Idolatry of the Gentile world.

number of gods that were in use in his country: and as it is well known, that as one part of his impeachment was his breaking the Athenian laws, by denying those to be gods whom the city of Athens acknowledged to be such; so his dying in that cause, and becoming a martyr for the unity of the Godhead, may be some reasonable presumption that his followers, the Academics, continued in the same persuasion. Plato, the founder of another sect, was of this opinion, • that there were not two gods, governing the world by different counsels, but one only, † the author and parent of all things, who made the great animal of the world, and directed all its motions: and therefore he tells his friend, ‡ When I am in earnest, I begin my letter with one god; but when I am otherwise, I begin it with the name of many. The sect of the Stoics (as § they are represented by the learned commentator on Virgil) held, that the divine nature or power is one and the same, but had different titles, according to the different relations we stand in to God, and the variety of our duties which have respect to him: to which purpose ¶ Seneca, and not long before him \* Aristotle, rejecting a multitude of deities, resolve the difference of God's names into this, that they signify to us the variety of his operations, and the different exertments of his power: for, though the Pagans worshipped several deities (as † St Austin informs us) yet their philosophers declared, that these were only so many different names of their great god Jupiter, who was called in the air, Juno; in the sea, Neptune; in the earth, Pluto; in hell, Proserpina; in war, Mars; in vineyards, Bacchus; and in the woods, Diana. Yea, all those other inferior gods and goddeses, says he, such as Apis, Lucina, Cunina, Fortuna, and the rest of that numberless company, were but one and the same Jupiter, ‡ who, according to the various benefits that he bestowed upon mankind, was worshipped under different names and appellations. “ It is of no  
“ great consequence therefore, concludes § Seneca, by what  
“ name you call the first nature, and the divine reason, which  
“ presides over the universe, and fills all the parts of it; he is  
“ still the same God. He is called Jupiter Stator, not, as his-  
“ torians say, because he stopped the Roman armies as they  
“ were flying, but because he is the constant support of all  
“ Beings. Some may call him Fate, because he is the first  
“ cause,

e Plat. Polit. Vol. II. f Timæus Locrius, de Anima Mundi. g Plat. Epist. 43. ad Dionys. h Stoici dicunt non esse nisi unum Deum, & unam eandemque esse potestatem, &c. Serv. in Æn. iv. i Tot appellationes ejus possunt esse, quot munera—Omnia ejusdem Dei nomina sunt, varie utentis sua potestate. De Benef. Lib. iv. c. 7. k *Eis de oon polyonymos esti*, &c. De Mundo. l And yet, some other fathers look upon both the Grecian and Roman Jupiter as no other than an arch devil, and a topical god; and accordingly deride his worship as the adoration of a man that was born and buried at Crete. Tension of Idolatry, c. 5. m Quid? Utrque adeo majores nostros insipientes & cæcos fuisse credendum est, ut Bacchum, & Cererem Deos putarint? Imo unum Deum credebant, eajus illa munera, illæ functiones essent. Aug. de Civit. Dei, Lib. iv. n De Benef. Lib. iv.



“ cause, on which all others depend: we Stoics call him some-  
 “ times Father Bacchus, because he is the universal life that  
 “ animates nature; Hercules, because his power is invincible;  
 “ Mercury, because he is the reason, the order, and the eternal  
 “ wisdom: you may give him as many names as you please,  
 “ provided you allow him but one sole omnipresent principle,  
 “ filling all things that he hath made.”

BUT, though some of the wisest heathens are supposed to ac-  
 knowledge one supreme God only, and him to worship, accord-  
 ing to his several powers and perfections, under different titles  
 and denominations; yet it will be very irrational and groundless  
 to infer from hence, that there never was any such thing as po-  
 lytheism in the world. The philosophers indeed, who were  
 forced to comply with the follies of the people, might, in excuse  
 of such their compliance, pretend, that such a multitude of dei-  
 ties as the vulgar owned, was either the parts of the universe,  
 which, among the Egyptians, was looked upon as a god, or the  
 several powers and properties of the one supreme God, under a  
 variety of appellations: but certainly the common people had  
 no such refined thoughts; they seldom looked farther than the  
 objects of sense: and therefore we need less wonder (as one of  
 the most plausible apologists for the Gentile religion owns) if men  
 of gross ignorance esteemed wood and stones divine images,  
 since they, who are unlearned, look on monuments that have  
 inscriptions on them as ordinary stones; esteem valuable tables  
 as pieces of common wood; and books of the best learning,  
 they regard no otherwise than so many bundles of paper.

The more  
 ignorant  
 believed a  
 plurality.

THAT the generality of the heathen world was guilty of  
 idolatry, and polytheism, in the common and most obvious ac-  
 ceptation of the words, is evident from the most authentic re-  
 cords. In the Old Testament, how positively, how expressly  
 is the worshipping a diversity of gods related? How frequently  
 are the gods and idols, belonging to several nations, mentioned?  
 How exactly are the rites, and distinct circumstances of their  
 adoration described, and the folly and infatuation of their wor-  
 shippers set off, with all the keenness of derision and sarcasm?  
 In the New Testament, among many more, we have one passage  
 that fully determines the matter, where the apostle, speaking  
 of the Pagan idolaters, tell us expressly that they changed the  
 glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to cor-  
 ruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping  
 things—and worshipped and served the creature more than the  
 Creator, who is blessed for ever: instead of true, they enter-  
 tained false conceptions of God, and worshipped corruptible  
 creatures in the place of the incorruptible Creator. All sorts  
 of

Proved  
 from scrip-  
 ture.

o Porphyr. apud Euseb. de Præpar. Evang. Lib. iii. c. 7. p Edwards, of the  
 Idolatry of the Gentile World. q Vid. Isa. lxi. 7, &c. Ch. lxiv. 9, &c. Hab.  
 ii. 20, &c. r Rom. i. 23, 25.

of created beings, even those that were most contemptible, had the same veneration that was due to the glorious Majesty of heaven; yea, they were worshipped by them more than God himself: or if *para* may be rendered *besides*, as well as *more than*, then it is evident that the Pagans worshipped the true God, and false gods too; *i. e.* though some of them were persuaded of the existence of one supreme Being; whom, in some sort, they revered and adored; yet, besides him, they worshipped other beings, and set up a vast number of other gods, who were no more than creatures: and therefore the same apostle, who well understood the nature of Gentile idolatry, tells the Lycaonians, when he found them going to offer sacrifice to him and Barnabas, that the intent of his preaching the gospel to them was \* to turn them from these vanities, *i. e.* the worship of the many idols, to which they were addicted, to that of the living God who made heaven and earth, the sea and all things that are therein.

And other  
authorities

SUBSEQUENT to the apostle's time we find Justin the philosopher (once a Pagan, and then writing to the Pagans) reminding them of their images and idols of all sorts, and telling them plainly, ' that they not only called these gods, but served them, and worshipped them as such; and that they hated the Christians, because they were of another opinion; and Clemens of Alexandria, another convert from Paganism, recounting the reasons of the first invention of heathen deities in these words: " Some contemplating the stars, ' says he, and admiring their " courses, made them gods; so the Indians worshipped the " sun, and the Phrygians the moon: and others, collecting " with delight the fruits of the earth, deified corn, which they " called Ceres, and the vine, which they called Bacchus. " Some being afraid of punishments, distresses and calamities, " found out particular deities whom they either took to be " means of sending them upon mankind, or of diverting them. " The philosophers, following the fancy of the poets, made " gods of the passions, as love, hope, joy; others put the vir- " tues into the number of the gods, representing them by " outward shapes; and the common people, lastly, did gene- " rally deify those from whom they received any considerable " benefit or advantage." So that, according to these mens account, not only the common people, but even their philosophers and men of the best understanding made no scruple of setting up a multiplicity of gods: we need less wonder then, says Lactantius, (who was a good judge in the case, as having himself been bred up in heathenism) if barbarous nations and the ignorant people erred in adoring the stars; seeing the very philosophers of the Stoic sect (who were the prime moralists as well

\* Acts xiv. 15. *s Tauta Theous kalcite toutois douleuete toutois profhynete,*  
&c. ad Doognet. Epist. t Exhort. ad Gent. Rom, i. 22.

well as naturalists) were of the same opinion, and thought that all the heavenly bodies which are in motion were to be reckoned among the number of the gods.

AND indeed, if we look a little into the first institution of idolatry and polytheism, it will appear more than probable that it was not the ignorant rabble, but some wiser, or, at least, some pretendedly-wiser head that first formed the design of introducing more gods than one into the world. The apostle has given us good grounds for this conjecture: for, having observed in what manner divine homage was paid to the most contemptible creatures, he immediately denotes the men that were the occasion of it; they were such, says he, as professed themselves to be wise; which plainly relates to the philosophers (as most commentators allow) who made great pretences to reason, and were professors of wisdom; and are therefore very appositely upbraided with their folly, in making brutes their gods, and, by their practice and persuasion, encouraging the more ignorant sort to do the same.

IN what age of the world the number of gods began to multiply upon the face of the earth, is not so easy to determine: \* the silence of the sacred historian however is a good presumption, that, in the times before the flood, there was no worship of strange gods, since it can hardly be supposed but that so foul a sin (had it been in practice in those early days) would have met with the same animadversion from Moses, as † the violence and injustice which then filled the earth, or \* the unclean mixtures of the sons of God with the daughters of men. The old world was doubtless wicked enough to deserve the destruction which God brought upon it: but, from the fresh memory of the creation, from the frequent apparitions of God and angels, who might remind men of their duty; from the long lives of the Antediluvian patriarchs who would not fail to inculcate to their families what themselves were abundantly assured of, the almighty power and unity of the Godhead; from these, and perhaps several other causes to us unknown, it might come to pass, that the worship of idols was, either not in being, or, at least, not in frequent use in this infancy of the world. Some indeed, from a passage in Moses, ‡ then began men to profane (as they would render it) instead of translating it (as our church has done) to call upon the name of the Lord, have been inclined to refer the origin of idolatry to the days of Enos: but, § since the name of God may be profaned by sundry other means, as well as by idolatry (as it was certainly profaned before, and with great irreverence abused in the wicked families

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of

\* Quid mirum, si aut Parbari, aut imperiti homines in adorandis Astris errant. cum etiam philosophi Stoicæ disciplinæ in eadem fuerint opinione, ut omnia cælestia, quæ moventur, in deorum numero habenda esse censerint? Infit. lib. II. † Tension, of Idolatry, Ch. iv. x Gen. vi. 11. y Ibid. ver. 12. z Gen. iv. 26. a Tension, of Idolatry.

of Cain and Lamech) though the Hebrew word may sometimes signify to *profane*, yet <sup>b</sup> in this place there is no reason to enforce such an exposition; especially since the Chaldee interpreter seems to come nearer the scope of the passage, and has given us a sense that seems unexceptionable: In those days men began to make supplications in the name of the Lord, *i. e.* the number of families increasing in the days of Enos, they appointed more public places for God's service, in which, at set-times, they met together, and, in a more solemn congregation, worshipped their great Creator.

FROM Cham therefore, rather than from Enos, the learned have derived the beginning of idolatry; and they suppose that this man's heart, being deeply depraved before the deluge, was but the more hardened by his wonderful escape from it; so that it might be just with God to give him up to the farther seducement of his sensuality, and to the visible power of the old serpent, who for a time might be chained down by the curse in paradise, but was now let loose again for the punishment of those whom God's severe and miraculous discipline did not cleanse of their wickedness and folly. This date however <sup>c</sup> some have accounted a little too soon, and therefore placed the beginning of idolatry at the confusion of languages, and under Belus, rather than Cham; reasonably presuming, that the difference of mens dialects, and the distinction of their opinions concerning God, might not improbably commence together.

By whom.

BUT be the precise time of the commencement of idolatry what it will, it was the wise men of the world (as we said before) the reasoning philosopher, or cunning priest, who found his advantage in it, that having formed the design, addressed to the multitude with a grave appearance, <sup>d</sup> and prevailed, as we may imagine, by some such way of arguing as this: "We are all aware, ye sons of Noah, that religion is our chief concern, and therefore it well becomes us to improve and advance it as much as possible. We have, indeed, received appointments from God for the worship which he requires; but if these appointments may be altered for his greater glory, who doubts but that it will be a commendable piety so to alter them? Now our father Noah has instituted us in a religion, which, in truth, is too simple, and too unaffecting. It directs us to worship God abstractedly from all sense, and under a confused notion; under the formality of attributes, as power, goodness, justice, wisdom, eternity, and the like; an idea, foreign to our affections, as well as our comprehension: whereas, in all reason, we ought to worship God more pompously, and more extensively, and not only to adore his  
" personal

<sup>b</sup> The word [*Chala*] in the conjugation wherein it is here used is never taken for *profaning*, but *beginning*. <sup>c</sup> Cyril. Alex. contra Julian. Lib. I. <sup>d</sup> Young's Sermons, Vol. II.

“ personal and essential attributes, but likewise all the emanations of them, and all those creatures by which they are eminently represented. We ought therefore (if we will be wise) to worship the host of heaven, because they are eminent representations of his glory and eternity. We ought to worship the elements, because they represent his benignity and omnipresence. We ought to worship princes, because they sustain a divine character, and are the representatives of his power upon earth. We ought to worship men famous in their generation, even when they are dead, because their virtues were the distinguishing gifts and communications of God. Nay, we ought to worship the ox, and the sheep, and whatever creatures are most beneficial, because they are symbols of his love and goodness; and, with no less reason, the serpent, the crocodile, and other animals that are noxious, because they are the symbols of his awful anger.” This seems to be a fair opening of the project, and, by some such cunning harangue as this, we may suppose, that the first contrivers of idolatry drew in the ignorant and admiring multitude. And indeed, considering the natural stupidity of vulgar minds, and the strong inclinations they have, in matters of abstruse consideration, to help themselves by sensible objects, it seems not so difficult a task to have drawn them in.

\* THOSE who worshipped universal nature, or the system of the material world perceived first that there were excellencies in the several parts of it; and then to make up the grandeur and perfection of the idea, they joined them altogether in one divine being. Those who laboured under a weakness and narrowness of imagination distributed nature into its several parts, and worshipped that portion of it which was accounted of most general use and benefit. Usefulness was the common motive; but it was not the only motive that inclined the world to idolatry: for, upon farther inquiry, we shall find that whatever ravished with its transcendent beauty, whatever affrighted with its malignant power, whatever astonished with its uncommon greatness, whatever, in short, was beautiful, hurtful, or majestic, became a deity, as well as what was profitable for its use.

For what reasons.

† THE sun, they perceived, had all those powers and properties united in it. Its beauty is glorious to behold; its motion wonderful to consider: its heat occasions different effects, barrenness in some places, and in others fruitfulness; and the immense globe of its light appears highly exalted, and riding in triumph, as it were, round the world: the moon, they saw, supplied the absence of the sun, by night gave a friendly light to the earth, and, besides the great variety of its phases, had a wonderful influence over the sea, and other humid bodies: the stars they admired for their height and magnitude, the order of their

their positions, and celerity of their motions, and thence were persuaded, either that some celestial vigour or other resided in them, or that the souls of their heroes and great men were translated into them when they died; and upon these, and such like presumptions, they accounted all heavenly bodies to be deities, though the sun, in all places, was the most universal and popular idol. \* The force of fire, the subtilty of air, the usefulness of water, as well as the terror and dreadfulnes of thunder and lightning, gave rise to the consecration of these elements. The sea itself, swelling with its proud surface, and roaring with its mighty billows, is such an awful sight, and the earth bedecked with all its plants, flowers, and fruits, such a lovely one, as might well affect a Pagan's veneration: when from the like motive, their beneficial, hurtful, delightful, or astonishing properties, beasts, birds, fishes, and insects came at first to be adored. The pride and pomp of the great, and the low and slavish dispositions of the mean occasioned, first the flattery, and then the worship of kings and princes, as gods upon earth. Men famous for their great adventures and exploits, the founders of nations or cities, or the inventors of useful arts and sciences were revered while they lived, and, upon their death canonized. The prevailing notion of the soul's immortality made them imagine either that immediately they ascended up to heaven, and there settled their abode in some orb or other; or that they hovered in the air, whence, by solemn invocations, and by making some statue or image resembling of them, they might be prevailed with to come down and inhabit it.

The rise of  
images.

THE author of the book of Wisdom <sup>b</sup> has given us a full account of the first institution of statues and images, and upon what occasions they were probably set up. A father, says he, afflicted with untimely mourning, when he hath made an image of his child, soon taken away, now honoured him as a god, which was then a dead man; and delivered to those that were under him ceremonies and sacrifices. Thus, in process of time, an ungodly custom, grown strong, was kept as a law, and graven images were worshipped by the commandment of kings. When men could not honour in presence, because they dwelt far off, they took the counterfeit of his visage from far, and made an express image of a king, whom they honoured, to the end, that, by this their forwardness they might flatter him that was absent, as if he were present. Also the singular diligence of the artificer did help to set forward the ignorant to more superstition; for he, peradventure, willing to please one in authority, forced all his skill to make the resemblance of the best fashion; and so the multitude, allured by the grace of the work, took him now for a god, who, a little before, was but  
honoured

honoured as a man. i Thus the splendor and artifice of the statues themselves, together with the juggles and impostures of the heathen priests, telling strange stories of their original, or their discovery, inclined the world to an opinion that what was primarily a memorial of a departed child, or heroe, a remembrancer of a distant friend, or governor, or a monument of some remarkable accident in the world, was the receptacle of some strange divinity.

WHEN statues came first to be idolized, is not so easy a matter to determine; but, that they were of very early institution is manifest from that passage in scripture, where we are told, that \* Rachel stole away her father Laban's images. Laban lived in Chaldea, or in Mesopotamia which belongeth to it; and, as this is the first instance of idolatry that we have upon record, it is presumed by some learned men, that these images, or † Teraphim, which Rachel stole, were images in miniature, made in imitation of the statues of some great Assyrian kings, who very probably were the first heathen gods: and from hence they farther conjecture, that the first images of this kind were those which (as Lactantius tells us) Ninus erected in remembrance of his father Belus (whom the scriptures call Nimrod) and that these were the earliest objects of profane worship. Chaldea, no doubt, was the mother of idolatry: there Abraham dwelt; and from thence he was ordered to depart, that he and his posterity might be rescued from the general impiety, and taught to worship the true God only: but then, whether the images of great men were the first objects of the Chaldean adoration, is a matter much to be questioned. m The Chaldeans, it is certain, by reason of the plain and easy situation of their country, which gave them a larger prospect of the heavenly bodies than those who inhabited mountainous places, had a great conveniency for astronomical observations; and, accordingly, were the first people that took any great pains to improve them. And as they were the first astrologers, so learned men have observed that \* they had no other gods but the stars, to whom they made statues and images: those which they made to the sun, were of gold; to the moon, of silver; and so to the rest of the planets, of the metals dedicated to them. They suppose therefore, that these astrologers, lying on the ground, or else on flat roofs all night to make their observations, fell in love with the lights of heaven, which, in the clear  
firmament

When first  
worship  
idol.

The first  
idol.

For what  
reason.

i Tension, of Idolatry. k Gen. xxxd. 19. l These Teraphim (according to Kircher's Oedip. Egypt.) were the same idol with the Egyptian Serapis, i. e. an image like a little child wrapped up, without hands or feet. The Jewish Rabbis agree with him thus far, that they were images of human shape; but they add farther, that they were Ishimianical images, made by astrologers, and capable of celestial influence: and therefore Rachel stole them from her father, say they, lest, by their inspection, he should discover which way Jacob took his flight. Selden de Diis Syris Syntag: 1. m Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacra- n Maimon. More Nev. P. III. c. 29.

firmament of those countries, appeared so often, and with so much lustre; and perceiving the constant and regular order of their motions and revolutions, they thence began to imagine that they were animated by some superior souls, and therefore deserved their adoration. And as the sun, excelling all the rest, seemed to command the greatest observance; so the generality of learned men have, with good reason, imagined that this bright luminary was the first idol in the world.

JOB very probably (as <sup>o</sup> we have had occasion to take notice before) lived in Jacob's time, yet it is plain (by his asserting his innocence in this respect) that this kind of idolatry was customary in his days; <sup>p</sup> If I beheld the sun, when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and mine heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed mine hand, *i. e.* if, with devotion of soul, or profession of outward ceremony; I have worshipped those heavenly bodies, which, by their height, motion, and lustre attract the eye, and ravish the senses; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judges; for I should have denied the God that is above. Moses, conducting the children of Israel into Canaan, gives them intimation what kind of idolatry was current in the land, and a strict caution, <sup>q</sup> that when they lifted up their eyes to the heavens, they should arm their minds against that enchantment to which they were subject by the sensible glory of the sun, moon, and stars: and therefore, the account which <sup>r</sup> the historian gives us of the first commencement of idolatry seems not improbable, *viz.* That the most antient inhabitants of the earth (meaning those that lived soon after the flood, and particularly the Egyptians) contemplating on the world above them, and being astonished, with high admiration, at the nature of the universe, believed that there were eternal gods, and that the two principal of them were the sun, and the moon, the first of which they called Osiris, and the second Isis; <sup>s</sup> since, of late years, when the mariner's compass directed men to a new world in America (peopled no doubt from several parts of the old) many different idols were found in particular places; but as for the sun, it was the general deity both in Mexico and Peru.

The great multitude of idols.

BUT whatever the first idol might be, it soon multiplied to such a prodigious number, as to fill both heaven and earth with its progeny; in so much that there were few parts of the creation but what, in one nation or other, had their worshippers. <sup>t</sup> They worshipped universal nature, the soul of the world, angels, devils, and the souls of men departed, either by themselves, or in union with some star or other body. They worshipped the heavens, and in them both particular luminaries and constellations; the atmosphere, and in it the meteors and fowls of

<sup>o</sup> Vid. page 43. <sup>p</sup> Job xxxi. 26, &c. <sup>q</sup> Deut. iv. 19. <sup>r</sup> Diod. Sicul. Bibl. Histor. L. iii. c. 11. <sup>s</sup> Tennison, of Idolatry. <sup>t</sup> Tennison, *ibid.*



of the air; the earth, and in it beasts, birds, insects, plants, groves, and hills, together with divers fossils, and terrestrial fire. They worshipped the water, and in it, the sea and rivers; and in them fishes, serpents and insects, together with such creatures as are doubtful inhabitants of either element. They worshipped men, both living and dead, and in them the faculties and endowments of the soul, as well as the several accidents and conditions of human life. Nay, they worshipped the images of men, the images of animals, even the most hateful, such as serpents, dragons, crocodiles, &c. images of several parts of very different creatures, and reckoned all such figures and representations, though never so strange and monstrous, sacred and venerable. Thus they ransacked heaven and earth, and in every place found out something to transmute into a god.

BUT amidst this strange variety, <sup>a</sup> there were few nations but what had one god peculiar to themselves, to which they paid a more than ordinary veneration. And <sup>\*</sup> though this god might possibly be the same with what other nations worshipped; yet, by the difference of the name and title which they gave it, and the diversity of rites and ceremonies wherewith they addressed it, they made it at least seem to be a distinct deity. Thus the holy scriptures acquaint us, that not only <sup>\*</sup> every nation made gods of their own; that <sup>y</sup> Astoreth was the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, &c. but that every city and large town had a particular deity, to which, in a peculiar manner, they were devoted. This the exprobration of the prophet, <sup>z</sup> according to the number of thy cities, so are thy gods; and this the vaunting speech of Rabshakeh implies, <sup>a</sup> where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? Where are the gods of Sephervaim, Henah and Ivah? As much as to say, that the gods who presided over these several cities, and were worshipped and invoked by the inhabitants thereof, could not deliver them out of the hands of his master the king of Assyria.

Some nations had particular ones.

NAY, some nations were so far infatuated this way as not to be content with the particular deities of their own countries, but were eager to import from other climates, and to worship all the gods they could any where hear of. <sup>b</sup> The Romans, for their superstition in this respect, were very remarkable: for, as they conquered all nations, they adopted their religions: and

<sup>u</sup> Unicuique enim provinciarum, et civitatum, suus Deus est, ut Syriarum Astarte, ut Arabiarum Disares, &c. Tertul. Apol. c. 24. Inde adeo per universa imperia, provincias, oppida videmus singula, sacrorum ritus Gentilium habere, et Deos colere municipales, ut Eleuthios Cererem, Phrygas Magnam matrem, Epidaurios Esculapium, &c. Min. Felix. • Thus the Osiris of the Egyptians, the Baal of the Phœnicians, the Moloch of the Amorites, the Belus of the Syrians, the Mithras of the Persians, and the Apollo of the Greeks and Romans, are supposed by some learned men to be one and the same deity, and to signify the sun. Herbert's Religion of the Gentiles. • x 2 Kings xvii. 29. y 1 Kings xi. 3. z Jer. ii. 28. a 2 Kings xviii. 34. b Edwards of the Idolatry of the Gentile World.

and having built a pantheon or temple for all the gods of the whole world, they made their worship as universal as their empire. Nor were the Athenians in the least inferior to them: they had their *theoi xenikoi*, strange gods, or gods of other countries, in every corner of the city; and that they might be sure to take in the whole complex of them, they erected altars (as not only <sup>c</sup> the apostle, but <sup>d</sup> Pagan authors have likewise told us) to unknown gods, insomuch that Athens was but one great temple, or (in the language of <sup>e</sup> a very considerable writer) all altar, all sacrifice, all consecration to the gods.

The absurdities they ran into.

AMONG such a number of deities, their importers, or first instituters, ran themselves into frequent absurdities. <sup>f</sup> They confounded the species of things, and mixed sometimes the most monstrous and inconsistent together, in order to constitute a god of an uncommon make. <sup>g</sup> They confounded the sexes, and made one and the same deity sometimes male, sometimes female, and frequently both. They confounded the officers of their gods, and made them many times preside in very different and incompatible provinces. Apollo, for instance, was their god of music, and yet at the same time they made him the god of physic, the god of poetry, and the god of wisdom, and all this to be reconciled with his being the sun. Diana was the goddess of woods and forests, yet, under the name of Trivia, she some way related to the streets; she is made to be the moon or queen of heaven; sometimes an huntress; sometimes a midwife under the name of Lucina; and again, under the title of Hecate, no better than a witch. What can be more absurd and ridiculous than the representation they gave of their god Dagon, who in his upper parts was a man or a woman (for they made him of either sex) and below a fish; of the Libyan Jupiter <sup>h</sup> with his ram's head and a pair of crooked horns; or of the Egyptian Anubis, who was worshipped in the shape of a man's body, <sup>i</sup> with the head of a dog? This shews the fatal progress of error, and into what wild conceits men naturally deviate, when once they forsake the worship of the true God, and by the deception of the devil <sup>k</sup> become vain (as the apostle expresses it) in their imaginations, and have their foolish hearts darkened.

The order fell a rambling.

THIS prodigious number of deities, giving such a latitude to mens wild conceits, occasioned great perplexity among their worshippers, and raised disputes about their preference and priority:

<sup>c</sup> Acts xvii. 23. <sup>d</sup> Pausan. in Attic. Lucian. in Philopat. & Laert. in Epimenide. <sup>e</sup> Zenoph. de Repub. Athen. <sup>f</sup> Edwards of the Idolatry of the Gentile World. <sup>g</sup> Among the Assyrians, Syrians and Greeks, the Pagan gods were of both sexes: Bacchus in Aristides's oration is made male and female, and so is Jupiter in one of Orpheus's hymns: among the Romans, Fortune was accounted not only a goddess but a god; and among the Pagan Saxons, Friga, which was their Venus, (to whom the sixth day of the week, called Friday, was dedicated) was an idol representing both sexes. Edwards, ibid. <sup>h</sup> Statistic Cornubus Ammon, Luc. Lib. IX. <sup>i</sup> Omnigenumque Deum monstra, et Latrator Anubis. Virgil, Æn. viii. <sup>k</sup> Rom. i. 21.

ority: \* so that to end these disputes, it was concluded by the Romans and others, that some should be established as *Dii majorum gentium*, much superior in power and dignity to the *Dii minorum gentium*, who were but called Heroes and Half-gods: not but that the former were only men canonized after their death, as well as the latter; but the distance of time, wherein they lived, which increased the stories of their achievements, as well as the long course of devotion which in succeeding ages had been paid them, raised them above the rest, and in the general esteem gave them a pre-eminence. What the number of this order was is not so well agreed on, some making them but twelve (six males, and as many females) and others † twenty; and what their several actions and adventures were, would be an endless work to recount: our present purpose leads us rather to consider by what ways the heathen mythology concerning them might possibly arise.

Now, though the chief cause of this may be imputed † to the fanciful humour of the first writers that appeared in the world, the poets who took delight to disguise all antient stories under fables, wherein they were so lost as never to be recovered afterwards; yet it seems apparent to any diligent inquirer, that, † either by taking the idiom of the oriental languages in a literal and proper sense, or by altering the names of the antient tradition, and substituting others in their own language of the like importance; either by attributing what was done by the ancestors of mankind to some persons of their own nation, or by ascribing the actions of several persons to one who was either the first or the chief of them; these antient authors did by degrees corrupt the original account of men and things, and changed it into the heathen mythology.

The heathen mythology, whence it arose;

THAT they had some knowledge of the writings of Moses is manifest from the plain footsteps of scripture-history which are discoverable in their fictions. • The Saturn, the oldest of their gods, who was the son of heaven and earth, once in great power, but afterwards deposed and forced to abscond, agrees exactly with the account we have of Adam's creation, his dominion in the golden age of his innocence, his loss of it by his folly, and hiding himself from the presence of the Lord for fear and shame. That Tubal-cain gave first occasion to the name and worship of Vulcan, has been probably conceived both from the great affinity of the names, and from Tubal-cain's being called † an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron. The

Probably from scripture history.

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story

\* Herbert's Religion of the Gentiles. † Their names are Janus, Jupiter, Saturn, Genius, Mercury, Apollo, Mars, Vulcan, Neptune, Sol, Orcus, Bacchus, Terra, Ceres, Juno, Luna, Diana, Minerva, Venus and Vesta; twelve males and eight females. Herbert, *ibid.* in Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacre. † This and the following means of occasioning their mythology, the learned Stillingfleet has illustrated by several instances. Orig. Sacre. p. 365, &c. † Stillingfleet, *ibid.* p Gen. iv. 22.

story of Prometheus, and his forming mankind, relates to the memory of Noah, from whom the world was re-peopled; Bacchus's being twice born, seems to denote his preservation after the flood; and the double face of Janus, wherewith he looks both forward and backward, is not so fit an emblem of any thing as of Noah's seeing two ages, one before and the other after the flood. It is no vain conjecture that the memory of Jacob's long peregrination and service with his uncle Laban, was preserved under the story of Apollo's banishment, and being a shepherd under Admetus; and that the memory of Joseph in Egypt was preserved under the Egyptian Apis, has been shewn with a great deal of probability <sup>a</sup> by several learned men: so that from these, and many more instances that might be produced, we cannot but conclude with <sup>r</sup> a very judicious inquirer, that this wonderful agreement of heathen mythology with the scriptures, is a convincing argument that the one is a corruption of the other, and that many of their stories came from thence, though by the change of names and other proper inversions, the first compilers of them gave them a different dress, to suit them to their own meridian.

The manner of worshipping these gods.

Thus we have inquired into the first institution of heathen idolatry, and from what probable occasions it might arise; into the great number of their gods, and the very confused accounts they give of them; and have nothing more to say upon this argument, except it be what relates to the rites and ceremonies wherewith they used to worship. That these fictitious deities had temples and altars erected to them in great variety, and according to their respective natures, is too manifest to need any proof; <sup>s</sup> only the Persians, Scythians, and Tartars, who worshipped the fire and earth, had no structures, at least none made in any formal or solemn manner. What they offered to the terrestrial gods was laid upon the bare ground; what to the infernal was offered in ditches or pits made in the ground; and what to the celestial in places raised above the earth, *i. e.* altars, and these sometimes set upon hills and mountains. Their manner of worshipping was most commonly with their heads covered, but on some occasions bare; often lying prostrate, and sometimes standing barefooted; running sometimes about in frantic fits, with hideous and confused outcries: and at others, exercising great cruelty, and cutting and slashing themselves, (as <sup>t</sup> we read Baal's worshippers did) with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. The first-fruits were a common oblation to their deities; but the chief part of their worship

<sup>q</sup> Vossius de Idol. Lib. I. c. 29. Kirch. Oed. Egypt. Syn. 3. c. 5. and Tennison of Idolatry, who proves it in this method, 1. That Moses was the antient Egyptian or Arabian Bacchus 2. That Bacchus was the Egyptian Osiris And, 3. That the antient Egyptian Bacchus or Osiris was no other than Apis, p. 126. <sup>r</sup> Ex mirabili illo consensu, vel cæcis apparebit, præcos fabularum architectos a scriptoribus sacris multa mutuatos. Bochart, Canaan. <sup>s</sup> Edwards of the Idolatry of the Gentile World. t 1 Kings xviii. 28.

ship consisted in sacrificing animals: and this they did out of a real persuasion that their gods were pleased with their blood, and were nourished with the smoke and odor of them; and therefore the more costly they thought them the more acceptable, for which reason they stuck not sometimes to regale them with human sacrifices. Some things indeed were offered in common to them all; but for the generality they had their distinct sacrifices. To Apollo was offered a bull; a goat and a tiger to Bacchus; a boar and a wolf to Mars; a she-goat, and sometimes a young heifer to Minerva; a dove to Venus; a peacock to Juno; and a barren cow to Proserpine, &c. Each of these gods had rites and mysteries of a peculiar nature; and to gain an admission to the most secret of them, their votaries after a long course of penance (for the Persians were to undergo a dozen sorts of torments, some greater, some less, before they fitted themselves for the mysteries of their god Mithras) had certain <sup>u</sup> Symbols and forms of words given them as a badge and token of their profession, which none but their own fraternity were acquainted with. The feasts and other solemnities, in honour of their gods, were mixed with a great deal of lewdness and intemperance; nor were they thought to be duly performed, unless they were attended with riot and debauchery, and sometimes with cruelty and bloodshed. The Bacchanalia and the rites of Cybele, the mother of the gods, were always celebrated with gluttony and drunkenness: on this occasion \* one of their great moralists allows of intemperance, and thinks it a very fit and becoming thing to drink to excess at the feasts of that god who is the giver of wine. The Saturnalia were riotous times among the Romans, wherein (as <sup>x</sup> Seneca complains) a licence was given to all public luxury and uncleanness. The Lupercalia (which were the feasts of the god Pan) were solemnized by naked men; those of Flora by the other sex in the same condition; and (to name no more) in the mysteries and ceremonies of Ceres, as well as the rites and sacrifices of Bacchus, such inhuman actions and barbarities were committed, <sup>y</sup> that the observation of them was prohibited at Rome by a positive decree of the senate: for where these and such other solemnities were allowed of, the Psalmist speaking of the Israelites has acquainted us in what manner they were performed; <sup>z</sup> they were mingled among the heathen, says he, and learned their works, inasmuch, that they worshipped their idols, which turn-

Their  
feasts.

<sup>u</sup> With allusion to these Symbola among the Pagans, the learned author of the History of the Apostle's Creed, supposes that that system of faith was called by the name of Symbolum; and upon this occasion, has given us a brief account what some of these symbols were, both mute and vocal, p. 11. as these of Ceres more especially are mentioned by Arnobius, Clemens of Alexandria, and Julius Firmicus. \* *Pineinde eis met'hen oute allot'bi pou prepei plen en te tou orionontos Theou heorte.* Plato de leg. lib. vi. <sup>x</sup> Jus Luxuriæ Publicæ dat un est. Ep. xviii. <sup>y</sup> Liv. Hist. Lib. lix. c. 9. & Val. Max. Lib. vi. c. 12. lib. cii. 35. &c.

ed to their own decay : yea, they offered their sons and daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they offered unto the idols of Canaan, and the land was defiled with blood : for such as their gods were, such were the ceremonies of their worship, lewd and riotous, bloody and brutal. Let us now proceed a little farther, and see whether the case is at all amended with relation to the present state of idolatry in the heathen world.

## S E C T. I.

### Of the present State of the Heathen Idolatry.

A summary of the antient idolatry.

**T**HE Gentiles of old (as we shewed before) did, most of them, acknowledge one supreme God, the first and universal cause of all things, and to him they made their supplications and vows : but then they imagined likewise that he did not rule by his immediate providence, but by several orders of inferior beings, as his substitutes, and lieutenants. \* They saw that the pride or policy of their princes (in order to create a greater awe and reverence) made them withdraw from the management of affairs, appear but seldom in actions themselves, and commit the reigns of government to their ministers ; and thereupon they supposed that it comported best with the state and dignity of God, not to concern himself with the government of the world, but to leave it intirely to his substitutes. Upon this presumption, <sup>b</sup> they were easily induced (next to the supreme God) to give divine worship, first to intellectual substances of an heavenly nature, whom they called Gods, whether they were substances separate from bodies, or the souls of orbs and stars ; next, they addressed to intellectual substances united to aerial bodies, which they called Dæmons, and thought worthy of divine worship, as being the mediators between the gods and them ; in process of time, they came to worship the souls of such as had distinguished themselves by their usefulness to mankind, and these they called Heroes, as being raised to an elevation above this present life ; and, in the conclusion, thought it not amiss to pay the like honour even to the several images of these beings, or of other parts of the creation, as supposing them to participate of a superior nature, either from the influence of heavenly bodies, or the inhabitation of some spirit. This, in short, seems to be the state and progress of antient idolatry, which we come now to compare with the present ; beginning (where it is chiefly predominant) in the East.

In the East-Indies. The present idolatry of the Chinese.

**T**HE Chinese, <sup>c</sup> in general, worship the supreme God, the king of heaven and earth, or rather the eternal mind, which

<sup>a</sup> Tension, of Idolatry. <sup>b</sup> Th. Aquinas cent. Gent. Lib. iii. <sup>c</sup> Salmon's Modern History.

(as they imagine) animates the whole creation; but him they suppose <sup>a</sup> to govern the universe by a vicegerent, whom they call Laocon-Tzanty; by the sun, which they account an eternal spirit; and by another divinity, named Chanfay, whom they suppose to have dominion over all sublunary things. To these spirits, <sup>c</sup> and the three principal ministers employed under them, together with the heavens, and all the heavenly host, the souls of their ancestors, and of such as have been the authors of any notable invention, they present oblations, and religious worship; only with this distinction, <sup>d</sup> that the king alone sacrifices to celestial bodies, the sun and stars, &c. the lords and grandees to terrestrial, to the mountains and lakes, &c. the gentlemen and officers to the four seasons of the year, &c. and the commonalty to their household-gods, and tutelar angels. In their temples, <sup>e</sup> they have three remarkable idols set up for the public use: the image of immortality, which they worship in the form of a monstrous fat man, sitting cross-legged, with his breast open, and an huge prominent belly: the image of pleasure, about twenty foot high; and between these, another large image of thirty foot, gilded all over, and adorned with a crown, and rich apparel, to which they pay a particular adoration, and call it the great King Kang. Lesser images are innumerable, not only in the temples, but in the streets, and other public places. Every one has his Jos, or household-god, but they sometimes use them very coarsely; for if they have prayed to them any considerable time, and find no effect of their prayers, they not only upbraid them with neglect, but very often drag them through all the kennels of the streets: however, if in the mean time, they happen to obtain what they asked, they set the idol in its place again, fall down before and adore it, excusing their ignominious usage of it, and (to make it more propitious for the future) they wash, and paint, and gild it over afresh. They consecrate temples to demons, who (as they fancy) are confined within statues; <sup>b</sup> and have, particularly, a little island dedicated to the devil, where they sacrifice solemnly to him, under the name of Camassono, and where the vessels which pass by make an offering to him of whatever they have on board, and throw it into the sea, to prevent his anger.

<sup>f</sup> THE Banians believe that there is but one supreme God, whom they call <sup>g</sup> Parabrama, which, in their language, signifies absolutely perfect, existing from himself, and free from all corruption: but then they say, that he has committed to Brama the

Of the Pa  
nians.

care

<sup>d</sup> Mandellio's Travels into the Indies, Lib. ii. <sup>e</sup> The three ministers, or coadjutors in the government of the world, are, Tarquam, Teiquan, and Tzniquan; whereof the first presides over the air, and makes it rain; the second, over the generation of men, and the production of fruits and animals; and the third has the government of the sea. Mandellio, *Ibid.* <sup>f</sup> Semedo's History of China, <sup>g</sup> Atlas Geogr. Modern. and Salmon's Modern History. <sup>b</sup> Atlas Geogr. Modern. <sup>h</sup> Barten de Vite & Gess. Savers, Lib. i. <sup>k</sup> Mandellio, *Ibid.*

care of all things concerning religion ; to Wistnow, another of his sons, the care of mens rights and necessities ; and to a third, the power over the elements and human bodies. <sup>1</sup> These three they represent by an image <sup>m</sup> with three heads rising out of one trunk, and make their addressees to them as the chief dispensers of divine favours. But because they imagine that God created the devil, on purpose to punish, and to do mischief to mankind, they therefore worship him likewise, and have their temples filled with the representations of him, in statues of all kinds of metals and materials. The figure, under which they usually represent him, is dreadful to behold. Out of its head (which is adorned with a triple crown, in the fashion of a tiara) grow four horns ; out of its mouth come two large teeth, like the tusk of a wild boar ; and its chin is set out with a great ugly beard. Under its navel, between its two thighs, comes out another head more ghastly than the former, having two horns upon it, and from its mouth thrusting out a filthy tongue ; and (as an addition to all this ghastliness) instead of feet, it has paws, and behind it a long cow's tail. This figure they set upon a table of stone, which serves instead of an altar ; on the right-hand of which stands a trough full of water, wherein those that intend to do their devotions, wash and purify themselves ; and, on the left, a box or chest, for the reception of such offerings as they are minded to make to the <sup>n</sup> Braman, or priest of the place that is in waiting.

of the Ja-  
panese.

THE Japanese, though they acknowledge a supreme Being, which dwells in the highest heaven ; yet admit of several other inferior gods, whom they place among the stars ; though, it must be owned, they do not much worship and adore them. What they chiefly worship and invoke are the gods whom they suppose to have the sovereign command of their country, and the chief direction of its produce, its elements, its animals, &c. and who, by virtue of their power, can more immediately affect their present condition, to make them either miserable or happy in this life, and, by their assistance and intercession, obtain rewards for them, proportionable to their deeds, in that which is to come. Of these gods of their own country, they make mention of two successions ; the first, they say, was that of the seven great celestial spirits, who lived in the most antient times of the sun, long before the existence of men and heaven, and inhabited the Japanese world (the only country, in their opi-  
nion,

<sup>1</sup> Mandelsto says that they sometimes call him Wistul, and sometimes Etwa-  
ra. Mandelsto's Travels into the Indies, Lib. 1. <sup>m</sup> Some are of opinion that  
this idol with three heads, represents their three great philosophers, Confucius,  
Xequiam, and Tanzu. Ross's View of all Religions. <sup>n</sup> The Bramans, who  
are the priests among the Banians, make it their boast that they came out of  
the head of their god Brama. Many other creatures, they say, were produced  
out of his arms, thighs, feet, and other ignoble parts ; but their peculiar privi-  
lege was to be born of the brain of their god. Mandelsto, *ibid.* <sup>o</sup> Engelber-  
ter's Kämpfer's History of Japan.



nion, then existing) many millions of years. The seventh and last of these celestial spirits, whose name (as they fable) was Ifanagi, begot of his divine consort Ifamani, a second succession of divinities, called the Succession of the five Terrestrial Deities, who lived and governed the country of Japan a long while, and of whose adventures and knight-errandries, their defeats of giants, dragons, and other monsters, they tell many ridiculous stories. But besides these invisible deities which they call by the names of Sin and Cami, signifying souls or spirits, they have an infinite number of pagods; <sup>p</sup> and, among these, <sup>q</sup> one of a prodigious size in a stately temple at Meaco, and another at Tencheda, <sup>r</sup> no less famous for other extraordinary qualities, have the principal esteem and adoration. Their temples which are curiously carved and gilt, and dedicated some to the devil, and others to apes, rivers, and fishes, have many frightful figures in them, and in that dedicated to Chanis, one of the heads of their sects, they have as many idols as there are days in the year.

THE Siamese believe that there is one God who created the universe; <sup>s</sup> but at the same time they are persuaded that he has under him several other gods, by whom he governs the world. The god whom they worship with the highest devotion, they call Sommona Codom, and of him they tell this romantic story;—<sup>t</sup> that he, being the king of Ceylon, bestowed all his estate in charity, and even killed his wife and children, and gave them to the Talapoins, *i. e.* the priests of the place, to feed upon; that before he entered into bliss, he had acquired a prodigious strength, and was able to work miracles; could enlarge his body to what size he pleased, and then reduce it to so small a point as almost to be invisible; that he had two principal disciples, Pra Molga, and Pra Scarabout; that Pra Molga, at the request of the evil genii, overturned the earth, and took hell-fire in the hollow of his hand, with a design to extinguish it; but, finding himself not able to do it, he begged the assistance of Sommona Codom, who, apprehending that men would abound in wickedness, if the dread of the punishment

Of the Siamese,

<sup>p</sup> Salmon's Modern History. <sup>q</sup> This idol, which is of copper, reaches up to the roof of the temple: its chair, according to Sir Thomas Herbert, is seventy foot high, and eighty broad: its head big enough to hold fifteen men, and its thumb full forty inches round: by which we may make a judgment of the whole. Salmon, *ibid.* <sup>r</sup> The Bonzes, *i. e.* the priests of that place, pretend that every new moon their god appears in human shape to a virgin, whom at that time they bring into the temple, all illuminated with golden lamps, and place before the great image; when, on a sudden, the lights are miraculously put out, and something in human shape immediately embraces, and sometimes impregnates the young damsel. But whether this be done by one of the priests, or by the phantom they adore, is left to the reader to conjecture. The girl however, after this adventure, is highly honoured by priests and people, and (as if she were inspired) takes upon her to resolve the most difficult questions that are propounded to her. Salmon, *ibid.* <sup>s</sup> Mandello's Travels. <sup>t</sup> Salmon, *ibid.*

nishment were once removed, refused to grant it him. This and abundance more of the like nature the deluded people believe, and accordingly place the image of this their favourite deity with his two disciples on the same altar, and behind him several other statues representing the officers of his court, to whom they address their vows and supplications. They are of opinion that the dead have power to assist or torment the living; and are therefore very careful and magnificent about their burials. The priests are hired to sing in the room, on pretence of teaching the souls of the deceased (which they suppose to stand about the chamber) the road to heaven; and, as they believe themselves commonly tormented by their apparitions, they carry provisions to their tombs, in order to appease them, and give alms to the priests, as esteeming charity the best ransom for the sins of the deceased.

and other  
people of  
the East.

THE people of Peru hold an eternal succession of worlds without creation, and a multiplicity of gods to govern them: to these they offer up their petitions sometimes; but, in all their calamities, their first addresses are to the devil, to whom they make their vows, and punctually perform them; and to whom, at their meals, before they eat any themselves, they throw over their shoulders part of what they have by way of oblation. Those of Bengal worship the river Ganges, and are so besotted as to think that whoever at the point of death drinks of its water, shall immediately be translated into paradise. Those of Goa, besides several idols of horrible aspects, pray to the first thing they meet in a morning all that day, especially if it be a hog; and every new moon salute its appearance with supplications on their bended knees: and, to finish the account of this part of the world with the people of Narsinga and Bishnagar, here is an idol whereunto pilgrims in great numbers resort, with ropes about their necks, or knives sticking in their legs and arms, which, if they happen to fester, are accounted holy. This idol is every year carried about in procession, with virgins and music going before it; under its chariot-wheels the pilgrims strive to be crushed to death, and whoever are so, have their ashes kept as sacred reliques. Its votaries cut off their flesh, and let out their blood, by way of offering; and those of the female sex make no scruple of prostituting themselves, in order to procure money for its maintenance.

Of the  
Tartars.

FROM the idolatry of the Eastern nations we proceed to that of the Tartars (a people now subject to the empire of China) \* who are said to acknowledge one God, the maker of all things, and the author of all worldly blessings and punishments; but yet,

<sup>u</sup> Atlas Geogr. Modern. \* Unum deum credunt, quem credunt esse factorem omnium visibilium & invisibilium, & credunt eum tam bonorum in hoc mundo, quam penarum esse factorem; non tamen orationibus, aut Laudibus, aut ritu alieno ipsum colunt. Joh. a Plano Caprini Lib. de Tartaris.

yet, instead of addressing him, \* they have a kind of inferior deity called Itoga, whom they believe to be the god of the earth, and him they worship with the greatest solemnity, though their adoration generally terminates in secular advantages. They worship likewise the sun and moon as the authors of all the noble productions of the earth; and, though they do not believe that there is an hell, yet they are persuaded there are devils, and evil spirits which afflict and torment people in this life; \* and therefore endeavour to appease them with rich presents and costly sacrifices. One sort of idolatry peculiar to this nation, especially to those who live in the eastern parts of it, is their worshipping a living man, whom they call Lama, and to whom they pay such a superstitious veneration, that the greatest lords esteem themselves happy, if they can, by rich presents, obtain some of his excrements dried, which they put into a golden box and wear about their neck, as a certain preservative against calamities of all sorts. In a secret part of his palace, bedecked with gold, silver, and precious stones, and illuminated with costly lamps, the man is shewn, sitting upon a stately throne, and dressed in robes excessively rich, to receive the adorations of those who come from all parts to prostrate themselves before him, and humbly kiss his feet. They call him the Eternal Father; and, that he may be thought immortal, and, in some measure, answer his name, his priests take care to have one in readiness, as like him as possible, to set up in his stead as soon as he dies; and burying the corpse privately, carry on the imposture to a miracle, and make his votaries believe that he really lives for ever.

FROM the East we come to the Western parts of the known world, and, if we take a short view of some of the most considerable nations, we shall find that their idolatry is much of the same complexion. \* In Virginia, the Indians that still remain unconverted to christianity seem to have some sense of one supreme God, who has been, as they say, from all eternity; but then they affirm, that, when he first purposed to make the world, he made other gods of a superior order to be his instruments in the future creation; and, after them, the sun, the moon, and stars, by whose influence these first-created gods were, in a good measure, to govern the world. They have no notion of a providence, and therefore they neither fear, nor worship the supreme God; \* but the devil they think must be pacified, for fear he should ruin their health and plenty, and be always visiting

In the West  
Indies.  
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x Paulus Venetus, de Reg. Orient. l. 1. c. 29. y About forty leagues from Casan there is a place called Nemda, amidst the fens, whither the Tartars go in pilgrimage to do their devotion; and they believe that those who go thither empty handed, and carry no present to the devil (who, as they imagine, has his principle residence in the brook sheekshem, only because its rapidity hinders it from being frozen) shall languish, and pine away of some long and incurable disease. Olearius's Travels into Tartary. z Harriot's Description of Virginia. a Atlas Geograph. Antient and Modern.

them with thunder and storms, &c. and therefore they make no scruple to offer up young children to him. They have idols in abundance, but a great part of their devotion, with regard to them, consists in howling, and dancing about fires, with rattles in their hands; in beating the ground with stones, and offering tobacco, deer-suet, and blood, on their altars, which are commonly made of stone. <sup>b</sup> Their notions of another state favour of Mahometism; for to the good their priests promise perfect pleasure, fine women, and an eternal spring; but those that are bad, they threaten with lakes of fire, and torments inflicted by a fury, in the shape of an old woman.

Canada.

In Canada, <sup>c</sup> the natives believe that there is an Almighty God, the creator and supporter of all things, whom they call the great Spirit, or Master of Life, supposing that he contains, appears, acts in, and gives motion to every thing; for which reason they pretend to adore him in whatever they see, especially what is fine and curious, as the sun, and stars, &c. Every thing, however, that surpasses their understanding, they call by the name of Genius or Spirit; and of these they imagine there are two sorts, some good, the cause of all fortunate, and others bad, the authors of all unlucky events that befall them. To the evil spirits they never sacrifice living creatures, but only such goods as they have from the French for bevers; and when they sacrifice, the air must be serene. Then every one lays his offering on a pile of wood, and, when the sun is high, the children make a ring, and burn the pile, while the warriors dance and sing, and the old men harangue the evil spirit, and present him with pipes of tobacco, lighted at the sun: and in this manner they continue, dancing, singing, and haranguing till sun-set, only that, at certain intervals they sometimes sit down and smoke. In Florida,

Florida.

<sup>d</sup> their great idol is the sun, which, once every year, they worship in this manner. They fill the skin of a stag with fruits and sweet herbs, and so adorning its horns and neck with garlands, place it, with the head towards the sun, upon the trunk of a tree; and then kneeling down, pray to the sun to bless them with a continuance of such fruits as they offer unto him. Before any engagement, they turn with great reverence towards the sun, begging of it to grant them success, which, if they obtain, they return solemn thanks, and, by way of acknowledgment, sacrifice their own eldest sons, knocking out their brains with a club.

Peru.

In Peru <sup>e</sup> they generally own one sovereign lord, and maker of all things, whom they call Pachacamac, or wonderful Creator of heaven and earth. To him they offer what they esteem most precious, and pay such a profound veneration, that both their kings and priests enter his temple with their backs towards the

<sup>b</sup> Atlas Geograph. Antient and Modern. <sup>c</sup> Ibid. <sup>d</sup> Ibid. <sup>e</sup> Garcilasso de la Vega, dans le Commentaire Royal Yncas, L. II. c. 1.

the altar, and so come out again, without daring to turn about, and look upon his image: but, together with him, they worship the sun, by reason of the benefits which the world receives from it; the moon, as wife, and sister to the sun; and the stars, as her daughters, and servants of her house. Among the stars, they have great respect for the planet Venus, which they call *The Page of the Sun*; a great awe for thunder and lightning, as the executioners of justice; and a great veneration for the rainbow (which their *Yncas* or kings made their coat of arms) as the issue and production of the sun. Human sacrifices are generally prohibited; but, upon more solemn occasions, such as the sickness, or coronation of their king, their entering upon a war, and public supplications for success, they sacrificed children, from four to ten years of age: and (to finish the account of this part of the world with the Pagans of Mexico) though they undoubtedly have a notion of one supreme God, the maker and preserver of the universe; yet all their visible worship centers upon idols, of which they have multitudes, some of gold and other metals, and some of wood and stone; but among these, two of distinguished note; the one, made of wood, but curiously adorned with gold and jewels, represents the sun, and therefore is seated in an azure-coloured chair, to signify his abode in the sky, and has an high tuft of feathers, tipped with gold, on his head, to denote his brightness and glory; and the other, which they call the God of Repentance, made of black shining stone, has in his left-hand a plate of gold, burnished like a looking-glass, in which, as they fancy, he observes all worldly transactions; and in his right, a rod, a quiver, and four darts, for the punishment of all criminals; and therefore of this idol they stand in great awe, for fear it should discover, and take cognizance of their crimes. They sacrifice to devils, and (as an author, who dwelt in the place, tells us) have several oratories, or dark houses, full of idols, great and small, which they bathe and wash in blood, even the blood of men, of which they shed such quantities, that the walls of the houses are an inch thick with it, and the floor a foot. Into these oratories the priests suffer none to enter, but persons of the first distinction, and when any such go in, they are obliged to offer some man or other as a sacrifice, that the priests may wash their hands, and sprinkle the house with the blood of the victim. The author of the civil and moral history of the Spanish West Indies, says, that the Mexicans never sacrifice any, but such as are captives in war; but of the blood of these, their priests were so profuse, that they thought it dishonourable to sacrifice less than forty or fifty at a time to one single idol; and had such an ascendant over their princes, that they made them believe their gods were angry, and would

Mexico.

would not be appeased, without four or five thousand men sometimes sacrificed in a day.

In the  
North.  
Lapland.

THE spreading of the christian faith in the North has happily abolished polytheism and idolatry in most places, but <sup>b</sup> there are still such considerable remains of it among the Laplanders, as incline many authors to believe, that they never heartily embraced christianity; for they worship Christ and their idols promiscuously, and with the same form of worship. They own indeed one supreme God, whom they arm with thunder, and have the same conceptions of him, that the Pagans of old had of their Jupiter: but they have another subordinate god, to whom they acknowledge, they owe all the blessings of life; and, together with him, they worship the sun, whom they call Baiva, because of his influence over the bodies of men and beasts. To each of their gods they have temples consecrated, and images made of stone, or rudely carved out of the trunk of trees, which, when they worship, they anoint with the blood of the sacrifice they offer, and <sup>c</sup> then, lying flat on their bellies, they mutter their prayers into the ground, under which they conceive that the devil has his abode.

The witch-  
crafts there

No nation has been so remarkable for sorcery and enchantments as this. <sup>\*</sup> Here parents teach their children these diabolical arts, and, as part of their inheritance, bequeath such spirits to them, as they think have been assistant to themselves. Each family has its dæmons, and, with some, these dæmons are so familiar that they meet them in woods, and in private walks, and teach them a song, which, when they sing, they always appear to attend their commands. They send abroad flies of a blueish colour, which they pretend to be their familiars, to hurt their enemies, their cattle, or their children; and between some families there frequently happens a trial and contest, whose familiar shall be most powerful. They tie knots, by which they pretend to make the winds favourable or cross to sea-faring men: but the usual instrument of magic and divination is their drum; which he that beats, mutters some charms all the while, till falling into a trance (during which, all that are present set up a singing) he pretends, when he comes to himself, that whatever it was, he employed this enchantment for, was fully revealed to him. The people, in short, are under strong deceptions of the devil: they believe nothing of the resurrection; and have such gross notions of a future state, that, when any of them die, they put into the coffin a flint and steel, that they may not want light in the other world; an hatchet, that they may cut out their way to heaven through woods; together with a bow, arrows, and victuals, that they may be able to encounter

<sup>b</sup> Atlas Geogr. i The people of Greenland are said to observe the same way of worship; and of them it is likewise reported that in some diseases, they tie a stick to a great stone; and, after they have prayed to it, if they can lift it up easily, they think their prayers are heard. Atlas, *ibid.* <sup>c</sup> *ibid.*

counter all opposition, and fight their way thither without fainting.

THOUGH the Mahometan religion has over-run a great part of Africa, <sup>In the South-Guinea</sup> yet in Guinea (a country, where we have some dealings, and shall therefore make it a specimen of the rest) the people retain their antient Gentilism. They believe indeed in one true God, to whom they attribute the creation of the world, and all things in it; but this opinion they rather owe to their daily conversation with the Europeans, than to any tradition of their ancestors: for, instead of calling upon God, or making their oblations to him at any time; in all their difficulties they apply to their Fetiche, or false god, and, in all their undertakings, pray to him for success. Their notions about the creation of man are somewhat singular: they say, that God, at the beginning, created a black, as well as a white man, and made them an offer of two sorts of gifts, gold, and learning; that he gave the first option to the black man; but he, despising the knowledge of letters, made choice of gold, which so incensed God, that he resolved the Whites should for ever be their masters, and they be obliged to wait on them as slaves. What particular notions they have of their gods, it is hard to determine. This only is observable of them, that they have a great number; that each man, at least each house-keeper, has one to himself, of whom he is persuaded that he narrowly inspects his actions, rewards the good, and punishes the bad; but then, he makes the reward to consist in a multiplicity of slaves and wives; the punishment, in the want of them; for of future rewards and punishments, they have a slender or no conception, except it be some of them, who take it for granted, that, when they die, they are immediately conveyed to a famous river, called Bosmanque, situate in the inland-country, where their God inquires what sort of life they have led, whether they have kept their oaths, observed holidays, and abstained from all forbidden meats; which if they have done, they are gently wafted over the river, to a land abounding with all kind of happiness; but if they have offended against these precepts, their God plunges them into this river, where they are drowned, and buried in eternal oblivion. Though they have a multitude of gods (as we said before) yet, in several places of the country, especially all along the gold-coast, they are not acquainted with idol-worship; and, though they believe that there are devils, which do them much mischief, yet it does not appear, that intentionally they either pray, or make offerings to them: on the contrary, they seem to detest the devil, and at a certain festival, have an annual custom of

Bosman's new Description of Guinea. \* After seven days spent in mirth and jollity, singing and dancing, &c. our author tells us, that on the eighth in the morning they hunt out the devil with a dismal cry, all running one after another, throwing sticks, stones, excrements, or any thing they come at, as thick as hail.

of driving him out of their cities with a great deal of ceremony. What they call gods however are, in effect, no other than devils, of which there is one of a very gigantic size, with one side of his body sound, and the other rotten (which if any person do but touch <sup>m</sup> he dies immediately) whom the deluded people of Ante endeavour to appease with eatables of all kinds; and for this reason, thousands of pots and troughs full of victuals, are continually found standing throughout the whole Antese country.

Thus we have inquired into the grounds of the antient idolatry, and made a survey of some principal parts of the world, wherein that sin and impiety still prevails: a dismal prospect, and full of horror! But, to do justice to our subject, we must carry our observations a little farther, and pursue our inquiry into the sound, as well as the corrupt part of the religion of the heathens, and what sentiments of this kind the learned, as well as the ignorant, the philosopher, as well as the vulgar have in all ages entertained.

## S E C T. II.

### Of the Sounder Parts of the Heathen Religion.

The sound part of the antients.

**T**HOSE that have considered the nature of the Pagan religion <sup>n</sup> (in order to separate it from its dross) have generally reduced the substantial parts of it to these five propositions:

1. THAT there is one supreme God.
2. THAT this God ought to be worshipped.
3. THAT virtue and piety ought to be acquired.
4. THAT repentance and sorrow for sin ought to be exercised. And,
5. THAT rewards and punishments are dispensed by God, both in this life and that which is to come.

God to be worshipped.

A DILIGENT inquirer into these matters <sup>o</sup> lays it down for a certain position, that there never was in any age any people so rude and barbarous which did not acknowledge and worship one supreme Deity, the first principle and governor of all things: “But that the wiser sort, says he, might teach the more ignorant that the supreme Being, whom they called God, was present in all places, they therefore made abundance of gods in all places, and over all things.” But from whatever cause the multitude of their gods might arise, it is certain that they always had one whom they looked upon as supreme, to whom their public as well as private worship, their prayers and vows, and

him, and pursuing him a considerable way out of the town; which, when they have done, they come back rejoicing; and the women, to prevent his return, take care to wash and scour all their wooden and earthen vessels very clean. Bosman's new Description of Guinea. <sup>m</sup> This our author, who lived long in the country, tells us, he verily believes without the least scruple. Bosman, *ibid.* <sup>n</sup> Herbert's antient Religion of the Gentiles. <sup>o</sup> Kircher's Oed. Egypt. *syn.* 3.



and other acts of religious homage were in a peculiar manner addressed. Among the Romans, Jupiter (whom the poets call the father of gods and men, and graver writers distinguish by the stile and title of *Optimus Maximus*) was accounted this first and greatest god, the supreme governor of the world, and king over all rational beings; and to signify what great esteem they had of all moral virtues and perfections, they deified, and built temples to honour and chastity, to fidelity and fortitude, &c. Cicero, in his second book *de Legibus*, has given us an abstract of the religion of the antients, and plainly tells us that men have no other means of carrying them to heaven but a pure mind, an holy faith, a sincere piety, and a combination of all manner of virtues; and, in his proem to his natural questions, Seneca maintains that virtue enlarges the soul, prepares it for the knowledge of celestial things, and renders it fit and worthy to be admitted into the society of God.

Virtue to be valued.

TOGETHER with these injunctions and commendations of virtue, as perfective of man's nature, and conducive to his happiness, they prescribed the wisest rules, both for the prevention and expiation of sin. They supposed that all sin and wickedness proceeded, either from the society of bad men, from imprudence or ignorance of what was evil, or from anger or concupiscence, the passions or depraved appetites of the man's own mind; and from hence they concluded that the best remedies would be to avoid all wicked company and conversations; to restrain the impetuosity of evil affections; to correct and cure such unruly propensities as arise from human frailty; to wash away those stains of sin which had defiled their conscience; and to make frequent and fervent supplications to their gods, that they might become kind and propitious to them. They imagined that man, considered simply, and in his own nature, was neither good nor evil, but inclinable either way according to his education; and that vice and sin were not so radicated in him, but that with good management they might be totally weeded out and destroyed: so that, unless the soul was obstinately bent upon wickedness, they saw no reason why it might not be reduced to a good state (even after the pollution of sin) by an internal purification. Conscious they were of the deformity of vice, and what an high provocation it was to God; but then they considered that goodness was essential to a divine being, and that where goodness resided, wrath and resentment could not last long: wherenpon they encouraged themselves with hopes of a pacification, upon expressing their sorrow and regret for what they had done amiss: and that they were sincere in such expressions, the many vows they made, the many prayers they put up, the temples they built and dedicated, and their expiations, lustrations, and other peculiar rites and ceremonies to pacify

Repentance for sins.

pacify their gods (whereof the writers of their antiquities give us so long a detail) are a sufficient indication.

Future re-  
wards and  
punish-  
ments.

SOME of the wisest of their philosophers owned that the supreme God was to be worshipped for himself, the most excellent nature deserving the utmost veneration; but, notwithstanding this, from his bounty and goodness they promised themselves a recompence of reward, if not in this, at least in the other world, for all their sufferings and services. In this world they perceived an unequal distribution of things, the good oftentimes oppressed with calamities, and the wicked rejoicing in pleasure and plenty; and thereupon, from the justice as well as the goodness of God, they inferred that the righteous were to receive ample rewards, and the wicked suffer condign punishments after this life; for it scarce ever entered into their thoughts that this was the only life they were to experience, or that so noble a creature as man, who is big with immortal designs, and full of projects for future ages, who was made to contemplate the wonders of nature and providence, to admire and adore his Maker, and can look backward and forward, and view an eternity without beginning and without end, was made but for a moment, as it were, and finally perishes when he dies: and from this reflection they inferred that the soul was immortal, and that death only translated it to another state, joyous to the virtuous, but full of torments to the wicked. Thus far were their notions just and regular: but when they came to ascertain the places where those that deserved well received their reward, and the guilty their punishment; as the Elysian fields, the isles of the blessed, the stars and heaven, for the virtuous; Tartarus, Erebus and Orcus, and the four infernal rivers for the vicious; they fell into very gross and absurd errors, without any manner of necessity. For they might more easily have convinced the people that divine justice had allotted punishments after this life in some place or other, according to what every one had deserved, though they could not define the precise place, manner and duration of them; than rashly determine it to be in some obscure, subterraneous caverns near the centre of the earth, or in apartments in the middle region of the air, with many other circumstances equally ridiculous and uncertain: though it must be confessed that their making heaven and the stars the seat of the blessed was not at all incongruous; since the universal opinion, even at this time is, that an eternal and happy state is only to be found in God and heaven.

Of the mo-  
dern hea-  
then reli-  
gion in  
China.

THESE are some of the truths of the antient heathen theology, and (to compare them now a little with what are more modern) in China we find a sect called the Literati, that adhere to

r Herbert's antient Religion of the Gentiles. s Sherlock upon Deah.  
t Herbert, *ibid.*

to the doctrines of the much celebrated <sup>a</sup> Confucius, <sup>x</sup> whose philosophy, like that of Socrates in Greece, is thought to have been brought down from heaven. <sup>y</sup> He speaks of God as the most pure and perfect principle, the fountain and essence of all things; he prohibits the worship of images; acknowledges the immortality, though he allows the transmigration of the soul; believes a future state; and, <sup>z</sup> in a book which is called *Siudo*, *i. e.* the Philosophical Way of Life, has left a collection of such wise sentences and moral maxims, as are not inferior to any of that kind; wherein he recommends to his followers the practice of virtue, a free conscience, and a good and honest life; <sup>a</sup> and teaches them to contemn riches and pleasure, to subdue their passions, and improve their reason.

IN Japan, there is a sect, following the institutions of <sup>b</sup> Siaka In Japar their founder, <sup>c</sup> who believe that the souls of men, and animals both, are immortal; that those of men, after their departure

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from

<sup>u</sup> This Confucius whom the Chinese call Koofi, was born in the province of Kok, about 483 years before Christ. He was called a child of sorrow, because his birth was posthumous, which nevertheless was accompanied with some remarkable signs and prognostications of his being a sages or philosopher: for music, they say, was heard in heaven while his mother was in labour, and two dragons were observed to attend while the child was washed. His stature when grown up was very noble and majestic; his deportment grave, and his piety, even in his earliest years, very exemplary. He honoured his relations; endeavoured to imitate his grandfather, who was much admired for his sanctity, and never ate any thing before he offered it to the supreme Lord of heaven by protestation. After the death of his grandfather, he made a considerable proficiency in the knowledge of antiquity, and compiled the above-mentioned collection of moral and political maxims, which ever since (now upwards of two thousand years) has been looked upon as a performance incomparable in its kind, and an excellent pattern of a good and virtuous life. A profound respect is shewn to his memory, both in China and Japan, by public as well as private persons. His picture is allowed the most honourable place in the houses of philosophers; and it is not long ago since the emperor of Japan caused two temples to be built to him in his capital city Jedo, whether he went in person as soon as they were finished, and on this occasion set forth, in a handsome speech to his courtiers, the merits of this great man, and the peculiar excellency of the maxims of government which he had laid down. Kämpfer's History of Japan, and Atlas Geogr. Antient and Modern. <sup>x</sup> Ibid. <sup>y</sup> Salmon's Modern History. <sup>z</sup> Kämpfer, *ibid.* <sup>a</sup> Atlas Geogr. Modern. <sup>b</sup> This Siaka, whom the learned men among them usually call Sommona Codom, was (according to the Japanese historians) a native of Magattakokf, which is supposed to be the island of Ceylon, and born above 1029 years before Christ, son to the king thereof. When he came to the nineteenth year of his age he quitted his parents, leaving his wife and an only son behind him, and became a disciple of Arara-Sennin, then an hermit of great repute, who lived on the top of a mountain called Dandokf; and, under his inspection, betook himself to an austere life and continual meditation on heavenly and divine things, whereby he penetrated into the most secret and important points of religion, *viz.* the existence and state of heaven and hell, the state of souls in the life to come, and the manner of their transmigrations, the way to eternal happiness, the power of the gods in governing the world, and many more things beyond the reach of human understanding, which he afterwards freely communicated to his disciples, who, for the sake of his doctrine and instructions, followed him in crowds, and embraced the same austere course of life. He lived in this manner seventy-nine years, and died (according to the common computation) 950 years before Christ. Kämpfer's History of Japan. <sup>c</sup> *Ibid.*

from their bodies, have their portion in a place of happiness or misery, according to their behaviour in this life. In the place of happiness they suppose that there are different degrees of pleasure, in order to reward every one according to his deserts; but the whole place is so thoroughly filled with bliss, that each happy inhabitant thinks his lot the best, and, far from envying the greater felicity of others, wishes only for ever to enjoy his own. Amida, the general patron and protector of human souls, is the sovereign commander of these happy regions; and the leading a virtuous life, and doing nothing that is contrary to the commandments of the law of Siaka (which are chiefly these, not to kill any thing, not to steal, not to whore, not to lie, not to drink strong liquors, but to fast and pray, to adore God, his word, and those that imitate his virtues) is the only way to become agreeable to him, and worthy of eternal happiness. In the place of misery (which they call *Dsigokf*) degrees of torments are, in like manner, proportioned to mens offences. Justice, they imagine, requires that every one should be punished according to the nature and number of his crimes, the number of the years he lived in the world, and the station he lived in, and the opportunities he had to be virtuous and good. Jemma, or with a more majestic character, Gemma O (as they call him) is the severe judge, and sovereign commander of this place of darkness and misery; to whom all the vicious actions of mankind appear in their proper horror and heinousness, by means of a large looking-glass placed before him, which is call the Looking-glass of Knowledge. The miseries of the souls, confined to these dismal abodes, are however not so incessant and lasting, but that some relief may be expected from the virtuous life and good actions of their friends and relations whom they left behind, but more especially from the prayers and offerings of their priests to the great and good Amida, who, by his powerful intercession, can so far prevail upon the judge of this infernal place, as to oblige him to abate of the severity of his sentence; where it is consistent with justice, and the punishment due to their crimes; to treat these unhappy souls with kindness; and, at last, to send them abroad again, <sup>d</sup> in order to enter upon a fresh probation.

As respects  
them here-  
upon

THESE doctrines, though disguised with abundance of fiction, are, in the main intendment of them, true; and, abating the notion of the pre-existence and transmigration of the soul, and its temporal confinement only to the place they assign for its punishment,

<sup>d</sup> For this is their opinion, that when these souls have been confined long enough to expiate their crimes, they are sent back again into the world, not indeed to animate the bodies of men, but of such creatures whose nature resembles their former sinful inclinations: where after several transmigrations, they are suffered at last to enter human bodies again, and by that means are put in a capacity either by a good and virtuous life to make themselves unalterably happy; or by a new course of vices to expose themselves to a fresh confinement, and another round of transmigrations. Kämpfer's History of Japan.

ment, there are few points in them, but what, not only an honest heathen, but even a sober christian may embrace; while the integrity of their lives, their remarkable justice, and temperance, and sobriety, the strictness of penance imposed upon themselves, and great severity in punishing most enormous crimes, are enough to upbraid us christians, and make us ashamed of the comparison.

It can hardly be expected, that, in countries over-run with ignorance, and devoid of all kind of learning, reason should have power enough to preserve any of the fundamental articles of religion; and yet we are told of the people of Peru, <sup>of Peru.</sup> that they have a clear notion of God, and esteem his name so very sacred, that, without an absolute necessity, they never pronounce it, and then with all imaginable signs of devotion; that they are so cautious of profaning it, that, in the most important causes, witnesses never take an oath, but only promise the judge to speak truth, which they do with great strictness, and make any falsification herein capital: and that the natives of Canada <sup>and Canada.</sup> have a full persuasion of the immortality of the soul, as well as future rewards and punishments, <sup>upon this motive—</sup> that they see most men, especially the best, are subject to hardships here, which they say are ordained, that they may be happy in the other world, and therefore they account none of their calamities to be real misfortunes. A true principle in religion! and a good preparative, one would think, to their conversion; but to this (as <sup>our</sup> author observes) the bad manners of the priests, teaching christianity, and the wicked lives of the French that have made their settlement there, are the greatest impediment and obstruction.

In general (for it would be endless to produce particulars) <sup>Whether this religion of the heathens will save them.</sup> we may observe that in most of the countries hitherto discovered, the belief of a God, and obligation to worship him; the belief of a future state, and necessity of virtue to prepare men for it; sorrow for sin, and the invention of many rites to expiate it, have been the known principles of the heathen religion: but whether these principles, loaded as they are with all the superstitious above-mentioned, the worship of idols, the sacrifice of human blood, the adoration of devils, and other such impieties as the divine nature cannot but detest, will be available to their salvation, is a question neither so easy nor so safe to be resolved. This only we may say (without intruding into the counsels which God has hid in his own breast) that as ignorance of duty, the prevalence of custom, and the power of prepossession plead strongly in mitigation of any fault, so has the heathen world, not only these apologies to produce, but some declarations likewise in holy writ, which seem to have their particular case under consideration. For if, <sup>as St Paul</sup> tells

<sup>a</sup> Atlas Geogr. <sup>f</sup> Ibid. <sup>g</sup> La Hontan, in his account of the Savages of Canada, &c. <sup>h</sup> Acts xvii. 30.

tells the Athenians, a people wholly given to idolatry, God winked at their former times of ignorance; if, <sup>i</sup> as our Saviour tells the Pharisees, such as are blind, *i. e.* without a competent knowledge of their duty, have no sin, at least, not in so great a measure; <sup>k</sup> and if, as he tells his disciples, Moses, the law-giver of God, suffered the Israelites to do things which were not directly right, for the hardness of their hearts, <sup>l</sup> *i. e.* because the imperfection of his revelation wanted proper efficacy to work their hearts to a greater softness; then have we sufficient reason to suppose that the same connivance, and kind construction of faults will be granted to the present, that was to the generations of old: though, when we consider farther, that there is <sup>m</sup> no communion between light and darkness, no concord between Christ and Belial, no agreement between the temple of God and idols, in what method this grace will be extended, and the divine attributes remain unblemished, is a mystery past our comprehension. This only we know farther, that, as the merits of Christ, whereby alone we obtain salvation, are imputable to the Gentile, as well as the christian world (which we have in some measure shewed already) <sup>n</sup> in his interceding with God, and offering sacrifice for sin, he can (as the apostle assures us) have compassion on the ignorant, and such as are out of the way, since their error is involuntary, and their ignorance no part of their crime; for how can they call on him (as <sup>o</sup> he argues in another place) in whom they have not believed? How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher?

The opinion of the Millenniums.

