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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE
THEORY OF RELIGION.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY T. DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE
THEORY OF RELIGION.

BY EDMUND LAW, D. D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF CARLISLE.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE LATE

WILLIAM PALEY, D. D.

A NEW EDITION.

BY GEORGE HENRY LAW, D. D.

LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR RODWELL AND MARTIN, NEW BOND-STREET,

AND

MESSRS. RIVINGTONS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

1820.

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A New Edition of the "Theory of Religion" being called for, it has been the pleasing office of filial duty, to superintend its publication. No alterations or insertions whatever have been admitted, except the Author's last verbal corrections, and a Life of him, drawn up by the late Dr. Paley. It was indeed the Editor's original wish and intention to have made considerable additions to this very short memoir: but he soon desisted upon finding, that the pen of a son was not to be trusted, with writing the Life of a Father.

GEO. H. CHESTER.

London,
May 20th, 1820.



LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE LATE

WILLIAM PALEY, D. D.

EDMUND LAW, Bishop of Carlisle, was born in the parish of Cartmel, in Lancashire, in 1703. His father, who was a clergyman, held a small chapel in that neighbourhood, but the family had been situated at Askham, in the county of Westmorland. He was educated for some time at Cartmel school, afterwards at the free grammar-school at Kendal; from which he went, very well instructed in the learning of grammar-schools, to St. John's college, Cambridge. He took his bachelor's degree in 1723, and soon after was elected fellow of Christ's college in that university, where he took his master's degree in 1727. During his residence there, he became known to the public by a translation of Archbishop King's "Essay upon the Origin of Evil," with copious notes; in which many metaphysical subjects, curious and interesting in their nature, are treated of with great

ingenuity, learning, and novelty. To this work was prefixed, under the name of a "Preliminary Dissertation," a very valuable piece written by Mr. Gay, of Sidney college. Our Bishop always spoke of this gentleman in terms of the greatest respect. "In the Bible, and in the writings of Locke, no man," he used to say, "was so well versed."

Mr. Law also, whilst at Christ's college, undertook and went through a very laborious part, in preparing for the press an edition of "Stephens's Thesaurus*." His acquaintance, during his first residence in the university, was principally with Dr. Waterland, the learned master of Magdalen college; Dr. Jortin, a name known to every scholar; and Dr. Taylor, the editor of Demosthenes.

In 1737 he was presented by the university to the living of Graystock, in the county of Cumberland, a rectory of about 300l. a year. The advowson of this benefice belonged to the family of Howards of Graystock, but devolved to the university for this turn, by virtue of an act of parliament, which transfers to these two bodies the nomination to such benefices as appertain, at the time of the vacancy, to the patronage of a Roman catholic. The right, however, of the university was contested, and it was not until after a lawsuit of two years continuance, that Mr. Law was settled

* His coadjutors in the work were John Taylor, Thomas Johnson, and Sandys Hutchinson. *Ed.*

in his living. Soon after this he married Mary, the daughter of John Christian, Esq. of Unerigg, in the county of Cumberland; a lady, whose character is remembered with tenderness and esteem by all who knew her. In 1743 he was promoted by Sir George Fleming, Bishop of Carlisle, to the archdeaconry of that diocese; and in 1746 went from Graystock to settle at Salkeld, a pleasant village upon the banks of the river Eden, the rectory of which is annexed to the archdeaconry; but he was not one of those who lose and forget themselves in the country. During his residence at Salkeld, he published "Considerations on the Theory of Religion;" to which were subjoined, "Reflections on the Life and Character of Christ;" and an Appendix concerning the use of the words *Soul* and *Spirit* in the Holy Scripture, and the State of the Dead there described.

Dr. Keene held at this time, with the bishopric of Chester, the mastership of Peter-house, in Cambridge. Desiring to leave the university, he procured Dr. Law to be elected to succeed him in that station. This took place in 1756, in which year Dr. Law resigned his archdeaconry in favour of Mr. Eyre, a brother-in-law of Dr. Keene. Two years before this he had proceeded to his degree of D. D., in his public exercise for which, he defended the doctrine of what is usually called the "sleep of the soul," a tenet to which we shall have occasion to

revert hereafter. About 1760 he was appointed head librarian of the university; a situation which, as it procured an easy and quick access to books, was peculiarly agreeable to his taste and habits. Some time after this he was appointed Casuistical professor. In 1762 he suffered an irreparable loss by the death of his wife; a loss in itself every way afflicting, and rendered more so by the situation of his family, which then consisted of eleven children, many of them very young. Some years afterwards he received several preferments, which were rather honourable expressions of regard from his friends, than of much advantage to his fortune. By Dr. Cornwallis, then Bishop of Lichfield, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who had been his pupil at Christ college, he was appointed to the archdeaconry of Staffordshire, and to a prebend in the church of Lichfield. By his old acquaintance Dr. Green, Bishop of Lincoln, he was made a prebendary of that church. But in 1767, by the intervention of the Duke of Newcastle, to whose interest, in the memorable contest for the high-stewardship of the university, he had adhered in opposition to some temptations, he obtained a stall in the church of Durham. The year after this, the Duke of Grafton, who had a short time before been elected Chancellor of the university, recommended the master of Peter-house to his Majesty for the Bishopric of Carlisle. This recommendation was made, not only without solicitation

on his part, or that of his friends, but without his knowledge, until the Duke's intention in his favour was signified to him by the Archbishop.

In or about 1777, our Bishop gave to the public a handsome edition, in three volumes quarto, of the works of Mr. Locke, with a life of the author, and a preface. Mr. Locke's writings and character he held in the highest esteem, and seems to have drawn from them many of his own principles; he was a disciple of that school. About the same time he published a tract which engaged some attention in the controversy concerning subscription; and he published new editions of his two principal works, with considerable additions, and some alterations. Besides the works already mentioned, he published in 1734 or 1735, a very ingenious "Inquiry into the Ideas of Space, Time," &c. in which he combats the opinions of Dr. Clarke and his adherents on these subjects.

Dr. Law held the see of Carlisle almost nineteen years; during which time he twice only omitted spending the summer months in his diocese at the Bishop's residence at Rose Castle; a situation with which he was much pleased, not only on account of the natural beauty of the place, but because it restored him to the country, in which he had spent the best part of his life. In 1787 he paid this visit in a state of great weakness and exhaustion; and died at Rose about a month after

his arrival there, on August 14, and in the eighty-fourth year of his age.

The life of Dr. Law was a life of incessant reading and thought, almost entirely directed to metaphysical and religious inquiries; but the tenet by which his name and writings are principally distinguished, is, “that Jesus Christ, at his second coming, will, by an act of his power, restore to life and consciousness the dead of the human species; who by their own nature, and without this interposition, would remain in the state of insensibility to which the death brought upon mankind by the sin of Adam had reduced them*.” No man formed his own conclusions with more freedom, or treated those of others with greater candour and equity. He never quarrelled with any person for differing from him, or considered that difference as a sufficient reason for questioning any man’s sincerity, or judging meanly of his understanding. He was zealously attached to religious liberty, because he thought that it leads to truth; yet from his heart he loved peace. But he did not perceive any repugnancy in these two things. There was nothing in his elevation to a bishopric which he spoke of with more pleasure, than its being a proof that decent freedom of inquiry was not discouraged.

* The Editor has here omitted an assertion of the Author, very much questioning his authority for making it.

He was a man of great softness of manners, and of the mildest and most tranquil disposition. His voice was never raised above its ordinary pitch. His countenance seemed never to have been ruffled; it preserved the same kind and composed aspect, truly indicating the calmness and benignity of his temper. He had an utter dislike of large and mixed companies. Next to his books, his chief satisfaction was in the serious conversation of a literary companion, or in the company of a few friends. In this sort of society he would open his mind with great unreservedness, and with a peculiar turn and sprightliness of expression. His person was low, but well formed; his complexion fair and delicate. Except occasional interruptions by the gout, he had for the greatest part of his life enjoyed good health; and when not confined by that distemper, was full of motion and activity. About nine years before his death, he was greatly enfeebled by a severe attack of the gout, and in a short time after that, lost the use of one of his legs. Notwithstanding his fondness for exercise, he resigned himself to this change, not only without complaint, but without any sensible diminution of his cheerfulness and good humour. His fault was the general fault of retired and studious characters, too great a degree of inaction and facility in his public station. The modesty, or rather bashfulness of his nature, together with an extreme unwillingness to give pain, rendered him

sometimes less firm and efficient in the administration of authority than was requisite. But it is the condition of human nature. There is an opposition between some virtues, which seldom permits them to subsist together in perfection. Bishop Law was interred in the cathedral of Carlisle, in which a handsome monument is erected to his memory, the inscription on which is as follows.

Columnæ hujus sepultus est ad pedem
 EDMUNDUS LAW, S. T. P.
 per XIX. fere annos hujusce ecclesiæ Episcopus.
 In evangelica veritate exquirenda
 et vindicanda,
 ad extremam usque senectutem
 operam navavit indefessam :
 Quo autem studio et affectu veritatem
 eodem et libertatem Christianam coluit ;
 Religionem simplicem et incorruptam,
 nisi salva libertate
 stare non posse arbitratus.
 Obiit Aug. XIV. MDCCLXXXVII.
 Ætat. LXXXIV.

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THE following discourses were originally part of a larger plan, tending to show that Arts and Sciences, Natural and Revealed Religion, have upon the whole been progressive, from the creation of the world to the present time; as also that they have been suited to each other, as well as to the circumstances of mankind, during each eminent period of this their progress. A theory, which, when fairly represented, might be supposed to give satisfaction to some thoughtful persons; who being convinced of the existence and attributes of one supreme first cause, yet are so unhappy as to entertain strong prejudices against every supposed Revelation from him: as well as to assist many serious inquirers, who are equally at a loss in their searches after any settled order, in each of these Establishments: but, if they could persuade themselves, that one of them proceeded in some uniform *ratio* and *analogy* with the other; and that both were in a state of *progression*; would

probably wait a while, in hopes of seeing their particular objections gradually removed, by the same general rules.

Having formerly attempted to clear up some of the chief difficulties that occur in our conceptions of a Deity, and his Providence, in a series of notes on *Abp. King's Essay on the Origin of Evil*, which met with a favourable reception from the public, I am induced to offer this continuation of the same design of *justifying the ways of God to man*: and from the very nature, aim, and tendency of that useful undertaking, however imperfectly executed, there is some ground for hoping, that it may obtain the same regard here, which it has abroad, since it was translated into German by the celebrated *Michaelis*, who made it, as I am informed, his *Lecture Book*.

THEORY.

PART I.

WANT OF UNIVERSALITY

IN

NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION,

NO JUST OBJECTION AGAINST EITHER.

Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the
Gentiles also. — *Rom.* iii. 29.



WANT OF UNIVERSALITY
IN
NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.
NO JUST OBJECTION AGAINST EITHER.

ACTS xvii. 30.

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

THESE words contain a declaration of God's gracious purpose to reclaim mankind by the coming of Christ; and at the same time intimate the preference due to this, above any former institution.

In the foregoing verses the Apostle had been instructing the *Athenians* in the nature of the true God, and his universal providence. He shews them that there is one common father and supreme governor of the world, who has made this earth a fit habitation for the sons of men, and distributed them over the face of it; who has distinguished the seasons, and divided the nations, and fixed the bounds and periods of each*, in so very regular

* See *Bryant* on Ancient History. p. 162, &c.

and wise a manner, as might lead all diligent observers of them to a knowledge of their author; and put them upon seeking out some proper method of expressing their devotion to him. Though here in fact (as the Apostle intimates, ver. 27.), they were all but like men poring in the dark; their notions of the Deity imperfect and obscure; their worship equally absurd and irrational.

This their ignorance God was pleased for some time to *wink at* (*ὑπεριδεν*), to overlook, disregard, or, as it is in a parallel place*, *He suffered them to walk in their own ways*, to wander through the various sects of superstition and idolatry into which they had fallen: but now he *commandeth all men everywhere to repent*; or rather publishes, (*παράγγελλει*) proclaims the tidings of salvation to all men upon the fair and easy terms of *repentance* and *reformation*; he offers a new covenant to mankind in general, from the benefits whereof none are absolutely excluded who sincerely desire them:—*tidings*, which ought to be received by all, as they were by the first *converts*, with joy and gratitude.

But, how strangely has the face of things been altered, or rather, the whole nature of them inverted since! When, through the degeneracy of mankind, the benefits of this divine institution become restrained to a few people; and these are taught to despise it, for that very reason which

* Acts xiv. 16.

uses to make a benefit the more valuable, namely, because it is restrained to themselves!

If, say the present unbelievers, *God has made of one blood all nations of men, and is no respecter of persons*; if he designs this revelation for all men, as he must, if it would be of so great use and advantage to them;—Why then is it not actually communicated to all?—Why did he so long,—Why does he still—*wink* at the ignorance of so many nations, and leave them without any means of coming to the knowledge of his truth? Can a God of infinite power, and wisdom, be disappointed in his aim? Or, will the common father of mankind confine his greatest mercies to so very few of his children?—And thus every argument of the superior excellency of our religion becomes an objection to its divine authority; and what should be a peculiar motive to a thankful acceptance of it, is made one of the chief pretences for contemning and rejecting it.

In my following discourse I shall consider that part of this objection, which relates to the *manner* of conducting the *Christian* dispensation; the other, which more immediately affects the *time* of its delivery, being reserved to a more full examination afterwards.

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

I. That a *partial communication* of Christianity can be no particular objection to its divine autho-

riety, since the religion of nature is on the same foot with it in this respect.

II. I propose to shew the wisdom and goodness of the divine conduct in the dispensation of both. And,

III. The great benefit of complying with the terms of the gospel, and the inexcusableness of rejecting it.

I. I am to shew that a *partial communication* of Christianity can be no particular objection to its divine authority, since the religion of nature is on the same foot with it in this respect.

As the all-wise Creator of the universe has been pleased to frame different *orders* of intellectual beings, so he has made a considerable difference among those of the same order. In *mankind* the case is very evident. We cannot but observe a vast disparity between both the abilities and advantages of some, and those of others; their tempers of body, and powers of mind, and circumstances in the world; their education, opportunities, and ways of life; the station they are in, or the government they live under.

Now, these are so many talents, which together constitute our portion of *reason*, and severally contribute to the forming our understanding, and improving our *nature*. As these then are so very unequally distributed; 'tis plain that our religious notions, or our *law of nature*, must be very different and unequal also. The bounds of duty will be as various as the degrees of knowledge in every

man, and likewise be enlarged in proportion to the gradual improvements in the same man.

To speak therefore of one *fixt, immutable, and universal* law of nature, is framing an imaginary scheme without the least foundation in the real nature of things; nay directly contrary to the present order of the whole creation: 'tis making the same rule suit beings in all circumstances; which is equally absurd, as to prescribe the same specific regimen to all constitutions.

To style this religion of nature absolutely *perfect*, or its light *sufficient*; can only mean, that every one may be as perfect here as God intended him to be, and able to do all that his Creator will require of him; or so much as is sufficient to excuse him from *wrath* and *punishment*: which is very true, but nothing to the purpose: for this kind of perfection is far from implying an universal, and unchangeable equality in the law of nature itself, or excluding greater light; since it may be very consistent with that diversity of talents above-mentioned, and those different degrees of happiness and perfection, which are founded in, and naturally resulting from it.

As therefore all the gifts of nature are distributed in this unequal manner, how unreasonable is it to object against revealed religion, for its being conveyed in the very same manner! One who believes any thing of a God and his providence, will naturally suppose, that if any revelation were made to mankind, it would be made

according to the same method which is observed in the government both of the natural and moral world; at least, he that allows this to be consistent with the belief of a Deity in the one case, cannot on that very account reject the other*.