To satisfy, in some measure, these inquiries, those who favour the doctrine of a Millennium have devised a scheme, whereby to account for the future condition of the heathen world. <sup>p</sup> They lay it down for an undoubted truth, that the great design of Christ's coming into the world was to procure the salvation of all mankind, and that the merits of what he did and suffered were available to that purpose; that salvation is to be had by no other name but only that of the Lord Jesus Christ; and yet those who shall be saved by him must believe in him, *i. e.* must receive him for their Saviour, and embrace the conditions of that covenant which he hath established in order to their salvation. Since therefore men cannot believe in him of whom they never heard; and yet there are many men, yea, many nations of men, that never heard of the name of Christ; from hence they conclude, that, at some time or other, he shall be made known to all men; and, since so great a part of mankind had no knowledge of him before their death, that they certainly shall have it after their resurrection; and to support this

<sup>i</sup> John ix. 41. <sup>k</sup> Matth. xix. 8. <sup>l</sup> Young's Sermons, Vol. I. <sup>m</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 14, &c. <sup>n</sup> Heb. v. 2. <sup>o</sup> Rom. x. 14. <sup>p</sup> Vid. Staynoe's Short Inquiry, and Burnet's Theory.

this conclusion, they suppose that, after this life, there will be a threefold resurrection. <sup>a</sup> The first will be of the faithful in Christ, such as have been martyrs for Jesus, and lived in this life observant of his laws. These, for a thousand years shall reign with Christ upon earth, and then, together with him, ascending into heaven, shall there continue for ever. The second will be of those who, during this life, never heard of the sound of the gospel, or had the offer of a Saviour made them. These, upon their resurrection, shall be admitted to the knowledge of him and his doctrines, and put upon the same probation that we now are, who live under the gospel-covenant. If they believe and obey, they shall be instated in the same happiness that good christians are to enjoy, and, without tasting death any more, be translated into heaven: but, in case they prove impious or infidels, shall be reserved to the third resurrection, which will be of such as rejected the Saviour of the world in this life, and, together with them, shall be cast into the lake of fire.

BUT though this hypothesis, as it is chiefly built upon abstruse passages in a <sup>r</sup> very difficult and mysterious book, has not obtained a general reception; yet this we may lay down for an infallible truth, that, as the judge of the world cannot but do right, mankind will never be condemned for the want of what they were in no condition to attain; and therefore, <sup>t</sup> instead of stretching the severity of God's justice, in relation to this argument, we may rather venture to extend the bounds of his mercy; <sup>q</sup> since this is the attribute, which, of all others, is the most magnificently spoken of in the scriptures. But indeed the most proper way is, to leave the secrets of God as mysteries too far above us to examine, and rather study to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, than let our minds run into uncertain speculations concerning the measures and conditions of that of others. We are allowed very justly indeed to commiserate the state of those who sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; <sup>u</sup> but, as darkness itself is sometimes called upon in scripture to praise the Lord; so even intellectual darkness, *i. e.* ignorance has, occasionally, great reason to join in the praise: for supposing men to be sinful, it is happy for them if they are ignorant; the supreme judge of the world having laid down this for one rule by which he will proceed at the last day, *viz.* <sup>x</sup> that the servant who knew his master's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few.

#### A COMPLETE

<sup>q</sup> Rev. xx. 14.    <sup>r</sup> Ibid. chap. xx.    <sup>s</sup> Burnet on the Articles    <sup>t</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>u</sup> Young's Sermons, Vol. I.    <sup>x</sup> Luke xii. 47, 48.

What best  
becomes  
us.

A  
C O M P L E T E B O D Y  
O F  
S P E C U L A T I V E A N D P R A C T I C A L  
D I V I N I T Y.

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P A R T I V.

Of the Myfteries of our moft Holy Faith.

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C H A P. I.

Of the Nature of the Second Covenant, commonly called  
The COVENANT of GRACE.

What to be  
done with  
man under  
the  
breach of  
the first  
covenant.

**WE** left the first parents of mankind <sup>a</sup> under the breach of the first covenant, and in them all their posterity lost and undone; sentenced to labour, to sorrow, to sufferings, to sickness, to death, and exposed to the vengeance of Almighty God: and in this situation there are but three things that can occur to our thoughts; 1. that God should destroy them instantly; or, 2. reserve them for punishment; or, 3. extend mercy and forgiveness to them.

Not to be  
destroyed.

**I**F indeed we consider the pure and spotless nature of God, and how abominable and loathsome all sin and wickedness is to him, we must be inclined to think, that, upon the commission of it, he should immediately withdraw his divine influence, and suffer his rebellious creatures to sink into nothing: <sup>b</sup> but then, if we consult farther the idea we have of an infinitely perfect being; one who foresees the necessary connections of causes and effects, and all the results and consequences that attend them; one whose property it is to be constant and immutable in all his counsels and actions, and what he wills for once, to will for ever; we shall find that it was not so consistent with the attributes of God ever to have created mankind at all, if there could be any subsequent reason of sufficient force to induce him to destroy

<sup>a</sup> Vide Vol. I. p. 455. et seq. <sup>b</sup> Taylor on the two Covenants.



stroy them. To project and contrive to no purpose, to build and destroy again, is common to men, whose views are short and humours fickle; but God cannot be mistaken in his measures, nor defeated in his purposes: and yet (upon the supposition of an annihilation) it is on him only that the disappointment falls, if so be that after the vast expence and pains (if we may so speak) of building this majestic temple of the world, he should be obliged to set it on fire with his own hands, and thereby give his great adversary the devil, and sin and rebellion, his detested offspring, a sufficient matter of triumph in having effected so glorious a mischief as to force the Almighty to the dishonourable work of razing his own foundations, and yet necessitate him to leave the stain of wickedness still behind, as an everlasting blemish on his power and glory.

SINCE therefore the destruction of the world for the transgression of mankind, would have been a work wherein God alone had been the sufferer (the sinner being only to be reduced to the condition he was in before) our thoughts in the next place suggest, that this guilty creature must be preserved to atone for offending against infinite majesty, by the infinity, *i. e.* the eternal duration of his sufferings: and in this thought we are the rather confirmed, not only by the notions we have of the justice and holiness of God, but by his particular proceedings against a nobler rank of creatures, the angels of heaven; who, not keeping their first estate, but disobeying their Maker, were thrown headlong thence into the bottomless regions of despair, and are reserved in everlasting chains, unto the judgment of the great day.

But reserved for punishment.

THAT this must have been the wretched condition of apostate man, if no satisfaction could be made to the injured Deity, if no ransom could be paid to offended justice, seems to be a plain dictate of reason. And now, if we cast about and consider where such a satisfaction is to be found, as may pacify the wrath and indignation of an angry God; where such a ransom is to be met with as will be a sufficient price for the sins of all mankind; the earth saith, it is not in me; the sea saith, it is not in me. It cannot be gotten with gold, it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx and the sapphire; and therefore vain are all attempts of man to emancipate himself; a it cost more to redeem his soul, therefore he must let that alone for ever.

For he could not atone for himself.

WE may suppose indeed, that Adam, having now experienced the folly of his choice, might think of returning with firmer resolves to obey his Maker; that the shame and guilt of sin having wounded his conscience with a deep remorse, might put him upon an unfeigned repentance, which would happily restore him to the favour of God, and blot out the remembrance of his transgression -

transgression: but - alas! he is not capable of repentance; or if he were, his repentance would not be available for his pardon. Repentance, which leads to salvation, is the gift of God, and a considerable branch it is of the divine mercy: but that attribute as yet lies hid and undisplayed in the infinite goodness of God, and cannot exert itself till Almighty Justice be satisfied. <sup>f</sup> So that guilty man can find no expedient for his deliverance; he cannot conceive how mercy can save him without the violation of justice, nor can he be brought to make an humble confession of his fault, when he expects nothing but an irrevocable doom. And accordingly we may observe that the history of Adam's transgression makes no mention of an overture on God's part, or any sort of advance on man's, towards a recovery this way. The man and woman indeed are ashamed, but it is of their nakedness; and afraid of God, but it is with a slavish fear of punishment for their offence. There appear no tokens of a sincere contrition; no deploring their unhappiness, no deprecating offended justice, no promise of amendment, no fears, no sorrow for what was past, nor any indications of persons possessed with the heinousness of their guilt, and importunate for pardon: on the contrary, they both make excuses for their sin, and, in effect, throw all the blame of their misconduct upon God; the woman pretending that he had made the serpent too wise, <sup>g</sup> the serpent beguiled me; and the man that he had made the woman too full of charms and temptations to be resisted, the woman that thou gavest to be with me, she gave me, and I did eat.

Nor any  
other for  
him.

HITHERTO no hopes appear for the recovery of lost man upon his own performances, nor can he any more depend upon the assistance of any other creature to pay his ransom and set the captive free. <sup>h</sup> Which of all the heavenly powers and principalities will be willing or able to bear the vengeance of an omnipotent God, demanding satisfaction for the violation of his laws and the contempt of his authority? Or what creature that should be so zealously charitable as to wish himself accused for his brethren's sake, would be able to undergo so vast a burden as the propitiating, by his sufferings for so many millions of offenders, that lie dormant in the loins of a sinful progenitor? Where is that one creature, or what is his name, who by his righteousness can obtain a general indemnity, cancel our obligations

<sup>e</sup> Taylor on the two Covenants. <sup>f</sup> Bates's Harmony. <sup>g</sup> Gen. iii. 12, 13. <sup>h</sup> Milton in his excellent poem brings in God asking the blessed angels surrounding his throne, which of them would undertake to atone for man's sin?

" Say, heavenly powers, where shall we find such love?

" Which of ye will be mortal, to redeem

" Man's mortal crime, and just, th' unjust to save?

" Dwells in all heaven charity so dear?"

He ask'd, but all the heavenly quire stood mute,

And silence was in heaven: on man's behalf

Patron or intercessor none appear'd;

Much less, that durst upon his own head draw

The deadly forfeiture and ransom set.

Paradise Lost, Book iii.

gations to punishment and merit, <sup>1</sup> a free gift of God upon all men unto justification of life, in the same latitude, as by the offence of one the sentence of eternal death was passed, and judgment came upon all men unto condemnation? We may safely pronounce that there was no creature of itself sufficient to be <sup>2</sup> this days-man between God and us, and to lay his hand equally on us both; for God is not a man that we should answer him (either by ourselves or any created substitute) and come together in judgment.

REASON then could never have found out a mediator, nor obnoxious sinners expected a propitiation, had not God made the overture of his mercy (even before he pronounced the sentence of his justice) in the gracious promise of a Redeemer, appointed before the foundation of the world in the seed of the woman, *i. e.* his own beloved Son, assuming human nature, and by the sacrifice of himself vanquishing the enemy, and atoning for the guilt of mankind.

To form some conception then of the ground and foundation of the covenant between God the Father, and God the Son, wherein the redemption of mankind was concerted; we may imagine to ourselves that God in his eternal counsel purposing to create mankind, in order to supply the vacant places of those angelic powers which he foresaw would revolt, foresaw likewise that man would abuse the liberty of choice implanted in his nature, and deluded with Satan's temptations, violate the great command which was to be the test of his obedience, and thereby plunge himself into a state of perdition; and that, moved with compassion at his unhappy circumstances, and considering withal that, though his iniquity was voluntary, in some measure it was occasioned by the malice and suggestions of another, who would pride himself in the success, and triumph in the poor creature's ruin, resolved not to proceed against him according to the demerits of his transgression, but to find out an expedient for his recovery. <sup>3</sup> The angelic nature was not quite

Therefore  
God com-  
passionate  
him.

lost: myriads of those blessed spirits did still continue in the state of their innocence; and this some assign for a reason, why God did not contrive a means for their restoration: but in Adam all mankind sinned at once, and fell short of the glory of God, and therefore, lest they should all perish, and a whole species of rational creatures, capable of beholding and enjoying him, for ever be cut off from his presence and the beatific vision, he thought of their redemption; but here were the difficulties that obstructed the design. Man had sinned, and therefore man was to sustain the punishment of his sin: the original law, founded in the nature of God, and in the nature of man, as he was created after God's own image, could not be repealed without

Why.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. v. 18. <sup>2</sup> Job ix. 32, 33. <sup>3</sup> Hopkins of the two Covenants, and Bate's Harmony of the Divine Attributes.

some one to fulfil its obligation of perfect and unflinching obedience; but where was the man, or indeed any other created being sufficient for so great a task?

The tenor  
of the se-  
cond cov-  
enant.

THE unity of the divine nature is such, that no person in the Godhead can be supposed to have any thoughts or purposes, but what the other are equally admitted to. But (to help our conceptions in this matter) we may imagine that <sup>m</sup> God the Father, having communicated to his Son the kind intention he had of recovering lost man, and admitting him to a farther probation, might urge the difficulties that attended it; whereupon his Son, moved by the same divine compassion, might offer himself to accomplish the great and arduous work, which the father accepting, the covenant of man's redemption was immediately concluded. Christ for his part engaged that he would assume human nature, and so become the proxy and representative of mankind; that in their stead he would fulfil the law of righteousness, wherein they failed, and undergo the penalty which by such failure they had incurred; that he would die, in short, for their salvation; and (to effect a reconciliation between their Creator and them) whatever the divine justice had to charge upon them he would be responsible for, and bear in his body the transgressions of them all. Upon these performances God promised to accept mankind as innocent, and receive them into favour again; for the future to pardon their offences, upon the condition of their humiliation and repentance; to help the infirmities of their nature with the supplies of grace upon their supplications and prayers; and to admit them into that state of happiness they were entitled to before, upon their sincere though imperfect obedience, joined with the merits and intercession of their great Mediator; and upon the consideration of these advantageous conditions it is that the apostle founds the disparity of the two covenants: \* not as the offence, says he, so also is the free gift; for if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many: the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

The two  
covenants  
compared,  
and advan-  
tages of  
the second.

To form the comparison then, and so state the difference of these two covenants, in order to perceive how much the one is preferable to the other, we shall consider them, 1. with respect to the duty they require; 2. the strength given for the performance; and, 3. the reward annexed to the discharge of them. And here we may observe, <sup>n</sup> 1. That the first was properly a covenant of justice; its conditions were strict and rigorous; its obedience was to be intire, performed by the man's own strength, without the least failing or imperfections, and its penalties and rewards

<sup>m</sup> Allen on the two Covenants. \* Rom. v. 15, 16. <sup>n</sup> Taylor on the two Covenants.

rewards absolute and indispenfible. No court of equity was here eftablifhed to foften or mitigate the rigour of the command, or interpret in favour of the offender: if he transgreffed in the leaft point he knew his doom; ° curfed is he that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them; and in this lies one great difference, p that the rigour and feverity of the covenant of works requiring that our righteoufnefs fhould be perfonal, and wrought out by ourfelves, is now relaxed by the covenant of grace, promifing us the remiffion of fin, and acceptance of our fervices through the righteoufnefs of our furety, conveyed unto us by faith.

2. IT mult be prefumed indeed, that God gave the firft man a native ftrength fufficient to enable him to keep his commandments: but when it is confidered that q he left him in the hands of his own counfel, without any farther direction or affiftance, and to grapple with an adverfary envious and deceitful, againft whose wiles and stratagems he had no prefervative, but only the dread of the impending punifhment; we can hardly think that his virtue was fo well fecured as that of thofe who live under this covenant, whose conditions are not unflinng, but fincere obedience, rendered eafy and practicable by the fuccours of heaven, and the grace and ftrength of our Mediator. Under this covenant indeed r fin may more eafily make its breaches upon us, by reafon of our prefent infirmity, either through ignorance or furprife; but it cannot get dominion over us without our own deliberate option: for it is an exprefs gofpel-promise againft the power of fin, s that it fhall not have dominion over us; againft the power of the devil, that greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world, againft the power of temptations, t that God is faithful, who will not fuffer us to be tempted above what we are able; againft difcouragement from our infirmities, u that we may do all through Chrift that ftrengthens us; and in cafe of falling, v that we have an advocate with the Father, and a propitiation for our fins, by means of which the favour of God may be regained, and that principle of grace recovered to make us grow good again, and fo find a new acceptance.

3. To difpute whether Adam, if he had not finned, fhould at fome period of his earthly life have been tranflated into heaven, and there united to God in his eternal enjoyments, were only to be wife about what is written. If we will confine our judgment to what we read in fcripture, nothing appears there but that the promise of heaven was made in Chrift alone; x and that, as our impunity is the effect of his fatisfaction, our title to happinefs is the purchafe of his blood (which

o Deut. xxvii. 26. p Hopkins on the two Covenants. q Eccus. xv. 15. Young's Sermon, Vol. II. s Rom. vi. 14. t 1 Cor. x. 13. u Phil. iv. 13. John ii. 1. x Bates's Harmony of the Divine Attributes

(which is therefore called the Blood of the New Testament) and the fruit of his redundant merit ; with whose perfect obedience God was so well pleased, that he promised to confer upon those that believed in him all the glorious privileges becoming the sons of God ; to make them associates with himself in his eternal kingdom, and in those celestial abodes, whereof paradise with all its pleasures, was but a faint shadow and similitude.

Why God made not the covenant of grace first.

THESE are the advantages of the second covenant, that it is founded upon milder terms, better helps, and richer promises ; that it admits of repentance after sin ; accepts of sincerity instead of perfection ; assists the infirmities of human nature, and crowns its services with immortality. “ But if this covenant “ was so excellent, why did not God establish it at first, and “ place man, as soon as he was created, under the best means “ of perseverance in his duty ? ” Now, in answer to this, it should be considered, that, as it would have been inconsistent with the glory, and wisdom, and power of God, to have had any creature come out of his hands but what was perfect in its kind ; so would it have been a disparagement to that perfection not to have given it a law commensurate to its abilities ; and an encouragement to sin, not to have enforced that law with sanctions of the greatest severity. We indeed, in this degenerate state of ours, live under easier terms ; we have an indulgence given to our infirmities ; nor is every transgression irreparable, and threatened with immediate death : but then we are to remember that not only our condition requires these alleviations, but that, when we do amiss, we have a Saviour’s propitiation and intercession to flee to. But, our first parents, in their state of integrity, stood upon their own bottom, and had none to answer for them ; for which reason any mitigation in the covenant, or hopes of impunity in the violation of it, must necessarily have impaired their attention to the divine command. For let us suppose God concluding the covenant he made with them in some such terms as these : “ Thus I have given you a law requiring the strictest obedience ; have invested you with powers to “ enable you to perform it ; and have annexed a dreadful penalty to engage your care and assiduity ; but be not discouraged at this severity, my wisdom shall find out an expedient, “ in case you should transgress, to punish the sin, and yet to “ save the sinner.” This is expressly the form of the second, and yet it had been highly improper in the tenor of the first covenant, & since a comfortable provision against sin had been a strong temptation to it : For certainly, if our first parents could break through those restraints of threatening and terror, wherewith God had guarded his commandments ; of how much lighter account would it have been to have made a fally where there

was

was such an avenue opened to a vain curiosity, as might, of itself, been inducement enough to have put them upon the trial?

NOR was it for man's security only, but for the manifestation of God's greater glory, that the covenant of justice preceded that of mercy. It is darkening the plot that gives beauty to the discovery; and the deeper the distress is laid, the more conspicuous is the deliverance. \* Whether therefore we suppose that the incarnation of Christ was primarily in God's intention, even when he made the world, or was only a design subsequent upon the prospect of Adam's fall, and the many calamities attending it; yet so it is, that the severity of the first covenant did so far contribute to this design, that there had not been that necessity for a Redeemer, had not sin, taking occasion from the commandment (as † the apostle speaks) deceived our first parents, and by it slain them; not but that the commandment was holy, just, and good; but sin, that it might appear in (*i. e.* very destructive) worked death in them by that which was good. Sin indeed, in its own nature, has no tendency to good, nor any proper efficacy to promote the glory of God: † but as a black ground in a picture, which in itself only defiles it, when placed artfully, sets off the brighter colours, and heightens their beauty; so the evil of sin, which, considered absolutely, obscures the glory of God, by the over-ruling disposition of his providence, serves to illustrate his name, and make it more glorious in the esteem of all reasonable creatures; and therefore "O happy fault (as one of the antients calls it) " not in itself, but by the wise and merciful counsel of God, " which was repaired in a way so advantageous, that the sal- " vation of the earth is the wonder of heaven, and the re- " demption of man the joy of angels!"

THIS agreeable contrast of danger and escape, of misery and happiness in man, displays the wondrous work of our redemption, and shews forth † the mercy of God in designing it; the wisdom of God in contriving it; the power of God in effecting it; and the holiness of God in the manner wherein it was effected; † the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passeth all knowledge, in being the great instrument and performer of it; none of which had appeared to so much advantage, had it not been for the violation of the first covenant.

God's design in the second covenant.

IN suffering this covenant then to be violated, and by that means introducing a new one, † God intended to glorify himself; his unsearchable counsel in finding out a means to reconcile justice and mercy; his perfect righteousness in the remission of sins through the propitiation of Christ; and his abundant grace

z Taylor on the two Covenants. a Rom. vii. 11, 13. b Bate's Harmon. c *Felix culpa, quæ tantum, & talenti meruit habere redemptionem!* d Ba- rrony. e Eph. iii. 18, 19. f Hopkins on the two Covenants.

in giving his Son to die for rebels. He intended to glorify his Son; his free love in subjecting himself to a shameful death for our ransom and deliverance; his almighty power in supporting human nature under the load of God's wrath; his complete sacrifice in fully perfecting those that are sanctified; and his effectual intercession in procuring to his church the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit. He intended, lastly, to glorify us; by the precepts of the gospel purifying our hearts and hands from all uncleanness, and by the operations of his Spirit repairing his defaced image in us; that so, being <sup>f</sup> made partakers of the divine nature again, we might thereby <sup>g</sup> be made meet likewise to become partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

The antiquity of it.

**BUT** though for these, and several other reasons that might be produced, the first covenant was not to be superseded; yet it is worth our observation that the second covenant, or covenant of grace, which was to succeed it, was determined in the divine counsel, and commenced, and continued all along from the first foundation of the world; for <sup>h</sup> God hath redeemed us (says one apostle) with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot, fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but manifest in these last times; and he hath saved us (says <sup>i</sup> another) and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose, and the grace given to us in Christ Jesus, before the world began, but now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

<sup>k</sup> Now, in order to a right understanding of this important point, we must remember that, ever since the fall of man, and the original promise of a Saviour to come, that seed of the woman alone, who was to break the head, and destroy the power of the old serpent, the devil; the covenant, under which all mankind was placed, was no other than the covenant of grace, or the covenant of the redemption and salvation of the world, upon the conditions of faith and obedience to the Messiah, the Son of God. We must also remember, that, though this covenant was revived, explained, and published more solemnly to the world by Christ and his apostles; yet was it, from the beginning of things, made known and delivered down to all future generations; partly, by such express revelations as the frequent appearance of the Son of God upon earth did then permit; partly, by the several renewals of it to Noah, to Abraham, to David, and others; partly, by the clearer and clearer intimations of it to the prophets, as the fulness of time grew near; and partly, by the institution of propitiatory sacrifices, derived down from Abel to all future ages, as constant and standing monuments and memorials of the necessity of that great propitiation,

<sup>f</sup> 2 Pet. i. 4. <sup>g</sup> Col. i. 12. <sup>h</sup> 1 Pet. i. 18, &c. <sup>i</sup> 2 Tim. i. 9, 10. <sup>k</sup> Whil-  
son on the Antiquity of the Christ an Covenant.



tion, that one sacrifice upon the cross, on which this new covenant was founded and established for ever. Under this covenant both Jew and Gentile lived; and, if they lived well, were made partakers of its promises. The covenant of Moses was but a kind of little codicil, annexed to this great testament, made with all mankind. It was indeed a special provision to separate one nation (of which the Messiah was to come) from the idolatry and wickedness of the rest of the world; but the patriarchs and prophets, looking beyond the bounds of this dispensation, saw the promises of the gospel afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them; they desired a better, that is, an heavenly country, and looked for a city prepared for them, whose builder and maker is God: and that the heathens, especially the wisest of them, had the like notion, and expected the same provision, appears by a remarkable testimony in the most antient book of holy writ, I mean the book of Job, where we find that noble Arab, in the midst of his sore afflictions, and when he seems to have no longer preserved any hopes of a temporal deliverance, professing his faith in his gracious Saviour, and in a joyful resurrection at the last day; I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet, in my flesh, shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reigns be consumed within me.

“ BUT if the covenant of grace was all along from the first beginning extant in the world, why was the law of Moses, which, as the apostle affirms, could not convey righteousness, or justify any man in the sight of God, instituted at all? Of what use or purpose was it to the people on whom it was imposed? Or why is it so frequently called the first, and the old covenant, if there was another of so much excellence that preceded it?” To elucidate this matter, the apostle proposes this question to himself, wherefore then serveth the law? And the answer which he makes is this; it was added because of transgression, until the seed should come, to whom the promise was made. It was added because of transgression; for such was the blow given to human understanding by our first fall, and the progression of degeneracy ever after, that even the natural sense and distinction of moral good and evil was in a great measure obliterated; and therefore, to repair this decay, the law of the ten commandments, which, in its spiritual sense, answers the pure law of nature, was promulgated, to give a clearer perception of the extent of duty, and the nature and enormity of sin; for so the apostle seems to mean, when he tells us, I had not known sin, but

An objection.

Answered by shewing the reasons why the law was instituted.

I Whiston on the Antiquity of the Christian Covenant. m Heb. xi. 10. &c. Job xix. 25. o Gal. iii. 11. p Heb. viii. 7. q Ibid. ver. 13. r Gal. iii. 19. Allen on the two Covenants. t Rom. vii. 7.

but by the law; for I had not known lust, or the sinfulness of coveting what belongs to another, except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet.' It was added because of transgression; for such was the general prevalency of idolatry, that few nations were exempted from it. The worship of the Gentiles consisted of many superstitious rites and ceremonies, which the Israelites being naturally addicted to, were in great danger of falling into an adoration of their gods; and therefore frequent injunctions were given them <sup>u</sup> not to imitate the manner of the land of Egypt, from whence they came, nor of the land of Canaan, whither they were going, but to keep the statutes and judgments of God, which if a man do, he shall live in them. So that, to employ their busy minds, and thereby prevent the danger of defection, God designedly appointed them a worship which consisted much in bodily services, and instituted many laws <sup>\*</sup> which stood in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of the reformation. It was added because of transgression, and that, not only to restrain the Israelites, but to reform all other nations round about them, who, hearing of the wisdom of their laws, and perceiving how prosperous they were, so long as they observed them, might then be induced to quit their idolatrous practices, and join themselves to the people of the God of Israel: even as it came to pass in such as were profelytes to their religion. <sup>\*</sup> To them were committed the oracles of God, and from them it was expected that they should communicate knowledge to such as were ignorant of his laws, by making their own observance of them more conspicuous; for <sup>v</sup> this is your wisdom and your understanding, says their great law-giver, in the sight of the nations, who shall hear all these statutes, and say, surely this great nation is a wise and an understanding people; for what nation is there so great that hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is, in all things that we call upon him for? Or what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all the law is which I set before you this day?

THE apostle has suggested another reason why the law of Moses was instituted, even while the covenant of grace was in being, by calling it <sup>z</sup> a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. For, as children are sent to school to be taught the first rudiments of learning, but afterwards, as their understanding advances, are initiated into higher sciences; or (to use another of the apostle's similitudes) <sup>a</sup> as an heir, during his minority, is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed by his father; <sup>b</sup> so God was pleased to deal with his church, beginning with such instructions as were adapted to their capacities, in the state of their ignorance, and thence

<sup>u</sup> Lev. xviii. 3, &c.    <sup>\*</sup> Heb. ix. 10.    <sup>x</sup> Rom. iii. 2.    <sup>y</sup> Deut. iv. 6, &c.  
<sup>z</sup> Gal. iii. 24.    <sup>a</sup> Ibid. iv. 1.    <sup>b</sup> Allen on the two Covenants.

thence proceeding gradually to such as were higher ; till being come to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (as the apostle words it) they were to be admitted to all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. The law, in the typical nature of it, was of great use to the Jews, to facilitate and strengthen their belief in Christ. The predictions of their prophets served of old to raise their expectation, as they do now to confirm our faith in him, in whom they are all found to centre. Their ceremonies were most of them prefigurative of his performances ; and the institution of their sacrifices, in particular, as atonements for legal guilt, was a sufficient indication of God's willingness to accept of his own Son's offering himself for the expiation of ours ; For if the blood of bulls, and of goats (as the apostle argues) and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh ; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God ?

Thus the law was an hand-maid to lead us to Christ ; something preliminary to a clearer manifestation of God's will, when he should think fit to reveal it ; and the people who lived under that dispensation, were both sanctified and saved (as † the apostle argues) not so much by the performance of its ordinances, as by faith in the covenant made with their forefather Abraham (the same which was made with the Protoplast Adam) and by the merits of the Messias to come, who was all along the Mediator of the New Testament, that, by means of death, for the redemption of transgressions, that were under the first Testament, they which are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

THE truth is, if we would speak strictly and properly, the covenant of God with his church has, in all ages, ever since the fall of our first parents, been but one and the same. † Its terms on God's part are, forgiveness of sins, restoring mankind to holiness and immortality, for the sake of his Son, and in view of his sacrifice and death for them : on man's part, belief in that Son, dependence upon that sacrifice, repentance for past offences, and sincere obedience for the future ; and these terms have always been required by God, always expected and hoped for by such as had an eye to the promises, and carried their contemplations to a due extent ; in which *se- se* our blessed Saviour tells the Jews, † your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and saw it, and was glad. † The promises made to Abraham and the

The law and gospel both one covenant.

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Y y

patriarchs

c Col. ii. 2. d Heb. ix. 13, 14. † Gal. iii. *passim*. e Heb. ix. 15. f Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II. g John vii. 55. h Gal. iii. 17.

patriarchs were confirmed in Christ, <sup>1</sup> the Spirit, speaking by the prophets, was the Spirit of Christ; nay, even before the flood, <sup>2</sup> it was Christ that preached to the old world, while the ark was preparing in the days of Noah; so that Christ being the same, <sup>3</sup> under all dispensations, the covenants of the law and the gospel are not two, with respect to the substance and principal intent of them, but only in regard of their different administration, and the more or less obscurity in the general promise of salvation. <sup>4</sup> The promises and covenant of the gospel are declared better indeed than those of the law, as they are pronounced with greater clearness, confirmed with stronger evidence, and are, in some measure, accomplished; for the gospel hath brought life and immortality to light, of which mankind before had but dark and doubtful expectations. It teaches, in express terms, what the law taught in shadows and types, and with an obscurity, under which carnal minds seldom discerned the spiritual and heavenly blessings that were to be understood: it changes the object of our faith from the Messiah to come, to one already come; but still the Messiah is the Saviour; still the joys of heaven the reward; still virtue, and piety and faith, the conditions of attaining it; whether the simpler worship of the patriarchs, or the rites of the Mosaic law, or the faith and sacraments of the gospel, disburdened from these rites, were the method which Almighty God, in his wisdom, thought fit, each in their proper season to prescribe as a necessary qualification for them at that time. So that, though the law and the gospel, as to their difference in modes and circumstances, were perfectly distinct; yet, in effect, and as to the essentials of obedience and moral virtue, the reward aimed at, and the ground and foundation of mens hope, they were one and the same covenant; but under different denominations, according to the period of time wherein it was fully discovered.—I say fully discovered; for though the covenant of grace was certainly prior to the giving of the law, and (as we said before) virtually included in it; yet, forasmuch as it was not fully revealed until the preaching of Christ, which was about fifteen hundred years after the giving of the law, the apostles, in their writings, call it the New, and Second Covenant, in conformity to the manner of diction observed among the prophets; for \* Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with them:—I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people, and they shall teach

Under different denominations.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 11.    <sup>2</sup> k Ebd. iii. 20.    <sup>3</sup> 1 Feo. xiii. 8.    <sup>4</sup> in Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II.    p Jer. xxxi. 33, &c.

teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more.

### Of the Conditions of the SECOND COVENANT.

**I**N the beginning of this work we have discoursed at large of the truth and veracity of the Mosaic and prophetic, Christian and apostolical revelation; and (what more immediately concerns us here) from the miracles and predictions of Jesus Christ, the excellency of his doctrine and wonderfulness of its propagation; from the attestation God gave of his being no impostor, by many signs and tokens, especially his resurrection from the dead; and the undeniable characters concurring in his apostles, to prove that they were true witnesses of what they relate concerning him, we have shewn that 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, whom he hath made heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The first condition is faith.

Its necessity.

AND if God has been pleased to make such a revelation of his will, and therein to declare the covenant of grace by no less a person than his own beloved Son; the first and fundamental duty which this lays us under is, (as the apostle exhorts) to take the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip; to fix it indelibly in our minds, and to give the utmost consent of our hearts, without the least doubt or reserve, to this infallibly revealed truth—\* that the man Christ Jesus who was so miraculously born (as the holy evangelists relate) so wonderful in all the works and miracles of his life, so surpassing all the wisdom of the world in the excellency of his doctrine, and by his own choice (for the sake of our miserable sinners) so shamefully treated and put to death upon the cross, was likewise no less than the eternal Son of God and Saviour of the world, united in one and the same person to our frail nature, for this very purpose, that he might redeem us from the slavery of sin and Satan, and satisfy the justice of his heavenly Father for our rebellion against him; without which gracious interposition we must have lain under the Almighty's displeasure for ever, and finally perished in our sins.

FAITH

\* Heb. i. 1, &c. p. *ibid.* ii. 1. † Slater's Conditions of the Covenant of Grace.

FAITH then, or a thorough persuasion of the truth of our holy religion, together with a full assent of the mind to the great and fundamental articles of it, is one condition of the covenant of grace; and a condition of such importance that our Saviour himself assures us, <sup>q</sup> this is the will of him that sent me, that <sup>r</sup> whosoever believeth in me should not perish, but have everlasting life; that the evangelist informs us, this was the intent of recording his actions, <sup>s</sup> that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name; and that the apostle to the Romans puts the whole of our salvation upon this issue, <sup>t</sup> If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation; <sup>†</sup> and therefore to explain the nature and necessity of our believing in Christ, or, what is all one, our believing the truth of the christian religion, we must observe that faith in general is the assent of the mind to any proposition upon the credit of the speaker; and herein it differs from other sorts of knowledge, because in them we believe upon the evidence and apparent reasons of the things themselves, but in this upon the witness and authority of the persons that declare them; we are then said to know, when we assent upon the authority of things, but then to believe when we assent upon the authority of persons; when not the evidence, in short, of the things discovered, but the word and testimony of the discoverer makes us give credit to what is said. This shews the difference between faith and science properly so called; for whereas science arises from the light and evidence of things, and faith from the authority of persons only, the evidence which faith begets, though it may be sure and certain, cannot be so clear and perspicuous as that which arises from science; and accordingly, the author to the Hebrews describes it to be <sup>\*</sup> the substance of things hoped for, and the argument of things not seen; <sup>‡</sup> where by substance and argument he equals it with science, in regard to the firmness and certainty of assent; but, by saying that it is of things not seen, he makes it inferior to it in point of evidence.

of faith in general.

Whence it arises.

It is in the authority of testimony then that faith has its foundation, which will therefore be more or less stable according to the ability and integrity of the testifier; <sup>‡</sup> his ability in the knowledge of what he declares, and his integrity in declaring according to his knowledge: for in both these ways he that testifieth any thing may deceive us, either when he is ignorant of the truth, and so, for want of better knowledge, imposes both

<sup>q</sup> John vi. 39. <sup>r</sup> Ibid. iii. 15. <sup>s</sup> Ibid. xx. 31. <sup>t</sup> Rom. x. 9, 10. <sup>†</sup> Allen upon the two Covenants. <sup>\*</sup> Heb. xi. 1. <sup>‡</sup> Norris's Discourses, Vol. III. <sup>§</sup> Pearson upon the Creed.

both on himself and us; or when he is dishonest, and so asserts that for a truth which he knows to be false.

Now because all men are liars, *i. e.* either may deceive or be deceived, their testimony partakes of their infirmity, and so does the degree of persuasion which it creates. But God, being both infallible and true, and consequently it being impossible that he should either deceive or be deceived, his testimony begets the firmest persuasion, and the highest degree of faith in its kind. However, because the only way we have of proving any testimony to come from God must be by rational arguments, the degree of faith or persuasion wrought by such a testimony will be according to the strength of the arguments which we have to persuade us that such a testimony is divine: so that it is the nature of the testimony which differences and distinguishes our faith. If we believe any thing upon the bare word of a man, it is an human, if upon the bare word and testimony of God, it is a divine faith: the general nature of faith is the same in both, since they both rely upon testimony; only as human testimony differs from divine as much as fallible does from infallible, the same in proportion will be the difference between human and divine faith.

DIVINE faith then (if we will describe it) is a full persuasion of mind concerning the truth of what is testified, reported or revealed by God himself, or by persons commissioned by him to reveal or bear record to it. For as human faith is only the persuasion of the truth of what is told or testified by man, so divine faith must be a firm persuasion of the truth of what is testified or revealed to us by God: and from hence it will follow that we may have a divine faith of as many things as God has any way attested or revealed to us. Now the usual ways of God's revealing any thing to mankind, has been either by his own immediate voice or inspiration, whereof we have several instances, especially in the lives of the patriarchs, or by the mediation and message of inspired men. In this manner he revealed his will to the people of Israel by the mouth and ministry of Moses; and because both God and man concurred in this testimony, their belief of his message was their faith, not in God only, but, together with him, in his servant Moses, and accordingly is called the Mosaic Faith. But the clearest revelation that God ever vouchsafed mankind was by the message and mediation of his own Son Jesus Christ; and the belief of his gospel, or taking for certain truth all those things which he has declared to us in God's name, is called the Christian Faith. So that in like manner as the Mosaic faith was a belief of the divinity of the Mosaic law and religion upon the authority of Moses, the christian faith is a belief of the divine institution of our christian religion upon the authority of Jesus Christ.

WHILE

The object  
of it.

• WHILE Moses lived and spake as a mediator between God and the Israelites, they believed his words, and so they did the prophets while they preached; when Moses was gone up to mount Nebo, and there died; when the rest of the prophets were gathered to their fathers, they believed their writings, and the whole object of their faith was contained in them. When the Son of God came into the world to reveal the will of his Father, and <sup>e</sup> made known to the apostles, as his friends, all things that he had heard of the Father; then did the apostles believe the writings of Moses and the prophets, as also the words of Christ, and in these taken <sup>a</sup> collectively, did the object of their faith consist. When Christ was ascended up to heaven, and the Holy Ghost come down; when the doctrine which Christ delivered to the apostles had been taught to others, and many thousand souls converted to the faith, they believed the writings of the prophets and the words of the apostles, and in these two was comprised the object of their faith. When the apostles themselves departed this life, and confirmed the truth of the gospel by their sufferings and death, they left the sum of what they had received in writing, for the continuation of the faith in the churches they had planted, and the propagation thereof in other places; and so christians that have lived since their days have believed the writings of Moses and the prophets, of the apostles and evangelists, and in the whole of these is comprehended the matter of their faith: from whence it follows that the belief of a christian, as the state of Christ's church now stands, and shall continue unto the end of the world, consists in this—that it is a firm assent of the mind to the doctrines, both speculative and practical, delivered unto us in the writings of the prophets and apostles, and a full persuasion that they are indubitably true, upon the testimony that God gave of his Son, our Saviour Christ, who first revealed and published them.

The evi-  
dence of it.

<sup>b</sup> To set before us then, in one short view, the testimony which God gave of his Son, or (what is all one) the evidence of our christian faith, we are to remember that the great points of our holy religion are not only most reasonable and excellent in themselves, but moreover taught and inculcated by one who has given us the most convincing evidence that could possibly be desired of his being sent immediately from God. The miracles which our Saviour wrought were, to his first disciples, who were eye-witnesses of them, a full demonstration of the truth of his doctrine; and the history of his life, death and resurrection, delivered down to us upon the testimony of those disciples, is to us also a sufficient evidence of the same truth. Their having converted from the beginning with our Saviour himself, their

<sup>c</sup> Pearson on the Creed. <sup>f</sup> John xv. 15. <sup>g</sup> Ibid. ii. 22. <sup>h</sup> Clark's Practical Essays.



their having heard, and having seen with their eyes, their having looked upon, and having handled with their hands the word of life (as <sup>i</sup> St John expresses it) made it impossible that they should be deceived themselves, and their whole life and conversation, their sufferings and deaths, were invincible proofs against the adversaries of christianity that they had no design of imposing upon others. They saw all the prophecies of the Old Testament precisely fulfilled in the life and doctrine, the sufferings and death of our blessed Saviour; they saw him confirm what he taught with such mighty works as his bitterest enemies could not but confess to be above the power of nature, even while they were blaspheming that holy Spirit which wrought them; they saw the whole course of his life to be such as to all unprejudiced beholders loudly proclaimed his divine commission; they saw him so constantly despise all worldly greatness, as once, when the people would have made him a king, even to work a miracle to avoid that which was the only thing that was possible to be the aim and design of an impostor: in fine, they saw him <sup>k</sup> alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, conversing with him for forty days together, and at last beheld him ascend visibly into heaven: these were such demonstrations of his being a teacher sent from God, and consequently that his doctrine was most certainly an immediate revelation of the divine will, that nothing but the most inveterate malice and obstinacy could withstand them. And the same reason that these disciples of our Saviour had to believe his doctrine, the same reason the rest of the world had to believe theirs. They confirmed what they had taught by signs and miracles; they lived according to the doctrine they preached, though manifestly contrary to all the pleasures and interests of this world; and (what no deceiver could ever do) they died with all imaginable cheerfulness and joy of mind for the testimony of their doctrine, and the confirmation of their religion.

THIS, in brief, is the evidence of the truth of the christian institution; and the only exception that can be made to it is the difference which some may suppose the distance of time may occasion between primitive and traditional faith. <sup>An objection.</sup> “Blessed are the eyes, says our Saviour to his apostles, which see the things which ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. His disciples saw the undeniable tokens of the wisdom and power of God manifesting themselves in all their master’s words and actions, and could therefore have no room for distrust. The first converts to christianity saw his disciples giving the like proofs of their divine mission, and were therefore directly placed under the power of conviction;

<sup>i</sup> 1 John i. 1. <sup>k</sup> Acts i. 3. <sup>l</sup> Matthew xiii. 17.

“ vision ; for what they saw they could not but believe : but  
 “ we live so remote from the age wherein these things were  
 “ done, and are every day so liable to be imposed on by false  
 “ reports, that, at this distance of time, it is an hard matter to  
 “ say what we are to believe, especially when the objects of  
 “ faith are made so full of mystery, if not of contradiction.”

Answered. It must be owned indeed, <sup>m</sup> that, as the first converts to christianity had greater difficulties and stronger prejudices to master than those who were afterwards born in the bosom of the church and educated under her care ; so it was agreeable to the wisdom and goodness of God, that their attention to the proofs of the christian religion should be excited after a more powerful and affecting manner. Those who lived in our Saviour’s days attended to him, heard his sermons themselves, and saw his miracles, the great attestations of his divinity ; those who lived in the apostles days had the report and testimony of eye-witnesses, confirmed by mighty signs and wonders to convince them ; those who lived in after ages, even down to our days, have the writings of the apostles, and the universal belief of all ages to assure them of the truth of such matters ; this indeed makes some difference as to the external proof of the thing, because what I myself hear and see, strikes and moves me more than what another only relates to me ; but as to the internal proof, which is properly the evidence of faith, it makes no kind of alteration.

The evidence of faith not impaired by distance of time.

To make this in some measure more obvious, we must remember what was said before, viz. that a divine faith is ultimately resolved into the authority of God ; <sup>n</sup> but then the authority of God is no more visible than God himself ; and therefore to convince us that the person who pretends to come from God, in order to reveal his will to us, is really sent by him, God must give testimony to him by some divine and visible effects, by enabling him to work miracles or predict future events. These predictions and miracles, it is true, terminate in sense ; but then the evidence of faith, which is built upon them, goes a great deal farther. <sup>o</sup> When the apostles saw their master raise up Lazarus, for instance, their eyes convinced them of the reality of the fact ; but then that this was an attestation of his being sent from God, of his being what he pretended to be, the Son of God and no impostor ; that consequently all his doctrines, all his precepts, and all his promises were true ; this was not the effect of sight, but of reason and discourse : and therefore whatever wonderful things men see, if they resolve to reason perversely, they may still continue infidels in like manner as the Jews did, who ascribed our Saviour’s miracles to a diabolical power, and entertained such unreasonable

<sup>m</sup> Fiddes’s Body of Divinity, Vol. II.    <sup>n</sup> Sherlock’s Sermons, Vol. II.  
<sup>o</sup> Sherlock, *ibid.*

able prejudices against him as precluded all conviction. They had ocular demonstration indeed to engage their belief: but then it must be considered † that their minds were tinctured with wrong notions, and poisoned against him with early prepossessions; whereas we from our childhood have been trained up in an honourable esteem of Christ and his gospel, have lived to see his prophecies concerning the Jews fulfilled, and, that other great proof of the truth of christianity, the miraculous propagation of it; which, laid in the balance together, will at least be equivalent to their seeing the wonders that were wrought in confirmation of it. The short is, those who lived in the time of Christ's ministry heard his doctrines and saw his works; what they thus heard and saw they recorded in a book, which book has from age to age ever since been handed down to us. This book we have now in possession; so that one point of inquiry more than they had is, to know whether this book be genuine, and whether the authors of it had, beyond all controversy, the characters of honest men; which when once we are satisfied in, we argue then from what we read, in the same manner as his disciples did from what they saw, that the person, of whom such wonderful things are recorded, was certainly a teacher sent from God. Nor will the distance of time make any alteration of the case, † since traditional truths, well attested, deserve the belief of one age as well as another, and are so far from losing their credibility by being often told and repeated, that it should rather be an argument (the longer it has been since their discovery, and the more they have been considered and examined) that their original evidence is so much the stronger.

“ BUT how strong soever the evidence may be, yet if the revelation be repugnant to reason; if it crosses our conceptions, or transcends the bounds of our understanding, how can we bring ourselves to believe it? Knowledge is certainly a great ingredient of faith; and therefore where we have no notions, nor any competent perception of the thing, it is impossible for us to believe.”

It cannot be denied indeed, but that in the christian religion there are many great mysteries, or doctrines of too much sublimity for the powers of reason, unassisted by revelation to find out, or, when discovered, fully to comprehend: but this is no more than what we may reasonably expect, considering the nature and quality of the things which it treats of. In its main intendment indeed, it is a kind of comment upon the divine nature, or an instrument to convey right conceptions of God into the soul of man, so far as it is capable of receiving them. † But now God we know is an infinite being, without any bounds or limitations of his essence;

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wonderful

† Taylor of faith in Jesus Christ. † q. 5. Jes's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. † South's Sermons, Vol. III.

Another objection.

Answered.

The necessity of religion no argument against its credibility.

wonderful in his actions, inconceivable in his purposes, and inexpressible in his attributes; and how can such vast and mighty things be crowded in a little finite understanding? How shall our poor short faculties be able to measure the lengths of his eternity, the breadth and expansions of his immensity, the heights of his prescience, the depth of his decrees, and last of all, that unutterable, incomprehensible mystery of two natures united into one person, and again, of one and the same nature diffused into a triple personality. When a man that was born blind (as one expresses it) shall be able, on hearsay, to conceive in his mind all the varieties and curiosities of colours, or to draw an exact scheme of some fine city, or map of some large province; then we may expect, in this degenerate state of our understanding, to comprehend the ways of the Almighty, and by searching to find out God: but (to do justice to the argument on the other side) as it would be extremely foolish and irrational for a blind man to affirm that there is no such thing as colours, or lines, or pictures, because he finds that he cannot figure in his mind any true perception of them; so would it be equally, or rather superlatively more unreasonable for us to deny the great mysteries of our faith, because the plummet of our reason will not reach them.

Mysteries  
the com-  
mendation  
of religion.

WISH therefore we may that religion were less difficult to us; but, at the same time, we ought to remember, that we wish away that which in reality is religion's present commendation, as well as an ingredient of our future bliss. It is easiness of access, we know, that many times lays a man open to contempt, and a thorough inspection into the secrets of any object that is apt to make us insult over it; and therefore, to protect our religion from rude encroachments, by impressing an awe and reverential fear upon our minds, God has thought proper to surround it (as it were) with a sacred and majestic obscurity, and in some parts of it to exhibit such sublime truths as transcend the reach of human wisdom; thereby to humble the pride and haughtiness of our reason, and thereby to engage us in a closer and more diligent search into such subjects as will every moment furnish us with new matter to entertain the busiest contemplation, even to the utmost period of human life. While therefore we continue in this state, we must be content to know in part: a full and adequate perception of the mysteries of our religion is reserved as a principal ingredient of our felicity and happiness above, when all the heights and depths which we now stand amazed at, shall then be made clear and familiar to us; when God shall display the hidden glories of his nature, the wonders of his providence, and the wisdom of his counsels; and willal fortify the eye of the soul to such a degree as to make it able (so far as the capacity of an human intellect can be

be able) to behold and take them in : when faith, in short, shall be swallowed up in vision ; and we admitted into that place where we shall see face to face, and know even as also we are known.

To have a right notion of the mysteries of our religion then, we must be careful to distinguish between those things that are above reason and incomprehensible, and those that are against reason and utterly inconceivable : For \* some things are above reason, because of their transcendent excellency and distance from us ; whereas those that are against reason involve a contradiction, and have a natural repugnancy to our understandings, which cannot conceive any thing that is formally impossible : and from hence it will follow, † that though we neither can nor should believe those things that are contrary to our reason ; yet we both may and ought to believe those that are above it. Apprehend indeed every thing we must before we can believe it ; we must have some consistent notion of what is propounded to us before we can assent to it ; but to expect that we should fully comprehend every thing we believe, that we should have an adequate notion of it, and be able to free that notion from all appearance of difficulty and abstruseness, is to suppose ourselves gods and not men. If then we can but shew that in the christian system there are no doctrines but such as stand clear of all absurdity and contradiction, the more abstruse or mysterious they are, the more they deserve our belief, for this very reason, ‡ because if what is revealed concerning God, were every way easy, and adapted to our comprehension, it could never reach, nor with any fitness represent that nature which we all allow to be incomprehensible.

THE holy scriptures, for instance, teach us that in the divine nature (which can be but one) there are three distinct persons to whom are ascribed the same attributes and perfections, the same worship and adoration : this indeed is a doctrine above our comprehension, as to the manner how three should be one and one three ; § but still we affirm that there is no contradiction in it, if we will but distinguish between numbers and the nature of things. For three to be one indeed is a contradiction in numbers ; but whether an infinite nature can communicate itself to three different subsistences without such a division as is among created beings, must not be determined by bare numbers, but by the absolute perfections of the divine nature, which must be owned to be above our comprehension. The holy scriptures teach us that the Son of God was made flesh and dwelt among us, and that therefore our Redeemer was both God and man in one person. This we own is in its own nature one of the great mysteries of godhead, as St Paul calls it ; but then

A distinction of things above and against reason.

No contradiction in the mysteries of religion.

\* Bates's Harmony. † Wilson's Essays. ‡ Young's Sermons, Vol. II. § Schilling's Sermons.

then we must remember that in reality it is not much more difficult than the union of the soul and body in all mankind, which, how unaccountable soever it may be to our reason and imagination, yet it is too certain, in fact, to be called in question. Once more the holy scriptures teach us that our Saviour Christ, who was both God and man in one person, became the redeemer of the world, offered himself a propitiation for sinners to his heavenly Father, and that upon the Father's acceptance thereof depends the new covenant, and all the great benefits contained in it. This in many respects is a mystery too, and what we could not have known had it not been revealed to us; but now that it is revealed, it is far from deserving the imputation of being absurd. \* That all mankind are sinners, and fallen from their primitive integrity, not only the scripture, but the constant experience of our own irregular appetites, the wickedness of the world in past ages, and the known complaints of the wisest philosophers, are but too sad and too convincing demonstrations. Now since this was our condition, and God was minded to rescue us from it, but intirely at his liberty in what method to effect it; since the soul of our Saviour Christ was a free immaculate being, that might voluntarily suffer for us if he pleased, and by the dignity of his nature inhanche the value of his sufferings to the full pardon of our sins, upon his father's acceptance of a vicarious sacrifice; there appears nothing in this doctrine of Christ's satisfaction (now that we have it fully revealed to us) but what corresponds with common reason and all the judicial proceedings among mankind.

THESE are some of the principal doctrines we profess; and being they are free (when rightly considered) from all appearance of contradiction, we may appeal to the judgment of any considerate person, † whether it be not for the dignity and advantage of religion that some articles of it exceed the largest human comprehension: whether we should entertain the same awful impressions of the divine majesty, if the perfections of his nature and operations were only such as we could see to the end of: whether it does not raise the value of man's redemption, to have it brought about by miracles of mercy, not only without example, but even beyond our present understanding. Had all these things been less, we should indeed have known them better; but then, so much as we abate of their mysteriousness to bring them down to our capacity, so much we impair their dignity and weaken the power of them upon our affections. It is therefore the very commendation (as we said before) and excellency of these doctrines that they are so far above us; and we ought to esteem it an instance of the divine goodness no less than wisdom, so to have tempered his revelations that we want no knowledge fit to engage our piety and holy wonder,

and

a Whistler's Essays. b Stanhope's Sermons.

and yet have not so much as should destroy our humility and godly reverence; and, upon the whole, have reason to believe it could not have been better, nay, probably not near so well if either less had been discovered to us, or less concealed from us.

THUS we have considered the nature, the evidence and the reasonableness of faith; and should now proceed to inquire into the power and efficacy of it; how it influences the minds and manners of men, and upon what accounts it is made the federal condition of our salvation; but that there is a seeming repugnancy in the sentiments of two great apostles concerning this doctrine, which (before we come to that) we shall endeavour to reconcile. St Paul writing to the christians at Rome concerning the nature and necessity of faith, <sup>a</sup> that a man is justified by it without the deeds of the law: St James, writing to the christians that lived among the dispersed Jews, concludes quite the contrary, <sup>b</sup> ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only: the one affirms that salvation is to be attained not by working, but by believing; the other as resolutely affirms not by believing, but by working. St Paul proves his doctrine by the example of Abraham, <sup>c</sup> to whom faith was imputed for righteousness; and St James makes use of the self-same argument to prove his likewise, for <sup>d</sup> was not Abraham our forefather, says he, justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Here indeed is a great appearance of contradiction, but this appearance will possibly vanish, upon our considering the different senses of the terms made use of by the apostles, as well as the different scopes they might have in their respective writings.

St Paul and  
St James  
reconciled.

<sup>e</sup> 1. Now the most obvious and usual signification of the word *justify* in holy scripture is to receive to mercy, to absolve, and acquit from former transgressions; so that when God justifies any man: it is by forgiving him his sins; by accepting, esteeming, and rewarding him as a righteous person, although, in reality, he comes far short of that character. For indeed what other justification is the best good man among us capable of? We are all sinners, and therefore, by a righteous God, cannot be acquitted as innocent; there is no other way for us to be justified therefore, but by having our sins forgiven, our punishment remitted, and ourselves graciously received to mercy. Taking the word in this sense then, we must farther observe that there is a two-fold justification; the first is, when we give up our names to Christ, and take upon us the profession of his most holy religion in baptism; for then are our sins washed away in the laver of regeneration, and ourselves admitted into a covenant of grace and pardon. This however is not a full justification: our sins may afterwards be imputed to us, if, either

<sup>a</sup> Rom. iii. 28. <sup>b</sup> James ii. 24. <sup>c</sup> Rom. iv. 22. <sup>d</sup> James ii. 21. <sup>e</sup> Black  
hall's Sermons.

in profession, or works, we deny that faith which we then took upon us: and therefore the second, and indeed our complete justification is not till the day of judgment, when God will for ever acquit from guilt, and free from the punishment of all their offences, those who continue faithful to that covenant which they entered into at their baptism.

2. THE word *faith* or *belief* in scripture has many different significations; three of which we need only here single out, as the most usual, and most applicable to the case in hand. The first is, when faith is put to signify a bare assent of the mind to some revealed proposition. This indeed is the most genuine sense of the word, and in this sense it is that St James uses it, when he makes it unavailable to the justification of any man: but then, 2. There is a larger signification frequently occurring in St Paul's epistles, where it denotes, not only a bare belief in the gospel-truths, but likewise a life led answerable to such a belief, and adorned with such virtues and evangelical graces as are the proper effects of it: and therefore, 3. When it is set in contraposition to the law, it generally means the whole complex of christianity; to wit, our believing the revelation, and trusting in the promises, and endeavouring to follow the precepts of our holy religion: in which latter senses are those passages to be understood which make justification the effect of faith.

3. THERE is the like ambiguity in the word *works*; for sometimes it is put to signify those moral doctrines of piety, justice, and charity, &c. that are required under the gospel; sometimes those ritual observances that were in force under the law; sometimes it is taken for a perfect and unflinching obedience, such as may challenge the reward as a debt; and at other, for a sincere endeavour only to please God, without any notion of merit, or expectation of reward (but through the divine grace and beneficence) for what is done. These observations being premised, there may be several ways of settling the difference between the two apostles; for,

1. WHEREAS we observed that there is properly a two-fold justification, one when we are admitted to baptism, and the other when we are acquitted at the day of judgment: suppose, at present, that by faith and works both the apostles mean the same things; yet if they do not speak of the same justification; if St Paul, when he speaks of justification by faith only, means the first justification, which is dispensed to us in baptism; and St James, when he speaks of justification by works, in conjunction with faith, means the second and final justification at the last day; there is plainly no contrariety between them. They both speak truth, because, to be admitted at first into the covenant of grace by baptism, nothing more than faith, or a full persuasion of the truth of christianity, is expected; but then to be pronounced guiltless at the last of heaven, a virtuous and  
godly



godly conversation, or a life led answerable to such a persuasion, is certainly required.

2. AGAIN, faith, as we said, signifies sometimes the christian religion, sometimes a belief of the gospel-truths, and, over and above that, sometimes such a life and conversation as becometh such a belief. Suppose then that both the apostles use the word *justify* always in the same sense; yet if St Paul by faith includes all that St James would have us understand by faith and works too, then is there again no contrariety in their doctrines, for both assert the same thing.

3. ONCE more, works, as we said, are known to signify sometimes the observance of legal ceremonies, sometimes the merit of good works, and sometimes a sincere endeavour to please God in all manner of holy living. Suppose then that these two apostles use these words in different senses; St Paul, by the works which he rejects, means the performance of legal ordinances, or the merit of good works; and St James, by the works which he requires, means only an evangelical obedience to God's precepts; though there be a diversity, yet is there plainly no contrariety in what they affirm. They do not both indeed affirm the same thing; but what they both affirm, is both consistent and undeniably true. By ritual performances, says St Paul, we are not justified, because they are useless and unnecessary, they cannot make the comers thereunto perfect, neither hath God required them of us now; or (take him in the other sense) by the merit of good works we are not justified, because our best deeds are so full of sin and imperfection, that it is of God's gracious mercy alone that we are not condemned for them: but this hinders not what the other apostle asserts from being true, by works a man is justified, always meaning not the works of the law, *i. e.* not the observances of the Levitical dispensation, or such works as are supposed to be meritorious, and to need no mercy, no repentance, no humiliation, and no appeal to grace and favour; but always meaning works that are an obedience to God by the measures of a good will, and a sincere endeavour, and faith in the Lord Jesus.

Thus, take the words which way we will, the apostles cannot be said to contradict one another. If St Paul, by the faith which he makes the sole condition of our justification, means a lively and active faith, which approves itself by a ready obedience, he means thereby the same thing that St James does by faith and works both; and consequently affirms the same, *viz.* that a virtuous life, as well as a right belief, is made the condition of man's salvation. Or taking it otherwise, that the works and justification, here under debate, in St Paul are of one sort, and in St James of another; then indeed are the conclusions different; they do not both affirm the same thing, but what they both affirm implies no fallacy, no inconsistency, no contra-

diction

dition to each other. St James asserts that the works of piety, justice, charity, &c. are requisite to our justification; and St Paul asserts that the merit of these works, or the performance of the Jewish ceremonies, is not: and, as to this, they are doubtless both in the right, though, in arguing on different occasions, and to different persons, they propose their arguments not in the same manner. St Paul, writing to christians, <sup>1</sup> among whom were several Jewish converts, who still retained a veneration for the Mosaic ordinances, and thought that some of them (circumcision especially) were still necessary to salvation, even under the dispensation of the gospel, and being minded to antidote them against the infection of such erroneous opinions, was naturally led to frame his discourse against justification by works of the law; and, on the contrary, to ascribe it chiefly to faith in Christ, in his death, and in his doctrine, without the addition of such works: whereas St James, writing to christians, among whom were many libertines who denied the necessity of a godly life, and maintained that the outward profession of christianity, and a bare speculative faith was enough to save them, intended to caution them against such dangerous positions; and thereupon, in like manner, was naturally led to declare himself against a faith destitute of good works; and, on the contrary, to maintain that the great thing necessary to salvation was christian obedience. In a word, <sup>2</sup> the one speaks professedly of the works of the Jewish religion, and the other of the works of the christian; and therefore there can be no contradiction between them, since it is plain that the faith of the christian religion may avail to justify a man without the works of the Jewish religion (which is the assertion of St Paul) though it cannot do so without the works of the christian religion (which is the assertion of St James) and therefore where St James extols works, he means the moral and evangelical; where St Paul decries them, he means the Jewish and ceremonial; for otherwise, when he has to do with such wicked and erroneous christians as retain the faith in ungodliness, he tells them plainly (even in those writings where he seems to depreciate works most) that <sup>3</sup> in Jesus Christ nothing will avail them but faith working by love; for <sup>4</sup> though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing; and therefore, says he to Titus, <sup>5</sup> This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.

The sum of  
the whole  
matter.

Why faith  
is made a  
condition  
of salva-  
tion.

If then, at last, it come to be inquired why faith should so frequently be made the condition, not of our justification only, but <sup>6</sup> of our eternal happiness and salvation; the answer is—That as faith first puts us in the way of salvation, by procuring our admission

<sup>1</sup> k Allen on the two Covenants. <sup>2</sup> I Clarke's Essays. <sup>3</sup> Gal. v. 6. <sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 2. <sup>5</sup> Tit. iii. 8. <sup>6</sup> Vid. Eph. ii. 8, 9. Rom. iii. 25. Tit. iii. 5.

admission into the church of Christ, and a participation of the privileges belonging to that society; so it is the spring and foundation of all the obedience we afterwards perform, and, when lively and constant, never fails of its effect. † That faith in God is the foundation of all the services we perform to him, is a proposition of undoubted authority, for † he that cometh to God (as the apostle lays it down) must believe that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek to please him; and, from this principle, he shews that the patriarchs and holy people, before the revelation of the gospel, † obtained testimony that they were righteous, and, in the most difficult instances, † chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. And that faith in Christ is equally the foundation of all our obedience, is manifest from all those places in scripture where it is styled † the Work of Faith, by virtue of which we are enabled to † overcome the world, to mortify our inordinate affections, and † to quench all the fiery darts of the devil.

AND indeed, if we consider the great objects of our faith, As the spring of our obedience. the blessings promised to the obedient, and the evils threatened to the wicked: that the blessings allotted to the obedient exceed vastly any thing we here enjoy; the punishments entailed upon the wicked are far more lasting and intolerable than any thing we here can suffer; and if, at the same time, we believe that Christ our Saviour who promised these blessings and threatened these punishments was really a divine person, and could therefore reveal nothing but what was true, nor promise or threaten any thing but what he both can and will make good to the utmost; it will be impossible for us to prefer a less good before the greatest blessings, or to incur the worst of misery, in order to escape a less evil, so long as the faith, or a full persuasion of these things is present to our minds. † It would be impossible for men to value any thing in comparison to the joys of eternity, supposing that they had a distinct sight and feeling of them: it would be impossible for them not to see sin, and dread every guilty approach towards it more than they do racks and tortures; did but the ghastly scene open, and set before their eyes the pains and anguish, the insupportable and everlasting wrath which the damned endure; no temptation, though otherwise never so insinuating, would be able to make its way and seduce us with such a prospect as this before our eyes. Now faith is the evidence of things not seen; when it is strong and lively, it brings distant things to view, and makes futurity present to the imagination: and therefore we may lay it down for a certain truth, that when we neglect to do what our Lord

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† Whitby, in his preface to the Epistle to the Galatians. † Heb. xi. 6.  
 † Ibid. ver. 4. † Ibid. ver. 25. † 2 Thef. i. 11. † 1 John v. 5. † Eph. vi. 16.  
 † Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. IV.

has declared absolutely necessary to obtain, and to secure our eternal interest, and venture upon the commission of what he threatens with everlasting misery, that we do not at that time actually believe these things; we have not a full and vigorous persuasion of them upon our minds; we are hurried away with the impetuosity of our passions, and the presence of the temptation, which blind the eye of faith, and remove the consideration of all distant objects from its sight.

Means to  
improve it.

IT is not enough then that we are convinced in our judgment of the truth of the great doctrines of religion. <sup>a</sup> We must, by constant meditation, endeavour to fix them indeleibly in our hearts, that they may, with more prevalency than worldly objects can, move our passions, and excite our affections. It is not enough that we slightly believe the existence of a God, but we must present him frequently to our thoughts in the most lively colours of glory and majesty; consider him as that supreme Being <sup>b</sup> who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span; who hath comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance: consider him as that all-powerful Being <sup>c</sup> before whom the pillars of the earth tremble, and are astonished at his reproof; before whom <sup>d</sup> all nations are as nothing, and are counted less than nothing and vanity. It is not enough that we believe in general the providence of God, but we must think of him always, as actually present, observing all our words and actions, and <sup>e</sup> understanding our thoughts afar off; not enough that we believe a judgment to come, but we must frequently represent to ourselves the solemnity and terror of that great day, and imagine that we see our Saviour sitting in judgment (as <sup>f</sup> in the propheticallusion) with his throne like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire; a fiery stream issuing from before him, thousand thousands ministering unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him; the judgment set and the books opened. It is not enough, lastly, to believe slightly, and in general, a state of reward and punishment for virtue and vice, but we must meditate frequently on the happiness of those who shall be admitted <sup>g</sup> to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the general assembly of the first-born, to an innumerable company of angels, to God the judge of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant: and, on the contrary, meditate seriously on the misery of those who shall be cast <sup>h</sup> into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; and where <sup>i</sup> they shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever. These considerations, if so fixed in the mind as to be always

<sup>a</sup> Clarke's *Essays*. <sup>b</sup> *Isa.* xl. 12. <sup>c</sup> *Job* xxvi. 11. <sup>d</sup> *Isa.* lx. 17. <sup>e</sup> *Psal.* cxxxix. 2. <sup>f</sup> *Dan.* vii. 9, &c. <sup>g</sup> *Heb.* xii. 22, &c. <sup>h</sup> *Mark* ix. 44. <sup>i</sup> *Rev.* xx. 10.

ways present to our thoughts, and influencing our affections, cannot fail of being a strong preservative against temptations of every kind, and (by the assistance of divine grace) an effectual means to make us <sup>n</sup> constant and immoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.

2. ANOTHER condition of the covenant of grace on our parts is repentance, founded upon the promise of pardon and forgiveness on God's; for such was the stipulation between God and Christ—<sup>n</sup> That, in case God would engage to forgive the sin of our first parents, and from their posterity to remove the imputation of guilt; and, considering the state of their degenerate nature would be pleased to be merciful to their transgressions, and ready at all times to release them from their obligation to punishment; he, on his part, would undertake to fulfil the law, which they were unable to do; to bear all the penalty due to their disobedience; and, once for all, make a standing compensation for what they, in all ages, should do amiss; provided that they, on their part, when ever they found themselves led away by temptations, and deviating from the path of God's commands, should, upon their first recollection, return to their obedience; and, by all the proper indications of sorrow and repentance, make the best reparation they could. For this is the tenor of the covenant on God's part, that <sup>o</sup> he hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, that he might be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus; and this is the condition annexed on ours, that we should <sup>p</sup> repent and be baptized every one of us, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sin; for God having promised <sup>q</sup> that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, the promise is to us, and to our children (as the apostle tells us) and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Now in order to state the right notion of repentance we must observe that the apostles of our blessed Lord, preaching either to the heathens or unbelieving Jews, do constantly exhort them to repent, as a proper introduction into the christian dispensation; because, without a due sense of the wickedness of their former state, they could not possibly be induced to believe in Christ, and so initiated into a religion so contrary to their avowed notions. We must observe farther, that as soon as men complied with this first condition, being sensible of their former impieties, and thereupon admitted into the church by baptism; the exhortations of the apostles take another turn, and insist chiefly on the newness of life and perfection of virtue required in christians; on the danger of relapsing, and the necessity of

The second condition, repentance

The primitive notion of repentance.

<sup>n</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 58. <sup>o</sup> Scott's Mediator. <sup>p</sup> Rom. iii. 25, 26. <sup>q</sup> Act. ii. 38, 39  
<sup>r</sup> Luke xxiv. 47. <sup>s</sup> H. Wesley's Terms of Acceptance.

working out their salvation with fear and trembling : and from hence we may infer, that, as the frequent mention of repentance was made to those chiefly who were unconverted and unbelievers, but to such as were become believers and christians, the practice of all virtue, and the positive improvement in all that is good and praise-worthy, was recommended ; so to us who are adult christians, and have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil, milk does not so properly belong as strong meat ; or (as the apostle explains the metaphor) the first principles of the doctrines of Christ, such as repentance from dead works, and faith towards God, are not so strictly the conditions we are under, as a growth in grace, and progression to perfection.

Repentance after baptism.

THIS however must be owned with grief of heart, that, such is the weakness of our nature to betray, and the subtlety of the tempter to supplant us, the force of our passions to blind, and the agreeableness of objects to allure us, that in many things we offend all, and, in strictness of speech, there is none that doth good, no not one. The gospel therefore would in vain profess to bring salvation to mortal men, if every wilful deviation from the rules of virtue were so unpardonable that no future amendment would be sufficient to entitle the sinner to the forgiveness of what is past.

Denied by the Novatians.

IN the primitive church indeed, there was a sect of men, who, upon a mistaken interpretation of some passages of the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, contended that there was no more place of repentance allowed to those who after baptism should fall into any wilful and deliberate sin. In baptism, they agreed indeed, that all sin and wickedness was forgiven, and washed away by the blood of Christ, but, after that general remission, if men sinned any way presumptuously, they then affirmed that there remained no more sacrifice for sin ; or, that as the death of Christ could not be repeated, so they could not obtain any farther pardon : and therefore how sincerely soever they might repent, there was nothing now to be expected but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation. This opinion, however, is far from comporting well with the description God gives of his nature ; the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquities, transgressions, and sins ; with the solemn declaration he makes of his will, *as I live, saith the*

Unjustly, as appears from scripture.

Lord,

<sup>s</sup> The Novatians, so called from Novatus, a priest of Carthage, denied absolution, not only to apostates, and such as in the times of danger and persecution renounced the christian religion, but to such as had been guilty of any notorious crime, and withdrew from the communion of the church, as thinking it defiled by the re-admission of sinners and apostates ; though this was not done till after a long separation and severe course of penance, as appears by the canons of those ancient councils of Milevis, Arles, and Ancyra, as also the writings of Tertullian, and others. Vid. Burnet on the Articles, and Payne on Repentance. 1. Reg. xxvii. 6. 2. Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live; and, above all, with that amazing instance of his mercy, the sending of his only Son, out of his bosom, to \* preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, as the prophet describes the blessings of the evangelical state in a beautiful variety of metaphors. And therefore when our blessed Saviour makes this general invitation to sinners, † Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; when he gives his apostles commission ‡ to preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations, § being willing that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance; when, pursuant to that commission, St Peter † exhorts Simon Magus, whose sin was detestable enough in all conscience, to repent of that his wickedness, and gives him encouragement to hope that he should obtain forgiveness; when St Paul reminds Timothy ¶ to instruct in meekness those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, and that they may recover themselves from the snare of the devil; and (to instance no farther) when he advises the Galatians, that † if any man were overtaken in a fault, they who were spiritual; should restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering themselves, lest they also be tempted; when these, and such like passages every where meet us in the gospel, it is plain that neither our blessed Saviour, nor his apostles had any such persuasion of the irremissibility of sins committed after baptism. The truth is, \* that none who continue obstinately in the commission of sin, might delude themselves with the vain expectations of pardon; St Paul hath warned them not to be deceived; † be not deceived, says he, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. But on the other side, that none who have been guilty of the most abominable iniquities, might upon leaving their sins, and applying themselves to the mercy of God, through the merits of Christ, for forgiveness, despair of pardon, he immediately subjoins, and such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

† THE primitive christians indeed thought no promises too great, nor any threatenings too severe, whereby they might engage such as had escaped the pollution of sin by baptism to preserve their innocence; but yet they did not immediately give up

And the practice of the primitive christians.

\* Isa. lxi. 1. y Matth. xi. 28. z Luke xxiv. 47. a 2 Pet. iii. 9. b Acts viii. 22. c 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. d Gal. vi. 1. † Bishop Southwicks's Sermons. z 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. F. Clarke's Essays.

up to despair those who had unhappily violated it. \* They en-joined them indeed strict penance, and for some time excluded them the communion of saints; but <sup>b</sup> after the punishment which was inflicted by many had been sufficient to reduce them to repentance, they then put in practice the apostle's direction to receive them, and to comfort them, lest peradventure they should be swallowed up with over much sorrow. They taught that the holy word and church of God always admitted of true repentance; that to every one who heartily and sincerely repents, God sets open a door of pardon, and the Holy Spirit returns again into a mind purified from its pollution; that, out of his compassion, God will be patient and merciful, and keep the invitation which he made by his Son; and that therefore, as it will nothing avail a man to have been formerly righteous, if he at last grows wicked; so he that has formerly lived wickedly, may afterwards, by repentance and renewed obedience, blot out his past transgressions, and attain to the crown of virtue and immortality.

<sup>Some passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews explained.</sup>

WHEN therefore the author of the epistle to the Hebrews tells us <sup>i</sup> that it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, &c. if they shall fall away, <sup>k</sup> and sin wilfully, after they have received the knowledge of the truth, to renew them again unto repentance; we must remember, 1. That <sup>l</sup> it is very usual in scripture to express that by impossible, which is extremely difficult, or impossible for human strength, unassisted by divine grace, to accomplish. Thus, in the case of <sup>m</sup> rich men entering into the kingdom of God, our blessed Saviour explains himself by saying that though the thing be impossible, with regard to the temptations such persons are liable to, and their natural inability to resist them; <sup>n</sup> yet the things that are impossible with men are possible with God, *i. e.* he, by the prevailing influences of his grace, may wean their hearts from the world, and enable them to overcome their darling inclinations: and, in like manner, though men who reject and quench the Holy Spirit by sin cannot renew themselves, yet God can give them the heart and power of repentance and renovation: and therefore the word impossible here is not to be taken in a strict and rigorous, but comparative sense only: even to denote the great labour and pains, the many struggles and contests, the frequent mortifications and self-denials, it must necessarily cost the wilful and habitual sinner before he can be born again (as the scripture expresses it) <sup>o</sup> put off the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and put on the new, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. To remove this difficulty

<sup>g</sup> Cave's Primitive Christianity. <sup>h</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7. <sup>i</sup> Heb. vi. 4, &c. <sup>k</sup> Ibid. vi. 26. <sup>l</sup> Payne on Repentance, and Stanhope's Sermons. <sup>m</sup> Matth. xix. 23. <sup>n</sup> Luke xviii. 27. <sup>o</sup> Eph. iv. 24.



difficulty effectually we must remember, 2. That these texts to the Hebrews are meant, not of every sort of wilful offenders, but of such only as revolt, and fly off intirely from the faith of the gospel. For this reason they are branded with the name of Adversaries, of such as crucify the Son of God afresh, as trample him under foot, count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and do despight to the Spirit of grace; and these men, to be sure, it is impossible to renew while they continue in their apostacy, because they have cast off their only remedy. Faith, we all know, is the indispenfible condition of pardon; but this they have rejected, and disclaimed, and consequently are not within the covenant, nor under the influence of grace. They have denied the Lord that bought them; they have renounced the whole religion of Christ; and therefore cannot possibly reap any benefit from the sacrifice of that blood which they esteem common, and no sacrifice at all; or from the merits of him whom they tread under foot, as if he were still dead, and lying in the grave; and consequently account him a vile miscreant and impostor. <sup>s</sup> But the case is far otherwise with those who are engaged in a sinful course, and yet have not made such dangerous defection, or thrown off the profession of christianity. They may see their folly, and acknowledge the merit of their Saviour's atonement; they may comply with the good motions of the Spirit, which they have too long resisted, though they have not formally done public despight to him. There is a mighty difference between walking unworthy of the christian profession, and being open and avowed adversaries to it; between a conversation unbecoming the gospel and principles, that professedly overthrow it: and consequently those passages in scripture which strike at one of these, and declare it incapable of forgiveness, need not, must not, be applied to the other, so as to exclude from all hope and comfort, a case so very much unlike it. There is one case indeed, that of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which (as the scriptures testify) excludes from repentance; and yet, since some learned men have mollified the gospel-expressions, so as even to bring this sin within the compass of forgiveness, it may not be amiss to inquire a little into the particular nature of it, and upon what account the scriptures have made it so peculiarly unpardonable.

NOTHING certainly can be plainer in scripture than that the sin against the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour mentions as exempt from pardon, is to be understood of the Pharisees imputing the miracles which he wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, to the power of the devil; and yet, I know not how, a great many learned men have made shift to mistake it. <sup>r</sup> A denial of Christ's divinity, a denial of his religion for fear of suffering,

The sin against the Holy Ghost what.

<sup>p</sup> Heb. x. 27, 29. <sup>q</sup> Stanhope's Sermons. <sup>r</sup> Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. and Payne on Repentance.

suffering, a wilful opposition to the truth, a malicious envying other mens graces, gross relapses into sin, or final impenitence and perseverance therein, have, some by one, and some by others, been made the characteristics of this sin; and yet the very occasion of our Saviour's discourse concerning it, cannot but give us quite different conceptions. He had just now healed one possessed of a devil, blind and dumb, whereat the people were much amazed, and began to say among themselves, Is not this the son of David, *i. e.* the promised Meſſias? Which when the Pharisees perceived, they gave this vile and malicious turn to the miracle; this fellow does not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils: which alummy our Saviour undertakes to confute, by shewing how unlikely a thing it was that the devil should lend him his power to use it against himself, and then proceeds to discourse of this sin; Wherefore, I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy (which is of another nature, and not aimed particularly against the Holy Ghost) shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto them. The Pharisees therefore are the persons charged with the sin, and the sin is their attributing what was done by the finger of God to a diabolical power.

The heinousness of it.

OUR blessed Saviour, to shew that he was sent from God, wrought miracles, such as did plainly evidence a divine power and presence accompanying him. These miracles (to which he frequently appeals) the Pharisees were eye-witnesses of, and therefore could not deny them; yet such was their hatred and opposition to him and his doctrine, that, rather than allow his divine mission, they were resolved to ascribe all he did to the power of the devil: hereby intending to destroy the whole credit of christianity; and, by making him a confederate with Satan, to represent his religion as the work and contrivance of hell, and such as could tend only to the mischief and destruction of mankind. To slander and calumniate the Son of man was a great sin, no doubt, but such as might more easily be forgiven them, because of his state of humiliation and poor appearance, which might occasion their diseiteem: but to represent the Spirit of God as an apostate-angel, and whatever he did for the good and salvation of mankind, as the work and intrigue of the devil, is a sin of such an horrid nature as may well deserve a particular exemption from the general promise and covenant of pardon.

How it becomes unpardonable

GOD, no doubt can, if he will, work so powerfully upon the minds of men by his grace and Spirit, as to convince the most obstinate; and, supposing them to be convinced and repent, it cannot be denied but that they would be forgiven: and therefore,

s Matth. xii. 22. e Ibid. ver. 31. f Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. g Payne on Repentance. h Tillotson, *ibid.*

therefore, when our Saviour says that such as blaspheme against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, it is reasonable to suppose that he means, that, when men are come to such a degree of inveterate malice, God (as he justly may) will withdraw his grace from them, and leave them to the bias of their perverse minds, which will insensibly engage them into a farther opposition to the truth, and sink them finally into perdition; so that, being deserted of God, and, for want of the necessary aid of his grace, continuing finally impenitent, they become incapable of forgiveness both in this world and that which is to come. The short then of all is this—<sup>1</sup> That the sin against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable, not because there is not a sufficiency of merit in Christ to atone for it, or of mercy in God the Father to forgive it, but because those who commit it are of such a refractory and incorrigible spirit that they resist the last and utmost means of their conviction and amendment, and consequently, neither will nor can repent.

WHATEVER mollifications therefore <sup>\*</sup> some learned men may devise, yet our Saviour's words are so express, and repeated with so much earnestness, and the nature of the sin so heinous, and so repugnant to the method of man's salvation, that it well may be judged a case exempted from the general act of pardon: but then, whether this sin may be committed now-a-days, or was peculiar to the times of our Saviour's ministry, is a question that well deserves our consideration. Now, since the formality of this sin lay in resisting the evidence of miracles wrought in confirmation of the truth of christianity, and maliciously imputing the things which were done by the power of the Holy Ghost, to the power of the devil, there seems to be not that reason for confining it so strictly to our Saviour's days; since those who, at any time, resisted the evidence of miracles were chargeable with it, as long as miracles lasted, which was a considerable time after the death both of our Saviour and his apostles. <sup>1</sup> The power of the Holy Ghost was seen in working miracles, whenever they were wrought; and therefore, at whatsoever time this power was attributed to an evil spirit (as Julian and Celsus both ascribed the miracles which the apostles did to their great skill in diabolical magic) or was any other way spoken against, or derided by any, the persons who did this, were chargeable with the sin against the Holy Ghost. But it does not therefore follow, that every one who opposes christianity, or disputes that demonstration of divine authority which accompanies it, is therefore guilty of the same crime. There is a great deal of difference, in point of conviction, between reading an account of miracles wrought in attestation of any thing, and seeing them done before our eyes: and therefore great caution

Whether it  
can be  
committed  
now.

VOL. II.

B b b

must

<sup>1</sup> Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. <sup>k</sup> Vid Hammond upon Matth. xii. and Payne on Repentance. <sup>l</sup> Edwards ibid.

must be used, lest we lay a stumbling-block before our weaker brethren, by extending this sin too far.

What sin  
come near  
it.

THIS however must be said, for the terror of those that dare venture upon the confines of this dangerous sin, that, though there are some particular circumstances which make it peculiar to the first ages of christianity; yet, even among us, there are some great and daring impieties that have but too near a resemblance of it. Every wilful act of sin, especially in a christian, is, in some sense, a sin against the Holy Ghost; it is a grieving, a quenching, a resisting, and doing despite to the Spirit in scripture language; and therefore, all sinning against the clear conviction of our consciences, and the motions and suggestions of God's holy Spirit to the contrary, all obstinacy in a vicious course of living, notwithstanding the motives and arguments of the gospel to persuade men to repentance; all profane scoffing at religion, and making a mock of sin; all abuse of the scriptures, and ridiculing the holy word of God; all perverse infidelity, and malicious opposition of the truth, when the arguments for it are very plain and evident to every impartial mind, are crimes of an high nature, and of a near affinity to this great and unpardonable sin; and though God, to encourage the repentance of men, has not declared them irremissible, yet, where they once get possession of a man, they, by degrees, so waste the conscience, and corrupt the mind, as to make it incurable. They are, in short, great and grievous provocations to Almighty God, and if they be long persisted in, we know not how soon he may withdraw his grace from us, and suffer us to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

The nature  
of repen-  
tance.

Internal.

THUS we have considered the universality of repentance, and in what instances only it fails; and now (to inquire farther into the nature and qualifications of it) we must observe, that, in the constant and plain notion of the scriptures, it is such a virtuous alteration of the mind and purpose, as begets a like change in the life and practice, which beginning in our thoughts and resolutions, is made perfect in our works and actions. And accordingly, those that have treated on this subject, have always laid the first foundation of repentance in the mind, in the inward working of its thoughts, and the shame and sorrow it conceives upon the reflection on its past sins, and the consideration of its wretched condition. So that, when the heart is smitten within, and bleeds (as it were) for those inward wounds it feels in its own conscience; when it vents itself in all the sorrowful expressions of inward trouble, and mourns and laments for its grievous wickedness; when it is afraid of the anger and indignation of that God whom it has offended, and has a just dread of those punishments it knows it has deserved; when it is under great convictions of the folly and evil of its sins; and is very sensible

sensible of the sad fruits and consequences of those things whereof it is now ashamed; when it considers how little benefit and advantage it ever got by the commission of them, and to what sad account they will turn at last, if the end of them proves eternal death: this inward sense and godly sorrow if it continue upon the mind, and goes not off like the morning dew, will bring it, not only to confession, and humiliation, and afflicting its soul by fasting, which may be signs and attendants sometimes, but to (what are the proper parts and acts of repentance) firm purposes and resolutions of becoming better, hearty wishes that it had never committed such offences, and sincere vows and intentions to forsake them all for the future.

2. BUT besides this disposition of the mind, there is an out-ward part of repentance, the forsaking the sins we are guilty of, and practising the contrary virtues, without which all our sorrow and inward repentance will be of no avail. For, if we consider the nature of God, <sup>External.</sup> we cannot suppose that our sorrow or grief, which (in the degree of it) is misery itself, can, for its own sake be acceptable to him. Bare sorrow is what he rather dislikes than likes; but it is that godly sorrow only that worketh amendment and alteration which he approves. If we consider our own nature, we cannot but perceive that all the movements of our minds were calculated to influence and govern our actions; and therefore, if we cannot but reflect with sorrow and concern upon some part of our conduct, which we find repugnant to the laws of God, it is certain that this very power of reflection was designed to influence our behaviour for the time to come; since, to be sorry for any part of our behaviour implies in it, that it was either unbecoming or sinful; and, to account it unbecoming or sinful implies in it, that it ought never to be practised again: or lastly, if we consider the nature of our holy religion, we shall find that the end and design of it was not to beget in us a little sorrow for sin, or conviction of guilt, or dread of punishment, but <sup>to</sup> teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; that, <sup>being</sup> made free from sin, and become the servants of God, we may have our fruit unto holiness, and our end everlasting life.

THUS if we consult the nature of things, our christian repentance necessarily implies, not only sorrow for having done amiss, and resolutions for better obedience for the future, but a putting those resolutions likewise in practice, by an actual relinquishing the sins that do beset us, and an actual proceeding in all the virtues of a godly life. Heathens indeed might, in some measure, have the same notions of repentance; for natural religion tells us that, when we have offended God, we ought to be sorry for it, and amend our ways; but in this is the doctrine of repentance

Repentance a gospel doctrine.

tance peculiar to the gospel, that the great motive and enforcement of it, the assurance of pardon and remission of sins, through the merit and mediation of Jesus Christ, is purely evangelical. Before the promulgation of the new covenant, † wherein God has obliged himself to pardon us upon our repentance, sinful men, though true penitents, could never arrive to such a degree of security of God's reconciliation to them as was necessary to set their minds at rest, and free them from anxiety. Some wavering hopes perhaps a poor penitent might have, upon the consideration of the infinite benignity of the divine nature; but the utmost comfort that he could give himself was that of the penitent king of Nineveh; † who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger and we perish not? But alas! when a man's mind is racked with the sense of guilt, and the apprehensions of divine wrath, who can tell is such a poor relief as must necessarily leave it extremely anxious and desponding? But now, upon the foundation of the covenant which Christ procured for us, we all can tell, and that with as much certainty as that God is true, that, if we do repent and turn from our evil ways, God will turn, and recover of his anger and displeasure against us; and therefore, whatever the heathen world, living up, as far as they are able, to the principles of natural religion, and, upon any failure in their duty, being heartily penitent, may do towards recommending themselves to the pardoning grace of God; or whether the benefits of Christ's death, by some secret determination of the Divine Will, may not extend to them (which are questions wherein we can never come to a certain resolution) this must be acknowledged by all, † that there is a mighty difference between an article of faith, and a conclusion drawn from a mere probable conjecture; between a fœderal right to a promise, and an arbitrary uncovenanted act of divine grace.

The great privilege of it.

ALL the light then which natural religion can afford a sinner, as to the acceptance of his repentance with God, must needs leave him in great doubt and perplexity: it is the privilege of divine revelation (and an inestimable privilege it is) which ascertains us of these great truths, that, upon every transgression, God is not severe to mark what is done amiss; that, when we go astray, he is patient to wait our return; that no sins are too heinous for his mercy to forgive, or for the great propitiation of Christ's blood to atone; that when at any time † we have fallen by our iniquity, we can take with us words, and turn to the Lord, and say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so shall we render thee the calves of our lips: nay, even when our provocations have been innumerable in a long course of riot and rebellion, that we have it in our power

† Scott's Discourses, Vol. II. s. Jonah iii. 9. † Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. u. Hosea xiv. 1, 2.

power to say to ourselves (and in full assurance of reception) \* I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Only, that we may not abuse his paternal goodness, we must remember that there are some qualifications in our repentance necessary to recommend it to his favour and acceptance: and what we may reckon the first of these is the earliness of it, *i. e.* a forsaking of our sins so timely as to acquire, and live in the habits of the contrary virtues.

The conditions of it.

1. That is to be early.

THE plain and express condition of the covenant established by Christ is an holy life, *i. e.* \* a constant and persevering obedience to all the commands of God (allowing for human weaknesses and imperfections) from the time of our baptism, or our coming to the knowledge of the truth, to the end of our lives; and the least that can possibly lay claim to the reward promised upon this condition is such a repentance which produces the actual obedience of, at least some proportionable, part of a man's life: and therefore, though God may possibly have reserves of mercy, which in the event he may exercise towards men in their last extremity; yet originally it is certain that the gospel-covenant gives no assurance of comfort, but either to a constant and persevering holiness, or to a repentance evidenced by actually renewed obedience.

AT baptism indeed, or whenever we first come to the knowledge of the truth, all past sins are so intirely forgiven and washed away by the blood of Christ, that repentance, though it has no time to evidence itself in the fruits of righteousness, is without all controversy available to salvation. But when those who by baptism have covenanted solemnly with God for an holy life, and confirmed that covenant by other repeated promises and resolutions, shall yet wilfully live in sin, and, notwithstanding the express threatenings of our Saviour and his apostles, that they who do so shall not inherit the kingdom of God; notwithstanding the earnest exhortations and warnings of God's ministers, and notwithstanding the perpetual reproaches of their own consciences, will continue obstinately to do so: such persons have no reason in the world to expect that God will at last accept their late, unactive, and ineffectual repentance. The penitent thief was received by our Saviour as any other infidel may be, who, towards the end of his life, is converted to the truth of the christian religion, and heartily embraces it; but there is nothing like a promise in scripture that the unactive repentance of a christian, who has lived all his life in notorious wickedness, shall be accepted at the hour of death. The labourers who were hired into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, received indeed the same wages with them that had borne the burden and heat of the day; but our Saviour has no where promised

\* Luke xv. 18, 19. x Clarke's Essays. y Ibid.

promised that baptized and professed christians, who are hired into the vineyard in the morning, if they riot away all the day in idleness and wickedness, shall at night be accepted for professing their sorrow that they have not worked.

The inviolability of a late repentance.

THOSE who argue for a late repentance place all the efficacy of it in this supposition,— That the person, if he had time and opportunity, would stedfastly persevere in his holy purposes: but alas! how frequent instances have we of the contrary? And who shall dare to presume that to be his own case in which, if himself has not formerly failed, yet a multitude of pretending penitents fail daily? How many have we seen, who, if God had been pleased to take them away while they seemed to be in a good mind, had left behind them such hopes of their happy condition, that it would have been thought uncharitable and unchristian to question it; and yet all this was not the man's heart but his fright; a violence upon his nature and settled disposition? The fit of sickness and that of zeal abated and wore off together; and, as soon as the smart of the rod was over, all the remembrance and good effect of it was over with him too. Few stomachs are so high and sturdy, but that the approach of death, the terrors of an incensed God, and the near prospect of a gaping hell will bring them down. When men are just upon the brink of eternity, a new scene opens upon them: these things will then be seen and heard: they intrude upon the thoughts whether they will or no, and make quite different impressions from what they did when they were at a distance; when health and strength, the hurry of business and variety of pleasures helped to divert and drive away the uneasy reflection. And when matters are come to this extremity, who is so nice as truly to distinguish between the hatred of sin and the dread of punishment; between the love of God and an anxious care to preserve one's self; between the sorrow of the penitent, and the amazement of his fears, or melancholy of his disease; and consequently, who can pronounce any thing peremptorily concerning the dying person's condition? In short, the uncertainties of a late repentance are so great, and the dangers so many, and the examples in scripture so few, and when nearly inquired into, so distant from our case; the pretences for delay so vain, and the sophistry whereby men delude themselves in this important affair, both so palpable and so fatal, that if ever we intend to approve our repentance to God and our own consciences, we must be careful both to begin and perfect it in the time of our health, that when we come to die, we may have the comfort of a well-grounded hope of a happy eternity, to alleviate the pain and uneasiness of our passage to it.

This is the great and proper proportionate to offences.

2. ANOTHER qualification of a true and acceptable repentance is, that it be great and bear some proportion in its sorrow and



and humiliation to the nature and heinousness of the sinner's offences. For though it be certain that the amendment of life is the best indication of a sincere repentance, <sup>a</sup> yet whoever have lived in a state of sin, ought to do something to testify their sorrow for their past transgressions, and <sup>b</sup> to judge themselves, that they may not be judged of their Lord. <sup>c</sup> They have to deal with a God, to whom they are in no condition of bringing any atonement; and therefore the only satisfaction they can make him is their taking the shame of their faults to themselves, and being unfeignedly afflicted for all their unworthy behaviour; and this the rather because their care to avoid sin for the future will naturally be proportionable to their concern for having committed it heretofore: for behold this self-same thing (says the apostle to the <sup>d</sup> Corinthians) that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge? For this reason it was that St James advises those who had sinned to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; to let their laughter be turned into mourning, that he might exalt them in due time: and for this reason the primitive church always taught that sins committed wilfully, after the knowledge and belief of the truth, were to be done away with labour and sorrow; that the afflictive duties of repentance ought to bear some proportion to the greatness of the sin; and that by how much the more severely any man judged himself here, by so much the more might he hope that God would spare him, and be merciful to him hereafter. The penitential exercises in those early times of christianity were very severe; and thus far they are an instruction to us that we ought to afflict our souls with sad remembrances, in proportion to the delight and the aggravations with which we have offended, in order to increase our hatred against sin, which can never be too great, nor any sorrow that contributes to it too intense, provided it be necessary to reclaim us more perfectly, and do not drive us to despair or distrust of God's mercy.

IT must be remembered however, that God measures our performances of this kind, neither by the quantity of our tears, nor the degree of our contrition, but by the sincerity of our hearts, and the amendment of our lives: and therefore the best, the greatest and most effectual repentance that a man can possibly exercise, is to endeavour to be so much the more careful in mortifying his vices, and so much the more zealous in improving all opportunities of doing good, by how much he has once been more faulty in any particular; to be more eminently conspicuous in those virtues which are most directly contrary to the vices he formerly indulged; and, where he has been van-

quished

<sup>a</sup> Clarke's Essays. <sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 31. <sup>c</sup> Stanhope's Sermons. <sup>d</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 11.

quished by any temptation, there to resolve to strengthen himself so much the more against it: he that thus endeavours to appease God (says St Cyprian) and by his repentance, and shame, and sorrow for his past offences, is spurred on to exercise greater faith, and virtue, and courage; such an one, by the assistance of God, may become a joy to the church which he before made sorrowful; and shall obtain not only the pardon of his sins, but also the crown of righteousness.

That it be  
constant.

3. ONE qualification more in a true and acceptable repentance is, that it be constant and persevering in its effects, *i. e.* it must put a man into such a state as that he will not any more return to his vices. Till it arrives at this pitch, repentance is not right, and (however men may deceive themselves with vain imaginations) can never be effectual to salvation. The condition that our Saviour expressly requires in the gospel is a continued holy life, from the time of our knowing and embracing the truth: but certainly he will never accept of any thing less than a life of holiness and persevering obedience from some period of reformation and repentance. He therefore that repents should be as fearful of relapsing into sin as one that is recovering out of a dangerous and almost mortal sickness: whenever he wilfully relapses, he makes his case worse than it was at first, and his disease more in danger of being mortal: it becomes much harder for him to renew himself into repentance, and much more difficult to procure pardon. Evil habits, it is true, are not to be rooted out at once, nor vicious customs overcome in a moment: so long therefore as a man does not return wilfully and deliberately into the habit of sin, many surprisings and interruptions in the struggle with a customary vice, may be consistent with the progress of repentance; but it is then only that it becomes complete and effectual, when the evil habit is so far extinguished that the man from thence forward obeys the commandments of God without looking back, and returns no more to the sin he has condemned.

To conclude this argument then with some motives and encouragements to repentance; let it be considered, that when God calls upon us to relinquish our sins, and perform the duties of our holy religion, he only desires us to be kind to ourselves, by abandoning that which is so deceitful in its appearances, and so destructive in its effects, the parent of sorrow and shame and sad remorse; that cheats us with imaginary pleasures of a moment, but leaves real and lasting pains behind, the horrors of conscience, the agonies of guilt, amazement and despair; and plunges us at last into the bottomless pit, there to endure the gnawings of a worm that never dies, and the burnings of a fire that never can be quenched; only desires us to be kind to ourselves by embracing a state whose ways are ways of pleasantness,

e Clarke's Essays. f Payne on Repentance. g Stanhope's Sermons.

ness, and all its paths are peace, the parent of ease, happiness and health; that is attended with the sweet transports of a good conscience, the supporting sense of a reconciled God, the happy experience of his favour and protection here, and the joyful expectation of a blessed eternity hereafter. Let it be considered then <sup>b</sup> that there cannot be a more unaccountable folly than by impenitence to lose the hopes of a certain and eternal happiness, for the sake of those pleasures which are the disgrace as well as disquiet of human nature; that to continue in sin with the hopes to repent, is to stab ourselves with the hopes of a cure; that to delay our repentance till the time of our death, is to cripple ourselves in order to run; and that the sooner we set about it, the sooner shall we find our minds at ease, and we enjoy such pleasures in forsaking our sins, as are far more noble and manly than ever we found any in committing them. And, to engage us to set about the work, let it be considered, lastly, that we have all the encouragement imaginable, a covenant of pardon and forgiveness to plead; a standing satisfaction to appeal to; sufficient help and assistance to rely on; the bowels of an indulgent father calling us; the merits of a powerful advocate interceding for us; the examples of other successful penitents exciting us; the judgment of our own minds applauding us; and both holy men and angels viewing our conflict, and rejoicing in our conquest and conversion.

Obedience.

4. THERE is one condition more pursuant upon God's promise of heaven and happiness, which the covenant of grace obliges us to perform, and that is obedience to the divine commands. For such is the purpose and determination of God, that <sup>i</sup> to every man he will render according to his deeds, to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil: for <sup>k</sup> I come quickly, says our Lord in the Revelation, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his works shall be; when <sup>l</sup> not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, or makes profession of my religion, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven. And therefore, to state the true nature and necessity of our christian obedience, we may not improperly reduce it to these three qualifications:

1. THAT it proceed from a religious principle.
2. THAT it have respect to all God's commandments. And,
3. THAT we persevere in the performance of it, even unto the end.

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<sup>h</sup> Stillingfleet's Sermons. <sup>i</sup> Rom. ii. 6. &c. <sup>k</sup> Rev. xxii. 12. <sup>l</sup> Matth. vii. 21.

In qualifi-  
cations.

Sincerity.

I. THE first qualification of our christian obedience is, that it proceed from a religious principle. For of such importance are the motives upon which any thing is done, that there can be no just distinction between virtue and vice without them. <sup>m</sup> A man may be liberal to the poor out of charity, and he may be so out of ostentation too. He may be temperate in obedience to some natural antipathies, or in favour of a weak constitution; he may be just for reputation; frugal and diligent for the sake of wealth; or devout to be seen of men: and how highly soever he may deserve to be commended for his prudence, yet surely there is no religion in all this, nor consequently any foundation for reward. Our blessed Saviour, speaking of such as give alms, and pray, and fast, with a design to be taken notice of, tells us with some sort of solemnity that this is all they are to expect, <sup>n</sup> verily, I say unto you, they have their reward: their reward, *i. e.* what they proposed to themselves for the end of such actions when they did them: and so are to look upon this as a full payment, since they thought the duties worth undertaking at so low a price. The case is much the same with those that are temperate merely for their health, or diligent and just for reputation and convenience: a sound constitution, a florid old age, plentiful fortunes, and credit, and countenance in the world, are properly the rewards of these men, and all that they have any just pretence to: for, as to the retributions of the last day, there is a great deal of reason to believe that they will proceed upon the same eternal rules of equity which our returns to one another are founded upon now. If a friend, for instance, labours sincerely in my interest, and yet cannot be successful, his inclination and endeavour hath to me the merit of a performance; but if a man, in prosecution of his own private advantage, by some providential turn of affairs, finds it necessary for his own sake to do me a kindness, I rejoice in the benefit indeed, but, strictly speaking, I owe him no thanks. In like manner, God has promised to reward our mere disposition and good-will to serve him, though our power of effecting it do not in all points answer our desires; but the specious actions of hypocrites shall meet with no regard, because though they did in some degree contribute to his glory and the good of men, and so may seem to have some colour of a plea; yet these effects were purely accidental, and no part of their design when they did them. Their avarice or vain-glory, or whatever else it was that moved them to affect such appearances of virtue, hath already received satisfaction in this world; and therefore when they come to demand more wages in the next, what should hinder the great master of the vineyard from answering them, as he does the murmuring labourer in the parable,

rable, ° friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for so much? Take that is thine, and go thy way.

THIS however is to be understood with some restriction, because the having respect to our own advantage in our obedience to God's commands, is upon many accounts not only an innocent thing, but in some measure necessary and unavoidable. Respect to our own advantage, consistent therewith In itself it can neither offend God, nor exclude us from the promised reward, because the necessity of our nature requires it; our faith is made effectual by it; God's laws directly propose it; and the best men that ever yet lived made it a part of their consideration: to which purpose the author to the Hebrews, recounting the worthies of old, tells us expressly that <sup>q</sup> they had all a respect to the recompence of reward; and, in an higher instance than any of them, even in that of Christ himself, he assures us that his own advantage, as well as the glory of God, was the motive of his obedience, when, <sup>r</sup> for the sake of the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, and despised the shame of it.

IT is not barely the intention then of our own advantage in the service of God that is culpable. When culpable. To have respect to the eternal advantages which in his laws are promised to our obedience, is always lawful; and to have an eye to those temporal advantages which will accrue to us by obeying them, is not always sinful: it is then only that the design of our own self-interest, in conjunction with the design of serving God, makes our services insincere, and cuts off our hope of reward, when together with our design of serving God we join a design of serving sin; or when we design some temporal ends of our own as much or more than we do the service of God.

2. ANOTHER qualification of our christian obedience is, that it have an equal respect to all God's commandments. Integrity. There is no man so lost to reason and virtue, but that he finds it for his purpose to observe some of them; natural modesty, self-preservation, and the promoting an interest with others persuade the practice of many commendable things; poverty and sickness, public shame and public punishment, restrain men from gratifying many corrupt inclinations; nor will the fear of God immediately cease to have a check upon the conscience, and to enforce other considerations more powerfully; and these impressions, people that make any pretensions to goodness, are, many times, not averse to submit to; but still, if there be any reserved case, any favourite corruption, upon which religion exercises its power but feebly, though it be but one, yet if it continues proof against all the charms, and all the terrors of the gospel, that single exception is a blemish to the whole, and renders all the rest of a good life ineffectual, though a man should labour

° Matth. xx. 13, 14.    p Kettlewell's Measures of Obedience.    q Heb. ii. 2.  
r Ibid. xiii. 2.    s Stanhope's Sermons.

labour never so zealously in other instances to please God, and save his immortal soul.

The danger of favourite sins.

THE mischief and danger of such favourite corruptions is so much the greater, because men are apt to flatter themselves with a vain hope that a few spots will easily be overlooked in the multitude of good actions which give a grace and beauty to their lives. They account it hard that the reward of so many virtues should be lost for the sake of one vice; and are therefore inclinable to think that Almighty God will admit them to compound with him, and to buy off the breach of one command by a punctual discharge of another. But since the law was established with a curse upon every one that continueth not in all things written therein, to do them: this cuts off all hopes of heaven, when grounded upon such an obedience as shall presume to dispense with any particular precept contained in it. The gospel, it is true indeed, was intended to abate the rigour of the law, by making provision for forgiveness upon repentance, and using great tenderness to the infirmities of human nature; but still, as it gives no man licence to transgress wilfully, nor the least indulgence to any known sin. In this respect, the curse continues still in full force; and St James has proved it must needs do so by that remarkable passage in his epistle: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill; now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law: where the apostle evidently shews, that the authority of the law-giver is that which binds the law upon us; that the contempt of that authority is the thing to be accounted for; and if that be once violated, it matters very little whether it be done in this or that particular instance. For though some crimes be more heinous than others, yet obedience or disobedience is not to be measured so much by the quality of the actions, as by the regard or disregard to the will of our superiors; and since our Lord's pleasure is signified by all his laws, it is sufficient to condemn us that we wilfully neglect any. It will become us therefore to look upon every command of his as armed with thunder, and to remember, that when he comes to judgment, he will exact all that he has required, whatever our concern in it may be; because he comes in short, not as a corrupt party, to make his laws bend to our interest, and to disannul such as make against us; but as a just and impartial judge, to inflict what his gospel threatens, and to make his sentence conformable to what it says, and not what we can bear.

Perseverance.

3. THE other qualification of our christian obedience is, that we should persevere in the keeping of God's commandments all the days of our lives. For this is what he indispensibly exacts of

of us, that \* having set our hands to the plough, we should not look back, but x being faithful unto death, and y holding the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end, we should z be always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord. And indeed the scriptures, by comparing our life to a work, to a race, to a fight, and other actions of a stated period, do plainly enough imply, that as there are no wages to be looked for, without finishing our task; no prize to be had, without coming up to the goal; no triumph to be expected, without fighting it out to the last, and gaining a complete victory; so there is no future reward to be hoped for, without steadiness and perseverance in well-doing: and therefore (to continue one of the comparisons) since the impediments in running the race that is set before us are so many, the corruptions of human nature so prevalent, and the temptations that beset it so assiduous and so strong, that good men sometimes feel dreadful interruptions; a there will be greater occasion for us, at all times, to keep up our resolution and vigour, by remembering that nothing less than running the whole course can entitle us to the prize; great need often to take ourselves aside, and see what progress we have made, and whereabouts we are; what length of the field there is still before us, and how short a time is left us to compass it in; that so when the race of life comes to a conclusion, and our departure is at hand, we may have it to say, with the blessed apostle, b I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

THESE are the terms of our christian obedience; and, from the consideration of them, there are two questions that naturally occur to our thoughts.

1. WHETHER the gospel requires of us a perfect and unflinching obedience. And,

2. BY what signs we may perceive whether our obedience be such as God accepts.

1. THAT God Almighty requires an obedience to all and every of his commands, at all times, and in all places equally; and that there is likewise no sin or transgression of his law, in any one instance, but what he disapproves, and absolutely forbids, is evident from the whole tenor of the gospel; and therefore, in this sense, it may be justly said that he requires a perfect obedience at our hands; c as it is no more than reasonable indeed that the most wise and holy God should enjoin every law of

The gospel requires not an unflinching obedience.

\* Luke ix. 62. x Rev. ii. 10. y Heb. iii. 14. z 1 Cor. xv. 58. a Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels. b 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. c Moody's Terms of Acceptance.

of his (which intirely agrees with reason) to be constantly observed by reasonable creatures, and condemn every wilful transgression of it as an absurd and irrational practice: but then, because no such obedience was ever yet performed by any (our Saviour Christ only accepted) because all men in the world have found themselves surrounded with infirmities, and misled by temptations and trials in some instance or other, so that they cannot but condemn themselves for some wilful deviations from the rule of right reason; it has pleased God (out of his abundant goodness) at the same time that he requires an intire obedience, not only to excuse the imperfection of our services, occasioned by the frailties and infirmities of our nature; <sup>d</sup> not only to overlook our involuntary slips and miscarriages, occasioned by our ignorance and inadvertency; but for the sake of Jesus Christ, his Son, and our Saviour, to pardon our wilful and presumptuous sins, upon such conditions as he has prescribed; and such as are not inconsistent with his exaction of our perfect obedience. For, as the father may command such and such particulars, and yet admit his son to reconciliation, upon some terms, after he has transgressed some of his commands; so likewise may Almighty God require obedience to every one of his commands, at all times, and in all places, and yet, after his creatures have been so unhappy as to transgress any of his commands, he may forgive them these transgressions upon some certain terms and conditions. In a word, <sup>e</sup> the universal obedience which the christian law requires, is the obedience of the penitent; and though we have failed in our duty, yet we may, with good comfort, repair our neglects for the future, being assured that thereupon God will not impute to us our former transgressions. This therefore is to be considered, together with the strictness of the rule, that repentance will be accepted, that great and inestimable grace of the gospel, without which the best of men can have no hope, and with which the worst may have some.

SINCE therefore, it is certain, that Almighty God forbids every sin always, and enjoins the practice of every virtue at all opportunities, and in this sense may be said to require a sinless obedience; and since it is certain, that, by his own open declarations, there is room left for favour and mercy to such as have committed wilful sin; it is evident that the perfection which is so much required of christians, as a condition without which they shall not be finally happy, can be no other than an amendment and reformation in those instances wherein they have wilfully failed, and a constant progression and improvement in such virtues and godliness of living as they have already entered into: and from hence it will be no hard matter to give a resolution to the

2. OTHER



2. OTHER question, viz. how, or by what signs we may best perceive whether our obedience be what God will be pleased to accept. For if the terms of gospel-obedience be such as have been declared, then † he who makes no other use of its gracious proposals than to encourage himself to recover from any sin, of which he knows he has wilfully been guilty; and is so affected with any instance of his past weakness, as to keep a greater and stricter watch over himself for the time to come: he who at any time finds, upon a review of himself, that though he be not absolutely perfect, yet he gets ground of his imperfections, and proceeds by a daily course farther and farther in the paths of virtue: he who carefully avoids the opportunities and temptations whereby he knows he has formerly fallen; and when unavoidably, and without any fault of his own, he meets with the same trials and temptations which have formerly vanquished him, finds faith, and sense of God, and strength of mind enough to vanquish them, and resist all their insinuations and artful onsets, has good ground to hope that he is in a way acceptable to God. Whereas, on the contrary, he who takes encouragement from the doctrine of acceptance and reconciliation delivered in the gospel, to venture still farther in the paths of sin, with a foolish hope of coming up to the terms of acceptance some time or other: he who finds himself led by his sinning at any time to love the sin, rather than to detest and guard against it; and to run to the temptation, rather than to flee from it: he who finds the sense of the importance of morality and virtue diminishing, and the power of the world, or the flesh, so far increasing over him, as, every day, by their terrors or allurements, to carry him into the practice of wickedness: in a word, he who finds himself such a captive to any wilful sin, that he has not yet got out of its power; that his faith in God, his sense of religion, and his belief of a future state, are not all sufficient to disengage him from it; may be well assured that he is not, as yet, in such a condition as that he may entertain any rational and well-grounded hopes of salvation upon the terms of the gospel, which, notwithstanding all its rich promises of pardon and forgiveness, ‡ teacheth 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 appearing 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.

## S E C T.

† Hoadly's Terms of Acceptance. ‡ Tit. ii. 12, &c.

How to  
judge of  
our accep-  
tance with  
God.

## S E C T. I.

## Of the Mediator of the NEW COVENANT.

A mediator,  
what.

**T**HE word *Mefites*, which we translate Mediator, signifies a person who interposes between two parties, either to obtain a favour from the one to the other, or to adjust some difference, and make a reconciliation between them. <sup>h</sup> The person who undertakes this office, does it either voluntarily, or by the designation of both parties: if voluntarily, he can act but precariously, and not so properly determine any thing, as only intreat and persuade; if by designation, and both parties are equal, he acts by the authority of both, and consequently has a full power to determine the matter in debate just as he thinks fit: but if it so happen, that the one party be superior to the other, even to such a degree as master and servant, sovereign and subject, &c. it is enough then that the mediator be authorized by the delegation of the superior; and the subject or inferior party will be as much obliged by his determinations, as if he himself had voluntarily appointed him. In the case between the sovereign and the subject, the mediator indeed is the sovereign's vicegerent, and the subject's advocate; and therefore, as the sovereign has, at all times, a right to the subject's duty, and what favours he confers on him, confers spontaneously, and of his free accord; he may (whether the other consent to it or no) demand his duty, by what vicegerent, and bestow his favours by what advocate he pleases.

Of whose  
appoint-  
ment.

Now, since the degeneracy of our nature had made us unfit to converse with God immediately, and yet his tender mercy and compassion was such, that he would not utterly reject and abandon us; there was no expedient (at least within our knowledge) wherein the holiness of his Majesty could so fairly accord with the tenderness of his mercy, as in this of transacting with us by a mediator; by whose inter-agency he, though a most holy sovereign, may, without debasement, freely converse with us; and we, though his guilty subjects, may, without terror or anxiety, as freely draw near to him. But then, because God's sovereignty over us was absolute, and the blessings he intended to bestow upon us, free and undeserved; therefore was the right of chusing and appointing this mediator intirely in him; and, accordingly, the holy scripture has assured us that as <sup>i</sup> there is one God, so there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who <sup>k</sup> did not assume that honour to himself, but <sup>l</sup> was appointed thereunto by God; and <sup>m</sup> therefore the apostle lets all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom they had

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Scott's Mediator, and Les Oeuvres posth. de Mr Claude, Tom. ii. <sup>i</sup> Tim. ii. 5. <sup>k</sup> Heb. v. 5. <sup>l</sup> Ibid. iii. 2. <sup>m</sup> Acts ii. 36.

had crucified both Lord and Christ. Christ signifies anointed; and as anointing with oil was antiently the visible sign by which the regal, priestly, and prophetic offices were conferred; so, by this appellation St Peter meant to inform the Jews, that God had invested Jesus with the character of a Mediator, which included in it all these offices.

WHEN Christ was first of all invested with this character, <sup>When first appointed.</sup> whether at the beginning of the new covenant, or not till the time of his incarnation, is a question wherein the learned are not so intirely agreed. This however can hardly be gainfayed, <sup>a</sup> that since the scriptures assure us, he is now the mediator of the new and better covenant, he must have been so all along, from the time of the fall, upon which it commenced: otherwise this new covenant (upon which he now mediates) must have been four thousand years without a mediator; which, considering the whole state and condition of it, can by no means be a reasonable supposition. For, besides that the fall of man was the true cause of God's withdrawing himself from all immediate converse with him; and consequently, whatever intercourse he had with him afterwards must have been carried on by a mediator; there is nothing more evident from scripture than that this very covenant, which is the standing medium of God's converse with men was granted to us in consideration of Christ's death and sacrifice. Since therefore it was granted long before Christ died, even from the time of man's apostacy, it must be granted, upon Christ's engaging himself to the Father, by his death to atone for our sins, when the fulness of time should come; which engagement was virtually, and in effect an oblation of himself as a sacrifice for us; and accordingly was accepted by God in the same manner as if it actually had been offered: and since, in consideration of Christ's future sacrifice, God first granted this covenant to men, it necessarily follows, that, upon the same consideration, he, at the same time, appointed Christ to be the mediator of it. In short, Christ's sacrifice was as certain in God's account, and therefore as prevalent with him before as after it was offered; and therefore, since • his mediatorship of the new covenant is wholly owing to the prevalence of his sacrifice, there was the same reason why God should admit him to be the mediator of it before it was offered as after. And accordingly, long before he offered up his sacrifice, he is called the <sup>p</sup> Angel or Messenger of the New Covenant, which covenant (as St Paul assures us) four hundred and thirty years before the law of Moses was <sup>q</sup> confirmed of God to Abraham in Christ; and if it was then confirmed by Christ, it is certain that Christ was then the mediator of it, though the full exercise of that office was not till the days of his incarnation.

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<sup>n</sup> Scott's Mediator, and Les Oeuvres posth. de M. Claude, Tom. ii. <sup>o</sup> Vid. Phil. ii. 6, &c. <sup>p</sup> Mal. iii. 1. <sup>q</sup> Gal. iii. 17.

The man-  
ner of it.

THE apostle, † in a verse or two following this passage, speaking of the Jewish law, gives us to understand that it was ordained or delivered by angels in the hand of the mediator, *i. e.* in the hand of Moses, who was appointed to mediate, not only for God with the people of Israel, but also for the people of Israel with God: for this (as he argues) is implied in the very notion of a mediator, that he be a third person acting between two others; but God is only one of the parties between whom this mediation is made, and therefore Moses must be supposed, not only to act for God with the people, as his vicegerent, but likewise to act for the people with God, as their advocate: in short, he must act for both parties, otherwise he is not a mediator. And accordingly as Moses, who was the mediator of the Jewish covenant, acted between God and the people; so Jesus, who is the mediator of the christian covenant, acts between two opposite parties, God and man. As God's vicegerent he acts for him with us, in order to reduce us to our duty and allegiance; and, as our advocate, he acts for us with God, in order to induce him to be gracious and favourable to us; that so, having prevailed with us to lay down our enmity against God, and obtained of God to remit his displeasure against us, he may effect an happy reconciliation between us: and in this sense the author to the Hebrews seems to have laid down both parts of his mediation; † wherefore he is able to save to the utmost those who come unto God by him, who submit to God upon his intreaty, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them, or to plead with God the merits of his sacrifice in their behalf.

The necessity of a mediator.

THE vast disproportion between the divine nature and ours sets us at an infinite distance from God, and the pollution of our sins removed us still farther from the hopes of communion with him: the sense of guilt alienated our hearts, and the suspicion which it ingendered made us averse to God's intreaties, and diffident of his promises in case we should lay down our arms: God too on his part had abundant reason to hate us for our sin and sad apostacy, and no manner of encouragement (considering our natural aversion to good) to depend upon our better obedience for the future, in case he should grant an act of indemnity. To remove therefore all these obstructions at once, the Son of God, by assuming the human nature, has tempered and qualified the effulgency of his infinite majesty, and so made a nearer approach to us; and, by paying a full and adequate satisfaction to God's justice, has appeased his wrath and indignation against us. † In negotiating with us for God, he not only woos and intreats us to be reconciled; but, to engage our obedience as much as possible, has laid solemn injunctions upon us, and these strengthened with every thing that may affect our hopes and fears.

† Gal. iii. 19, 20. † Heb. vii. 25. † Les Oeuvres posth. de M. Claude, Tom. ii.

fears. <sup>u</sup> In negotiating with God for us, he not only prays and intreats him to be reconciled to us, but pleads our right likewise, and prefers our claim to the blessings he has purchased for us by his blood, by the daily presentation of that same blood before the throne of grace. <sup>w</sup> As God's mediator with us, he calls us by his word and sacraments; he discovers to us the secrets of the will of God; he blesses, he sanctifies, he strengthens, he comforts, he protects, he conducts us in this life; raises us from the dead, and exalts us to heaven: and, as our mediator with God, he takes our sins upon him; he atones for them with his blood; he devolves his merits upon us; he engages with his Father for the performance of our promises; for our perseverance in faith, in piety, in sincerity; and in case of failing, is always pleading for mercy, and making intercession for us, that being renewed in the spirit of our minds, we at last may become his rejoicing, by having our fruit unto holiness, and our end everlasting life.

THESE are some of the acts of our Saviour's mediation between God and man; and from hence it appears that the person who undertakes such an office, <sup>x</sup> ought to be so qualified as to have an equal power and interest with both parties; to be of sufficient dignity to approach the superior; of sufficient humility to give access to the inferior; and of such ascendancy over both as to have nothing denied him which he should think proper to ask. But, if he undertakes to make satisfaction for the offences of either party, he should (over and above all this) be a free and independent master of himself; capable of suffering, that he may atone for the delinquent; but incapable of sinning himself, that he may make his atonement meritorious: all which is answered by his partaking of the nature of both. <sup>y</sup> That therefore this high and most important office might more effectually be executed, the eternal Father thought fit to place it in the hands of his eternal Son, to whom he communicated from all eternity his own divine essence, and whom in due time he appointed to assume the human nature into a personal union with his divinity, that so, being both God and man in one person, he might be the better accomplished to mediate between both.

IN mediating for God with man, <sup>z</sup> he was to perform the office of a divine king to rule and govern us, as God's viceroy, so as either to reduce us by his authority, or chastise us for our rebellion. And this was a sphere so vast and so sublime, that nothing but a divine intelligence could inform it. The chief seat and subject of the divine government is in the soul of man: but now nothing less than an omniscient Being can take cognizance of all the thoughts and affections, of all the purposes:

And his partaking both of the divine and human nature, 1. See God's account.

<sup>u</sup> Scott's Mediator. <sup>w</sup> Les Oeuvres posth. de M. Claude, Tom. ii. <sup>x</sup> Ibid. <sup>y</sup> Scott's Mediator. <sup>z</sup> Ibid.

poses and resolutions that are secretly transacted there, in order to reward or punish them: nothing less than an omnipotent power can order and dispose of all those outward accidents, whereby these thoughts and affections, these purposes and resolutions are in a great measure framed and regulated. To over-rule and manage such infinite numbers of events as concern such infinite numbers of men, so vastly distant from one another in place, condition and temper, requires a power that can do whatsoever it pleases both in heaven and earth: and therefore, since our blessed Saviour was appointed to this office, he could in no sense have been qualified to perform it, without partaking of the perfections of the divine nature, and being in reality what the evangelical prophet, speaking of his government, styles him, <sup>b</sup> Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

AND as, to qualify him for this high office of mediating with God for men, it was most fit that he should be God; so was it no less requisite that he should be man. God, we know, is an invisible spirit, and living in light that is inaccessible, can only be approached by our imaginations; and our imaginations are generally so gross and sensual that they cannot perceive spiritual objects, and therefore often form such misconceptions of God as incline them to idolatry. In condescension therefore to this deplorable weakness of their minds, God has all along vouchsafed to converse with mankind under some sensible appearance of his divine presence. When he conducted his chosen people through the Red-sea and the wilderness, he went before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; when he gave them the law from mount Sinai, he descended in a bright and glorious flame, overcast with thick and solemn clouds; and, as soon as the tabernacle was erected, in this appearance he made his entrance into it, and, there constantly residing, did often exhibit himself to the people's eyes and senses, in a body of visible light and glory. In allusion to this condescension to the Jews, St John, in the beginning of his gospel, tells us that <sup>c</sup> the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, or (as the original signifies) pitched his tabernacle in our flesh and nature, from whence we beheld his glory (viz. at his baptism and transfiguration) as the glory of the only begotten of the Father; or as the glory wherein the Son of God was wont to display himself from between two cherubims. Since therefore, in compliance with our weakness, it was requisite that God should address to our sense in some visible appearance; and since, upon many accounts, there was no visible appearance, so proper for this purpose as that of human nature; it must evidently follow from hence, how necessary it was that he should assume our nature to his Deity, that so they, whose conceptions could

<sup>a</sup> Psal. cxxxv. 6. <sup>b</sup> Isa ix. 6. <sup>c</sup> John i. 14.

could reach no farther than a visible emblem of God, & might have one to whom they might pay divine worship, without danger of idolatry, and without injury to the divine nature; even a true and natural image of God the Father, the fountain of the Deity, or (as the apostle to the Hebrews describes the Son of God) the resplendency, or & brightness of his Father's glory, and the express character, or image of his person.

IN mediating for men with God there were two things (as we shall have occasion to shew hereafter) that were requisite for him to do: 1. To make atonement for our sins with his blood; and, 2. To make intercession for us in heaven. <sup>2. On man's</sup> 1. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood (as the apostle argues in the former case) he also himself took part of the same, that, through death, he might destroy him who hath the power of death, that is, the devil. <sup>2</sup> His divine nature is purely impassible; and therefore, to make him capable of suffering, some other nature was to be assumed, and the human rather than any other, that sin might be expiated in the same nature wherein it was committed: but then the divine nature was still to be retained, to make his sufferings sufficiently meritorious, both to satisfy the divine justice for what was past, and to secure the divine authority for the future: and accordingly we are said to be <sup>3</sup> purchased with the blood of God; not that the divine essence can any way suffer, or bleed, but, being united into one person with the human nature, the properties of the human, and the actions and passions thence proceeding, may not unfitly be attributed to the divine. And therefore, since in the person of Christ, God was united to man, whatever his humanity suffered may be truly called the Suffering of God; and, in this sense, was a suffering equivalent to the eternal punishment of the whole world of sinners.

BUT, 2dly, as he was to be our advocate and intercessor in all things, <sup>4</sup> it behoved him (as the apostle argues again) to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. The sensible experience he had of the weakness and infirmity of our nature, while he was among us, will make him more nearly concerned, and more tenderly touched with compassion for it; and consequently, solicit its cause and interest, at the right hand of God, with greater zeal and importunity. But then, to make his solicitations available, it was requisite that he should retain his divine nature, thereby to preserve his interest in the court of heaven, that we, in his name might, at all

<sup>d</sup> Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. <sup>e</sup> Heb. i. 3. <sup>f</sup> Ibid. ii. 14. <sup>g</sup> Scott's Mediator, and Les Oeuvres posth. de M. Claude, Tom. ii. <sup>h</sup> Acts xx. 28. <sup>i</sup> Heb. ii. 17, 18.

all times, \* come boldly to the throne of grace, and find favour and † acceptance in the Beloved.

Thus, to qualify Christ for the several parts and offices of his mediation, it was highly expedient that he should be both God and man in one person. \* To discharge his prophetic office, he must be God, that he might deliver his rules and doctrines with more authority and efficacy than any mere creature could; and he must be man, that he might more familiarly converse with us, and convey the counsels of God in such a manner as man could receive. To discharge his priestly office, both of expiation and intercession; he must be man, to make him capable of suffering; and God, to make his sufferings meritorious; man, to make him intercede with compassion to us; and God, to give him credit above, and make his intercessions prevalent: and to discharge his kingly office, he must be God, to appoint us laws; and man, to go before us in obeying them; God, to conquer and subdue our enemies: and man, to encourage us in our spiritual warfare by his example: for so the apostle tells us, \* that it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings.

The several offices of Christ's mediatorship.

THE wants which the world laboured under before the coming of Christ were chiefly these,—The want of a sufficient teacher to instruct them in the will of God, for which reason he was sent as a prophet; the want of a sufficient sacrifice and intercessor with God, for which reason he was constituted a priest; and the want of a conquerer to subdue their enemies, and a law-giver to direct their obedience, for which reason he was appointed a king: and how excellently fitted and accomplished he was for these several offices, as well as how fully and effectually he has discharged them, we shall now endeavour to make appear.

A Prophet.

I. **THOUGH** the word *prophet*, according to its common acceptance, denotes one who foretels future events, yet, in a strict etymology, it signifies no more than a person who speaks from, or ° in the stead of another: and when that other is God, it means one † that expounds and makes known his will to us by a divine revelation. How well fitted and accomplished our blessed Saviour was for this purpose, the holy evangelist has taken care to inform us; ° No man, saith he, has seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And indeed his being in the bosom

k Heb. iv. 16. l Eph. i. 6. m Bate's Harmony. n Heb. ii. 10. ° In which sense the preposition *pro*, is the same in composition with *hypo*. Thus God said to Moses, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet, *i. e.* he shall be thy mouth, to deliver to Pharaoh what I shall deliver to thee. Exod. vii. 1. p In this sense the poets were antiently called the Prophets of the Muses; and St Paul, quoting a passage out of Epimenides (Tit. i. 12) calls him a Prophet, though, if we may credit Aristotle, *ou periton esomason manteia*, he never prophesied of things to come. Khet Lib. iii. c. 17. q John i. 18.



bosom of the Father, *i. e.* his being so near and intimate to him, did perfectly qualify him to reveal his will to mankind, because, in that nearness and intimacy, he could not but have a perfect knowledge of him; not by the instruction of angels, or by dreams and visions, as other prophets had: nay, nor merely by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, but by an immediate personal intuition of his Father's thoughts and purposes, which, from all eternity, were exposed to his view and prospect. † No man hath ascended up to heaven (says the same evangelist in another place) but he that came down from HEAVEN, even the Son of man: † he might have come down from heaven inrobed with splendor and light, and preached his gospel to the world in the midst of a choir of angels from some bright throne in the clouds; but, as he consulted our advantage, more than his own Majesty, he knew very well that it would be more for our interest to conduct us by his example, than to amaze us by his appearance: and therefore he chose to appear to us in our own nature, that so, by going before as a man he might, by his example, shew us what it became men to do, and trace out the way of happiness to us by the print of his own footsteps. † Thus coming from the bosom of his Father with a full and perfect knowledge of his will, and coming in the form of the Son of man, to make his addresses easy and familiar to us, as well as conduct us by his example, he was every way accomplished for the prophetic office; and how well and effectually he has executed the same, we may best perceive, by considering the excellency of the revelation he has left us, in respect of the things necessary to be known and practised, in order to our salvation.

1. THE things necessary for us to know are, the nature of God and his attributes; the original and demerit of our sins; the way of atoning for them; and the methods of our being justified and sanctified here in this world, in order to be glorified in the world to come. † That there is a God, and that there is but one God; that the only one God is incorporeal, invisible, immortal, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, of infinite justice, wisdom, and goodness, the maker of heaven and earth, the supreme governor of the world, and of all things therein, and a gracious rewarder of those that seek him, is absolutely necessary to be known by all who would attain eternal life; and it cannot be doubted but that the faithful, from the beginning, had this knowledge of God: but then, before the coming of Christ, they had not so certain, so clear, and so distinct a knowledge of these things as we have now under the gospel. For, over and above the knowledge of these things, which the pious before Moses had, either from a serious contemplation of the works of God, or from the tradition and instruction of the patriarchs, and which the Jews, in succeeding ages, had from the writings

The excellency of Christ's doctrines, in relation to what we are to know concerning the nature of God.

writings of Moses and the prophets; we christians have a more clear, more distinct, and evident manifestation thereof from the books of the evangelists and apostles. What was obscurely delivered, and hidden under a veil in the Old Testament, is discovered openly, and placed in a full light by the New.

THE doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity may perhaps, by learned men, be traced, and some obscure footsteps thereof discerned in the writings of Moses and the prophets; but it is so legibly written, and so clearly and plainly expressed in the writings of the apostles, that there is no need of learning to discover its being taught therein, though a great deal of learning (falsely so called) has been used to puzzle and perplex, and, by nice and metaphysical distinctions, to obscure the truths that are there plainly and expressly delivered. The faithful, under the Jewish dispensation (not to mention the wisest among the Gentiles) did, without doubt, believe God to be an invisible, and omnipresent Spirit; and yet his frequent appearances, sometimes under one resemblance, and sometimes under another; the building of an ark, a tabernacle, and temple, whither he was pleased to call his people together into his immediate presence, and to talk with them (as <sup>u</sup> Moses expresses it) face to face, must necessarily turn their eyes and minds towards the mercy-seat; make them apprehend God shut up, as it were, within the holy of holies, and consequently, perplex and obscure their notions of his spirituality and omnipresence: whereas there is no room now, under the gospel, for any gross conceptions of the Deity, when we are not called upon to turn our eyes towards a visible tabernacle, but <sup>\*</sup> to pray every where, in any place, lifting up holy hands; and are taught by Christ, <sup>x</sup> that God is a Spirit, and that they who worship him, must worship him in spirit, and in truth. The philosophers of old, as well as the believers under the law, were persuaded that all things were ordered and governed by an all-wise and all-powerful Being; and yet the most sagacious of them were not able to account for the justice of divine providence, in suffering the wicked to prosper, and the righteous to be afflicted. But now, this difficulty every common christian is able to solve, by the help of what he has learned from the gospel, concerning the retributions of a future state; and can apply to all such cases the reflection made by Abraham on the rich man's desire of some relief from Lazarus, <sup>y</sup> Son, remember that thou, in thy life-time, receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

The nature  
of sin.

2. THE nature and obliquity of sin is, what men, in all ages, could not but perceive; but, how to account for its cause and origin they were at a strange loss: and therefore some imagined a pre-existent state, from whence they brought depravity along with

<sup>u</sup> Deut. v. 4. <sup>\*</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 1. <sup>x</sup> John iv. 24. <sup>y</sup> Luke xvi. 25.

with them, while others devised two contrary principles, equally actuating the world, the one the author of all the good, and the other of all the evil they did. \* The wickedness of man (as Moses tells us) was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was evil continually; but whether these expressions are to be extended to the whole race of mankind, and so are a proof of the general depravation, has been doubted by some; whereas all such doubts must now be silenced by the plain assertions of the New Testament, that † by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so that † by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; that all who are of the race of mankind are sinners, ungodly, enemies of God, children of the devil, and by † nature the children of wrath; that † when they would do good, evil is present with them, having a law in their members warring against the law of their mind, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin; and that this is the state of depraved nature wherein men are born, and wherein those that live and die shall † be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

3. AND as the gospel gives us a more distinct account of the origin and demerit of sin, so does it furnish us with a clearer discovery of the method whereby the guilt of it is atoned. Those who lived under the law of nature, as well as those who lived under the Mosaic dispensation, were saved by the same means of redemption as we who live under the evangelical; but the mystery of our common redemption was not, in any degree, so fully manifested to them as it is to us; and hence it is that the apostle compares the writings of the Old Testament (which yet far exceeded those of the greatest sages in the heathen world (to a † light) or (as the original is) to a candle shining in a dark place; but the revelation which was made by Christ in the gospel, to the day-dawn, and the day-star arising in our hearts. The revelation made to the Jews was to them a light, but a faint one; it shone, but in a dark place. The nativity, life, and death of Christ, the several offices of his mediatorship, the remission of our sins through his blood, the sanctification of our hearts by his Spirit, and the glories of the world to come were taught them, not in words at length, but in figures; and a dark veil was over the writings, as well as over † the face of Moses, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold his doctrine any more than they could his countenance. In a word, † they were saved, as well as we, by the blood of Christ; but there was as great a difference between their knowledge of the mystery of our redemption by the sacrifice of the death of

Its atone-  
ment.

VOL. II.

E e e

Christ

z Gen. vi. 5. † Rom. v. 12. a Ibid. ver. 18. b Eph. ii. 3. c Rom. vii. 21. 23. d 2 Thess. i. 9. e 2 Pet. i. 19. f 2 Cor. iii. 7. g Smalridge's Sermons.

Christ and ours, as there was between that dark cloud, where-with God led the people at one time, and that pillar of light, wherewith he guided them at another.

Our justifi-  
cation.

4. AND as the gospel gives us clearer notions of the expiation of sin, so does it exhibit a fuller assurance of our being justified, or having our sins pardoned thereby. Religious persons, who lived before the coming of Christ, knew that they were sinners, and that they therefore had need of the favour and mercy of God for the remission of their sins; but then, being not sufficiently instructed in the method of obtaining God's favour, they could not but groan sorely under the weight of them. Severe curses were denounced in the law against all who should in any case transgress it; these curses were plain and easy to be understood; but the promises of a pardon, through the merits of a Saviour, were more intricate and involved: when therefore the danger which threatened them was so apparent, and the methods of their escape so obscurely notified to them, it is no wonder if their fears did very much over-balance their hopes. Hence it is that the Spirit, by which they were governed, is in the gospel represented as a Spirit of Bondage, but the Spirit by which we christians are influenced, is a Spirit of Adoption: <sup>b</sup> Ye have not now, says the apostle, received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry ABBA, FATHER, *i. e.* whereby we are as well assured of the love of God as a child is of the affection of an indulgent father; as surely entitled to the joys of heaven as an adopted son is to the inheritance of him who therefore adopted him, that he might make him his heir; for (as the apostle goes on to display the privileges of the christian) the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

And future  
glory.

5. AND as the assurances given us of this inheritance are greater; so, lastly, is the inheritance itself much more plainly revealed to us in the gospel than ever it was before. Whatever could be learned of a future state from the light of reason, that, and much more was known to the Jews: what, by reason, and by revelation was made known to the Jews, concerning an immortal life, that, and much more is revealed to us christians. The texts, in which a future state is revealed to the Jews are few, and here and there thinly scattered in some particular books of the Old Testament; but there is no one book, scarce one chapter, in which this doctrine is not taught in the New. Those in the Old Testament are not so clear of ambiguity, but that they are capable of another interpretation, and even are actually interpreted of temporal promises by some pious and learned christians; those in the New are so clear, that there is no room for the most ignorant to misapprehend, or the most impious

<sup>b</sup> Rom. viii. 15, &c.

impious to pervert them. Some in the Old Testament seem not more clearly to assert an immortal life, than others do to deny it; and even the same writer sometimes delivers things upon this head, which, at first view, appear to be inconsistent; but, as a future state of happiness and misery is supported by many more texts in the gospel, and those much more clear than in the law: so can it not be pretended, that it is in the least impugned by any suspicious passage through the whole New Testament; and therefore it is with great justice that the author of the epistle to the Hebrews (who himself was excellently well versed in the knowledge of the Jewish law) hath observed, that <sup>1</sup> the law had only a shadow of good things to come, but not the very image of the things; *i. e.* it did, but obscurely and faintly, typify the glories of heaven; not give us so bright an image, and so lively a representation of the rewards of another world, as is pictured out to us, and, in all its full proportion and lineaments, accurately described in the gospel; wherein the <sup>2</sup> mystery (as the apostle words it) which hath been hid from all ages, and from generations, God hath now made manifest to his saints.

THESE are some of the pre-eminences of the christian revelation, in what we are to know; and, if we proceed now to the consideration of what we are to do, we shall perceive the like excellency and perfection in it. For, **I.** with relation to God, the full discovery which the gospel has made of his nature and attributes <sup>3</sup> teacheth us to place the true and acceptable worship of him, not so much in positive and ritual observances, as in approaching him with pure hearts, and undefiled bodies, with unfeigned repentance for all past miscarriages, and sincere resolutions of constant obedience for the future; teacheth us to pray to him for every thing we want, and to return him our most hearty thanks for every good thing we receive with such submission and humility, such trust and reliance on him as are the proper affections of dutiful children. All the great men among the heathens were defective in point of piety, by reason of their ignorance of the divine nature: <sup>4</sup> even Aristotle, who was so clear-sighted in other matters, when he comes to discourse of God, not only in his physics, where he considers him as the first cause and mover of all things, but even in his morals, where he was naturally led to treat of him as an object deserving our most ardent love and affection, is far from making any such representation of him, though the love of God is that alone which gives price and value to all moral virtues. In the Platonic philosophy indeed, there are some things that have a tendency this way; but then they are so frigidly, and so obscurely expressed, that, like the inscription on an antient defaced marble, they are hardly legible: it is the singular character of the gospel,

The excellency of Christ's doctrine, in relation to what we are to do in our duty to God.

and

<sup>1</sup> Heb. x. 1. <sup>2</sup> Col. i. 26. <sup>3</sup> Clarke on the Being and Attributes. <sup>4</sup> Bacon's Harmony.

and what distinguishes it from all human institutions, that it represents the infinite amiableness of God, and his manifold goodness to us in such a manner as to excite our affections, and enliven our devotions with the most seraphic love. For who can refuse the oblation of his whole heart to God, who considers that <sup>a</sup> God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son everlastingly to save it; or who <sup>b</sup> beholds what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God? Thus a spiritual and internal service, proceeding from a principle of love, and terminating in the glory of God, it becomes the duty of a christian; though an heathen, or Jewish worshipper might be excused, if moved by no higher principle than fear and the dread of punishment, they intended no more than a bare performance of outward ceremonies in God's service.

Our duty  
to our  
neighbour.

2. WITH relation to our neighbour, the notice which the gospel gives us of his near relation to us; that we are not only sprung from the same original, and partakers of the same nature, but are admitted into the same fellowship, and partakers of the same grace; that, <sup>c</sup> by one Spirit, we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentile, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit; and that, <sup>d</sup> as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another: the strict union, I say, which the gospel discovers, in making us all members of one and the same body, whereof Christ is the head, plainly teaches us what endeavouring love and sympathy should interfere between christians; that, <sup>e</sup> as when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or, when one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it; so should we <sup>f</sup> be kindly affectionate one to another; rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep; <sup>g</sup> be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, <sup>h</sup> that there be no schism in the body, but contrariwise blessing; being ready to assist, and willing to do good offices, not only to friends, but even to our bitterest enemies; though such instances of kindness and condescension to people bred up under a severer dispensation, where revenge was held glorious, and retaliations tolerated, might seem marks of an abject spirit, and imprudent provocation of future affronts.

Our duty  
to our-  
selves.

3. WITH relation to ourselves, the knowledge which the gospel gives us of the tendency of our nature, <sup>i</sup> that, notwithstanding the near union and commerce that is between soul and body, there are no two in the world at such enmity one with another,

<sup>a</sup> John iii. 16. <sup>b</sup> 1 John iii. 1. <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 13. <sup>d</sup> Rom. xii. 4, 5. <sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 26. <sup>f</sup> Rom. xii. 10, 15. <sup>g</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9. <sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 25. <sup>i</sup> Young's Sermons, Vol. I.

another, none that drive on such quite different interest as they ; that all our fleshly lusts are an army that war against the soul, and the speediest way to ruin is to hearken to the whispers of our own bosom ; this knowledge of ourselves, I say, teacheth us that humiliation and poverty of spirit, the mortification of our passions and inclinations ; and in order thereunto, such voluntary restraints and inflictions as the gospel calls Taking up the Cross, are necessary parts of a christian's duty, though they never came into the catalogue of heathen virtues. And, lastly, the knowledge which the gospel gives us of the world ; that it is but a passage, and not a place of abode ; that here we are strangers and pilgrims, and must therefore expect cross accidents, and not every thing accommodated to our liking ; that we are designed for an happier country, and must therefore look upon this as a place of exercise rather than enjoyment ; that our chief interest is not here, but above, and therefore the love of the world must needs be enmity with God ; because to place our affections here, is to vilify that better provision which he hath made for us : this representation, I say, which the gospel gives us of the world, teacheth us that patience under our greatest sufferings, and abstinence even in the most lawful pleasures ; that heavenly-mindedness, and contempt of the world, and chusing rather to die than commit a moral evil, are the necessary offices of a christian, though a Jew might have been excused, if he had looked upon them as indiscretions.

IN a word, \* the rules which Christ has left us for the direction of our religious services, for the governing our passions, for suppressing the first motions of unclean desires, for putting up injuries, for enlarging the object of our charity to strangers, to enemies, to all mankind ; the commands, so often repeated, of forsaking all, and laying down our life for the sake of truth and our duty, and the restraining his followers from some liberties ; allowed the Jews, in regard to polygamy and divorce : these, and some other instances have not undeservedly been thought commands perfectly new, and peculiar to the gospel. But suppose they are contained in the old moral law, yet this must be allowed, that the advantage is very great in the gospel-promulgation of them : for, since the constituent parts of a law are its precepts, and its sanction, there is no doubt to be made, but that one law may excel another, in either, or in both these respects. In respect of the former, the law that is full, and clear, and express, is confessedly more perfect than one that is dark, and perplexed, and involved in general terms, which leave men to find out the measure of their duty by remote consequences : and, in respect of the latter, a law is more or less perfect according to the encouragement it proposes to the observation, or the penalty it threatens to the transgression of it. Since then

Its excellency above the old moral law.

\* Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

then the moral law has, under the christian state, explained mens duty more fully, and if not extended it farther, yet expressed it in its just and utmost extent; since it has cut off all evasions from pretended ignorance in many cases of great importance, which neither the common people, nor even the teachers of the Jews held themselves obliged to before; since it engages our utmost diligence, by express promises of eternal life, which the law, under the old æconomy, did no where positively covenant for; since it restrains the sinner by threatenings of certain and eternal vengeance, whereas the other denounced only temporal sufferings; in a word, since the gospel-compensation is an over-balance for all we can do, or endure, to attain it; and the gospel-penalty such, as no pleasure or present profit can make us amends for incurring it; but the law, supposing it to require all that the gospel requires (as dying for religion in particular) does not propose a valuable consideration for the duties it enjoins; it cannot but be granted that the moral law is exalted by Jesus and his doctrine; and that, either by adding to the matter of it, or, at least, by adding to the clearness and strength, to the efficacy and obligation of it, he hath left it a more perfect rule and motive of obedience than he found it at his coming.

Christ's second mediatorial office.

2 Priest.

II. THE second branch of Christ's mediatorial office is his priesthood, whereby he becomes both our atonement for sin and our advocate with Almighty God. In the first ages of the world, it cannot be denied but that, in matters which concerned himself alone, every one was his own priest. Thus, in sacrificing to God upon their own accounts, <sup>1</sup> Cain and Abel officiated for themselves; but, in sacrifices of a more general nature, <sup>2</sup> the instances of Noah and \* Job make it manifest that the father of each family was the priest. In process of time, when families began to multiply into tribes and greater societies, the prince of each country was also the supreme priest of it; so that <sup>3</sup> the sacerdotal honour was, for a long while, annexed to the regal. In the days of Abraham we find that Melchisedec was both <sup>4</sup> the king of Salem, and the priest of the most high God; and the reason why the sacred history takes notice of him more especially

<sup>1</sup> Gen. iv. 3, 4. <sup>2</sup> Ibid. viii. 20. \* Job i. 5. <sup>3</sup> Thus Aristotle has observed, that *monarchein kai hieratousin*, to rule and sacrifice were offices conjoined in the same person, Pol. Lib. iii. Rex anius, rex idem hominum phœbique sacerdos, is a line of Virgil, (Æn. iii.) whereupon Servius has this note, Sane majorum hæc erat consuetudo, ut rex esset etiam sacerdos vel pontifex. Which custom was, for a long while, continued in Egypt, and from thence derived to the Greeks, and from them to the Romans, as Plutarch (Quæst. Rom. p. 279.) tells us, *To palaiou hez basileis ta pleijta kai malijta toon hieroon edroon*, &c. *i. e.* of old, kings performed the most and greatest parts of the sacred rites, and, together with the priests, sacrificed the victims, &c. and therefore Dionysius Halicarn speaking of the power of kings, tells us expressly, *Prooton men hierousu kai thyjtoon hegemonian eseban* &c. *i. e.* They had the government of sacrifices and sacred rites, whatsoever was to be done to the holy gods was done by them. <sup>4</sup> Heb. vii. 1.



cially is not because he was the only person invested with this double character, but because all other kings that were contemporary with him had very probably revolted to idolatry, so that he only remained the priest of the most high God.

WHO this Melchisedec was, and in what sense those characters are to be taken, wherein the author to the Hebrews has described him, in order to make his priesthood a more perfect type of Christ's, is what we had occasion to take notice of before; and need only observe farther, wherein the main difference between the Aaronical and Melchisedecal priesthood (which was prefigurative of that of Christ) may not improperly be said to consist. The conjunction of the two offices of king and priest in one person was undoubtedly continued until the time of Moses; for we find that prince and law-giver of Israel officiating likewise as their priest in the solemn sacrifice at the foot of mount Horeb, whereby he confirmed the covenant between God and them. It is very probable therefore, that the first separation which was ever made of these two offices was in the person of Aaron, whom God appointed to the priesthood, but without any regal power, and ordered it so to continue successively in his family. During this separation none could be a priest of the Aaronical order, but such as were descended from his loins. Our Saviour therefore, being sprung, not from the house of Aaron, but from that of Judah, which was the royal line, could not be of the Aaronical order; but, re-assuming the priestly office from the tribe of Aaron, and rejoining it to the kingly office, with which it was originally united, he therefore became a royal priest, after the antient order of Melchisedec, which was prior to that of Aaron. The difference therefore between the Aaronical and Melchisedecal priesthood does not, as some imagine, consist in the nature of their sacrifices, as if Melchisedec had sacrificed only inanimate things, whereas Aaron sacrificed animals: their sacrifices, in this respect, were certainly both alike; otherwise how could Aaron's bloody sacrifices be typical of our Saviour's priesthood (which was after the order of Melchisedec) if Melchisedec's priesthood admitted of no bloody sacrifices? And therefore the true difference between the two orders was this—That, whereas the regal power was united to Melchisedec's priesthood, it was wholly separate from Aaron's, who, in all probability, was the first high-priest in the world, that was not a king, as well as a priest.

THE author to the Hebrews has made use of several instances thereby to shew both the difference and similitude between the priesthood of Christ, and that of the house of Aaron. They differ in that the latter was reposed in the hands of frail men; was destitute of all regal power; designed for no long continuance; and incapable of making any effectual atonement for sin,

The difference between the priesthood of Aaron and that of Melchisedec.

Wherein the priesthood of Aaron and that of Christ both differ and agree.

sin, and was therefore obliged to repeat every day such sacrifices as were only available to the purifying of the flesh : whereas the former was committed to the administration of the Son of God ; was invested with sovereign power and dignity ; was effectual to expiation of all kinds of sin ; and designed to abide as long as the sun and moon endures, &c. but herein they agree ; that, whereas every high-priest is ordained for men, in things pertaining to God, *i. e.* to avert his anger, and obtain his favour and blessings for them ; there are two more eminent acts whereunto they were both appointed : first, to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people ; and then, secondly, to present such sacrifices to God in order to make intercession for them. To this purpose we read that the high-priest under the law (especially on the great day of expiation, when he stood in his nearest resemblance of Christ acting in his sacerdotal capacity) was appointed to bring the beast which was set apart to die for the sins of the people, to the door of the tabernacle, and there to kill it with his own hands ; after which he was to take the blood of it, and, presenting it before the Lord in the holy of holies, was to sprinkle it seven times with his finger upon and before the mercy-seat ; both which offices the author to the Hebrews plainly ascribes to our blessed Saviour, and makes them typical of what he did ; for <sup>2</sup> Christ, says he, being come an high-priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building ; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

The necessity of Christ's priesthood as to sacrifice.

THAT sacrifices are acts of religion addressed to God ; <sup>h</sup> that they were of different kinds, and designed for different purposes ; some as decent tributes and significations of gratitude due to the divine bounty for benefits already received ; others, as atonements for offences committed, to avert that displeasure and punishment to which men, conscious of their guilt, apprehended themselves liable ; all as means judged proper for procuring favour and blessing from the fountain of all goodness ; are truths so manifest, and so universally allowed, as not to need either proof or enlargement. Whence the practice of expiating sin by sacrifice had its first rise, whether from human discourse, or (what seems more probable) from divine institution, and was afterwards propagated from age to age by tradition, is no part of our present business to inquire. That the wages of sin is death, and that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin ; these two notions (whence soever they came into the minds of men) seem to have suggested the rite of offering up living sacrifices at first. Sadly sensible they were that they had sinned ; their lives they knew they had forfeited by their sin ; <sup>i</sup> but

<sup>g</sup> Heb. ix. 11, 12. <sup>h</sup> Staupole's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

but how to redeem them and appease the wrath of God, this they were ignorant of. The best expedient that could be thought on in this exigence was the sacrificing brutes, and substituting one life in the room of another: but alas! this would not do: for what proportion is there between the momentary sufferings of a beast, and the eternal sufferings which are due to sin? The death of a beast is a punishment far short of the death of a man, but infinitely short of that eternal death to which a man's sinfulness consigns him. And therefore the heathens finding the imperfection of these sacrifices, in cases of great extremity, and where they had highly offended God indeed, were accustomed to sacrifice men. But here likewise they were miserably mistaken: they never considered that the men whom they offered were sinners as well as themselves, and that it was a greater flaw in an expiatory sacrifice to be a sinner than to be a brute.

AND as mankind before the coming of Christ stood in need of a sufficient sacrifice, so wanted they no less a powerful advocate, to whom they might address, and by whom they might find access to the most high God. For this was the natural effect of sin in all ages, that it, filling mens minds with dreadful apprehensions of God, and making them afraid to approach him of themselves, <sup>k</sup> drove them to the necessity either of giving off all intercourse with him, or of finding out some other to make intercession for them; and this seems to have given rise to the first institution of demon-worship among the Gentiles. Their minds were so stung with the sense and remembrance of their guilt, that they could not approach God without horror and anxiety; and thereupon they cast about to find out other beings that might interpose with him on their account: and being informed by tradition that there were certain middle beings between God and man, called Angels or Demons; these they addressed with petitions and bribed with sacrifices, to use what interest they had with the supreme God in their favour. However this be, it is certain that the Jews, who had no explicit revelation of a mediator, were always tremulous in their approaches to God, and whenever they had gone astray, diffident of their reception to mercy; which is the best reason that can be given why we meet with so many melancholy expostulations from them, Wilt thou be angry for ever? Hast thou forgotten to be gracious? Wilt thou turn away thy face for ever, and remember thy loving kindness no more? Thus destitute was the world both of a sufficient atonement for sin, and of a competent advocate with God, till Christ, whose divine nature derived an infinite value upon the oblation, and whose oblation gives infinite power and efficacy to all his requests, <sup>l</sup> appeared in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of him-

And as to  
interces-  
sion.

self, and is now at the right hand of God making daily intercession for us. These are the great acts of his sacerdotal office: and how well he has quitted himself herein, we shall now endeavour to evince by considering,

I. THE nature and extent of the sacrifice he once offered: And,

II. THE manner and efficacy of the intercession he now makes.

Christ's  
death a  
real sacri-  
fice for sin.