Thus much may be sufficient to shew, that natural and revealed religion are upon the same foot in point of *universality*; and that the objection holds equally against both of them. And I have been the more brief on this head, as it has been fully discussed by able writers†.

II. Let us proceed therefore in the second place, to point out the wisdom and goodness of the divine conduct in both these dispensations.

* *Chubb*, in his discourse on *Miracles*, p. 48, &c. endeavours to invalidate this observation, by asserting, that the two cases are not parallel, because the one could not have been better constituted; which, he thinks, cannot be made appear concerning the other. But, if it be shewn that the like, or greater inconveniences would flow from any other assignable way of conveying revelation (which will be attempted in the following part of this discourse); then we have the same reason to assert, that it could not upon the whole have been conveyed in a better way; and consequently, the objection drawn from its want of Universality, will be of no more force than that from inequality is in the common course of nature; and the two cases will still be exactly parallel. Nor can I find the least proof of the contrary in Lord *Bolingbroke's* declamation, (*Works*, vol. iv. p. 293, &c.) except what arises from the arbitrary supposition of some few divines, and is here sufficiently obviated near the end of Part II.

† See *Conybear's*, *Foster's*, or *S. Browne's Defence of Revelation*; or, *Denne's* Sermon on the Propagation of the Gospel; or more at large in *Butler's Analogy*, &c. p. 181, 215, &c. 8vo. or *Sykes* on *Miracles*, p. 204, &c.

1st. Of Natural Religion; which, as we have seen, is proportionable to the different abilities and attainments of mankind; as these generally arise from their different stations and conditions; both which we shall find exquisitely adapted to the well-being of the world.

For, in the first place, *society* is requisite, in order to supply the conveniences, the comforts, and the necessaries of life, as well as to secure the quiet use, and safe possession of them. To preserve society among such frail, fallible, and refractory beings as constitute the bulk of mankind, there is need of *government*, which implies different stations and conditions; as these again call for different abilities and qualifications. All, 'tis plain, cannot be governors, nor enjoy the benefits which attend some posts of wealth and power: the *many* have nothing left them but to obey, to execute the will of their superiors, and undergo the drudgeries of life*.

The same holds in the body politic, as in the natural; there must be many inferior and *more feeble members*, which yet are *necessary*; *neither can the head say to the feet, I have no need of you.*

But, if all these different members of the com-

* Illi ergo omnes conditi sunt ut hæc opera præstent, quibus in civitate opus est; conditus est autem vir scientia præditus sui gratia: [*i. e.* ob finem quem adeptus est, sc. scientiam] atque ita simul colitur terra, et reperitur sapientia. Quam scite ergo dixit ille, quisquis fuit, *Nisi essent stulti desolaretur terra!* Maimon. *Porta Mos.* p. 41. Vid. Eccl. xxxviii. 32, 34. & Holberg. *N. Klim.* p. 133.

munity had naturally the self-same sense and relish of things; if each man had originally and unchangeably the highest degree of understanding and acuteness; the greatest strength of reason, and fineness of imagination that is to be met with in any of the species, how very incongruous must this unavoidable diversity of orders prove! How hard would be the case of them, whose lot is to fill the worst and lowest offices, and yet who find themselves as well qualified for, and as highly deserving too of the best, as those that hold them; and who likewise cannot but be as deeply sensible of all that hardship and disappointment which arises from the want of them! The common intellect and apprehension of man would be but ill placed in an *ox* or *ass*; nor would the genius and temper of some philosophic mind be any better suited to *him that driveth them, and is occupied in all their labours.*

But this must necessarily be the state of things, if all men were by nature furnished with all those intellectual accomplishments, which adorn some few of them at present. Three parts in four of the world must be unfit for their particular circumstances, and at odds with their condition.

How inconsistent also would it be in nature to implant those various senses, appetites, and tastes in all men, which not one in a thousand would have power to gratify!—that sublime degree of reason and reflection, which often could only prove its own tormentor!

Not to mention what ill influence such a scheme would have on government itself; how difficult it must be to rule, where every one has the same strength and skill; how disagreeable to obey, when all have equal abilities, and therefore (as they might reasonably imagine) an equal right to be their own directors. * In short, how much more wise and beneficial is the present constitution of things! where all is left in a great measure to mankind themselves, who have both the *forming* and *disposing* of each other; nay, where men are at liberty to frame their own natures, and dispositions: where they have no inconvenient or pernicious principle to lay to nature's charge †; no properly innate *notions*, or implanted *instincts* ‡; no really original *appetite* or *affection*, to sway or bias them; except that universal sense, and uniform desire of *happiness*, which was absolutely necessary to their preservation (a).

* Si omnes ingenio pares essent, omnesque in eodem affectus proclives, aut iisdem virtutibus ornati; non esset qui alius imperiis parere vellet, aut ei quidpiam concedere, aut qui varietati ministeriorum et artium omnium generum aptus esset. Cum omnes omnia curare nequeant, singulos in Societate suo munere, in gratiam aliorum, fungi oportet; nec vilissima munera minus sunt necessaria interdum quam sublimiora. Itaque esse oportuit omnibus suum ingenium, ut quisque quod suum est ad *Societatis* felicitatem conferret, et quod cæteris deest sua industria suppleret. Cleric. *Sil. Philol. ad Æschin. Socr.* p. 170, 171.

† See *Ibbot's Boyle's Lect.* 2d set, Sermon V. p. 143, &c. or *King's Origin of Evil*, note 38, p. 189, 4th edit.

‡ See Prelim. Diss. to *King*, and Rem. i. p. 75, 4th edit.

(a) To such as are desirous of forming more precise notions on the present subject, let it be observed, that when the first

By these means we have at first only such thoughts and inclinations instilled into our minds

foundation of a diversity of sense and intellect is once laid in a greater or less susceptibility of pleasure or pain, by a *perception* of *ideas* more acute or dull, more quick or slow, and a proportioned *reflection* on them,—from hence the whole tribe of *affections*, &c. and the several degrees in each, are very apparently deducible: supposing only this, I say, which seems to lie in the *original stamina* of the body, and is so far not to be accounted for, at least by me; which therefore, and which only I should term *innate* or strictly *natural*; since every thing besides, that is comprehended under the name of *natural appetite*, &c. is so far from being such, that it is evidently posterior in the order of nature, and entirely grounded on the *ideas* which themselves arise from hence, and whose *innateness* in all senses of that word is now generally given up:—supposing then this one foundation laid by nature, a difference herein will be enough to constitute the Being more or less sensible, or rational in general; and tend to make it more or less *passionate* or *mild*, eager or indolent, &c. with regard to whatsoever it applies itself: but, can this ever actually determine it to any one peculiar set of objects, or have any tendency towards giving what we mean by a particular genius, taste, or temper? That, and the principal constitution of the human mind, or its predominant qualities, seem to arise afterwards from the particular *associations* which we form ourselves, or learn of others, as these grow gradually, and even mechanically from the circumstances we are in, or from those objects that more immediately surround and strike us*; provided that a suitable *attention* and regard be paid to each as it presents itself.

For that amidst all this mechanic apparatus we have such a distinct faculty of *attending*, and determining the subordinate powers in consequence thereof, as is stated at large by Abp. *King*, I must beg leave to suppose, till all the various appearances, which seem so much to require it (of which in the following note*) are solved on other principles; and then indeed this,

* See *Hartley's Observations on Man*, Part I. A book well worth the pains required to understand it, and which I must recommend, as exhibiting a very cu-

as are agreeable to, and for the most part do in fact arise from our particular place and circum-

will be of course excluded. I may add here, that neither are those *associations* themselves, from whence some very ingenious persons would deduce a total mechanism, altogether *necessary*; nor we so far passive under them, as to be left without a power of curbing and correcting, breaking and eradicating; as well as of contracting them at first, and afterwards confirming them: to assert this would be advancing a new doctrine of *habits* contrary to the general sense and language of mankind.

Well then, allowing such a degree of liberty, or active power, to be joined with the other passive ingredients in our composition, as such, it must in some measure act independently on each of them, and be capable of forming new *associations* from its own proper acts, which will extend to all the rest, and influence them: and yet as it will also have some such connection with them all, as to be itself in some respect or other influenced by them reciprocally; or (which comes to the same thing) the *mind* will be so affected in and through them as to influence it; which we all daily feel: [else how come these parts of our constitution to be constantly applied to with success for the determination of it? Why is pain present or in prospect used to move a man, or arguments and motives urged, if they are really matters of indifference to his *choice*, and have no natural effect upon it?] As this grows and gathers strength, like all our other faculties; and is equally capable of being impaired, and rectified again*.—As it is limited and subject to its laws, not perhaps

rious history of the human frame, and well founded in the main; though the ingenious author carries some points, particularly that of mechanism, farther perhaps, than either experience seems to justify, or we are at present willing to allow. Perhaps it exceeds the power of man's understanding to decide where mechanism ends, and where the liberty of *indifference* (the only notion of liberty that comes up to the purpose) may be supposed to commence. However, it seems clear that some share of each is to be admitted into our composition, as well towards solving several phenomena, as giving due satisfaction in the great articles of religion and morals; and that after all the attempts of the most able writers on this subject, neither principle can be wholly excluded.

* *King*, note X. p. 360. 4th ed.

stances in the world; and afterwards find room enough to refine and enlarge our faculties; to

wholly different, though of a kind distinct from those of the other appetites: (however, such as make it no less governable*), and cannot go against these appetites without manifest pain and misery to the person †:—As it may be inclined, both by them and its own course of operation, and will become daily more and more conformed to them, by a duly regular exercise; which we likewise experience;—its operations will become as much the objects of foreknowledge; nor will it be much less easy to account for either the formation, or *increase* of any particular turn of mind, in any given situation, than if all were performed in us necessarily, and at once.

This plan of human nature, which derives every thing from a few clear principles, and yet makes room for that endless variety conspicuous in it, might, I am sensible, be set in a good light, and shewn to be free from some of the greatest difficulties that must clog all others. In this view, a just uniformity is, by the Deity, so far as his immediate acts reach, in all cases, and might be by us, generally, preserved among all its constituent parts; our talents suited to our capacity of using them; our sphere enlarged, as that increases; and keeping pace with our improvements; in short, each dispensation put upon a reasonable foot; and all discoveries made in due proportion to our qualifications for judging of them, and our dispositions to apply them. Whereas the contrary scheme, of bringing every thing to an original, equal, and immediate intuition; or of fixing every man to certain impulses, or instincts, independent on his station and endeavours, and intirely unimproveable by them;—this must be quite arbitrary, and in a great measure useless; and attended with all the inconsistencies and inconveniencies already mentioned.

Such would be the consequences of that pretended *universal equability*, in natural religion; nor is the levelling scheme, so much contended for in revelation, less absurd, as will appear below.

* *King*, c. v. § 5. sub. 4, p. 372. &c. with notes 69, p. 366, and 70, p. 371.

† *Ib.* note N, p. 216, &c.

qualify ourselves for, as well as, by a right application of them, thus far, merit, some superior station, whenever that shall become void. How regular and beautiful a subordination must this soon produce! How fitly might the *whole body, thus knit together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, increase with the increase of God,* would man but enter into the same plan of exciting industry, and do whatever lies in his power to promote it, viz. entail benefits and successes on a proficiency in these endeavours,—suit every one's station to his respective merit and abilities; i. e. deal with each person according to what *he is*, and observe those rules which the great God of nature has established!

What emulation must this raise, joined with the utmost care and caution, when each person finds it so much in his power to improve and advance, as well as to impair and degrade his *nature*; and thereby also change his *state*! what eagerness to excel some! what apprehension of falling below others! what encouragement for all to make the best use of their several faculties and opportunities! This amicable contest must certainly make more for the good of the whole, than if all had been merely passive, and absolutely fixed in any assignable degree of knowledge and perfection; or limited unalterably to any one condition(*b*).

(*b*) See *King, Or. E.* note 19, p. 108, &c. and note Y, p. 398, &c. We may add, that the supposition of any such fixed, unim-

Upon this plan alone could there be place for hope or fear, reward or punishment, the only proper means of governing free, rational agents; and of conducting them to their supreme and truest happiness, which seems to consist in agency; and which can only this way be excited*. This therefore is the method most agreeable to wisdom and goodness, and in consequence most worthy of God†.

Having thus far considered the partial distribution of the gifts of nature, and consequent diversity of *natural religion*, and offered some hints towards explaining the reasonableness and necessity thereof; I proceed to shew the same concerning *revelation*.

If a revelation were to be made at all, (and I must here take it for granted that such a thing

provable state of *natural* good implies, strictly speaking, no less than the subversion of all virtue or *moral* good; which is nothing but the choosing to communicate the former. [See *King*, R. i. p. 75, 76, 4th edit.] for which communication there could be no place in such a state, nor consequently any room for any of those agreeable ideas which are founded on it.

Nor does this scheme any better consult the interest of our *intellectual* accomplishments; which, while it seems to be exalting them, is at the bottom taking away all their use and exercise: while it pretends to constitute an equality among rational agents, is really destructive of both rationality, and agency.

* See *King*, p. 216, 298, 311, 324, 335, 348, &c. with the following note [e] and *Foster's* Wisdom of God in the various ranks and subordinations of human Life. Sermon. viii. vol. 2.

† See this described more at large in Bp. *Butler's* Analogy. p. 93, &c. 2d edit.

is neither impossible nor unreasonable in itself,)* must be conveyed in the method we are told it was, namely, at first communicated to some few select persons, and by them divulged, and gradually propagated to the rest of the world(c); or

* See *Jenkin*, vol. i. c. 1, or *Mrs. Newcome's Enquiry into the evidence of the Christ. Rel.* § 8.

(c) *Chubb* (on *Miracles*, p. 68, &c.) objects to this first method, that hereby it would be in the power of a few men to deprive the rest of all the benefits of this revelation.

But is not that really the case in all the other benefits of nature, and the ordinary gifts of providence? Are not most of the blessings of life communicated to us by the mediation and instrumentality of other men, who may be just and faithful in communicating them, or otherwise? and it is not oft in the power of a single person to deprive multitudes either of life itself, or any of its comforts; of liberty, peace, plenty, arts, improvements, &c.? and is not all this unavoidable while men are allowed the free use of their natural powers, which *Chubb* himself contends for? Men, he says, *are not to be over-ruled* in either the publication or reception of religion; and if so he has yet to explain how that is to be given so as *not to leave it in the power and pleasure of a few*, sooner or later, to restrain and suppress, to disguise and corrupt it; and consequently *to prevent thousands and millions of others from sharing in the benefits thereof*, *ib.* p. 63. On a little farther consideration such writers may probably find, that on the plan of human liberty, it must be impossible for any thing relating either to the minds, or outward circumstances of mankind, to remain in a state of perfect uniformity; and then they may be sensible too that the same causes, which among other things that concern mankind, make their religion unavoidably continue in this partial and unequal way, will hold as strongly for its being originally given in the same way.

Chubb's second objection, That if men could be supposed to be honest and faithful in the publication of a system of revealed religion, then there would be no occasion for such system, *ib.* seems to be worse founded than the other; since this revelation, notwithstanding all the imperfections that attend its communi-

secondly, every particular man must have it by immediate inspiration; and be at all times, and in all cases, influenced and directed to it internally; or thirdly, it must be published again and again, and fresh miracles worked for the conviction of each unbeliever in every age.

In the second of these methods the inconveniences are very obvious: for this influence, of what kind soever it is, must either be absolutely efficacious and irresistible, *i.e.* so strong as to subvert the natural powers of man, and take away his freedom of thinking and acting; and conse-

eration, may still be the means of conveying such superior benefits to those who do come to the knowledge of it, of making such discoveries in the nature both of God and Man, and of affording motives for men's attaining to such a degree of virtue, and true rational happiness, as all their honesty, without such helps, could never raise in the generality of them.