I. THAT the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was really intended to be a sacrifice for sin, in order to pacify the divine wrath, and satisfy the divine justice, is manifest from those various texts in scripture, wherein we are told that <sup>m</sup> he was made an offering for sin, and <sup>n</sup> brought as a lamb to the slaughter; that <sup>o</sup> he is the lamb which taketh away the sins of the world, and <sup>p</sup> who gave his life a ransom for all; <sup>q</sup> that God sent him to be a propitiation for our sins, gave him <sup>r</sup> this commandment to lay down his life, and that <sup>s</sup> he loving us, and giving himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God, <sup>t</sup> by his death we have remission of our sins, and reconciliation with God. That Christ, this expiatory sacrifice, was substituted in our room, to undergo the punishment which we, by our offences, had incurred, is plain from sundry declarations both in the Old and New Testament, that <sup>u</sup> he was cut off, but not for himself; that <sup>v</sup> he bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows; was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; <sup>w</sup> was made sin and a curse for us; <sup>x</sup> suffered for the unjust, died for the ungodly, was offered to bear the sins of many, and <sup>y</sup> tasted death for every man; that <sup>z</sup> through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage: and that this sacrifice of ours was allowed and accepted of by God as a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, is apparent from all those places wherein we are reminded of the blessed effects of his passion, viz. <sup>a</sup> to finish transgression, and make an end of sin; to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness; wherein we are told that <sup>b</sup> the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed; that <sup>c</sup> we are reconciled to the Father in his cross, and in the body of his flesh through death; that <sup>d</sup> we are sanctified by the offering of his body once for all, and <sup>e</sup> are redeemed with his blood, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot. For such is the excellence of our high-priest; that whereas <sup>f</sup> every priest, under the law, standeth daily min-  
nistring

<sup>m</sup> Isa. liii. 10. <sup>n</sup> Ibid. ver. 7. <sup>o</sup> John i. 29. <sup>p</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 6. <sup>q</sup> 1 John iv. 10. <sup>r</sup> John x. 17, 18. <sup>s</sup> Eph. v. 2. <sup>t</sup> Rom. v. 10. <sup>u</sup> Dan. ix. 26. <sup>v</sup> Isa. liii. 4, 5. <sup>w</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. <sup>x</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 18. Heb. ix. 28. <sup>y</sup> Heb. ii. 9. <sup>z</sup> Ibid. ver. 14. <sup>a</sup> Dan. ix. 24. <sup>b</sup> Isa. liii. 5. <sup>c</sup> Col. i. 21, 22. <sup>d</sup> Heb. x. 10. <sup>e</sup> 1 Pet. i. 19. <sup>f</sup> Heb. x. 11, &c.

nistring and offering, oftentimes, the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; he, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, in token of God's acceptance of it, for ever sat down on the right hand of God: for, by one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

IN these and many more passages which lie dispersed in all the parts of the holy scriptures, it is as plain as words can make any thing <sup>h</sup> that the death of Christ is proposed to us, not only as a pattern of holy and patient suffering, but as our sacrifice and reconciliation, our atonement and redemption. And to confirm us in the truth of this, as well as to illustrate the force and energy of some of these expressions, which allude so plainly to the manner of sacrificing under the law, we must observe,

1. That in all sacrifices of beasts, the owner laid his hand <sup>i</sup> upon the head of them, not only to signify the property he had in them, but to intimate likewise the translation of his sin and guilt upon them; more especially <sup>k</sup> in the case of the scape-goat, the priest, as the peoples representative, lays his hands upon its head, and confessing their iniquities over it, is said to put them upon it, and sends it away, supposed to be polluted therewith, into the wilderness.
2. That the bodies of those beasts, which were offered with the greatest solemnity, were burnt without the camp, during the service of the tabernacle; and without the <sup>l</sup> gate of Jerusalem, after the building of the temple: and that they conveyed a legal impurity to those that touched them, as being in the eye of the law charged with their sins, in whose behalf they were offered.
3. <sup>m</sup> That all solemn offerings were necessarily to be performed by the priests, as a branch of their sacerdotal function; and on the great day of atonement, even the most servile offices of this kind lay upon the high-priest alone.
4. That in all sin-offerings for the people, the priests were to carry the blood within the sanctuary, and sprinkle it seven times before the veil of the sanctuary; but, on the day of expiation, the high-priest only was to carry it into the holy of holies, and there sprinkle it seven times before the mercy-seat.
- And, 5. That the use of blood in common food was therefore prohibited the Jews, because it was appropriated to God's service; <sup>n</sup> for the life of the flesh, says God, is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

• THESE few observations, carried along with us, will, in some measure, be a key to let us into the propriety and just importance of many phrases and scripture-passages. By these we may plainly discover the mighty force and elegance of the prophetic

Some observations upon the customs in sacrificing under the law.

Their use in the explanation of some scripture-passages

<sup>h</sup> Burnet on the Articles. <sup>i</sup> Lev. i. 4. Ch. iii. 2, 8, 10. <sup>k</sup> Lev. xvi. 21. 22. <sup>l</sup> Ibid. vi. 11. <sup>m</sup> Heb. v. 1. <sup>n</sup> Lev. xvii. 11. <sup>o</sup> Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

phetic stile, in which God is said to lay on Christ the iniquity of us all; and of the apostles expressing the same notion, when they tell us that he bore our sins, in his own body, on the tree; that he suffered without the gate, to the end that he might sanctify the people with his own blood; that God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that being a priest, he must of necessity have somewhat to offer, and therefore God prepared him a body, and that with his blood (which is therefore called the Blood of Sprinkling) he entered into the holy place (*i. e.* into heaven, the antitype of the holy of holies) having obtained eternal redemption for us. These, I say, are all of them terms of a peculiar energy; and being used to men who worshipped God by sacrifices, they could not, upon their own principles, but be understood to imply, that the same person who is thus declared to suffer and die for us, did not die only for our benefit, but in our stead; by a proper sacrificial substitution of his life for ours, and by taking upon himself the punishment of those iniquities which belonged to us. Nothing less than this fills the ideas of those terms of art, those phrases which are otherwise jejune and mean; but, in their proper sense and due extent, do prove his death, in the strictest sense of the word, to be a true peculiar sacrifice: a sacrifice \* whose merit and influence was not confined to the age in which it was offered, but had a retrospect to generations long since past and gone; for Christ is † the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance: and a sacrifice which looks forward to all generations yet unborn; for ‡ the promise (says St Peter) is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call; who is † become (as St Paul tells us) the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him, being able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

An objection against Christ's satisfaction.

Thus the whole tenor of the gospel (if we may be allowed to understand the propriety of its diction) testifies and proclaims aloud that the death of our blessed Saviour was really and truly a sacrifice, expiatory of sin, and satisfactory to divine justice. But here some may ask us, “ Why all this expence for the expiation of sin, when the thing might have been compassed at a much easier rate; Why such vast pains taken in the satisfaction of divine justice, when once for all, God might have passed an act of general indemnity, and cancelled the transgressions of all mankind at one word’s speaking? As he is the “ sovereign

p Isa. liii. 6. q 1 Pet. ii. 24. r Heb. xiii. 12. s 2 Cor. v. 21. t Heb. viii. and x. u Heb. xiii. 24. \* Stanhope’s Sermons at Boyle’s Lectures. z Heb. ix. 15. y Acts i. 39. z Heb. v. 9. chap. vii. 25.

“ sovereign Lord and master of the universe, he could have  
 “ forgiven the iniquities of his people without any penal ex-  
 “ actions; and it seems more consistent with the discoveries we  
 “ have of his goodness and clemency, so to have forgiven  
 “ them, than to have stood in need of any external motive to  
 “ oblige him. At least, if any compensation was requisite,  
 “ something of less moment (the sacrifices, for instance, ap-  
 “ pointed under the law, or sufferings of some good man, or  
 “ mighty angel) might have been deemed more proper and  
 “ convenient than the offering up of the Son of God, the most  
 “ innocent, and most excellent person that ever was; besides  
 “ the manifest incongruity of a Divine Person’s suffering for  
 “ the satisfaction of divine justice.”

Now though we presume not to limit the prerogative of the Fully an-  
swered. supreme governor of the universe, or to prescribe to the good-  
 ness or wisdom of a Being, infinite in all perfections, and shall  
 not therefore dispute whether God could not either remit sins  
 without any satisfaction at all, or accept any that he thought fit,  
 how mean and worthless soever in itself; yet considering God  
<sup>a</sup> (as he ought to be considered in the present case) in the quality  
 of a law-giver and judge, as it was most reasonable that, in the  
 first giving of the law, he should lay the strongest restraint upon  
 man for the prevention of sin; so is it no less reasonable, when  
 the command was broken by man’s rebellion, that the penalty  
 should be inflicted either on his person, according to the imme-  
 diate intent of the law, or that satisfaction, equivalent to the  
 offence, should be made, that the majesty and holiness of God  
 might appear in his justice.

<sup>b</sup> THE design of every wise governor is to contain men in  
 their duty, by enacting such laws as may be a rule for their  
 obedience, and enforcing those laws with such punishments as  
 shall render the breach of them terrible and exemplary, that all  
 may be deterred from doing the like, and that a just reverence  
 for the constitution may be maintained. To these purposes Al-  
 mighty God having made man immortal, gave him a law, the  
 transgression whereof he threatened with death, the most ter-  
 rible of all punishments. That law being broken by our first  
 parents, they, and in them, human nature became obnoxious to  
 the penalty of eternal death. To preserve his workmanship,  
 in so noble a part of the creation, from perishing, it pleased God  
 to accept of a vicarious punishment: but since he still continues  
 to rule us by laws, it was requisite that this vicarious punishment  
 should be such an one as might answer the above-mentioned ends  
 of government. <sup>c</sup> The life of the law depends upon the exe-  
 cution of it; for impunity occasions a contempt of justice, and,  
 by extenuating sin in the account of men, encourages the free  
 commission of it: if therefore God had proclaimed a general  
 pardon

<sup>a</sup> Bates’s Harmony. <sup>b</sup> Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels. <sup>c</sup> Bates, *ibid.*

pardon of sin to all mankind, without any testimony of his wrath and displeasure against it, how highly soever we may think of his generosity, yet certainly it would either reflect upon his wisdom, as if he had not upon just reasons made the offence and penalty inseparable; or upon his power, as if he were not able to vindicate his own authority; or upon the sacredness of his truth, if, after severe threatenings to the contrary, he should suffer the sinner at last to go unpunished.

The difference between temporal rulers and God.

SOME cases there are indeed, wherein the law-giver is obliged to dispense with the law (as when the sparing of an offender is more advantage to the state than his punishment) and when some are too mighty to be brought to justice, there is a superior tribunal, to which such offenders are obnoxious; and good magistrates, when, through weakness, they are forced to spare the guilty, refer them to God's judgment. But it is otherwise in the divine administration; for, as God is infinitely free from all necessity of compliance, so is there no exigence of government that requires any offender should escape his severity, nor any justice above his, to exact satisfaction of them. And therefore, as the majesty of his laws is more sacred than that of those which preserve earthly states, and ought to be more inviolable, it is reasonable to suppose, that (if even there were any other motives pleading for forgiveness) the holiness and justice of his nature, as well as regard to the sanction and veneration of his laws, would preponderate with him, to exact the penalty incurred by the violation of them, and to call out the guilty offender to execution.

The necessity of Christ's satisfaction.

THUS <sup>a</sup> to declare God's hatred against sin, which is essential to the perfection of his nature; to prevent the commission of sin by preserving in men an holy fear of offending; and to maintain the honour of God's laws, which would otherwise fall under contempt; it was expedient that the breach of his commands should not go unpunished. But then how or on whom this punishment was to be inflicted, is the question. The persons indeed, who were the offenders, were the prime objects of God's indignation; but then, in this method of proceeding, all mankind (for all had offended God) must have finally perished. By God's own appointment the sacrifice of beasts was instituted under the law; but, besides the imperfection of such atonements, what apprehension of divine vengeance, what terror, what example can there be in the death of a brute? <sup>a</sup> To see a creature die, when devoted to an holy use, will not much affect them who every day kill the like for their own sustenance and refreshment: to purchase pardon at so cheap a rate would be a means to encourage wickedness rather than produce a reformation; and the sense of divine majesty would not long continue, when so poor a matter as the life of a brute should

<sup>a</sup> Bate's Harmony. c Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II.



should come to be thought a sufficient reparation for the grossest affronts of it. A creature of less merit than the eternal Son of God may be supposed deputed to the office of making satisfaction for sin: but <sup>f</sup> admitting such a person to be not only innocent, but able likewise to bear the heavy wrath of God; yet, as the obedience and sufferings of no creature could from his own worth and excellency be equivalent to the obedience and sufferings of all mankind; so not only the performance of his sufferings, but even his innocence and perseverance in righteousness must be ascribed to the grace and goodness of God, not to any power of his own to sustain himself; and consequently the obedience and sufferings of no created being, how perfect, how excellent soever, could have been of that value as to merit for others to make satisfaction to the divine justice, or procure the remission of human sins. For, since death is ordained the punishment of sin, <sup>g</sup> the effect of its remission must be immortal life: but now, how can we imagine that the death of any creature, not immortal itself, could procure for us a right to immortality? No, the sacrifice that takes away sin, must not only die but live again; must be able to give itself immortality, before we can be immortal by virtue of it: which brings the matter at length to this conclusion, that such a sacrifice must necessarily be man, must be an innocent man, must indeed be much more than man, must be God, God as well as man; for the scripture is express, that <sup>h</sup> God only hath immortality; and it is evident to common sense that a being which itself has not immortality cannot give it to others.

THE office of making atonement for sin then redounds ultimately upon the Son of God; and as God for the vindication of his honour and the reparation due to his justice, was pleased to demand of his Son all that human nature, in its highest state of innocence and righteousness, could undergo; so he, by the assumption of that nature, fully qualified himself for that great work. <sup>i</sup> Human nature had the suffering part which was to be complete in its kind, and then to receive the utmost perfection, and become fully meritorious and expiatory by virtue of the union between the human and the divine nature; in which sense we are said <sup>k</sup> to be purchased with the blood of God, and to <sup>l</sup> be redeemed, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ; for the sufferings of the Son of man, though in themselves great beyond conception, and valuable beyond comparison, are of infinite merit and efficacy, for this reason, because he is the Son of God. Nor need we add, how well the ends of government are answered by this method of our redemption; for, <sup>m</sup> when the Son of God became a sacrifice

<sup>f</sup> Jenkins's Reasonableness of Christianity, Vol. II. <sup>g</sup> Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II. <sup>h</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 16. <sup>i</sup> Jenkins, *ibid.* <sup>k</sup> Acts xx. 28. <sup>l</sup> 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. <sup>m</sup> Eates's Harmony.

sacrifice for sin, the world may soon perceive how fully God has vindicated the honour of his laws, how highly he is offended at, and how effectually he has discouraged the commission of all kind of wickedness; there being the same terror, though not the same rigour in this dispensation, as if all mankind had been finally condemned.

THE sum of this argument thus far pursued is this—That, since no wise and good governor either pardons crimes committed against the end and order of his government, upon slight terms, nor omits any due care to provide, both that satisfaction may be made for the violation of his laws, and that those who have been guilty of the breach of them may be deterred from the like provocations: God, the great governor of the world, was for these reasons determined not to remit the sins of mankind without an equivalent satisfaction: and since, among the whole order of created beings, none was found sufficient to make such a satisfaction, the business of atonement (if it was to be done at all) was to be performed by the Son of God. But here if it be asked “How God could receive this satisfaction, “since himself was the party that gave it? Or how the Saviour “of mankind, supposing himself to be God, could make satisfaction to himself?” The answer is,

The objection,

farther answered.

1. “THAT the infinite goodness of God, in giving us a Redeemer, does not divest him of the office of supreme judge, nor hinder him from receiving a ransom to preserve the rights of justice inviolable. To help us to illustrate this matter, we have a memorable instance not unlike it in the case of Zaleucus, the prince of the Locrians, who passed a law that adulterers should lose both their eyes; and, when his son was convicted of that crime, the people who respected him for his excellent qualities came and interceded for him. || Zaleucus, in a conflict between zeal for justice and affection for his son, took but one eye from him, and parted with one of his own to satisfy the law; and in this action he both paid and received the punishment; paid it as a father, and received it as a conservator of public justice. In like manner, when guilty mankind, by reason of their poverty, could not pay the forfeiture of the law, God the father of mercies was pleased to give it from the treasures of his love, *i. e.* was pleased to give the blood of his Son for their ransom, which he nevertheless, as the supreme judge, received from Christ upon the cross, and declared it an offering of a sweet-smelling favour unto him, or a sufficient compensation for the sins of the whole world.

2. NOR is there any inconsistency with reason that the Son of God, clothed with our nature, should by his death make satisfaction to the Deity, *i. e.* to himself. ° In a difference between two parties, a person that belongs to one of them may certainly

certainly interpose for reconciliation, provided he divests his own interest, and leaves it with the party from whom he comes. When a father and son (for instance) both possessed of imperial power, have been offended by rebellious subjects, it may not be improper for the son to interpose as mediator, to restore them to the favour of their prince; and yet, at the same time, he reconciles them to himself, and procures them the pardon of an offence whereby his own majesty was violated. Just in the same manner all the persons of the ever-blessed Trinity are equally provoked by our sins, and to obtain our pardon, the Son, with the consent of the Father, deposits his interests in his hands, and as mediator, intervenes between us and him; and so having performed what justice required, reconciles the world to God, *i. e.* to the Father, himself, and the eternal Spirit: but in all this transaction his person is the same, though his capacity be different; for he makes satisfaction as mediator, and receives it as God; which is distinction enough to clear the words of the apostle from any fancied impropriety, when he tells us that God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

“ BUT why should not God impute their trespasses to the persons that are guilty? Why should he transfer their penalty upon the innocent? Since the justice of the punishment must arise from the demerit of the delinquent, the punishment can in justice be inflicted only there, where the demerit is; and therefore, if our Saviour was no sinner (as certainly he was not) neither ought he in justice to have been a sufferer.” We must be careful, however, upon this occasion, to remember the difference there is between the same person, when abstractedly considered; and by himself, and when sustaining the character and representation of others, since such an one’s innocence, though it renders him incapable of suffering, strictly so called, in the former of these respects; yet hinders not at all why he may not be a just and proper object of it in the latter. The reason is, because then the law no longer looks upon his private, but altogether upon his representative capacity; consequently, if they in whose place he stands be guilty, the penalty due to their guilt is now devolved upon their proxy: and therefore the whole matter in debate turns, at last, upon this, whether in the nature of the thing it be just to admit of such proxies, and to deal with them in the same manner as their originals would have been dealt with.

Now the general practice of mankind has agreed in this, that, in some cases, one man may become a surety for another, and that, if the principal fail in the performance of his just obligation, the surety (so far as he stands bound for him) is concerned

in justice to answer, and make good such obligations. † Nay, the law of nations makes no scruple of putting hostages in war to death, whose lives were staked down as a pledge for the fidelity of their countrymen, though the breaches of faith for which they suffer be neither their own act, nor so much as done with their knowledge or consent. These instances make it plain, that both in pecuniary and capital cases, it is no uncommon thing for one person to be responsible for another; only to make it in like manner equitable, there seems to be three conditions necessary. 1. That the party, thus bearing the punishment of others, do it by his own consent. 2. That he have a right thus to dispose of himself. And, 3. That the ends of punishment be as fully answered, by such a transfer of it, as they could have been by inflicting it upon the principals themselves. Suppose full consent, and the party suffering cannot receive wrong; suppose full power of giving that consent, and no other party receives wrong; suppose the ends of penal laws as effectually served by such an expedient, and the public receives no wrong. Now, that our blessed Saviour did voluntarily submit to the punishment of our sins, and suffered merely because he chose to suffer, is evident from hence, that being lord of the universe, he had no superior authority to command, or power to compel him; and therefore, when he cometh into the world, † he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure; then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart. That he was intirely free, and master of himself, so as to be able to dispose of his life, and all his actions, just as he pleased, is manifest from his own declaration; † No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this command I received of my Father. That his Father was consenting to this commutation of punishment, and willing to accept the satisfaction for our sins from his hands, is plain from all those passages, where it is said that he gave his only begotten Son, that we might not perish; † that he sent him to be a propitiation for our sins; and † made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, &c. And, lastly, that by such commutation the end and interest of God's government is preserved, the horror of sin displayed, and the laws of righteousness become more sacred and inviolable, is manifest both from the severity of the punishment, and the excellency of the person sustaining it. † For how could God express his hatred and indignation against sin more sensibly than first by threatening it with

† Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures. † Heb. x. 6, 7. † John x. 18, u † John iv. 10. x 2 Cor. v. 21. y Stanhope, *ibid*.

with eternal torments, then, by not pardoning it without satisfaction to his justice, and afterwards, when goodness and compassion moved him to remit it, accepting no less a compensation than the sufferings, and agonies, and death of his own Son? How could he receive so full a satisfaction for the affronts done to his honour, and our obnoxiousness to the severity of his laws, as by a reparation so ample, and a ransom so inestimably precious? And what could constrain us to our duty with such an holy and irresistible violence, as that mixture of gratitude and godly zeal, that fear, that indignation, that sorrow to repentance not to be repented of, which the contemplation of a suffering Saviour, so dearly purchasing the pardon of sin, when standing only in the place of sinners, under every view, suggests?

To sum up all then, \* if our blessed Saviour might become surety for the discharge of that debt, which, by our violation of the divine laws, was originally ours; if, upon our inability to pay this debt, so as to obtain our acquittance, he was willing, and fully empowered to lay down his life, in order to our relief and discharge; and if God, the great ruler of the world, might in justice accept the offering of such a life, for so gracious and merciful a purpose, especially when the wise ends of his government were served and promoted thereby (all which we have sufficiently proved) then does this great and popular objection against the justice of Christ's suffering in our stead, and for our sake, vanish and come to nothing.

“ BUT though it be granted that Christ had power over his own life, that he was willing to lay it down for us, and that God for wise ends was ready to accept it; yet, since the sins of mankind are innumerable, and the death, which our Saviour underwent, was but the death of one; since the death which we deserved for our sins was eternal, and that which our Saviour underwent was but transient and temporal; there is still a defect in the propitiation, even though we admit of the vicariousness of it. Christ did not suffer the same in kind that sinful men were liable to; and therefore the sacrifice which he offered was not adequate.”

Another  
objection.

He did not suffer the same indeed, because he could not. The reproaches of a sinful mind, the killing anguish of despair, with several other aggravations of misery and sorrow, which go to making up the sinner's hell, cannot, in the nature of the thing, fall upon an innocent and divine person; they are the result of a guilty conscience only: but then, it should be considered, that, in the sad and doleful moments of his passion, the Saviour of the world had horrors and agonies of another kind, the heavy weight, though not the guilt of universal sin, the fearful apprehensions of a painful and ignominious death, the busy powers of the prince of darkness, the smoking wrath and indignation

Answered.

of

of Almighty God, and the unrelenting strokes of his vindictive justice all united against him, to sustain; while the divine nature withdrew, as it were, from his relief, and, though adding infinite merit to his sufferings, would not remove or abate him one pain. † But whatever the ingredients of this bitter cup were, which God that mixed them, and himself that drank them, only knew; yet we have abundant reason to think that it was no ordinary infliction which could overwhelm his soul with such a flood of sorrow, dissolve his body into a sweat of blood, and, at last, extort that strange exclamation from him, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? This, and the farther consideration of his being <sup>a</sup> in the form of God, <sup>b</sup> the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, <sup>c</sup> in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, may make it no inconceivable strain to imagine that the infinite dignity of the person suffering must needs add an immense value to his sufferings, and by so doing make them equal to the guilt, and more than adequate to the sufferings of all mankind. And this will lead us to consider,

The extent  
of Christ's  
satisfaction

2. THE extent of the atonement and satisfaction which Christ has made for us. Nothing certainly can be plainer in scripture than that the redemption of the world in the divine intention is universal. <sup>d</sup> The love of God, which was the impulsive cause of his sending his Son into the world, is equally inclined to all mankind: <sup>e</sup> With him there is no respect of persons; for is he (says the apostle, assigning the reason for that assertion) the God of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles? No, there is no difference of Jew and Greek; for there is the same Lord of all, who is rich, in mercy and bounty, unto all that call upon him. The undertakings and performances of our Saviour Christ are represented, in general, as bearing proportion to the transgression of our first parent Adam; this the apostle prosecutes at large, and then closes his discourse in these words; <sup>f</sup> As therefore, by the offence of one man, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. Declarations in scripture every where meet us, that <sup>g</sup> God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world by him might be saved; that the Son accordingly, desirous that <sup>h</sup> all should be saved, gave himself a ransom for the <sup>i</sup> whole world, and <sup>k</sup> died for all, that they who live might not live to themselves, but to him that died for them: and to exclude all limitation, that he even died for such as perish, for such <sup>l</sup> as denied him, for such as were in the way to destruction, and for such as <sup>m</sup> trampled him under foot, and counted the blood

† Norris's Discourses, Vol. IV.    a Phil. ii. 6.    b Heb. i. 3.    c Col. ii. 9.  
d Barrow's Works, Vol III.    e Rom. ii. 11.—iii. 22.—x. 12.    f Ibid. v. 18.  
g John iii. 17.    h 1 Tim. ii. 4.    i Ibid. ver. 6.    k 2 Cor. v. 15.    l 2 Pet. ii. 1.  
m Heb. x. 29.

blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and did despite to the Spirit of grace.

So boundless are the expressions wherein the intended benefit of Christ's propitiation is exhibited in scripture; nor is there the least intimation of any restriction or particular designation of it for the sake of the elect only; and yet there have not been wanting some who have endeavoured to reduce what is of so general and universal extent to a very narrow compass; <sup>a</sup> by asserting, "That those, whom, from all eternity, God in his gracious purpose had separated from the rest of mankind, and pre-ordained for salvation, are the only persons for whom Christ died; for whom the remission of sins, and other graces, requisite to entitle them to the benefits of his passion, are reserved; while the rest of mankind that are not thus elected, reap no advantage by his death, and at the time of its oblation, were intirely secluded from the divine purpose and consideration." Whatever texts in scripture they therefore find of a more extensive signification; they usually refer to an universality of kinds, not of particulars, pretending that Christ did not die for all in general, and for every one in particular, but only for some of all people, nations, and languages, in contraposition to the narrowness of the law of Moses, which was confined to the Israelites only.

The opinion of some Calvinists.

Answered.

THE doctrine of predestination, as it relates to the election of some, and preterition of others, <sup>b</sup> has been largely considered already, the weight of each argument stated, and on what side the merits of the controversy lies in some measure determined; and therefore we need only add, that though there are some expressions in scripture, relating to this matter, of a seemingly wide signification, which are to be confined to a narrower compass; yet there are an infinite number of others which set forth the design of Christ's death in such a manner as cannot possibly admit of any restriction. Thus, when we read that <sup>c</sup> in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; that <sup>d</sup> God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, to the intent that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; that <sup>e</sup> Christ was made a little lower than the angels, that, by the grace of God, he might taste death for every man; and so <sup>f</sup> became a propitiation, not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world: it is impossible but that these and such like words, taken in their easy and usual sense, must, to any sober and impartial readers signify the whole community of mankind, comprehending persons of all sorts and qualities, good and bad, believers and unbelievers alike.

That Christ died for all.

AND indeed, if we once reflect on what has been said before, viz. that our blessed Saviour was the common proxy and representative

<sup>a</sup> Les Oeuvres post. de M. Claude. <sup>b</sup> Vid. Vol. I. p. 247, &c. p 1 Cor. xv. 22. <sup>c</sup> John iii. 16. <sup>d</sup> Heb. ii. 9. <sup>e</sup> 1 John ii. 2.

sentative of all mankind, and that his death had in it all the properties of a true propitiatory sacrifice, we cannot but conclude, that, as sacrifices of this kind were offered for the sins of all the people, his death was commensurate to the number of the persons he represented; and therefore when the Baptist saith, \* Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, he not only speaks in allusion to the lambs, daily offered up for the sins of the whole Jewish nation, but plainly enough intimates that, as they were offered up to expiate the sins of the whole nation, so was the Lamb of God offered to expiate the sins of the whole world in general. And, that our high-priest, in making this oblation, had no private respect to any particular number of persons, but intended it equally for the benefit of all, is evident from this obvious reason, <sup>u</sup> that he offered the same sacrifice, suffered one and the same death, and shed the same blood for all, for whom he died; and consequently, that if this sacrifice was offered for all, it was offered equally for all, because it is the same oblation, the same body crucified, and the same blood shed; and, as they cannot be distributed into parts, that one may have one share of them, another a second, and another a third, but whosoever has an interest in them has a title to the whole benefit procured by them; so the scriptures, which say expressly that Christ died for all, afford not the least intimation that he suffered more, or shed more of his blood for one than for another.

<sup>v</sup> upon what <sup>w</sup> conditions. BUT though Christ died equally for all, yet he did not die absolutely and unconditionally for any: faith, and repentance, and obedience to the laws of the gospel, are (as we have seen) the express conditions upon which the blessings of Christ's salutary passion are suspended, and therefore he did not, he could not, die, but with intention to confer these blessings only upon true believers, true penitents, and such as would obey his righteous laws; it being impossible in the nature of the thing, that he should die to save the unbeliever, *i. e.* the person who will not own him as a Saviour, of whom it is said that \* he shall not see life, but is condemned already; or to reconcile God to the impenitent, *i. e.* to those who still continue in their sins, and their rebellions against God, of whom it is said, <sup>y</sup> that they shall surely perish, and that <sup>z</sup> he will come in a flame to take vengeance of all that obey not his gospel. And therefore, when we say that Christ died for all, we do not mean that he hath purchased actual pardon and reconciliation for all; but only that he put all men in a capacity of being pardoned and justified, and so of being reconciled to God, upon their turning to him, and believing in his Son. And in this sense it is that we understand that article of our Creed, concerning forgiveness of sins, wherein we profess

\* John i. 29. <sup>u</sup> Whitby of the Extent of Christ's Redemption. <sup>x</sup> John iii. 16, 36. <sup>y</sup> Luke xiii. 3, 5. <sup>z</sup> 2 Thess. i. 8.



profess to believe, not that sin is already pardoned by the death of Christ (for there is no foundation for such a belief) but only that Christ has, by the merits of his cross, opened a way for pardon and reconciliation, and made them possible and attainable by faith and repentance.

<sup>a</sup> For the full completion of the pardon of sin there is therefore, properly speaking, a two-fold reconciliation, or, if you please, a two-fold degree of it, one on Christ's part, and the other on ours. The first is previous to our repentance, and indeed wholly preventive of any thing we can do; the second follows it, and is grounded upon it. That which is previous to repentance consists in a bare remissibility of sin, and is purely the work of our Redeemer; that which follows it consists in the full and actual remission of sin, wherein we ourselves are active, and must come in for our part. The first of these is wholly absolute, and unconditionate (there being nothing required of us to make sin pardonable to us) the second is suspended upon conditions, till the performance of which, sin, though pardonable, is not however actually pardoned. Nor is this distinction destitute of foundation in scripture: for, when St John says, <sup>b</sup> if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world; the universality of the character shews it plainly to be meant of the first reconciliation, resulting immediately from the death and satisfaction of Christ: and, when he says, in another place, <sup>c</sup> if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin; the conditionality of the character shews it to be meant of the second reconciliation, resulting from our own performances: and from hence it follows, that the forgiveness of sins does not consist in actual pardon and justification, but only in laying the foundation of it; in procuring for us, not the possession, but the capacity and possibility of it, which is then reduced to act, and made complete, when we put the conditions whereon it is suspended in execution, and comply with those terms upon which it is purchased by our Saviour's blood, and offered to us in his gospel.

To illustrate this by a plain similitude. <sup>d</sup> Suppose a prince, whose subjects had rebelled against him, and so lay under the sentence of condemnation, through the intercession of his beloved son, should vouchsafe mercy to as many of them as should profess sorrow for their guilt, ask pardon in his son's name, and promise to be obedient subjects for the future; would this procure an actual pardon to any of them till they had performed these conditions? Or would it ever do it for them who wilfully refused,

<sup>a</sup> Norris's Discourses, Vol. IV. <sup>b</sup> 1 John ii. 1. <sup>c</sup> Ibid. i. 7. <sup>d</sup> Whitby on the Extent of Christ's Redemption.

refused, or even scorned and neglected to perform them? The case is the same in the matter now before us. Christ by his death obtained of his Father a new covenant, in which he promises to pardon, and to be reconciled to all, upon their faith and repentance, and to make them partakers of salvation, upon their perseverance in well-doing: but he has not procured an actual pardon, reconciliation, or salvation to any who have not performed these conditions, nor can they lay any just claim to them, by virtue of his dying for them, so long as they continue in their impenitence or unbelief.

An objection answered.

In this sense, and under these conditions, we say, that Christ's death and satisfaction is universal; but then, if it should be asked how it comes to pass that a general design has only a particular effect, or (in scripture-terms) for what reason it is that so many are called, and so few are chosen; our blessed Saviour has stated the whole process, both on God's side and man's, with relation to this event, in a very lively similitude. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a king, says he, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants, saying, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage: but they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize, &c. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Go ye into the high-ways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage: which the servants accordingly did, and gathering together all, as many as they could, both bad and good, the wedding was furnished with guests. <sup>1</sup> Those that undertake to explain this parable tell us, that by the king here, we are to understand God the Father; that the marriage made for his Son is the salvation of the world; that the guests invited, and occasionally brought in, are the whole race of mankind, both Jews and Gentiles; and that his killing his oxen and fatlings, and making preparation for dinner, answer, in the application, to his sending his Son in our flesh, to die for our sins, and make all proper provision for our eternal happiness: and, upon the foot of this interpretation, we may observe farther, that the multitude of the guests denotes the design of our redemption to have been of universal benefit to mankind; that the different qualities of the guests signify God's having no respect to persons in his invitation of mankind to the means of salvation; that his earnest and repeated invitations shew his sincere desires that all who are called, and have heard the good tidings of the gospel, should partake of its salvation; and that the excuses which the guests alledge for the refusal of the king's invitation, discover wherein the true cause of the ineffectualness of man's redemption lies, viz. not in any want of mercy in God, or of virtue in Christ's passion, not in any secret purpose of the divine

<sup>1</sup> Eragg on the Parable; and Staukope's Sermons.

divine mind, or fatal decree, predetermining it should be so, but in the depravity of the man's own heart and affections, his love of riches, and indulgence of sensual delights, which occasion it to be so: <sup>m</sup> I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I have married a wife, and therefore cannot come.

<sup>n</sup> WE readily acknowledge indeed, that the counsels of Almighty God are a vast and dark deep, and think it unbecoming poor feeble mortals too busily to intrude into them, or to pronounce any thing peremptorily concerning them: but still, there are some plain principles so obvious to man's reason that he cannot but admit of them. That the Judge of all the earth cannot but do right, and he whose truth is like the strong mountains cannot falsify or prevaricate, are things universally allowed; and, though the justice and truth in God may proceed upon measures not understood by us, yet, since true and false, just and unjust, are not arbitrary and alterable things, we have no reason to suppose that justice and veracity in God are contrary to what we esteem just and true among men; and may therefore be allowed to conclude, that whatever the decrees of God are, they cannot but be such as consist very well with the temper of his covenants, with his invitations, his promises, his threatenings, his vehement and affectionate exhortations, his laying the sinner's ruin, and rejection of salvation intirely at his own door, so frequently, so manifestly recorded in scripture.

The nature of God's decrees.

How far the sacred attributes of God are concerned in this question, we had occasion <sup>o</sup> to take notice before, and shall now only observe what influence it must needs have upon our piety and virtue. <sup>p</sup> I will, says St Paul, that men should pray in every place, lifting up pure hands, without wrath or doubting; <sup>q</sup> but how can any man observe this precept? How can any man pray with calmness and confidence of mind who is not assured that Christ is his Saviour, or that God, for Christ's sake, is disposed to grant his requests? <sup>r</sup> Give thanks always, says the same apostle, for all things unto God, and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; but how can we perform this duty? How can any man give thanks unto God, in the name of Jesus, or heartily resent his great love and kindness in sending his Son into the world, who knows not that this kindness was ever designed for him? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, is a duty required both of Jew and Gentile; but how can any man do this who is persuaded that God, who is the Creator of souls, has excluded from his care the greatest part of them; and his perhaps among the rest? How can any man apply himself cheerfully to serve that God whose favourable incli-

As some explain them, destructive of piety and justice.

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<sup>m</sup> Luke xiv. 18, &c. <sup>n</sup> Stanhope's Sermons. <sup>o</sup> See Vol. I. page 252, &c. <sup>p</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 8. <sup>q</sup> Whitby on the Extent of Christ's Redemption. <sup>r</sup> Eph. v. 20.

nation towards him, and whose readinefs to accept of his service, he doubts of? It is partly the benefits we have received, and partly the advantages we hope to receive from a superior, that are the prevailing motives of our love and service: if therefore God never intended any benefit for the greatest part of mankind; if, through want of an interest in Christ, they are for ever debarred from reaping any advantage by him; the sense of this must necessarily damp their affections, and relax the sinews of their obedience. Nor can it well be said, for what reason we are so frequently called upon in scripture, to imitate the goodness and compassion of our God, \* to be merciful, as our Father is merciful; to † love our enemies, and do them good, that we may be children of our heavenly Father; to abound in love, and † to be tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us: why we should be bound, I say, to this extensive mercy and charity by God's example, and enjoined to exercise it, that we may be like unto him, is a thing unaccountable, if so be the bowels of the divine love and compassion are confined to a few, and all Christ's sufferings and performances were only intended for the benefit of a small remnant of mankind: whereas, if God be truly willing to have mercy upon all, and if he delivered up his Son for the benefit and salvation of all, our love and mercy (if we would be followers of him, as dear children) must, according to the terms wherein it is enjoined, be truly general, and comprehend all.

The difference between the two doctrines.

“ BUT admitting the redemption of mankind, in God's intention, to be universal; yet since, in event, it proves but partial, where is the mighty difference whether we are saved by God's pre-election or by our own performance of the conditions of the gospel, so long as the persons, that are saved, are the same, both in number and quality?” This is the last objection we think ourselves concerned to take notice of upon this subject; and for a solution, we may ask those that make it.—Is it the same thing to say that salvation was, by God's gracious purpose, intended even for those that perish, so that, without being deaf to the calls of grace, and the motives of the gospel, and without acting in plain contradiction to the reason and conscience, and natural desires of mankind, they could not have missed of it; and to say that no salvation was ever designed, or grace afforded them to rescue them from perdition? Is it the same thing to say that the greatest part of the world cannot be saved, because the Saviour of mankind died not for them, and God never intended their salvation; and to say that therefore they cannot be saved, because they would not come to that Jesus who died for them, that, through the merits of his death, they might have life; nor obey that God who out of his tender affection to them sent his Son into the world, that the world by  
him

him might be saved? Is it the same thing to say that men are not saved, because they want sufficient means, on God's part, to render their salvation possible; and to say that therefore they are not saved, because, when they have salvation freely tendered to them, and means and motives sufficient to engage them in the pursuit of it, they wilfully despise, and wickedly neglect this great salvation?

Is it the same thing to represent the God of love as an hater of the greatest part of mankind; as one who has determined, before he made them, to withhold his compassions from them; and to represent him as extending his rich goodness and mercy to all the souls that he has made? Is it the same thing to represent the God of truth as full of guile and dissimulation, pretending one thing, and designing another; as to represent him truly declaring that he would have all men to be saved, and sincerely promising salvation upon such terms as are both reasonable for him to require, and possible for them to perform? And lastly, Is it the same thing to advance a doctrine, which vitally destroys all the acts of piety and virtue, of prayer and thanksgiving, of fear and love, and obedience towards God; as to assert one which manifestly encourages, and lays the greatest obligation on men to the performance of these duties? If not, then though the persons, eventually saved, will be the same, the doctrine, which is clogged with so many incongruities, can never be the same with that which stands intirely free from them. And so we proceed,

II. To the other part of Christ's sacerdotal office, viz. his intercession, which is an act subsequent upon his having offered himself a sacrifice for our sins. For as the high-priest under the law, after he had offered the sacrifice without upon the altar, went into the holy of holies with the blood of it, and there sprinkled it before the mercy-seat, in order to make intercession for the people: so Christ, our high-priest (as the apostle \* draws the similitude) is entered within the veil into the holy place (which is heaven itself) with his own blood, there to appear in the presence of God; there \* to sit at the right hand of God, making intercession for us for ever. In the presence of God he appears, not as a supplicant upon his knees, offering up tears and strong cries, as in the days of his flesh; but as an advocate pleading with authority for what has been the purchase of his blood: and therefore he is represented as sitting (a  $\gamma$  posture which denotes dominion and sovereignty)  $\gamma$  on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens. Upon this account his intercession may not improperly be defined, “ $\dagger$  A solemn address to God the Father in our be-  
“ half,

Christ's  
interces-  
sion.  
The man-  
ner of it.

\* Heb. vi. 19, 20.  $\times$  Rom. viii. 26.  $\gamma$  Ipsum verbum sedere regi significat potestatem.  $\delta$  Hier. Com. ad Eph. c. i. v. 19.  $z$  Heb. viii. 1.  $\dagger$  Scott's Mediator.

“ half, wherein, by presenting to him his own sacrificed body,  
 “ and by continuing and perpetuating the presentation of it,  
 “ he obtains of him power and authority to grant unto us the  
 “ pardon of our sins, the acceptance of our prayers, the supply  
 “ of our wants, the assistance of grace, and the collation of all the  
 “ other blessings and benefits which are made over to us in that  
 “ covenant, which he hath ratified by his blood;” I say, obtains power and authority of God to grant these blessings to us : for though it be certainly true, that <sup>a</sup> every good and perfect gift cometh down from above, even from the Father of lights, yet it is no less certain that they come not down to us from the Father immediately, but are all derived to us through the hands of the Son, who by his continual intercession obtains continual power and authority to derive and confer them on us. For, as the high-priest, <sup>b</sup> after he had presented the blood of the sacrifice in the holy of holies, was authorised to bless the people ; even so our blessed Saviour, by presenting his meritorious sacrifice in heaven, and in virtue thereof interceding for us with the Father, is continually authorised by him effectually to bless us, *i. e.* to confer on us the blessings of the new covenant, upon such conditions as are therein proposed ; for which reason he is said <sup>c</sup> to be able to save those to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for us.

God's blessings come by Christ's intercession.

THAT by his intercession, Christ has obtained of God the power of bestowing on us all the blessings of the new covenant, is plainly enough intimated by all those passages in scripture wherein we are said <sup>d</sup> to have access to the Father through him ; <sup>e</sup> by him to have access to the divine grace ; <sup>f</sup> in him to have boldness with confidence ; for in him, and by him, and through him (as the apostles testify) are all the graces and favours of God conferred on us. Our supplications are accepted, because he is the <sup>g</sup> angel of the covenant, who at the golden altar before the throne offers up the prayers of the saints, incensed with the merits of his sacrifice. Our sins are forgiven us, because he <sup>h</sup> has the keys of hell and death, *i. e.* the power to bind or loose, to pardon or condemn. The gift of God's Spirit is imparted to us, because (as St Peter tells the Jews) <sup>i</sup> Jesus, being raised up, and exalted at the right-hand of God, has received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost : and, lastly, eternal life is consigned to us, because (as he himself assures the church of Laodicea) <sup>k</sup> to him, that overcomes, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I have overcome, and am sat down with my Father on his throne. By all which it is abundantly evident, that though the blessings of the new covenant do originally come from God the Father, yet are they immediately

<sup>a</sup> James i. 17.    <sup>b</sup> See 1 Chron. xxiii. 13.    <sup>c</sup> Heb. vii. 25.    <sup>d</sup> Eph. ii. 18.  
<sup>e</sup> Rom. v. 2.    <sup>f</sup> Eph. i. 12.    <sup>g</sup> Rev. viii. 3.    <sup>h</sup> Ibid. i. 18.    <sup>i</sup> Acts ii. 32, 33.  
<sup>k</sup> Rev. iii. 21.

diately derived to us through God the Son; and that whatever God bestows upon us, he bestows by the hand of Jesus, whom, upon his first presentation of his sacrifice in heaven, and continual intercession with it, he constituted and continues the general distributor of all his graces and favours to mankind.

<sup>1</sup> How much this method of God's communicating his favours to mankind, through our Saviour's intercession, tends to excite in us a profound awe and reverence of his divine majesty, upon this consideration, that we are not allowed to have access to him, even by our prayers and supplications, without the interposition of a mediator, who is greater than the greatest of all the kings on earth, or angels in heaven: how much it tends to give us a strong conviction of God's hatred and abhorrence of our sins; since, notwithstanding the kindness and benevolence of his nature, upon their account he keeps us at so great a distance, that without some powerful intercession, he will not be prevailed with so much as to hear our prayers, or to have any kind of communion with us: how much it tends to secure us from presuming upon God's mercy, while we continue in our sins, since our very repentance, which is the best thing we can do to make him propitious to us, is insufficient without Christ's intercession, and yet Christ is resolved never to intercede for those that are impenitent: on the other hand, how much it tends to encourage us, if we will but repent and amend, to draw near unto God with cheerfulness and freedom, upon this consideration, that the highest favourite he has in heaven or earth is our advocate; one, who not only is infinitely concerned for us, as being a-kin to us by nature, and having a compassionate sense of our infirmities, but who employs likewise in our behalf all the favour and interest he has with God, as he is the Son, of his essence and the object of his love: and, lastly, how much it tends to assure us, if we will but persevere in goodness, of God's gracious intentions to perform all his promises, since we have not only his word to depend on, but the suretyship likewise of a mediator, in whose hands he has actually deposited all the blessings he has promised us, and made him executor in trust for the performance of his bequests to the heirs of promise: how much this dispensation of God's favours, I say, through the intercession of our Saviour, tends to create in us reverential thoughts of God, a dreadful sense of sin, a sense of the danger of impenitence, freedom in our addresses to God, and assurance in his gracious promises; consequently, how much it contributes to our reformation and amendment, and thereby to the illustration of the riches of God's mercy to mankind, the arguments but just hinted at will be sufficient to convince us. For

The wisdom and goodness of God herein.

The benefits of Christ's intercession.

cate

<sup>1</sup> Scott's Mediator. <sup>m</sup> Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. III.

cate at the right hand of God to plead our cause, and solicit our concernment; so good a friend in the court of heaven, in such high power and favour with the great king of the world: of what singular comfort it is, in every trying circumstance, in every penfive hour, in the distress of fortune, in the decays of age, in the languishings of sickness, in the agonies of death, that " we have not an high-priest who cannot be touched with a sense of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are: of what life and vigour it is in our prayers, that they are offered up by so powerful and prevalent an hand; and of what encouragement in all our spiritual conflicts, that he, who hath all power both in heaven and earth, is on our side, the captain of our salvation, and who has the succours we want under his direction and command: ° seeing then we have a great high-priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us (as the apostle exhorts us) hold fast our profession; and let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in the time of need.

Christ's  
kingdom.

III. THE third and last branch of Christ's mediatorial office is that of his being a king. That the Messiah was all along, down from the time of David, foretold and expected under the character of a king, is evident from so many passages in the Old Testament, that it would be almost endless to recite them. The truth is, when we read such pompous descriptions as these, p Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; desire of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession; thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel: for ° unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever: such magnificent expressions as these, I say, are by the enemies of christianity made a popular objection (which we shall have occasion to satisfy hereafter) that our Jesus could not be the promised Messiah, because the figure in which he appeared was so different to the pomp and grandeur wherein the prophets have described the glories of his kingdom.

† THAT our blessed Saviour, in the New Testament, is affirmed likewise to be a king, in a manner superior to any other, is plain from the good tidings which the angel brings at his conception, " he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of

° Heb. iv. 15. ° Ibid. ver. 14, 16. p Psal. ii. 7, &c. s Isa. ix. 6. t Stan-  
dard on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. III. u Luke i. 32, 33.



of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Judah for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end; is plain from the confession of Nathanael, \* Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel; plain from the acclamations of the people, x blessed is the king of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord; from his own declaration, y all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; and from the testimony of his apostle, telling us, z that he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet: for † worthy is the lamb that was slain (say the angels in the Revelation) to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE better therefore to understand the nature and constitution of Christ's kingdom, it will be necessary to observe, a that, The nature of it. as he is the creator of the world, he has one dominion, and as the redeemer of it another: as creator, his regality is essential to his nature; as redeemer, it is annexed to his office: the one is in common with the other persons in the godhead, and what he had from all eternity; the other is peculiarly assigned him, and what he entered upon when he undertook his mediatorship; so that the one he holds by right of his eternal generation, the other as a reward of his great performances in our flesh; b because he humbled himself (says the apostle) and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, therefore has God highly † exalted him, and gave him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and

\* John i. 49. x Ibid. xii. 13. y Matth. xxviii. 18. z 1 Cor. xv. 25.  
 † Rev. v. 12. a Les Oeuvres posth. de M. Claude, Tom. iii. b Phil ii. 8, &c.  
 † Most of the antients, who understand this text of a proper exaltation, have interpreted it of Christ's human, and not of his divine nature; but if to exalt will signify to manifest or display to a greater degree, in which sense it frequently occurs in scripture (Exod xv. 2. 2 Sam. xxiii 47. Psal. xxi. 13, &c) then may we apply it to his divine nature, as the humiliation here spoken of seems properly to direct us. The absolute essential dignity of our Lord indeed, in respect of which he was ever equal with God, will admit of no advancement or exaltation; it was always the same; but his relative dignity towards us, founded in the obligation we have received from him, in that amazing and astonishing instance of condescension and goodness, his becoming man, and dying for us; this may be exalted, *i. e.* proclaimed aloud, and made more public: and therefore, when God the Son had humbled himself to this degree, and, by an unparalleled work of mercy, had redeemed mankind, and thereby acquired a new and special title to be their Lord and Sovereign; it pleased God the Father, in the most solemn and pompous manner, to proclaim the high dignity of his Son; to re-inforce his rightful claim of homage, and to command heaven and earth, angels and men, to pay him all honour, reverence, and adoration, suitable to the dignity of so great, so good, so divine a person as the Son of God. And thus we may understand the words, Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, *i. e.* on account of the great work of redemption, so full of love and goodness, so astonishing and so endearing, God hath remarkably proclaimed his dignity, and set forth his glory, commanding all men hereupon to acknowledge him their God and Lord; their Lord always, but now more especially, by a new and distinct claim, as their Saviour and Deliverer, and only Redeemer. Waterland's Sermons at Lady Moyer's Lectures.

and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father ; <sup>c</sup> who raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in heavenly places, far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but that also which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and hath given him to be head over all things to the church. Not but that Christ, as he is the Son of God, co-equal and co-essential with him, had all along a communion in the same might and dominion which admits of no increase ; and, from eternity, was infinitely above all other principalities and powers whatever ; but then, as to effect our salvation he humbled himself, and became the Son of man, in this sense he was capable of being advanced ; and accordingly God is said to set him at his right hand, as the kings of the East were wont to place the person they appointed to preside over their dominions.

<sup>d</sup> THOUGH therefore the essential kingdom of Christ is co-eternal with himself, and inseparable from his Being ; yet his mediatorial kingdom is not so. A time there was when it had no existence, and a time will come when it shall be dissolved : the time when Christ entered upon it was at the commencement of the covenant of grace ; the time when he was solemnly inaugurated to it was at his ascension into heaven ; and the time when he shall deliver it up to God, even the Father, shall be at the end, or consummation of all things. This is the kingdom which falls under our present consideration, and how well our blessed Saviour is known to administer it will best appear by inquiring into his regal acts.

Christ's regal Acts.  
To conquer his enemies.

<sup>e</sup> I. THAT there are two great powers in the universe contending against each other under their respective heads and leaders, whereof Jesus Christ is the one, and the other the devil, or Satan ; and that these two chiefs have two separate kingdoms, the one represented under the notion of a kingdom of light, and the other under that of a kingdom of darkness, is manifestly the apostle's meaning, when he <sup>f</sup> gives thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son : and that between these two kingdoms there is a perpetual and an unwearied opposition, is the received interpretation of that passage in the Revelation ; <sup>g</sup> and there was war in heaven ; Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon, and the Dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place any more found in heaven. And the great Dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth

<sup>c</sup> Eph. i. 20, &c. <sup>d</sup> Scott's Mediator. <sup>e</sup> King's Critical History of the Apostles Creed. <sup>f</sup> Col. i. 12, 13. <sup>g</sup> Rev. xii. 7, &c.

ceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

WHAT number of spirits the devil drew into his party and interest is a matter unknown to us, since the scripture has not thought fit to reveal it; but our own observation will give us too sad a view of the extent of his kingdom among mankind, where he gradually enlarged his empire, till at length the whole earth was covered with ignorance and darkness; and, especially at the time of our Saviour's coming, the generality of mankind was so blinded with him, that they had almost lost all true notions of God, and were so far sunk into idolatry, that, in many places, they worshipped the devil himself as God, <sup>k</sup> being dead in trespasses and sins (as the apostle represents them) they walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, and the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. But now, when our Saviour came into the world, he erected his kingdom among mankind, by the propagation of his gospel enlarged his dominions over the most distant regions of the world, and wherever his religion came, there put a period to all idolatrous worship, and utterly destroyed the power and empire of the devil. While he was on earth, him he subdued in all his temptations and personal conflicts with him; sin he took away, the guilt of it by the laver of his blood, the punishment of it by his suffering in our stead, and the dominion of it by the efficacy of his grace; and death he has vanquished by dying himself, rising again, and opening the way to eternal life; <sup>i</sup> For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil; and <sup>k</sup> having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them on the cross, <sup>l</sup> leading captivity captive, as he ascended up to heaven; and when he shall return from thence, <sup>m</sup> O death! he will be thy plagues; O grave! he will be thy destruction; for he will ransom his subjects from the power of the grave, and when each repository of the dead shall be opened, and all the sons of men return to life again, then shall <sup>n</sup> death be totally swallowed up in victory.

2. AFTER the erection of his kingdom, Christ's next regal act is to appoint proper ministers by whom he is to rule it. For being himself about to leave the earth, and to ascend into heaven, it was necessary that he should substitute some to supply his room, that the kingdom, which he had gained from the prince of darkness, might be continued in good order, and secured from the danger of relapsing into the enemy's hand. <sup>o</sup> The first minister of this kind is the Holy Ghost, the third person in the ever-blessed Trinity, whom, upon his accession to his heavenly kingdom, he sent down to preside, in his absence,

To appoint proper ministers.

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<sup>h</sup> Eph. ii. 12. <sup>i</sup> 1 John iii. 8. <sup>k</sup> Col. ii. 15. <sup>l</sup> Eph. iv. 8. <sup>m</sup> Hos. xiii. 14.  
<sup>n</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 54. <sup>o</sup> Scott's Mediator.

as his vicegerent in his kingdom here below ; to furnish his apotles with such miraculous gifts as were necessary for the first propagation of his gospel, and all succeeding christians with such graces as are conducive to the illumination of their minds, and the sanctification of their wills and affections. Next under him are angels of different kinds and orders, who, by the appointment of Christ, are to attend the affairs of his kingdom ; good angels to guard and protect his subjects, not only against outward dangers, but against the rage likewise and fury of evil spirits ; to support and comfort them under sore calamities and difficult undertakings ; to further and assist them in their religious offices ; and, when life is done, to conduct their separate souls into the mansions of bliss : and evil angels, to try and exercise the virtues of his subjects ; to chasten and correct their faults and miscarriages, and to execute his vengeance, in the other world, on such as will not submit to his government in this. Next to these are the kings and governors of the world, who being ordered by Christ to be nursing fathers to his church, in analogy to that name, are to protect and defend it in the profession and exercise of the true religion ; to secure its peace and good order by wholesome laws ; to chasten and correct its irregular members ; and to make proper provision for the decency of its worship, and the maintenance of its ministers : and, last of all, are these spiritual and ecclesiastical ministers, whose appointed office it is, to preach the gospel of Christ, to administer his holy sacraments, to offer up the public prayers and intercessions of christian congregations ; and, when raised to be rulers in the church, to confirm such as have been instructed in religion, to ordain fit persons to ecclesiastical offices, to make laws for the preservation of peace and good order, and to execute that spiritual jurisdiction which Christ has established for edification, and not for destruction.

To pre-  
scribe  
laws.

3. AFTER the appointment of proper ministers, Christ's next regal act is to prescribe laws for the government of his kingdom ; and this he did in those sermons and discourses which are recorded in the gospel, <sup>a</sup> wherein he performed the part of a legislator, as well as a teacher ; and by his own authority, as he was a king, stamped those doctrines, which he taught and delivered as a prophet, into laws ; laws that are of a spiritual nature, and extend their obligation to the wills and affections of his subjects ; that restrain our thoughts and desires, as well as our words and actions, and give direction to our inward intentions, as well as our outward performances : laws that not only forbid the commission of evil actions, but even blame and account criminal the very affection and inclination to them, making <sup>b</sup> hatred to be murder ; <sup>c</sup> covetousness, robbery ; and <sup>d</sup> the inordinate lusting after a woman, adultery : laws lastly,

that  
<sup>a</sup> Isa. xlix. 23. <sup>q</sup> Scott's Mediator. <sup>r</sup> 1 John iii. 15. <sup>s</sup> Mark vii. 22.  
<sup>t</sup> Matth. v. 28.

that are bound upon us by such sanctions as no earthly prince can give to his ordinances, everlasting happiness, or everlasting misery, according as our obedience or disobedience shall appear at the great day of examination.

4. AFTER the prescription of proper laws, Christ's next To protect his subjects regal act is to protect and defend his kingdom against the outrageous attempts of its numerous enemies. For this end, the Father, as the apostle tells us, has put all things in subjection under him, and given him to be head over all things to his church, that, having the universal government of all events in his hand, he might, by his over-ruling providence, order and direct them to the interest and advantage of his church: and accordingly, now that he is in heaven, the defence and preservation of his church is the great business which he intends upon earth. There he now sits looking down from his throne with a watchful eye to observe all the motions, and trace out all the dark designs of its enemies; and from thence he stretches forth his almighty arm to guard and defend it against them, to over-rule their malice, and make their wicked machinations redound to its greater prosperity. Nor is it for his church in general, but for all the faithful and obedient subjects of it, that he exercises such a vigilant providence. They are the dear purchase of his blood, and must therefore be supposed to deserve his care: they are the jewels of his kingdom, and are therefore kept, in his treasury, under the strongest and most inviolable security: they are the living members of his body, and, as he feels their pains with the most tender sympathy, his providence is as much concerned for their defence, as his eye-lid is to defend the apple of his own eye. Sometimes indeed he corrects them with his own hand, and permits them to be oppressed and afflicted by others: but still he does this with a most gracious intention, either to excite and exercise their graces, or to cure or prevent some disease in their minds, or to wean them from the love of this vain world, and fit and prepare them for a blessed eternity; and whatever evils happen to them in the course of his providence, still he takes care to extract good out of them, and to contrive and order the whole scene of affairs so that, in the issue, \* all things may work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose.

5. AFTER the defence and protection of his kingdom, one To punish and reward. act more of Christ's regal authority is, to punish his wicked and rebellious, and to reward his faithful and obedient subjects. † For, as he mediates for his Father, in ruling and governing us, he must be the minister of his Father's providence; and consequently, whatever divine punishments are inflicted upon offenders, are to be looked upon as the strokes of his hands. ‡ I gave her space to repent of her fornications (says he of Jezebel and

‡ Zech. ii. 8. \* Rom. viii. 28. † Scott's Mediator. ‡ Rev. ii. 21, &c.

and her followers) and she repented not; behold I will cast her into a bed, *i. e.* into a bed-rid and irrecoverable condition, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, and I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to his works. And though, for wise and gracious ends, he oftentimes spares bad men in this life, and sometimes shines upon them a continued day of prosperity, without any cloud or interruption; yet he always overtakes them with the fearful storms of his vengeance in the life to come. For no sooner are their souls departed from their bodies, but they are immediately consigned, by his warrant, into the hands of evil angels, by them carried into some dismal abode, and there made to suffer all the torments and agonies that the wrath and malice of devils, together with their own awakened consciences, and furious and unsatisfied affections, are able to inflict. On the contrary, to him that overcometh, says our Saviour, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God, *i. e.* I will admit him to a participation of the blessed immortality of heaven. For whenever any faithful and obedient souls depart from their bodies, he presently sends forth his angelic messengers to conduct them safe to the immortal regions, and there to lodge them in some one of those blissful mansions in his Father's house which he went before to prepare for them; where, free from a vexatious and tumultuous world, they live in a continued fruition of their utmost wishes; all their happiness is eternal, and all their eternity nothing else but one continued act of love, and praise, and joy, and triumph; where there are no sighs or tears, no intermixtures of sorrow or misery, but every heart is full of joy, and every joy is quintessence, and every moment crowned with some new and fresh enjoyment.

THESE are some of the regal acts which Christ has already performed, and which he continues constantly to perform in the government of his mediatorial kingdom; but others there are of a more extraordinary nature, which, in the fulness of time, he is still to perform, before he surrenders up this kingdom, and these are reducible to three heads; 1. The enlargement of his empire. 2. The resurrection of the dead. And, 3. The judgment of the world at the last day.

The enlargement of Christ's kingdom.

1. IF we consult the antient prophecies concerning the vast extent of our Saviour's kingdom, that <sup>a</sup> the stone cut out without hands (by which all agree the kingdom of Christ is signified) should become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth, and that it should break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms; that <sup>b</sup> the Lord should be King all over the earth; that <sup>c</sup> he should have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the end

<sup>a</sup> Dan. ii. 34, 35, 44, 45. <sup>b</sup> Mich. v. 4. <sup>c</sup> Psal. lxxii. 8.

end of the earth ; that all kings should fall down before him, and all nations serve him ; and <sup>c</sup> that all the ends of the earth should remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations worship before him, because the kingdom shall be the Lord's, and he shall govern the nations : if we consider these, and several other prophecies of the like import, I say, we shall find that there are a great many of them which, as yet, were never accomplished ; and thereupon must conclude that there is a time to come, before the consummation of all things, wherein our Saviour will, once more, display the glorious banner of his cross, and like a mighty man of war march on conquering, and to conquer, till he has either confounded or converted his enemies, and finally completed his victory over all the powers of the earth.

I AM not unensible that some expositors are of opinion that the prophetic expressions of this nature have reference only to Christ's coming in the flesh ; and the progress which his gospel afterwards made, and, even to this day, is still making in the conversion of the world ; <sup>d</sup> but, upon a diligent comparing of things, we shall find that they must of necessity have a more extensive meaning, if we intend, that the interpretation should answer either the height and greatness of the words, or the weight and dignity of the matter spoken of. Many indeed of the heathen world were converted in the days of the apostles, but that conversion was not general : those, who were then called, were but the first-fruits of that complete calling of Pagans to christianity, which is to be a little before the conversion of the Jews ; <sup>e</sup> for I would not, brethren, says the apostle to the Gentiles, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved. The blindness of the Jews, and the salvation of the Gentiles, the apostle here calls a mystery, and in this he intimates that the persons he wrote to did not comprehend the design of God in this matter ; and therefore he unfolds this secret of providence by acquainting them that God took occasion, from the obduration of the Jews, to communicate the gospel to the Gentiles, in order to convert them to the faith ; and so, by calling of them, to provoke the Jews afterwards to accept of the gospel, that they, in like manner, might be saved. But then, whether this be spoken of a general conversion, towards the end of the world, or only of the great numbers converted by Christ and his apostles, at the first publication of the gospel (as some are apt to imagine) comes now to be considered.

AND, in order to a right understanding of this matter, we must observe that the scripture acquaints us with a two-fold calling,

By the conversion of the Gentiles,

<sup>c</sup> Psal. lxxii. 11. <sup>d</sup> Edwards's Survey of Religion, Vol. II. <sup>e</sup> Rom. xi. 25, 26.

calling, or conversion of the Gentiles, † the one partial, and the other total; the former of these was when the Jews were rejected, viz. in the time of our Saviour and his apostles, and when the Gentiles were called in to supply their room; the latter, which is here named the Fulness of the Gentiles, denotes a full body of them which is to come in, some time or other, before the conclusion of the world. This is set forth in the parable ‡ of the great supper, where the Jews were the guests that were bidden, but, upon their refusal, the servants were commanded to go into the streets, and the lanes of the city, and to bring in the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind: these were the Gentiles, who, in the apostles times, and ever since, have been converted to the christian faith. But after this is done, it is said, there is still room, viz. for more converts to christianity; and therefore the servants are bid again to go out into the high-ways, and hedges, and to compel them to come in. Here is a plain distinction between the former and latter conversion of the Gentiles: after the first invitation and entertainment, there was more room, which intimates at least, that there was a second calling; and (what makes very much to our present purpose) the second company is compelled to come in to the supper of the Lord, that his house may be filled; that the church may be compleated and made intire, which it could not be, without the conversion of the Gentiles at last.

and Jews.

THAT, soon after the conversion of the Gentiles, the Jews, who (notwithstanding their frequent dispersions over the face of the earth) have still remained a distinct and separate people, shall be converted likewise to christianity, and so become one fold, under one shepherd and bishop of their souls, is plain from all those passages which assure them of God's remembering the covenant made with their forefathers; which promise them an happy restoration and establishment in their own land; and foretel a glorious and flourishing state of religion that will then succeed among them. <sup>b</sup> When they are 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; for I am the Lord their God: <sup>c</sup> There shall come therefore out of Zion a Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for <sup>k</sup> the Lord shall set his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth: <sup>d</sup> in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign to the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious; for <sup>m</sup> if the fall of the Jews (as the apostle argues) be the riches of the world,

<sup>a</sup> Edwards's Survey of Religion, Vol. II. <sup>g</sup> Luke xiv. 16. &c. <sup>h</sup> Lev. xxv. 43, 45. <sup>i</sup> Isa. lix. 20. <sup>k</sup> Isa. xi. 11, 12. <sup>l</sup> Ibid. ver. 10. <sup>m</sup> Rom. xi. 12.



world, and the diminishing them be the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?

IT is not to be denied indeed but that some of the texts usually cited out of the Old Testament to prove the general conversion of the Jews, are to be understood of the temporal deliverance of that people from captivity; and that others of them relate to their conversion, in our Saviour's time, when multitudes of them renounced their own religion, and acknowledged Jesus to be the true Messiah: all this cannot be denied; and yet any unprejudiced person may take notice of other places, both in the Old and New Testament, which point at the national conversion of the Jews, before the conclusion of the world; \* nor can he forbear observing that some of those texts which foretel their return from Babylon to their own land, and others which speak of their turning from Judaism to christianity, at the first propagation of the gospel, are also to be understood of this universal recovery of them at the time of this enlargement of Christ's kingdom: it being no uncommon thing, in the prophetical writings of the Bible, to have a two-fold historical meaning in the same passage, one primary, and chiefly intended, the other secondary, and included.

THUS, by the accession of both Jew and Gentile, the whole world will be Christendom, and all the kingdoms of the earth become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ: and how this great event will be brought about (by comparing the several prophecies together) we may be allowed to conjecture— That when, in the revolution of ages, the time appointed for this mighty work shall come, ° the scene will probably open with some such miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost as was at the first beginning of christianity, but far more general and extensive: the missionaries, and such as are employed in the conversion of infidel-countries, shall then perhaps be endowed with the same powers that were bestowed upon the apostles and first christians, the gift of tongues, of curing diseases, working miracles, and speaking the word of God with all boldness: Christ will then open unto them a door of utterance, will give them the same zeal and fervency of love, the same patience and perseverance in labour, the same innocence and exemplariness of life (which was so conspicuous in the primitive ages) to recommend his religion: and, as he has the hearts of princes in his hand, and the issues of providence at his command, by the kindly operations of his Spirit, and an happy conjunction of national affairs, he will dispose them to a favourable reception of that doctrine, which, besides its intrinsic worth, has the advantage of so good a recommendation: by these, and sundry other means in the secrets of the divine counsel, † the Gentiles shall come to his light, and kings in the phrase of the prophet) to the brightness of

How this  
will be ef-  
fected.

\* Edwards's Survey of Religion, Vol. II. † Scott's Mediator. ‡ Isa. lx. 3, 4.

of his rising : he shall lift up his eyes round about and see ; all they gather themselves together, and come unto him ; his sons shall come from far, and his daughters shall be nursed at his side.

WE may be allowed to conjecture farther that this wonderful conversion of the Gentiles shall raise the inquisitiveness of the Jews, and (as the apostle expresses it) provoke them to jealousy. They shall begin (what they have long neglected) to examine into the merits of a religion, which has made so great a revolution in the world ; and, laying aside their prejudice against it (without the preaching of Enoch and Elias, and without the personal appearance of Christ in the clouds) shall happily receive conviction from the labours of holy men, animated by a spirit of godly zeal, and unfeignedly endeavouring to promote the welfare of their immortal souls : and being once convinced of the error and wickedness of their infidelity, with one heart and mind they shall return to the Lord, and with penitent tears wash off the guilt of the blood of their Saviour ; for this is the sense of the prophecy where Christ himself is introduced as speaking, I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a spirit of grace, and of supplication ; and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and mourn, as one mourneth for his only son, *i. e.* they shall heartily bewail the execrable wickedness of their forefathers, who put the blessed Jesus to death, and as sincerely grieve that they themselves crucified him by their sins.

The happiness of his state.

THE Jews being thus converted by the power of Christ, shall return into the Holy Land, and be repossessed of their native country, where (as the prophet expresses it) they shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places ; while the rest of the christian world (for the world shall be all then christian) shall enjoy an universal peace, and a concurrence of all temporal blessings in this happy state : they shall come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. \* All angry and mischievous passions, that now set the world in a flame, shall then be extinguished, and a quiet and peaceable temper interfere, not only among rational creatures, but even the most savage brutes ; for \* the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down

q Rom. xi. 11. r It was the opinion of Tertullian, Chrysostome, Theodoret, and several other fathers (in which they are followed by the doctors of the Roman church) that the calling of the Jews before Christ's coming to judgment shall be chiefly effected by the preaching of Enoch and Elias s It is the opinion of some, that, in order to the Jews conversion, Christ will make a visible appearance, in a bright and glorious manner, seated upon the clouds ; but the texts on which this opinion is founded relate rather to his coming to judgment t Zech xii. 10. u Isa. xxxv. 10. \* Vid. Burnet's Theory, Vol. II. and Edwards's Survey, Vol. II. x Isa. xi. 6. I am very sensible that these words are by most commentators understood of that inward change which shall be

down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fating together, and a little child shall lead them, &c. All antipathies shall then cease, and they shall be restored to that harmlessness and innocence they had at the first creation. In this happy period of time, righteousness as well as peace shall abound, and virtue and godliness become the habit of every mind. Religion shall then be restored to its antient purity, and piety and goodness be received as the prevailing fashion. All lying and falsehood, all guile and dissimulation shall then disappear, and the true faith, the sincere sanctity, the generous and unaffected virtue, which christianity teaches and prescribes, shall be the universal livery and cognizance of the christian world. Thus fraught with every blessing, both spiritual and temporal, with peace and righteousness, with joy and triumph, external prosperity and internal sanctity, shall the latter end of the Messiah's reign be: and (what will consummate his subjects blifs) this happy state of things shall some way or other (though we cannot define the precise manner of it) be enlivened and enlightened by his own divine presence; for so we read in the Apocalyptic vision, that, *v* upon the New Jerusalem's coming down from heaven, a great voice was heard, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

WHEN this prosperous state of Christ's kingdom will commence, is neither so easy nor so safe a matter to determine, since those that have attempted the computation have hitherto miscarried, and perhaps have given ill-minded men an occasion to disbelieve all the other prophecies in the Apocalypse; because the period of this, which was stated with so much confidence, is eventually found to be untrue. In the general we know that the restoration of Christ's kingdom will begin when the seventh and last angel soundeth his trumpet, for then shall *z* the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ; but when this last angel shall perform that office, we are utterly ignorant; only we may surmise, that if the ex-

When it  
shall begin.

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altation

be made in mens minds and hearts, by the powerful influence of the gospel: but I see not much foundation for such an interpretation; nor is there any reason to fly to a metaphorical sense of a text, when it appears that there is a literal one. The prophet here gives us an account of the peaceable kingdom of Christ, which should happen in the close of the world; and (among other things) he tells us that this is a part of it, viz. that there shall be a change in the very nature and qualities of brute animals; that the wolf, the leopard, the lion, the bear, the serpent, the adder, creatures remarkable for their fierceness, should become as tame as lambs, kids, or calves; should lie down and dwell and feed together; neither prey upon one another, nor do any hurt to men. Nothing could be said more plainly to express the great blessing and privilege of these last days, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; which being the very next words, do manifestly shew what period of time they relate to. Edwards's Survey, Vol. II. *y* Rev. xxi. 3. *z* Ibid. xi. 15.

altation of Christ's kingdom is to ensue upon the destruction of the four general monarchies (as we have grounds from the prophet Daniel <sup>a</sup> to believe it will) then is the fourth monarchy, *i. e.* the Roman, which is now translated to the Germans, and become but a mere name and title, so wearing off, that we have room to suppose the time of Christ's enlarging his kingdom, *i. e.* of making a more illustrious manifestation of christianity, and a more visible and glorious display of its power and virtue than was ever yet in the world before, is at a nearer distance than what the present face of affairs may seem to promise. For who knows <sup>b</sup> but that impiety and irreligion are now making their last efforts before that glorious day arrives; that an universal profaneness may usher in an universal holiness and purity; and the divisions and contentions in churches and states may be forerunners of a general quiet and repose?

That it is  
not yet  
past.

THAT this happy period <sup>c</sup> is not past, we may satisfy ourselves by considering, that, from the birth of christianity to this present age, there never yet were a thousand years which deserve the name, or answer the character of this pure and pacific state. <sup>d</sup> The first ages of christianity, as they were the most pure, so were they the least peaceable. Being continually more or less under the persecution of heathen emperors, they were so far from being the reign and empire of Christ and his saints over the nations, that christians were then every where in subjection and slavery, a poor helpless people, thrust into prisons, or thrown to the lions, at the pleasure of their princes or rulers. When the empire indeed (much about the fourth century) became christian under Constantine the Great, there was for a time peace and prosperity in the church, and a good degree of purity and piety; but that peace was soon disturbed, and that piety soon corrupted. The growing pride and ambition of ecclesiastics, and their easiness to admit and introduce superstitious practices, destroyed the purity of the church; and, as to the peace of it, their contests about opinions and doctrines tore christians themselves into pieces, and soon after an inundation of barbarous people fell into Christendom, and put it all into flames and confusion. After this eruption of the northern nations,

<sup>a</sup> Dan. ii. <sup>b</sup> Edwards's Survey, Vol. II. <sup>c</sup> It is nevertheless the opinion of many learned and pious men, that this period of Christ's reign is expired; the cause of which I apprehend to be this—That, being prejudiced against the doctrine of the old Millenniums, and looking upon it (and that justly) as a groundless and scandalous opinion, they were willing to resolve the thousand years into some past time, rather than into any that is to come, and thereby utterly quash that fond conceit of Christ's personal reign upon earth. This was an ill method they took, but their great dislike of the other opinion occasioned it, and in some measure pleads their excuse: whereas had they rejected what is amiss in the doctrine of the Millenniums, and retained what is true in the general, *viz.* that there shall be a future state of the christian church more glorious than what has hitherto befallen it, they had taken the right course, and asserted a truth that is founded in the sacred scriptures. Edwards's Survey, Vol. II. <sup>d</sup> Burnet's Theory, Vol. II.

tions, Mahometanism rose in the East, and swarms of Saracens, like armies of locusts, invaded, conquered, and planted their religion in several parts of the Roman empire, and of the christian world. In following ages they over-ran the Eastern empire and the Greek church; and to this very day hold that miserable people in sad slavery and subjection. Thus providence seems to have ordered affairs that the christian world should never enjoy a perfect rest, should never be without a woe upon it, lest it should fancy itself already in those happy days of peace and prosperity which are reserved for future times.

FROM this short account of the state of Christendom we may learn, that this happy term of Christ's reign, when Satan shall be imprisoned, and virtue and innocence in the throne, is not yet begun, though we cannot determine when it will; but, from a surer word of prophecy we may inform ourselves that, whenever it shall begin, its duration shall be a thousand years: for "I saw an angel come down from heaven, says St John, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should not deceive the nations any more till the thousand years should be fulfilled. I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God—and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." In all which, and several other places that might be produced, no reason can be given why a precise and determinate number of years should be so often mentioned, unless that the Holy Spirit's design was to instruct us that this happy and glorious scene was to continue a thousand years.

But when begun, will last a thousand years

I AM very sensible what use learned men in several ages of the church have made of the foregoing passage, to establish the doctrine of a Millennium, or personal reign of Christ and his saints upon earth, for the space of a thousand years, some time or other, before the conclusion of the world. 1. Here, say they, is mention of the first resurrection, antecedent to the general resurrection of the dead. 2. This resurrection is proper to those that were slain for the testimony of Jesus, and were not worshippers of the beast. 3. And that this resurrection is not metaphorical, but a proper resurrection, we are told that the souls, *i. e.* the persons of them that were slain live again. 4. Since therefore they are to reign with Christ a thousand

The doctrine of the Millennium.

e Rev. xx. 1, &c. f Edwards's Survey, Vol. II. g Whitby's Treatise of the true Millennium.

thousand years, their reign they infer must be upon the earth, because the whole scene (as appears by the context) is laid there: from which positions they raise this doctrine—"That  
 " after six thousand years in this world are compleated, all the  
 " faints (some say only martyrs) shall arise, their bodies come  
 " out of their graves, or wherever else they were, and their  
 " souls come down from heaven to re-inform them; that Christ  
 " also should descend from thence and keep a jubilee with them,  
 " reigning in inconceivable splendor, and subjecting all other  
 " kingdoms to his empire; that in this state, the righteous en-  
 " joying an abundance of the good things of this world, shall,  
 " in order to fit and prepare them for the beatific vision, spend  
 " their time in devotion and contemplation, till a thousand  
 " years be run out; and then (after some space of time) all  
 " the rest of mankind shall rise from the dead, and proceed to  
 " judgment."

In some  
 sense con-  
 futed.

IT cannot be denied indeed but that this doctrine has <sup>h</sup> its antiquity, and (as <sup>i</sup> an antient father acquaints us) was once the general opinion of all orthodox christians; and yet upon a close inquiry, it seems not so very consistent with what the scriptures affirm concerning our Saviour, <sup>k</sup> that the heavens must receive him, until the times of the restitution of all things; nor does it at all comport with the received notions of the happy state of souls departed. For how can it rationally be supposed that <sup>l</sup> those spirits of just men made perfect, which are now with Christ, and, <sup>m</sup> being absent from the body, are present with the Lord, should ever leave those blessed mansions and quit that happy state to live on earth a thousand years? That they who are already entered into rest, and enjoy all the delight and satisfaction which paradise itself affords, should relinquish that sta-  
 tion,

<sup>h</sup> The original of the Millenary opinion is commonly imputed to Cerinthus, and its refinement to Papias, who is mentioned by Irenæus, as having received it from St John, but without any just grounds. If we would be exact in its pedigree, we may trace it up to the Jews long before Christ's time; for it was an antient tradition and persuasion amongst them, that the Messias should reign a thousand years on earth in all pomp and grandeur. [Vid. Talm. Babyl. in Cap. Helec; R. Eliezer in Midrash Tillin; and Lightfoot in Harm. Rev. xx.] "The opinion of Christ's personal reign, in the affluence of  
 " all sensual and worldly delights, was an old Jewish error, says St Jerome,  
 " and hence the christians, converted from Judaism, borrowed and retained  
 " the notion:" And indeed it was retained a considerable while in the church, and for the first three hundred years after the apostles, was almost universally believed. At length the credit of Papias, who was thought to be the first broacher of it, was called in question; and, as he was a man of weak judgment and small learning, Eusebius tells us, that he reported many strange and fabulous things, and not rightly understood the apostles arguings. St Jerome and St Augustine were the first who wrote against this Millenary reign, which was soon after condemned by the fathers of the Greek and Latin church, and has ever since been looked upon as an heterodox opinion; till about a century ago, some anabaptists revived it, and, since that time, several learned men, both in our own and foreign churches, have taken great pains to maintain it.

<sup>i</sup> Justin Martyr, Dialoꝑ. cum Tryph. <sup>k</sup> Acts iii. 21. <sup>l</sup> Heb. xii. 23. <sup>m</sup> 2 Cor. v. 8. Phil. i. 27.

tion, in order to enjoy peace and plenty upon earth? Can they expect to be more righteous and holy, to have more divine and heavenly speculations, or a more full fruition of their Lord on earth than they enjoyed in paradise? If not, who can suppose that God should thus degrade them after so long enjoyment of these happy regions, or that they themselves should voluntarily quit those blessed abodes for any temporal enjoyments whatever; much less to fight and wage war, as they necessarily must when <sup>a</sup> Gog and Magog gather them to battle, and compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city. <sup>o</sup> And if these things seem not consistent with the state of happy souls in general, much less will they comport with these especial privileges and high prerogatives supposed by some fathers to belong to the souls of martyrs, viz. that they instantly receive their crowns, and are admitted to a fuller vision, and a more intimate enjoyment of God in heaven; for the higher their advancement is, the greater must their degradation be when they return again to live in this sublunary world. If this intermediate space between their resurrection and full fruition of heaven be thought necessary, <sup>p</sup> that by degrees they may enlarge their capacities, and fit and accustom themselves to receive God, <sup>q</sup> it sounds not so well that the martyrs should want capacity to enjoy the beatific vision, without employing their contemplations and devotions upon earth a thousand years; nor can it be imagined how coming down from those celestial regions to this dull earth, can be a way to elevate the soul to heaven; or putting on a corruptible body, a body needing plenty of earthly things, and finding pleasure in the fruition of them, can be any tolerable expedient to quicken and invigorate her heavenly flights and aspirations.

SINCE therefore the doctrine of Christ's personal reign upon earth is loaded with so many inconsistencies, there is a necessity for understanding that passage in the Revelation in a figurative sense; and if we reduce it to a literal meaning, it will denote no more than this—<sup>r</sup> “ That though christians in preceding ages  
 “ were cruelly and inhumanly treated by their merciless persecutors; though Christ's kingdom in those times laboured  
 “ under great and unspeakable miseries; yet upon the entrance  
 “ of the joyful Millennium (for there shall be on earth such a  
 “ Millennium, though not of that nature which either ancient  
 “ or modern Chiliaists assert) all those troublesome and afflictive  
 “ things shall cease; the faithful shall be put into the possession  
 “ of an undisturbed repose and serenity; the christian church,  
 “ after its sore troubles and mortifications, shall revive; shall, as  
 “ it were, rise out of its grave; and (as our excellent Hammond  
 “ paraphrases on the place) there shall be such an universal  
 “ profession

<sup>n</sup> Rev. xx. 8, 9. <sup>o</sup> Whitby's Treatise of the true Millennium. <sup>p</sup> Burnet's Theory, Vol. II. <sup>q</sup> Whitby, *ibid.* <sup>r</sup> Edwards's Survey, Vol. II.

“ profession of christianity, as if all the departed good christians  
 “ were alive again, and come upon the stage of this world once  
 “ more :” For it is no uncommon thing in scripture to represent the restoration of the church, and her return from a low afflicted state, under the metaphor of a resurrection from the dead ; for so, speaking of the Jewish nation, ‘ I will open your eyes, says God, and cause you to come out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

THE other two regal acts which Christ has still to perform are the resurrection of the dead and the judgment of the world ; but of these we shall have occasion hereafter to treat at large, and shall only take notice at present † that when our blessed Lord shall have finished this last and most glorious act of royalty, viz. judging the world, and hath finally condemned to everlasting fire the irreclaimable enemies of God, and crowned all his faithful servants with eternal glory and beatitude ; then will the whole business of his mediatorial kingdom be at an end ; then will the covenant, of which he was the mediator, be completely executed, and consequently his mediation cease, as being of no farther use, and having no farther part to act. For, as our beatific vision will supersede the necessity of his prophetic office to teach and instruct us ; and as our perfection and intire fruition will supersede the necessity of his priestly office, to offer and intercede for us ; so the security of our possession of both will supersede the necessity of his kingly office, to protect and defend us ; and therefore when our affairs are once reduced to this happy issue, his kingly office, as well as all other parts of his mediatorship, shall for ever cease ; † then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall put down all rule, and all authority, and all power ; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, &c. and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, which did put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

The sur-  
rendering  
up his king-  
dom.

IN the mean time, \* that God might govern us in a way more accommodated to this degenerate state of our nature ; that he might more effectually prevent the danger of idolatry, more powerfully encourage our obedience, oblige us to himself by a stronger tie of gratitude, and give us a more ample assurance of that inestimable reward which he hath provided for us, his wisdom and goodness is very remarkable, in constituting his eternal Son to be our king, and his vicegerent here on earth ; so that, of all other people, christians have the greatest reason to take up the words of the Psalmist, and say, † the Lord is king, the earth may be glad thereof, yea the multitude of the Isles may be glad thereof ; for righteousness and judgment are  
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† Ezek. xxxvii. 13, 14. † Scott’s Mediator. u 1 Cor xv. 24, &c. \* Scott, ibid. x Psalm. xcvi. 1, 2.



the habitation of his seat. Of all others, christians have the greatest reason to bear up under adversities of what kind soever, those especially which they suffer for his name's sake, being assured that our Jesus, our Saviour, is in heaven; not only a merciful high-priest, sensible of our wants, and compassionate of our infirmities, but a king likewise, invested with all power and all authority, and consequently both able and willing to save to the uttermost those that by faith implore his assistance, and, holding fast their profession, flee to his throne in any pressing juncture, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help them in the time of need.

### S E C T. III.

#### Of the Sacraments of the New Covenant.

**T**HE word *sacrament*, though not to be met with in the holy scriptures, became of early use in the christian church; and being taken, most probably, from among the Romans, <sup>a</sup> is generally supposed to denote these three things, 1. A military oath which soldiers took in order to assure their officers of their courage and fidelity. 2. A badge or token, whereby soldiers were distinguished, according to the commanders they served under. And, 3. A pledge or pawn, deposited by the party impleaded, in order to oblige him to answer the plaintiff, upon the peril of forfeiting so much money. And, in all these senses, some have thought the word very proper to denote those sacred ceremonies which are used in the christian service; since by them (as by a solemn oath) we engage ourselves to become the faithful soldiers and servants of Christ, the captain of our salvation, unto our lives end; by them (as by a visible badge) are distinguished from all societies of men that are not christian; and by them (as by an holy pledge) are assured of God's grace, and all the other benefits of the covenant which Christ has purchased for us with his blood, whenever we sue to him for the performance of his promises.

The meaning of the word Sacrament.

IT cannot be denied indeed but that the word *sacrament*, as it is usually translated from the Greek *μυστήριον*, is, <sup>b</sup> by the Latin fathers, set to signify almost any thing that carries with it an hidden meaning, or some sacred representation; and from this lax signification of the word, those who multiply the number of sacraments have taken occasion to infer—that, because confirmation, by the laying on of the hands of the bishop, implies

The number of them.

<sup>y</sup> Heb. iv. 16. <sup>a</sup> Newcome's Sermons. <sup>b</sup> Thus we read of the sacrament of the cross, in St Austin; the sacrament of martyrdom, in St Jerom; the sacrament of virginity, in Leo; and the sacrament of prayer, of weeping, of fasting, in St Hilary; for Signa (says St Austin) cum ad res divinas adhibentur, sacramenta vocantur, Lib. iii c. 6. de Doct. Christ.

plies the conveying of grace to enable us to perform our baptismal vow ; because holy orders, by the same ceremony, import the conferring of the Holy Ghost ; matrimony represents the mystical union between Christ and his church ; penance is a sign and help to repentance ; and extreme unction signifies and seals the remission of sins ; they are therefore all to be reckoned in the number of sacraments : whereas the same fathers, when they express themselves with more caution upon this subject, confine the proper sacraments to the definitive number of two only ; for our Lord Jesus Christ, says St Austin, has united christians together by sacraments, few in number, easy of observance, and excellent in signification, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

What are  
not sacra-  
ments.

AND indeed if we consider the nature of a sacrament, as it is described to be an outward and visible sign, which Christ instituted to exhibit and assure us of those graces and benefits which he, by his meritorious blood-shedding, has procured for us, we shall soon perceive that the other supernumerary rites or offices are, in a great measure, destitute of the characters which are required in a sacrament. <sup>a</sup> Confirmation, we own, is an apostolic institution all along continued in the church, and of singular use to such as were baptized in their infancy ; but yet we cannot allow it to be a proper sacrament, because it was neither of Christ's own appointment, nor has it any outward and visible sign, to which an inward and spiritual grace may be supposed to be annexed. Ordination indeed, or the calling and separating proper persons for the work of the ministry, is an institution of Christ, and in the same manner continued by us, as he and his apostles settled it in the church ; but in this we see nothing adequate to a sacrament. The laying on of hands, is only a gesture in prayer, which denotes the designation of the person to prayed over, and the grace which is therein conferred, is only the blessing of God upon a particular employ not common to all christians (as we presume all sacramental graces should be) nor, consequently, any part of that federal blessing which our Saviour has purchased for us. Marriage, we grant, is an honourable estate, instituted by God in paradise, and capable to signify the mystical union between Christ and his church ; yet, wanting an outward sign, to which, by Christ's promise, a blessing is annexed, and being not generally necessary to salvation (since those who affirm it to be a sacrament inhibit some sort of persons the use of it, and account such as make vows against it more holy than other christians) it cannot come under the denomination of a sacrament. To be humble and contrite under  
the

<sup>c</sup> Dominus noster leni jugo suo nos subdidit, & sarcinæ levi ; unde sacramentis, numero paucissimis, observatione, facillimis, significatione præstantissimis, societatem novi populi colligavit, sicut est baptismus trinitatis nomine consecratus, communicatio corporis & sanguinis ipsius, & siquid aliud in scripturis canonicis commendatur, Epist. ad Jan. 118. <sup>d</sup> Buract on the articles

the sense of our offences, to make confession of them to God; in case of injury, to men; and sometimes, in case of doubt or trouble of conscience, to a minister likewise; and to have open and scandalous offenders rebuked before all, that others may fear the like chastisement, and reform; is what we own and practise as necessary parts of christian discipline; but since in all this there is no sign established by Christ, to which divine grace belongs, we dare not pronounce such penance sacramental; nor can we believe but that a contrite sinner, who has made a proper acknowledgment of his sins, and by the assistance of grace reformed his life, may receive an effectual pardon from God, whatever becomes of the doctrine of auricular confession. † To call for the elders of the church, in case any was sick, and to let them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord, we acknowledge, was a practice in the days of the apostles, and proper enough at that time, when a miraculous power of healing all diseases attended the apostolic function; but, since this anointing was not of Christ's institution, nor had any relation to the good of the soul; since the apostles made use of it, not as a sacramental conveyance of any benefit, but only as a symbol, accompanying a miraculous power peculiar to their age; we have sufficient reason for rejecting extreme unction, and for accounting the eucharist (as the antients always accounted it) the only viaticum of christians in their last passage.

THE two ordinances then, wherein the characters of a true and proper sacrament meet, are Baptism and the Lord's Supper; the one, the sacrament of initiation, to receive us into Christ's church, and entitle us to the privileges of it; and the other, the sacrament of confirmation, to keep and preserve us in it, and to convey to us the benefits to which we are entitled: and it is no small prejudice against enlarging the number of them, ‡ that, till the XIIth century, they were never reckoned seven, nor till the XVth, was their number established by any council; and it seems no improbable conjecture that the thing which gave occasion to the innovation was that mystical expression of the <sup>b</sup> seven spirits of God in the Revelation, from whence there arose a conceit of the seven-fold operation of the spirit, whereof to assert seven sacraments might be fancied a good illustration.

WHENCE the true sacraments of the christian religion had their original it will be no hard matter to perceive, if we do but consider, that, as our blessed Saviour was himself a Jew, and born under the Jewish œconomy, it is reasonable to suppose

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that

<sup>c</sup> 1 Tim. v. 20. <sup>f</sup> James v. 14. <sup>g</sup> Peter Lombard, a writer of that age, is the first that reckons seven of them, and the council of Trent was the first that confirmed that number; for so their decree is [Sess. 7. Can. 1.] If any man shall say that the sacraments are more, or fewer than seven, or that any one of these seven is not truly and properly a sacrament, let him be anathema. <sup>h</sup> Rev. i. 4. and iv. 5.

The two sacraments.

Their original.

that he should imitate the usages of his countrymen, and adopt many of the rites and ceremonies into christianity, the more easily to induce them to embrace his doctrine and discipline. That the Jews never received any person into their covenant as a profelyte, *i. e.* one who had come over from Pagan idolatry to their religion, without a baptism, <sup>i</sup> is manifest from the testimony of such as are best conversant in their writings: that priests and Levites, entering upon their office, were to be sanctified by washing with water, and new-born children, and such as had contracted any legal defilement, were to be purified by the same ceremony, <sup>k</sup> we see plainly prescribed by their law: and, that it was usual for persons who were conscious to themselves of having transgressed God's laws, upon the invitation of any one commissioned by God to repentance, and amendment of life, to be washed by him, in testimony of their stedfast purpose so to do, and in hopes of regaining the favour of God, appears very probable from the undertaking <sup>l</sup> of John the Baptist, which seems to have been no novel and uncommon thing. This practice then of washing, in so many cases, and to so many purposes customary among God's people, <sup>n</sup> our blessed Saviour (who never favoured innovations) was pleased to assume, and impose upon the disciples and followers of his religion: and, in like manner, that the sacrament of the Lord's-supper had its rise from the postcœnium used by the Jews, in the close of their passover, is evident from several chief circumstances wherein they agree. For as, when the paschal lamb was eaten, it was usual for the company to rise and wash their feet, in order to sit down to a fresh collation, or second course; whereupon the master of the family takes unleavened bread, and blesses it, and breaks it, and gives to every one a piece; after which he takes a cup, and blesses it, and so drinks to one of the company, that he may send it round; and in conclusion all sing some Psalms, which they call the great Hallel: so, in the institution of the eucharist, we find our blessed Saviour, after eating the paschal lamb, rising from supper, washing his disciples feet, and then beginning a new entertainment; breaking bread, and distributing it; sending the cup of wine round the company, and in the conclusion singing an hymn: which actions so nearly resemble the customs of the Jews, that there is no question to be made but that our Saviour borrowed this ordinance likewise from them; only

<sup>i</sup> That the Gentiles, converted to Judaism, were baptized after they were healed of their wound in circumcision, is manifest from what the learned Buxtorf says in his *Synagoga*: from the writings of Scaliger (*de Emend. Temporibus*) Ludovicus Capellus, Thorndike, Lightfoot, and others who were well skilled in the Hebrew customs, it is evident that the Jews used baptism, or washing, in initiating both the native Jews and the heathen profelytes into their congregation; and that the christian baptism was borrowed from the like usage among the Jews, the learned Seiden particularly proves in his *Treatise De Synedriis*, L. I. c. 3. <sup>k</sup> Exod. xxix. 4. Numb. viii. 6. Lev. xv. 8, 16, 18, 27, &c. <sup>l</sup> John i. 25, 33. <sup>n</sup> Acts xxii. 16.

only improving it to spiritual purposes, and exalting the effects and virtue of it, far above what it was in its original.

Now one of the purposes, for which sacraments were instituted, was to be outward and visible signs of our entrance into covenant with God, and of renewing that covenant with him. For if covenants between man and man be made with all the formality of witnesses, of hands and seals, and delivery in solemn and express words; if men know themselves too well to trust one another without this solemnity, it may well be expected that when God is pleased to permit them to enter into covenant with himself, he should not receive them under less obligations of caution and security for their integrity than men are wont to use among one another; since every breach of covenant with him is infinitely more affronting and sinful than any breach of covenant with man can be. And as these outward signs serve to raise our attention, and fix our minds, and to put us in remembrance that heaven and earth, angels and men are witnesses against us, if we prove treacherous and unfaithful in this covenant; so they are as tokens and pledges to us of God's love and favour, and give us sensible and visible assurances of that grace which is invisible and spiritual. It is not a little in the nature and temper of man to be better pleased and contented with something present and in hand, though of small value and insignificant in itself, as a token and pledge of what is made over to him, than with the greatest promises and protestations, without any thing as earnest to confirm them. Now what is inward and invisible is absent as to sense, and what is future stands in need of something present to represent it to us; and therefore God, who was pleased to bind himself by an oath, that he might be wanting in nothing which might help our infirmities, and assist our faith, has been pleased, for our farther comfort and trust in him, to appoint visible signs and pledges of that which is invisible; and to give such assurance to our very senses, as they are capable of, that all the promises of his spiritual blessings shall as certainly be fulfilled to us, as the outward signs and pledges, which he hath appointed, are duly received by us.

The reasonableness of them.

NOR are these sacraments only signs and tokens of spiritual blessings which God will confer on us; but they are appointed as means likewise and instruments of grace and salvation to us, that, as the body partakes in the moral actions of virtue or vice, so it might concur in the religious acts ordained for our sanctification; that the soul, even in this case, where it is more immediately concerned, might not be wholly independent on the body; but since both must be happy or miserable in the next world, both might be assistant in the way and means of salvation in this. In a word, that sacraments are not mere ceremonies,

Their effects.

only

only to maintain order and unity in the church of Christ, but means instituted for the conveyance of grace and spiritual benediction to well-disposed receivers, is evident from the testimony of the scriptures, which attribute such effects to them, as are the immediate issues of the graces they are set to signify, <sup>p</sup> the washing of sin by Baptism, and <sup>q</sup> the communion of the body and blood of Christ by the Lord's Supper.

WE are not however to imagine that the sacraments work physically, or necessarily, and infallibly confer grace; it is in our own disposition that their efficacy lies; and <sup>r</sup> to pretend that they operate any other way is, in effect, to introduce the doctrine and practice of charms into the christian religion, to dissolve all obligations to piety and devotion, to holiness of life, and purity of temper, when the being in a passive, and perhaps insensible state, while the sacraments are applied, is thought a disposition sufficient to give them virtue. It is our comfort and consolation indeed, that the efficacy of these ordinances depends not upon the intention or worthiness of the person that administers them; but then we are to remember that neither does it depend upon the bare application of them. They operate in a moral way; are intended to raise and quicken our affections, not supply our defects; and therefore become the means and instruments of grace only to the worthy receiver; for the baptism <sup>s</sup> which saveth us, says St Peter, is the answer of a good conscience towards God; and they who communicate in the other sacrament unworthily, <sup>t</sup> says St Paul, not discerning the Lord's body, purchase to themselves damnation.

## OF BAPTISM.

The institution of baptism.

**H**OW well soever the Jews might be accustomed to the rite of baptism, <sup>u</sup> yet the institution of it, as it is a federal act of the christian religion, must be taken from the commission which our Saviour gave his disciples; <sup>\*</sup> go ye and teach, or make disciples to me of all nations (for so the original is to be rendered) baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; where he authorises his disciples to administer this sacrament, and consequently, obliges all persons to make use of it. This he repeats again; <sup>\*</sup> go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; where he enjoins this sacrament as a condition of salvation, and lets all men know,

<sup>p</sup> 1 Cor. x. 16. <sup>q</sup> Burnet on the Articles. <sup>r</sup> Sacraments are to be considered as the public acts of the church: and though the effect of them, as to him that receives them, depends upon his temper, his preparation and application, yet it cannot be imagined that the virtue of these federal acts to which christians are admitted in them, the validity of them, or the blessings that follow them, can depend on the secret state or temper of him that officiates. Burnet on the Articles. <sup>s</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 21. <sup>t</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 29. <sup>u</sup> Burnet, *ibid.* <sup>\*</sup> Matth. xxv. 19. <sup>x</sup> Mark xvi. 15, 16.

know, that, unless they make open profession of the christian faith, and join themselves to the church by this ordinance, they exclude themselves from life and happiness: <sup>y</sup> Except a man be born of water, says he again, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; where he makes the ordinary and appointed way of entering into the evangelical at least, if not the celestial state, to be baptism, made effectual by the spirit of regeneration.

AND here, in our way, we may perceive the difference (though <sup>z</sup> some are unwilling to perceive any) between the baptism of John and that of our Saviour's institution. The stipulation of John's baptism was repentance, but Christ's, the belief of the whole christian religion: in John's, a profession was made in the belief of a Messiah soon to appear: in Christ's, a declaration that Jesus was the Messiah: those <sup>a</sup> who were baptized unto John's baptism, received no effusion of the Holy Ghost, nor any instruction in the great mystery of christianity, the doctrine of the Trinity; whereas those that were baptized into Christ's were vouchsafed both. In a word, the baptism of John was preparative to that of Christ; a dawning, as it were, and imperfect beginning to the other; even as he who administered it was like the morning-star before the Sun of Righteousness.

The difference between John's baptism and Christ's.

UPON this institution and commission given by Christ, the apostles, we find, went up and down preaching and baptizing: and so far were they from considering baptism only as a carnal rite, or a low element, above which an higher dispensation of the spirit was to raise them; that, even when St Peter saw the Holy Ghost had descended upon Cornelius and his friends, he nevertheless thought proper to baptize them: <sup>b</sup> Can any man forbid water, saith he, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we? Where he plainly teaches us that the baptism of water is not to be excluded by the baptism of the Spirit, for when this latter had fallen upon Cornelius and his friends, why was the other to be superadded, but that, in the apostle's esteem, it was an ordinance of sacred institution, and not to be superseded upon the account of any gifts or illuminations whatever? <sup>c</sup> It must therefore be a sad perversion of the sense of the words, to say, because the Baptist declares, <sup>d</sup> I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, that therefore there is no need of water-baptism under the gospel, since the only baptism of Christ's institution is that of the Spirit. The words are no more than a plain prediction of a miraculous event, which was literally fulfilled

The Quakers notion confuted.

<sup>y</sup> John iii. 5. <sup>z</sup> Calvin, and several others of his sentiments. <sup>a</sup> Vid. Act. xix. 2, &c. <sup>b</sup> Ibid. x. 47. <sup>c</sup> Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. <sup>d</sup> Matth. iii. 11.

fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles in the shape of fiery tongues. To this event they are expressly applied; as indeed to apply them to any other, would put us under some difficulty to interpret what can be meant by baptizing with fire: and though they may give some grounds for distinguishing between spiritual and water baptism, yet they afford none at all for separating them. They teach us indeed that, after Christ's coming, the gifts and graces of God's holy Spirit should attend the ordinance of baptism; but that these gifts should vacate the ordinance itself, of this they give us no manner of intimation; and the man must be extremely partial to his own opinion who can read, <sup>e</sup> in the book of the Acts, no less than fourteen or fifteen times, of the administering of baptism, and find it therein distinctly set down, who were the persons, in what manner, and with what matter, they were baptized; and yet continue his persuasion, that external baptism, thus founded on the precepts of Christ, confirmed by the example of the apostles, and established by the constant and universal practice of the church ever since, is no evangelical ordinance, nor of any significancy under the spiritual dispensation of the gospel.

BUT enough has been said to shew this sacrament to be a divine ordinance: the next things we are to consider are, 1. The persons, by whom: 2. The persons, to whom: and, 3. The manner in which it is to be administered: and so proceed, 4. To inquire into the privileges and benefits which we receive thereby, and the duties we promise to perform.

The persons by whom baptism is to be administered.

1. THAT the eleven apostles were the persons to whom our blessed Saviour gave the original commission of baptizing, is plain from the account we have of it in scripture. <sup>a</sup> Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them: and Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and earth; go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. That the apostles gave commission to bishops, presbyters, and deacons (for Philip, who was but a deacon, <sup>b</sup> we read, baptized the eunuch, and much more may we suppose it of the two superior orders) is evident from the history which records their transactions: <sup>c</sup> that the bishops, as their immediate successors, were invested with the same authority, and, in the following ages of the church, communicated the like power of baptizing to persons admitted to the like offices; and, in

<sup>a</sup> Acts i. 5. <sup>b</sup> Vid. Acts ii. 41. viii. 12, 13, 16, 36, 38. xviii. 8. xix. 5. <sup>c</sup> i. 16. and 1 Cor. i. 13, 14, 15, 16. <sup>d</sup> Matth. xxviii. 16, 18, &c. <sup>e</sup> Acts xii. 22. <sup>f</sup> Laurence's Lay baptism invalid.



in short, that the christian ministry was, all along from the apostles time, conveyed in episcopal hands only, we shall hereafter have an occasion to evince, both from the consent of all ecclesiastical history, and the constant and uninterrupted practice of the universal church of Christ, in all ages and places, for one thousand five hundred years together, from the apostles days. What we are chiefly concerned in at present is to know, “ Whether any persons but such as are episcopally ordained have right to administer baptism in the christian church; and, in case of any usurped and unauthorized administrations, whether they are of any efficacy to entitle the receivers to the same benefits which regular administrations do, are not rather null in themselves, and of no significancy at all.” These are questions, that, of late, have been revived and agitated with more heat than perspicuity; but to give them the best resolution that we can, we shall first produce the strength of the arguments on both sides, and then consider to which of them it is that the evidence of truth seems most to incline.

I. THOSE who deny the validity of lay-baptism, \* make the divine authority of the administrator (consisting, they say, in episcopal ordination) one of the essential parts of the sacrament itself, and no more to be omitted than either the matter or form of the administration; because every essential part of a divine institution is of equal obligation and necessity: and hereupon they argue—That since God, under the Mosaic dispensation, made the divine authority of the administrator an essential part of his positive institutions, so as not to accept the performance of them from any hands but such as were appointed to the office, as is evident in the case of Corah and his company; since Christ himself, notwithstanding his many personal excellencies and perfections, would not leave his private station of life, wherein he continued above thirty years, to take upon him so great an office, until he received his commission and inauguration thereunto by the hands of John the Baptist; since, in the very words of the institution of baptism, our Lord <sup>b</sup> commissioned none else but his eleven apostles, and their successors and substitutes, to baptize all persons capable of baptism, even unto the end of the world; since the very form of administration, in the name of the Father, and by the authority of the Trinity, requires, and supposes the divine authority of him, that administers; since the benefits of baptism are so great and supernatural that none can be presumed capable of conveying them but such as are authorized by him who appointed it; and, lastly, since, in reality,

Arguments  
against lay-  
baptism,  
from scrip-  
ture and  
reason.

\* Vid. Laurence's Lay-baptism invalid, and Bret's Sermons against Lay-baptism. <sup>k</sup> It is in the very nature of a commission to be exclusive of all others but those to whom it is given; for it is well known, that when a prince gives a commission to any one of his subjects for the execution of some great office, it is with a design to appropriate that office to that particular subject, that none may act in it but he, and those whom he shall appoint. Laurence, *ibid*.

reality, it is Christ himself, who baptizes us by the ministry of those, whom he has delegated to that office, which nevertheless he cannot be said to do, if he does it by one whom he never sent: since all these premisses are true, say they, and not to be denied without manifest inconsistencies and contradictions, it must necessarily follow, that the divine authority of the administrator of baptism is an essential part of that holy institution, and constantly to be observed, wherever the institution takes place; and from hence they infer, that whoever is destitute of such authority, has no right to administer about holy things; and consequently, that all his offices of this kind are of no more force or validity than if a bold pragmatist should pretend to administer the great affairs of the kingdom, without any commission or designation from his prince. For <sup>1</sup> when every other office of trust and power, whether in a civil or military capacity, is conveyed unto men by some form of admission, and solemn investiture; it is scarce to be supposed, say they, that the great and weighty offices of sending up the prayers of the people, of blessing the congregation, of administering the word and sacraments, absolving the penitent, ejecting the criminal, and of working together with God for the salvation of souls, should be left to the direction of every one that has pride and presumption enough to assume them.

From the  
practice of  
the primi-  
tive church

FROM the sense of the scriptures, they proceed to the practice of the primitive church; and, to this purpose, they produce the Apostolic Constitutions (as they are called) (<sup>m</sup> “prohibiting all laymen to perform any sacerdotal office) as the sacrifice of the eucharist, or baptism, or imposition of hands, &c. For no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God; which call is by the laying on of the bishops hands; but he that taketh it to himself without commission, shall sustain the punishment of Uzzias.” In extraordinary cases of great necessity, and where a public minister could not be procured, they deny not indeed but that laymen were sometimes permitted to baptize; but then they affirm, <sup>n</sup> that it was always done in subordination to a legal power, by persons living in communion with the church, and having the consent and approbation of their bishop for so doing; otherwise the act was declared null and invalid, and the party on whom the unwarrantable baptism

<sup>1</sup> Cumber on the Ordination-office. <sup>m</sup> Vid. Const. Apost. Lib. ii. c. 27. Lib. iii. 10, &c. <sup>n</sup> “Thus the council of Eliberis [Anno 305. Can. xxxviii.] declares, that any christian, who is neither penitent (*i. e.* under penance) nor a bigamist, may baptize in case of necessity, those who are on a journey, being at a great distance from the church, upon condition that he present him to the bishop, if they survive, to be perfected by the imposition of hands.” But here it is to be observed, that this canon is plainly to be restrained to such as were in communion with, and lived in subjection to their bishops; and therefore, supposing this antient council had been a general one (which certainly it was not) yet the lay-baptizers among us, who act in opposition to episcopacy, can receive no authority from this canon. Laurence’s Lay-baptism invalid.

baptism passed, whenever he became a convert to the church, was certainly re-baptized. About the middle of the third century, there arose a dispute in the church concerning the validity of baptism administered by such as were then heretics and schismatics, wherein St Cyprian, with the rest of the African, and not a few of the Eastern bishops, maintained, “ that catholic bishops were obliged to condemn all such baptisms, and to account them null and void; consequently, they were not immediately to confirm, but first to baptize such, whenever they came over to the Catholic, and only salutary communion.” But allowing, that, in cases of necessity, laymen may be tolerated to baptize, and that the baptism of heretics and schismatics, returning to the communion of the catholic church, might be confirmed by the imposition of the bishop’s hands, because these, even in the time of their defection, always acknowledged Episcopal authority; yet when persons say they, purely in opposition to such authority, and in countries abounding with regular ministers, where no plea of necessity can be urged, set themselves up to administer this sacred ordinance, that such administration is of no effect, we have the opinion of \* St Basil, bishop of Cæsarea, that those whom a laic baptizes are to be re-baptized; the testimony of • St Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople, that baptism can no more be administered by a laic than the eucharist; and the canonical injunction of one who lived very near the days of the apostles, the glorious martyr and bishop of Antioch, St Ignatius; † “ Let the sacrament, says he, be judged firm and effectual, which is dispensed by the bishop, or him to whom the bishop has committed it. It is not lawful, without the bishop, to baptize, or celebrate the other offices but what he approves, according to the good pleasure of God, that is firm and safe.”

FROM the customs and opinions of the antient church, they pass to the doctrine and practice of our own; and hereupon they argue—That since, in her twenty-third article of religion, she affirms, That it is not lawful (whereby she means sinful and contrary to the very institution of sacraments) for any man to take upon him the office of administering them, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same; since, in the preface of her form and manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of bishops, priests, and deacons, she manifestly confines this lawful calling and sending to Episcopal ordination; since, in her twenty-sixth article, when she teaches, That the minister, dispensing the sacraments, does it in Christ’s name, and by his commission and authority, she plainly calls this Episcopal ordination Christ’s Commission and Authority; since she will not admit any dissenting teachers, desirous to join in her communion, into the number

The practice and doctrine of our own.

of her lawful ministers, until they be divinely authorised by the imposition of Episcopal hands, thereby signifying her sense of the invalidity of their former ministrations; since, lastly, she requires every one (without any exception for cases of necessity) to be baptized by a lawful minister, and has provided no office of confirmation for those who have received baptism from lay-baptizers; but, on the contrary, a very proper one for their admission into her communion, viz. the ministration of baptism to such as are of riper years, and able to answer for themselves: since these, they say, are the doctrines and declarations of our church, the divine authority of the administrator of christian sacraments is, in her opinion, an essential part of their institution, and those that pretend to dispense them, wanting such authority, are both unqualified for the office themselves, and unable to confer upon others those great and supernatural blessings which God has annexed to the regular performance of it. For if the effect be spiritual (as our learned Taylor expresses it) the agent must be so too.

The consequences of each opinion.

FROM the doctrine and practice of our church, they come at last to inquire into the consequences of each opinion; and hereupon they observe—That to allow the validity of lay-baptism, is, in effect, to destroy the whole ministry of the christian priesthood, and to open a door of licentiousness to all intruders into that sacred office. For if the baptisms of the laity be thought valid, then may their administration of the Lord's-supper, and much more their teaching and preaching to such congregations, as they can gather to themselves, be thought so too; and if this be the consequence, then farewell all rule, order, and authority in the christian church; the distinction of persons is at an end; and Christ's setting therein some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the work of the ministry, and the perfecting of the saints, is become a fruitless design. It is in vain to preach to such as dissent from our communion, the danger of schism, or causeless separation, when, by allowing the validity of their uncommissioned teachers ministrations, we give them an argument to confound all that we can say for their conviction: nay, it will be in vain to say that such lay-administrations must be confirmed by the bishop before they can be valid sacraments. For if it be demanded, by what authority the bishop requires such ministrations to be confirmed, and

q Vid. Rubricks in the ministration of private baptism. r Hickeys Letter to Mr Laurence. The occasion of making this office, in the preface before the Common prayer, is declared to be the growth of anabaptism; but there are many other cases in which it is equally useful, and ought to be applied, as in the case of those adult persons who had the misfortune to be baptized, but not in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; or, if in their names, yet not in their names as a real, but nominal trinity, as I suppose the Bedellists, who were a numerous sect at the restoration in some parts of this kingdom did; and the Socinians now do. Ibid. s Ductor Dubitantium. t Eph. iv. 11, 12.

and he cannot produce sufficient testimonials from the scripture to this purpose (as it is much to be feared he cannot) his pretending to the thing will be a jest, and the separatists conclude themselves as much in the church as the bishop himself, while they administer and receive as good sacraments as he, and he cannot prove their lay-administrations necessary to be confirmed or rectified by the imposition of his hands. But now, on the contrary, to maintain, “ That, in the sacraments of the christian church, the divine authority of the administrator is an essential part; that the priest is as much the representative of God the giver, as the outward elements are of the graces given; and that consequently, these latter are no christian sacraments, when separate from God’s authorized representative, the priest:” this is the most probable way to make men tender of the unity of the church, and cautious how they separate from her; when, how far soever a vain curiosity may prompt them to follow lay-teachers, the consideration of their being destitute of christian sacraments will be a powerful means to deter them from withdrawing from the communion of the christian priesthood.

THOSE, on the other hand, who maintain the validity of lay-baptism, place all the weight of their argument, not on the quality of the administrator, but on the matter and form of the administration: they suppose, that if the party be baptized with water, and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it destroys not the efficacy of the sacrament, though the person officiating be a mere layman; and for the proof of this they suppose a strict analogy between christian baptism and Jewish circumcision, and thereupon they argue—That, since the original commission, given the Jews to circumcise, did not exclude the laity from the right of circumcising, or appropriate it to any distinct order of men; since Christ, in the words of the institution, does not, in express terms, confine baptism to the administration of his apostles and their successors, so as that none can dispense true baptism but they, and such only as they shall authorize: since the divine authority of dispensing orders, and, together with them, a power of administering sacraments, is still in dispute, whether it be vested in the episcopate only, or not equally in the presbytery, which makes the foundation of baptism precarious; since the necessity of baptism is so great that there is no obtaining salvation without it, and any expedient may be made use of rather than suffer a person to go unbaptized; since God desires mercy rather than sacrifice, and will not permit a defect in some small circumstance to cancel an action, when the great essentials of his institutions are observed; since what ought not to be done, may be valid, when done, and every usurpation in the administrator may not destroy the effect

Arguments  
for lay-  
baptism  
from scrip-  
ture.

of

of his administrations, <sup>u</sup> as is evident in the case of Caiaphas, the sacrilegious and usurping high-priest, <sup>\*</sup> whose authority our Saviour nevertheless owned, and whose oblations the people nevertheless relied on: since these things are so, say they, we see no reason why the character of the person officiating should be essential to this sacrament, or why the baptisms of our anti-episcopal dissenters, and of some foreign churches, who are destitute of Episcopal ordination, should not be esteemed good and valid; for, are not all christians, in the apostle's opinion, <sup>x</sup> an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ? And may not our Saviour's words concerning the man who cast out devils in his name, and yet did not follow him, in some measure be applicable in this case, <sup>y</sup> forbid him not; for he that is not against us, is for us?

The practice of the primitive church.

FROM the sense of the scripture, they proceed to the practice of the primitive church; and herein though they grant that in ordinary cases laymen were always debarred from meddling with the administration of baptism, <sup>z</sup> yet, that in cases of extraordinary exigence, and where no public minister could be procured, they were permitted to do it, is evident, say they, from the testimony of <sup>a</sup> Tertullian, <sup>b</sup> St Jerom, <sup>c</sup> St Austin, and several other antient fathers; the determination of the council of Eliberis in the west, and of the church of Alexandria in the east; all agreeing <sup>d</sup> in his position, "That in time of necessity, when a bishop, a presbyter or other minister could not be found, and a man desired baptism who was in danger of death, in that case laymen were used to give them that sacrament, which they themselves had received, rather than that he should die without it." The baptisms of such heretics as denied the doctrine of the Trinity (wherein the very form of the ordinance consisted) they own indeed were accounted null; but whosoever preserved the form intire, and baptized into the faith of this holy mystery, their baptisms were always accounted valid, even though they separated from the communion of the church, and held principles of a dangerous nature in other respects. Nay, <sup>e</sup> even jocular and ludicrous baptisms,

<sup>u</sup> Burnet on the Articles. <sup>\*</sup> John xviii. 22, 23. <sup>x</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 9. <sup>y</sup> Luke ix. 50. <sup>z</sup> Bingham's History of Lay-baptism. <sup>a</sup> De Bapt. c. 17. <sup>b</sup> Cot. Lucif. 4. <sup>c</sup> Apud Gratian. de Consecrat. Dist. 4. c. 2. <sup>d</sup> Can. 38. <sup>e</sup> Whilst Alexander bishop of Alexandria, on a certain day, being the festival of Peter the Martyr, after the solemn service of the church was over, was entertaining himself with a prospect towards the sea, he chanced to espy a company of boys at play, whereof Athanasius acted the bishop, others priests, and so proceeded to baptize several children, who represented Catechumens and Competents in form. Alexander, observing them for some time, sent at last for the boys to be brought before him, and understanding, from their own relation, that this ludicrous baptism of theirs was performed according to the rites and orders of the church, was of opinion, with other bishops present with him, that the children so christened were not to be re-baptized, whereupon he confirmed them with christ and imposition of hands. This story is related by Socrates [Lib. i. c. 15] Sozomen [Lib. ii. c. 17.] and Rufinus [Lib. i. c. 14.] who says he had

baptisms, when administered in their proper form, though unauthorised and irregular in the administrator, were accounted effectual to the persons baptized, and accordingly ratified by episcopal hands; if the credit of some very antient historians may be relied on. "For it is the name of the Trinity," says "Optatus, and not the work of the agent that sanctifies the mystery, and ministers of baptism are labourers only, not lords of the action."

FROM the practice of the primitive church, they proceed to that of our own; and here they alledge that in the old liturgy, in the time of king Edward, and queen Elisabeth, the rubric of primitive baptism running in these words, "First let them that be present call upon God for his grace, and say the Lord's prayer, if the time will suffer: and then one of them shall name the child, and dip him into the water, or pour water upon him, saying these words, *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;*" that the rubric, I say, running in such general terms, gave toleration to laymen to baptize children privately without a public minister: and though, after the conference at Hampton-court, this office was restrained to the minister of the parish, or some other lawful minister, to preserve better order and regularity; yet that baptism, even when administered by illegal and unauthorised persons, such as dissent from our communion, and set themselves up in opposition to Episcopacy, is not absolutely null and void, and as such to be repeated by a lawful minister, in order to obtain salvation, is evident from the practice of our church, which not only holds communion with churches abroad destitute of Episcopal ordination, but even receives schismatical converts (on whom the true form of baptism has past, notwithstanding the default of the administrator) into her bosom, without any thoughts of rebaptization: For "though the defect of the baptizer," says our learned Hooker, may make the sacrament without fruit, as well in some cases to him that receiveth as to him that giveth it; yet no disability of either part can so far make it frustrate and without effect, as to deprive it of the very nature of true baptism, having all things else which the ordinance of Christ requireth."

The practice of our own.

AND indeed, if the being and efficacy of a sacrament depended upon man, so that none but a priest, every way qualified without

The consequences of the contrary opinion.

exception. had it from the mouth of those who conversed with Athanasius himself: Of later years it is confirmed by Whitgift, Abbot, Cotelerius, Pagi, and many other learned men that might be named; though Dr Cave, in his *Historia Literaria*, Du Pin, in his notes on Athanasius, in his *Nouvelle Bibliotheque*, and the learned Benedictin, in the life printed before Athanasius's works, in some mens opinion are thought to have exploded it. Vid. Bingham's *History*, and Hickeys Letter to Mr Laurence. His words are these: Non dixit (nempe Jesus) apostolis, vos facite, alii non faciant. Quisquis in nomine Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti baptizaverit, apostolorum munus implevit—Ergo nomen est quod sanctificat, non opus, &c. Cont. Parmen. Lib. v. g. *Eccles. Polit. Lib. v.*

exception, might be allowed to baptize, <sup>b</sup> how dreadful would the consequence be? How many foreign reformed churches, which have no Episcopal ordination, would be effectually unchurched, as being destitute of a christian ministry, and consequently of christian baptism? How great a part of faithful and pious christians would in this case want the seal of their christianity? Or who could be certain that himself was baptized in every respect as he ought to be? One who was never ordained may take upon him the person of a priest; one who was never baptized may be admitted to holy orders: or, if he was baptized and ordained, he may be consecrated by a bishop that was no lawful bishop, nor had any authority to give the power of imposition of hands to others: in all which cases, how great must the doubt and perplexity be which will attend the generality of christians, if the being and efficacy of this sacrament depend upon the person that administers it: and therefore to conclude with an illustration of this matter, taken from the example of preaching; “ he that speaketh the words of the scripture (says <sup>i</sup> a learned divine of our church) and expoundeth them, may be said to preach though he be not thereunto called; which likewise holds good in the administration of the sacraments. For as the word of God is the word of God, by whomsoever it is preached, minister or no minister; so the sacrament of baptism is true baptism, by whomsoever it be celebrated; the usurper of the office hath to answer for his intrusion, but the sacrament is not thereby defiled.”

The determination of the whole.

IF this may be thought a good decision of the controversy, (as indeed in such a silence of scripture, and contrariety of opinions on both sides, it will be no easy matter to find out a better) then will the result be, that though every one who usurps the office of baptizing, which belongs not to him, is a great transgressor in the sight of God, and all his acts are vain as to what concerns himself; (for they shall never be accounted to him as an acceptable service worthy of a reward, but rather expose him to divine wrath and punishment) yet are they not therefore utterly null and void in respect of the receiver also; he shall not be so far a sufferer as to become no christian by reason of the other's default; though it will be thought no breach of charity, I hope, to place him in the same rank and capacity with those antient schismatics and heretics, <sup>k</sup> whose baptism, if done in due form, entitled them to some privileges, but not all that might have been expected from it in the church; made them members indeed of Christ's visible body, but did not convey to them internal and invisible grace, particularly <sup>l</sup> the grace of unity and charity, which completes all other graces, and which men of their dispositions were not supposed

<sup>i</sup> Abbot, Prælect. 2. de Bapt. <sup>j</sup> Whitgift's Defence of the Answer to the Admont. Tract. 9. <sup>k</sup> Bingham's History of Lay-baptism. <sup>l</sup> Bingham, *ibid.*



posed qualified to give, nor they who desired baptism at their hands qualified to receive, till they returned with repentance to the bosom of the church, and had the defect of their baptism supplied by (the only method made use of in the primitive church) the imposition of the bishop's hands.

AT the first preaching of the gospel, the main body of christians consisted of those who had by the apostles preaching been converted from the Jewish, or from the Gentile religion to the christian; and these were consequently baptized into the name of Christ, after they were come to riper years: but afterwards, when the christian religion had spread itself over whole countries and nations, the church consisted chiefly of such as were born of christian parents, and educated from the beginning in the christian religion, and these were generally, even in the primitive times, admitted into the church by baptism in their infancy: but because the baptizing of infants, which our church defends, has been a dispute of some continuance, and of late especially, on both sides managed with a great deal of art and dexterity; it may not be improper first to state the arguments which oppose this practice in a fair light, and then endeavour to give them a satisfactory solution.

THOSE who reject the baptism of infants are earnest to maintain, "That there is no such analogy between circumcision in the Jewish, and baptism in the christian church, as to draw a parallel between them;" and that the custom of baptizing proselytes, and, together with them, their wives and children, into the communion of the Jews, has no manner of relation to us, nor should be any rule for our procedure. The only direction of our behaviour in this particular, say they, is the institution of Christ, but in it we find no mention made of little children, nor in any other portion of scripture; on the contrary, all those passages wherein baptism is commanded, do immediately relate to adult persons, since they only can be supposed capable of that repentance, and faith, and instruction, which are the necessary qualifications for the reception of this ordinance. Instances of baptisms indeed there are several in the history of the apostles, but no one can be produced from whence it may clearly be gathered that infants were the subject of that sacrament; and if we descend to the sense and practice of the antient church, though it could be proved that the doctrine of Pædobaptism was universally maintained, yet even would not that be of authority enough to bear down the plain institution of Christ: whereas, on the contrary, it is manifest that this doctrine is so far from pretending to antiquity, that in the earliest times there are several authors who make no mention

The persons to whom baptism is to be administered.

Arguments against infant baptism.

“ tion of it, some that utterly reject it ; nor was it ever asserted  
 “ by any council till that of Carthage, which was almost four  
 “ hundred years after Christ. It is no hard matter then to  
 “ conceive how the practice of Pædo-baptism came to be in-  
 “ troduced, when once the doctrine of the absolute necessity of  
 “ baptism in general began to prevail : for if none but the  
 “ baptized were to be saved, it is no wonder that parents, led  
 “ by the tenderness of their affections, were willing upon very  
 “ slender grounds to be persuaded to a practice which might  
 “ put them out of pain, in a matter so near to them as the  
 “ salvation of their childrens souls.”

Fully an-  
 swered.

THIS is the substance of what the antipædo-baptists have to say ; and (to give them a proper answer) it is to be considered that though baptism and circumcision do not in every particular come up to a parallel, yet there are two things wherein they manifestly agree ; the one is, that both were the rites of admission into their respective covenants, and to the blessings and privileges which arose out of them ; and the other is, that in them both there was an obligation laid on the persons to the observance of that whole law, to which they were so initiated. Parents had (by the Jewish constitution) an authority given them to include their children under this obligation ; so that the will of the child was so far put in the power of the parents, that they could bring them under federal obligations, and thereby procure to them a share in federal blessings : and hence very probably it was that when the Jews made profelytes, they considered them as having the like authority over their children, and therefore, upon their request, first circumcised and then baptized them, though they were but infants.

Profelytes  
 baptized in  
 the Jewish  
 church :

THAT it was a custom of the Jews, before our Saviour's time (and, as they themselves affirm, from the beginning of the law) to baptize as well as circumcise any profelyte that came over to them from other nations ; and, in case such a person had any infant children then born to him, that they at their father's desire, were in like manner circumcised, and baptized, and admitted as profelytes, is manifest from the incontestible evidence

o Burnet on the Articles o Gal. v. 3. p Wall's History of Infant-baptism. q I shall here add some authorities to what were mentioned before. In all ages when an Ethnic is willing to enter into the covenant, and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God, and take upon him the yoke of the law, he must be circumcised and baptized, and bring a sacrifice ; or, if it be a woman, be baptized and bring a sacrifice. Maimonides Ifuri Bia, c. xiii. When a profelyte is received, he must be circumcised, and then when he is cured (of the wound of circumcision) they baptize him in the presence of two wise men, saying, Behold, he is an Israelite in all things. Talmud. Babyl. Mafs. Jevamoth, Fol. 47. If with a profelyte his sons and his daughters be made profelytes, that which is done by the father redounded to their good. Gemara Baby. Chetuboth, c. i. fol. 11. If any is desirous of more authorities of this nature, he will find plenty in Ainsworth on Gen. xvii. and Hammond on Matth. iii. xix. xxiii. John iii. In Selden, de Jure Nat. et Gent. Lightfoot Hor. Hæbr. and in the learned author of the Discourse concerning Lent. Pt. II. c. ii.

evidence of their writers. The incapacity of the child to declare or promise for himself was not looked on as a bar against his reception into the covenant, but the desire of his father to dedicate him to the true God was accounted available, and sufficient to justify his admission: and the reason they give is, because the things they were admitted to were undoubtedly for their good; for one may privilege a person, say they, though he be incapable of knowing it, but one ought not to disprivilege any one without his knowledge and consent.

Now this gives great light for the better understanding the meaning of our Saviour, when he bids his apostles go and teach all nations, baptizing them: for when a commission is given in such short words, and there is no express direction what they shall do with the infants of those who become profelytes; the natural and obvious interpretation is, that they must do in that matter as they and the church in which they lived always used to do. Since therefore our blessed Saviour took baptism, and appointed it to be the federal admission to his religion, as circumcision had been in the Mosaic dispensation; it is reasonable to believe that except where himself declared a change, in all other respects it was to go on, and continue as before. Had infants indeed never had the seal of the covenant applied to them, it had been not only expedient, but necessary, that our Saviour should have particularly named them, and thereby declared his intentions of enlarging his mercy and loving-kindness towards them; but infants being ever included in it, and the seal of the promise being always applied to them, there could be no reason for giving them a new title to what they were initiated in before. On the contrary, had it been Christ's design that children should no longer be received into the church, he should by an express order have excluded them; for they having a former grant of being admitted into covenant, and being in actual possession of the sign and seal of it, there was a necessity of an express and direct command to deprive them of it; and our Saviour must have declared, "That, whereas children were formerly received into the covenant by circumcision, he now ordered the contrary, and would have none admitted into the church by baptism but grown persons, capable of understanding the nature and end of it." But since we meet with no declaration of this kind, and know that it would have been inconsistent with the mercy of the gospel, which was not to straiten but widen the gates of the church, and make it more capacious to receive people of all nations, sexes and ages; we may safely conclude, that if infants were admitted by the old dispensation, they are not to be excluded by the new.

Which illustrates the words of the institution.

VOL. II.

N n n

THAT

Childrens  
right to the  
covenant.

THAT in the church of the Jews † infants were a part of those who entered into covenant with God, is evident from that memorable passage in Deuteronomy, where Moses tells the Israelites, † Ye stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God, your little ones, and your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee: and, that in the christian church, children in like manner are under the covenant of grace, is more than intimated in St Peter's exhortation to such persons as he had converted, that they would receive baptism, in order to make their children likewise capable of it; because \* the promise was made to them and to their children, *i. e.* the promise of remission of sins, and of receiving the Holy Ghost (mentioned immediately before) which appertained to the covenant, belonged both to them and their children. Now, † if the promise and covenant belonged to these latter, then is there no question to be made but that baptism, which is the seal of the covenant, and the visible confirmation of the promise, belongs to them likewise: and, if infants have a covenanted right to baptism, we may safely infer that Christ never intended to debar them of it; and consequently, though they are not expressly named, yet they are certainly implied in the commission of baptizing all nations. For, † since the universal includes all particulars, and children make up a very considerable part of all nations, the words of the commission may reasonably be supposed to comprise them; nor can we forbear concluding, when we read † of whole families baptized, but that there must of course be several children among them; especially when it is considered farther, that children are no improper objects of baptism.

They are  
capable of  
the ends of  
baptism.

THEY cannot indeed understand the nature and end of that institution; but neither were the Jewish children, at eight days old, able to know what the purpose of circumcision was. They have no actual faith of their own, but the faith of those who present them in the congregation, is imputed, and themselves are sanctified by being born of believing parents. They have no manner of room for repentance, but then they have innocence, which is a much better qualification; and though they cannot stipulate for themselves, yet have they proxies and sureties (of early institution, † both in the Jewish and christian church) to contract in their names, whose act is looked upon, and

† Hopkins's Doctrine of the two Sacraments. † Deut. xxix. 10, &c. \* Acts ii. 39. † Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. † Hole's Exposition of the Church Catechism. † The word *oikos*, which in this case is rendered household, without doubt is of a very large signification, and takes in every individual person of the family, women as well as men, children as well as grown persons; and therefore we have reason to believe that when this word is used, persons, not only of both sexes, but of different ages, are contained in it, and are to be understood by it. Edwards, *ibid.* † Wall's Infant-baptism, Introduction, Sect. 34. and P. I. c. 4. P. II. c. 9.

and accepted by God, as theirs. In the mean time, that infants and young children (though insensible of what is done for them) may have favours conveyed to them, and are capable of receiving spiritual advantage to their souls, is plain from that passage in the evangelical history, where, when <sup>b</sup> young children were brought to Christ, he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them; namely, <sup>c</sup> by praying for a blessing, by pronouncing a blessing, and by actually conferring a blessing on them; and if they are capable of being blessed, why should they be thought incapable of being baptized; since baptism, in the main, is but a solemn benediction, as it institutes us in the privileges and benefits of the gospel, such as adoption and grace, the pardon of our sins, and the acceptance of our persons?

In short, <sup>d</sup> the covenant of grace is a deed of gift made to us by Christ, wherein he promises to bestow upon us eternal life and happiness: and, as it would be absurd to say that a child's name ought not to be put into any deed or legacy until he came of age to understand it; so it is equally absurd, and far more injurious, to exclude our children from the heavenly legacy which Christ, out of the riches of his goodness, hath bequeathed to them; especially considering, <sup>e</sup> that the primitive church did all along, and <sup>f</sup> every national church at this day in the world does admit their children into the christian covenant by this ordinance; that <sup>g</sup> many of the most antient writers plead the necessity of it, in order to the expiation of original guilt, and <sup>h</sup> speak of it as a great sin in parents, or others, that have opportunity, to suffer any child under their care, or any other person, to die unbaptized. <sup>i</sup> It is plain, from what we read, that these writers had considered the reasons which the Antipædo-baptists now alledge as objections against baptizing infants, that they have no sense, no faith, no actual sin, &c. and yet they did not account them of validity enough to withhold their children from this salutary institution; and though, for the more orderly administration of this sacrament, it was enacted, that none should be baptized but at certain times of the year; <sup>k</sup> yet they always excepted infants and sick persons, and for this reason <sup>l</sup> many of them allowed laymen to baptize in case of necessity.

The practice of the primitive church.

NAY, so universal was the practice of infant-baptism, that for the first four hundred years after Christ (as <sup>m</sup> a very good judge has drawn up the account) there appears but one man, namely Tertullian, who seems to discountenance it; and that, not upon account of its being any way unlawful, <sup>n</sup> but merely because he thought it more expedient to have it deferred till children had attained to some measure of knowledge. Hereby

Infant-baptism universal.

however  
<sup>b</sup> Luke xviii. 15. <sup>c</sup> Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. <sup>d</sup> Hopkins's Doctrine of the two Sacraments. <sup>e</sup> Vid. Wall's History, P. I. passim. <sup>f</sup> P. II. c. viii. <sup>g</sup> P. I. passim. <sup>h</sup> Ibid. c. iv, vi, xv, xviii, &c. <sup>i</sup> Ibid. c. xiv, xv, xix. <sup>k</sup> Ibid. c. xvii. <sup>l</sup> Ibid. c. iv. <sup>m</sup> Ibid. ad finem. <sup>n</sup> Ibid. P. I. passim.

however he confirms us in the opinion that this kind of baptism was the received practice of the church (because we find him arguing against it, and pretending to give reasons for its delay) and consequently, that there is a great deal of truth in what St Austin tells us, viz. that he never heard, nor read of any christian, catholic, or sectary, but what always held that infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins; and therefore we need less wonder that we find so little mention of it in several antient books, and so little notice taken of it in the decrees of councils, when the thing was so practised, and allowed on all hands, that there was never any controversy started about it, but what has sprung up within these few years.

and for  
what rea-  
son.

It is a wrong suggestion then to say that the opinion of the absolute necessity of baptism (which never prevailed till after the Pelagian heresy arose) gave occasion to the practice of baptizing infants, which, from the beginning, was never intermitted in the christian church; but that it was the tenderness of the parents love which constrained them to dedicate their children to God so very young, is a true assertion: and well it were that the like tender affection would provoke some among us to consider seriously the nature of this sacred rite, and so endeavour to overcome the prejudices which they unhappily have conceived against it. It may seem a mean thing perhaps for an infant to be sprinkled with a little water; but let us look on the author and institutor of this sacrament; remember his design in it, and then it will no longer appear low and contemptible: for with Christ's appointments there goes a special power and virtue; his institutions and ordinances are accompanied with a blessing, yea, with a multitude of inestimable blessings: and therefore why should any of us be such enemies to those whom we pretend to love unfeignedly, and so negligent of their safety, as not speedily to deliver them from the guilt and danger of original sin, rescue them from the power of the prince of this world, and place them under the guardianship of God

and  
o Contra Pelag. p About the year 1130, there arose a sect among the Waldenses (a nick name given to the first reformers) which declared against the baptism of infants, as being incapable of salvation. But the main body of them rejected that opinion, and they who held it quickly dwindled away, and disappeared; nor was there any more heard of that tenet till the rising of the German Antipædo baptists, Anno 1522. Wall, P. II. c. vii.

q This heresy was not breached till the year of Christ 410: and their principal point, relating to baptism, was—that the doctrine of original sin, and natural corruption, by which persons are supposed to be born under a necessity of sinning, do cast a reflection on the honour and justice of God, who gives us our being; and therefore they said—that the baptism of infants was not for any good they had, but to gain them admittance into the kingdom of heaven. For they supposed that children, though they were not baptized, were to have an eternal and happy life, not in the kingdom of heaven indeed, because our Saviour (John iii. 5) had determined the contrary; but in some other place, though they could not describe where: and this engaged their adversaries (and among the rest St Austin) to carry the necessity of baptism, in order to salvation, to a degree of absoluteness a little too severe. Wall's History, P. I. c. lxxx.

and good angels? Why so regardless of their true honour and interest as to delay our adopting them into the family of God, in order to have them translated into the kingdom of his beloved Son? Can the christian be thought so much a better and more gracious covenant than that of Moses, supposing it to exclude so many millions of souls which this other readily received, nay, peremptorily demanded? And is it not enough that these are not positively refused, to satisfy us that though the ordinance be changed, yet the subjects and privileges of it continue still the same? Why then do any of us undertake to make the gate yet straiter, to shut up the mercies, and lessen the family of God? Why represent the blessed Jesus less kind than Moses? No, let us rather lose no moment's time of impressing on our offspring the seals of the new covenant: let us make the best reparation we can for the stain and guilt we conveyed to them, by seeing them immediately washed in that fountain opened by Jesus Christ for sin, and for uncleanness, even the laver of regeneration, the sacrament of baptism. Let us deliver them up to his care, who is gracious to all ages, and cannot but embrace and adopt the tender innocence of those, who are propounded as a pattern to all, that enter into the kingdom of heaven. And are those, to whom all who enter in must be like, not capable of entering in themselves? Never let such a thought harbour in our breasts: only, withal, let it be our constant business to second and confirm these good beginnings by timely instruction, and a virtuous education. For dreadful will their condemnation be whose own bowels shall rise up against them at the day of judgment, and upbraid them with that cruel fondness which laid the foundation of their vices, and their torments: but blessed are those pious souls who increase the kingdom of God with every addition to their own family, and double every joy in heaven to themselves by those of the children whom they have led, or sent before them thither; by a race of good men here, and glorified saints hereafter. And so we proceed to consider,

An exhortation to parents.

3. THE manner in which baptism was used to be administered. And to this purpose we must in the first place observe, that the two things which were indispensibly necessary (we speak now of the baptism of the adult) to prepare them for this solemnity, and to qualify them to be partakers of this holy sacrament, were faith and repentance, *i. e.* a declaration of their firm belief of the great doctrines of the christian religion, and of the resolution to live suitably to that belief.

The prerequisites to baptism.

IN the times of the apostles, when the miracles wrought by those first preachers of christianity were so convincing, and the extraordinary grace of God poured down upon men so effectual as to convert them to the faith of Christ, as it were, in a moment; a single declaration of their faith and repentance seems

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to have been accounted sufficient to prepare them to receive baptism immediately; for: so Philip baptized the eunuch, and \* St Paul the gaoler, upon the first indication of their conversion: but afterwards, when these mighty operations of the Spirit grew less common, and men began to be convinced, more gradually, by the ordinary means of the preaching of the word, it was not thought sufficient, in most churches, for men, upon their conversion, barely to profess their faith and repentance, but they were obliged to give some evidence of the sincerity of both, before they were admitted into the church by baptism.

If they had formerly been great and grievous sinners, they were to evidence their repentance \* by prayers, and watchings, and fastings, and confessing of sins: they were to demonstrate, by the real change of their whole course of life, that they had actually renounced all the rites and practices of their former profession, and would, for the future, conform their lives to the rules of the christian institution: they were to endeavour to purge their consciences from every evil work, that their baptism might be, \* not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God. They who were willing thus to make proof of their repentance, and of their sincere desire to be admitted into the church of God, were catechised in all the necessary articles of the christian faith, which they were to make public profession of at their baptism, and were fully instructed in the moral precepts of that divine religion which they were to practise the remaining part of their lives, and then they were thought prepared for the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

The manner of baptism.

WHEN the person to be baptized was thus prepared, and the time appointed come, he was brought by the priest to a convenient place, where there was plenty of water, and, a being stripped of his cloaths, in the first place, b he renounced the devil,

t Acts viii. 38. u Ibid. xvi. 33. \* Tertul de Baptif. c. xx. x 1 Pet. iii. 21. y The usual time was at Easter, or Whitsuntide, the commemorations of our Saviour's passion and resurrection, and of the great effusion of the Holy Ghost; things principally respected in this sacrament. Clarke's Essays. z Before the christian religion was so far encouraged as to have churches built for its service, they baptized in any river, fountain, or pond; [Tert. de Baptifmo, c. 4] but, when they came to have churches, one part of the church, or place nigh the church, called the Baptiftery, was employed to this use; wherein was a cistern, font, or pond, large enough for several to go into the water at once; and this was divided into two parts by a partition, one for the men, and the other for the women. Wall's History of Infant Baptifm, Vol. IV.

a Though the antient christians were baptized stark naked, yet great care was taken to preserve the modesty of any woman; for till she was undressed, and her body under water, none but women came within sight of her, and then the priest, putting her head under water, and using the common form of baptism, went his way, and left her to the care of the women to take her out of the water, and cloath her again with the white garment. Wall, *ibid.*

b In the church of Jerusalem, the form, as we read in St Cyril, was, I renounce thee, O Satan, and all thy works, all thy pomp, and all thy service; where, under the name of the Devil's Works, as he explains himself, is comprehended all kind of sin. Wall, *ibid.* c. ix.



devil, and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and not only all the sinful, but even all the lawful desires of the flesh, so far as to keep within the most strict bounds, and the most exact obedience to the laws of reason and religion. After this he made profession of his faith in one God the Father Almighty, &c. in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, in the Holy Ghost, &c. and in the catholic church, &c. and then was baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, being three times immersed in the water, as each person in the ever-blessed Trinity was named. This being done, he was signed on the forehead with the sign of the cross, and then coming out of the water, and being anointed with oil (as the custom of some churches was) he was clothed with a white garment, and so admitted to the communion of the saints, with this form of words pronounced by those that put it on: Receive this white and immaculate cloathing; and bring it with thee unspotted before the tribunal of Christ, and thou shalt inherit eternal life

THIS is the form and manner wherein adult persons, converted to christianity, were baptized in the primitive church: nor was there any great difference in the baptism of infants, saving that they had sponsors or godfathers (for there is no time or age of the church in which there is any appearance that infants were usually baptized without them) who answered for them, and made the same renunciation and professions in their names, which persons of maturity made for themselves. But here a notable objection will arise: for, “if immersion, say some, be the primitive form of administering this holy rite, how comes sprinkling to be substituted in its place? When neither the sense of the word, nor the significance of the act, nor the custom of the church give countenance to this practice, but require the very contrary, upon what presumption can we think a sacrament valid that deviates so grossly from its original form?” Now, in order to a right resolution of these questions, we must be careful to distinguish between what is necessary and essential to baptism, and what is only accidental and circumstantial to it. As for the former, the element of water, the form of words in the administration, and (as some think) the persons, duly qualified and authorized there-

An objection against sprinkling.

unto, e What they intended by this sign was to declare that they would not be ashamed of the cross of Christ; never be abashed at the flouts of the heathens who objected to them, that the person, in whom they trusted as their God, had been executed for a malefactor; never to be scandalized, if it came to be their fortune to suffer it themselves: on the contrary, they voluntarily owned it as their share and allotment in the world, and were willing to undergo it, whenever God should think fit. Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Vol. IV. d By this was signified, that, being now washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb, they had put on Christ, were become children of light, and of the day, and were resolved to keep themselves unspotted from the world Wall, *ibid.* e *Ibid.* Part ii. c 9. f See Stenner's Answer to Ruffen, and Gale's reflections on Wall's History. g Hole's Exposition, Vol. II.

into, are made necessary to the sacrament by the command of our Saviour, which things must therefore be constantly observed and kept in the administration of it: but as for the latter, viz. the quantity of water, and the manner of using it, whether it be by dipping or sprinkling, these things, being under no command, nor any where determined in holy scripture, are left indifferent.

THAT the manner of baptizing was, by the antients, accounted no more than a mere circumstance, no way essential to the ordinance itself, is evident from their using either immersion, or effusion, as occasion required. For <sup>h</sup> though the general and ordinary way was to baptize by immersion, or dipping the person, whether it was infant, or grown man or woman, into the water; yet that, in case of sickness, weakness, haste, want of water, or other such extraordinary occasions, baptism was performed by effusion of water on the face, and such baptism esteemed valid, we have the practice of the apostles and primitive christians to evince. For when we read of whole families baptized in their houses, particularly <sup>i</sup> of the gaoler and his household baptized at home, and at midnight too, we can hardly suppose that a sufficient quantity of water, and other conveniences proper for a decent immersion, could be procured upon so sudden an occasion; nor can we well conceive how the <sup>k</sup> three thousand converts, upon St Peter's sermon, could be baptized in the same day, in the same place, where they were assembled, unless we have recourse to aspersion. The quantity of water, on such occasions as these, is of no consideration; for, "the contagion of sin (as a very antient father <sup>l</sup> expresses it, speaking of effusion, or sprinkling) is not, in the sacrament of salvation, washed off in the same measures that the dirt and defilements of the skin and body are washed in a common bath. —It is after another way that the breast of a believer is washed; after another fashion, that the mind of a man is by faith cleansed; and therefore, in the sacrament of salvation, when necessity compels, the shortest ways of transacting divine matters do, by God's gracious dispensation, confer the whole benefit."

Now, since among the antient christians, profusion and aspersion were used in baptism, especially in case of weakness and indisposition of body, the climate has the same consideration with us that sickness and infirmity had with them; and since the words *Bapto* and *Baptizo* do undoubtedly signify sprinkling, as well as dipping, and are equally applied to either; there is plainly no particular designation from God; and the church, consequently, is left to her discretion to embrace which form of baptism suits best with her convenience: only it is the private wish

<sup>h</sup> Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Vol. II. i Acts xvi. 22, 33. k Ibid. ii 41. <sup>l</sup> Cyprian. ad Fidum, Epist. 76.

with of <sup>n</sup> many good men:—As there is presumption to believe immersion is of more <sup>n</sup> antient date, and <sup>o</sup> universal usage, more supported by scripture-evidence, more symbolical of the things represented by baptism, † and not prejudicial to human constitution (as some imagine) that, for the peace and tranquillity of the church, and the recovery of those who dissent from her in this particular, this custom was revived and <sup>p</sup> restored to a general use, and aspersion only permitted (as it was of old) in the case of sickness, infirmity, or imminent danger of death. And, with this wish, we go on to consider,

4. THE privileges and benefits we are entitled to enjoy, and the duties we are engaged to perform, by virtue of our baptism: and what I account the first benefit of this kind, is the remission of our sins and past offences. For, <sup>v</sup> since the design of our Saviour's coming into the world was, by the merit of his death and suffering, to purchase pardon and remission for all those who should believe in his name, and obey his gospel; the means by which this pardon is applied, and the seal by which it is secured to all such as perform these conditions, is baptism: and for this reason we find the blessed apostles exhorting the first converts to christianity immediately to receive this sacrament: <sup>r</sup> and now why tarriest thou? (says Ananias to St Paul) Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sin; and so St Peter to the converted Jews, <sup>r</sup> repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost. For another benefit of our christian baptism, is; <sup>2</sup>dly, The influence and assistance of God's blessed Spirit. At the first preaching of the gospel, this influence of the Spirit frequently discovered itself in those extraordinary gifts of speaking with tongues, working miracles, &c. as appears in the history of the Acts of the Apostles: but, these by degrees ceasing, it afterwards continued to evidence itself in the strange and almost miraculous change which it made in the minds of men, from the most corrupt and vicious, to the most virtuous and heavenly disposition, almost in an instant, upon their being baptized. And when this effect also grew less frequent, as the zeal and

The benefits and privileges of baptism.

1. Pardon.

2. Grace.

## VOL. II.

## O o o

## purity

m Bishop Taylor, in his Rule of Conscience; Mr Rogers, in his Treatise of the Sacraments; Mr Walker, in his Doctrine of Baptismus; Towerfon, in his Explication of the Catechism, &c. <sup>n</sup> See Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Vol. II. Part ii. c. 9. how the custom of immersion, which was certainly first in use in all ordinary cases, came to be superceded by that of effusion, in France, then in Italy and Germany, and last of all in England. <sup>o</sup> If we take the division of the world from the three main points of it, all the christians in Asia, all in Africa, and about one third part of Europe are such as use immersion; for none but those nations, which do now, or did formerly submit to the authority of the bishop of Rome, do ordinarily baptize their children by sprinkling, as the historian makes his observation. Wall, *ibid.* † Sir John Floyer, in his book of Cold Baths, has evinced by reasons, taken from the nature of our bodies, from the rules of medicine, from modern experience, and from antient history, that, walking or dipping infants in cold water, is, generally speaking, not only safe, but very useful. Wall, *ibid.* <sup>p</sup> Whitby's Commentary on Rom. vi. <sup>q</sup> Clarke's Essays, <sup>r</sup> Acts xxiii. 16. <sup>s</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 38.

purity of christians declined, it yet continued (and to this very day still continues) by its secret power and operation, to renew and transform mens minds, to instruct them in their duty, and to enable them to perform it; to purify their hearts from vicious inclinations and desires, to beget holy dispositions and affections in their souls, to direct them in difficulties, and to encourage and establish them in all the course of christian piety: for these, we are informed, are its blessed effects, <sup>t</sup> to be washed, to be sanctified, to be justified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God; <sup>u</sup> which Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And this suggests another privilege of baptism; <sup>y</sup> 3dly, Our admission into the church and family of God. St Paul describing the state of the Gentiles, at the time when they were without Christ, tells them that <sup>\*</sup> they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; but now in Jesus Christ, says he, ye who were sometimes far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, having in baptism <sup>x</sup> received the adoption of sons. <sup>y</sup> Now adoption (as it appears by the laws and customs of countries where it has obtained) is an act of favour, whereby the master of an estate takes persons of another family, and receives them as his natural-born children. The persons thus received, if slaves before, are hereby made free, and then, as freemen, they take the name, and succeed to the right of the inheritance of the adopter. And in like manner, how distant soever we may be from God, aliens and strangers to him, and slaves and captives to the enemy of souls before our baptism; yet (upon the due performance of that ordinance) we commence <sup>z</sup> fellow-citizens with the saints, and are enrolled in the number of those whom God hath chosen to be his peculiar and elect people; <sup>a</sup> whom he intends to govern with the same tenderness that an affectionate and merciful father has for his beloved son, and for whom he designs a more ample provision than the greatest monarchs upon earth can confer on their adscititious children; a provision of which all the crowns and kingdoms, and glories of the earth are but a faint shadow and representation, and an <sup>b</sup> inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them. For if we are children, then (according to that happy climax) are we heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, to the intent that we may be glorified with him.

Adoption.

And 4thly,  
Glory.

The duties  
we engage  
to perform.

THESE are the privileges of our high calling, which God, on his part, has assigned to us in the ordinance of baptism: but then we are to remember that there are sundry duties which we,

<sup>t</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 11. <sup>u</sup> Rom. viii. 16. <sup>\*</sup> Eph. ii. 12, 13. <sup>x</sup> Gal. iv. 5. <sup>y</sup> Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospel: Vol. I. <sup>z</sup> Eph. ii. 19. <sup>a</sup> Clarke's Essays. b 1 Pet. i. 4.

we, on our parts, then engaged to perform. For therein we profess our sincere belief in the truth of that doctrine which God the Father revealed by his blessed Son, and confirmed by the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost; therein we declare our humble acceptance of the overtures of mercy and grace, purchased for us by our Saviour's meritorious performances, and in this sacrament tendered to us; and therein we avow our resolution to forsake all wicked courses of life repugnant to the doctrine and laws of Christ, and to conform ourselves intirely to his will, living thenceforward in all piety, righteousness, and sobriety, as loyal subjects, faithful servants, and dutiful children to God. In a word, therein, renouncing all erroneous principles, all vicious inclinations, and all other engagements whatever, we devote ourselves to the faith and obedience of God the Father, our great and glorious maker; of God the Son, our good and gracious Redeemer, and of God the Holy Ghost, our blessed guide, assistant, advocate and comforter.