And whether the *sole* end of revelation be to bring men to a higher pitch of happiness than they could otherwise attain, or not: [*ib.* p. 49.] this author never can prove but that it may be *one* of its great *ends*; and this end be in fact obtained, to as high a degree as is consistent with his own scheme of perfect liberty; so that, in the last place, allowing God to *foresee* all the consequences, and events attending such an establishment (*ib.* p. 62.) yet that the same establishment, so circumstanced, may, notwithstanding any thing this author has made out to the contrary, come from him. And indeed *Chubb* seems at length to be sensible of that famous *objection against the divinity of a revelation from its non-universality* being so *very much weakened*, that he is grown weary of it, and willing to get rid of it as handsomely as he can, by pretending that he has not even *leaned to that side of the question* in all his debates upon it, and will take it *unkindly* to have such a thing so much as *insinuated of him*. The Author's Farewell, p. 219, note.

quently destroy all virtue, praise, reward; *i. e.* all that is good and valuable in religion:—or else it would not be sufficient to answer the several ends proposed; nor could it certainly and effectually secure the lasting interest and salvation of mankind.

As an *illumination*, it must either be distinguishable from the present effects of reason, and the ordinary operations of the divine spirit, or not; if the former, this must be by striking us more forcibly, and working a more assured, infallible conviction in our minds; but so much as is added to that, above what may arise from the present constitution of things, just so much must be taken from the present choice, and merit of believing; and the concomitant delight and satisfaction which we feel, and ought to feel, in giving our assent to truth(*d*). Such evidence must either supersede all

(*d*) See Abp. *King*, Or. N. 19. p. 108, &c. 4th ed. compared with N. 59. p. 310. Whence it appears, that though in some cases and respects the assent be unavoidable, and we merely passive in the attainment of many useful parts of knowledge; which must be attended with satisfaction in degree proportioned to the apprehension of that usefulness, and of a kind perhaps very complex, as arising from a variety of causes accidentally associated; yet neither is the kind, nor the degree of this delight so intense, and exquisite, as that which usually accompanies those points, which we work out ourselves; which we properly make *our own*, by a free, fair investigation. These truths, though of no more importance in themselves, or in their consequences, than any others that are either forcibly obtruded on us, or fortuitously thrown into our way; yet are attended with a sort of self-approbation, and complacency, which both accompanies the first discovery, the transporting *εὐφροσύνη*; and will continue after it, and bear reflection; and which makes them in-

action and inquiry of our own, and overbear the judgment beyond possibility of doubt (which yet, is impossible to be conceived, without reversing the whole frame of the human mind; neither would that appear to be at all desirable, as is shewn above), it must, I say, either be inconsistent with the exercise of our other most valuable faculties, or it would come to the same thing with the pre-

finitely exceed all others in our estimation. The same thing, as it is come at in the one or other of these ways, is evidently not the same to us: which I can ascribe to nothing more than a consciousness that in the former case we have contributed somewhat to the acquisition of it, and to our own improvement by that acquisition; or an idea of *merit*, constantly associated with this kind of acquisitions; and which is perhaps the very strongest, and the most agreeable of all our *associations*.

From whence also we may collect how necessary it is to the happiness of man, that he should appear to himself to be *free*, in the exercise of the faculties of his mind, as well as the powers of his body; to be in some degree *active* in the attainment of his knowledge, as well as any other attainments; and how far this will go towards proving him to be really so, I leave to be considered. If he has any proper liberty, there will be a good reason for annexing this double pleasure to the exercise of it, both to excite him to action in cases of difficulty, and afterwards to justify him for engaging in such; and enable him to go through all the toil and hazard that attends them. If he has none, would it not be a little hard to point out, either the rise or reasonableness of this so constant, and so general a delusion; and to account for such ideas as those of esteem, merit, reward, &c. which are entirely founded in it?

Whether the resolving all, with a late author, into *the deceitful feeling of liberty*, be attended with less difficulties, than those which this hypothesis is calculated to remove, must be submitted to the thoughtful reader. See *Hume on Liberty and Necessity, Essay on Mor. and Nat. Rel. Part I.*

sent use of them; and prove alike capable of being equally neglected or opposed, corrupted or destroyed: it would produce no higher evidence than in some cases the common principles of reason have; nor could it lay any stronger obligation on us to obey its dictates.

The same will be the case with it considered as an *impulse*, or impression on the mind, inciting it to follow each determination of the judgment, and *physically* connecting thought with action; since this connection, if much altered from that which is observable in the present state, or increased to any considerable degree above that harmony which now subsists among our natural powers, would be attended with the very same consequences*.

Farther, as all this must be transacted in a man's own breast, and while it is limited as above, or he retains the least degree of liberty, is capable of being stifled there; every one might, and most probably would soon disregard it, as much as he does now the many good thoughts, motions, and suggestions, which arise daily in his mind. Nor is there less likelihood of its being perverted to the very worst purposes, as interest, vice, or vanity might direct:—of its soon filling the world with rank *enthusiasm*, or the most wicked and absurd *impostures*; and when it is thus perverted, there seems to be no room for any remedy upon this scheme; no means are left to detect the fraud,

* See *Hutcheson* on the Passions, p. 179, 200, &c.; or *King*, O. of E. N. 28, &c.

or folly of any pretences in religion whatsoever; no method for mankind to rescue themselves from perpetual error and delusion(e).

(e) The author of *Christianity not founded on Argument*, [Dodwell], seems to adopt this second method of communicating a religion to mankind, and carries it so far as to supersede all other means, divine or human, that have ever been made use of to support it in the world. He contends for a *constant and particular revelation imparted separately and supernaturally to every individual*, p. 112. This he terms *inspiration*, and infused evidence, p. 58, *feeling* and *internal sense*, ib. and *of a nature but little differing from that of intuition*, p. 59. In short, it is what will dispatch the whole business of religion at once, without either *time* or *teaching* (p. 17.), reading or reasoning, the use of our understanding, or the evidence of our senses.

It is hard to guess upon what plan this author would defend himself if he were pressed; but for the present he admits one general external revelation to have been made and recorded [though both, upon his principles, must have been unnecessary], and yet labours to dissuade us from examining the contents of it, and most inconsistently attempts to show, as well from reason as this very revelation, that we ought not to employ our reason at all, either in the proof; or the interpretation of it; or in any thing else relating to the subject, p. 7, &c. A self-destructive scheme! which were it really, as he pretends to prove, laid down by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and in the *nature of the thing*, or from the *practice of mankind* ever so necessary, yet could not possibly be kept clear of the consequences above-mentioned:—of which more hereafter.

But that this is far from being the case, may easily be shewn. That *Christ* and his *Apostles* both encourage and enjoin the exercise of reason in religious matters is plain enough from these few texts, *Matth.* xiii. 19, 23. *Mark* viii. 17, 18. *Luke* i. 4. xii. 57. *John* v. 39. *Acts* xvii. 11, 17. *Rom.* x. 17. xi. 1. *1 Cor.* x. 15. xiv. 29. *2 Cor.* xiii. 5. *1 Tim.* iv. 13, 14, 15. *2 Tim.* iii. 15. *1 John* iv. 1. *1 Pet.* iii. 15. Do such texts as these suppose *Conviction to precede the Evidence?* [p. 37.] to which add *1 Thess.* v. 21. where *St. Paul*, treating of *spiritual gifts* themselves, exhorts his followers to *prove all things* [a hopeful task! says our author, p. 76.] and *Rom.* x. 2. where the same great apostle is

Nor, in the third place, would less inconveniences attend the frequent republication of re-

commending *zeal according to knowledge*; though this writer is pleased to tell us, that *such zeal will scarce ever deserve the name*; p. 25.

However, to give this extraordinary scheme of his a scriptural air, he lays hold on some passages of scripture history [of which in their proper place], and draws in several detached parts of texts about the *Spirit of God*, or such as sound that way; which he applies to his point indiscriminately, whether they concern those ordinary assistances and imperceptible operations that may be expected from the Holy Ghost in every age, or are confined to his extraordinary, miraculous gifts, that were, we think, peculiar to the first publication of the gospel, and produced those wonderful effects which this writer alludes to; and which he, with some modern sectaries, seems still to claim, upon that ever weak foundation of believing strongly that he has the same, without being able to bring any of the same proofs in justification of such his belief. Though even here he ought to be reminded, that most of these very supernatural gifts were so far from exerting themselves independently on any natural attainments, that they most commonly acted in conjunction with, and were administered conformably to such; and were themselves improved by labour, diligence, and study; or impaired and quite extinguished by neglect; (See *Whitby* on *2 Tim.* i. 6.) that all of them were subject to the will and reason of those who possessed them; and to be carefully and prudently applied to the particular exigencies of the church, and the most useful purposes of *edifying*: so as to constitute the whole a *reasonable service*. “God, when he makes
“ the prophet, does not unmake the man. He leaves all his fa-
“ culties in their natural state, to enable him to judge of his in-
“ spirations, whether they be of divine original or no. When he
“ illuminates the mind with supernatural light, he does not ex-
“ tinguish that which is natural. If he would have us assent to
“ the truth of any proposition, he either evidences that truth by
“ the usual methods of natural reason, or else makes it known
“ to be a truth which he would have us assent to, by his au-
“ thority, and convinces us that it is from him, by some marks

ligion, and working new miracles for the conviction of each particular person that might wish for it,

“ which reason cannot be mistaken in. Reason must be our “ last judge and guide in every thing.” *Locke on Enthusiasm*; a chapter which I would recommend to this extraordinary writer; and when he shews us any of the same infallible *marks* of inspiration, that were formerly exhibited; when he communicates some of that *infused evidence* which he can make appear not to have been derived from other sources, we may be obliged implicitly to follow his directions; but till then, are, I apprehend, at liberty to suppose that he himself is only *following his own spirit, and has seen nothing*; and that all these *feelings* (if he be in earnest in pretending to them), are no more than the effects of his own warm imagination. For that the *ordinary* operations of the Spirit do not suggest any thing of this kind;—that they are never distinguishable from the natural workings of our own minds, much less in any respect subversive of them;—that they are perfectly consistent with the most free use of all our rational powers, which are the gift of the same author, and given to be so used by us;—and that these generally attend upon their regular exercise, and were designed rather to preserve, assist, improve, than to obstruct and supersede it; is, I think, now pretty well agreed on. See *King’s Or. of E. N.* 71. p. 376, &c. 4th edit.

Nor can this author shew that reason, thus assisted, will be insufficient for the purposes of true religion; or make out from the *nature* of these two, that they ought to have no communication with each other.

His first allegation, that men by the exercise of their reason neither do, nor can be required to *think all alike*, will not come up to his point, as it is neither true, nor necessary. ’Tis false in many matters both of fact and reason, on which all men, that think at all, think in one way; and he has yet to shew why the essentials of the Christian institution may not be included among such; I mean as they lie in the Bible, and so far as our assent is there explicitly required to them, on pain of forfeiting the privileges of that institution. These essentials he will find to be very few and plain. But though he allows the whole of Christianity

or be supposed to want it; since these repeated publications, when grown common, would in all

to be true and reasonable, yet he seems all along to beg the question, by supposing that it is of such a nature as is incapable of being made appear so to each person; so far as he is concerned to know, either the substance of it, or its grounds. Hence all the formidable objections against reason's judging of the gospel-truths; which yet hold equally in many other truths of consequence in common life, wherein the common people, notwithstanding, go on very well by the use of their natural faculties, be they ever so weak, or ever so strongly beset with doubts and difficulties.

His other arguments against admitting reason in religious matters, from some particular institutions, and the general practice of the world, are no better founded. That *children* are introduced into the Christian church by *baptism*, and that they have early prepossessions in favour of Christianity (whereof he shews the great use and necessity, and wherein we most heartily join with him;) does this render their religion the less reasonable to them, when they are capable of reasoning about it? Or are they strictly under any other obligation, when they come to age, of taking it upon themselves, than what arises from their conviction of the reasonableness and wisdom of so doing, on their then being satisfied of its truth and divine authority; and what they otherwise would have been under, when thus much ever should come to their knowledge? Surely, their being made to understand the *Christian* religion in the first place, by no means hinders their giving it a fair examination afterwards; so soon and so far as they become qualified for such examination. Nay, if they understand it thoroughly, they will find, that it requires examination from all its professors in some degree or other; as appears sufficiently from those few texts above cited. It does indeed insist on a right *belief*, and a conformable *practice*, in all persons to whom it has been fairly proposed: and where is the wonder! Does any lawgiver proclaim those exceptions to the general obligation of his laws, which accidentally arise from the sole incapacity of the subject; and which common sense is ever willing to allow for, without the least diminution of their use and

probability be as little minded as the constant preaching of it is at present. Such a continual

obligation? Or would it be any derogation from their excellence and authority; or any excuse for our not labouring to understand these laws, that all men did not reason right about them?

Nor does our being to apply by *prayer for the continuing steadfast in the faith, shew the design of God that reason should not be at all employed on all these occasions*; p. 11. any more than his *working in us both to will and do*, and our being taught to *ask* this of him, proves that we have no occasion to endeavour to *work out our own salvation*. We do not pretend that reason is itself sufficient either to discover all that may be of any benefit in religion; or engage us to observe and act up to what it is really able to discover; and therefore there is still room enough for our soliciting the grace of God, as well to strengthen and support this very faculty, as to bring others into due subjection to it;—to lead us into the truth;—to make us love and seek it;—to guard us against every deviation from it;—and enable us, to resist the numberless temptations to vice, ignorance, and a criminal unbelief.

Nor, lastly, would the *difficulties* and *discouragements* which human reason is too frequently laid under by the practice of the world, (were that in truth so bad at present as this author represents) would these wholly destroy its influence in the point before us; or prove any thing more than that its province is too much invaded by all those, be they *parents, tutors, or magistrates*, who either wilfully or unwarily impose these difficulties; and who alone are answerable for giving any handle to such a plea as this author has grounded on them. If the two former constantly betray its cause, by narrowing the minds of youth, and shutting up the avenues of knowledge; if they do not teach them carefully the art of reasoning, and lead them to a fair, free use of reason on every subject within their sphere, and worthy of their inquiry; or if the last intrench upon its rights by interposing their authority in the grand affair of divine worship, beyond barely keeping up the established form, where it is fit to be kept up, and tolerating others;—If this were indeed the case now, as I trust it is not, this author, I conceive, should have shewn these

series of miracles would in time be no miracles at all; they must lose their force, together with their

proceedings to be warrantable in themselves, 'ere he went on in earnest to draw from them such a consequence, as that the *whole subject is absolutely out of reason's jurisdiction*. A consequence, which, whatever was intended by it, can only serve to revive *Celsus's* calumny against the *Christian* cause, Μη ἔξεταζε, ἀλλὰ πισυεσον; and recommend the no less absurd, modern maxim, that *ignorance is the mother of devotion*: it renders all that *scripture*, which was given by inspiration, a dead useless letter; and represents that other *candle of the Lord*, human reason, as a false light and dangerous; and such as, by this writer's *motto*, is insinuated to be a curse upon us, rather than a blessing. This notion indeed he has kept to all along, whether seriously or otherwise he knows best; and concludes suitably enough to it with this piece of advice to his young academic, that he content himself with being as rational a Christian as his *sister* or *mother*, p. 114.

As for the inconsistencies which this writer labours to fix upon that excellent institution the *Boylean* Lecture, and those worthy persons who have with so much success accomplished its design, I need only appeal to Dr. *Ibbot*, who stands absolutely clear of his exceptions; and in particular gives us the true scripture idea of *faith* and the virtue of it. Serm. V. 2. S. xxi. The same liberal spirit breathes through all his sermons, and has as fully answered the end of its great and good founder, Mr. *Boyle*, as he has obviated this author's whole performance. Of which I shall only observe farther, that it seems to be in a great measure borrowed from *Bayle's* explanation concerning the *Manichees*, at the end of his Dictionary.