THESE are the duties which precede and attend on baptism, especially when the persons baptized are of riper years; and what is subsequent hereupon, and incumbent on all, is to make good the engagements they contain. <sup>a</sup> Having then had our bodies washed with pure water, let us often review our baptismal vow, and (as the apostle exhorts) hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; remembering always that apostacy, either in profession or practice from God and goodness, adds to our disobedience the charge of perfidiousness and ingratitude; and that, upon the whole, it <sup>e</sup> would have been much better for us never to have known the way of righteousness, than after we have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to us.

### Of the LORD'S SUPPER.

HOW much soever the supper of our Lord may be thought to resemble the postcœnium, used by the Jews, in the close of the paschal-supper; yet that it was designed for greater and more noble purposes, and to represent things of a more weighty consideration than the Jews ever had to commemorate, is manifest from the form of its institution, which (as <sup>f</sup> the apostles relate it) was, In the same night in which Christ was betrayed, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my body which was given, and broken for you; this do in remembrance of me: and, in the same manner also, he took the cup, and gave thanks, and  
gave

<sup>c</sup> Barrow on the Sacraments. <sup>d</sup> Heb. x. 22, 23. <sup>e</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 21. <sup>f</sup> Vid. Matth. xxvi. 26. compared with Mark xiv. 22, &c. Luke xxi. 19. and 1 Cor. x. 23, &c.

gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ; for it is my blood of the New Testament, which was shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins ; this do ye, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of me ; for as oft as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do shew the Lord's death till he come.

The true sense of the words of the institution.

BUT before we proceed to the consideration of the nature and ends of this ordinance, it may not be amiss to settle the right sense of the words of the institution : and, in order to this, we must observe,—That when the scripture treats of sacramental matters, it is not unusual to have the sign or representation of a thing expressed by the name of the thing signified, and to speak of a thing not yet done, in the same manner as if it were already done. Thus God, speaking to Abraham of circumcision, says, <sup>a</sup> This is my covenant, when Abraham, as yet, was not actually circumcised ; and even when he was so, it is evident from <sup>b</sup> St Paul, that circumcision was never the covenant itself, but only the evidence and seal of it : and, in like manner, Moses calls the Paschal Lamb, <sup>i</sup> the Lord's Passover, even before God, passing over the Israelites, had smitten the Egyptians, and when, after all, that lamb could be no more than a bare memorial of this miraculous event. Upon this occasion therefore we need less wonder that we find our Saviour calling the bread his Body, and the wine his Blood, <sup>k</sup> since this is a figure common in any case, but extremely natural, and in a manner necessary, where a sacrament is the subject of discourse. <sup>l</sup> Nor could this manner of speech either seem harsh or unintelligible to his disciples, who had, even then, been eating the Paschal Lamb, which was usually stiled the Body of the Passover, and the unleavened bread, which was called the Bread of Affliction (*i. e.* the representation and memorial of that bread) which their fathers did eat in the land of Egypt : so that, being accustomed to such sacramental phrases, they could scarce understand the like expression of our Saviour, this bread is my body, any otherwise than as it was to be the representation and memorial of it. <sup>m</sup> The prohibition of eating blood was given the Jews in such severe terms, as <sup>n</sup> that God would set his face against him that did it, and cut him off from among his people ; and these were so often repeated in the books of Moses, that, besides the natural horror which human nature has at the mention of drinking man's blood, it was a special part of their religion to make no manner of use of it. Yet after all this, the disciples, we find, were not startled at our Saviour's words, which is a plain argument that they understood him not in a literal, but figurative sense, and such as was agreeable to the laws and customs of their country. It was impossible indeed for them to suppose that

<sup>a</sup> Gen. xvii. 10. <sup>b</sup> Rom. iv. 11. <sup>i</sup> Exod. xii. 11. <sup>k</sup> Stanhope on the apostles and Gospels, Vol. II. <sup>l</sup> Whitby on Matth. xxvii. <sup>m</sup> Burnet on the Articles. <sup>n</sup> Lev. vii. 26, 27.

that they did eat Christ's body, or drank his blood, when they saw, before their eyes, his body whole and untouched, and knew that his blood was still in his veins: and therefore since the figure of eating and drinking was used, among the Jews, to denote wisdom, and learning, and all intellectual apprehensions, it was no wonder that the disciples, accustomed to their master's figurative way of instruction, understood his discourse to proceed in that sense.

AND as this, at the first institution of the sacrament, was the true sense of our Saviour's words, so may we happily observe farther, that, for above five hundred years afterwards, they were never taken in any other. <sup>p</sup> The primitive fathers do indeed (and with great reason) very much magnify the wonderful mystery and efficacy of this ordinance; they frequently speak of a great supernatural change made by the divine benediction; and tell us that the elements of bread and wine, to every worthy receiver, become the body and blood of Christ: but then they likewise affirm that the names of the things signified are given to the signs; that the bread and wine do still remain in their proper nature and substance, and are turned into the substance of our bodies; that the body of Christ, in the sacrament, is not the natural body, but the sign and figure of it; not that body which was crucified, not that blood which was shed upon the cross; and that it is impious to understand the eating of the flesh of the Son of man, and drinking his blood literally. To this purpose <sup>q</sup> Justin Martyr tells us that our blood and flesh are nourished by the conversion of that food which we receive in the eucharist; and <sup>r</sup> Irenæus affirms that when the cup that is mixed (viz. of wine and water) and the bread that is broken, receive the word of God, they become the eucharist of the body and blood of Christ, of which the substance of our flesh is increased and consists. Tertullian, arguing against Marcion the heretic that the body of our Saviour was not a mere phantasm and appearance, has these words; <sup>s</sup> The bread which our Lord took and distributed to his disciples, he made his own body, saying, This is my body, *i. e.* the image and figure of my body; but it could not have been the figure of his body, if there had not been a true and real body: and St Austin, laying down some rules for the right understanding of scripture, gives us this for one; <sup>t</sup> If the speech, says he, be a precept, forbidding some heinous crime, or commanding us to do good, it is not figurative; but if it seem to command

From the testimony of the fathers.

<sup>o</sup> Maimonides observes that whensoever eating or drinking are mentioned in the book of Proverbs, they are to be understood of wisdom and the law; and after he has brought several places of scripture to this purpose, he concludes, that because this acceptance of eating occurs so often, and is so manifest, as if it were the primary and most proper sense of the word, therefore hunger and thirst stand for a privation of wisdom and understanding. More Nevoch <sup>p</sup> Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. <sup>q</sup> Apol. 2. <sup>r</sup> Lib. v. c. 21. <sup>s</sup> Adversus Marcion, Lib. iv. <sup>t</sup> De Doctrina Christi.

command any heinous wickedness, or forbid that which is profitable and beneficial to others, it is figurative: for instance, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you; this seems to command an heinous wickedness, and therefore is a figure enjoining us to communicate of the passion of our Lord, and, with delight and advantage, to lay up in our memory, that his flesh was crucified and wounded for us. \* So that, according to St Austin's best skill of interpreting scripture, the literal eating of the flesh of Christ, and drinking his blood would have been a great impiety, and therefore the expression is to be understood figuratively.

AFTER so full a testimony of the fourth age of the church, out of the many which succeeding ages afford us, we shall but produce two; that of Theodoret, who says that Christ honours the symbols with the name of his Body and Blood, not changing their nature, but adding grace to nature; for the mystical symbols, after the sanctification, do not depart from their own nature, but continue their former substance, figure and form, and may be seen and handled as before: to which we shall add that of Pope Gelasius, who tells us that the sacraments of the body and blood of Christ are a divine thing, so that by them we are made partakers of a divine nature; and yet the substance of bread and wine, which are the image and resemblance of Christ's body and blood in this mystery does not cease to exist. In short, \* since nothing is more common among the fathers than to call the elements, even after their consecration, the Figures, the Signs, the Symbols, the Types, and Anti-types, the Commemoration, the Representation, the Mysteries, and the Sacraments of Christ's Body and Blood; it is demonstrable, that they could not think that they were the very substance of his body and blood; and therefore it may be a matter of no vain curiosity to inquire a little how this figurative sense, which, for so many ages, was the only received interpretation of our Saviour's words, came, by degrees, to be laid aside, and the doctrine of a real and corporal presence introduced into this holy sacrament.

Now it cannot be denied but that some godly fathers of the church, apprehensive of the profanation of this sacrament, from

How the doctrine of real and corporal presence came to be introduced Anno 705.

Anno 787.

\* Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. x Burnet on the Articles. y Burnet, *ibid.* The first controversy about this matter was started in the Greek church, upon occasion of a dispute concerning the worship of images, wherein the council of Constantinople decreed, That the sacrament was the image of Christ's body and blood, in which the substance of bread and wine remained: but, in answer to this, the second council of Nice declared peremptorily, That the sacrament, after consecration, is not the image and antitype of Christ's body and blood, but is properly his body and blood. In the Latin or Roman church, Paschasius Radbertus, abbot of Corby in France, was the first who wrote to any purpose in defence of the reality of Christ's body and blood in the eucharist; but, as he had several followers, so some of the most learned men of that age wrote against his doctrine as a gross innovation. The tenth century was the blackest and most ignorant of all the ages of the church, so that we have no writer in



from the unworthiness of those who came to it, and being desirous to beget a due reverence for so sacred an ordinance, and seriousness in the performance of it, did urge all the topics which sublime figures and warm expressions could help them; and, though they took care to maintain that the substance of bread and wine, even after consecration, did still remain, yet several of them supposed a certain union of the elements to the body of Christ, much like that of his human nature to the divine. It is to be observed farther, that not long after this, the Goths and Vandals in the West, and the Turks and Saracens in the East, made havock of all that was polite and learned; by which means the chief writings of the best and first times were lost; and instead of them, many spurious ones afterwards produced, which, in dark and ignorant ages, easily passed for genuine. The Popes too, at this time, were such an infamous succession of men as cannot be paralleled in all history; and their clergy (which were very numerous) entering into combinations to subject the temporal power to the spiritual, were fond of any opinion that would raise their character, and render their persons sacred, as the power of making a god, with a few words, could not fail to do. Add to this, that the doctrine of corporal presence in the eucharist had never been condemned in any former ages: for, as none condemn errors by anticipation, so the promoters of it had this advantage, that no formal decision had been made against it, and agreeing (as it did) in outward sound, with the words of the institution, and the phrase, generally used, of the elements being changed into the body and blood of Christ, it is less wonder that it found so ready a reception in ages of ignorance, when sound and appearance might pass for good arguments.

FROM these, and other causes that might be mentioned, the people were generally brought to believe that Christ was in the sacrament, and that the elements were his body and blood, without troubling themselves to inquire in what manner this was done; and, in after-ages, when the doctrine of extirpating heretics began to prevail, it is no strange matter if this other gained ground, when both the priests saw their interest in promoting it, and all people felt the danger of denying it. Thus the going off from the simplicity, in which Christ did deliver the sacrament, and the church at first receive it, into some sublime expressions about it, set men at first wrong in their notions, and, when they were once out of the way, some unhappy incidents of the ages they lived in carried them still farther and farther from it. Pious and rhetorical figures, pursued by  
men

that time that gives us any tolerable account of its doctrine. About the middle of the eleventh century however, Berengarius, arch-deacon of Angiers, began to oppose the doctrine of Real Presence, but was compelled to recant twice, first by Pope Nicholas, and then by Pope Gregory VII. about twenty years afterwards. Tillotson against Transubstantiation. Anno 1059. Anno 1079.

men of heated imaginations, and inflamed affections, were followed by explanations invented by colder and more designing men afterwards; and these, enforced with the anathemas of the church, and the terrors of persecution, were enough, in some places, to silence contradiction; though, considering their many monstrous absurdities, their contradiction to the evidence of our senses, and opposition to the received maxims of philosophy, and known properties of a body, together with the long train of their cruel and idolatrous consequences, it is much to be questioned whether, from any diligent and judicious inquirer, they ever yet gained a sincere assent.

This sacrament not a real propitiatory sacrifice.

FROM this different interpretation of our Saviour's words in this institution, there has proceeded another controversy concerning this sacrament, viz. whether it be a real propitiatory sacrifice, or only a commemorative and eucharistical one. Those who maintain the doctrine of corporal presence, and even some who reject that mass of contradictions, contend that it is truly propitiatory: but the greater part of divines (and with better reason, I conceive) seem to be of the contrary opinion. The truth is, the word *sacrifice* is frequently used in scripture to signify almost any act of religious worship: <sup>a</sup> our prayers, <sup>a</sup> our alms, <sup>b</sup> our affections, <sup>c</sup> nay, even our bodies are called by that name; and in this extended sense it cannot be denied but that the eucharist is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. <sup>d</sup> Nay, as there is an oblation of bread and wine made in it, which, after consecration, are consumed in an act of religion, and as there is a commemoration and representation to God of the sacrifice which Christ offered for us on the cross, on these accounts we allow that it may be called a sacrifice: but still, though it be a commemorative, yet, that it is not a true, real, and propitiatory sacrifice, we have a full proof in the epistle to the Hebrews, where the apostle, after a long discourse concerning the priests and sacrifices under the law, endeavours to shew that under the evangelical dispensation, our only priest and sacrifice (in a strict sense of the words) is Christ. For speaking of those of the Levitical order; <sup>e</sup> they truly, says he, were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood: <sup>f</sup> he needeth not therefore, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice daily, first for his own sins, and then for the people; for this he did once, when he offered up himself: whereupon the apostle makes the conclusive difference between those priests and Christ to consist in this,—That, whereas <sup>g</sup> every priest stands daily ministring and offering sometimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sin; this man, after he had

<sup>a</sup> Psalm cxli. 2. and Heb. xiii. 15. <sup>a</sup> Heb. xiii. 16. <sup>b</sup> Psalm li. 17. <sup>c</sup> Rom. xii. 1. <sup>d</sup> Burnet on the XXXIX Articles. <sup>e</sup> Heb. vii. 23, 24. <sup>f</sup> Ibid. ver. 27. <sup>g</sup> Ibid. x. 11, 12.

had offered up one sacrifice for sins, for ever set down at the right hand of God: so that, according to the full tenor of the apostle's discourse, strictly speaking, we have but one priest, and one sacrifice under the gospel; and therefore how largely soever these words may, in some places, be taken, yet, according to the true idea of a propitiatory sacrifice, and of a priest, that reconciles sinners to God, they cannot be applied to any acts of our worship, or to any order of men upon earth.

ALL the virtue then that can with any justice be imputed to this sacrament is,—that therein we gratefully commemorate the sacrifice of Christ's death, and by renewed acts of faith, present that to God as our sacrifice, in the memorial of it which he himself hath appointed; hereby confirming our covenant with God, and sharing in the blessed effects of that death which our Lord suffered for us. This is the whole intendment of the institution: and that the first christians had no farther notion of it, is evident from this remarkable instance, that, when the heathens objected to them their irreligion and impiety in having no sacrifices, they readily owned, that <sup>a</sup> they had no sacrifices, but prayers and praises; no oblations <sup>b</sup> but a pure heart, clean conscience, and a stedfast faith, which they hardly would have done had this sacrament, at that time, been looked upon as a sacrifice of inestimable value to God.

The virtue and nature of it.

THIS being sufficient to shew the true sense of our Saviour's words, and in some measure the true nature of the ordinance itself; what we have farther to do is, to observe,

I. THE several ends and designs of its institution.

II. THE several benefits which we receive from thence.

III. THE obligations that lie upon us to the frequent observance of it. And,

IV. THE qualifications that are necessary thereunto. Now the first,

I. AND only design that our Saviour mentions in this institution is, that we should observe it in remembrance of him. Whether our blessed Saviour might (as <sup>c</sup> some imagine) intend by this injunction any conformity to a custom, then prevalent among the disciples of several sects of philosophers, who used to have an annual feast or collation in remembrance of their respective founders, is not so material for us to inquire. This only we may infer from the common acceptance of the word, that since to remember one is not barely to call to mind that there was once such a person in the world, but to reflect likewise on the particular quality and relation wherein he stood to us, the benefits he did, and the obligations he laid upon us; our blessed Lord undoubtedly intends, when in this holy feast he desires us to remember him, that we would think of him in

The ends of this sacrament.

<sup>a</sup> To remember Christ.

all his capacities and relations, (such as a faithful teacher, a gracious governor, an intire friend and generous benefactor, doing the highest kindneffes, and working the greatest deliverances for us and for all mankind) wherein he deserves to infinitely to be remembered. 1 We may reasonably presume then that he would have us remember him; 1st, As our faithful teacher, and to call to mind those excellent things which he hath revealed unto us; as, namely, that for the sake of his death, and through the merits of his blood all mankind, who were utter enemies before, shall be put in a way of reconciliation with God, and have the benefit of a new covenant, which proffers pardon to all who truly repent of their sins; grace and spiritual help to all who are careful to endeavour therewith; and the blessing of heaven and everlasting happinefs to all that are intirely obedient. 2dly, He would have us remember him as our gracious governor, and to bear in mind those commands which he as our sovereign Lord and master has laid upon us; as nainly, that we should love God and trust in his goodness, and submit to his providence, and worship him with prayers and praises; but, above all, with an holy and god-like life; that we be humble and heavenly-minded, chaste, temperate and contented; that we be dutiful to our governors, respectful to our superiors, courteous to our equals, condescensive to our inferiors, loving and obliging to our enemies, and just, charitable, and peaceable towards all mankind. 3dly, He would have us remember him as our most intire friend and generous benefactor, who loved us (without any thing of our deserts, and in spite of the highest provocations) to such a degree as made him forego the pleasures which he might have held without any interruption in heavenly places; to become a man of sorrows, lead a persecuted and necessitous life, and at last die a painful and ignominious death for our sakes, in order to ransom us from the greatest misery, the slavery of sin and Satan, and to procure for us the most valuable blessings that our nature is capable of, grace, pardon, and eternal life.

To confirm  
the new  
covenant.

2. ANOTHER end in the institution of this sacrament is, to confirm <sup>m</sup> the new covenant which Christ has purchased and procured for us by his death. What the nature of this covenant is, we have sufficiently explained before, and need only now take notice <sup>n</sup> that as we first entered into this covenant when we were baptized, so are we called to renew and confirm it every time we are invited to sup with our blessed Lord in this holy sacrament; he having wisely provided that we should never want an opportunity of renewing our engagements; of making up the breach, whenever it should happen, between us and God; of giving fresh security and strength to our obligations; and of devoting ourselves in the most solemn manner to a more constant love and service of our gracious master, in spite of

<sup>f</sup> Kettlewell on the Sacraments. m 1 Cor. xi. 25. n Kettlewell, *ibid.*

of all those spiritual enemies that would seduce us from him. And in this respect the eucharist supplies the deficiency of baptism, which, though it devote us to God at first, is no means to reconcile us to him upon our having offended afterwards; because it is but once admittred, and cannot be repeated: and therefore is the institution of this other sacrament intended to guard and maintain the covenant between God and man, that our baptismal vows may be kept in force, and we continue, by his gracious acceptance of the renewal of our engagements in this ordinance, his faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives end.

3. ONE end more for which this sacrament was instituted, is to ratify a league of love and friendship with those brethren that communicate with us and with all others. Eating and drinking together at the same table, and partaking at the same feast, hath always been esteemed a note of friendship, and a profession of love and kindness among men: it is the common way of the world to compose differences, to keep up friendliness in neighbourhoods, and to beget endearment and mutual love in all fraternities. • To this purpose the paschal supper among the Jews was celebrated at one time and in one place, with an intire lamb assigned to each family; not a bone of it was to be broken or divided; and with bread not soured with any leaven, the better to signify that love and unity, and sweetness of temper which was to be among them. And in allusion to this, the apostle exhorts us, now that  $\rho$  Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, to keep the feast, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth; and that the rather, because this feast is in remembrance of the highest instance of love shewed to us by our Lord's laying down his life for our sakes, and therefore obliging us never to forget the return of love again to him, by his appointed proxies, who are our brethren, servants of the same Lord, and members of the same body with ourselves. This then was our Lord's intention in appointing this sacrament, and inviting us to eat at the same table, that we might mutually embrace as friends and love as brethren, and be knit together in the same fellowship and communion. And accordingly we may observe that the primitive christians were careful to make this use of it; for Pliny, in his letter to the emperor Trajan, wherein he gives an account of the christian meetings, tells us that their communicating in the eucharist  $\rho$  was a religious compact and combination among themselves, that they would do no hurt to one another, but love as brethren, and live as friends together.

II. THESE are the ends for which this sacrament was instituted, and answerable to these ends are the benefits which we receive thereby; 1. The pardon of our sins. 2. The increase

And a league of love with our brethren.

The benefits of it. Pardon of sin.

of grace. And, 3. The confirmation of our title to eternal life. 1. † Whenever we repent indeed we have God's promise of forgiveness, (which may comfort our hearts and cure our despondency after any sin) not only in this blessed sacrament, but even in every penitential prayer and confession. In this holy ordinance, however, the promise of forgiveness is again repeated, and in the most solemn manner sealed and confirmed, to shew us that God is still in the same mind, and to give us a renewed and sensible assurance of it. So that, if after any offences committed against God, we can but make sure of our own repentance, the eucharist may be said to do that in an ordinary way, which an angel from heaven or a special revelation would do in an extraordinary, *i. e.* let us know that our sins are remitted, and God become our friend: for therein we receive from him the blood of expiation, a plain proof that our sins are atoned for and forgiven; and therein we renew a solemn covenant of peace and reconciliation with him, confirmed by a priest of his own prescribing.

Increase of  
grace, and  
how.

2. IT is not without very good reason then that our Lord made use of the elements of bread and wine, as proper and fit emblems of this divine mystery, and the benefits conferred by it: † for, as bread and wine convey a vital nourishment to the body, so the sacrifice of Christ's death, by this sacrament in commemoration of it, conveys somewhat to the soul that is vital, that raises its faculties and fortifies all its powers: but in what manner this is done, there is a diversity of opinions among divines. Some think, that this memorial of the death of Christ, when seriously and devoutly performed; when it animates our faith, increases our repentance, inflames our love and zeal, and so unites us to God and to our brethren, draws down the returns of prayer, and a farther increase of grace in us, according to the nature and promises of the new covenant; and in this they suppose that the virtue and efficacy of this sacrament consists: but others imagine that this belongs only to the inward acts of the mind, and is not properly sacramental, and therefore they think that the eucharist is a federal act, in which, as, on one hand, we renew our baptismal engagement with God, so on the other, we revive, in the sacrament, a visible consignation of the blessings of the new covenant, which are something superadded to the return of our prayers, and the inward acts of our minds. This they think answers the nourishment which the body receives from the symbols of bread and wine, and fills up the idea which these words of St Paul convey, † The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread, which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? *i. e.* a communicating to us those

† Kettlewell on the Sacrament. † Burnet on the XXXIX Articles. † 1 Cor.

those benefits and graces which his death was designed to purchase for all men? And therefore they conclude, <sup>u</sup> that this sacrament does not only confer grace by its natural tendency, as other means do; but, by virtue of God's promise and immediate concurrence with it, conveys spiritual strength and refreshment to the worthy receivers of it, as it is an instrument in his hands: for such has been the opinion of the church in all ages, that <sup>\*</sup> they who partake of the eucharist by faith, are thereby sanctified both in body and soul; that <sup>\*</sup> in it we receive the similitude of the body of Christ; but, together with that, all the grace and virtue that the true and real body obtained; and that <sup>v</sup> this sacramental food, though in outward appearance a bodily substance, yet, by an invisible efficacy, works all the effects of a divine power and presence.

3. **WHATEVER** then becomes of the conceit of some of the antients, that this sacrament has a peculiar efficacy to prepare our bodies for an immortal state; yet, since our blessed Saviour has so positively declared, that <sup>z</sup> who so eateth his flesh, and drinketh his blood, hath eternal life, and he will raise him up at the last day, the least that we can infer is—That, as it ratifies the evangelical covenant between God and us, it confirms our right, and renews our title to that eternal happiness which Christ, the mediator of this covenant, has purchased and prepared for us: and, in this sense, it may not improperly be called in the phrase and stile of the antients, <sup>a</sup> the Medicine of Immortality, which is an antidote to preserve men from dying, and to give them a life that is everlasting.

A title to eternal life.

III. **SINCE** the benefits then, which are derived and secured to us by this sacrament, are all the blessings of the new covenant, the forgiveness of our sins, the assistance of grace, the comfort of God's holy Spirit, and the glorious reward of eternal life; <sup>b</sup> in point of interest we are obliged to frequent it, unless we judge ourselves unworthy of the blessings of the gospel, and are minded to be deprived of one of the best means and advantages of confirming and conveying these blessings to us. Since this was the charge of our best friend (nay of the greatest friend and benefactor of all mankind) when he was preparing to die in our stead, and to offer up himself a sacrifice for us, to undergo the most grievous pains for our sakes, and to suffer the worst of temporal, that he might deliver us from eternal death; and an injunction so easy as only to meet at his table, and there remember what gracious things he hath done for us; we are bound in point of gratitude to the observance of it, unless we will incur the charge of neglecting our dying Saviour, the great friend and lover of souls, in a command so reasonable, and so

Our obligation to observe it.

<sup>u</sup> Kettlewell on the Sacrament. <sup>\*</sup> Clem. Alex. Pædag. Lib. II. c. ii. <sup>x</sup> Ambr. de Sacram. Lib. VI. c. i. <sup>y</sup> Cyr. de Cæna Dom. sub. inst. <sup>z</sup> Joh. vi. 54. <sup>a</sup> *Hoc est pharmakon atheniense autiletos tou ne spatheon, &c.* <sup>b</sup> *Ita est Christus in panis.* Ignat. ad Eph. <sup>b</sup> Tillotson's sermons, Vol. I.

full of blessings and benefits to the worthy performers of it. Since this sacrament, in all the offices of religion, is a most excellent means to recommend our prayers, and make them powerful, to fortify us in all the trials that befall us, and to preserve us invulnerable against all the fiery darts of our spiritual enemy; we are obliged in point of safety to a frequent observance of it, unless we are minded, by relinquishing our guard, to become his prey, and so be led captive by him at his will. Since, finally, this is the solemn injunction of our great Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy, in point of indispensable duty we are bound to perform it, unless we will abide the expresses of his wrath, which all must allow to be insupportable: for if he that despised Moses's law, by a non-observance of the Passover, died without mercy; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the authority of the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, or a thing not worth his regard and consideration? Since then the obligations incumbent upon us for the frequent observance of this ordinance are so many, what should be the cause of all this backwardness which we see in men to so plain, so necessary, and so beneficial a duty? The apostle, speaking of this sacrament, has inserted a caution or two; \* whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord: and again, he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself: and from hence some infer—That, “if the danger of unworthy receiving be so great, and the preparation necessary for a worthy receiving costs so much pains, the safest way seems to be, wholly to refrain from this awful sacrament, and never receive it at all.”

Some hindrances.

Now, to shew the fallacy of this inference, by stating the true occasion of the words, it will be necessary to observe,—<sup>b</sup> That, in the primitive church, it was usual to bring to their religious assemblies (every one as he was able and disposed) provisions for a common entertainment. Out of these provisions, a convenient quantity was set apart to be consecrated for the blessed sacrament: this sacrament was, in some churches, celebrated before, in others, after this Feast of Love (as that entertainment was used to be called) but, in all places, they were both celebrated in company with each other. The design of these feasts was to express friendship and concord, and to shew that christians esteemed themselves one family, and one body; to be a comfort to the poor, whose necessities were thus relieved at the

<sup>c</sup> Kettlewell on the Sacrament. <sup>d</sup> *Spoudazete pyknoteron*, &c. Give all diligence, says Ignatius to the Ephesians, to assemble often in the eucharist, for the oftener you meet thereat, the more your standing is secured, and the power of Satan is destroyed. <sup>e</sup> Heb. x. 23, 29. <sup>f</sup> Exod. xii. 15. <sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29. <sup>h</sup> Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II.



the public expence; and to speak the charity and condescension of the rich, who thus declared their meaner brethren in all christian privileges, fellow-members, and equal with the greatest. These voluntary contributions were stiled Oblations, because every contributor was understood to devote what he brought to a religious use, and to divest himself of all manner of property in it: and therefore, as these entertainments were designed for the whole body of believers, every one, who came to the communion, had a right to share alike, though all did not contribute alike; nay, though the circumstances of some were so strait that they could not contribute any part at all.

Now, when this parity was broken in upon; when every one would take upon him to eat at his own time, in separate company, and in proportion to his own bringing; the rich met, and, excluding the poor from what should have been the common entertainment, after much riot and excess, they went to the sacrament in no small disorder; <sup>k</sup> one was hungry, having eaten nothing at all; and others drunken, having feasted intemperately; and so the poor were despised and neglected. This the apostle condemns as a gross profanation of that solemn institution of the sacrament, at the participation whereof they behaved themselves with as little reverence as if they had been at a common meal. This is <sup>l</sup> the eating and drinking which he calls Unworthy, for which he pronounces them guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and tells them that they did incur the judgment of God. For, that the word *krisis* (which our translators render damnation) does not here signify eternal misery, or that which is elsewhere termed the Damnation of Hell, but only a temporal judgment and chastisement, in order to the prevention of eternal condemnation, is evident from what follows; <sup>m</sup> For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep; *i. e.* for this irreverence of yours, God hath sent among you several diseases, of which many have died. <sup>n</sup> Wherefore, my brethren, says he, concluding with this advice, when ye come together to eat [viz. in these love-feasts] tarry for one another; and if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto judgment: where he plainly intimates, both what the crime of unworthy receiving was, and the punishment of it: their crime was their irreverent and disorderly participation of the sacrament; and their punishment was those temporal diseases, and other chastisements, which God inflicted upon them for this their irreverence and contempt.

AND now, is it not as clear as the light, that in a church like ours, where the consecrated elements are furnished at the public expence, and a distribution of them made equally, decently, devoutly, and as nigh to the primitive institution as can well be imagined;

The passages to the Hebrews explained.

Danger of unworthiness or sufficient plea

<sup>i</sup> Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. <sup>k</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 21. <sup>l</sup> Ibid. ver. 29. <sup>m</sup> Ibid. ver. 30. <sup>n</sup> Ibid. ver. 33, 34.

imagined; the unworthiness charged upon the Corinthians, neither is, nor possibly can be ours? And if so, it must follow that those texts of St Paul are perverted to a very wrong use, when they are made a pretence of keeping from the holy table the persons whose present circumstances have no manner of affinity to them.

• DID but men consider (what is most certainly true) that every act of religion, public or private, requires the very same disposition of mind with the sacrament; that no man is fit (for instance) to say the Lord's prayer, who is not fit to eat and drink at his table; that reading, and hearing, and praying unworthily, (*i. e.* without due reverence, or in love or indulgence to any wilful sin) is damnable, as well as unworthy communicating; they would soon perceive that the excuses usually alledged for the neglect of this, if pursued through their just consequences, would hold every whit as strongly for casting off every branch of solemn worship enjoined by the christian religion: and yet there is not one of all these but what requires to the due performance of it, the same sorrow for our past sins, the same stedfast purposes of amendment, the same faith in Christ, and the same charity to our brethren, as the communicating in that sacred ordinance; nor is any man accepted by God in any of these, who is not fit and qualified to come to the other. To say all in one word, no man, who leads a good life, can ever be unprepared for the Lord's Supper; and no man, who leads a bad one, can come prepared to that, or any other christian ordinance whatever.

Not want  
of prepara-  
tion.

AND this, I think, may serve to shew the vanity of another sort of unpreparedness commonly alledged, *viz.* the want of leisure to retire so many hours, and to say so many prayers before each communion. These, doubtless, are very proper exercises, when men have opportunities for them, and no man can take too much pains with himself, to afflict his soul with remorse, and to raise his affections and devotion on such occasions: but then, to think that by these meditations and prayers we are, and that without them we cannot be prepared, is no less than superstition, and an error which draws a world of ill consequences after it. Even these prayers (if we hold fast any darling lust) are an abomination, an hypocrisy, that mocks God, and deludes our own soul; and therefore it is much to be wished that people could be made duly sensible, that, although a week's preparation (when such extraordinary addresses are added to a conscience void of offence) may be exceeding well, yet nothing can be depended upon but communicating frequently, and reverently; and living, as if we were every day to communicate, between one opportunity and another. To cease to do evil, and learn to do well; to love God, and keep his command-

ments;

ments; to follow the works of our calling with industry, and to provide for our families with honesty; to trust in God's good providence, and to be content with our condition; to preserve unity in the church, and peace and good order in the state; to study to be quiet, to do our own business, and the duty of the capacity and relations we stand in; to abhor uncleanness, and evil-speaking, and all uncharitableness; this is true preparation, and he that thus communicates, though at a minute's warning, will never be rejected by God, nor deserve to be condemned by men.

4. THIS we may call an habitual preparation: but, because there is a decency to be observed, and, on solemn occasions more especially, the wedding-garment is to be put on before we resort to this feast; therefore is an actual preparation peculiar to this ordinance (which is the highest act of christian worship, and a complication of the most spiritual performances) ordinarily incumbent on all communicants. <sup>Actual preparation</sup> Before we address ourselves then to a participation of this venerable mystery, we should consider whether it is that we are going, and what the nature and importance of that action is we are setting ourselves about: that we are approaching to our Lord's Table (as the apostle calls it) to come into his more immediate presence, to be entertained by him with the kindest welcome, receive the fullest testimonies of his mercy, and the surest pledges of his love: that we are going to behold him offering up himself a sacrifice to God, therein undergoing the sorest pains, and the foulest disgrace for our salvation; and that therefore we ought to bring with us dispositions of mind suitable to such an intercourse with our gracious Lord: and, in preparation hereunto, we should, with our utmost power, endeavour to cleanse our souls from all impurity of thought and desire, from all iniquity and perverseness, from all malice, envy, hatred, and such evil dispositions as are offensive to God's all-seeing eye, and unbecoming his most glorious presence. <sup>Before,</sup> On the contrary, we should dress our souls with all those comely ornaments of grace, with purity, humility, meekness, and charity, which will render us acceptable to him: we should compose our minds into a frame of reverence, and awful regard to the majesty of God; into a calm and serene disposition of heart, apt to express all respect due to his presence, fit to admit the gracious illapses of his blessed Spirit, and susceptible of all such holy and heavenly affections as are suitable to such a communion. And therefore we should abandon, not only all vicious inclinations and evil purposes, but even all worldly cares, desires, and passions, which may distract or discompose us, may cause us to behave indecently or unworthily before God, and so bereave us of his intended benefits. Nor should we forget, according to the apostle's advice, to try and examine ourselves; considering our past actions and present inclinations,

and accordingly by serious meditation, and fervent prayer to God, for his gracious assistance therein, working our souls into an hearty remorse for our former miscarriages, and a sincere resolution to amend for the future.

at, THESE are the duties which are previous to our receiving this holy sacrament; and those which are proper to accompany it are—An awful sense of mind, answerable to the greatness and holiness of him with whom we converse, and to the sacredness of those mysteries which are exhibited to us; an hearty contrition for our sins, which exposed our Saviour to such pains and agonies as are therein remembered, and a firm resolution of forsaking them intirely, as injurious and displeasing to him: a fervent love to our dear Redeemer for his wonderful goodness and charity to us; a sincere thankfulness for his inconceivably great expressions of kindness; the deepest humility upon the sense of our unworthiness to receive such testimonies of his grace and favour; a pious joy, in consideration of the excellent fruits accruing to us from his performances; a comfortable hope of obtaining the benefits of his passion, by the assistance of his grace; and, lastly, an enlarged good-will and charity to all our brethren, as being, by his appointment, made heirs of the same hope, sons of the same family, members of the same body, and not only washed in the same baptism, but fed at the same table with ourselves.

and after  
the sacra-  
ment.

THESE are the duties which should attend our participation in this holy sacrament; and those, which are properly subsequent to it, are—An increase of all those pious inclinations and affections which were then kindled at the altar of the Lord; a cherishing those influences of grace which descended upon our hearts in this communion; a watchful care and endeavour in our lives to approve ourselves, in some measure, worthy of the great honour and favour of being admitted to so near an approach to God; a pursuance of the resolutions, and a performance of the vows and engagements which we made on that solemn occasion; and finally, a fixed and permanent consideration, that, by the breach of such resolutions, and the violation of such engagements, our sins will be aggravated, and our guilt increased; and that, by the relapse of our souls into so grievous a distemper, our spiritual strength will be sadly impaired, and consequently, our comforts abated, shaken, and our eternal state very much endangered.

Frequent  
receiving.

THESE are most of the duties subsequent to our participation of the Lord's Supper; only there is one more, which, upon this occasion, must not be forgot, and that is, our gladly embracing every opportunity, which presents itself, of communicating herein: always remembering, that, besides the obligation of the divine precept and command, there is no office of religion so immediately designed for our spiritual strength and refreshment,

ment, as our partaking of this bread of life, and wine of elect souls, which nourish and exhilarate the inward man, and convey into us a principle of living well, and of living for ever; that, without it, we can hardly deserve the character of christians, and run a great danger of being excluded from what it finally represents, the everlasting festival of the faithful, and the marriage-supper of the Lamb of God.

To conclude then with a word or two of exhortation. The obligation which Christ hath laid upon us is so vastly great, not only beyond all requital, but beyond all expression, that if he had commanded us some very grievous thing, we ought, with all the readiness and cheerfulness in the world, to have done it; how much more, when he hath imposed upon us so easy a commandment, a thing of no burthen, but of immense benefit? When he hath only said to us, Eat, O Friends, and drink, O Beloved? When he only invites us to his table, to the best and most delicious feast that we can partake of on this side heaven? Since therefore this holy ordinance is not only the remembrance of our Lord's death, but also the sure pledge of his love; how barbarous are we to our own souls, in denying them the best and most lasting comfort of frequently rejoicing in those ravishing hopes and assurances which are here exhibited and confirmed? If not for Christ's sake, then (which yet were most unthankful and base) at least for our own (which not to do were most inhuman and stupid) let us beware of affronting so good a Lord, by refusing his invitations to so much mercy, and of drawing upon ourselves the punishment of those unworthy wretches in the gospel, who went one to his farm, and another to his merchandize, one to the pleasures, and another to the business of life, till at last they were finally excluded all from the marriage-feast of the great King.

An exhortation to us.

## C H A P. II.

### Of CHRIST'S Humiliation.

IN treating of the nature of the second covenant, and therein of its mediation by the man Christ Jesus, we were led to consider him (in the execution of that office) under the different capacities of prophet, priest, and king: but come now to inquire into what relates to his personal character and transactions in the two opposite states of his humiliation and exaltation here on earth. But before we apply to that, it will be necessary, for the better understanding what is to follow, to premise, <sup>a</sup> 1. That

The nature of Christ's humiliation.

<sup>a</sup> Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I. <sup>u</sup> Stanhope, on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II. <sup>x</sup> Vid. Matth. xxii. 5. and Luke xiv. 18. <sup>a</sup> Les Oeuvres posthumes de M. Claude, Tom. III.

in this humiliation of Christ, his divine nature could not possibly suffer any change or diminution, either in its essence or attributes, nor he lose any part either of that internal glory and greatness, which result from the dignity of his nature, or of that external glory and honour, which are subsequent upon his works of creation, conservation and providence. For besides the arguments that might be drawn from the simplicity of the divine nature, the scriptures have given us such an idea of God, when they tell us that <sup>b</sup> the heavens shall perish, yet he shall endure; though they shall wax old as does a garment, yet he to all eternity shall be the same; as quite excludes all suspicion of mutability. When therefore they declare <sup>c</sup> that Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, and equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant; and being found in the fashion of a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death; the meaning must be. not that he in his divine nature suffered any manner of abasement; but that being minded to manifest himself to mankind, he put on the veil of our flesh, liable as it was to frailties and infirmities, to pains and sorrows, and death itself. So that the seat or subject of inherence (as some term it) of these miseries and infirmities, wherein Christ's humiliation consisted, was only his human nature; though the subject of denomination to which these sorrows and frailties may be imputed, is his whole person, as he is both God and man: upon which account (by a communication of idioms) we may apply that to his divine, which, in strictness of speech, belongs only to his human nature, and with propriety enough say, that the Son of God (taking in the whole complex of his person) shed his blood, and the eternal word underwent many indignities here on earth; though we cannot with any possibility of truth affirm that God, as God, could any way be liable to such like sufferings.

And exaltation.

2. AND in like manner we may observe that <sup>d</sup> the glory or exaltation of Christ could not possibly consist in any real augmentation of dignity or excellence, or any advantageous change to his divine nature, which, being infinite and immutable, can admit of no increase or diminution; but only in its shedding a more abundant influence upon his humanity to which it was conjoined, and in making a more bright and visible display of the rays of its excellencies and perfections than it had done before; that, in this exaltation, I say, the glory of his divine person lay not in a real acquisition of honour and dignity, but merely in this—That the cloud of the meanness, of the infirmities and sufferings under which he chose to appear, being now wholly dispersed, the native glory and brightness of his person, like the sun from behind a cloud, broke forth in its former lustre; that

<sup>b</sup> Psal. cii. 26, &c. <sup>c</sup> Phil. ii. 6, &c. <sup>d</sup> Les Œuvres posthumes de M. Claude, Tom III.

the glory of his human nature lay not in its conversion into, or intimate union with his divinity (since the one was impossible, and the other was done at the moment of his incarnation) but in its being freed from infirmities and sufferings; its entering upon an immortal and incorruptible state, a new, spiritual, celestial and eternal life; and participating in such divine worship and honours as the Son of God (to whom it was so nearly allied) had an undoubted right to receive.

3. THE humiliation of the Son of God, indeed, may at first sight appear to be a thing not so becoming his person, nor so consistent with his honour; yet if we consider the great ends for which he humbled himself, and the blessed effects which his pains and sufferings produced, we shall be constrained to acknowledge that the afflictions and hardships which he underwent, tended to his own honour and renown, as well as our comfort and felicity. For by these sufferings it was <sup>e</sup> that he opened unto us an entrance into paradise, and merited for us a resurrection and eternal life; by these, that he repaired the honour and glory of the divine justice, which before was violated by the sins of mankind; that he republished the eternal laws of righteousness, which were grown obsolete and quite forgot; restored virtue and holiness to the lustre and reputation they had long lost in the world; dissipated and destroyed superstition, error, idolatry, corruption, and all that wild confusion which the fraud and malice of the devil had introduced, and, in the room thereof, introduced truth, peace, joy, comfort and hope, and re-established them in mens hearts. Upon these accounts the sufferings of Christ are so far from being inglorious to him, that they supply matter for his eternal praise; and are the tenor of the song in the service of the church, both militant and triumphant; for <sup>f</sup> worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour and glory, and blessing. These things being premised, we come now to consider the personal character and transactions of Christ, in the state of his humiliation.

His humiliation not inglorious.

I. THAT our blessed Lord is really and essentially a divine person, might be argued and inferred (had we not in some measure done this <sup>g</sup> already) from such attributes as belong only to God; such worship as is due only to God; such acts as can be done by none but God; and such titles and appellations as can agree with none but God, every where meeting us in the scriptures. That he is truly man as well as God, will appear, not only from <sup>h</sup> the promises, prophecies and predictions concerning him in the Old Testament, but from several remarkable testimonies in the New. To this purpose we are informed that

Of the person of Christ.

His body.

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<sup>e</sup> Les Oeuvres posthumes de M. Claude, Tom. III. <sup>f</sup> Rev. v. 12. <sup>g</sup> Page 193. Vol I. <sup>h</sup> Vid. Gen. iii. 15. *Ibid.* xli. 3. Deut. xviii. 18. Isa. vii. 17. *Ibid.* ix. 6, &c.

when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law; for <sup>k</sup> he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham; upon which account we find the title of the Son of man so frequently, so emphatically given him in the evangelists. In short, the conception and birth, the life and death of our blessed Saviour, so largely described and insisted on by the penmen of the gospels, do abundantly manifest, that in the substance of his body he was truly man, and not merely the shape and shadow of humanity, as some <sup>l</sup> old heretics imagined.

His human  
soul.

<sup>m</sup> FORASMUCH then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, *i. e.* the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject unto bondage: and certainly, if the Son of God vouchsafed to assume the frailty of our flesh, he would not omit the nobler part, our soul, without which he could not be a perfect man. Wisdom, we know, belongeth not to the flesh, nor can the knowledge of God, which all allow to be infinite, admit of increase; and therefore he <sup>n</sup> whose knowledge did improve together with his years, must have a subject proper for it, which could be no other than an human soul. This was the seat of his finite understanding, and resigned will, distinct, we perceive from that of his Father, and consequently that of his divine nature, as appears by that known submission, <sup>o</sup> not my will, but thine be done: this was the subject of those passions and affections which manifestly appeared in him, when before his sufferings he said, <sup>p</sup> My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; and this was the thing, which, before its departure out of the body, while he was yet upon the cross, he recommended to the Father, <sup>q</sup> Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit; and having thus said, he gave up the ghost. So that there is no question to be made, but that he who was perfect God, was also perfect man, of a reasonable soul, and human

<sup>i</sup> Gal. iv. 4, 5. <sup>k</sup> Heb. ii. 16. <sup>l</sup> These were the Valentinians, who held that Christ's body was framed in heaven, and passed through the Virgin Mary as water does through a pipe; which notion was likewise espoused by Marcian: for he, as Athanasius assures us, was of opinion that God came down from heaven, and dwelt or sojourned in the Virgin without participating of her substance, being incapable to receive any thing from the nature of man, that was fallen under sin, and subjected to the ruler of wickedness. Besides these, there was another sect, called Apelleans, from Apelles, a scholar of Marcian's, who owned indeed that Christ had a real and material body, but denied it to be formed in the Virgin's womb, or to have participated of any part of her substance: for they supposed that when our Saviour came down from heaven (as Epiphanius Adv. Apel. Heret. relates it) he framed unto himself a body of the four elements, or (as Tertullian *de carne Christi* reports it) of the stars and substance of the superior world, wherein he truly suffered and died. King's Critical History of the Creed. <sup>m</sup> Heb. ii. 14, 15. <sup>n</sup> Luke ii. 52. <sup>o</sup> *Ibid.* xxv. 42. <sup>p</sup> *Math.* 26. 38. <sup>q</sup> *Luke* xxiii. 46.



human flesh subsisting; though some ancient heretics, who allowed of his assumption of human flesh, did nevertheless maintain that the word, or his divinity, supplied in his body the place of an informing soul.

THAT it was highly expedient at least, if not absolutely necessary, for our blessed Saviour, as he was designed to be the mediator between God and man, to partake of the nature of both, is what we had occasion to shew in treating of his mediatorial office: that both these natures united in our Saviour, do but constitute one person, is evident from his being represented in scripture not as two but one Christ, and all along spoken of and addressed to as one person; and that in this union (how great soever the mystery be) there is no contradiction or impossibility, may in some measure be gathered from the union of the soul and body, which, though consisting of two different substances, do but constitute one man. How this union of the two natures in Christ is effected, and wherein it does consist, is the great question in our religion, which we can only resolve by the negation of any possibility for such union to consist either in the conversion or confusion of these two natures. That the divine nature should be changed into the human, implies a repugnancy in the very notion; and that the human nature should be converted into the divine, is absolutely impossible. The creature can no more be made God, than God, blessed for ever, can cease to be God, and become a creature. To suppose then that the human nature were turned into the divine, is to destroy all union between the two natures: for the human nature, upon this supposition, ceasing to be, or being as it were swallowed up by the divine, there would be plainly in the person of Christ only one nature, *i. e.* the divine, and no other; and to suppose that the two natures were blended and mixed together in the person of Christ, is in effect to destroy them both; since Christ, upon this supposition, would be so far from being both God and man, that in reality he would be neither God nor man, but a person as different from both as all mixed bodies are from the elements which concur to their composition.

The union of the two natures in Christ.

THOUGH therefore we cannot positively account in what manner this union is effected, yet that after this union, the two natures remain intire and distinct in their respective properties, may in some measure be conceived again from the union of our souls

And their distinction.

r The most remarkable sects of this kind were the Arians and Apollinarians. Arius taught that Christ had nothing of man but the flesh, with which the word was joined: but Apollinarius distinguished between the soul and the mind, the *Psyche* and the *Nous*; and acknowledged that the word assumed the body, and soul or *Psyche* of man, but not the mind or *Nous*; for the word itself, he said, was in the place of that. This was then the true difference between the Arian and the Apollinarian heresy, as Faecundus states it, Lib. ix. Apollinaristæ quidem carnis et animæ naturam, sine mente, assumpsisse Deum credunt; Ariani vero, carnis tantummodo. Pearson on the Creed. s Conant's Sermons. t Pearson, *ibid.*

souls and bodies. <sup>a</sup> The body it must be owned, after its union with the soul, does not move or act in the same manner that it would have done in a separate state. The soul, by which it is now informed, modifies it a thousand different ways, and gives it quite another course of operations; and yet, notwithstanding this, it preserves all the qualities and affections that properly belong to a body; from whence we may suppose that the human nature may still retain all its natural powers and properties, though so intimately united to the divine, and acting after such a manner in subordination to it, that they both constitute but one individual person.

The two  
natures  
united for  
ever.

Thus the unity of the person takes not away the distinction of the natures, but the godhead and manhood retain their own properties severally; neither does the distinction of natures hinder the unity of the person, but one and the same Christ is perfect God and perfect man, and so shall abide for ever. For though after the day of judgment, when the number of God's elect shall be compleated, Christ's mediatorial office shall be at an end; yet the glory which he obtained as the reward of his meritorious performances shall never cease. \* The saints, we are told, shall inherit an everlasting kingdom; and much more than shall he who procured this exaltation for them, be himself for ever possessed of his glory; they shall come to Sion with a song, and in the heavenly Jerusalem praise and magnify him that sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb for ever and ever; and how great soever the illumination of their minds may be, yet it is not unreasonable to suppose that they will still be more sensibly affected with all the proper motions of love, veneration, and gratitude towards him, from the visible appearance of his human nature in union with the divine, which cannot but suggest the thought, that to his great performances in that nature, supported by the divine aid and benediction, all their present glory and felicity is to be ascribed.

The con-  
ception of  
Christ.

II. THIS being sufficient to be spoken in general concerning the great mystery of the hypostatical union of the divine and human natures, in the person of our blessed Saviour; we proceed now to the particular formation of his human, which (as the angel acquainted the blessed Virgin) was to be effected in this manner: <sup>x</sup> The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee; therefore also that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God: in which words (agreeable to the usual modesty and great decency of scripture-language) is implied all that action of the Holy Ghost, whereby the Virgin was enabled to become fruitful, and the place of ordinary generation, in this case, supplied. <sup>y</sup> For that there was no concurrence of any ordinary cause,

<sup>a</sup> Burnet on the Articles, and Fiddes's Body, Vol. I. and Barrow on the Creed. \* Burnet and Fiddes's Body, Vol. I. <sup>x</sup> Luke i. 34. 35. <sup>y</sup> Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. I.

cause, not only she herself in the preceding words, but the angel by whom she was visited, testifies; when, in order to strengthen her belief in a production so strange and astonishing, he declares it the work of God, with whom she ought to remember † that nothing is impossible.

Now when this action is in scripture represented as intirely the work of God, and yet attributed to the Holy Ghost in particular, we are not to understand it so peculiarly his, that the two other persons subsisting in the Godhead should have no concern in it; but it is therefore more especially assigned to the Holy Ghost (though common to both Father and Son) because fructifying and sanctifying are, in the sacred stile, generally ascribed to his influences. As therefore he began the first creation by moving or brooding (as it were) upon the face of the waters; so did he here begin the new creation, by conveying a principle and power of fruitfulness into a person otherwise incapable of it: and as it was requisite that the Saviour and sanctifier of the world should himself be <sup>z</sup> holy and undefiled, without blemish and without spot; hence grew an absolute necessity, that he should spring from the immediate operation of that Spirit who is the fountain of all holiness and purity; and, lastly, as it was requisite that, to enable him to perform the work of the world's redemption, the divine and human nature should be conjoined in his person; hence grew <sup>a</sup> necessity again for the intervention of an agent, <sup>+</sup> to whom we find that all the great and magnificent things of God, those signal works of providence, the revelation of divine truth, the prediction of future events, the performance of miracles, the renovation of mens minds, and the reformation of their manners, are in a peculiar manner ascribed.

Why by the Holy Ghost.

BUT though to accomplish the conjunction of the divine and human nature in the person of our Saviour Christ, to supply the defect of a plastic power in the substance of the Virgin, to rectify the corporeal matter which he took from her, and to clear it from that stain and corruption which in an ordinary propagation adheres to human nature, the intervention and agency of the Spirit of God was required in this miraculous conception; yet, since the holy scripture, with great significance, calls him <sup>b</sup> the seed of a woman, the Son of God made of a woman, and the like, (none of these titles could in any sense have been proper had this Virgin contributed nothing more, upon this occasion, but carrying this burden and bringing into the world a body thus miraculously framed) what we are farther to believe concerning his conception is this—That Christ's human nature was intirely taken from his mother; that, by a wonderful efficacy of Almighty Power, his body was formed, not only

Christ's human nature taken from his mother.

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† Luke i. 37.    z 2 Cor. v. 21. Heb. vii. 26, 27.    a Barrow on the Creed.  
b Gen. iii. 18. Gal. iv. 4.

in her, but of her; that thus he truly became (what otherwise he could not have been) <sup>c</sup> the seed of Abraham and David, according to the flesh; and that Mary consequently upon all accounts was strictly and literally his mother; nay, upon some accounts more strictly so, than any other woman can be the mother of her child; since, in the usual course of nature, children partake of the substance of both parents, whereas the whole of Christ's human substance was derived from her alone.

Why.

THOUGH therefore <sup>d</sup> we may easily conceive that God could immediately have created a nature, in kind and properties like ours, and so assumed it to his divinity; yet this would not have so fitly served the design of our redemption, since to effect that in the most congruous way, not only a resemblance in nature, but a proximity in blood was required; that the dignity we had lost by our rebellion might be recovered by the satisfactory merits of one who was of our own race and kindred; and that the devil, who by the weakness of a woman had seduced man from his duty to God, by the strength and faithful obedience of one proceeding from a woman, might be defeated and debased: but then, to distinguish the birth of this Saviour of the world from the ordinary births of other men, it was expedient likewise (according <sup>e</sup> to the prophecies which had gone before concerning him) that he should be born of a virgin, to give us a full conviction of his divine original.

Whether, after his birth she still continued a virgin.

THAT the mother of Jesus was a virgin at the time of her conception, neither is nor can be questioned by those who believe the scriptures; and that she should continue so until she had brought forth her first-born son, is pious to believe (even though we had not the testimony of the scriptures to this purpose) in honour both to the manner of his conception and the sacredness of his person. Whether after the birth of Christ this holy mother continued still in a perfect state of virginity, has been a question under some debate among learned men. <sup>f</sup> The peculiar honour and privilege vouchsafed that mother, the regard and deference she always shewed to her son, the awfulness of the power of the Highest which overshadowed her, and the presumed goodness and piety of Joseph who espoused her, made the persuasion pretty general, that, even after the birth of our Saviour, she still continued in a perpetual state of virginity. As it is sufficient however to the mystery of the incarnation, that at the time when our Lord was conceived and born his mother was a virgin, there can be no impiety in maintaining the contrary opinion; if so be that the natural and unconstrained interpretation of scripture do but warrant it.

WHEN therefore we find the royal prophet bringing in the Messiah in a psalm, which has a manifest reference to him, complaining

<sup>c</sup> Matth. i. 1. Rom. i. 3. <sup>d</sup> Barrow on the Creed. <sup>e</sup> Isa. vii. 14. Jer. xxxi. 22. <sup>f</sup> Pearson on the Creed.

Some reasons against it.

plaining in this manner : *s* I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children ; *h* when, pursuant to this prophecy, we find *i* St Matthew plainly preparing the way for our belief of other children by the blessed Virgin, by intimating to us that Joseph was her husband, and she his wife, and that they cohabited as such all along after the birth of our Saviour ; when, to confirm this intimation, we find *k* the evangelical history telling us that our Lord had brethren and sisters, and these not a few ; that his brethren were four, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, and his sisters perhaps as many ; when we perceive that these brethren of Christ were always so called by the evangelists, and so reputed by the Jews ; nay, that one of them is expressly so stiled *l* by St Paul, is frequently made mention of *m* in the apostolic constitutions, and *n* by Josephus the famous Jewish historian, without the least sign of any other sense imaginable ; and lastly, when we consider that there is not the least intimation of Joseph's being ever married before, and having other children, who might improperly be called the brethren of Jesus ; and that, though the blessed Virgin had nephews, yet were they never called the brethren of Christ in the whole New Testament : when these considerations are put together, I say, they will make it more than probable that the mother of our Lord did not continue a perpetual virgin, notwithstanding it be granted that in the Jewish language it was no unusual thing to call any collateral kindred, such as cousins or cousin-german, by the name of brothers. But this we advance only as the easiest acceptance of some texts of scripture, which make mention of our Saviour's family, without any design to oppose the contrary opinion, which is supported by a great body of learned men ; but ought not however to be made an article of divine faith, since there is no visible foundation for it in divine revelation.

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*g* Psal. lxxix. 8. *h* Whiston's Sermons and Essays. *i* Matth. i. 18. *k* I bid. xliii. 55, 56. Mark iii. 31. Luke viii. 19. *l* Gal. i. 19. *m* Constit. Apost. Lib. VI. c. lv. Lib. VI. c. xii, &c. *n* Antiq. Lib. XX. c. 8.

*o* A very learned man of our church has produced one of the best arguments I have met with, for the perpetual virginity of the blessed mother. Spanhemius, says he, in his *Dubia Evangelica*, concludes against the opinion of Helvidius, who denied this perpetuity merely upon the account of decency and congruity, as judging it more suitable and agreeable to that honourable esteem we ought to have of our blessed Saviour's mother, to hold that after his birth she remained a perpetual virgin. But I add, says he, to assert so, seems not only decent, but of as absolute necessity as that Jesus Christ the Messias, was to be of right king of the Jews. For upon supposition that Joseph had any children, either by Mary or any other wife, they, as coming from the elder line of Abiud by Joseph, their father, must have claimed the inheritance of the kingdom in his right, and not Jesus the son of Mary, who descended from Rhesa the younger son of Zorobabel, and so could not legally inherit, but upon default of issue from Joseph, the only remaining heir of the elder. For this being the law of the Jews, which in this case would have debarred Jesus from a title to their kingdom, and our Saviour coming to fulfil the law in every part and tittle of it, would never have owned himself king of the Jews contrary to the express

injunctions

THERE are other questions which fall under this head, such as, <sup>p</sup> “ whether our blessed Saviour, while he was in his mother’s womb, was subject to the same infirmities with other infants ; <sup>q</sup> and whether his mother felt any pain and uneasiness, and was liable to the disorders which attend other women in the like circumstances, &c.” but instead of treating on these and such like questions which afford matter for vain curiosity, rather than answer any purpose of religion and morality, we shall rather chuse to refer our reader to what is said under the page concerning these subjects ; and so proceed,

The time of Christ’s birth.

III. To the consideration of our Saviour’s nativity ; and herein, 1. of the time, when ; 2. the place, where ; 3. the family, from which our Saviour was born ; and so make some proper observations from this part of his history.

When the prophecies were fulfilled.

I. Now there are three periods more especially, when it was foretold by the prophets, that the Saviour of the world should be born : the first period was to happen upon the accomplishment of that prophecy of Jacob, <sup>r</sup> the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until

Shiloh

injunctions of it, had Joseph had any heirs of his own to succeed to the title : whereupon he concludes that Joseph had no children after Christ’s birth, and that Mary consequently was a perpetual virgin. South’s Sermons, Vol. III. But this destroys the solution of another great man, who, making Mary the mother of Jesus and St John, to be the same person with the mother of James and Josias in St Matthew and St Mark, supposes Joseph to have had these by a former venter, and Mary to be their step-mother. See Whitby on Matthew xiii. 55.

p “ En Effet, le Fil de Dieu, ayant voulu se faire Chair, a revetu toutes nos infirmités, entre lesquelles, celles de l’enfance, & des premiers Mois apres la Conception, doivent etre contestées. Il ne faut donc pas douter, que Marie, sa mere, n’ait ete exposée a toutes les incommoditez des Grossesses ordinaires, & que le divin Enfant, qu’elle portoit dans son sein, n’eût sa part de ces incommoditez.” M. Claude, de Jesus Christ, Lib. V. c. ix.

q “ Ab hac sententia excipitur virgo, Mater Dei: quæ, quia sine peccati collusione, & sine virillis admixtionis detrimento, Christum suscepit, sine dolore genuit, & sine integritatis violatione, pudore virginitatis integro, permansit.” August in Johann. “ Ceux de l’Eglise Romaine s’imaginent, que, quand Jesus Christ est ne, il ne s’est fait aucune Ouverture dans le Corps de la Vierge, mais qu’il est ne par, ce qu’on appelle, la Penetration des dimensions. Mais tout cela se dit sans necessite, & sans aucune Temoinage de l’Ecriture.—L’opinion constante des anciens Peres a ete, que Jesus Christ est sorti du Corps de la Vierge avec Ouverture de Matrice, & l’Ecriture meme le dit en termes formels ; car elle applique a Jesus Christ cette parole de la Loy, tout maie, ouvrant la Matrice, sera appelle saint au Seigneur : surquoy plusieurs Peres ont fait cette Remarque, que Jesus Christ est le seul, a qui proprement cette parole appartient, puisque lui seul, entre tous les Enfants, a fait l’Ouverture de la Matrice de sa mere. Les adversaires disent au contraire, que si cela etoit vray, Marie n’auroit pas demeure Vierge dans l’Enfantement. Mais a cela je repons, que l’Idée, qu’ils se font de la Virginité, est absurde. Car l’Ouverture de la Matrice peut arriver par plusieurs accidens, comme par Maladie, sans pourtant que la Virginité soit perdue. La Virginité consiste a n’avoir eu aucun commerce d’homme ; Marie donc a ete Vierge avant l’Enfantement, dans l’Enfantement, & apres ; puisque son Fruit a ete concu dans son sein, par la vertu du Saint Esprit, sans l’Intervention de l’homme.” M. Claude, de Jesus Christ, Lib. V. c. ix. <sup>r</sup> Gen. xlix. 10.

Shiloh come, *i. e.* (as we explained the text before) the Jews, who were so denominated from Judah, shall not cease to be a political body, and to exercise a regal, or at least, a judicial power and authority, till the time that the Messiah (for so the word Shiloh was always interpreted) shall appear. For the Sceptre or Rod does not only denote royal power, but any judicial, or legislative authority, under what form of government soever; and this the Jews did certainly retain, even during all the breaches which were made in their government, until the time of our Saviour's coming. The expiration of the seventy weeks, mentioned by the prophet Daniel, is another note of time when the Messiah should appear. \* For here, by weeks understanding (as the Jews used sometimes to compute) weeks of years, the whole number of seventy weeks will contain four hundred and ninety years; at the expiration of which time, the Jews were no more to be the peculiar people of God, nor Jerusalem his holy city; because then the œconomy which he had established among them was to cease, the worship which he had appointed at Jerusalem was wholly to be abolished, and the christian church, and christian worship to succeed in its stead.

3. Another note of time when the Messiah, according to the prophet Haggai, was to be born, was during the standing of the second temple: for † I will shake all nations, says God, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory; the glory of this latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former. But how came this latter temple (which both on account of its structure and external ornaments, as well as the special manifestations of the divine presence and power in it, was so much inferior) to be accounted more glorious than the former? For no other reason, but because the angel of the covenant, the delight of the Israelites, and the desire of all ages (which characters seem plainly to describe the perfections of our Saviour) was to grace and adorn it with his presence.

WHEN

‡ See page 35. and Prideaux's Connection, Part II. Lib. IX.

† The sceptre and law-giver remained among the Jews till both began to be taken from them by the Romans, on their reducing Judea into the form of a Roman province; and then Christ, the promised Shiloh, began his coming, as the Messiah, by then first entering on his Father's business, for which he was sent. And that this actually fell in with the time of this charge plainly appears: for Christ was then in the twelfth year of his age, and the twelfth year from Christ's birth was that wherein Coponius entered upon his government: for Herod lived one year after the birth of Christ, and, after the death of Herod, Archelaus reigned ten years, and the next year after the Romans seized Judea, and made it a province of their empire. Christ therefore first appeared in the temple, as the Messiah, at that very time when the sceptre and the law-giver first began to depart from Judah; and sixty-two years after that, this departure was fully completed, in the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, and the utter abolishing of the whole Jewish policy and constitution of government in that land, which hath, never since, either there, or any where else, been again revived. Prideaux's Connection, Part II. Vol. II. u Dan. ix. 24, &c. \* Prideaux, *ibid.* Part I. Vol. II. x Haggai ii. 7, 9.

WHEN therefore these predictions were going to be fulfilled; the second temple was yet standing; Daniel's seventy weeks were expiring; and the sceptre was upon the point of departing from Judah; then was the fulness of time, or the stated and prefixed time for Christ to appear. And, from the strength of these prophecies, very probably it was, that, about the time of our Saviour's birth, there was so strong a tradition (as several historians tell us) through all the East, that a great and mighty prince was then to arise out of the Jewish nation. However this be, it is certain that the necessities of mankind, and the particular temper and disposition of the age wherein Christ was born seemed then to call for him, when he came. For (not to mention the superstition and idolatry of the Gentile world) even in Judea, the seat of the once beloved people of God, all licentiousness, Jew'dness, and villany prevailed. \* The hypocrisy of the Pharisees, the subtilty of the Herodians, the heresies of the Sadducees, and the impertinent traditions of the doctors of the law had quite spoiled and defaced all religion and morality; † so that the greatest Jews were Atheists and Epicureans; they both professed, and lived like persons of that character; and the meaner sort were sunk into ignorance and brutality. When therefore the world was thus out of order, and every day like to be worse, God sent forth his Son, to bless us with greater discoveries of his will, to give us rules of exact holiness, to recommend religion and virtue by his own example, and so † to call us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

When  
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the age re-  
quired it.

BUT what might induce God, more especially, to pitch upon this point of time for the manifestation of his Son, was the particular disposition of that age; when the temporal power of the Jews being broken by the Romans, they were unable to make that vigorous and effectual opposition to Christ and his religion, which they otherwise would have done; when a great part of the earth being under one government, and a communication kept up between different countries, did promote and facilitate the propagation of Christ's gospel; † when the Roman empire was in its full glory, and, together with it, learning and wit, as well as all the arts and sciences flourished; when the world enjoyed a profound peace, and was at liberty to examine into the truth of any prophet or profession that set up with high and uncommon pretensions. † And, as men at this time were

y Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus & constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut, eo tempore, Judæa profecti rerum potirentur. Sueton. de vita Veipastiani. Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum, literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valescerat oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur. Cornel. Tacit. Hist. L. V. which agrees very well with what Josephus tells us of a current prophecy, that one of their own country should, at that time, have dominion over the world. And this, as he tells us, was one means of exciting the Jews to make war with the Romans. De Bello Judaic. L. VII. c. xiii. z Les Oeuvres de M. Claude, Tom. III. a Edwards's Survey, Vol. I. b 1 Pet. ii. 9. c Atterbury's Sermons, Vol. I. d Jenkins's Reasonableness of the Christian Religion.



were sufficiently qualified to discover an imposture; so, considering the prevailing depravity, they must be supposed unwilling to embrace any truth which put a check to all licentiousness, and restrained them from their beloved lusts. Vice would be sure to make a strong defence, and an eager plea; and nothing would be difficult for it to discover, when it had so great a number of such subtle and devoted advocates. It is no small argument therefore of the divine authority of our most holy religion, that the providence of God sent the great author and publisher of it into the world in a time the most unlikely for an impostor to pass undiscovered, and therefore the most seasonable for truth to manifest itself; since that must needs be true which neither learning, nor prejudice, nor vice, nor interest could impair the credit of, nor any way prove to be false.

2. ANOTHER considerable circumstance, relating to our Saviour's birth, was the place where it came to pass, which, according to the express prediction of the prophet, was Bethlehem, in the tribe of Judah: For thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me one that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings-forth have been from of old, from everlasting. And here we cannot but observe how the special providence of God was visible in the disposition made for the birth of Christ, in the very place where he was born: for Augustus having published a decree that all the world should be taxed, *i. e.* have their names and conditions of life set down in court-rolls, according to their families; Joseph and Mary were obliged to go up, from the place of their abode, to this city of David, to be taxed there, as being of the house and lineage of David; where while they continued, the days were accomplished that Jesus should be born. Had it not been in obedience to this decree, it is highly improbable that Joseph and Mary would have taken such a journey in the condition she was, and at so unseasonable a time of the year: but God, who can effect his designs by what instruments he pleases, so ordered the matter, that, by the command of an heathen prince, they should, at that time, repair to Bethlehem, to the end that, not only the accomplishment of the prophecies concerning this circumstance might become more conspicuous; but that the birth of our Saviour Christ might be recorded in the public acts of the empire, for his followers to appeal to (as we find Justin Martyr and Tertullian expressly do) when called upon to make proof of the reality of his incarnation.

It is deservedly counted a great honour to any place that famous and excellent persons have been born in it: \* for this reason, cities and nations have, in all ages, been wont to strive and contend with one another, to draw and appropriate to themselves

The place of Christ's birth.

Highly honoured hereby.

\* Micah v. 2. f Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. g Couant's Sermons.

themselves the glory of having given birth to such and such eminent persons. Nor is this merely a vain humour of the world, but what the holy scriptures represent as a great blessing to a place when men of renown and beneficial qualities happen to receive their first breath in it. For so, promising his people a reward upon the performance of their duty, <sup>b</sup> they that shall be born of thee, says God, shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundation of many generations, the foundations that for many ages have been demolished and ruined, and thou shalt be called, *i. e.* thou, in thine offspring, and in those that shall descend from thee, shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, and the Restorer of Paths to dwell in. If then, even in God's account, it be a great honour and privilege to a place to have eminent and worthy persons born in it; whether we consider our blessed Saviour, in the dignity of his person, as he is <sup>i</sup> over all, God blessed for ever; or in the greatness of his achievements, as he is the <sup>k</sup> vanquisher of Satan, and of all the powers of hell; or in the beneficial effects of them, <sup>l</sup> as he is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him; under which of these notions soever we consider our Lord and Saviour, I say, we shall perceive the reason <sup>m</sup> of the evangelist's variation from the words of the prophet; <sup>n</sup> and thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a governor, that shall rule my people Israel. For, though it might be little, in respect of its extent, and the number of its inhabitants, in Micah's sense; yet, in the sense of St Matthew, it was eminently great, by giving birth to the Saviour of the world, the Son of God. Hither it was that the holy angels sent the shepherds to declare the <sup>o</sup> good tidings of great joy which they brought from heaven: and hither it was that a star directed the <sup>p</sup> wise men of the East to come and pay their homage and adoration to their God incarnate. But who these wise men were, whence they came, and what the nature of the star was, by whose conduct they were directed to Christ, may perhaps be no improper digression here to inquire.

The wise-  
men of the  
East, who.

1. THE word which we render Wisemen, in its original, signifies magicians; which, however now it may bear not so good a character, was nevertheless heretofore a name of very innocent and honourable signification. <sup>q</sup> The studious and in-  
quisitive,

<sup>h</sup> Isa. lviii. 12. <sup>i</sup> Rom. ix. 5. <sup>k</sup> Heb. ii. 14. <sup>l</sup> Ibid. v. 9. <sup>m</sup> The prophet Micah speaks of Bethlehem as a little city, whereas St Matthew calls it not the least, *i. e.* a very considerable one among the princes, or cities of Judah; and to reconcile this seeming difference, several learned men have affirmed that the original word signifies indifferently either little or great; and with great emphasis (says our learned Pocock) seems that word here put to shew, that, as some other things, which are little in bulk and quantity, are, in other regards, of great esteem and value, so was it with Bethlehem. <sup>n</sup> Vid. Pocock on Micah v. 2. <sup>o</sup> Whitby on Matth. ii. 6. and Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah. <sup>p</sup> Matth. ii. 6. <sup>q</sup> Luke ii. 10, 14. <sup>r</sup> Matth. ii. 2, 9. <sup>s</sup> Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. I. and Whitby's Annotations on Matth. ii. 1, &c.

quisitive, whose business and profession led them to search into nature, its most abstruse causes and effects, and more particularly into the motions and dispositions of heavenly bodies, were distinguished by this title : and, in what veneration and profound respect they were held, appears from the most important matters, both sacred and civil, being committed to their administration. They were the counsellors, the judges, the priests, the princes, in a word, the oracles of the Eastern countries. But, as the best arts are sometimes perverted to ill purposes, so it happened to these, that, falling into the hands of bad men who met with people ignorant and credulous, and not only easy, but even glad to be deluded, they degenerated into the common cheats of judiciary astrology ; and these abuses grew so general, as, at last, to fix an ill sense upon the word, and a scandal on the science itself.

IT were a wrong, and great indignity to the persons now before us, not to believe them of the nobler and better sort ; but we can hardly be persuaded (though some would endeavour to do it) that they were persons of royal dignity ; \* because we cannot reasonably suppose that the evangelist would have omitted a circumstance of so great moment, both for their honour and our Lord's : we can hardly think but that some account would have been given of their royal train and equipage, and that all Jerusalem would have been moved as much to see their entry, as they were to hear their questions : nor can we imagine that it would have been decent in Herod to have received them with no more respect, and to have dismissed them without any attendance to Bethlehem, much less to have laid his commands upon them to return back, and to bring him an account of the child, as soon as they had found him, had they been persons of equal rank and dignity with himself. Upon these considerations, we may not unjustly deny them the title of kings, though we cannot but allow them to be persons of great wisdom, learning, and integrity ; † of which ours, and some other translations of the Bible, have been so sensible, as very prudently to decline the odious name of Magicians, and to call them the Wisemen from the East ; but then, what, and where this east was, is a question, wherein the body of interpreters have very much divided.

2. SOME conceive that these travellers came out of Persia, others from Chaldea, † others from Arabia Felix, and others again from Mesopotamia. These countries all lay east-ward from Jerusalem and the Holy Land ; and in each of these some antecedent notions of the Messiah's advent may be accounted for. In Chaldea and Persia, the captivity of the Jews, and the book of Daniel might be a means to inform them of it : in Arabia, they might learn it from the nearness of their neighbourhood,

The country whence they came.

VOL. II.

S f f

hood,

\* Whitby's Annotations on Matth. ii. 1, &c. † Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. I,

hood, and frequent commerce with the Jews; and in Mesopotamia, besides these common helps, they had the prophecy of their countryman Balaam, concerning † a star that should come out of Jacob to direct them. \* But as we know of no record wherein this prophecy was preserved but the book of Moses, which the people of Mesopotamia neither read nor believed; so it seems evident that Balaam's words do not refer us to a star that should arise at any prince's birth, but to a king, who should be as glorious and splendid in his dominions as the stars are in the firmament. So that, upon the whole, it seems most likely that these wisemen came out of Arabia; not only because the gifts which they offered were the natural product of that country (which was famous likewise for its magi) but, because its neighbourhood to Judea might give them the advantage of discerning the star better than any other nation had.

The nature of the star which led them.

3. \* FOR, that this was no common star, its motion contrary to the ordinary course of nature, its performing the part of a guide to these travellers, and that probably by day as well as by night, its accommodating itself to their necessities, and disappearing and returning as they could best or least be without it; and (what is a circumstance as remarkable as any) its pointing and standing over the very place where the young child was, is a sufficient demonstration: and therefore the most probable opinion is, that, what the evangelist calls a Star, † was a certain luminous body, formed on purpose, and hanging in the air in the manner of a meteor, over the centre of the land of Judea, to give notice to the neighbouring nations of the birth of the Prince of Glory; which the wisemen of Arabia perceiving, and (according to the tradition then prevailing) taking it to be an indication of this eminent person's birth, came to Jerusalem, and there inquired, † Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East; or from the place of our abode, which is in the East. \* For it seems the better expedient to give them notice hereof, by setting this light vertically over the place where the king, which it betokened, was born; than by placing it in any eastern part of the heavens, where it might seem to denote something among the Indians, and other distant nations, rather than among the people of the Jews. But to return:

Christ's descent from David.

4. ANOTHER remarkable circumstance in the birth of our Saviour Christ is the family and lineage from whence he descended. To Abraham indeed God had promised, in general terms, that † in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed; but to David he had given a particular assurance, that † of the fruit of his body (as the apostle expresses it) he would raise up Christ.

† Numb. xxiv. 17. u Whitby on Matth. ii. \* Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. I. x Whitby, *ibid.* y Matth. ii. 2. z Whitby, *ibid.* a Gen. xii. 3.—xxii. 18. b Acts ii. 30.

Christ to sit upon his throne. The promise which God made to David in this behalf, himself introduces in this solemn manner; • I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant; thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations: † which words are too great to have their completion in Solomon, or any of the succeeding kings of Judah, descended from David. And therefore we may observe that the Psalmist distinguishes between David's seed and David's sons; by his seed, he means the Messiah; by his sons, his descendants and successors; to the latter the promise is conditional; but to the former, absolute: of his sons it is said, • If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with a rod, and their sin with scourges; but of his seed it follows, † Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips: once I have sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David; his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne, as the sun before me; it shall be established for ever, as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. And, as this was the solemn and unalterable promise made to David, so we may observe that the prophets which come after him speak of the Messiah in the same strain, viz. that he should † sit upon the throne of David for ever; that he should be † a righteous branch, raised up to David, and a king, that should reign and prosper; and that the people of the Lord † should have one shepherd, and David be their prince for ever, for which reason, the Jews, who well understood the language of the prophets, taking our Saviour to be the promised Messiah, pray to him thus, † Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on us, and making their acclamations in these words, † Hosanna to the Son of David.

IT is not to be doubted then but that our Saviour Christ was to be of the house and lineage of David; but then how to adjust his pedigree to that purpose, and to reconcile the two evangelists, St Matthew and St Luke, who seem to differ so widely in the genealogies they have given us of him, is a matter of some difficulty; and in order to resolve it we may observe, 1. = That the designs of the two evangelists in their respective deductions of our Saviour's pedigree are very different; for St Matthew intends only to set down his † political or royal pedigree,

c Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4. d Kidder's Demonstration. e Psal. lxxxix. 30, &c. f Ibid. ver. 33, &c. g Isaiah ix. 7. h Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. i Ezek. xxxvii. 24, 25. k Matth. ix. 27 — xv. 22 — xx. 30. l Ibid. xxi. 9. m South's Sermons, Vol. III. n That Matthew uses the word (begat) only in a political sense, is clear from hence—That he applies it to him who had no child, even Jeconiah, of whom it is expressly said (in Jer. xxii. 30.) that God wrote him childless: whereupon being deposed by the king of Babylon, Zedekiah his uncle was made king,

pedigree, by which he had a right to the crown of the Jews ; but St Luke shews his natural descent, through the several successions of those from whom he took flesh and blood. And to this purpose we find St Matthew beginning his reckoning only from Abraham, to whom the first promise of the kingdom was made, but St Luke runs his line up to Adam, the first head and fountain of human nature ; which plainly shews that one deduced only his title to the crown, the other the natural descent of his humanity.

2. WE may observe farther, that as David had several sons by former wives, so by Bathsheba likewise he had three besides Solomon, whereof the eldest next to him was Nathan ; and that Christ descended naturally from David, not by Solomon, but by Nathan. For though it be frequently said in scripture that the Messias should spring from David, it is never said that he should descend from Solomon ; for which reason St Luke deduces only Nathan's line, which came into the possession of the throne upon Jeconiah's captivity and want of issue in the person of Salathiel.

3. WE may observe again that the crown of Judah being now come into the line of Nathan in the person of Salathiel, and after him in the great and renowned Zorobabel ; for as much as the two evangelists agree from Jeconiah to Zorobabel, and after him divide (each ascribing to him a different successor, viz. one of them Abiud, and the other Rhesa ; ) we may rationally suppose that these two were the sons of Zorobabel, and that from Abiud the elder brother, lineally descended Joseph, according to the calculation of St Matthew ; and from Rhesa the younger brother descended Mary, of whom Jesus was born, according to the description of St Luke.

4. ONCE more we may observe that it was a custom of the Jews not to reckon the woman by name in her pedigree, but to reckon the husband in right of his wife ; for which reason we are not to think it strange that we find Joseph twice reckoned ; first in his own right, by St Matthew, and then in his wife Mary's right, by St Luke : for it is certain that Mary was properly the daughter of Eli, and that Joseph, who is there reckoned after him, is so reckoned not as his natural son, but as his son-in-law, instead of his wife Mary, as the manner of the Jews was. And accordingly it is remarked by some learned men that St Luke does not say of Joseph that he was the son of Eli, but only *ton Eli*, that he was of Eli, *i. e.* related to him, and belonging to his family, viz. as his son-in-law.

Now

king, and afterwards, upon the removal of him likewise for his rebellion (there remaining no more of the line of Solomon) Salathiel being next of kin, was declared king of the Jews. Which Salathiel, upon that account is said by St Matthew to be begotten by Jeconiah, not because naturally he was his son, but only legally or politically so, as succeeding in the kingdom during his captivity. South, *ibid.* o Gen. xvii. 6.

Now to sum up the account of these observations, it is in short this—<sup>p</sup> That the royal line of David by Solomon being extinct in Jeconiah, the crown and kingdom passed into the next younger line of Nathan (another son of David) in Salathiel and Zorobabel; which Zorobabel having two sons, Abiud and Rhesa, the royal dignity descended of right upon the line of Abiud, of which Joseph was the last; and he marrying the Virgin Mary, who sprang from the line of Rhesa, the younger son of Zorobabel, and (as some imagine) having no issue himself, his right passed into the line of Mary, being next of kin, and by that means upon Jesus her son; whereupon he was, both naturally the son of David, and legally the king of the Jews, the latter of which is accounted to us by St Matthew, as the former is by St Luke.

THIS seems to be a pretty clear and manifest deduction of our Saviour's pedigree from David; but <sup>r</sup> perhaps interpreters might save themselves the trouble of giving a reason for several difficulties occurring herein, by saying that St Matthew (concerning whom the main dispute is) recites it as he found it in the authentic copies of the Jews, who doubtless had preserved some known and approved genealogy of their descent from Abraham, the father of their nation, in whom they so much gloried, and from whose loins they expected the promised Messiah. That even in our Saviour's time the Jews had genealogical tables, wherein they kept an account of their families and tribes, is evident from what Josephus says, <sup>r</sup> that he gave the succession of his family, as he found it written in the public books; nor need we question but that the like, or greater care was employed to preserve the stems of the royal family of David. Since then the Jews, who lived in the time when the gospels were published (though exactly curious in things of this nature, and withal maliciously bent against Christ and christianity) never once attempted to invalidate the account which these evangelists give, this seems to be a sufficient proof that these genealogies, when first they came abroad, were neither thought <sup>r</sup> erroneous, nor inconsistent, but agreeable to the public records then in use; and that, if any difficulties now arise in them, they are not to be attributed to any real and intrinsic cause, but accidentally to the ignorance of interpreters for want of proper helps, at this distance of time to explain them by.

BEFORE we dismiss our observations concerning the pedigree and parentage of our Saviour Christ, it may not be improper to <sup>r</sup> make <sup>r</sup> The condition of the Virgin Mary.

<sup>p</sup> South's Sermons, Vol. III. <sup>q</sup> Whitty on Matth. i. 2. <sup>r</sup> *Tou men on tou genous hemoon diadoken hoos en tais demofiais deltois anagegrarmienon heuren houtos paratithemai.* De vita sua. <sup>s</sup> The reader that is desirous to see a fuller vindication and reconciliation of these genealogies, may look into Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, Part II. where he treats this argument at large, from chap. vi. to chap. xv. and there with great accuracy solves all the difficulties which either Jews or deists have alledged.

make a more particular reflection upon the state and condition of the blessed Virgin, and the peculiar favours which God vouchsafed to her, in order to perceive what honour and respect is due unto her upon the account of her being the mother of our Lord. How nearly soever she was related to the royal tribe and family of David, yet we find her in no better circumstances than to be espoused to a poor carpenter; in the time of her greatest necessity forced to make use of a stable for a lodging-room; and, at the day of her purification, able to bring no better offering than (what <sup>is</sup> the meanest sort were appointed to do) a pair of turtle-doves and two young pigeons. And yet, observe the wonder of the divine condescension! This woman, so poor, so mean, so destitute, of all the virgins of Israel is chosen and elected to be the instrument of bringing into the world the long desired Messiah; the instrument of repairing and making amends for the loss and damage brought upon mankind by the transgression of the first mother Eve, and a temple consecrated for the inhabitation of the Son of God. What then is the nature and measure of that honour and respect which we ought to pay her upon this account? Shall we give her lavish and excessive epithets, and (as some are wont to do) <sup>we</sup> call her a goddess, and ourselves her suppliants: stile her the queen of heaven and mother of divine grace; the sovereign lady of angels, arch-angels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, &c. the refuge of sinners and advocate of all christians? This we think is carrying the compliment too far: we have no instance of such attributes given to the blessed Virgin in the holy scriptures; nor can we help thinking that this is a strain much fitter for some poetical heathen goddess than for a christian saint.

How we  
are to ho-  
nour and  
respect her.

1. What  
we may  
not do.

SHALL we give her the honour of our prayers, and trust upon her for the returns either of temporal or spiritual good things? † The word of God remonstrates against this; nor can the piety of the blessed virgin herself be presumed to bear it. For the more highly she is exalted in heaven, the more sensible she is of God's bounty, the more engaged in his love, and the more zealous of his honour; and therefore she cannot but the more detest and abhor any acts of worship done to her, which may any way invade the incommunicable rights of God.

SHALL we give her the honour of invocation, and pray to her to pray for us, as we sometimes desire the prayers of our friends here on earth? Though we have no diminishing thoughts of her prevalence this way, and think that the charity of her prayers is more spontaneous and free than to stay for the motive of our solicitations; yet so long as this text remains in our Bible, There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, we can never be persuaded to be-  
take

† Bull's Sermons, Vol. I. u Lev. xii. 6, &c. compared with Luke ii. 24.  
\* Wake's Sermons. † Young's Sermons, Vol. II.



take ourselves to the mediation of the blessed virgin, nor of any other saint whatever. For though to desire the prayers of our brethren here below is a duty commanded, because it is an office in itself necessary for the improvement of human charity, humility, and edification; yet, in desiring the prayers of any of the saints above, we are not secure of any issue so much as this, viz. Innovating in the rule of worship, losing our pains by not being heard, laying in a stock for superstition to grow upon, and alienating our minds from their immediate love and dependence on God.

SINCE then into these errors we are forbid to run, what is the proper measure of honour and esteem that we may safely pay to the mother of our Lord? <sup>What we may.</sup> We may believe her to have been a most pure, and holy, and virtuous creature: that her virgin mind was clean and spotless, as her body was chaste and immaculate; and that, upon the account of both, she was the most fit, of any among her race or sex, for the Holy Ghost to overshadow, or for the Son of the Highest to inhabit. When we consider the firmness of her faith, the fervour of her devotion, and the excellence of her humility, we cannot but acknowledge a grace extraordinary in her, working all these eminent and divine qualities; and accordingly, we always speak of her with respect, and never mention her name without some preface, or epithet of honour. In the daily service of our church, we sing, or repeat her excellent Magnificat, and thereby testify our joy and complacency in those singular favours which God vouchsafed to her; by the appointment of our church, we celebrate two festivals, that of her Annunciation, and that of her Purification, in her memorial; and without dishonouring God the Father, and his eternal Son, can think of no other honour fit to be paid her, except it be the imitation of that purity and holiness, and of that faith and humility which were so conspicuous in her as to induce God <sup>b</sup> to regard the low estate of his hand-maiden.

IV. THUS we have finished the circumstances which relate to the incarnation and birth of our blessed Saviour, and come now to raise some proper observations from this part of his history: And,

1. IN this mystery of godliness, God's manifestation in the flesh, we may happily perceive the concurrence and harmony of the divine attributes: for here is the wisdom of God conspicuous, <sup>c</sup> in contriving such an expedient to reconcile the divine justice and mercy together, when our iniquities had set them at variance; when mankind had alienated themselves from God, in finding out a method of approaching and regaining them. <sup>d</sup> y flooping so low as to take the manhood into God; and <sup>e</sup> y then the whole race of Adam stood in need of a propitiation for sin, in

<sup>y</sup> Wake's Sermons. <sup>b</sup> Luke i. 48. <sup>c</sup> Vid. Bates's Harmony of the Divine Attributes, and Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. I.

in putting himself in the capacity of offering one that must needs be sufficient for the atonement of all sin, since the oblation, the oblator, and the deity appeased are all one. That God should exalt himself beyond all measure, beyond all imagination, is no more than what we account agreeable to the common conceptions we have of his greatness and immensity; but that he should humble, and, as it were, go out of himself; that he should make himself of no reputation, and appear in the fashion of a man; that he who is the Antient of Days, and whose out-goings are from everlasting, should be born in Bethlehem, a child not an hour old; that he who fills heaven and earth, should be wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and the majesty of the High and Holy One laid in a manger: in a word, that the immortal and impassable Creator should take upon him the passions and frailties, the sufferings and mortality of his own creatures; should begin to live and grow, should hunger and thirst, be weary and sleep, and bleed and die, in all points be tempted and afflicted like one of us; this is somewhat so exceedingly foreign to the manifestations God hath used to make of himself, that it quite crosses our common apprehensions of him; and yet, when we look nearer to it, we cannot but acknowledge it the stupendious work of his omnipotence, thus to unite infinitely distant and different natures, to join heaven and earth, God and man in one person; to confine immensity, and exhibit a virgin-mother and an infant-god.

BUT of all the attributes of God, that which shines out with a particular lustre, in the contrivance of this mystery, is this unspeakable goodness and mercy, condescending to take pity on our low estate, and to lay our case so much to heart, as to think of redeeming and restoring us from that depth of misery into which we had plunged ourselves; and to this purpose, sending not an angel (the least of which he had no reason to spare out of his train for our sakes) but his own beloved Son, out of his bosom, to effect our recovery and restoration. It deserves to be acknowledged, as a distinguishing mark of the divine favour, that we were at first created in the likeness of God; but what proportion is there between this and restoring to us that likeness (when most unhappily lost) by a kindness so amazing as that of God's being made in the likeness of man? To his putting on our passions and frailties, that we might rise to his perfections; subjecting himself to our necessities and wants, that we might partake of his fulness; promoting us to honour by suffering indignities; and opening to us a way to happiness, and life, and a kingdom everlasting by a life of afflictions, a death of exquisite torture, and the voluntary scandal of an ignominious cross? And all this done for creatures, who, as such, could add  
nothing

d Newcome's Sermons, Vol. I. and Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. I.

nothing to their Creator's glory; for sinners, who, as such, had done their utmost to impair it: for rebels and traitors, false to all their obligations of duty, disloyal to the best of lords, and unthankful to their only benefactor; wretches that had incurred his wrath, and merited ruin; that were undeserving of grace, and yet unwilling to accept it. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but he loved us, and gave himself for us! And this surely, of all others, is a <sup>c</sup> faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, *i. e.* fit to be embraced and entertained with all possible joy and thankfulness, redounding to the glory of God, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

2. IN the birth of our Saviour Christ, who was not only by nature the Son of God, but by human descent the king of the Jews, we learn a true estimate of the world; and may possibly guess at some reasons why he chose to make his appearance, not in some splendid and pompous, but in such low and debasing circumstances. The Jews indeed, whose ambitious desires made them wrest those places in scripture to the first, which were only meant of the second coming of Christ, expected that his kingdom would have been of this world; that he would have gone forth with his armies, delivered them from the Roman yoke, made them a great and glorious people, and <sup>e</sup> given them the heathen for their inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth <sup>f</sup> for their possession. But it being determined in the Divine Counsel that the Messiah should make a quite different appearance, the prophets accordingly foretel of him, that there should be <sup>g</sup> no form or comeliness in him, nor any beauty for which we should desire him; that he should be despised and rejected, be accounted the <sup>h</sup> very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people, be oppressed and afflicted, taken from prison and from judgment, and cut off at last from the land of the living. And, to prevent all expectations of his reigning in this life, wherever mention is made of his kingdom <sup>i</sup> there is added, that he should be meek, and poor, and lowly, subject to the insult of enemies, and destitute of the state and ornaments of majesty. And, indeed, considering the design of the errand he came upon (which was to teach the world a new religion) a mean and afflicted condition was more agreeable to his true character. For whereas mankind was over-run with an immoderate desire of the riches and honours of this world, the design of his religion was to rectify our apprehensions, to disengage our affections, and to raise them to the pursuit of a more noble and lasting happiness. It is indeed intended to give us the fullest conviction that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of those things which he possesses, and that the value of those honours and advancements which so busily employ the thoughts of

Teach us a true estimate of the world.

The design of the christian religion.

VOL. II.

T t t

the

<sup>e</sup> 1 Tim. i. 15. <sup>f</sup> Psal. ii. 8. <sup>g</sup> Isa. liii. 2, &c. <sup>h</sup> Psal. xxii. 6. <sup>i</sup> Zech. ix. 9.

the ambitious, consist more in fancy than in any real worth. It teaches us that the most desirable exercise of power is to govern ourselves; that godliness with contentment is the greatest gain; that justice, generosity, and charity are more honourable than the most magnificent titles without them; and so far is it from encouraging a martial spirit from making it a glorious thing to kill, and destroy, and set the world on fire about empire and dominion, that were its precepts followed, men might, in reality, \* beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, that nation might not rise against nation, or learn war any more.

Christ's appearance answerable to it.

Now what could be a more proper expedient to effect this excellent design than an obscure and afflicted condition in our Saviour? Or what could be a more authentic proof of the meaning and disinterestedness of his laws than to make them the rule of his own actions? His contempt of the world, his patience, and meekness, and resignation, the practice of his own beatitudes upon himself, and exact uniformity between his life and doctrine, is now a powerful recommendation of his institution; whereas, had he chosen a plentiful condition, he had not only brought his doctrine into disgrace, but given mankind a new temptation to over-value worldly honour and greatness to which they were too prone already. <sup>1</sup> Had our blessed Saviour, I say, taken the state of a king upon him, and wrought those temporal deliverances the Jews expected, this would have made them more eager after that which the apostle calls <sup>m</sup> the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life. Men of enterprising and encroaching spirits would have been glad of the colour of so great an example, in gratification of their ambitious views, would have thought themselves authorised to fill the world with blood and slaughter, and, for the enlargement of their dominion, to carry fire and desolation wherever they went, to depopulate whole countries, and \* lay waste defended cities into ruinous heaps. And, in like manner, had he appeared in the character of a man of much learning, <sup>n</sup> as one that had been brought up at the feet of the Jewish Rabbins, instructed by Athenian philosophers, and well acquainted with the Roman orators; there is reason to believe that the strength and uncommonness of thought, the clearness and majesty which appear in his sermons and discourses would have been less surprising. His silencing the Scribes and Pharisees, his resolving the profoundest doubts, and disengaging himself from the captious questions of the Herodians, would, in such a case, have been looked on as human acquisitions; nay, the marvellous deeds which he performed, might possibly have been imputed to his skill in natural causes, his understanding the laws of the elements, the constitution of human

<sup>k</sup> Micah. ii. 2. <sup>l</sup> Collier's Sermons. <sup>m</sup> 1 John ii. 16. <sup>n</sup> Isa. xxxvii. 26.  
a Collier, ib' d.

human bodies, the progress and waning of diseases, and the like; whereas, the meanness of his parentage and education gives a noble sanction and recommendation to what he said and did: for ° Is not this the carpenter? Is not this the son of Mary, say the people one to another? Whence then hath this man these things? Or, what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

THESE are the wise and gracious ends of the obscure appearance of the Son of God; that the ancient prophecies might be fulfilled; that a new religion might be instituted; that pride and ambition might be discountenanced; that the doctrine and miracles, which he came from heaven to exhibit, might receive their confirmation: and (what must not be forgotten in this place) that he might leave us an example of kindness and condescension, of humility and meekness, of resignation to providence, and committing ourselves to him that judgeth righteously, in all our sufferings and afflictions. ¶ If therefore there be any consolation in Christ (for we cannot conclude this head better than in the apostle's most pathetic exhortation) if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory, but in lowness of mind; let each esteem other better than themselves; and let this mind be in you which was also in Jesus Christ, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Teaches us  
humility,  
and other  
virtues.

## S E C T. I.

Of the chief Acts and Incidents of CHRIST'S Life, from his Birth, to a little before his Crucifixion.

AFTER the birth of Christ, the first instance of his humiliation and suffering that we meet with, is his circumcision. 1. Circumcision, in its primary institution (which was some hundred years before the promulgation of the law) was intended as a visible mark of distinction, whereby the holy seed, in covenant with God, should be known as his chosen generation, his peculiar people, from the rest of the nations who were aliens to the promise, and strangers to the commonwealth of Israel; and in this respect it was a political institution, to distinguish the Jews from the rest of mankind. 2. It was a note of commemoration to put those who bore it in mind whose offspring they were, and what advantages they were entitled to,

The end of  
circumci-  
sion.

provided

provided they took care not to degenerate from the glories of that flock from whence they sprang; and, in this respect, it was a religious institution, to remind them of the privileges they enjoyed as a spiritual society. 3. It was a sign (as the apostle expresses it) of that righteousness which is by faith, and what was intended to remind those, upon whom it passed, of the fame and renown of Abraham, the founder of their nation, of his generous trust in God, and ready obedience to his command; and, withal, of that noble emulation of his virtues which such a pattern ought to inspire. 4. It was a figure and representation of that inward holiness and purity which all who were admitted into covenant with God were to profess. And, 5. It was a sacrament of initiation into the service of God, and (as some imagine) an expedient to remove the guilt of original sin then, in proportion to what baptism does now.

Why our  
Lord was  
circumcised.

Now, though some of these ends, in the rite of circumcision, could not, with any reason, be applied to Christ (forasmuch as he was originally holy, and always in favour and communion with God) yet if we look upon it, 1. As a mark of distinction between the Jews and other nations, we shall soon perceive, that thus it became Jesus to be circumcised, in order to qualify himself for a free conversation with his countrymen to whom he was primarily sent, as himself testifies, and to render his ministry more acceptable among them. For since the Jews were so rigid, in the observance of this distinction, which God had established between them and other nations, as to exclude from their temple, their synagogues, and all manner of civil and religious commerce, such people as were not of their communion; the errand for which Christ came to them had been absolutely lost; no audience at all given to it; no opportunities allowed of preaching, or conferring publicly, nay, not even of eating and drinking with them, and so insinuating his doctrine privately had not this ceremony passed upon him. 2. If we consider circumcision as a commemorative sign of Abraham and the covenant made with him, it was highly requisite that Christ should undergo it: for as he was the seed, of whom the promise was made, that in him, all the nations of the earth should be blessed, he was obliged to give the world this testimony of his being truly and rightly descended from that renowned patriarch. 3. If we consider it as a seal of the covenant between God and man, it was very expedient that he should be circumcised, not upon his own personal account indeed, but for the sake of others, whose persons he came to represent, and whose cause he undertook. Or, 4. Lastly, if we consider it as part of the ceremonial law, it was convenient for him to undergo it, not only because (as himself declares) he came to fulfil all righteousness: but, being to contract

tract for a perfect obedience, by this initiating ceremony he obliged himself to the performance of the whole law, which none before him was ever able to accomplish.

THESE are the reasons that may be suggested for the circumcision of our blessed Saviour: and the name which was given him on that occasion, according to the direction of <sup>u</sup> the angel, before he was conceived in the womb, was Jesus; a name of comfortable import, because it is said of him, <sup>\*</sup> that he should save his people from their sins. Now if we reflect a little upon what the nature of sin unpardoned and predominant is, viz. an offence against a righteous law, and a contradiction to our interest and our duty; a stain to our nature, a wound to our conscience, and the corruption of our principles, which brings us under the tyranny of unruly passions and vicious habits; together with an heinous provocation of a just and holy God, whose power enables him, and whose truth obliges him to punish our disobedience with inexpressible and everlasting torments both of body and soul: if we look upon sin under this view, I say, we shall soon perceive the inestimable blessing and value of that Saviour and Deliverer, who has washed away the stain and guilt of our sins by his blood; has released the punishment due to them by becoming our sacrifice, and suffering in our stead; by his obedience has appeased the anger of God, and reconciled us to his once offended Father; and is continually subduing the power of sin by the doctrines of the gospel, by the assistance of his Spirit, and by all those means, and wise methods, in short, that are necessary to our condition; all that our circumstances want, considering us frail and sinful creatures; and all that our circumstances can bear, considering us free and rational creatures.

THIS is the salvation which Christ procures, and, in this manner, he saves his people from their sins: but then we are to remember that they are his people whom he thus saves; those who believe his word, obey his precepts, devote themselves to his service, and desire and endeavour (as far as in them lies) to save themselves from them. Less than this had not fulfilled the importance of his name, and more had defeated the design of it: for to save those from punishment who are still fond of their guilt, had not been to take away, but rather to promote the dominion, and encourage the practice of sin. If then the proud and ambitious, the unjust and covetous, the peevish and revengeful, the profuse and riotous, the profane and impious, in short, if men, of whatever denomination, continue in sins unrepented of; if they love and like the fault, how much sower they may abhor and dread the shame or punishment; if they persuade, entice, or any way encourage others in the commission of sin, either by their discourse, or example;

to

to every such man our blessed Lord is no Jesus at all, nor does there any one of the innumerable benefits, implied in that endearing name, belong to him: but, on the contrary, to the penitent sinner, to the devout worshipper, to the just and honest dealer, to the bountiful alms-giver, to the sober and pure, to the meek and the peaceable, to the humble and the mortified christian, to the diligent worker out of his own, and zealous promoter of other mens salvation, the safety and defence, the support and the joy of a Jesus is inconceivable: because they feel already his powerful operation on their hearts; they know that temptations cannot hurt, where he shields; nor sins condemn, where he pardons; nor adversity oppresses, where he sustains; and, in the language of the apostle, \* are persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, can be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The massacre of the children at Bethlehem

NOT long after our Saviour's circumcision, he was forced to remove into Egypt, to avoid the wicked designs of Herod, who, finding himself deluded by the wise men (whom † we made mention of before) resolved upon a course, which he thought could not fail of easing himself of any apprehension from this new-born king of the Jews; and that was, to send and murder all the children in and about the place where it was agreed Christ must have been born, and (according to the computation of the time when the star denoted his birth) much about his age. God, however, by the message of an angel, provided for his Son's escape; yet, since his providence did not interpose for the rest, but suffered such a number of innocent babes to be massacred upon this account, there is something in this transaction that seems to reflect upon the divine goodness and justice, which deserves to be cleared up.

IT ought to be remembered then, what we said before ‡, in vindication of the providence of God,—<sup>1</sup> That he is no farther concerned in any sort of crimes than barely as he permits the commission of them: and, if (as we there argued) it be no imputation upon his justice and goodness to suffer men to go on in the sin of designing, and acting the worst, the basest, the cruellest villanies; then the next and only remaining inquiry will be, whether the providence of God will be concerned to hinder the calamity, *i. e.* whether it be any reasonable reflection upon the wisdom, the justice, and goodness of God (who certainly could prevent them) to suffer such designs to take effect as are levelled against the innocent.

God's permission of it vindicated.

Now here a mighty difference must be made between mens suffering unjustly, with regard to men who are the next agents and

\* Rom. viii. 38, 39.    † See page 525.    ‡ See Vol. I. page 150.—4<sup>th</sup>.  
 † Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. I.



and instruments, and with regard to God who is the remote cause of these events. Men may afflict, crush, or murder those who have given them no provocation, and over whom they have no manner of right or controul: but God has an universal dominion over us, as creatures, and we have still strengthened that title farther, by forfeiting our lives, and all the comforts of them, as sinners: consequently, how unjust soever any of our sufferings may be, in respect of men, who are the immediate inflictors; yet, in respect of God, of whose deserved vengeance these men are the executioners, the extreamest sufferings of the very best people never are, never can be, unjust.

BUT this is not all: for we are to consider the present life, not as our last and final state of being, but as one whose principal tendency is to another: so that there is no certain measure to be taken, nor any right or peremptory judgment made of God's justice or goodness towards us, without taking in the distributions of that other life which is the main end indeed of our living at all. But now the scriptures have expressly declared that sufferings are a part of our discipline and trial, and that all the afflictions of our mortal condition shall therefore be recompensed with immortal happiness and glory. Since temporal death then is the acknowledged punishment of original sin, and God has an undoubted right to inflict this punishment, when and in what manner he pleases; there is certainly the same reflection upon his providence in suffering such innocents to die by convulsions, a fever, or any other disease incident to that tender age, as in permitting them to fall by the sword, a sacrifice to the rage of a merciless tyrant. But then, for a frail, a short, a troublesome, a dangerous life, God gives them the recompence of an immortal, a securely happy and compleatly glorious one, which not only vindicates, but magnifies his goodness and liberality to them. He considers their infancy and the noble fruit which might have sprung from these tender plants, had they been allowed to grow to full maturity, and accordingly rewards them. For though they wanted the will of martyrdom, which riper years may have, yet it must be allowed that they were clear of that voluntary and actual guilt which those riper years would have contracted. And therefore, as (in the most literal sense) <sup>b</sup> they were not defiled with sensual pleasures, but left the world in virgin innocence; as they were most truly redeemed from among men, whose early translation to a state of bliss prevented the hazards and temptations of a wicked world; and as they were (strictly speaking) the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb, who began to shed their blood in the cause of a new-born Saviour; so God hath been pleased to vouchsafe them a peculiar honour, <sup>c</sup> to sing, as it were, a new song before his throne, and to follow the Lamb whither-

soever:

<sup>b</sup> Rev. xiv. 4. <sup>c</sup> Ibid. xiv. 3, 4, 5.

soever he goeth; because in their mouth was found no guile; for they were without fault before the throne of God.

The use to be made of it.

WHAT then has been argued in vindication of the divine justice and goodness with regard to the death of these children, should dispose us to entertain, with patience and much meekness, not only the sufferings laid upon us by God's immediate hand, but those likewise which proceed from the wrongful dealings of wicked and unreasonable men: their injustice cannot in this case be greater than Hero's, nor can our innocence be more than that of these infants. Since then we have been taught by this example, that persons the most inoffensive and undeserving may be persecuted even to death, without any just reflection either upon their own virtue thus oppressed, or that providence which permits it; our method in this case should be to take sanctuary in the peace of a good conscience; to look up with an holy resignation of mind to the wise disposer of every event; and to trust his mercy and goodness for the necessary comfort and abundant compensation of all the hardships his wise providence sees fit to bring upon us.

Christ's confirmation in the temple.

AFTER our Saviour's return from Egypt, upon the death of the tyrant Herod, the evangelical history mentions nothing particular concerning him, only that he dwelt in Nazareth in his reputed father's house, waxing strong in Spirit, and filled with wisdom and the grace of God; until, in the twelfth year of his age, and at the time of the passover, we find him <sup>d</sup> in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

AND this very probably he might do, not merely out of curiosity, but to acquit himself of a duty expected from all who had attained to a certain age among the Jews. At the age of thirteen their youth was usually brought before some of the masters of the synagogue, to render an account of their proficiency in religion; and, having passed their examination, were sent away with the prayers and benedictions of the church, and thenceforward accounted responsible for their own sins. This, as some learned men imagine, was the occasion of our Saviour's being found in the temple sitting among the doctors. He was then under the examination of the doctors; and though the age appointed for that purpose was usually thirteen, yet this did not hinder children of extraordinary parts and capacities from doing it sooner, when they were competently prepared, and had a genius (in the phrase of the Jewish language) *out-running the command*. If this supposition be just, here seems to be a probable foundation for the christian rite of confirmation, wherein our young people, having answered to the first and necessary rudiments of their religion, do, in the presence of the fathers of the church (at that time imploring the blessing of God upon their

<sup>d</sup> Luke ii. 46. e Vid. Grot. in Locum, and Buxtorf Jud. Synag. c. iii.

their future endeavours) take the charge of their baptismal vow upon themselves, as being presumed sufficiently instructed to be answerable for their own duty the remaining part of their lives.

HOWEVER this be (for I am content to leave it as a probable conjecture only) yet thus much is certain, that our blessed Saviour in these conferences behaved himself not only to the satisfaction, but the wonder of the whole assembly; for all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. Not that we are to imagine that the fulness of his divine knowledge displayed itself upon this occasion, but only such a brightness of parts and apprehension as bespoke an uncommon pregnancy. For, though the divine nature was always present with him, yet it seems to have communicated its powers to the human by distinct and gradual illuminations, declining industriously the public manifestation of itself to the world, till (according to the common course of things) ripeness of years and judgment had carried him up to the perfections of a man, and the execution of his ministry called for such evidence to assist him.

UNTIL the fulness of time was come, the evangelist has taken care to inform us, that he <sup>e</sup> dwelt with his parents at Nazareth, and was subject to them: for whether he wrought with Joseph at the carpenter's trade (as <sup>h</sup> some of the antients have delivered their opinion) is not so material to inquire; this we are satisfied of, that whether his life was a life of labour or not, it was certainly a life of modesty and meekness, and exemplary obedience; which is enough to know how indispensable the duty of children to their parents is, and how inexcusable their stubbornness and contempt, when he, who was God as well as man, in all his deportment was full of respect to them, whose son, though he was in one capacity, yet was he their Father, their Lord, their King, their Creator, in another; and how sacred the obligation is which blood and nature have tied, when even the name and character alone is venerable, though the relation be wanting? For such our Lord hath proved it by the observance which he paid, not to her only of whose substance he was made flesh, but to him likewise who was no otherwise his father than by reputation and common acceptance; entitled to this honour only as the husband of Mary, and by a mistake of the world, which was not at that time let into the mysterious secret of a virgin made a mother.

His subjection to his parents.

IN this private condition our Saviour lived until he was thirty years old, when, being about to take upon him his prophetic office, we find him coming <sup>i</sup> from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. The singularity of the Baptist's

His baptism by John.

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character,

f Luke ii. 47. g Ibid. ver. 51. h It is the opinion of some, that he not only wrought at the carpenter's trade, but that, when Joseph died, (which happened before his entering upon his ministry) he wrought alone, and was no more called the Carpenter's Son, but the Carpenter, as we may observe from Mark vi. 3. Howell's History of the Bible. i Math. iii. 13.

character, his contempt of the world, his austere course of life, as well as an excellent zeal and spirit in preaching, created so great an opinion of him among the people that all held him for a prophet, especially when by his baptism he added a greater solemnity to his office. His office indeed (as the prophet foretels it of him) was <sup>k</sup> to prepare the way of the Lord, and to make straight an high-way for our God: which words, as they allude to harbingers, and such other officers as, upon the journeys of princes, are employed to take care that the ways should be levelled, and all such obstructions removed as might make their passage less commodious; so, upon the approach of the King of Glory, the preaching and baptism of John put mankind into a posture of receiving him, and greatly facilitated the design of his coming. His preaching was intended to bring men to a due sense of their sins, and to foretel the dreadful effects of God's anger against all who did not apply themselves to true holiness: and his baptism (as St Paul <sup>l</sup> expresses it) was the baptism of repentance, wherein he propounded the Messias who was shortly to appear for the object of faith to all who received this ordinance at his hand; saying unto the people, that they should believe on him, which should come after him, *i. e.* on Jesus Christ. And for this reason some of the antients have represented this ministry of the Baptist's as a sort of middle partition between the law and the gospel; of the law, as a thing already past and come to a period; and of the gospel as what, upon the manifestation of the Messias, was then just beginning to take place. <sup>m</sup> For this is he (as the Baptist openly declares) of whom I said, after me cometh a man who is preferred before me; for he was before me: and I knew him not, but that he might be made manifest unto Israel, therefore, am I come baptizing with water.

OUR Saviour however could not stand in need of John's baptism, as it was a baptism of repentance; but therefore he suffered it, because it <sup>n</sup> became him to fulfil all righteousness. Since this was appointed an instrument of purification to the Jews, it was not fit that he, who came to be a pattern of perfection, should neglect any ordinance instituted by his Father, or any mark and profession of sanctity. He indeed himself was no sinner; yet since he was made sin for us, it was proper enough for him to perform the sacrament of sinners, who was to undergo the shame and punishment of sin for them: and since this was to be a sacrament of perpetual use in the christian church, it was highly expedient that by his own baptism he should sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sin, that in all future ages his followers might look upon the holy ordinance with respect, and receive it with joy, upon this account, that the author and finisher of our faith did not himself disdain to submit to it.

IMMEDIATELY

<sup>k</sup> Isa. xl. 3. <sup>l</sup> Acts xix. 4. <sup>m</sup> John i. 30, 31. <sup>n</sup> Matth. iii. 15.

IMMEDIATELY after our Saviour's baptism, the evangelical history informs us that he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil: and here perhaps it may be of some instruction to us to consider a little, 1. The time when; 2. The place where: 3. The manner how; and, 4. The ends for which our Saviour came to be submitted to the assaults of this prince of darkness.

His temptation in the wilderness.

1. NOTHING is more common than to find men complaining, and even wondering with themselves, that they should be pursued with temptations at the time, or after the discharge of holy duties. Now, I hope, it may be of use to satisfy such persons, to remember that our blessed Master was baptized, not because he wanted, but because he meant to honour and recommend that sanctifying ordinance; that he was filled with the Holy Ghost; that he was, by a voice from heaven, declared the beloved Son of God, in whom he was well pleased; and yet, the very next thing we hear of him is, that he was tempted; nay, that the Spirit led him into the wilderness, to the intent that he might be tempted by the devil: consequently, we are not to look that sacraments, or any other holy duties should procure us an absolute freedom from temptations; consequently again, our being tempted in, or after the performance of such duties, is no reasonable cause to conclude that our services are not accepted by God, or that they have not had their proper efficacy. For as these consequences are plainly contrary to the example of our blessed Saviour, so are they no less repugnant to the reason, and nature of the thing.

The time when.

THE sacrament, and other offices of piety and devotion are weapons of our spiritual warfare; they fit and prepare us for more vigorous action; they are means of conveying to us such strength as may enable us to withstand in the day of trial; they repair our breaches, and heal our wounds: but they are so many acts of hostility, so many attempts to rescue ourselves out of the snare of the enemy, and therefore so many fresh provocations which he will not fail to make his advantage of, in order to reduce us again. And can we wonder that he should double his diligence, in proportion to ours, and then labour to recover his prey, when he is in most danger of losing it? If wicked men feel not the same conflicts, it is because they would be needlessly repeated upon those who are his captives already, and take no pains to make their escape; but there is great reason why he should not suffer good men to enjoy the like ease and quiet, who are continually struggling with him, and labouring to get ground. As therefore we may rationally expect the service hottest when we are most careful to discharge our duty; so our finding it such, ought rather to be accounted a good than a bad

o Matth. iv. 1. p Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II. q Matth. iii. 16, 17 and Luke iv. 1. r Stanhope, *ibid.*

a bad sign, a matter of satisfaction, not of discomfort ; and the advice of the wise man should be always settled in our hearts ; ' My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thyself for temptation ; set thine heart aright, and constantly endure ; cleave unto him, and depart not away, that thou mayest be increased at thy last hour.

The place  
where.

THE usefulness of retirement, when we set ourselves apart to the business of religion, is confirmed by every man's experience that makes the trial. By withdrawing from the world, we shut out infinite distractions, and are better qualified to collect our thoughts, and to fix them upon God and a future state. But even here we must not flatter ourselves with an imagination of an absolute security : in such circumstances the tempter assaulted our blessed Master (for he set upon him in the wilderness) and in such shall we frequently find him attacking us. Our closets and retirements may separate us from the snares of business and company, but they cannot divest us of the corruption of our nature, which, in all places, gives him an opportunity of insinuating his temptations. Our passions and affections, our ignorance and infirmities, and all the necessary consequences of our original weakness and depravation, these we cannot run away from ; and because we carry these about us every where, he can never want a fit place and opportunity to assail us.

The man-  
ner how.

IT is the general opinion of the antients, that the devil, at this time, was ignorant how great a person our Saviour was ; for had he known that, it is hardly credible he would have made so vain and fruitless an attempt upon him. It is likely enough he accounted him some extraordinary person. By the antient prophecies he might know that the Messias was to appear ; and from the prophet Daniel collect that the time of his appearance was already come ; nay, it is not improbable, that he was acquainted with all the circumstances of his birth, and heard the testimony God gave him at his baptism, This is my beloved Son ; but still he was a man, though an extraordinary man, and he might not suppose him any thing more. Having therefore formerly foiled our first parents in Paradise, in the state of innocence, he hoped for the like success again ; and, accordingly, in the first attempt, takes occasion from our Lord's hunger, to persuade him to work a miracle, in order to satisfy it, ' If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread ; in the second, he puts him upon an unnecessary experiment of God's preserving providence, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from this pinnacle of the temple ; and, in the third, he entices him to an unlawful act, with promise of worldly honours and advantages : \* All these things, viz. the kingdoms of the world,

s Eccclus. ii. 1, &c. t Matth. iv. 3, 5, 6. \* It is a great question among divines, how the devil, in his temptation of our Saviour, could possibly shew him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. " It looks very odd (says Mr. Le Clerc, in his note upon the ivth chapter of St Matthew) " that

world, and the glory of them, will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. In all which he visibly forms his attack upon those natural appetites and affections which God hath put into mankind, and which (as this example shews) are not the causes, but only the accidental occasions of sin.

It is impossible for any man living to describe all the subtle arts of this liar-in-wait to deceive; but, from the instance now before us, we may discover in general, that he strikes in with mens wants and necessities, with their different tempers and circumstances in the world, with their governing passions and darling objects; that from these he labours to suggest such ideas, to kindle such desires, to raise such affections, and to carry those he finds in our hearts to such excesses as may put us upon thoughts, and words, and actions, that are exorbitant and sinful. Mean while, it is no less plain, that he only suggests, he only puts us upon these; that there can be no sin without our consent; that he, who tries us, cannot compel us; that there is no hurt done till the temptation is allowed to prevail; and, in a word, that tempting is the devil's act, but yielding or resisting, when we are tempted, is our own; the former is our sin, and the latter our virtue; consequently, temptations are capable of becoming occasions to either. Danger indeed there is; and this should awaken our care: but God, who suffers us to be tempted, has, withal, given us this declaration and assurance, that "he will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will, with the temptation also, make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. For,

In that Christ hath suffered, being tempted, says the apostle, The ends  
for which. he is able to succour those that are tempted; and this he makes the encouragement of all good christians in the like circumstances.

"that an evil spirit should be permitted to have such power over our blessed Saviour, as to carry him through the air, and set him upon an exceeding high mountain. But even supposing this, the prospect of the kingdoms of the whole world could no more be shewn from a mountain than from a plain. For what can be seen from a mountain besides woods, fields, rivers, villages? &c. which in no language can denote the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; for this consists rather in their guards and attendants, their splendid attire, and costly edifices, &c." whereupon he concludes, that all this happened to our Saviour in a dream only, and was not really presented to his sight. But this seems to be a dangerous conjecture, and what robs us of all the practical improvement of our Lord's temptation: it allows the devil an absolute power over his phansy, to raise such imaginations, and suggest such dreams as he should think fit; which we think is a worse supposition than to give him that power over his body which neither did, nor could do him any hurt. And therefore the more safe, and indeed more probable opinion is — That, as God caused Moses to see the whole land of promise from the top of mount Nebo, either by strengthening his eyes to see it thence, or by representing it to him, as it were, in a large plan or map, in all the vallies round about him; so might the devil, in the vallies round about the high mountain on which Christ stood, make a large draught of all the beauties and glories of the world, of the stately edifices, of the guards and attendants of kings, &c. appearing in their splendor, and visible to the eyes of Christ: which appearance could not have been so well made unto him, nor so advantageously seen by him, had he been on a plain. Whitby on Matth. iv. 8. u 1 Cor. x. 13. x Heb. ii. 2

cumstances. As he was the captain of our salvation, who came to fight our battles, it was fit that he should first engage, and try the utmost strength of the enemy of souls; but as he fought, so did he conquer likewise, not for himself, but for those whose duty it is to fight under him. And what can be more effectual to animate such in all their spiritual encounters, than the contemplation of their victorious leader, and their vanquished foe? What more effectual to inspire them with hope, and an holy confidence of being succoured in all their straits and exigencies, than the consideration of their captain's being in all points tempted like as they, and retaining, now that he is in heaven (and consequently, in a condition to supply their weaknesses and wants, by pouring the recruits of grace and supernatural strength from above) a feeling of their infirmities, and a ready disposition to relieve them?

2. AND as the temptations of Christ were designed to encourage us under trials of the like nature, so were they intended to instruct us, that no degree of virtue can set men above them. For, when we find the christian life so often compared to a warfare, we have fair warning given us what we are to expect. Frequent action and continual danger, we know, is the lot of soldiers: experience in these is so necessary to their excelling in that art, that all the discipline in the world will not suffice to make them masters of it who were never engaged: and therefore no man (least of all good men) should flatter himself with a freedom from temptation, which (to continue the allusion) were in effect as absurd as to look for a profound peace in the field of battle. \* Count it all joy therefore, my brethren (says the apostle) when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience, and if patience have its perfect work, it will make you perfect, and intire, wanting nothing.

3. THERE is another end, which providence perhaps might have in view, in permitting this temptation to befall our Saviour, and that is, to instruct us, by his example, in what manner we may best repel this enemy of souls, whenever he makes his attempts upon us; which is, by having in store a good supply of scripture-truth, to oppose against his allurements and insinuations. There is a peculiar elegance in that expression of St Paul, where he calls the word of God <sup>a</sup> the Sword of the Spirit, meaning thereby, that it is an instrument of defence, which does not only ward off the blows, but cut to pieces any arms, with which the enemy can possibly assail us. For here we meet with such full and plain directions for our duty, as all the sophistry of the devil cannot perplex; here such great and precious promises, in case of obedience, as all his boasted proffers cannot come up to; here such dreadful threats, in case of disobedience, as all his severest inflictions cannot compare with; here



here such assurances of spiritual aid and assistance to those who do their parts, as all the discouragements, he can lay in our way, cannot withstand: <sup>b</sup> in short, this is a weapon quick and powerful; it is suited to all occasions, and all capacities; and is edged with an authority so sacred, and reasons so convincing, that nothing can resist its force. Let every man therefore inquire into his own circumstances, and observe the way whereby the tempter most usually does assail him; the sin that doth most easily beset him; the passion he finds hardest to be conquered; the temptations to which his condition or business most expose him; the infirmities and frailties peculiar to his age, or temper, or complexion; and be sure to lose no time for laying a fund (as out of so rich a treasure he quickly may) proper for these exigencies; that none of these may any sooner start up, but some portion of scripture, well digested, may instantly come up with it, and effectually bring it under again.

THESE, among others, are the ends which might be served by our Saviour's temptation in the wilderness. But from this passage of his life some have endeavoured to raise an objection against his divinity, which must not pass unobserved. <sup>c</sup> "If Christ, as is pretended, was God (say they) why should he be thus tempted? Was it to shew that God was able to sustain and overcome the temptations of the devil? This must be superfluous: or, was it to shew that the human nature, when personally united to the divine, was able to resist and baffle his assaults? Under the divine strength and assistance how could it do otherwise? But then, how will his doing this, by a divine assistance, afford us any comfort, when we grapple with the tempter, and are destitute of that armour, which in him was impene-<sup>d</sup>trable?" It must be confessed indeed, that our Lord's divinity set him above the utmost opposition of any created power; <sup>d</sup> but then it must be acknowledged withal, that his divinity did not exert itself upon all occasions, but suspended its operations very frequently, and withdrew. That the divinity of Christ was quiescent (as the ancients call it) for the space of thirty years; and very rarely manifested itself, until he entered upon the public execution of his prophetic office, most of the orthodox do allow: that it ceased to act at the time of our Lord's passion, seems very evident, not only from the history of his sufferings and death, but even from his own words, when he tells the people who came to apprehend him in the garden, This is your hour, and the power of darkness; and that this was the case of our Lord's temptation in particular, we are obliged to believe, because the ground of comfort, in the like trials which beset us, will be utterly taken from us, if Christ did only overcome him by virtue of

An objection against Christ's divinity.

Answered.

<sup>b</sup> Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II. <sup>c</sup> Whitby on Matthew iv. <sup>d</sup> Stanhope, *ibid*.

of that nature which was invincible. So that, in this conflict, the divine perfections lying by, as it were, and forbearing to engage, he is to be considered abstractly as a man, though much more perfect than any other man; and then the inference will be this—That, though his being God and man both made it impossible for him to sin, when he was tempted; yet, in regard he was attacked as man only, this example shews that it is possible for us not to sin, when we are tempted; and then the consideration of his Almighty power, as God, which enables him to succour those that are tempted, is our security for those spiritual assistances, upon the seasonable accessions of which, that possibility of not sinning, in the present state of things, does intirely depend.

The nature  
of our Sa-  
viour's  
preaching.

AFTER the temptation of our blessed Saviour was over, the sacred history represents him as entering upon his ministry, <sup>e</sup> going about Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases among the people. But, because we have considered our blessed Saviour before <sup>f</sup> in the capacity of a prophet, and under that title discoursed at large on the excellency of his doctrine; it will here be necessary only to observe in general, that the main drift and topics of his preaching were, <sup>g</sup> to enforce repentance and amendment of life; to rescue the law from the false and impious glosses which the Scribes and Pharisees had put upon it; to explode their superstitious traditions: to rebuke their pride, hypocrisy, and other vices; and to let his hearers into the knowledge of the mysteries of his kingdom, so far as the state and condition of his church did then require. But, because there is something peculiar in our Saviour's manner of preaching, at least to us, living at this distance of time, and accustomed to another method of discourse; it may not be improper to say something concerning the parables wherein we find him so often addressing himself to the people; and to assign some reasons why he might chuse this method of instruction rather than any other.

Why he  
made use  
of parables

Now of the many reasons which might induce our blessed Saviour so frequently to deliver himself in parables, none seems to have been more in his view than that of gaining hereby an opportunity of insinuating unwelcome truths in the most inoffensive manner. <sup>h</sup> To this the figurative stile of parables very much contributes. It naturally engages attention; it avoids all <sup>i</sup> the harshness of reproof, which plain and simpler language would

<sup>e</sup> Matth. iv. 23. <sup>f</sup> Vid. page 398. <sup>g</sup> Les Oeuvres posth. de M. Claude. <sup>h</sup> Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. III. <sup>i</sup> A fine writer and eloquent preacher has expressed this in such elegant terms that I cannot forbear citing him. "Offenders of magnitude, more especially, are exceeding difficult of access, and so tender that it requires the finest turn and delicacy of hand to lance the imposthume without offence, and to wound them to a cure. The prophet Nathan seems to have been a mighty master of address in this way

would occasion; it appeals to, and leaves the matter with, the sense of the hearers; and it turns off the invidious part of drawing the parallel, and making the application upon the parties themselves: and therefore history has supplied us with some instances, wherein such parabolical discourses have had more efficacy to persuade men, than the most strenuous argumentation of another kind. But our Saviour might have a farther reason for making use of parables, since it was a popular way of instruction among the Jewish doctors (as well as other sages of the East) and what his countrymen were very well accustomed to. What therefore is the wish of some, that our Saviour had taught his religion in the way of the heathen philosophers, is highly incongruous and impertinent. The Eastern way of reasoning was so different from that of the West, that the soundest philosophy of Greece or Rome would have been but mere jargon, if proposed in a plain perceptive way to the people of Jerusalem. The only method of reasoning which agreed with their taste was to introduce an handsome simile or story, apposite to the matter in hand; to apply a smart saying of some antient worthy; or to bring good proofs from their law, or antient tradition: but to go about to prove morality to them, as Plato or Tully do, from the eternal rules of justice, from the rectitude and honourableness of virtue, and the pravity and turpitude of vice, would have been such a way of talking as the wisest men of their manner of education would have utterly despised. Our blessed Saviour therefore, who well understood the genius and temper of the people he preached to, and who himself always industriously avoided the least affectation of singularity, took care that his method of instructing them should be agreeable to their education, and of better tendency to their edification than any regular lectures of philosophy possibly could be; because such figurative allusions as he employed are certainly best remembered, when once their sense is attained, and will stick closer to us; because the time spent in unfolding them, makes the idea more fixed and lasting in the brain.

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“ of parable; and by sheathing his correction in artful apologue, reduced the erring prince to confession and amendment; whereas ungilded reproof, or plain bitter truth, might have been distasteful to majesty, and provoked even David beyond the power of reflection.” Reeves's Sermons.

i It was by one of these that Menenius persuaded the commonalty of Rome, which was all then in an uproar, to be reconciled to the senate; and by another of the like kind, that Demosthenes escaped being delivered to Alexander.

k The Jewish books, at this very day, are full of such parables as our Saviour made use of, and they are oft ushered in with the same phrase, Whereunto shall I liken such a thing? As our Saviour introduces his. In the Talmudical treatises, there are the parables to be found of the rich glutton, and the foolish virgins; and in the Treatise Killaim, there is a dispute of sowing upon rocks and stones, and of mixing wheat and tares together. Vid. Nicholls's Conferences, Vol. I. and Whitby on Matth. xiii. 1 Celsus apud Orig. & Julian apud Cyril.

Why some  
parables  
are ob-  
scure.

IT is allowed indeed that there is some obscurity in such allegorical discourses, and that the doctrine contained under the covert of these parables is not so easy to be apprehended, as if it were delivered in a more plain and familiar way: but then it must be observed, that where this happens in our Saviour's parables, it is the perverseness and captiousness of his hearers which compelled him to it: for <sup>m</sup> therefore speak I to them in parables, says he, because seeing, they see not, and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. <sup>n</sup> Had they understood all he meant by the parable of the vineyard planted by the husbandman, wherein he upbraided their obstinacy and disobedience; by the parable of the vaunting Pharisee, wherein he taxed their pride and self-conceit; by the parable of the leaven and grain of mustard-seed, wherein he foretold the propagation of the gospel among the heathens; by the parable of cutting down the unfruitful fig-tree, wherein he foretold the ruin and destruction of the Jewish nation; or had the things couched under these parables been delivered with greater plainness, there is no doubt to be made but that they would have enraged the leading Jews, and stirred them up to a more violent opposition to his doctrine, or a more quick endeavour to destroy his person; and therefore when he undertook to reprove and catechise the Jews, and to lay before them such truths and doctrines as were unacceptable to flesh and blood, he chose to do it in this parabolical way, as the most engaging method to win over the well-disposed to hear and apply, and to print his lessons in the most lively and lasting characters upon their minds; and, at the same time, to screen himself from the malice of his enemies, and to leave them to their beloved darkness: "For parables (as \* one expresses it) are a touch-stone to discriminate the ingenuous and teachable from the conceited and obstinate, and serve as the pillar of fire and cloud to lighten the one and blind the other."

THOUGH therefore the great and fundamental precepts of the gospel, as well as the parables which represented the duties of morality, were delivered in the audience of the people with all imaginable clearness; yet, when the mysteries of christianity, the rejection of the Jews, the vocation of the Gentiles, or any other offensive truths were the subject of discourse, our Lord, in point of prudence, thought proper to make use of obscure similes, which those who followed him out of no good design might not understand, and which he afterwards took care to explain to his disciples in private: and in this he did no more than what is reported of Pythagoras, viz. <sup>p</sup> that he said many things in an hidden and covert manner, which those who came to learn of him with a pure mind might understand; but others, though they heard him, could not perceive his meaning.

ANOTHER

<sup>m</sup> Matth. xiii. 13. <sup>n</sup> Whitby, on Matth. xiii. 10. \* Reeves's Sermons. <sup>p</sup> Nicholls's Conference, Vol. I. <sup>p</sup> Jamblicus, in Vita Pythag.

ANOTHER part of Christ's ministry was the miracles which he wrought in confirmation of the doctrine which he published to the world. For upon all extraordinary and new discoveries of God's will to mankind recorded in scripture, it appears to have been his constant usage to strengthen the authority of the persons whom he employed as instruments for publishing these discoveries, by a power of working miracles. That our Lord was invested with such a power, and this power a sure evidence of his divine mission, is what we had occasion to prove in the beginning of this work: and need only now take a short review of the number and nature of the miracles which he did. When therefore we behold by our blessed Saviour natural defects supplied, accidental infirmities repaired, the most malignant and inveterate diseases, such as no length of time, no skill, no remedies, no expence could assuage, perfectly cured; winds and seas restrained and quieted; the malice of men awed and eluded; the rage of devils subdued; and persons, at death's door, nay, even actually dead, commanded back to life and health: when we behold these miracles done in a moment, sometimes without any outward application at all, always without such as could have any natural efficacy to serve such mighty purposes; with a touch, nay, with the touch of a garment; with a word, nay, with a word that operated effectually upon the absent and at a distance: when we consider this, I say, we cannot but be convinced of the number and great variety of Christ's miracles. And, in like manner, when we behold him giving sustenance to the hungry, supplies to those in want, safety to them that were ready to perish, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, eyes to the blind, understanding to the disturbed, strength to the impotent, limbs to the maimed, health to the sick, life to the dead, and release to souls and bodies held in bondage by the devil; we cannot but acknowledge the blessed quality of such miracles as captivate our affections, at the same time that they raise our astonishment: and from the number and quality of them both put together, cannot but conclude that the person must be from God, to whom was committed such a prodigious extent of power, all terminating in wonders of gentleness and pity, of beneficence and love.

Christ's miracles, their number and quality.

## S E C T.

q See Vol. I. p. 56. r Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures. s John ix. 6. t John v. Mark iii. u Mark i. 31. \* Ibid. v. 25, 26. x Matth. viii. 26. y Luke iv. 29, 30. John viii. 59. z Matth. xii. 22. Mark ix. 25. Luke viii. 29. a John iv. 47. b Luke vii. 15. John xi. 44. c Mark ii. 11. d Mark i. 31. John ix. 7. e Matth. ix. 25. f Ibid. ix. 22. g Luke vii. 14. h Matth. viii. 13. John iv. 52, 53. i Matth. xv. 31. k Ibid. xvii. 27. l Ibid. xiv. 30, 31.

## S E C T. II.

## The Preparatory Incidents before CHRIST's Crucifixion.

Christ's  
entry into  
Jerusalem.

**I**N this course of his ministry our Lord went about preaching the word, and working miracles, and doing all manner of good, for three years and upwards; till, the time of his return to his heavenly Father approaching, the evangelists represent him as assuming the part of a king, and making his public entry into Jerusalem, but in a pomp and solemnity somewhat singular. For <sup>n</sup> instead of numerous guards and triumphal chariots, and costly preparations, we find only the attendance of a vulgar and despised croud; the person for whom these honours were designed, riding in humble poverty upon a borrowed ass<sup>n</sup>; and the way before him not covered with tapestry, or rich furniture, but strowed <sup>o</sup> with branches hastily cut down from trees, and the garments of them who made up the train. The songs and acclamations applied to this occasion, did not tell of bloody battles fought, of victories obtained at the expence of infinite toil and treasure, of countries miserably harrassed, and reduced by fire and sword; but rehearsed the mercies of God long expected, and now fulfilled in the peaceful reign of the Messiah, that son of David, who should turn mens <sup>r</sup> swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, by establishing such laws, as (if duly observed) would effectually curb and quiet those great disturbers of mankind, envy, and avarice, and ambition;

<sup>m</sup> Stanhope, on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. I. <sup>n</sup> To ride upon an ass may, in these countries, be thought a very odd thing: we reckon an ass to be a contemptible creature, and a man, especially a man of character, riding upon an ass to be a ridiculous figure. These are prejudices of our time and country: and when they who look no farther than the manners and customs which are before them, examine this part of sacred history by the standard of modern prejudices; they see, or think they see something quite inconsistent with the gravity or dignity of the person pretending to be king of the Jews, when Christ is represented entering in triumph into Jerusalem mounted on an ass. But as contemptible as an ass, or a man riding on an ass, may be at present, from the beginning it was not so. In many countries, and particularly in Judea, persons of the highest distinction were usually so mounted. The governors of Israel are described, in the sons of Deborah, as riding on white asses, Judges v. 10. The thirty sons of Jair, who was judge and prince over Israel twenty years, are said to ride on thirty asses, Judg. x. 4. And another judge of Israel is recorded to have had forty sons, and thirty nephews, that rode on seventy ass-colts, Judg. xiii. 14. For the matter of fact is, that in most eastern countries, asses were generally made use of for this purpose, and horses seldom or never mounted, but in order of battle. Bishop Sherlock's Dissertation iv. annexed to the use and intent of prophecy. <sup>o</sup> At the feast of tabernacles, it was the custom of the Jews not only to sing Hosannas with the greatest joy, but also <sup>o</sup> to carry branches in their hands, desiring (as the Jews still wish at this feast) that they may thus rejoice at the coming of the Messiah: for which reason it is, that the multitude acknowledging Jesus to be the Messiah used Hosannas, and the rites of Revel in that feast, wishing prosperity to him and his kingdom more than that he should be *solus rex regum, et solus dominus dominorum* in the highest heaven. Whitby on Matt. xxi. de spiritualibus *regibus, &c.* vi. 2.

tion; and settle the world in profound and perfect tranquillity. upon principles of justice and contentedness, meekness and mutual love.

AT a former passover, when the people in admiration of his miracles would have paid him kingly honours, he withdrew, and refused the unseasonable testimony of their zeal; because his acceptance of it then might have obscured the efficacy of his preaching; but now, that the course of his prophetic office was finished, and the time of his departure was at hand, he permitted the people to proclaim his regal dignity, that their free and solemn acknowledgments thereof might be a balance against the shame and scandal of his cross. And more than a balance they certainly will be to every impartial considerer, when it is observed that his death was the contrivance of a restless party, prejudiced by secular interest, and jealous of his growing greatness in the esteem of the people; whereas these acclamations and acknowledgments were the effect of sincerity, and an honest reverence to one who (they verily believed) had fully answered all the predictions concerning the Messiah, and must of necessity be that very person so long promised, so impatiently expected, and so punctually described by the ancient prophets.

AND as this solemn entry was a declaration of Christ's kingdom, and so the circumstances attending it were significant intimations that it was not to be of this world, since its pomps and processions were so different from those of earthly princes. Our blessed Lord indeed could not have taken a more effectual course, to confute that vain imagination of the Messiah's temporal dominion at his first coming, than by ordering matters so as, in this only instance of his receiving princely honours, to go counter to the customary forms and solemnities; and, even in the manner of his triumph and inauguration, to teach us humility and contempt of the pride and glories of this life. But how mean and despicable this pomp and appearance might be, it certainly drew upon him the malice and indignation of the Jewish rulers, quickened them in their measures against him, and confirmed them in the expediency of his dying for the people in that wicked sense intended by Caiaphas. And therefore we may suppose that our Lord, who foresaw every consequence distinctly, suffered the officious respects of a well-meaning multitude to draw on his passion, by exasperating his bloody crimes, and making them more vigorous and impatient in the execution of their wicked design. Nor is their conjecture to be found fault with, who suppose that our Saviour intended this pomp and solemnity for a type and prelude of his triumphant advent to the general judgment; when, instead of a vulgar train, he shall descend from his celestial throne with troops of angels and blessed spirits innumerable, in a figure as becoming

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an univerfal Lord and conqueror then, as this other was fuitable to the character and condefcenfion of a fuffering Saviour now.

UPON our Saviour's triumphant proceffion to Jerufalem, we find him near the Mount of Olives, fadly lamenting the fate of the city, and all the difmal circumftances which he punctually foretels as a punifhment determined by God, to avenge the Jews for their obftinate infidelity and affected blindnefs; \* If thou hadft known, even thou, at leaft in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes: in the temple juftly refenting the profanations of the place, and with a noble zeal driving out thofe who kept a public mart in the court of the Gentiles; † faying unto them, It is written, my houfe fhall be called a houfe of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves: in the upper room celebrating his laft pafchal fupper, and inftituting that bleffed facrament (whereof we have treated ‡ before) to be a conftant memorial of his meritorious blood-fhedding, and obliging all his followers to obferve the fame in remembrance of him: and (what deferves a particular confideration) in the garden of Gethfemane, expreffing a forrow and heavinefs of foul, even unto death; fweating out large drops of blood, by reafon of the pain and agony which he felt; and, through the amazing profpect of what he faw approaching him, fending up his earneft and importunate prayer to God, \* O my Father, if it be poffible, let this cup pafs from me.

His agony  
in the gar-  
den.

IN opening this fad and tragical fcene therefore, we fhall, 1ft, obferve the height and bitternefs of his agony, and from what probable caufes it might arife; and then, 2dly, confider what the ingredients of this cup might be, and upon what account our Saviour might deprecate it with fo much importunity.

1. Now that this agony which our Saviour fuffered in the garden, was very grievous and exceffive, not only † the ftrong expreffions whereby the fcriptures represent it, fignify the utmoft horror and amazement, dejection of mind and anxiety of fpirit; but the earneftnefs of his petition, which he thrice repeats upon his knees and prostrate on his face, to fhew the vehemence of his defires; ‡ his sweating large drops of blood, which

‡ Luke xix. 42. † Matth. xxi. 13. ‡ See p. 476. \* Matth. xxvi. 39. x The words in the original are three, *lypeifhahi ekthambeifhahi*, and *ademonein*. The firft, *lypeifhahi*, is of a known and ordinary fignification, but in this cafe it is to be raifed to the higheft degree of its fignificancy, as appears by the words which follow, *perilypos efitin he pfyche mou*. So that it does not only denote an excefs of forrow furrounding and encompassing the foul; but alfo fuch as brings a confideration and dejection of mind, bowing the foul under the preffure and burden of it. The fecond, *ekthambeifhahi*, in the vulgar Latin, is *pavere*; but, according to the Greek Idiom, bears a much ftronger fenfe, and fignifies indeed the higheft degree of fear, horror, and amazement. The third, *ademonein*, denotes the confequences of exceffive fear, and forrow, i. e. anxiety of mind, difquietude, and reftleffnefs. Pearson on the Creed. y Our Saviour's sweating blood is not fpoken by way of comparifon, or hyperbole, but was really that

which



which shewed the extremity of his fear and consternation; and the appointment of an angel to strengthen and support him, which shewed the great weight of what lay upon him, are sufficient indications: but then from what quarter all this sorrow and dejection, all this amazement and consternation should arise, is not so easy a matter to determine. \* Those who impute it only to a natural dread and abhorrence of pain, and torments, and death, have this difficulty to contend with, that, how grievous soever the apprehension of these things be, especially to sinful flesh and blood; yet they are such as have been corrected by reason, and, in their most tremendous shapes, born, not only by Christ's faithful servants the martyrs, but even by many wise men and philosophers of old: and therefore we can hardly imagine that the prospect of the pain and ignominy of his crucifixion could give this excess of sorrow and consternation to his soul; especially considering that in the space of three days he knew he was to be released, and for ever afterwards gloriously rewarded for what he then suffered.

Whence,  
occasioned  
different  
opinions.

IT is the opinion of \* others therefore, that this exquisite sense of pain and dejection of mind, were occasioned by the perfect and penetrating light, which then diffused itself in his mind all at once, concerning the guilt and demerit of sin, and the wrath of an incensed God. They suppose that the image of all the iniquities of the world (for which he was to suffer) did then appear clear and lively, and express to his mind; and that all the vile and horrid circumstances of them stood (as it were) particularly ranged before his eyes, in all their dismal colours: that he saw, for instance, how much the honour of the great God of heaven and earth was abused by them, and how many millions of poor souls they must inevitably have cast under the pressures of a wrath infinite and intolerable, had not he turned the blow upon himself: that the horror of this filled and amazed his vast apprehensive soul; and that those apprehensions could not but affect his tender heart, full of the highest zeal for God's glory, and the most relenting compassion for the souls of men; till it fermented and boiled over with transport and agony, and even forced its way through all his body in those strange ebullitions of blood. " For \* if the true contrition of  
" one single sinner, say they, bleeding under the sting of the  
" law only for his own iniquities, cannot be performed without  
" great bitterness of sorrow and remorse, what bounds can be  
" set

which physicians call *diapedesis*, when the ferous blood is grown so thin and hot as to find a passage out at the pores of the body, as in an extraordinary sweat it may do, by rarifying the tunicles of the vessels which contain the blood: and to this purpose Maldonate tells us of one at Paris, in his time, who had drops of blood mingled with his sweat, at the hearing the sentence of death pronounced against him, though he was a person of a very strong constitution. Stillingfleet's Sermons. \* See Stillingfleet's Sermons, Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II. and his Sermons on several occasions. a See Pearson on the Creed, and South's Sermons, Vol. III. b Pearson, *ibid.*

“ set to that grief, what measures to that anguish, which proceeded from a full apprehension of all the transgressions of so many millions of sinners?”

THIS is the common solution: and yet there is something in the force of the words, as well as other passages in scripture, which has induced <sup>e</sup> others to think that on this occasion the devil and his angels had collected all their force, in order to fill our Saviour’s mind with the most dismal, terrifying scenes of horror, thereby to divert him from his intended enterprize. For, 1. we may observe, that before he entered the garden where this agony seized him, he expected some terrible assault from these infernal powers; and therefore he tells his disciples, <sup>a</sup> hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me; as if he had said, <sup>b</sup> give me leave now to discourse freely with you; because <sup>c</sup> within a little while I shall be so engaged that I shall not be <sup>d</sup> at leisure to discharge my mind to you: for the prince of <sup>e</sup> the devils is just now mustering up all his legions, and coming to make his effort upon me; but this is my comfort, he <sup>f</sup> will find nothing in me; no sinful inclination to take part <sup>g</sup> with him, no guilty reflection to expose me to his tyranny:” and accordingly, when the Jews apprehended him, he expostulates with them why they did not lay hands on him before, when he was daily with them in the temple, and then answers himself, <sup>h</sup> but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. 2. We may observe, that, when the disciples enter the garden with our Saviour, he gave them caution what extraordinary danger they were in, and therefore bids them <sup>i</sup> pray, and <sup>k</sup> watch and pray, that they enter not into temptation. Now this plainly implies, that, in that time and place, there was some occasion requiring a more than ordinary application to these duties, which cannot so well be imputed to any thing else, as those numbers of evil spirits who had furiously assaulted their master, and not altogether spared them: For, 3. we may observe, that, before our Saviour went into the garden, he expressly told his disciples that his hour was come, and when he was in it, earnestly intreated them to watch with him. One would have thought therefore, that the dear love which they bore him, and the infinite concern they had in him, might have kept them awake for some hours at least; and yet we find them suddenly asleep, and no sooner awoke, but asleep again and again; for the text tells us, that <sup>l</sup> their eyes were heavy: heavy indeed, that could not hold up for a few hours upon such an awakening occasion: now to what cause can we impute this prodigious drowsiness of theirs so well as to a preternatural stupefaction of their senses, by some of these infernal spirits then conflicting with

<sup>a</sup> See Scott’s Mediator. <sup>d</sup> John xiv. 30. <sup>e</sup> Luke xxii. 53. <sup>f</sup> Ibid. ver. 40. <sup>g</sup> Math. xxvi. 41. <sup>h</sup> Ibid. ver. 43, &c.

with our Saviour; who, perhaps to deprive him of the solace of his disciples company, did, by their diabolical art, produce that extraordinary stupor which oppressed them; that so, having him alone, they might have the greater advantage to tempt and terrify him?

THESE observations make it reasonable to imagine that this last agony of our Saviour was occasioned by a mighty struggle and conflict with the powers of darkness, who having by God's permission mustered up all their strength, intended once more to try their fortune against him; and to this purpose surrounding him, very probably with a mighty host, exerted all their power and malice, in persecuting his innocent soul, in distracting it with horrid phantasms, in afflicting it with dismal suggestions, in vexing and tormenting it with dire imaginations, and dreadful spectacles; and, in short, in practising all the arts and machinations their subtlety could invent, to tempt or deter him, if possible, from his gracious design of redeeming the world.

2. I see no reason, however, why all these terrifying and distracting things, which interpreters are so apt to separate, viz. the apprehension of a cruel and ignominious death, the sense of the guilt and heinous nature of sin, the prospect of God's wrath, and the combination of devils, all approaching him like a black and angry cloud fraught with thunder, and ready to break over his devoted head, might not be united in our Saviour's view; and, meeting together, make up the several ingredients of that bitter cup which we find him, with such <sup>k</sup> strong crying and tears, imploring his Father to remove. This will account for our Saviour's conduct, the expressions of his dread, and the deprecation of his doom, as he saw the cloud advancing; whereas to make any one of these singly, much more the apprehension that he was shortly to die, and his soul for some time to be separated from his body, the cause of his excessive sorrow and uneasiness, <sup>i</sup> is in effect to disparage the constancy of the captain of our salvation, and to give a preference (as we said before) to the behaviour of some soldiers of his, that have since fought under his banner, in the confirmation of that truth which they gladly sealed with their blood.

“ BUT how bitter soever the ingredients of this cup were, why should our Saviour, who came into the world for this purpose, that he might sustain the wrath of God and taste death for all men, endeavour to decline it? I e certainly knew what God had decreed, and himself had consented to it before his incarnation; and therefore, when he came to

Why Christ declined it.

Vol. II. Y y y “the

<sup>i</sup> Scott's Mediator. <sup>k</sup> Heb. v. 7. I If there had been nothing in this cup but what is commonly incident to human nature, as to the apprehensions of death or pain, it seems strange that he who had the greatest innocency, the most perfect charity, the freest resignation of himself, the fullest assurance of the reward to come, should express a greater horror of his sufferings than thousands did who suffered for his sake. <sup>l</sup> Stillingsfleet's Sermons.

“ the point, for what reason was it that he altered his purpose, “ and desired a release from his former engagements?” Now in answer to this it must be observed, 1. <sup>m</sup> That, in regard our blessed Saviour had the divine and human nature both united in one person, great caution must be used in observing his actions, that we do not mistake in assigning any of them to a wrong principle. For as those works of wonder which exceeded or controuled all the powers of created nature, must be attributed to a principle omnipotent and divine; so in those others which relate to subjection and suffering, he must be understood to proceed upon a principle purely human, and that the faculties of the divine nature were in such cases totally suspended. 2. That the efficacy and mystery of man’s redemption consisting in this union, it was necessary that there should be a clear and undoubted demonstration given of the reality of both these natures in Christ; which had not been done, unless, as our Lord’s miracles evidenced him to be truly God; so all the essential properties and affections of our nature had appeared in him too visibly to leave any doubt of his being truly man. Now, since the distinguishing marks of human nature lie chiefly in the soul, there had not been that demonstration given of our Saviour’s perfect humanity, unless he had discovered in his conduct an exact resemblance to us in all the natural passions and inclinations of our souls. 3. That in this soul of ours there is a twofold principle, reason and sense; that sense catches at the present, pursues ease and safety, and industriously consults the preservation and advantage of the body: whereas reason enlarges our prospect, takes into consideration distant and future objects, and persuades the foregoing some satisfactions, the running some hazards, and enduring some difficulties, in the discharge of our duty and the expectation of a greater good in reversion. So that under the former are comprehended all our natural passions, which are the secret springs that move us in what we do; under the latter are the understanding and judgment, which direct and regulate, and bound, and over-rule those passions: but still both these are constituent parts, and as necessary to make a perfect soul as the rational soul and human body are to make one perfect man. And from hence it follows, 4. That the weakness and corruption of our nature, as it stands depraved by sin, does not consist in our being tenderly touched with the fear of present evil, or the desire of present good, but only in suffering these fears and desires to prevail and take place against the dictates of reason and duty. Aversion to pain and conflict, to sorrow and death, and whatever is shocking and frightful to human nature, are affections interwoven with our original frame and constitution: Adam in his state of innocence felt them; and therefore it is no just reflection upon the second Adam, that he in like

like manner felt them too. Infirmities indeed these aversions may be called, in comparison of these perfections which belong to God and unbodied spirits; but then they are such infirmities as all who partake of bodies must have, and which if our Saviour was destitute of, he could not have been truly man. Now, 5. If Christ as man, could not be altogether indifferent and unconcerned at such severe trials, as the imposition of the burden of our sins, the infliction of pain and torment, and his approaching combat with the powers of darkness, must necessarily bring upon him; then surely it could not misbecome him to use all possible means for declining them, and consequently to express his concern, by praying against them with such reserve and limitation as we find he does; "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. For it was no disparagement of his love to mankind to detest death, and pain, and sufferings; but in truth an higher commendation of it, that notwithstanding so quick a sense, and so passionate a regret, he offered himself to undergo whatever God, for their benefit and salvation, should think proper to lay upon him. The more vehemently he wished for a release, the more meritorious was his submission; and the stronger his aversions were, the more he renounced his own will, and consequently the more acceptable was his compliance with that of his heavenly Father.