The same scheme which has been advanced by the writers above mentioned, is, after all the clearest answers given, again repeated in a letter to *Whiston*, 1750, and, as it should seem, by the same author; but in so wild and incoherent a way, that I can make nothing of it; and therefore till he shall be so ingenuous as to declare whether he proceeds upon the foot of *Atheism*, *Deism*, or *Manicheism*, it would be but lost labour to attempt any further confutation of it.

surprisingness and novelty; nor could they leave any more lively, or more lasting impressions on us, than such as may be kept up by those standing records, and visible memorials, which afford perpetual evidence to the truth of *Christianity*.

Not to mention that both of the foregoing schemes would in a great measure put it out of the power even of God himself to bring about a reformation in religion, when it was once corrupted (as it might easily be in both of them), since thereby the strongest and fittest of all means to procure attention, awe, and reverence, which we now call supernatural interposition, would become cheap, and ineffectual to that end; as was hinted above.

Besides, what unity or uniformity of public worship; what *decency and order*, could be preserved in such a state of things? If men did ever *assemble themselves together*, (the reasonableness and the necessity whereof will be apparent, so long as they are capable of having either their memories refreshed, or their affections raised by sensible objects;—so long as they have either memory or senses left) in such assemblies *every one of them would have a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation*; and what could this produce but universal tumults and confusion? This, surely, is not so *reasonable* a service, nor so fit for *edification*, as the present; not so proper a method to convey and preserve a system of divine truths in the world, as a regular settled instruction and

historic faith, grounded on a standing, written* revelation, which holds these forth, together with their proofs, to every one; and offers them to the view and examination of all ages.

When some of these things are attended to, we may perhaps be convinced that either the same, or as great objections would lie against any other assignable method of communicating a religion to mankind.

If then neither all men could be made equally wise and perfect,—nor religion be at once equally communicated to them all;—if the present laws of our nature, so far as we are able to judge, are the best that could be;—and as such, ought to remain inviolate; and we be left to the common methods of informing ourselves, in all natural as well as supernatural truths:—it will follow, in the last place, that Christianity could not have been propagated otherwise than in fact it was and is, namely, in a gradual, progressive, partial manner.

Let it be proclaimed at first ever so far and wide, yet the reception and continuance of it must, we see, in a great measure depend upon the dispositions of mankind both natural and moral. Some previous, as well as concomitant qualifications are requisite to the due exercise, and influence of it, as well in private men, as public states and com-

* The advantage of this, above *oral tradition*, may be seen in *Tillotson*, Vol. 2. Fol. Sermon. 73. p. 549, or *Le Clerc*. Harm. 3. Diss. p. 615.

munities: so that, among a people sunk in barbarity and ignorance, in places where there is no kind of good order or government established; no regular forms of education instituted; where there is an universal want of discipline, and a dissoluteness of manners; there *Christianity* cannot subsist.

Miracles were fit and necessary to gain attention and give authority to it at first; but the perpetuity of them would (as we have seen) weaken that very attention, and destroy their own authority. When therefore a religion has once been sufficiently promulgated by the Deity, it must thenceforth be committed to human means; left to the conduct of that nation or society in which it is planted, and by their care be handed down to posterity: it must be preserved and propagated in a natural way, and by the ordinary course of providence; or there is no avoiding the ill consequences above-mentioned; namely, perpetual enthusiasm or imposture. As a system of divine doctrines and stated rules of life, it must be subject to the common methods of instruction; and taught as all other science is. Youth of all kinds are to be principled, and grounded in it; and some instructed in those other parts of learning, which may fit them for a due inquiry into its original evidence; for understanding the true nature, ends, and uses of it; and conveying the same knowledge down to future ages. Some particular orders of men likewise must be commissioned to

explain and inculcate it; to defend its doctrines, as well as to inspect and urge the practice of its precepts.

From all which it appears, that ignorant, uncivilized, slavish, and brutish nations, are equally incapable* of receiving such an institution, as they are of all those other sciences, arts, or improvements, which polish and adorn the rest of mankind, and make life a blessing.

Without some tolerable degree of learning and civility, men do not seem qualified to reap the greatest benefit of the *Christian* institution; and together with these, they generally do receive it; the same human means serving to improve their notions in religion, which help to enlarge their knowledge in all other subjects; and at the same

* By being incapable of receiving it, I mean incapable of receiving it *with effect*; of retaining or applying it to any valuable purpose; for which men do not seem properly qualified, notwithstanding any natural capacity, without aid from the liberal arts and other accomplishments, in some degree. Most of the *Indians* are, I doubt not, capable of understanding the main principles of our faith at the first proposal; but scarcely qualified, I think, to make a right use, and receive the salutary effects thereof; to let it sink into the heart and form the temper, for want of some farther pains being taken to implant worthy principles of civil government and social life amongst them: without which, all endeavours to introduce the purest and most perfect system of religion seem preposterous. A sufficient proof of this may be seen in the *Complete Collection of Voyages, &c.* Vol. II. B. I. c. 3. § 20, p. 311, 312. Comp. Modern part of *Universal History*, B. 18. c. 5. Concerning the early plantation of Christianity among the *Tartars* and *Chinese*, see *Mosheim Hist. Tart. Ecclesiast.* p. 8, 9, &c. or *Eccl. Hist. Eng.* V. 2. c. 1.

time directing, and in a natural way, enabling them to arrive at, the most perfect dispensation of it.

One of the chief reasons commonly assigned for the *fitness of the time of Christ's* appearing in the world, was the extent of learning and commerce through all the then known parts of it*; which tended very much to open the minds of men, and qualify them to receive his institution; as well as paved the way for a more general communication of it: but as there were many at that time *not able to bear it*, so on the same account, neither yet are some able; nor will they be, till, *by reason of use they have their senses exercised, to discern both good and evil*: till their rational faculties are enlarged and improved; their natural genius cultivated and

* This is more fully explained in the following discourses, Part II. I shall only beg leave here to introduce the testimony of a candid and judicious writer, who appears to entertain right notions both of the nature of the Christian institution and of the best means for the propagation and support of it, and who has supplied us with the most valuable collection of ancient evidences of its truth. “ Men must be rational and civilized, before they can be Christians. Knowledge has a happy tendency to enlarge the mind, and encourage generous sentiments. Hereby we may hope to deliver men from superstition, bigotry, and persecution, which have been some of the greatest blemishes in the human conduct. As arts and sciences are now in a flourishing condition, in a great part of the world, we may hope it will have a kindly influence, and contribute to the advancement of Christianity, in its genuine purity and perfection.” *Lardner's Collection of Jewish and Heathen Testimonies.* Vol. IV. p. ult.

refined; which seems in a good measure to constitute the *fitness of time** with each of them respectively.

* That the *Chinese* in particular, from whom some have thought that the strongest argument might be drawn against what is here suggested, and whose learning and liberal education have therefore been industriously cried up, are very far from deserving so great a character, see *Renaudot's* dissertation on their learning, *Ancient accounts of India and China*, p. 200. *Terry's Voyage to the East Indies*, sect. 12 and 21. *Travels of several Missioners*, p. 180, &c. *Millar's History of the propagation of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 266, &c. *Mod. Univ. Hist.* B. 17. c. 1. sect. 4. and B. 18. c. 9. sect. note 11. P. or *Le Compté's Memoirs*, passim. I shall give one palpable instance from the last mentioned author of an absurdity more than tolerated by them; and that in a branch of philosophy, for which they have been often particularly celebrated. "All nations have ever been astonished at *eclipses*, because they could not discover the cause of them: but one would wonder that the *Chinese*, who, as to astronomy, may claim seniority over all the world besides, have reasoned as absurdly on that point as the rest. They have fancied, That in Heaven there is a prodigious great dragon, who is a professed enemy to the sun and moon, and ready at all times to eat them up. For this reason, as soon as they perceive an eclipse, they all make a terrible rattling with drums and brass kettles, till the monster, frightened at the noise, lets go his prey. Persons of quality, who have read our books, have for these several years been undeceived: but the old customs, (especially if the sun loseth his light) are still observed at Pekin, which, as is usual, are both very superstitious, and very ridiculous. While the astronomers are on the towers to make their observations, the chief mandarines belonging to the *Lipou* fall on their knees, in a hall or court of the palace, looking attentively that way, and frequently bowing towards the sun, to express the pity they take of him; or rather to the dragon to beg him not to molest the world, by depriving it of so necessary a planet." *Le Compté*, p. 70, Ed. 1738. comp. p. 93, &c. and let. 8.

From their notorious ignorance of, and contempt for the rest

And as barbarous and savage nations are unable to hear the truth; so vicious and immoral ones are in like manner incapable of bringing forth the fruits thereof. If such a people did receive the true religion, they would soon drop it again, as many nations most undoubtedly have done; at least they would lose the spirit, life, and power of it; and then the bare name, and outward form will not be worth inquiring after: nay, perhaps it might be as well, if these were quitted too, along with the other. *Christianity* cannot immediately transform the minds of men, and totally change the general temper and complexion of any people; but on the contrary, it will thereby itself undergo considerable alteration; and its own influence, and effect, in a great measure depend thereon: *With the pure, it will be pure*, and they that are otherwise will soon *defile* it; will either corrupt it with impious fables and absurd traditions; or turn it into licentiousness, and carnal policy: as was evidently the case under the *Roman* empire, and might be shewn to be so, more or less, under every human empire, or establishment.

of the world, and great averseness to any communication with it, till of very late years; we may easily account for the slow progress of theirs, both in the knowledge of nature and revealed religion, notwithstanding their having had very considerable means of improving both in their hands for some time; nor are they wanting in point of genius, as may be seen in the same accurate writer. Comp. *Barnardine's Account of China*, c. 9. or *Bianchini Hist. Univers.*—But this will come in more largely under the 3d Part.

Thus did the Eastern nations, and were overwhelmed with *Mahometanism**; and thus did a great part of *Africa*. To the like causes, in all probability, as well as the neglect and misbehaviour of its propagators and professors, (which have been here but too notorious†) it is owing that pure primitive religion makes no greater progress in the East and West *Indies*.

But it would exceed the limits of this discourse, to inquire into the state of every Heathen country, in order to see what probable reasons might be assigned either for their first rejecting, or not still

* See Part II.

† Of the former, a large account may be seen in *Millar's Hist.* c. 8. p. 274, 284, 291, &c. and c. 9. p. 376, &c. Add *Warburton's* observation at the end of sect. vi. p. 306, &c. of *D. I.* 2d ed. and *Calm's Travels into North America*, V. III. p. 270. As to the latter, we cannot but observe the great and general prejudice which must prevail in both the *Indies* against all Europeans, from the injurious treatment they have often received from us; as may be seen in almost every late account of the voyages, &c. See *Travels of Jesuits*, Vol. II. passim; particularly p. 370*. Nor are the frequent quarrels among Christians themselves, and their ill usage of each other in the articles of trade, a less prejudice against their profession: which always received the greatest check from the division raised among its propagators; as was remarkably the case not long ago in China. See *Mod. Univ. Hist.* fol. V. III. p. 569, &c.

These observations might be carried a great way towards accounting for the slow progress of Christianity among such nations as seem otherwise not ill qualified at present for the reception of it; but that they are not to be carried so far as those persons have done, who pretend that Christians first taught the people of America to be wicked. See *Benson* App. to his *Reasonableness*, &c. p. 302, 303. *Bayle's Dict.* art. *Leon*. Vol. III. p. 773.

retaining *Christianity* *. Perhaps it may be enough to have given these general hints; which though they were founded on mere conjecture, yet till such an hypothesis can be disproved from fact, we ought rather to acquiesce in them, than confidently arraign Divine Providence, and rashly censure its ways with man, in matters of the last importance. However, I hope, arguments may be drawn from them, sufficient to stop the mouth of the adversary on these heads; a more particular discussion of which will be the subject of some following discourses.

I shall only beg leave at present to add an observation or two, concerning that diversity of religion in general which prevails in the world, and the case of those who cannot attain to the knowledge of *Christianity*.

And first, Though I see no reason to affirm with some writers, that God takes equal delight in the various kinds of worship, which happen to be established; and that a specific difference in religion is, in itself, and abstractly considered, equally acceptable to him, with that diversity of beings which he constituted: on the contrary, I think, he has plainly discovered one most perfect standard, and requires all men to approach as near it as they can; and may be said to approve of every just approach to it, and prefer that to an opposite pro-

* See *Jortin's Discourses concerning the truth of the Christ. Rel. Disc. 1.* and *Remarks on Eccl. Hist. Vol. III. p. 428, &c.*

ceeding; in the same manner as he does every other excellence, and improvement of the human mind; where he intends perpetual advancement, (as we have seen)—yet from what has been already said, thus much must be allowed, viz. That one of these is in some measure a consequence of the other, during the present laws of nature, in the moral and intellectual world: a difference of capacity, among men, will produce an equal difference in their religious notions, as was shewn above; such difference therefore, in degree of perfection, is made necessary by the constitution of things, and the general dispensations of Providence; and what by the ordinary course of Divine Providence is to men, in some circumstances, rendered unavoidable, that the Divine Goodness will, in these circumstances, most undoubtedly excuse, and be ready to accept with all its imperfections*.

The same thing obtains remarkably in each particular system, even of *Christianity* itself; which to different persons, and in different times and places, must appear in a very different light: though so much always, every where, lies level to all, as is indispensably required of each; and so much also as might have a very considerable in-

* See *Rymer* on Rev. Rel. c. 6. It is a beauty in Providence to advance in the dispensations of religion; to propose various perfections in piety and virtue upon earth, and answer them with respective promotions in heaven. p. 152.

fluence upon their lives and manners. And the same may in a great measure be affirmed of *modern Heathens*; the generality of whom still preserve, in some degree, the great fundamental principles of one supreme God, a *Providence* and a *future State*; as authors of the best credit have assured us*.

Secondly. As to the case of these people in general, we may consider, that if they have fewer and less advantages than others, their native genius and disposition must likewise be inferior; to which their future state may be proportioned: God is not obliged to make all men equally perfect in the next world, any more than in this; and if their capacity be reduced below that of an ordinary *Christian*, a less quantity of happiness may fill it.

However, we need not be solicitous about their estate; much less ought we to cast any ungrateful imputation on the governor of the world, for not having dealt so bountifully with them as with ourselves; since we know that, in all cases, every one will at length be *accepted according to that he has, and not according to that he has not*; and that *to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required*. We know that their souls are in the hand of a most merciful Creator, all *whose ways*

* A collection of them may be seen in *Stackhouse's* B. of Div. Part 3. c. 8. § 2, 3. p. 528, &c. or *Millar's* Hist. of the Prop. c. 5. &c. *Comp. Mod. Univ. Hist.* fol. V. 3. B. 14. c. 8. and *Crantz* Hist. of *Greenland*, B. 3. c. 5. § 38, &c.

are equal; and who will most assuredly deal with every one according to what is just and right. But of this more hereafter.

I come, in the last place, briefly to observe the great benefit of complying with the terms of the gospel, and the inexcusableness of rejecting it.

The benefit of the Christian institution, above all others, appears in that it naturally *fits* men for an higher degree of happiness, as well as *entitles* them to it by positive covenant. It gives them more just and worthy notions of the divine Being, and the relation they bear to him; and of the duties which result from that relation. It explains, improves, exalts all those virtues and good dispositions, which are the immutable *foundation* of happiness, both in this world and the next. It directs us to add to our faith *virtue*, to virtue *knowledge*, to knowledge *temperance*, to temperance *patience*, to patience *godliness*, to godliness *brotherly kindness*, and to brotherly kindness *charity*. It proposes to our study, *whatsoever things are true, —honest,—just,—pure,—lovely,—and of good report*; and binds all these upon us with the strongest *sanctions*: at once giving us the most ample instruction in, and the warmest incitement to, the practice of our duty; and affording all fit and necessary means of *grace*, in order to prepare and train us up for glory. And thus, as *St. Peter* says, *hath the Father given unto us all things that pertain*

unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us unto glory and virtue;— that at length we might be partakers of the DIVINE NATURE.

The great condition of this covenant is expressed in the text, and many other parts of scripture, by *Repentance : repentance from dead works, and serving the living God* : to which is annexed the very comfortable assurance of entire forgiveness, which was so greatly wanted in the Heathen world*.

This was the substance of our Saviour's preaching, and what the apostles *continually testified, both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks*, namely *repentance towards God* †; that is, a thorough reformation of mind and temper; a renouncing of that extreme fondness for this present world, its vanities and vices; and an improvement in all those graces and good habits, which are absolutely necessary to fit us for the presence of God; the society of angels; and the spirits of just men made perfect.

How gracious a design this! how holy and amiable an institution! how strongly must it recommend itself to every man's judgment and conscience, when once rightly understood and experienced! And what infinite reason have we

* See Dr. Owen, B. L. § 18.

† Acts xx. xxi. V. *infra* Note *g.* p. 291, and *Jeffery's Tracts*, Vol. II. p. 233. or *Bradford's B. Lect.* Sermon 9.

to give continual thanks unto the Father, who hath not only prepared for us an *inheritance*, but likewise laboured to make us *meet* to be *partakers* of it, *among the saints in light!* And lastly, *how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* How disingenuous must it be, to refuse and put it from us! How dangerous to contemn and blaspheme it!

Rather, may the mercies of God in *Christ Jesus*, engage every one of us to obey the divine precept in the text; to shake off those vices and indulgences in which the heathens of old so much delighted, and which betray too many now a days into the like degenerate state; and blind their eyes, and harden their hearts, against all the means of conviction,—namely, pride, covetousness, and sensuality. May we all comply with the apostle's advice, in *walking circumspectly towards them that are without*; since the reason assigned by him is, in some respects, of equal force at present;—*because the days are evil*. As Infidelity still abounds, and the *love* of many *waxeth cold*, we, who profess the faith of *Christ*, and think we have a more perfect knowledge of it, and are to communicate the same to others; we ought to *contend* so much the *more earnestly* for it, and labour to *adorn the doctrine* of our Lord in all things.

To our daily prayers, therefore, let us add our constant endeavours, that the *kingdom of God may come* on those who have not yet received

it; and be restored in purity, to such as have unhappily rejected it: and finally, let us beware lest in any of *us* be found *an evil heart of unbelief*; let us take care that we be not of those, who, either in principle, or practice, *draw back unto perdition*; but of *them that believe, to the saving of the soul*.

THEORY.

PART II.

THE PLAN OF PROVIDENCE,

WITH REGARD TO

THE TIME AND MANNER OF THE SEVERAL
DISPENSATIONS OF REVEALED RELIGION.

Crescat igitur oportet, et multum vehementerque proficiat, tam singulorum quam omnium, tam unius hominis, quam totius ecclesiæ, ætatum ac seculorum gradibus, intelligentia, scientia, sapientia, *Vinc. Lir. Common.* 1. 28.



THE PLAN OF PROVIDENCE,

WITH REGARD TO

THE TIME AND MANNER OF THE SEVERAL
DISPENSATIONS OF REVEALED RELIGION.

GAL. iv. 4.

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

THE coming of *Christ* in the flesh is a dispensation so full of wisdom and goodness, that in what light soever it be viewed by us, it will appear highly worthy of its divine Author. The precise *time* in which he was manifested, though this has been made the subject of more cavils, ancient and modern, than any other circumstance attending it, yet I doubt not but, upon a fair examination, it may be discovered to bear the same characters.

On this head the following questions are usually asked. If the common Father of mankind be infinite in goodness, and the *Christian* scheme be the only acceptable way of worshipping him, and necessary to our salvation; why was it not communicated to the world much sooner? Why was

this greatest of all blessings kept back to the last; —to the *end of the world*, as it is called*? ‘if God
 ‘always acts for the good of his creatures, what
 ‘reason can be assigned why he should not *from*
 ‘*the beginning* have discovered such things as
 ‘make so greatly for their good; but defer the
 ‘doing of it till the time of *Tiberius*†?’ —Most of
 the adversaries to *Christianity* lay the greatest
 weight on this objection‡; and accordingly,
 several arguments have been offered to remove
 it: I shall select some of them which appear the
 most conclusive, and add such farther observa-
 tions as may help to set the whole in a proper
 light§.

When the *fulness of the time*|| was come.—The
 apostle in this chapter is comparing the ages of the
 world, to the life of man, and its several stages;
 as infancy, childhood, youth, maturity. If we re-

* Heb. ix. 26.

† Christianity as old, &c. p. 196. 4to.

‡ *Porphyry* often urges it. V. *Hieron. ad Ctesiphon. Ep. 43. Augustin. Ep. 102.* So also *Celsus. V. Origin. contra. L. 4. C. Blount*, [or the author of a letter to him signed A. W. published under the name of *Dryden*, in the *summary account*] was so very confident of its being unanswerable, that he was willing to rest the whole cause of infidelity upon it. *Miscell. works*, p. 210, &c. The author of *Christianity as old, &c.* dwelt very largely on it in many parts of his book; and not to mention *Chubb*, and others, the author of *Deism fairly stated*, still repeats the same thing over and over again, from p. 87 to 95, as if no answer had been ever made to it.

§ See an excellent discourse on this subject by Mr. *Parr*, Norwich, 1780.

|| Or, the proper *season*, ΚΑΙΡΟΙ ΙΔΙΟΙ. *Tit. i. 3.*

flect on this comparison, we shall find it very just in general; and that the world itself, or the collective body of mankind, as well as each particular member, has from very low beginnings proceeded by a regular gradation in all kinds of knowledge; has been making slow advances towards perfection, in its several periods; and received continual improvements from its infancy to this very day*.

And though in both cases this same progress be sometimes interrupted, and the course of this world and its inhabitants appear, like that of the heavenly bodies, stationary, or suffering some retrogradations; yet we have reason to believe, that these are such, for the most part, in appearance

* For a general explanation of this, see *Edward's Survey of all the Dispensations of Religion, &c.* Vol. I. p. 396. and Vol. II. p. 615—21, &c. *Worthington's Essay on Man's Redemption*, c. 8, &c. *Taylor's Scheme of Script. Div.* c. 3, &c.—The last author has made frequent use of this comparison, and drawn the following parallel:

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

But that there is no necessity for carrying on the parallel between these, to the decline of each in their old age, is justly observed by a late writer. 'Here it must be obvious, that the case of nations, and that of individuals, are very different. The human frame has a general course; it has, in every individual, a frail contexture, and a limited duration; it is worn by exercise, and exhausted by a repetition of its functions: but in a Society, whose constituent members are renewed in every generation; where the race seems to enjoy perpetual youth, and accumulating advantages, we cannot by any parity of reason, expect to find imbecilities connected with mere age, and length of days.' *Ferguson, Hist. of Civ. Society*, p. 320. Comp. *Priestley on Governm.* Introd. p. 5. &c.

only; that this very lett, where it is real, makes way for a more rapid progress afterwards (like currents pent up to produce a larger stream) which seems to bring matters into the same state upon the whole, as if they had been regularly progressive: and may itself be necessary, in order to produce an equal or proportionate happiness among the different nations of the earth(*g*).

(*g*) Thus there may be such a circulation in both the natural and moral circumstances of all constitutions, as is commonly observed, without any prejudice to the general progress in perfection, on the whole; nay, that may become in some respects productive of it; a corrupted people fall by their corruptions, and some new ones better constituted and disposed rise on their ruins. Whenever an exertion of the same skill and sagacity, politic or œconomical; a display of the same hardy virtues which raised the fortunes of any state or family, *viz.* courage, industry, frugality, when this is no longer esteemed necessary for its support, but gives way to an indulgence of the opposite qualities; such state will sink again, and generally become a prey to some more potent rival, who is in the ascending scale, and cultivating those very virtues by which the other rose and flourished; till that, going on in the same course, suffers likewise the same revolution: by which means the seat of empire, opulence, splendor, politeness, is often changed in every quarter of the world, without any real diminution, even of those particular virtues which produce them, on the whole; much less of virtue and happiness in general, but rather with a more universal and equal distribution of the several benefits and blessings among men at large; and the affording each class equal means and opportunities of improving themselves in these respects, as well as in the liberal arts, which indeed usually attend upon each other. ‘ The greatest blessing that can befall a state, which is obstinately tenacious of all its ancient institutions, is to be subdued by some people who have a better government, and have made farther advances in the arts of life. And it is undoubtedly a great advantage which the Divine Being has provided for this world, that conquests and revo-

Farther; every one that looks into the history of the world with an unprejudiced eye must ob-

lutions should give mankind an opportunity of reforming their systems of government, and of improving the science of it, which they would never have found themselves.' *Priestley* on the first Principles of Government, p. 135. 'Were it not for these great shocks,' says a Royal author, 'the universe would continue always the same, and there would be no equality in the fate of nations.' Essay on the progress of the understanding in the Arts and Sciences. Memoirs of the H. of *Brandenburg*. p. 294.

The same observation may be applied to religious knowledge; and is so applied, with a few leading facts from history to confirm it, by Mr. *Rotheram*, in his Sermon on the Wisdom of Providence.

The same way of reasoning which is used to prove that each individual attains to a greater sum of happiness upon the whole from low beginnings, from successive alterations, and gradual advances in his several states; than if he had set out at first and continued always fixed even in what is deemed the highest; this argument, drawn from the very nature of intellectual happiness, which is chiefly *relative*, and consists in the reflection on a man's present situation compared with that wherein he once was; or sees others round him now to be:—The same argument may be applied with like propriety to nations and communities, as being composed of individuals, all in like circumstances, and therefore under the like wise dispensations of Providence. See note 19 to *Abp. King*. O. of E. p. 108-9. 4th ed.

How many improvements were carrying on in most parts of the World through several of its darkest ages, by steps opening the way for still higher approaches towards perfection, may be seen in *Robertson's* judicious observations. Hist. of Ch. V. Thus absolutely rude barbarism gives way to *feudal* tenures and a standing militia; these to general *Laws* and a regular administration of justice; to more liberal *Communities*, p. 30. free Cities, p. 32. and equal distribution of Property. *Chivalry* and *Crusades* introduce generosity, a sense of honour, and a strong spirit of religion however imperfect and confused. p. 69. To these succeed more polished manners, legal settlements, and more sound policy; courts of justice are set up, civil and ecclesiastical constitutions

serve, that the minds of men have all along been opened by a train of events, improving upon, and adding light to each other; as that of each individual is, by proceeding from the first elements and seeds of science, to more enlarged views; and a higher growth. Mankind are not, nor ever have been capable of entering into the depths of knowledge all at once; of receiving a whole system of natural or moral truths together; but must be let into them by degrees; and have them communicated by little and little, as they are able to receive and relish the communication. In this manner does every art and science make its way into the world: And though now and then an extraordinary genius may arise, and reach as it were some ages beyond that in which he lives; yet how very

formed, and jurisprudence reduced to a science: general good is educed out of private evils, or a more pure and perfect state raised from a mixed and partial one. Thus did the *Roman* conquests civilize and polish *Europe*: when that unwieldy empire was corrupted and enervated, it gave way to more barbarous nations; but such as brought along with them liberty and independence; and laid the foundation of our present more happy and better poised constitutions. From the thick cloud of Popery bursts out a brighter light than ever shone upon the world since the first planting Christianity, at the revival of *Letters*, notwithstanding their abuses; p. 74, 75. We cannot help discerning their mighty influence on *Manners*, p. 76. and every means of improving the mind of man, as well as bettering his condition. Hence the establishment of numerous Schools and Universities; the extension of *Commerce* with all its beneficial effects, p. 81. the adjusting *Property*, p. 40. and fixing a *Balance* of power, p. 112. and at length the inestimable blessing of a *Toleration* in religious matters, v. iii. 336.

few of his contemporaries are able to follow him, or comprehend the import of what he delivers! The generality still go step by step in gathering up, and digesting, some small portions of that stock of knowledge, which he poured out at once; and are for a long time in respect to him, but mere children. So that, notwithstanding a few such extraordinary instances, I think, we may affirm in general, that from the beginning of the world, science, or all kinds of intellectual accomplishments, have been found to make a gradual and pretty regular advance among the bulk of mankind; but that upon the whole, advancing they have been, and are.

This, I say, is generally so in fact; and therefore will to a certain degree, have place in religious, as well as all other truths*, among men

* A more particular proof of this will be given in the III. Part. Nor will it on examination be found inconsistent with the observation of a late judicious writer, [*Jeffery. Tracts V. 2. p. 197, &c.*] concerning the sacred history of religion under the *Patriarchs, Jews, and Christians*, viz. That in every state there is first of all the *Institution*, then the *Corruptions*, and lastly the *Reformation* of it; since (not to mention the occasion of this, which in part arises from the natural imperfection of its mode of conveyance, as observed below) we have reason to believe, that in each thorough reformation of religion, there is something raised above the primitive standard in the minds of its recipients; that men are generally prepared to enter more fully into the plan and spirit of it, to arrive at a more clear and complete discovery of its several ends and uses, than at its original institution. Vid. *infra*, P. III. p. 262. Nor do we say, that every nation has improved in religious notices, exactly as it does in learning and politeness; or that one of these must keep pace with the other; since a supposed diversity in their original, will constitute a very

either taken collectively, or in each individual. Why the case stands thus in both,—why all are not adult at once, in body and mind, revelation is not concerned to give an account of, so much as the religion of nature; at least they are here, as in the former case, both on the same foot; and the same principles may be applied to each of them. And though in this respect, the Divine dispensations seem to differ from human arts and sciences, in as much as these are commonly the most rude and imperfect at first, and every part of them improving by repeated trials; whereas, the others have all that purity and perfection at their delivery, which in their season they are designed to have; and rather lose, in some respects, than get by length of time—yet will not this make any material difference on the whole.

To state the matter right, we ought to distinguish as well between the delivery of a doctrine, and its general reception in the world; which is according to the measure of the recipients only: and which will chiefly depend upon the state, and

notorious difference in this respect; the former may have been at first communicated to mankind in all its purity and simplicity; may long continue such, or suffer afterwards in its conveyance by tradition; while men were left in a great measure to themselves in the acquirement of the latter; which must by consequence receive a gradual increase by their repeated efforts: and that disparity observable between the state and progress of these two in several countries, is no bad proof that this was actually the case. See Leland's Advantage and Necessity of the Christ. Rev. V. 1. c. 20.

qualifications of the age they live in: as also, between the supernatural assistance, and extraordinary impressions, at the first publication of such doctrine, and the ordinary state in which it usually appears; and the common progress it will make, so soon as ever these shall come to cease, and it is left to be continued by mere human means; (as we have shewn before that it must be sometime or other), when we shall find it partaking of the taste and temper of the times through which it passes; and consequently propagated in the same gradual, partial manner, as all other parts of science, all human acquisitions and improvements are.

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

We will inquire first, what provision God made for the instruction of mankind in the *infancy* of the world; and whether it was expedient to send his son upon their first transgression.