AFTER the Jews had resolved in council to put our Saviour to death, the evangelist acquaints us that no man laid hands on him for fear of the people. <sup>Judas's treachery.</sup> Such was his esteem among all those who envied him not, that they could not seize him publicly, without the hazard of a tumult; and therefore they concluded it the safest method to seize him by night, in his retirement, where none should be aware to resist their attempt. <sup>His character.</sup> Judas, in all probability, was a man of commendable manners, and inoffensive carriage. Had he been otherwise, our Saviour would have scarce taken him into the number of his apostles, nor would he have escaped the censure and reproach of the Jews, for having such a blot in his train. Nay, in the very night of his treason, and while it was inquired among themselves who might possibly be the traitor, Judas, we find, lay no more under the common suspicion of ill designs against his Master than any of the twelve: and therefore we may suppose that he was a person of a sober and regular conversation, plausible in his address, and full of seeming respect to his Lord; though he was certainly an hypocrite, and had another latent sin, which put him upon the most detestable measures. Whether it was his own option, or our Saviour's order and appointment that he should carry the bag or common purse, and so, in the manner of a domestic steward, give alms to the poor, and provide things necessary

necessary for the maintenance of our Lord and his attendants ; but so it was, that his employment in this office administered matter to his covetousness, and gave him frequent opportunities of purloining not a little to himself ; till, having gone on some time <sup>p</sup> in robbing the poor, and defrauding his Master, Satan, at length, suggests to him another way of satisfying his avarice, even the betraying him for a sum of money : and when this suggestion prevailed with him to go to the high-priests with this question, What shall ye give me to betray him ? Then <sup>r</sup> Satan fully entered into him, and carried him, without remorse, to the performance of that horrid enterprize. For, having received a vile reward for the hire of his conscience, and finding, soon after, a convenient opportunity, he fetches a band of soldiers, and conducts them to the garden, where the sorrows of our Lord were propitiating for the sins of Eden ; and there, by a shameless address, and perfidious kiss to distinguish him, delivers up his Master into the hand of his enemies.

The nature  
and aggrava-  
tion of  
his crime.

IT is no small aggravation then of this man's crime that he was a disciple, one who had given up his name and faith to our Lord, and not only heard his doctrine and seen his miracles, but himself likewise preached the gospel, and wrought miracles, in the power of his commission : and that this wickedness was not the effect of a sudden surprize, or want of recollection, but the work of deliberation, and long contrivance, and solemn debate. He consulted with the high-priests and elders concerning the time, the place, and every circumstance for the most convenient execution of his villany ; he set his own soul and his Master's life to sale <sup>r</sup> at a vile price ; he continued his attendance upon that Master still, that so, under the disguise of friendship, and by much laboured hypocrisy, he might the better carry on his design of destroying him ; and, when his project was thus formed, he had many broad hints given him that his designs were detected, many warnings of the sin and danger he was running into, and that it <sup>r</sup> had been better for him he had never been born ; and yet none of these altered his purpose. So that, in this act of Judas, there was a complication of ingratitude, perfidiousness, hypocrisy, propense malice, and a settled inflexible resolution to do wickedly, beyond the power of advice and warning, and the most awful menaces to controul it ; a seared conscience, and hardened infidelity ; and a formed avowed design to ruin the cause of christianity, in the destruction of its author ; and therefore we need less wonder that we find the repentance, which he afterwards expressed, so inavailable to his pardon and salvation.

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<sup>p</sup> John xii. 6    <sup>q</sup> Luke xxii. 3.    <sup>r</sup> Thirty pieces of silver is the same with thirty shekels, which of our money, according to Dr Hammond, is 3l. 15 s.    <sup>s</sup> Matth. xxvi. 24.

HE expressed great sorrow for what he had done, and con-<sup>His repen-</sup>demned himself severely for his wicked treachery; <sup>tance.</sup> he brought again the thirty pieces of silver, for which he had sold his Master's life, and not only took the shame of his fault to himself; but in some degree made satisfaction to his injured Master by a public declaration of his unblemished innocence. When he found matters grow to so desperate an height, that there was no probability of our Saviour's escaping the malice of the Jews, he began to reflect, very likely, on the prediction of our blessed Lord concerning the dreadful vengeance which should overtake the person that betrayed him to death: these, and probably many other reflections working together, with all that horror and confusion which fear and guilt are known to create in mens minds, seem to have made up the concern which the evangelist calls repenting himself; a concern resulting from a principle of self-preservation, in the most carnal sense of the word; but we find not any due sense in him of the villainy of the fact, nor any condemning himself, as the basest, the most ungrateful, most abandoned wretch alive; one that had violated the laws of God, and society, and nature, and cast all fidelity, and gratitude, and common humanity, behind his back. All which, and a great deal more, were not only aggravations due to his crime, but the very properest occasions of remorse. He felt indeed some regret for what he had done (as an awakened conscience cannot fence off such reflections) and he wished perhaps he had never done it; but the regret which he felt seems rather to have been the effect of confusion and rage, than any godly relenting; the agonies of frenzy, and amazement, and despair, which are the most distant things in the world from that sober and regular sorrow which worketh <sup>a</sup> repentance unto salvation not to be repented of.

HEREIN then lay the defect of Judas's repentance, that the horror of his sin ran him into despair. \* For repentance, we must know, does not barely consist in sorrow for sin, but in such a sorrow as is tempered and supported with hope; not in a mere confession of our transgressions, but in such a confession as depends on forgiveness. It imports the change of our manners; but, if there be not a firm persuasion that our sincere endeavours for the future will be kindly received; and our former iniquities graciously passed over, all ground and encouragement for such a change is taken away. It requires, that we chuse new objects for our affections, draw them off from the world and its treacherous allurements, and settle them on God and heavenly things; but he that loves God must of necessity consider him under some other character than those of a stern judge, and implacable avenger: he must have some notions of his clemency and goodness;

Wherein it was defective.

<sup>t</sup> Matth. xxvii. 2, 3.    <sup>u</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 10.    \* Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. ii.

ness; for nothing but what is good can be the motive of our love; nor does it work upon our affections, but in proportion to what we apprehend it: and therefore no man can fix his affections on heaven and God, who is the fountain of all felicity there, who has no prospect, no hope of ever having a part in the joys of that blessed place.

REASON indeed cannot lead us to infer, that sorrow for the past, and amendment for the time to come can be any equivalent satisfaction for our offences: but revelation assures us that God may be appeased, and it hath told us withal in what manner he is appeased, even by the precious blood of his Son, who came to give his life for a ransom for many. In this matter God hath declared himself so fully that the very heinousness of our sins is not a greater provocation than the distrust of mercy (which, in effect, is making God a liar, and disparaging the merits of Christ's sacrifice) after we have committed them. So that hope of mercy, and faith in the promises and satisfaction of Christ are the very life and spirit of true repentance, essential, and indispensibly requisite to quicken and recommend every part of it; and therefore no wonder if Judas's repentance proved so ineffectual, which was plainly destitute of these necessary qualifications. \* If it be inquired how Judas came to be wanting in this point; the immediate cause, no question, was, that God had forsaken him, and withdrawn his grace from him; but then, if we pursue the inquiry, the matter will fall at last upon Judas himself, as the proper and original cause of his own misery and destruction.

An objection.

“ BUT if this fact of Judas was foretold, as we find it was  
 “ in a prophecy, as high as the Psalmist, wherein was he so  
 “ mightily to blame? What was foretold, was likewise pre-  
 “ ordained, and made necessary to come to pass by an irre-  
 “ sistible decree: now, where there is a fatality of acting, there  
 “ can be no choice, and where there is no choice, there can be  
 “ no guilt.” The fallacy of such arguments as these, which,  
 Answered. from the notion of divine providence, charge God with the sins  
 of mankind, is what we had occasion to consider, in treating of  
 the doctrine of predestination; and we shall only take notice  
 in this place, that miserable Judas was not aware of any power  
 in this argument to sustain his mind when he came to reflect on  
 what he had done. He could not interpret that the fore-know-  
 ledge of God had any causality or influence upon his sin, being  
 conscious that there was cause enough for that arising from his  
 own deportment. For, having given way to a covetous desire,  
 and hardened his heart, by a sinful indulgence, against all im-  
 pressions of wholesome counsel, he was convinced that the pro-  
 phesy of his treason could not fail of its event; because, when  
 the

\* Stainope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II. y Psal. xli. 9. z Vid. Vol. I. page 247



the temptation offered, he found himself under a necessity to comply: but then he knew withal, that it was a necessity, not fatal, but natural, not of God's decreeing, but of his own procuring. <sup>a</sup> Under the juster apprehensions of his crime, he is said to have repented, *i. e.* he grieved, he despaired, and then changed himself; and though we allow that his passions transported him too extravagantly in these latter violences, yet even from what is rational in his grief, we may learn this lesson—  
 “ That when an awakened conscience comes to estimate the  
 “ nature of its guilt, there will be found but poor shelter in all  
 “ those palliations that can be formed by human subtlety and  
 “ licentious wit.”

ONE very successful artifice made use of by the devil for our destruction is to dress up his temptations to such advantage, that all the profit, all the pleasure, all we promise to ourselves as the end of our sinning, shall be set in its best light, and appear in proportion larger than the life; but all the difficulty, all the danger, the troubles, and ill effects of it shall be infinitely lessened, or altogether concealed from our sight. This deceit is one cause why we find ourselves so very different men while we are pressing forward, heated with desire, and big with false and flattering expectations, from what we are, when looking back upon the thing done, and stung with reproaches and self-condemnation. Now this was exactly the state of Judas: his greediness of gain blinded his eyes, and quite diverted his thoughts from considering the horror of his treachery: but then the reflection fell upon his mind with a terrible after-blow; and he, who brought again the thirty pieces of silver, would have given ten thousand worlds, had he been master of them, never to have yielded to this villanous suggestion. <sup>b</sup> The pieces looked dazzling and pleasant to him at the first sight; but, by that time he had had them a little in his hands, such a loathing regret grew upon his mind that he could not in the least enjoy what he had so strongly coveted. Let this example therefore teach us to <sup>c</sup> take heed, and beware of covetousness; because <sup>d</sup> the love of money is the root of all evil, and they who will be rich, who resolve, and make it their business, and stick at nothing to make them rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

As soon as Judas had betrayed our Saviour Christ, the soldiers immediately seize him, and bind him, and carry him away to the high-priest's palace. <sup>e</sup> Caiaphas was high-priest at that time;

A caution  
against co-  
vetousness.

Christ's  
sufferings.

but

<sup>a</sup> Young's Sermons, Vol. I. <sup>b</sup> Young, *ibid.* <sup>c</sup> Luke xii. 15. <sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. <sup>e</sup> Annas and Caiaphas are both called high priests; Annas being a man of principal authority among the Jews, and Caiaphas placed by Pontius Pilate, the procurator in the pontificate. For the succession of the high priest was now changed, the lineal descendant of Aaron being postponed, and some other, whom the procurator pleased, named to that office every year, or removed, as oft as he thought fit.

but Annas, having formerly born that office, and being a man of great authority in the sanhedrim, they bring him first of all before him, and, as he was upon his examination, <sup>f</sup> an officer smote him on the face, and shamefully insulted him. From Annas he was sent to Caiaphas, who, having convened the council, pretended to proceed against him in a judicial way; but finding no evidence sufficient to convict him, he adjured him by the living God to tell him whether he was Christ, the Son of God; to which our Saviour answering in the affirmative, the high-priest, in name of the assembly, accused him of blasphemy, and so, declaring him guilty of death, for the present dismissed the council.

THE Jews, at this time, were <sup>\*</sup> under the jurisdiction of the Roman governor; and, having no power to condemn any man to death, the next morning they led him away to Pilate, in hopes of prevailing with him to ratify their sentence. And to this purpose they brought several accusations against him, pretending that he perverted the nation, forbade tribute to be paid unto Cæsar, and set himself up for a king. But our Saviour disclaiming all secular power, and the governor understanding that he was a Galilean, took occasion from thence to discharge himself

<sup>f</sup> The injury done the holy Jesus in this blow was heightened in this respect, that the person who struck him was one Malchus an Idumean slave, and the very man for whom he had wrought a miracle a little before in curing his ear. Howell's History. <sup>g</sup> About threescore years before our Saviour's birth, the Jews by Pompey the Great were made tributary to the Romans: and although, during the life of Hircanus the high-priest, the reign of Herod, and his son Archelaus, the Roman state suffered the Jews to be ruled by their own laws and governors; yet, when Archelaus was banished by Augustus, they received their governors from the Roman emperor, being made part of the province of Syria which belonged to his care. In the life of Augustus there was a succession of three, Coponius, Ambivius, and Rufus. At the beginning of the reign of Tiberius they were governed by Valerius Gracchus, and, at his departure, by Pontius Pilate. The office which this Pilate bore was the procuratorship of Judea; but what this office was is not so easy to determine, because it was newly introduced into the Roman government. For, before the dominion of that city was changed from a commonwealth into an empire, there was no such public office in any of the provinces, and particularly in Judea, none till after the banishment of Archelaus, some years subsequent to our Saviour's birth. When Augustus divided the provinces of the empire into two parts (one of which he kept for his own care, and left the other to the inspection of the senate) he sent, together with the president of each province, a procurator, whose business it was to take an account of the tribute, and whatever else was due to the emperor, and to order and dispose of the same to his advantage. Neither was there, at the first institution of this office, any other act belonging properly to their jurisdiction but such a care and disposal of the imperial revenue, which they exercised, as interior and subordinate to the president, who was always supreme provincial officer. Now Judea, being made part of the province of Syria, and consequently, under the care of the president of that province, according to this institution, a particular procurator was assigned unto it, for the disposing of the emperor's revenue; and, because the nation of the Jews was always suspected to be of a rebellious disposition against the Roman state, and the president of Syria, who had the power of the sword, was forced to attend upon the other parts of the province; therefore the procurator of Judea was invested with a power of life and death, and the whole power of judicature left in the hands of the resident-procurator. Pearson on the Creed.

himself of the Jews importunity, and immediately sent him to Herod, the governor of Galilee, who was then at Jerusalem, upon the occasion of the feast. Herod was glad to see Jesus; for he had long desired it; and, having heard much of his fame, expected to have beheld some miracle done by him; but, being disappointed in that, he, in revenge, delivered him up to his attendants, who treated him with all possible contempt and ridicule, and so sent him back to Pilate. <sup>b</sup> Pilate was a man of Pilate's  
character. pride and cruelty enough: Philo, who has given us his character, chargeth him with selling of justice, and giving any sentence for money; with rapines, with injuries, with murders, with unjust tormentings, with putting men arbitrarily to death, and with much excessive cruelty during his whole administration. But so apparent was our Saviour's innocence, that even this governor professes he can find no fault in him, and labours with the people to have him acquitted. When this would not do, he endeavours to save his life by proposing some lighter punishment to be inflicted on him; but when this was rejected too, he mentions him as the fittest person to be released in honour of the festival. When this they refused, and another was made choice of, in hopes of moving their compassion, he had him brought out, disguised and misused as he was by the soldiers, and offered to scourge him, and let him go: but this exasperated the people to that degree, that, adding threats to their clamours, they prevailed with the governor, contrary to his own conviction, as well as his wife's sollicitation, to release Barabbas unto them, <sup>i</sup> and to deliver Jesus <sup>k</sup> immediately to be crucified.

THIS is a plain narrative of the fact. And now to observe The aggra-  
vations of  
Christ's suf-  
ferings. some aggravations of it: to have his blood set to sale at a price, and that but a poor one too; that blood which was a purchase more than equivalent for the whole world, rated at thirty pieces of silver; to be betrayed and sold by one of his own servants, his friend and constant companion; to be assaulted with swords and staves, and apprehended as a common robber and pest of mankind; to be hurried from one high-priest to another, and there blind-folded, buffeted, spit upon, and insulted; to be exposed to the mercenary tongues of false witnesses, and, in the midst of all his distress, left alone, not one friend, not one disciple to stand by him; but betrayed by one, forsaken by the rest, and solemnly disowned and denied by the chief of them; to be dragged from one judgment-seat to another, and when neither Pilate nor Herod could find any fault in him, to have an unjust sentence of death pronounced against him; to have a known robber and murderer, one who stood convicted of sedition and blood preferred before him; to be made a spectacle to the people,

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and

<sup>h</sup> Prideaux's Connection, Lib. IX. <sup>i</sup> Mark xv. 15. <sup>k</sup> This was contrary to the Tiberian law, which, about twelve years before this time, decreed in favour of condemned prisoners, that, after sentence passed, execution should be deferred ten days. Howell's History.

and a laughing-flock to those that were about him; to be arrayed ridiculously in purple, as if he pretended to a royalty which belonged not to him; to have a mock crown and sceptre given him, and obedience made to him in jest and wantonness; royal salutations, together with spittings in his face, and his sceptre broke about his head to make him more contemptible: these are all of them circumstances of such horror, and insolence, and cruelty, as render this a case without parallel, and a wickedness beyond example: and yet observe with what invincible patience he bore this contradiction of sinners against himself. He did not impeach the righteousness of God for suffering such indignities to befall a blameless and innocent person; he was wounded, not for his own, but for our transgressions; he was bruised, not for his own, but for our iniquities; he was oppressed, he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; for, when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, leaving us an example that we might follow his steps.

St Peter's fall.

The occasion of it.

WHEN our blessed Saviour was taken by the Jews, and carried away to the high-priest's palace, St Peter we are told, followed afar off, and went in, and sat with the servants, in order to see the end. From the several passages wherein this apostle is concerned, we may learn that he was a person of a sanguine complexion, and great courage: his making so many professions of a fixed adherence to his master's cause, let the consequence be what it would; his drawing his sword in his vindication, and adventuring his single resistance against a strong body of men which came armed and prepared to apprehend him, may sufficiently justify this part of his character. However, when he came to the high-priest's palace, he found matters there in such confusion; the pomp and solemnity of the council met together, the severe and dreadful face of justice, the spite and malice of every person in authority, and the insults and indignities, the forgery and false evidences thrown upon his master, so terrified and shocked his courage, that the bold St Peter, who but a little before had singly engaged a whole band of armed men to rescue his master, upon the accusation of a poor servant-wench, now shamefully abjures him.

Circumstances.

• FEAR we know is a passion so interwoven in human nature, and so immediately consequent upon the principle of self-preservation, that in some circumstances it may befall the best and bravest minds. In these conjunctures we pity mens failings, and God no doubt makes favourable allowances when human nature is surpris'd, and unable to withstand an unexpected shock. This, however, was not St Peter's case intirely. The bitter

1 Pet. ii. 21, 23. n Matth. xxvi. 58. o Stanhope's Sermons on several occasions.

bitter things that were come upon his master had been foretold over and over again, and he himself sharply rebuked for not giving a ready credence to them. He had been taught that hatred, and persecution, and contempt was to be the lot of the first planters of the gospel; that the disciples were not above their master, but appointed by God to follow him in his sufferings, as well as his virtues; and, in such their distress, ordered to fear, not them who could kill the body only, but him alone who, after he had killed, had power to cast into hell. All this firmly believed was certainly enough to prepare his mind, and inspire him with courage, had he been called to suffer in his own person. But this he was not: he only saw his master suffer, and suffer no more than what had been frequently foretold. No man had yet laid hands on him, nor any person in power and authority given him the least molestation; only a few inferior servants officiously put the question, and he with a shameless falshood labours to clear himself of it; *¶* I know not the man, neither understand I what thou sayest. Had the denial been but once, it might have been deemed some sudden lapse of mind, and gone off with a better construction; but the denial is twice repeated, and every time with more vehemence; till at last, not content to back one lie with another, he flies to oaths and curses, profanely calls God to witness, and imprecates his judgments upon his own head, in a thing that he knew utterly false and base.

THESE are some of the sad circumstances of our apostle's Aggravations. fall: and these circumstances are all aggravated by the many advantages he had to do better: *¶* a person, who, for the space of three years and more, had the honour of our Saviour's conversation, the conviction of his miracles, and the instruction of his doctrine; who had been let into a full and distinct knowledge of those mysteries, which, for wise reasons, were delivered to the multitude in terms sometimes ambiguous; had been admitted to his transfiguration on the mount, his converse with Moses and Elias, and the hearing of that voice from God's excellent glory, *¶* This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, *¶* as himself testifies: a person that hereupon had made confession of his master's divinity, and received his commendations for it; had been chosen a companion of his agonies and sufferings, and forewarned frequently of the great danger of denying him; who, in a due sense of this, had that very evening professed himself ready to go with him *¶* into prison, and to death; and to distinguish his affection and constancy above any of his brethren, declared, that *¶* though all should be offended because of his master's sufferings, yet would not he; and though he were to die with him, yet would he not deny him: a person,

I say,

*p* Luke xii. 5. *q* Matth. xxvi. 70, 72. *r* Stanhope's Sermons on several occasions. *s* 2 Pet. i. 17, 18. *t* Luke xxiii. 33. *u* Matth. xxvi. 33, 35.

I say, placed in that rank and elevation, to fall off in the time of trial; to deny and abjure that very matter to whom he had made such large professions; to disclaim all relation to, and all knowledge of him, and that with the bitterest oaths and imprecations; this implies a guilt still more heinous, the more his knowledge and former conviction, the more his warning and long experience, the more his professions and boasted firmness of mind were conspicuous; and we read this passage to small purpose if it does not convince us of the miserable frailty even of the best men, and effectually overthrow all those vain confidences, which are apt to rise in our hearts from our own supposed strength and virtue.

And uses  
of it.

WHAT a lamentable instance have we here of one of the greatest men that ever was, falling in the most scandalous manner? And who shall hereafter dare to depend upon the highest degrees of knowledge, when one so well instructed, so perfectly satisfied in the christian truth, was yet, in despite of the fullest convictions of his own conscience, driven to deny the Lord that taught, and the Lord that bought him? Who shall presume upon the best resolutions, when he who declared so firm a purpose of adhering to Jesus, even to the loss of his own life, shamefully retracted and disclaimed all relation to him? And if so great a champion so soon gave ground, how shall we be able to stand in the day of battle? We, who are men as well as he, but not near so well appointed for this spiritual combat; we, who have the same principle of corruption to betray us, and the same passions to bear us down; but few, very few, the same knowledge and wisdom, the same courage and resolution, the same zeal and affection for our master, that this apostle had, and yet was foiled. Blame therefore we may the conduct of St Peter, and pity his infirmity, when we please to overlook ourselves; but certainly, if we consider the general state of human nature, the lesson which this example teaches us, is properly this—That reliance upon our own strength is folly, and the issue of it defeat; that in all our spiritual encounters, our best and safest way is, to flee unto God by supplication and prayer, because (as the apostle himself learned by sad experience) they who \* are kept unto salvation, are not supported by their own strength, but are kept through faith, and by the power of God.

His repen-  
tance.

WE should be injurious however to the memory of St Peter not to take notice of his repentance as well as his fall; who, upon the crowing of the cock, and our Saviour's x turning and looking upon him, remembered the word that Jesus had said, and found, by comparing his behaviour with it, how shamefully he had fallen from his boasted courage and constancy, how frail and unstable his strongest resolutions had proved; how easily he had been betrayed into a crime that he thought himself not capable

\* 1 Pet. i. 5. x Luke xxii. 61.

capable of; how base he had been to so kind a master, how false to his promises, how regardless of truth, how peremptory in the most notorious falsehood, how profane and profligate in his oaths and curses; and when his offence was thus set before him in its proper colours, and loaded with all the aggravations which belonged to it, the spectacle proved so frightful, that he could no longer refrain from tears; he went out and wept bitterly. And sufficient reason he had to weep: for besides the many particular circumstances which heightened his guilt and embittered the remembrance of so foul an offence; the very kindness of his master, who, in the midst of contumelies and sufferings, shewed a greater concern for his servant's sin than for any thing that himself endured; and, by a silent but significant rebuke of his eye, upbraided his baseness and ingratitude to him, could not but cut him to the quick, and fill him with confusion. This very probably was one of the bitterest ingredients of St Peter's sorrow, and what confirmed him in his duty ever after: for we must remember that in his future behaviour the apostle abundantly shewed the sincerity of his conversion, and made an ample amends for the scandal of his offence.

IT was the same St Peter, that, after our Saviour's resurrection, returned to his former fervour of affection; that <sup>y</sup> cast himself into the sea, out of impatience to hasten to his master on shore; that exerted himself on the day of Pentecost, and proved, by irrefragable arguments, <sup>z</sup> that Jesus Christ was the Son of God; that maintained his point against the Jewish rulers, <sup>a</sup> despising their rebukes and angry menaces, and telling them plainly that God was to be obeyed rather than man; that confirmed his brethren by his resolute behaviour, and made it a matter of <sup>b</sup> rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for the once abjured name of Christ. In a word, it was he, who, after a long labour of preaching and persecution, at length finished his course, and glorified God by the same kind of tortures and death which his Master condescended to undergo. So that St Peter was not more different from himself, when trembling at the voice of a silly damsel, than the same St Peter afterwards, the glorious, the invincible apostle, before the council, in prison, and upon the cross, was from the cowardly and infamous renegade in the high-priest's palace. This settled and deliberate fidelity was a noble compensation for the infirmity and transports of his fall. This shewed what the man was, when perfectly himself, and supported by the grace of God; as the other did, what he was, when naked and destitute of heavenly succours, depending upon his own strength, and left in the hand of his own passions: which is enough to convince us, that of ourselves we can do nothing, but all our safety, and <sup>c</sup> all our sufficiency is of God.

S E C T.

And refer-  
mation,  
and zeal.

<sup>y</sup> John xxi. 7.    <sup>z</sup> Acts ii. 14,—36.    <sup>a</sup> Ibid, iv. 19, 25.    <sup>b</sup> Ibid. v. 41.  
<sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 5.

## S E C T. III.

## OF CHRIST'S Crucifixion and Death.

Christ's  
Crucifixion

AFTER Pilate had given sentence against our blessed Saviour, and the military men and rabble had wearied themselves with their blasphemous merriment, they stripped him of all his ensigns of royalty, and, putting on him his own raiment, hurried him away to the place of execution. The Jews had four kinds of capital punishments, burning, beheading, strangling, and stoning; but here they made choice of crucifixion, because they accounted it the most painful and the most ignominious death. Painful it needs must be, because the hands and the feet, which of all the parts of the body, are most nervous, and consequently the most sensible, being extended to their utmost dimensions, and pierced through with iron pins, could not but give exquisite torture, when the weight of the body, thus stretched out, was left hanging upon these fastenings; and yet, as the wounds were in the extreme parts, and so immediately affected none of the vitals, the pain must necessarily have been long and lingering, as well as sharp and dolorous. For which reason the Romans themselves, who made use of this punishment, were frequently so compassionate as to strangle the party first, and so content themselves with having his dead body fixed upon the cross; though in our Saviour's case there was no relenting, no remains of humanity for his ease and relief. And as this was a very painful, so was it a most ignominious kind of death, peculiar to the meanest condition, and the most heinous offences, the punishment of robbers and murderers, provided they were slaves; otherwise, if they were free, and had the privileges of the city of Rome, it was then thought a prostitution of that honour, and too infamous a penalty for such to suffer, let their misdemeanors be what they would. Nay, so very odious and abominable was this punishment, that when they had a mind to brand the memory of any flagitious people, traitors

a painful  
and igno-  
minious  
death.

d Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. The Crucifixion was a Roman punishment in use in the empire as long as it continued heathen; but when the emperors embraced christianity, this punishment was forbidden by the supreme authority, out of a due respect and pious honour to the death of Christ. The form of a cross, according to the custom of the Romans, was that of a straight and erect piece of wood fixed in the earth, towards the top of which another transverse piece was fastened in such a manner that they cut one another in right angles. The erect post extended itself above the transverse, and, towards the lower part of it, another piece of wood was fastened and standing out. To the erect post our Saviour's body was applied; his head to that part of it which was above the transverse beam, and above his head was the table of his accusation fixed; to the transverse beam his hands were nailed, and upon the piece which came out from the lower part of the erect post his body hung, and his feet were transverse. Pearson on the Creed. f Pearson, Ibid. See also upon the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II.



traitors to the state, and common enemies to mankind, the most effectual way to fix an indelible infamy upon them <sup>h</sup> was, in their opinion to hang up their pictures thus, and to crucify those in effigy whose persons were out of their reach. And as this kind of punishment was shameful and odious among the Romans, so the Jews carried their detestation of it to an higher degree. For though they never inflicted it on any criminal when alive, yet, when notorious offenders had suffered another way, their bodies were sometimes hung up to be seen, which, according to their notion, was accounted an accursed thing, because it deprived them of the privilege of burial. The care of funeral rites indicated a life to come, and that the body and soul should be rejoined after death; but this lifting up of men from the earth, and hanging them in the air, (where they were to rot and perish) seemed to be treating them like brutes, the cutting off the hopes of a future life, and a kind of defeating the immortality of their souls, and the resurrection of their bodies; and therefore the sense and denunciation of their law was, that <sup>i</sup> he who hanged on a tree was accursed. In this painful, this shameful, this accursed manner did our blessed Lord, for the space of six long hours <sup>k</sup>, suffer the most exquisite torments both of body and mind; until nature being quite worn out, and the work of man's redemption finished, into God's hand he commended his spirit, or human soul, and having done that, he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

DEATH consists in a dissolution of the principal parts or organs of the body, so that neither they, nor any of the less noble parts in dependence on them, can any longer perform their respective functions: in consequence of which, according to the laws of union between the soul and body, the soul can no longer inform the body, but departs and retires elsewhere.

That

<sup>h</sup> Thus they used Celsus, one of the thirty tyrants of Rome, as Trebellius Pollio testifieth. *Novo injuriæ genere, imago in crucem sublata peritiantate vulgo, quasi Patibulo ipse Celsus videretur affixus.* Pearson on the Creed. i Deut. xxi. 23. <sup>k</sup> The Jews divided their day, not only into twelve hours (as is evident from John xi. 9. and many other places) but likewise into four quarters (in the same manner as they divided the night) allowing to every quarter three hours. The first quarter was from six o'clock in the morning until nine; and the last of these three hours was called by them the Third Hour: the second quarter was from nine in the morning until twelve; and the last of these hours was called the Sixth Hour: the third quarter reached from mid-day to three o'clock in the afternoon; and the last of these hours was known by the name of the Ninth Hour: the fourth and last division was into three more hours, which began at three o'clock in the afternoon, and ended at six, or even-tide. Now, from this brief account of the distribution of the hours of the day, it is easy to gather the beginning and end of our Saviour's suffering on the cross. For, as to the former, it is said, that it was the third hour when they crucified him, Mark xv. 25. *i. e.* they fastened him to the cross at nine o'clock in the morning, according to us; and as to the latter, St. Matthew relates, that about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, and yielded up the ghost, chap. xxvii. 50. wherewith St. Mark agrees, chap. xv. 34. which is at three o'clock in the afternoon. So that it is manifest from the whole, that Christ was six hours on the cross in all. Edwards's Body of Divinity, Vol. I.

The man-  
ner of it.

That the torments which Christ suffered were of sufficient force and intenseness to cause such a dissolution of the body, cannot be disputed; and that they had their effect, and Christ did actually die under them, was the constant conclusion both of enemies and friends, before whose eyes he was executed in the most public manner. Pilate indeed is said to wonder, when he heard in the evening, that he was dead so soon; but to us it can seem no strange thing that his spirit should be then wasted, who know what a sad variety of pains and miseries he underwent. The wondrous and unspeakable agony in the garden, the violence of the Jews, the buffetings of the servants, the harrassing him from one court of judicature to another, the thorny crown and merciless scourges; these, I say, (and what was worse than all these) that inconceivable anguish of heart, which, before any outward violence befel him, did with its own weight depress his soul, and make it exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, all conspired to spend his natural strength, and force his life away: though (properly speaking) it was not forced away; for as he <sup>1</sup> had power to lay down his life, so nothing could have taken it from him without his own permission and consent. For he who <sup>2</sup> struck his enemies down to the ground with his majestic presence, and afterwards gave them leave to apprehend him, could likewise, if he had pleased, have come down from the cross; he could have continued insensible in all the pains of it; he could have survived the sharpest anguish; and had he not suspended his divine power, death itself could not have taken hold of him, nor have bound this strong man, this infinitely more than man, in those chains which he therefore submitted to, that shortly after he might break and burst them asunder in a manner more glorious and triumphant. And from hence it will follow that the death of Christ was not a casual event, but a design from all eternity, contrived by divine wisdom, and resolved upon by divine goodness, for the illustration of God's sacred attributes, the exaltation of our Saviour's glory, and the procuration of man's redemption and felicity; of which we have treated at large in the doctrine of Christ's <sup>3</sup> sacerdotal office.

The wisdom of God  
herein.

HERE then we cannot sufficiently admire the wisdom of Almighty God, who thus ordered the great work of man's redemption, in despite of all the malice and subtlety of the devil, and his wicked instruments to the contrary. • The envy and malice of the chief priests and Pharisees, the eagerness and fury of the common people, the profligate consciences of false witnesses, the treachery and avarice of one of his disciples, the timorousness of a corrupt and time-serving judge, the barbarities of those who scourged and crucified him, and insulted over his dying

<sup>1</sup> John x. 18.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. xviii. 6.    <sup>3</sup> See page 406, &c.    <sup>o</sup> Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II.

dying agonies; all these were made use of by the enemy of mankind to destroy Jesus, and to overthrow his kingdom, to root out his name, and all the honour of it from among men: but observe the wisdom and power of providence in bringing good out of evil, and the most excellent and beneficial events out of the most unlikely, the most ungodly, the most malicious intentions! Had not these men been so exceedingly barbarous and wicked, the holy Jesus, so great a teacher, so innocent a liver, and so generous a benefactor to the distressed, could never have been taken off by so ignominious a death: had he not been put to such a death, he could not have suffered the shame and torment which the divine justice required as a satisfaction for the sins of men; had not the proceedings against him been injurious and unreasonable, that death had not bore the merit of a sacrifice and expiation for the guilty, whose persons he represented: in a word, had he not died, he had not conquered death, nor led captivity captive; but now, by virtue of his death, which these wicked instruments procured, having, as St Paul tells us, <sup>p</sup> spoiled principalities and powers, (all the principal powers of darkness) he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them upon his cross.

<sup>q</sup> No conqueror seated in his triumphant chariot, did ever yield so glorious a spectacle; no tree was ever adorned with such glorious trophies. To the outward eye and carnal sense, our Saviour was exposed to shame and scorn; but to the eye of faith and spiritual discernment, all his and our enemies hung upon his cross, objects of contempt, undone and overthrown: the devil, <sup>r</sup> that strong and mighty one, hung there bound and fettered, spoiled and disarmed, quite baffled and confounded: death hung there gasping and expiring, with its sting plucked out, and all its terrors quelled: the world, with all its vain pomps, its counterfeit beauties and bewitching pleasures, hung there all defaced and disparaged: our sins, those sins which <sup>s</sup> he bare in his own body on the tree, hung there exposed as trophies of his victories, and objects of our hatred and horror: in short, those manifold enmities between God and us, between man and himself, between one man and another, did all hang there together, abolished in his flesh, and slain upon his cross, <sup>t</sup> by the blood of which he made peace, and reconciled all things in heaven and earth.

The triumphs of the cross.

<sup>u</sup> LET it then to the Jews, prepossessed with false notions of a Messiah appearing in great secular pomp, be a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks, puffed up with conceit, and maxims of worldly wisdom, foolishness, <sup>v</sup> that God should put his Son in so sad and despicable a condition; that salvation from misery should be procured by so miserable a death; that eternal joy, happiness,

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Our glory.

<sup>p</sup> Colof. ii. 15. <sup>q</sup> Barrow on the Creed. <sup>r</sup> Matth. xii. 29. <sup>s</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 24. <sup>t</sup> Col. i. 20. <sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. i. 23. <sup>v</sup> Barrow, *ibid.*

happiness, and glory should issue from such springs of extreme sorrow and shame; that a person, in outward appearance, so contemptible, and exposed to such infamous and injurious usage, should be the Son of God, the Lord and Redeemer of mankind, the King and the Judge of all the world: let this, I say, be distasteful to some prejudiced, and incredible to some self-conceited persons: to us, who discern by a clearer light, 1. That God could not in a better method illustrate his glorious attributes of goodness and justice; and, 2. That virtue could not be taught and exemplified in a way more advantageous; the sufferings and death of Christ must be always grateful and glorious.

God's  
goodness  
herein.

\* THAT God, who is by nature incapable of sufferings and death, should condescend to become mortal man, to qualify himself to endure the bitterest afflictions; that he should do this for enemies and rebels, for such are wretched sinners; that the miseries of those who had provoked and injured him, and merited his utmost indignation and wrath, should move his pity to save their souls, at the expence of his own life; that, in the midst of sorrows and agonies, of pains and torture, he should still persevere in his most gracious purpose, and not accept a deliverance till he had finished this laborious undertaking; that he should embrace poverty and hardship, reproach and ignominy, bodily anguish and death, with a ready and chearful mind, when all the powers of hell could not have compelled him to one single pang; this is such an instance of compassion and friendship, as no tenderness ever yet did, or can compare with. † Greater love hath no man, says our Saviour, than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends; but herein ‡ God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, and consequently his enemies, Christ died for us.

And justice  
and severity  
against  
sin.

BUT at the same time that Christ's dying for us shews us the riches of God's goodness, it sets before us a dreadful image of his severe justice and indignation against sin. \* For if God, in consideration of our pardon, would admit of no meaner sacrifice than the precious blood of his own eternal Son; and, when that Son undertook to propitiate for us, would not so much as abate him one degree or circumstance of a most shameful and tormenting death, where shall sinners stand when he is angry? † How be able to bear his wrath and indignation, smeking against them, when the heat of it was so violent against him who sustained the representation only of sinners, but himself had never done any sin? How exquisite must be the amazement, how sharp and raging the pangs of offences unpardoned, when he, whose mind had nothing to reproach him with, trembled, and sunk under the apprehension of that fury which others had provoked? And can we read the doleful story of our Saviour's passion, and

\* Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II. y John xv. 13. z Rom. v. 8. a Scott's Mediator. b Stanhope's Sermons on several occasions.

at the same time reflect that our sins and iniquities were, in a great measure, the occasion of it, without a deep and sincere remorse? Can we think that we contributed to his agonies and griefs, that the malicious Jews and barbarous soldiers were only the instruments of cruelty, but every sinful man, in part, the cause of what he suffered, and think it without aking hearts, and a multitude of self-condemning reproaches? Can we behold our dear Lord's temples pierced with thorns, his holy face besmeared with blood, his body torn with scourges, nailed to the cross, hanging there in convulsions, thirsting, fainting, bleeding, dying, in pity to us; and yet suffer ourselves to be fond of those vices which injured, disgraced, tormented, and slew our best friend and most generous benefactor? Surely, if men have any gratitude, if any bowels, this prospect, lively represented to their minds, must needs check their wildest career, and restrain them from those wicked practices, which, we are told, do even now crucify afresh the Son of God, and again expose him to open flame.

FORASMUCH as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, says the apostle, we must arm ourselves likewise with the same mind: for, be the troubles we complain of in number never so many, be they in their kind and measure never so afflictive, they are few in proportion to that innumerable train of evils which Christ went through; they are light and trivial in comparison of that excessive weight which our Saviour bore. Do we complain that others live in great plenty and affluence, while we are so oppressed with poverty, that we want many of the comforts, and perhaps some of the necessaries of life? But know we not the mean and low condition of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for our sakes he became so poor as to have no place where to lay his head? Do we, at any time, find our actions misrepresented, and our persons treated with scorn and contempt? The same happened to our Lord and Saviour, who, though he went constantly about doing good, was, by the tongue of malice, stiled a Blasphemer, a Sabbath-breaker, a Deceiver, an Incendiary, a Madman, a Demoniack, and one who cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Are we touched to the quick when we are treated with disgrace, or do we cry out for anguish when we are afflicted with pain? What shame was ever like that to which our Saviour was exposed, when, besides other notorious ill usage, he was postponed to a vile thief and murderer, crucified between two malefactors, and reviled as a greater malefactor than either of them? What gout, what stone, what melancholy, could be so hard to bear, as the tortures he underwent, the acute pangs of his dolorous crucifixion, and the

The virtue of patience and resignation learnt from hence.

c Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II. d Heb. vi. 6. e 1 Pet. iv. 1. f Smallidge's Sermons. g 2 Cor. viii. 9. and Matthe. xiii. 20. h Acts x. 37. i Mat. h. xiii. 21.

the cutting sorrows that wounded his soul even unto death? So far are our most sensible afflictions short of that wherewith it pleased God to bruise this Son of his love in the day of his fierce anger! But, could we suppose them equal, yet does not this make a mighty difference, and ought it not to compose our spirits to submission, that his obedience was an act perfectly free, his sufferings chosen for ours, and not his own benefit? But we, alas! as creatures, are intirely at the mercy of our common Master and Maker; and, as sinners, bound to acknowledge the righteousness of God in every thing he sends upon us: and <sup>a</sup> doth a living man complain for the punishment of his sins? Can impatience, and discontent, and hard accusations of that providence, which disposes all events, become one, who, in the course of justice, hath brought misery upon himself by his own fault? Can he murmur at what is laid upon a principal, when so much more was laid upon a proxy; especially, when he remembers, <sup>i</sup> that though no chastning, for the present, be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby? Instead of fretting, and being uneasy, and discontented then, the proper reflection for a man in such circumstances is, <sup>k</sup> I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. “My Saviour, who had done no sin, suffered cheerfully  
 “ the severest displeasure of his Father, on account of my sins  
 “ imputed to him, and shall not I patiently bear the chastise-  
 “ ment of God for my own sins, whereby I have justly pro-  
 “ voked his wrath, and have deserved all those torments which  
 “ infinite justice can inflict, and from which nothing less than  
 “ the infinite satisfaction made by Christ could have delivered  
 “ me?”

<sup>l</sup> THUS may we be able to learn the difficult lesson of submitting to God's will in all his dispensations, if we do but duly attend to the example of Christ; we may <sup>m</sup> with patience run the race that is set before us, if, when we find ourselves weary and ready to faint, we re-invigorate our spirits by <sup>n</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God; remembering always that whatever our condition of life be, <sup>o</sup> we are not to live to ourselves, but to him that died for us; for <sup>p</sup> we are not our own, but are bought with a price, and therefore must glorify God in our body, and in our spirits, which are God's.

The case of  
the peni-  
tent thief.

DURING the time of our Saviour's crucifixion, the evangelist informs us, that two malefactors, one on his right hand, and the other on his left, were put to the same kind of death: that one railed on him, while the other, reproving his companion, declared

<sup>h</sup> Lament. iii. 39. <sup>i</sup> Heb. xii. 11. <sup>k</sup> Micah vii. 9. <sup>l</sup> Smalbridge's Sermons.  
<sup>m</sup> Heb. xii. 1. <sup>n</sup> Ibid. ver. 2. <sup>o</sup> 2 Cor. v. 15. <sup>p</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 20.

clared his innocence, and professed his belief of his divinity, and reliance on him for salvation; † Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom: a declaration so full of faith and integrity, that our Saviour accepts it with this gracious promise, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. Paradise is allowed on all hands to be the place into which pious souls, when separated from the body, are immediately admitted: from whence some have inferred, that since, in all probability, this thief began his repentance on the cross, and yet was received into Paradise, they too may be received into the arms of God's mercy, be their repentance never so late. But to shew the precariousness and danger of this supposition, we shall, 1st, State the case of this penitent thief on the cross; and then, 2dly, Observe what is the proper use that any christian may be allowed to make of it.

I. Now, in examining any of the surprizing and unusual acts of divine mercy, we must always be sure to bring this rule along with us, viz. That Almighty God, in the instances of love and compassion, is perfectly void of all that bias of humour, and passion, and partial fondness, which oftentimes are a blemish to the proceedings of easy and good-natured men; that he constantly acts with such steadiness as becomes infinite goodness, regulated and duly tempered with infinite wisdom and infinite justice; and consequently that all his dealings are strictly agreeable to equity and reason, though we cannot enter into the grounds of them; that, as he is the searcher of all hearts, he has a distinct knowledge of mens intentions and qualifications, and from these is induced (whenever he does so) to make a difference in favour of some above others; and that the worth and efficacy of such qualifications is not always to be measured by the length of time, or by the number of acts produced by them, because it may so happen that a very few, or but one single instance may be so circumstantiated as to give testimony of a man's sincerity and zeal, equivalent to a multitude of others. From these things thus premised, it plainly appears, that, in order to a right understanding, and a fair application of the example now before us, we must inquire a little into the good dispositions of the penitent upon the cross, such as we may presume recommended him to mercy: and of these we may observe in him,

I. A GREAT ingenuity of temper, and readiness of mind to embrace the faith of Christ, as soon as sufficient means of conviction were afforded him. It is highly probable that this man had never known any thing of Jesus before, otherwise than by common fame; nay, according to † the conjecture of some, he was prepossessed against him as an impostor, and joined with his companion in reviling him at first. The greater then was his virtue

His willing disposition.

to

† Luke xxiii. 42, 43. † Stanhope's Sermons on several occasions. † St Chrysostome and St Jerome.

to overcome these prejudices so soon, and to suffer the meekness and patience, the charity and piety of our Lord's miraculous death to disabuse him. This is so far from making him a late penitent, that it gives him the glory of an early convert; one whose heart was open to the first impression of grace, and wanted not so much the inclination as the opportunity of being brought over to the truth before. And what is yet more for his commendation, we may observe in him,

and strong  
faith.

2. A MOST noble and vigorous faith, such as confessed our Lord in his lowest, most afflicted and ignominious condition: When his hardened companion reviled him; when his enemies mocked and insulted over him; when one of his disciples had betrayed him, another had denied him, and all of them had forsook him: such as acknowledged him to be the Son of God, and the Lord of life, when he was hanging on the cross, suffering the pangs of death, and seemingly deserted by his Father: such as published his innocence in the face of triumphant malice, and, through the thickest cloud of shame and sufferings that ever intercepted the glories of the Son of God, discovered his divine power, and placed his hope in a spiritual kingdom, which flesh and blood, and human reason could never have discovered; a kingdom, which no eye but the eye of faith could have ever perceived; and which even they who had enjoyed the advantage of three years instruction and conversation, never yet perfectly understood, and now utterly despaired of. This was a confession so resolute, so singular, so illustrious, that no preacher, no apostle, no martyr ever came up to the heightening commendations of it; none gave so ample a testimony to the blessed Jesus, because none had this peculiar excellence of giving it under so many disadvantageous and discouraging circumstances.

no encour-  
agement  
to a late re-  
pentance.

II. <sup>u</sup> AND now, with what colour of reason can any late and death-bed penitent pretend to draw this example into a precedent for his own support and advantage? What affinity, what shadow of resemblance is there between a man submitting to the first impression, and one who hath wilfully hardened his heart against all the methods of instruction and amendment? Between a man accepting offers as soon as they were made, and one who hath refused salvation, and stopped his ears against the most affectionate importunities? We should be exceedingly blind and corrupt advocates for sin, to bring this unexpected honour, paid to our Saviour in his lowest and most deserted estate, to the wretched level of those men, who, notwithstanding his resurrection from the dead, and exaltation to glory, notwithstanding the conquest made by his gospel, and the infamy of denying him, continue still to injure and affront, to despise and defy him, in his most prosperous and triumphant condition.

In a word, no christian, who hath lived under the dispensation of the gospel, can, at the end of his days, plead the same

ready

<sup>t</sup> Whitby's Annotations on Luke xxiii.

<sup>u</sup> Chrysol. Tom. V. Crat. VII.



ready compliance to the calls of grace; and no man whatever can have an opportunity of exerting the same noble faith; because Christ could die but once, and it was his shame and suffering only that could have made this penitent thief's confession so peculiarly glorious. If then we are allowed to make any use, or draw consolations from this example, they must be no more than these—That it supports men with an instance of a great and grievous malefactor received into grace just at his leaving the world, and thereupon teaches us that no impurities of life, though never so foul, no crimes, though never so black, though never so numerous, shut us out from mercy, provided we sincerely repent; that the grace of God can recover wretches even when they are at the last gasp, and just dropping into everlasting torments: but as to actual repentance itself, and such grace being extended to those (when they come to death's door) who have been profligate and habitual sinners all their days, the most that can be inferred from hence is, that such a thing may be; but it gives us no manner of security, nor so much as one possible argument, that it certainly shall be. The conclusion of the whole is. Repentance, when true, is never too late, and therefore the thief upon the cross is a sovereign antidote against despair: but men may outstay the day of grace; they may not go about this work until it be too late, until they have lost both the will and the power to repent; and therefore this example, when truly considered, is an excellent preservative likewise against presumption.

The proper use to be made of it.

#### S E C T. IV.

##### Of CHRIST'S Burial and Descent into Hell.

IT is very observable that the evangelists are not more circumstantial in any particular relating to our blessed Saviour, than in that part which concerns his burial; and this seems to be done not so much for the sake of any consequence there is in the action considered apart by itself, as for the service it does to the proof of the truth of his preceding death, and the reality of his subsequent resurrection: for which reason, I suppose, it is that St Paul mentions our Saviour's burial as a point, which, among other articles of religion, he did use to preach and inculcate as a matter of faith: \* I delivered to you, first of all, that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins, and that he was also buried. But before we come to treat of that, considering Christ in a state of the dead, and his body separated from his human soul, the question may arise, "Whether, during that separation, the divine nature was still united in any particular manner to his body."

THAT

\* Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II.    † 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4

Whether  
Christ's di-  
vinity was  
united to  
his dead  
body.

THAT the two natures of Christ did still continue united after his death, is evident from the testimony of the holy scriptures, wherein the same individual person Christ, is said to be crucified, dead, and buried; that Christ's divine nature was conjoined to his human soul after its separation from the body, is clear from the promise he makes the penitent thief, This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise; and that there was such a general union of the divine nature with Christ's dead body, as that, whereby he supports and conserves all other creatures, is not to be questioned; but that there was the same particular union of his divinity with his body in the grave as when it was alive, is not allowed by some for this reason; "2 That supposing the divinity united after a special indissoluble manner to the flesh of Christ, it must have been united after a manner more powerful, with respect to all the functions of life, than that whereby an human soul is united to an human body: and if it be the union of the soul that prevents the death of the body, much more would the death of it be prevented by any special union of the divine nature, unless we can suppose such an union of it as has no manner of effect or operation; which, in a divine principle, is hardly within the compass of supposition." It is no easy matter to imagine then, according to these mens sentiments, how Christ's body could ever have died and been laid in the grave, if his divinity had at that time any vital communication with it: nor is it less difficult to conceive, 2 say others, why the divinity should not still continue even after death united to both body and soul, since no power hath any force against omnipotence, nor can any finite agent work an alteration in that union. A separation there was indeed between Christ's soul and body, but no disunion of them with his deity: for though Christ was more than man, yet it is not to be supposed that he died any more than man can die; and therefore though his soul and body were disjoined from one another, yet were they not disjoined from him who took them both together; 3 but, by virtue of that remaining conjunction, were rather united again after their separation. In this manner men have argued on both sides, but on which the presumption of truth lies, it is not so easy to determine. The question is abstruse in itself; but perhaps it may be of use to reconcile the contending parties, to remind them of the antient notion of the Godhead's being quiescent, and not exerting its power and efficacy in such instances, where the humanity is known to have suffered. In this manner it confessedly withdrew at his death; and,

2 Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. 2 Pearson on the Creed. To whose opinion St Austin [Trac. in John 47, 48.] and Greg. Nyssen. [Orat. i. de Resur.] seem to accede. b Tam velox incorruptæ carnis vivificatio fuit, ut major ibi esset soporis similitudo, quam mortis; quoniam Deitas, quæ ab utraque suscepti hominis substantia non recessit, quod potestate divisit, potestate conjunxit. Leo Serm. de Resurr.

and, by parity of reason, might continue its quiescence during the whole space of his interment, and until its power and operation were necessary in order to effect its resurrection. But this we suggest but as a probable expedient; and so proceed to consider in what manner the two separated parts of our Lord's humanity were disposed of. And,

1. To take notice of some circumstances relating to the burial of his body. His body, as we said, was now upon the cross submitted to the custom of the Roman laws, which ordered such as were crucified to hang upon the gibbet, exposed to all the injuries of weather, and a prey for ravenous beasts and fowls of the air. The Jewish institution however did not allow of this severity to the dead: it required that the bodies of such as were hanged up should not remain all night, but be buried in the day of their execution: and therefore, in obedience to the command, as well as in respect to the sanctity of the day approaching, the Jews themselves besought Pilate that his body, together with those of the malefactors, might be taken away: but, it being a farther custom among the Jews to bury their malefactors in some public and ignominious place, our Saviour's body must have undergone the same fate, had not Joseph of Arimathea, <sup>a</sup> a rich man, and honourable counsellor, *i. e.* a member of the Jewish Sanhedrim, (that very assembly of chief priests and rulers which laid wait for Jesus, which charged him with blasphemy, which used him with so much cruelty and contempt) applied himself to the governor, in whose disposal were the bodies of persons executed, and begged it of him, that he might rescue it from the contemptuous usage of common malefactors; and, by the help of <sup>c</sup> Nicodemus, another ruler of the Jews, who contributed a great quantity of spices and ointments towards its embalming (as the custom of the Jews was) might give him an honourable interment <sup>e</sup> in a new sepulchre, wherein never man was laid, and which he had hewn out of a rock for his own tomb.

<sup>f</sup> BY many passages in the Old Testament the Jews appear to have been, in all ages, extremely solicitous concerning the place of their burial, and to esteem it a curse not to sleep with their fathers; (as we often find it phrased) *i. e.* not to lie among those of their own race and family. The care of Abraham, <sup>h</sup> in buying a field for this purpose from the children of Heth, seems to have proceeded from a desire that the bodies of those who worshipped the one true God might not be mingled with idolators. As the Jewish people increased, they not only distinguished themselves from other nations, but even from one another in their burying-places; insomuch that every family of distinction, purchasing some piece of ground near their respective

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<sup>c</sup> Deut. xxi. 23. <sup>d</sup> Matth. xxvii. 57. <sup>e</sup> John iii. 1. and xix. 39. <sup>f</sup> Matth. xxvii. 60. <sup>g</sup> Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II. <sup>h</sup> Gen. xxiii.

The circumstances of Christ's burial.

five cities, (for within the cities none might be buried) and making it convenient for the purpose, had sepulchres appropriated to themselves. Such was the tomb of Joseph in a garden, and here he deposited the body of Jesus, where he designed to lay his own, and theirs whom nature and affection had made dearest to him: a mark of his great veneration for our Lord, and, at the same time, an evidence of the reality of his death. For, since Joseph was his disciple and his friend, he would not have treated the body of one (whom he honoured and loved) in such a manner as must needs have destroyed all remains of life, had there been any in it: nay, a strong confirmation of the truth of his resurrection too; for, since it was a new tomb in which no man had lain before, <sup>i</sup> if any one rose from it, it must be our Lord; since it was a tomb hewed out of a rock, there could be no digging through it to convey Christ's body away; and lastly, since its entrance was shut up with a <sup>k</sup> large stone, fastened with a seal, and watched by a strong guard of soldiers, the centry, to be sure, would not suffer the body to be conveyed out by this, or the nature of the place, by any other way. And therefore we are told that a divine power burst all these bars asunder; that an earthquake and an angel rolled away the stone, by an operation so amazing that the keepers could not withstand, could not sustain it: for they became <sup>l</sup> as dead men, trembling for fear, and running affrightened into the city to tell what was done; as we shall have occasion to take notice by and by.

An inference from thence concerning our own burials

IN the mean time, the description of the persons who interred Christ, and the enumeration of qualities and virtues, as well as the account of the spices and ointments expended at his burial, have been thought a sufficient reason and encouragement for the careful and decent sepulture of christians. <sup>m</sup> For, as natural reason will instruct us to give some respect to the body, though dead, because an human soul once inhabited it; so much more will it teach us that a greater care and respect is due to the bodies of christians, which once entertained a more glorious inhabitant, and were living temples of the Holy Ghost: <sup>n</sup> those bodies which were consecrated to the service of God, which bore their part in the duties of religion, and fought the good fight of faith and patience, of self-denial and mortification for the sake of piety and virtue: those bodies which we own still to be under the care of divine providence, which shall one day be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, and made partakers of the same happiness with their immortal souls, as once they were of their sufferings and good works: those bodies, in fine, which, as members of Christ, are already in him their representative exalted to the throne of God on high. These considerations

<sup>i</sup> Whitby's Annotations on Matth. xxvii. 60. <sup>k</sup> Ibid. ver 60. <sup>l</sup> Ibid xxviii. 4. <sup>m</sup> Pearson on the Creed. <sup>n</sup> Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Vol. II.

Considerations prevailed with the primitive christians to bury their dead with much solemnity; to commit them to the ground with prayers for their restitution; with praises of the virtues they had exercised while living; and with ample recommendations of their good example to the imitation of those that survived. And this they might do with the greater cheerfulness, considering that Christ, by his own vouchsafement to be buried, hath changed our graves, from seats of rottenness and corruption, into beds and chambers of rest; where, after his example, we retire and lie down for a while; but, having taken a short repose, are sure to be awakened again, and to rise up more fresh than from our beds, to life, to vigour, and immortality.

2. THE royal Psalmist, as he is cited by St Peter, speaking of our blessed Lord, has these remarkable words; *I have set God always before me; for he is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall; wherefore mine heart was glad, and my glory rejoiced, my flesh also shall rest in hope: for why, thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, neither shalt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. From which conclusion, not only the resurrection of our Saviour's body, but that famous article of our christian faith, his passage or descent into hell, may in this manner be fairly deduced, "If the soul of Christ was not left in hell at his resurrection, then was his soul in hell before his resurrection: but it was not there before his death; therefore upon or after his death, and before his resurrection, the soul of Christ descended into hell. For as his flesh did not see corruption, by virtue of this promise or prediction, and yet it was in the grave, the place of corruption, where it rested in hope until his resurrection; so his soul, which was not left in hell, by virtue of the like promise or prediction, was in that hell (where it was not left) until the time that it was to be united to the body, in order to accomplish its resurrection."*

Christ's descent into hell.

SOME by the word *hell* understand no more than the grave, and so make the descent of Christ to import the same with his burial. But this, in a summary of faith, would be very improper, to have a redundant repetition of the same thing, by an expression much more obscure and perplexed than that which it is designed

The different senses of it.

o Acts. ii. 25. p Psal. xvi. 9, &c. q Pearson on the Creed. r This exposition has a double advantage, viz. that Rufinus, who first mentioned Christ's descent in the Creed, did interpret it of his burial, and where this article was expressed, there that of the burial was omitted. But notwithstanding these advantages, there is no certainty of this interpretation. 1. Because Rufinus, who thus first interprets it, acknowledges, at the same time, the descent of the soul of Christ into hell; and those other creeds, which did likewise omit the burial, and express the descent, did shew, that by the descent, they understood, not that of the body, but that of the soul. 2. Because the Roman creed, having added the descent, in contradistinction to the burial of Christ, and expressed that descent by words of a stronger import, it cannot but be supposed that the Creed, as it now stands, should signify some other object of our belief, besides that of his burial. Pearson, *ibid.*

designed to illustrate. Others by hell understand no more than a state of death, and that Christ's descent consequently denotes no more than his stay or continuance in that state: but, besides that the original word is always thought to signify not a state but a place, this again would be a needless repetition of the same sense, and highly incongruous in a short form of belief. Some modern authors have thought that, in a figurative sense, the word might well enough import those infernal pains due to sinners, which Christ suffered upon the cross; and that therefore he might, in a large way of expression, be said to descend into hell. But, besides that the word is not to be found in any other place of scripture, nor among any of the antient fathers in this sense; the pains which our Saviour felt were antecedent to his death, part of them in the garden, part on the cross, but all before he commended his Spirit into the hands of his Father, and gave up the ghost. And though without all controversy they were very severe and heavy to be born, yet it is incongruous to suppose that they were of the same kind or degree with what the wicked suffer in hell. \* For there is a worm that never dies, which could not lodge in his innocent Spirit; there is a fire which feeds upon them, and is never to be extinguished, but could not seize upon his righteous soul; the damned are under a constant apprehension of God's everlasting displeasure, and under an utter impossibility of ever obtaining favour, which could not affect him who was never at variance with the Almighty; who looked upon the reward that was set before him; knew the beginning and end of his sufferings; and was all along conscious that the pleasure of the Lord was prospering in his hand, who in due time would see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied.

† SOME of the antient fathers took the word in its literal signification for the seat of the damned: and accordingly were of opinion that the soul of Christ, when separated from his body, went down into those lower parts which are the proper and peculiar habitation of devils and devilish spirits, either to triumph over Satan, or to preach to the spirits in prison, or to release some souls, and carry them along with him into glory. But † besides that the days which follow after death were never made for opportunities to a better life, and human souls were never cast into infernal torments in order to be released and delivered from them; the triumph of Christ over principalities and powers is ascribed, † by St Paul, to his cross: it was the effect and result of his death; and therefore leaves no reason for his going down to preach unto them, who, dying in disobedience,

and

s Pearson on the Creed. t Si ad inferos descendisse dicitur, nihil mirum est quoniam eam mortem pertulisset, quae sceleratis ab irato Deo infligitur. Calv. Institut. Lib. ii. c. 16. y Hunter on the Articles. \* Pearson, *ibid.* x Isaiah. lii. 17. y Athanasius, Epiphanius, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, and some other Greek fathers. z 1 Pet. iii. 19. a Pearson, *ibid.* b Col. ii. 15.

and being in torments for their sins, could in no sense be proper objects of such a dispensation. The phrase therefore of preaching to the spirits in prison, though confessedly abstruse, must certainly refer to some other thing, and may well enough bear this signification—"That Jesus Christ, after he was returned to life again, did by the Spirit of God, which he communicated to his apostles, preach his doctrine to the Gentiles who were shut up in idolatry as people in a prison:" For of what use, what advantage would it have been to preach the glad tidings of the gospel to persons under an irreversible doom? The rich man, whom we find in this condition, desired that one might be sent from the dead to preach to his brethren, then alive, lest they also should come into that place of torment; but we find no hopes he had that any should come from them who were alive to preach to him; for, if the living, who heard not Moses and the prophets, would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead, surely those who had been disobedient to Moses and the prophets, could never have been persuaded after they were dead.

ONCE more by hell may be meant a that unseen place to which departed souls are carried after their separation from the body. For though the Greek word [*hades*] so rendered, does now commonly signify the place of the damned, and, for some ages has been so understood; yet that, both among the Greek,

The most probable sense.

Latin, c It must not be concealed, however, that in the fourth year of Edward the 11th, this article was received with this explication; "That the body of Christ lay in the grave until his resurrection, but his spirit, which he gave up, was with the spirits which were detained in prison, and preached to them, as the place of St. Peter testifieth:" but in the synod, ten years after, in the days of queen Elizabeth, the articles, which continue still in force, deliver the same descent, but without any the least explication or reference to any particular place of scripture, in these words; As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also it is to be believed that he went down into hell. Pearson on the Creed. d Pearson, *ibid.* e Though we have nothing in our modern English, nor, by what I could ever understand, in any other of the present European tongues, to express the word *hades* by; yet, in the old English dialect, the word *hell* came up to its signification, viz. "that of an invisible place, wherein all separated souls, whether good or bad, were received and contained." For it is derived from the old Saxon word *hel*, which signifies to hide, or from the participle thereof *helled*, which is hidden, or covered, as in the western parts of England, at this very day, to *helle* over any thing, signifies, among the common people, to cover it; and he that covereth an house with tile or slate, is called an *Hellier*. From whence it appears that the word *hell*, according to its primitive notion, answers exactly to the Greek word *hades*; so called quasi *aidis topos*; because it is an unseen place, removed from the sight and view of the living; and very fitly so called, because of our uncertainty of the places where departed souls go, and of their invisibility to us. Lord King's Critical History of the Apostles Creed. f Thus Homer, in the eleventh book of his *Odyssey*, brings in Ulysses giving an account of his descent into *hades*, or hell, which he represents, as the common place of souls separated from the body, and where he met with several of his own acquaintance, and others, of whom he had heard both a good and a bad character.

Latin, Jewish, and Christian authors, it was used indifferently for the general receptacle of all departed souls, whether good or bad, needs no large or curious proof; \* since the least peruser of their writings must, without doubt, have observed this to have been their general opinion;—That, as, upon the death of all men, whether just or unjust, their bodies were committed to the grave; so their souls were translated into hell, or a place appointed for their reception; which translation, in compliance to the common form of speech, is called a Descent, because it was the generally received opinion that the mansions of departed souls were under the earth, or in the bowels of it: an opinion which might probably receive some confirmation from our Saviour's words that are generally applied to his soul, during its separation from the body; † as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so should the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

2. If this interpretation (which seems to be the best, as grounded upon <sup>n</sup> the general opinion of the church, and the most natural exposition of the prophecy of the Psalmist) be admitted, then will the meaning of our Lord's descent into hell be no other than this; “ That his soul, being separated from his  
“ body,

<sup>g</sup> Thus Virgil, in imitation of Homer, makes his hero Æneas go down to hell, or the habitation of departed souls, where he saw, not only the proud giants, who attempted to pull Jupiter from heaven, and many other great and abominable sinners, in the most inconceivable and tremendous torments, but a multitude of worthy souls,

—————Pulcherrima Proles,

Magnanimi heroes, nati melioribus annis. Æn. VI.

recreating themselves, amidst a full confluence of every thing that could make them happy. <sup>h</sup> From the Jews, and the books of the Old Testament (as St Ambrose [de bono mortis] affirms) the Pagans stole the notion of the state of departed souls, and he wishes that they had not mingled other superstitious and unprofitable conceits therewith, but would have been contented with that single opinion,—That souls, delivered from their bodies, go to hades, or hell, *i. e.* a place not seen, called by the Latins Infernum. And therefore the modern Jews (as we are told by the learned Huetius, in his Notes upon the Commentaries of Origen) distinguish between the superior Paradise or heaven, which is prepared for the glorified souls, and bodies of the saints, after the day of resurrection; and the inferior Paradise, which is usually called by them the Garden of Eden, and appointed to be the habitation of holy souls, during the time of their separation from their bodies. <sup>i</sup> That the primitive christians were of the same opinion with the heathen and Jews in this particular, accounting hell the common receptacle of all departed souls, we have the testimony of Irenæus, who, in this manner relates the order of the resurrection and glorification of all christians—that upon the disunion of their two essential parts by death, their souls shall go to hell, or to an invisible place appointed them by God, where they shall tarry till the resurrection, in a continued expectation of it: after which, receiving their bodies, and rising perfectly, they shall come into the presence of God. And not much unlike to this is that which Justin Martyr [Dial. cum Tryphon.] affirms—That all souls did not die, but that those of the godly remained in a better place, and those of the ungodly in a worse, expecting the day of judgment. King's Critical History of the Apostles Creed. <sup>k</sup> King, *ibid.* <sup>l</sup> Matth. xii. 40. <sup>m</sup> The learned Bishop Pearson has proved this to be the general opinion of the church, by a copious introduction of the testimonies of those ancient writers who lived successively, and wrote in several ages, and delivered this exposition in such express terms as are not capable of any other interpretation. On the Creed, p. 262.



“ body, did, by a real transition, and local motion, go into the  
 “ invisible region of spirits, where, according to the laws of  
 “ death, it remained, among other pious and religious souls,  
 “ till the resurrection of his body.” \* Hereby our Lord sub- The ends  
of Christ's  
death,  
 mitted to the condition of a dead man, as well as of a living ;  
 for, as his body was laid in the grave, as ordinarily the bodies  
 of dead men are ; so his soul was conveyed into such receptacles  
 as the souls of other persons used to be : for, since he † became  
 our high-priest, to redeem and save us, it behoved him, in all  
 things to be made like unto us, sin only excepted. † Hereby  
 he performed a principal and necessary part of his humiliation ;  
 for, though his soul was, as the souls of all good men are, in a  
 place of blifs and happiness ; yet so long as they continue in  
 their state of separation, they are suffering under the effects of  
 sin, and have the mark of God's displeasure on them, the want  
 of their bodies, from which they shall not be delivered until the  
 resurrection-day. Hereby he sanctified and sweetened the  
 state of our separation ; to abate its dread and terror, and to  
 make it more comfortable to us, in that our head and Saviour  
 endured it before : and hereby he gave an earnest and assurance  
 to all his followers, that, as himself loosed the bands of death,  
 † because it was impossible for him to be holden of it ; so, at the  
 appointed time for their resurrection, their souls shall be re-  
 scued by his Almighty power, and, in a joyful re-union with  
 their bodies, translated together into heavenly places, have their  
 perfect consummation and blifs.

‡ THERE is no notion under which we contemplate death and uses of  
it.  
 with more fear and reluctance, than as it is an entrance upon a  
 new and unknown state of life. The scene we conceive upon  
 our dissolution must needs be surprizing : what company we shall  
 find, what company we shall make, when we step into the world  
 of spirits, we cannot tell ; and it even confounds and amazes us  
 to think of going out of our bodies we know not whether.  
 Now, it may be of some use, I hope, to allay the inmoderation  
 of any such fear, to consider, that though it be appointed for all  
 men once to die, † yet we are only to go to that place where  
 our Saviour hath been before us, hath secured our passage, and  
 will preserve us in safety, until the restitution of all things ;  
 that we are not to travel in a path that is dark and desolate,  
 and through which none of our friends have passed before,  
 but shall go in the same which our dear Redeemer has visited,  
 and in which his disciples, and all good men, in all ages before  
 us, have followed ; and that we are to arrive at a place where  
 patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, and the spirits of all just men,  
 waiting for their Lord's return from heaven, and the glories of  
 their own resurrection, please themselves with the memory of a  
 well-spent

n Pearson on the Creed. o Heb. ii. 17. p King's Critical History of the  
 Apostles Creed. q Acts ii. 25. r Sherlock on death. s Boyse on the Articles.

well-spent life, which gives them assurance of a joyful eternity ; where enjoyments shall be commensurate to our faculties ; every thing that can give pleasure to our separate souls, set before them : and every pleasure and joy of this kind continually augmented with a sure and certain expectation of greater joys to come. When therefore our souls are shivering upon the brink of eternity, and ready to take their flight into the invisible world of spirits, here is a prospect (if presented duly to the eye of faith) that will overcome the reluctance of nature, and make us, \* with St Paul, desire to depart. The hope that is set before us on the farther shore, founded upon the consciousness of an holy and religious life on this, will allay the terrors of our passage, make us with cheerfulness resign our last breath, and therewith \* commit the keeping of our souls to God, as into the hands of a faithful Creator.

t Phil. i. 23. u 1 Pet. iv. 19.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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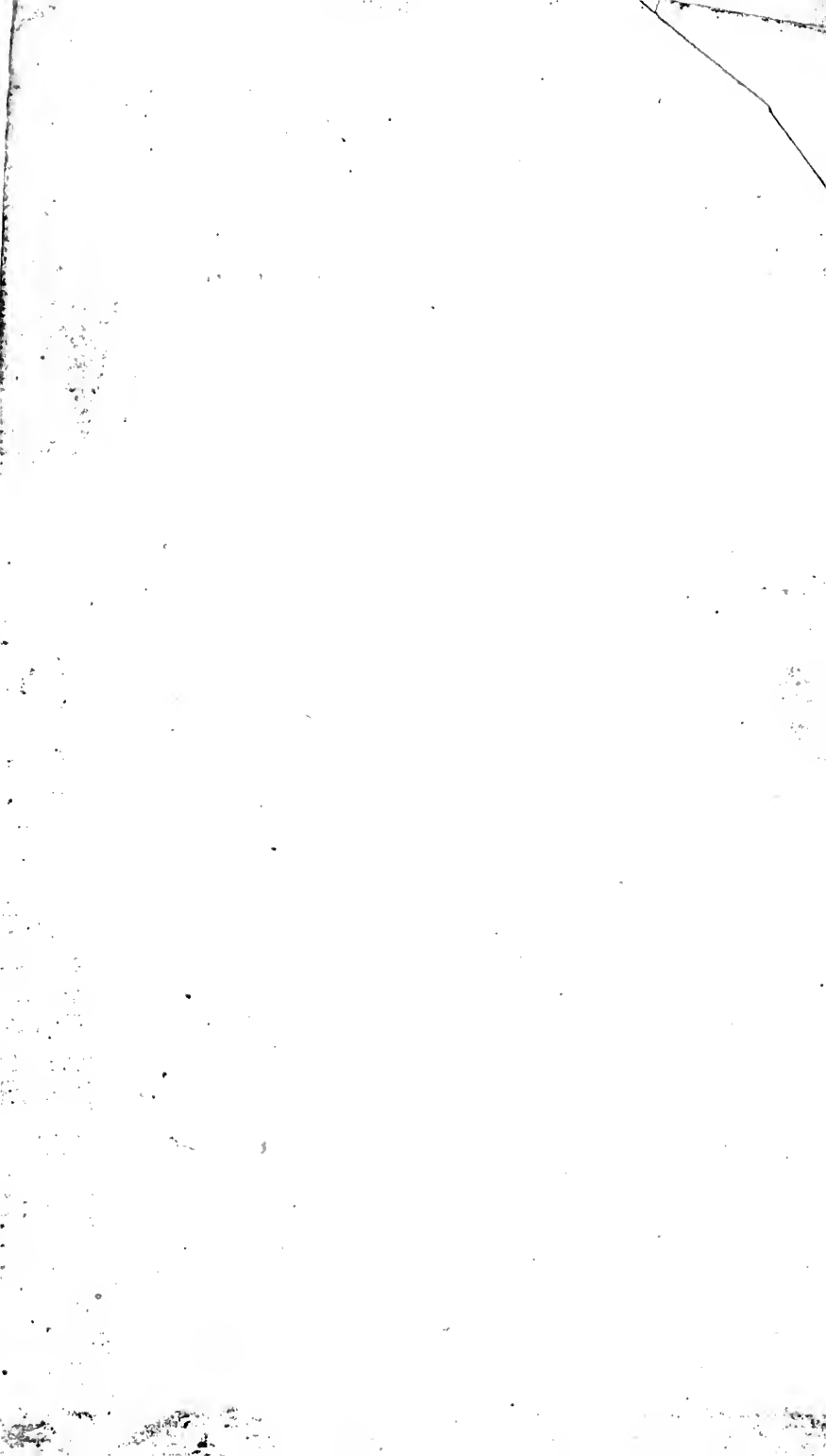
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| 1                | 35   | 497   | 5                  | 6    | 368   |
| 2                | 46   | 521   | EPHESIANS.         |      |       |
| 18               | 15   | 465   | 5                  | 3    | 140   |
| 22               | 40   | 539   | 6                  | 4    | 120   |
| 22               | 42   | 539   | 6                  | 17   | 526   |
| 22               | 52   | 182   | PHILLIPPIANS.      |      |       |
| 23               | 42   | 557   | 2                  | 6    | 492   |
| JOHN.            |      |       | COLOSSIANS.        |      |       |
| 1                | 18   | 398   | 1                  | 12   | 432   |
| 3                | 5    | 453   | 1                  | 21   | 110   |
| 4                | 9    | 286   | 2                  | 11   | 6     |
| 5                | 17   | 109   | 2                  | 16   | 111   |
| 14               | 30   | 536   | 3                  | 20   | 115   |
| ACTS.            |      |       | I. THESSALONIANS.  |      |       |
| 1                | 3    | 359   | 1                  | 6    | 145   |
| 1                | 12   | 166   | II. THESSALONIANS. |      |       |
| 2                | 39   | 466   | ROMANS.            |      |       |
| 10               | 47   | 453   | 2                  | 9    | 54    |
| 19               | 2    | 453   | I. TIMOTHY.        |      |       |
| ROMANS.          |      |       | 1                  | 15   | 513   |
| 1                | 23   | 311   | 5                  | 4    | 117   |
| 2                | 29   | 6     | 6                  | 9    | 543   |
| 3                | 28   | 368   | II. TIMOTHY.       |      |       |
| 4                | 2    | 13    | 3                  | 8    | 53    |
| 4                | 11   | 6     | 4                  | 13   | 235   |
| 4                | 18   | 5     | HEBREWS.           |      |       |
| I. CORINTHIANS.  |      |       | 2                  | 10   | 398   |
| 5                | 7    | 483   | 2                  | 14   | 397   |
| 6                | 12   | 99    | 2                  | 17   | 397   |
| 11               | 31   | 383   | 6                  | 4    | 374   |
| 15               | 3    | 559   | 6                  | 19   | 427   |
| II. CORINTHIANS. |      |       | 6                  | 20   | 10    |
| 5                | 19   | 471   | 7                  | 4    | 10    |
| 5                | 21   | 410   | 12                 | 16   | 29    |
| 7                | 10   | 541   | 13                 | 5    | 153   |
| GALATIANS.       |      |       | JAMES              |      |       |
| 3                | 17   | 393   | JAMES              |      |       |
| 3                | 19   | 79    | JAMES              |      |       |











Dear Mother  
I am well  
and hope  
you are the same  
I have not  
heard from  
you for some  
time  
I am  
yours affectionately  
John