Now we have reason to suppose that *Adam*, during his state of innocence, had frequent communication with the Deity*; from whence he re-

* A hint of such communication on the forming of *Eve*, as related by *Adam* himself, together with the general precept con-

ceived his information of things, and was directed in the use of them*. And, if he had been content to follow that direction, he would undoubtedly have been secured from any pernicious errors; and supplied with all the instruction and assistance which was then necessary for him, and trained up by degrees to as thorough an acquaintance with the Divine nature, and all things around him, as was agreeable to his own nature; and consistent with his state and circumstances in the world. But, upon his rejecting this guide, and applying elsewhere for knowledge, or setting up to be his own director(*h*); that communication might be in

cerning *Marriage*, grounded on it, occurs in *Gen.* ii. 21,—24. compared with *Matt.* xix. 5, 6. *Mark* x. 6,—9. *Eph.* v. 31.

Though what some writers attribute to Divine *Inspiration* influencing *Adam* on such occasions, seems to be more naturally accounted for from a *Vision* exhibited, or express *Oral Revelation* made to him: the former supposition appears to be the easiest in this case, and may include that whole transaction, as represented to him in a deep *sleep*. Concerning which mode of information see more below. Note *n*.

* *Gen.* i. 28—30. ii. 19, 20. Such persons as are apt to question the propriety of that particular restraint which was laid on him in the use of food, may consult the authors cited or referred to by *Patrick*, on *Gen.* ii. 17.

(*h*) That he intended nothing less than this by eating of the forbidden *Tree*, which was the trial of his submission to, or his rejection of the divine government, the *test* of good and evil, or that which would shew which of these he chose, and prove whether he would be good or bad, [*Patrick* on *Gen.* ii. 9. *Taylor* on *Or. Sin*, Pt. 3.] may be seen in *Rutherford's* account of that transaction, *Essay on virtue*, c. 2. n. (*) p. 273. Comp. *Taylor*. Scheme of Script. Div. c. 7. who makes the *knowledge* of good and evil, the same as *feeling good connected with evil*, tasting a pain-

a great measure withdrawn from him, and he left to the imperfect notice of his senses; to learn the nature of good and evil, and the way to obtain the one, and avoid the other, by a painful experience*. Yet was he not left wholly to himself in the affair of religion; but directed to such a form of worship, as served to point out, and perpetually remind him, both of the heinousness of his crime, and the dreadfulness of that penalty which he had incurred; and also gave him hopes of future pardon, and a final acceptance with his Creator.

All this seems to have been signified by the institution of animal *sacrifices*, setting before him all the horrors of that *death*, which he had been sentenced to undergo, but which was hitherto suspended; and that of some other creatures de-

ful pleasure, a destructive gratification, &c. by an *Hendiadis*. *Worthington* [Historical sense of the Mosaic account of the Fall proved and vindicated] supposes several communications of both kinds of knowledge made to our first parents, on their tasting the forbidden fruit; but not merely by the virtue of such fruit; which seems rather to have been the serpent's suggestion, *Gen. 3. 5.* of the very same kind and to the same end, with all his other suggestions of divine power annexed to various inanimate beings, whereby the world has been deluded ever since: nor does the same author ascribe to that tree, (though he calls it a mysterious one, p. 19) any *physical* effects infusing any sort of science; which creates the chief part of the difficulty on this point. *Dawson* on the three first chapters of *Genesis*, explains it by the trees, in eating of which, *Adam* transgressed the divine law; thus affecting to become—acting as if he thought himself—more *wise* and *knowing* than his Maker, p. 6. marg. 4.

* See Abp. *King's* Sermon on the *Fall*. And *Bate* on the same subject.

manded probably in its room. This, together with the promise of a future deliverance, by *the seed of the woman*, served for the present to afford some comfort to our first parents under their heavy sentence; and to convince them, that their offended Maker was not absolutely implacable; as well as to lead their posterity to suitable notions of religion, and such a kind of worship, as should constantly reconcile them to the Deity, and remove the guilt of their particular offences; and also prepare them to expect a greater and more noble expiation that would take off the whole of *Adam's* curse*, restore him and his posterity to that *immortal life* which he had forfeited(*i*); and raise

* What that really was, may be seen in *Hallet's* Discourses, Vol. II. p. 276, &c. *Sherlock's* Use and Intent of Proph. p. 142, 143. 2d ed. *Taylor* on Or. Sin, passim; or, at the beginning of *Locke's* Reason. of Christ. or Abp. *King's* Discourse upon the *Fall*.

(*i*) After all that has been writ upon the subject of *sacrifices*, I am forced to ascribe their *origin* to divine appointment: as to the *intention* of them, we may conceive some to have been enjoined by way of *Tribute*, or as proper *acknowledgments* of God's dominion over the creatures, and of man's holding that share which was delegated to him from God's hand, and enjoying all earthly blessings through his bounty;—some by way of positive *mult, fine, or forfeiture*, [*Abarb. ex. com. in Lev. p. 313. Cleric. in Lev. i. 2. Morality of Rel. p. 35.*] to render every breach of duty burdensome, and expensive to the sinner;—some for a *testimony*, or a *representation* of his repentance, his *confession* of such breach, and *deprecation* of its punishment;—[*Taylor, Script. Doct. of Atonement, p. 20. Forbes's* Thoughts on Religion, p. 124. *Essay on the Nature and Design, &c. p. 32, &c.*] some as a *federal rite* between God and him, or a *form* of entering into *friendship* with his Maker; [*ib. passim. Comp. Richie's* Criticism upon Mo-

them to a higher degree of happiness, than he could be conceived to have enjoyed in his paradisaical state*. And that this rite was enjoined by God himself, and explained to our first parent, is probable, from the short account we have of those times; since we find his two sons bringing their offerings to a certain place †, and well apprised (by some visible tokens ‡) when they were accepted; as that of animal *sacrifice* was rather than the other: and probably accepted for that very reason, because it had been appointed by God him-

self. [App. II. pass.] and obtaining future *favours* from him: and yet there might be perhaps some farther view to that original grant, or promise, whereby man was to be delivered from the effects of the *first breach*; which, as such, was in each dispensation thought proper to be particularly distinguished. All which appointments, grants, or *covenants*, may likewise be understood (not in their literal, strict sense, or as in themselves absolutely necessary, but) as so many gracious schemes of government, or methods of œconomy; so many merciful expedients to promote the great end of the divine government, and secure obedience to the divine laws: treating mankind, (not like philosophers but) as the generality of people of a more dull apprehension were always to be treated; and leading them gradually to as just and worthy notions of God and themselves, as they became capable of receiving.—But to ascribe such an institution, as this of sacrificing animals, wholly to the invention of men, especially to the men of those times who were capable of inventing so very little, appears somewhat unnatural.

* See *King's* note 80. p. 413, &c. 4th ed. or *Bate* on the *Fall*.

† *Heb.* xi. 4. *Vid. Interp. & Grot. in Gen.* vi. *Comp. Judg.* vi. 21. xiii. 23. See also *Taylor*, *Schemie of Script.* Div. p. 144.

‡ *Gen.* iv. 3, 4. Probably by *Fire*, See *Tenison* of *Idolatry*, C. 14. p. 320.

self, and was performed agreeably to his command(*k*).

The *time* of their worship seems likewise to have had the same original; as well from God's blessing, and sanctifying the *seventh* day*; and

(*k*) See *Sherlock's Use and Intent of Proph.* p. 73, &c. or *Rymer's Represent.* p. 30. *Ridley's Christian Passover, &c.* *Richie's peculiar Doctrines of Revelation.* Pt. 2. § 49, &c. This one article of the distinction made between *Abel's* offering, and that of *Cain*, which, according to the history, was so notorious as to deject and irritate the latter; and which cannot, I think, be accounted for otherwise than by the interposition of God himself; nor that remarkable interposition solved on other principles, than *Cain's* presuming to omit the prescribed *victim*, through his want of *faith*; *Heb.* xi. 4. (otherwise his portion of the fruits of the ground, might appear to be as just and natural a tribute of devotion from one within his province, as some part of the flock was from his brother; since we have no clear intimation of any other difference in the sincerity of their dispositions, whereon to ground the above distinction between them:) this, I say, seems a sufficient proof, that sacrifice was of divine institution; and is but ill resolved by *Spencer*, L. iii. c. 4. s. 2. *Comp. Dawson* upon *Gen.* iv, v. p. 21, &c. or *Ward Diss.* 3 V. 2d.

The same thing is inferred, with a good deal of probability, from the mention of those *coats of skins which the Lord God made for Adam and his wife*, *Gen.* iii. 21. which seem most likely to have been of those beasts that were offered in sacrifice, and might perhaps be in some measure of the same intendment with that sacrifice; for the discovery of which, rather difficult and disagreeable way of worship, one would think they should stand in need of God's particular direction, as much, at least, as for that other, more easy and obvious one, of clothing themselves.

Concerning the use and propriety of this kind of clothing at that time, see *Leland's* answer to *Christ. as old*, &c. p. 503, &c.

* *Gen.* ii. 3. *Exod.* xvi. 25, 26. *Com. Dawson* on *Gen.* iv, v. p. 19.

the ancient method of reckoning by *weeks**; as from the earliest observance of that Sabbath, in all nations of the world†; without any ground in nature for such practice; or the least hint of its arising from human invention (*l*).

* *Gen.* vii. viii. 10, 12. xxix. 27. *L.* 10.

† *Joseph.* contra *Ap.* *L.* ii. *Exod.* xvi. *Philo* de op. mund. *Selden* de jur. n. *L.* iii. c. x. xi. &c. *Euseb.* evang. præp. xiii. 12. *Grot.* de ver. *L.* i. c. 16. *Allix's* Reflections, B. i. c. 7. *Jenning's* Lect. B. iii. c. 3. p. 142.

(*l*) See *Rymer's* Represent. of Rev. Rel. c. 2. or *Ridley's* Christian Passover. And the same may be said of *tithes*. *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 102. *Durell*, p. 178. Authors on each of these points may be seen in *Waterland's* first charge, p. 41, &c. On sacrifices in particular, *Carpzov.* Introd. p. 118. and *Budde* Hist. Eccl. P. 1. s. 1. 30.** p. 115. The distinction that we meet with afterwards [*Gen.* vii. 2, 8, &c.] between *clean* and *unclean* beasts, which manifestly relates to sacrifice, [*Vid. Patrick*, *ib.*] shews likewise the continuance of that kind of worship; and seems to prove, that it was not owing to any human establishment, any more than this direction itself could be. And that the men of these, as well as after ages, had both sufficient authority, and instruction to use the flesh of the former sort of beasts, for food, as well as clothe or shelter themselves with the skins, appear to me as plain as that the tending and taking care of such was their chief business and occupation. Nor can I comprehend what merit there could be at any time in their making *offerings unto the Lord their God of that which cost them nothing*, of that which they could not eat; or how they came to distinguish between *fat* and *lean*: betwixt the *good choice pieces*, and others; unless they had tasted them themselves: [*Vid. Cleric.* in *Lev.* i. 2. iii. 3. and iv. 17.] though it is upon this chimerical supposition, that the use of animal food was not included in the original grant of absolute dominion, given to mankind over all the creatures, (some of which could be of no other service to them) that *Grotius*, and others, founded their attempt to explain away all animal sacrifice, before the deluge. ‘Eædem pecudes, quæ ad esum, etiam ad sacrificia

And that in those days men had frequent intercourse with the Deity, and were made sensible of his peculiar presence in certain places, appears

a *Noacho* adhibitæ; scil. mundæ quotquot erant *Gen.* viii. 20. Hic sacrificiorum usus cum Diluvio sit antiquior, idem de pecudum esu nobis persuasum, contra quam multi sentiunt. Neque enim *Abel* in sacrificium id obtulisset Deo, quo vesci nefas credidisset; et frustra pavisset agnos quibus non licuisset uti. Quin ipsa distinctio animalium in munda et immunda docet alia permissa fuisse, alia prohibita. Neque enim in animalibus natura sua quicquam immundum. Sed immundum id est ex lege, cujus esus interdicitur. Itaque illud, *Gen.* i. 29. *Vobis erit in cibum*, non solum ad plantas referimus, sed etiam ad animalia, de quibus præcedenti versu actum fuerat.' *Bochart. Hieroz.* p. 11. edit. 4. *Comp. Heidegger.* Dissert. xv. De cibo antediluviano, *Clayton's Answer to Delaney*, in the blood-eating controversy; or *Essay on Sacrifices*, p. 165, &c. or *Dawson's New translation of the three first chapters of Genesis*, who has shewn this sense to be very consistent with the original.

I have been obliged to differ here from the author of *Philemon* to *Hydaspes**, who in his fifth part is so far from allowing any kind of sacrifices to be a divine institution, that he declares, 'the general notion of the thing itself to be in every view of it so glaring an absurdity, that he is amazed that it should ever enter into the head of any rational creature.' p. 10. Some of the reasons offered to support this declaration are, First, 'the very idea of a Divine Being implies in it such a superior excellency of nature, as to be wholly out of the reach of our good offices. He neither wants, nor can receive benefit from them.' ib. Nor, Secondly, 'can we suppose that he should ever be pleased with the mere waste of his own productions.' p. 13. Thirdly, It gives one a very degrading idea of his 'goodness, to consider him as entering into a kind of merchandize with mankind, in the matter of his favours,' p. 14. And p. 20. 'The demand of the life of a perfectly innocent creature, to be offered up in sacrifice to God,

* The late Mr. Coventry.

farther, from his discourse with *Cain*, both before and after the murder of his brother*; as also from

‘ could give but small encouragement to hope, that God intended
‘ to favour a guilty one.’

But I cannot apprehend that such an intercourse as was kept up between God and mankind, by the forementioned offerings, must necessarily be taken in either the first, or third of these views; since the like intercourse is not always so understood, even among men; some of whom are too far exalted above others to receive any real *advantage* from them, yet nevertheless expect some dutiful acknowledgment of the benefits which they confer on others, and require frequent testimonies of their love; and why should we not imagine a sincerely devout sacrificer to the Deity, able to interpret his devotion in the same sense? or if led to a more gross interpretation of it, why may we not even suppose the Deity condescending in that case to set him right, by some such kind expostulation as the following! *Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most High. And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

Nor does there seem to be any more *merchandize* in any sort of sacrificial offerings, than in those of other vows, prayers, praises, and thanksgivings, which still make up an essential part of our religion; from their relation to which, the former always derived all their value, and were perhaps only a strong, lively manner of expressing them; [Qui sacrificat, id idem significat actione et gestu, quod qui precatur ore suo profitetur. *Vitringa Diss. Vol. I. p. 289. Comp. Patrick on 1 Sam. xiii. 12.*] nor probably more strong, and explicit, than might be necessary for the times; nor likely to convey any more degrading ideas of the divine goodness (at least not more than were adapted to, and unavoidably in the then low state of reasoning) than does the inward tribute of a *broken and a contrite heart*, which is still requisite on some occa-

* *Gen. iv. 6. 9.*

Cain's complaint of being hid from his *face**, and his going out from the *presence of the Lord*†. Nor

sions, as well as the outward public profession of our dependence on the Deity, the *rendering to him the calves of our lips*; which when the understandings of men were ripe for it, and they able to keep up a tolerable sense of duty by these means, have of themselves been, and are accepted by the same *gracious* being in the room of the other; (*Hos.* xiv. 2. *Heb.* xiii. 15.) though these be founded equally on human weakness, and at a like distance from the excellency of the divine nature.

As to the *Consumption* of the fruit of the ground in offerings; why might not men conceive, that the same God who had given them all things richly to enjoy, might reasonably expect a return, as it were, of some part of them, merely in token of gratitude for the rest: as an exercise of their faith in, a memorial of their dependance on him for a continuance of them, and a pledge of their obedience, in applying each to the good purposes for which he had bestowed them? and this without the least dread of affronting him by an implication that he either wanted any thing, or reaped any kind of benefit by their presents.

Nor need even such as have the most imperfect notions of his power and bounty, apprehend this to be any dangerous misapplication of these gifts, on a persuasion that he had required it; though without some tradition of that, *Socrates* himself [p. 10.] might perhaps justly doubt of the propriety, and acceptableness of this kind of worship: as he had the like scruples about *prayer*. [*Plat.* 2. *Alcib.*] as also *Maximus Tyrius*, long after.

But if ever these, or any such offerings, were in fact required, and these or the like ends might be served by them, then will this

* Ver. 14.

† *Gen.* iv. 16. *Taylor* supposes that there might be a standing *Shekinah*, to which the men of these times were to repair upon the sabbath, before which they presented their sacrifice, and performed their devotion. *Scheme of Script. Div.* c. 14, 15. add *Fleming's Christology.* B. ii. c. 7. *Tenison of Idolatry*, c. 14. But comp. *Dawson* on *Gen.* iv. v. p. 35, &c.

is it at all likely that *Adam*, who seemed to be well acquainted with the *voice of God in the garden* *

be far from a mere useless waste, though the things offered be destroyed: nor indeed can I see any material difference between a religious dedication of such things, and the destruction of them; or how they could be presented to the gods at all, if they were still kept for the use of their respective owners.

The case, I apprehend, will not be much different as to the *life of an innocent creature*; for if this creature be considered as a man's property, why may not the oblation of it be assigned by way of composition, mulct, or commutation for such faults as he is sensible of, and serve as a significant representation, and acknowledgment of such his sense; and be accepted by the offended Governor of the world, in lieu of a more condign punishment; by virtue of such assignment doing away his guilt, and being a sufficient ground of encouragement for him to hope for a full restoration to the divine favour; without any further import? Though if this should have yet a more distant and extensive view, it answers these ends for the present nevertheless; and is more like all other parts of the divine œconomy, which serve for various purposes, immediate and remote.

Upon the whole, I cannot help concluding it to be more probable in itself, and more analogous to the general course of things that this so universal a practice of sacrificing animals, however old and unaccountable it may seem to be in some respects at present;—should owe its origin to some divine appointment; be propagated every where by primitive tradition; and afterwards (as in too many other cases) by a pretended imitation, and improvement; but a real misrepresentation and abuse; receive such gradual alteration, from the authors of all superstition and vice, as at length to arrive at that degree of enormity, which this writer has so well described.

* *Gen.* iii. 8. 10. The curious reader may be entertained with some conjectures concerning a *full system of religion and morality*, communicated to *Adam* about this time, which *Peters* grounds on *Job* xxviii. 26, &c. and which he terms a *record of something spoken by God to the first man, not to be met with in the book of Genesis*. Vid. Crit. Diss. sect. 16. p. 456.

upon his fall, should never have heard it there before, on other occasions.

In those times therefore God was pleased to manifest himself to the *senses* of men, and visibly conduct them, by the *angel* of his presence, in all the chief concernments of religion. And this *infant* state of the world must stand in need of his especial guidance and protection. They were not yet able (with *Moses**) to see him *who is invisible*; to perform a purely rational, and spiritual worship. They could have no very perfect notions of his nature and providence; nor had they much leisure for speculation, and refinement in these subjects. They were all tillers of the ground, or keepers of cattle; employed sufficiently in cultivating this new world; and through the curse, brought on it by their forefather, forced with him to eat their bread *in the sweat of their brow*. We may suppose the generality of them, to have been no better than *Anthropomorphites*†, in their conceptions of the Divine Being; as many were found to be long after them, in much more knowing times‡; and as perhaps a great part of the world

* *Heb.* xi. 27.

† The reason of this is given at large by the author of *Glory of Christ as God-man*, Disc. I. sect. 1.

‡ ‘*Lactantius* is to prove that God has *human passions*—to prevent being misunderstood, and to provide a proper subject for these passions, he contends strongly for God’s having a *human form*; no discreditable notion at that time in the church.’ *Div. Leg.* B. iii. sect. 4. p. 372. add *Locke* on H. U. B. i. c. 4. sect. 16. and *Huet. Origen.* L. ii. B. i. sect. 8. p. 30.

yet are, by giving way to their imagination, notwithstanding the clearest revelations, and plainest arguments to the contrary. Frequent communications then might be necessary, to keep up a tolerable sense of religion among men, and secure obedience to the divine institutes*; and that the Almighty did not exhibit such manifestations of himself as were either necessary, or fit to answer this end, cannot be concluded from the silence of those very short accounts we have in sacred history, as was observed before.

Besides, *Adam* himself continued nine hundred and thirty years, an eye-witness of the power and providence of God; and could not but reflect on those remarkable instances of both, exerted at the beginning of his own life†; and must have acquainted the rest of mankind with all those truths relating to the Deity, that were implied in the original creation of man, and his first situation in the world‡; as well as his present state of punish-

* Και γὰρ εἰκος ἐν ἀρχῇ τῷ κόσμῳ ἐπὶ πλείων βεβούθησθαι τὴν ἀνθρώπων φύσιν, ἕως προκοπῆς γενομένης εἰς συνέσιν, καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς ἀρείας, καὶ τὴν εὐρεσίν των τεχνῶν δυναθῶσι, καὶ καθ' ἑαυτοὺς ζῆν, ἔχρηζοντες αἰεὶ ἐπίρροπευόντων καὶ οἰκονομούντων αὐτοὺς μέλα παραδοξῆ ἐπιφανείας των ὑπερβέβημενων τῶ τῶ θεῷ βεβληματι Orig. cont. Cels. p. 216. Ed. Cant.

† See *Allix's Reflections*, B. I. c. 8, &c.

‡ How he was able always to convince the world that he was the first man, from a peculiarity in the formation of his body, see *Cumberland De leg. patr.* p. 409, 410. *Adamus, ejusque uxor Eva secundum naturam non potuerunt habere umbilicos in medio ventrum suorum, uti habent omnes homines qui nascuntur e mulieribus propter vasa umbilicalia quæ umbilico inseruntur, et e placenta uterina nutrimentum afferunt infantibus, in utero*

ment, and prospect of a future redemption; which were exhibited together, and doubtless explained to him, upon his fall. He was all that while a living monument both of the justice and mercy of God; of his extreme hatred and abhorrence of sin; as well as his great love, and long-suffering towards the sinner. He was very sensible how sin entered into the world, and could not but apprise his children of its author; and at the same time inform them of the unity of God, and his dominion over the evil one; and assure them of his being the supreme governor, and judge of all. For so much, I think, might be gathered from that transaction in paradise, in what manner soever we understand it*; not to mention that the garden of Eden, the great scene of this transgression, might perhaps for some time be visible†. This would produce a tolerable idea of the Divine Being, and afford sufficient motives to obey him. And accordingly we find the effects of it, in the righteous family of *Seth*, who began to *call upon the name of the Lord*‡; or, as that text is better rendered in

matrum suarum generatis, indeque prodeuntibus. Nec credibile est Deum creavisse in protoplastis umbilicos qui iis essent prorsus inutiles, et eos redderet obnoxios periculoso morbo qui omphalocce dicitur a medicis. Ib.

* I think Archbishop *King* has said enough to vindicate the literal sense, in his excellent Sermon on the Fall annexed to his Origin of Evil.

† *Allix*, Reflect. p. 62, supposes it to have continued till the deluge.

‡ Gen. iv. 26.

the margin, to *call themselves by the name of the Lord**. They soon distinguished themselves from the posterity of *Cain*; and for their extraordinary piety, were entitled the people or *Sons of God*†. Of them, some time after, sprang a person so very eminent for goodness and devotion, as to be exempted from *Adam's* sentence, and the common lot of his sons: who after he had walked with God, or held converse with angels, three hundred years‡, and *prophesied* to his brethren, and forewarned them of the approaching judgment §, was translated that he should not see death ||. This very

* See *Shuckford*, Vol. I. p. 42, &c. *Van Dale's Orig. & Progr. Idol.* c. 2. *Stillingfleet*, *Iren.* c. 3, p. 73. 4to. Or this man, *Enos*, was called by the name of *Jehovah*. *V. Dawson on Gen.* iv. v. p. 37, &c.

† *Ward*, *Diss.* iv. v. 2d.

‡ *Cleric.* in *Gen.* v. 22. *Comp. Dawson*, *ib.* p. 55.

§ *Jude* 14. He foretells likewise the particular manner in which that judgment was to be inflicted, and by way of sign or confirmation (a frequent method on such occasions. *Comp. Is.* viii, &c.) imposes on his son the name of *Methuselah*, importing that when the person so called was *dead*, there should come an *Inundation of Waters*. And so exactly did that event correspond with his name, that in the very year he died, the earth was overwhelmed by the deluge. *Owen*, *B. L. S. 6. Bochart*, *Phal. L.* 2. C. 13.

|| *Heb.* xi. 5. *comp. Eccl.* xlv. 14. and *Arnald* upon *Wisdom*, iv. 10. His translation was probably effected in the same public manner as that of *Elijah*, *2 Kings* xi. 7. and the ascension of *Christ* himself. *Acts* i. 9. 'There is no doubt but his contemporaries had some visible or sensible demonstration of this fact. And as the fate of *Abel* was an argument to their reason, so the translation of *Enoch* was a proof to their senses (as it were) of another *state of life*.' *Peters Crit. Diss. on Job*, p. 274.

remarkable event must have made the world about him sensible of the good providence of God, inspecting and rewarding his faithful servants; and one would think it should have induced them to look up to a better state than the present; where righteous *Enoch* was already entered, and whither all such might expect to arrive in due time. To *Adam* himself, if he was then alive (as the *Samaritan* account makes him to have been above forty years after) it must have been a lively and affecting instance of what he might have enjoyed, had he preserved his innocence; as well as an earnest of the promised victory over the evil one, who robbed him of it; and a strong ground of confidence that he, and the rest of his posterity, should not be left entirely in their present state; but at some time or other, be restored to the favour of their Maker, and behold his presence in bliss and immortality*. At the same time lived *Lamech*, who was contemporary both with *Adam* and *Noah*, and probably well acquainted with the counsels of God; and foretold that that part of the curse which related to the barrenness of the earth,

* See *Bull's Discourses*, Vol. I. p. 343. Vol. II. p. 585, &c. *Worthington* argues farther, 'that this translation of *Enoch* was moreover an intimation to mankind, that if they overcame the depravity of their nature as he did, they should be delivered from the ill consequences of it as he was; the chiefest of which was death, temporal and eternal, both which he avoided:' and this author supposes him, upon what ground I know not, to be a type of many others being able to do the very same. *Essay*, p. 72, &c.

would in a great measure be taken off; as it was in his son's days*. At length, when the whole world became full of *unbounded lust*, and impurity †; of rapine and lawless violence ‡: when those *giants* in wickedness § had filled the earth with tyranny, injustice, and oppression; and the whole race of men were grown entirely *carnal* ||, and every *imagination of their hearts was only evil continually* ¶: God, whose spirit had been hitherto *striving* with them, was at length obliged, even in mercy to themselves, as well as their posterity, to cut them off; after having raised up another prophet**, to give them frequent warning of their fate; and allowed them a hundred and twenty years for repentance ††.

* Gen. v. 29. See *Sherlock's Use and Intent*, p. 89, &c. and *Ogilby on the Deluge*. Comp. *Dawson* in loc. p. 57. with *Worthington*, Ess. p. 83, &c.

† Gen. vi. 2.

‡ Ver. 11.

§ Ver. 4.

|| Ver. 3. *Seeing that he is (nothing but) flesh*, or wholly given up to the works of it.

¶ Ver. 5. That there was probably no settled government in the antediluvian world, see *Taylor*, Scheme of Script. Div. c. 19. p. 194.

** 1 Pet. iii. 19. Heb. xi. 7. *Noah the eighth, a preacher of righteousness*; (2 Pet. ii. 5.) or, as some more justly render it, *the eighth preacher*. (See *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 46. and *Pool* in loc. n. 4.) For he was neither the eighth *person* in descent from *Adam*, nor does his being *one* of the eight persons in the ark, seem to be a construction either very natural or pertinent. Add *Pearson* on the Creed, Part II. p. 115. 2d. edit. *Cumberland de Leg. Patr* p. 419.

†† Gen. iv. 3. This dispensation (of the Deluge) as all the rest

Thus did God make ample provision for the instruction and improvement of the world, for the first sixteen hundred years; namely, by the frequent appearance of *Angels*; by the *spirit of prophecy*, which is by some supposed to have been hereditary in the heads of families in those times*; and by an uninterrupted series of *traditions*, there being but two generations from *Adam* to *Noah*; so that we cannot well imagine that the knowledge and true worship of the Deity, during that time, could be entirely lost in any part of the world †.

But we are to remember that the world was still

had relation to the morals of mankind; and the evident design of it was to lessen the quantity of vice and profaneness, and to preserve and advance religion and virtue in the earth; the great end for which the earth, and man in it, were created. This end it was well adapted to obtain in the then present state of things, and in all future generations. In the present state of things it prevented a total corruption. For if the whole tainted part had not been cut off, a single family would soon have been drawn in, or destroyed: and then the whole globe must have been ruined, and the schemes and purposes of God from the very beginning of the world had been defeated. But by reserving a select family for the continuation of the human species, the system of the divine counsels was preserved entire, and the most proper method was devised for the establishment of true religion and virtue in the new world; as the family of *Noah* enjoyed much greater advantages for this end than the family of *Adam* at the beginning of things. *Taylor*, Scheme of Script. Div. c. 18. Com. *Owen's* Intent and Propriety of Script. Mir. sect. 2.

* *Jurieu* Crit. Hist. Vol. I. p. 34.

† That *Tradition* was the chief way of conveying religion in those early ages, see *Leland's* Advantage, &c. of the Christ. Rev. Vol. I. c. 1.

but in its state of *childhood*; which it aptly resembled, in those occasional supports afforded it; in the repeated instances of that paternal care, and tenderness, with which the Creator watched over it: and I have been the more particular in examining whence it might derive its notices of God and religion, and how far these could probably extend; in order to correct some mistakes, which are commonly made in perusing the history of those times; i. e. by setting out wrong, and supposing the first man to have been superior to all his posterity*, both in natural abilities, and actual knowledge, because more innocent than they; and imagining that the primitive religion was more perfect, because it was more naked, plain, and simple than that in after times: by which means, we are forced to make the state of the world frequently go backwards, to rise and fall again; and abound with breaks and inequalities; instead of observing that more even regular progress, which will appear in all parts of the divine œconomy.

To proceed. After the *deluge*, God is pleased to converse again, and make another more extensive covenant with mankind in the person of *Noah*; who was a new example of his power, his justice, and his goodness; and whose family

* Vid. Gen. Dict. art. *Adam*, p. 228, &c. or *South's* very extraordinary sermon on that subject. Comp. *Taylor* on Orig. Sin, p. 170, &c. 2d edit. and Script. Scheme of Div. c. 10. *Adam*, when created, may be considered as a child, without knowledge, learning, and experience, *ib.* p. 32.

had been sufficiently convinced of his supreme dominion over the earth and heaven; of his utter abhorrence of sin; and his fixed determination not to let it go unpunished. Nor could they, or their children, for some time, want any other argument to enforce obedience, fear, and worship*. The knowledge of mankind therefore, after the flood, must for a considerable time be better than it was before—might be propagated by tradition; and did not stand in need of any farther revelation, *Noah* himself having continued three hundred and fifty years. *Gen.* ix. 28.

But when by degrees many† had corrupted this tradition in the most essential parts, especially with relation to the object of their worship‡;

* See *Allix*, B. i. c. 13. The observations and reflections they might make on this extraordinary transaction are well imagined by *Winder*, *Hist. of Know.* c. 5. sect. 2, 3, 4. and *Taylor*, *Scheme*, &c. c. 18.

† Vid. *Winder's Hist. of Know.* p. 110, &c. *Patrick* in *Gen.* xi. 2.

‡ Lord *Bolingbroke*, in his 2d and 3d Essays, has taken great pains to prove, that such corruptions in religion could never be introduced so fast: and *Ess.* 2. p. 20. ‘supposes it impossible for
 ‘ any man in his senses to believe, that a tradition derived from
 ‘ God himself through so few generations, was lost among the
 ‘ greatest part of mankind, or that Polytheism and Idolatry
 ‘ were established on the ruins of it in the days of *Serug*, before
 ‘ those of *Abraham*, and so soon after the deluge.’ To which a sufficient answer may be had within two pages of the same extraordinary author. ‘The vulgar embrace them [Polytheism
 ‘ and Idolatry] easily, even after the true doctrine of a Divine
 ‘ Unity has been taught and received; as we may learn from the
 ‘ example of the *Israelites*: and superstitions grow apace and

and instead of one supreme God, had set up several inferior ones; and worshipped all the host of heaven (as they began to do in the time of *Peleg*, the fifth, according to the *Hebrew* computation, from *Noah*), and at the same time were uniting under one head, and forming an *universal empire*; and erecting a monument or *land mark**, to preserve and perpetuate this their union†: in order to prevent their being all corrupted at once, God saw it necessary to *come down*‡, and disperse them into several distinct colonies§, by dividing them

‘ spread wide, even in those countries where Christianity has been established, and is daily taught; as we may learn from the examples of the Roman churches, to say nothing of the reformed, who are less liable to the objection.’ *ib.* p. 22. Vol. IV. Comp. p. 224, &c. where he contradicts this again, disallows both *the facts and application of them, does not deny the truth of the former so much as the latter*, and all in a breath. But if any one wants to see more of his Lordship’s contradictions, a pretty complete list of them may be found ready drawn out, in the *Analysis* of his philosophical works, printed A. D. 1755.

* That this is the meaning of the word עֵצָה. *Gen.* xi. 4. which our translators have improperly rendered *name* here, see *Goguet*, *Introd.* p. 2. *. *De L’Origine des Loix*, &c. and *Bryant*, *Anal.* *pass.*

† See *Worthington*, B. Lect. § 8

‡ *Gen.* xi. 5, 7. See *Le Clerc* upon the place, with *Winder*, *Hist. of Kn.* p. 118. or *Taylor*, *Scheme of Script. Div.* c. 21.

§ The date of this great event is fixed with some probability to 240 post Diluv. See *Rowland’s Mona Antiq. Restor.* 281, &c. 2d Ed. That there was not only a general *dispersion* of the sons of *Noah* about this time, but also a particular *division* of the earth amongst them, see *Bryant’s Observ.* on parts of ancient *Hist.* p. 260, &c. Some of the benefits of this Dispersion are described by *Dr. Owen*, B. L. § vii.

into so many *languages* (or, causing that *discord** among them, which made their future intercourse impracticable): and thereby rendered it impossible for any one species of idolatry to be universally established; nay, gave a considerable check to the progress of false worship in general; which had most probably been introduced by the rulers† of those times; and for which reason, their people then might be driven from them, to hinder its being universally imposed; as God's own people were afterwards dispersed every where to cure it.

After the *dispersion*, particular revelations were in all probability vouchsafed, wherever men were disposed to regard them. We find *Peleg* had his name prophetically given from that *dispersion*, which was to happen in his days‡; and not only

* *Ps.* lv. 9. *Le Clerc*, *ibid.* & *Prolegom.* in *Com. Diss.* 1. § 3. & in *Gen.* xi. 9. *Add 1 Cor.* i. 10. and *Vitringa*, *Obs. Sac. L.* 1. c. 9. § 6, &c. *Shuckford*, Vol. I. B. iii. p. 146. *Hutchinson* on the Confusion of Tongues. Another account of this *Confusion*, making it rather an oblivion of the old language, than any infusion of new ones, is given by *Rowland*, *ib.*

† See *Shuckford*, Vol. I. B. V. p. 353, &c. The same author gives a probable *reason* for this, Vol. II. B. ix. p. 457, &c. *Comp. Taylor's Scheme of Script. Div.* c. 20.

‡ *Gen.* x. 25. *Vid. Winder*, p. 130. and *Rotheram's* *Serm.* on the Wisdom of Providence in the administration of the World; who supposes that not only the intention, and end of God's dispersing mankind over the face of the earth, but likewise the plan of their dispersion, was communicated to them, p. 15. *Comp. Josephus* H. J. L. 1. c. 4. 'It was in *Chaldea*, *Canaan*, *Egypt*, and the neighbouring countries, says a learned writer, [*Leland*, *Advantage and Necessity of the Christ. Rev.* Vol. I. P. i. c. 19. p. 435.] that the great corruption first began; or at least these

his father *Eber*, but all the heads of families, mentioned in the eleventh chapter of *Genesis*, from *Noah* to *Abraham*, are supposed to have had the spirit of prophecy, on many occasions. However, *Noah* was undoubtedly both priest and prophet; and living till *Abraham* was near sixty years old, might be able to keep up a tolerable sense of true religion in the world; which was then but very thinly inhabited*. His religious son *Shem* likewise was living so long as *Jacob*'s time, and could not but be a great means of causing the faith and worship of the true God to continue among his *descendants*†.

But, notwithstanding a few righteous men, and some remains of true religion, idolatry, with its perpetual attendants, vice and superstition‡, had in a

were the places where it made the most considerable progress, and from whence it seems to have been derived to other nations. And accordingly, it pleased God in his wise and good providence to take proper methods for putting an early check to the growing corruption in those parts of the world where it chiefly prevailed.'

* *Gen.* xiii. 9. Vid. Part iii. p. 208, note (W); and *Newt.* Chron. p. 185—6. The *ark* itself, a certain monument of the deluge, continued several ages after *Abraham*, and preserved the memory of it, even among Pagans; (Vid. *Lucian* de D. S. *Allix*, Reflect. p. 68. *Joseph.* Antiq. L. i. c. 3. *ib.* 20. 2. and *Chrysostom.* Orat. de Perf. Char. *Bryant*, v. 2. p. 217. &c.) this might serve as the *Prototype*, or model for ship-building. *Evelyn* on Navigation and Commerce, p. 18. From whence the story of *Argo* and the fabulous *Argonautics.* *Bryant*, Vol. ii. p. 496, &c.

† Concerning the notices of religion in the world about this time, see *Allix*, b. i. c. 14. *Winder*, c. 9. Comp. *Meier*, Disp. Theol. de Vestig. Rel. Patriarch. inter Gentes. *Bremæ*, 1757.

‡ The attendants and effects of idolatry are well described by the author of *Wisdom*, c. xiv. 23—29. So that there reigned

little time so far prevailed among the sons of *Noah*, as to make it expedient for God, as well to shorten the lives of men*, as to withdraw his *Shekinah*, or presence, from the generality, who had made themselves unfit for such communication; and to single out some one particular people, to bear his name, and be his more immediate servants; and thereby preserve his worship pure, in some part of the world, amidst the various mixture of corruptions that were going to overspread it.

With this view *Abraham* is called; who was driven out of an idolatrous nation, in all probability, for opposing and refusing to comply with its idolatry †; and after many remarkable trials of his faith and constancy, admitted to a particular intimacy and *friendship* with his Maker. God enters

in all men, without exception, blood, manslaughter, theft, and dissimulation, corruption, unfaithfulness, tumults, perjury. 25. Disquieting of good men, forgetfulness of good turns, defiling of souls, changing of kind, disorder in marriages, adultery, and shameless uncleanness, 26. Add c. xii. 4, 5, 6. Vid. Arnald in loc.

* Concerning this great change in the divine economy, see Part III.

† *Maim. M. Nev. Buxtorf.* p. 421. See *Chandler's Vind. O. Test.* Pt. ii. p. 474. *Judith v. S. Shuckford, Vol. I. B. v. p. 269.* It is a tradition among both *Jews* and *Mahometans*, that *Abraham's* father *Terah* was a maker and vender of images, from whom some derive the name of *Teraphim*; (i. e. *Terah-aphim*, images representing *Terah's* countenance), and tell many stories of his difference with *Abraham* for a time on that account. Some of these may be seen in *Calmet*, or *Bayle*, *Diet. Art. Terah*, and *Abraham*. This is consistent with the account of *Abraham's* having once been himself an idolater, as some interpret *Rom. iv. 5.*

into *covenant* with him, institutes *circumcision*, as the *sign* and *seal* of this covenant*, engages to be his present guide, protector and defender; and to bestow, not only all kinds of temporal benefits on him, and on his seed†; but to make some of them the means of conveying one of a higher kind to all the nations of the earth; who should in an extraordinary manner be *blessed through him*‡. *Abraham*, no doubt, was fixed upon for his singular piety, and trust in God under various trials; and entitled to these high privileges by his extraordinary virtues; for whose sake (or rather for the sake of encouraging and rewarding of which virtues), the same privileges were continued to a part of his posterity, though less worthy of them. But, we cannot think that it was so much on his

* *Rom.* iv. 11. Concerning the propriety and various uses of this institution, see *Le Clerc* on *Gen.* xvii. 10, 11, 12.

† That the promise of possessing all the land from *Egypt* to *Euphrates* (*Gen.* xii. 7. xiii. 14, 15. xv. 18, &c.) was made to *Abraham's* seed in general, though the especial covenant was restrained to a *part* of them, see remarks on part of the 3d Vol. of the *Mor. Philos.* p. 89, 90. That the full execution of the former promise depended on their obedience, vid. *Durell* App. p. 153.

‡ *Gen.* xii. 3. xxii. 18. xxvi. 4. xxviii. 14. *Rom.* iv. 16, 17. *Gal.* iii. 8. 17. That the especial covenant, limiting the *Messiah's* descent to one branch of *Abraham's* posterity, and that peculiar dispensation which attended it, were not inconsistent with the original grant or promise, which constituted *Abraham* the *Father* of many *Nations*, from whom all nations of the earth were to derive a *Blessing*, and to whom therefore the *Gospel* is said to have been *preached* before *Christ* came into the world; see *Taylor's* *Covenant of Grace*, p. 6. 13, &c.

own account that he was thus distinguished; or, that *for his sake only** *faith*, or sincerity, is said to be *imputed to him for righteousness*; but rather for the common benefit of mankind was all this done; in order to make him an instrument, in the hand of Providence (and a fit one he was) to convey the same faith, and fear of God, to all the nations round him. And accordingly we find him greatly favoured, and distinguished among the neighbouring princes; and *Kings reproved for his sake*; who are acquainted with his prophetic character, and desire his intercession with God†, and obtain assistance through that intercession. History tells us of his conversing on the subject of religion, with the most learned *Egyptians*‡, and being very highly esteemed by them; from whom probably they afterwards derived the rite of circumcision§, among other religious institutes. We are

* *Rom.* iv. 24.

† *Gen.* xii. 17. and xx. 7.

‡ *Josephus*, L. i. c. 9. contr. *Apion.* passim. *Damascen.* in *Euseb.* Præp. Evang. L. ix. c. 16. There is at this day a select number of families in *Egypt*, who call themselves descendants from *Abraham*, and are in high esteem there, and give themselves up intirely to the study of music, medicine, and astronomy, and never intermix with any other *Egyptians*, or marry out of their own families. *Nouveau Voyage de Grece, d'Egypt, &c.* *Hague*, 1724. p. 106, &c.

§ *Shuckford*, B. v. p. 322, &c. and B. vii. p. 132, &c. *Comp. Spencer de Leg.* 1. 4. and *Cleric.* in *Gen.* xvii. 10.

Others derive it from *Joseph.* *Univers. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 527. note *r.* and p. 453. note *n.* Add *Jenkin.* Vol. I. p. 97. *Grot.* Ep. 327.

Others suppose it introduced by *Ishmael* (*Rev. Exam.* Vol. II.

informed, that his name was had in the greatest veneration all over the East*: that the *Magians*, *Sabians*, *Persians*, and *Indians* all gloried in him, as the great reformer of their religion †. And, as he was let into the counsels of the Almighty, and taught to reason, and reflect upon them; as he was fully apprised of God's just judgment in the miraculous overthrow of the four wicked cities ‡,

p. 190.) or his posterity the *Shepherds*, or *Arabians*, as is made very probable by the author of Remarks on part of the 3d Vol. of the *Mor. Philos.* p. 59, &c. Comp. *Witsii* Egypt. L. iii. c. 6. *Bochart*. Geogr. L. iv. c. 32. This subject is largely discussed by *Findlay*, Vind. pt. 2. § 21.

* Vid. *Euseb.* Præp. Evang. L. ix. c. 16, 17, &c.

† *Prideaux*, Part i. B. iv. p. 225. Comp. *Hyde* De Rel. Vct. *Pers.* c. 2. and 3. and *Univers. Hist.* pass. It is remarkable that the *Lacedemonians* retained the memory of him for above 1600 years, and under their king *Areus* claimed kindred with the *Jetes*, as being of the stock of *Abraham*. 1 *Maccab.* xii. 21, &c. *Joseph.* Ant. L. xii. 5. (see *Waterland's* Postscript to Script. Vind. Pt. 2. p. 142. or *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 53. and 90. How this might come about, see *Stillingfleet*, Orig. S. B. iii. c. 4. or *Shuckford*, B. x. p. 51.) nor is it unlikely that from the *Abrahamans*, or sons of *Abraham*, the *Brachmans* might descend, and derive their name. *Newt.* Chron. p. 351. It is likewise observed, that the *Persians* adhered so strictly to the religion of *Abraham*, as to keep clear of the most gross idolatry, for a long time. Vid. *Cleric.* in *Is.* xxi. 9. and *Ind. Philolog.* *Stanley*, voc. *Statua*.

‡ Some authors call them *five*, according to the common name, *Pentapolis* (*Wisdom* x. 6. *Joseph. B. J.* v. 8.) including *Zoar*, which had been condemned to destruction, but was spared at the intercession of *Lot*. Of these, two are sometimes named by themselves, as being superior to the rest. *Gen.* xix. 24, 25.

Some suppose that, besides the four principal cities in that valley (*Sodom*, *Gomorrah*, *Adma*, *Zeboim*, or *Bela*, *Gen.* xiv. 2. *Deut.* xxix. 23.) there were nine other inferior ones destroyed

with the particular circumstances of it*; as well as his most gracious intent of providing a Redeemer for all mankind, and *rejoiced to see his day*†, it is very probable, that he and his family would propagate these doctrines, together with their consequences, wheresoever they went‡.

(called the *daughters of Sodom*, *Ezek. xvi. 46*, &c.) which agrees with the account of *Strabo*, *Geogr. L. xvi. Comp. Cleric. App. Com. in Gen.*

* *Gen. xviii.* Some of the causes, ends and uses of this severe dispensation, as well as testimonies of its reality, are set forth in *Owen's B. L. § 9.*

† *Joh. viii. 50.* ἠγαλλισατο, *gestiebat*, longed earnestly. *Warburton* supposes, that the command of sacrificing *Isaac*, was a mode of information by action, instead of words, concerning the great sacrifice of *Christ*, given to *Abraham* at his own earnest request. *Div. Leg. Vol. II. Pt. ii.* which is well illustrated by *Gilbank*, *Script. Hist. of Abr. p. 113*, &c. and might perhaps receive some confirmation, by observing that this scene most probably was placed upon the very spot where *Christ* actually suffered: (see *Crit. Notes, Genes. xxii. 1, 2. Comp. Pool, Synops. ib. and Patrick on Gen. xxii. 9.*) in which such another coincidence might be observed between the type and person typified, in respect of his *death*, as *Episcopus* remarks concerning the place and circumstances of his *birth*. Nemp̄e ita ego mecum sentio; Id non casu, sed, Deo ita procurante, evenisse, ut vel hac etiam ratione Deus testatum faceret filium hunc, Davidis filium esse, paremque cum eo fortunam sortitum atque expertum esse. Enimvero pastor fuerat David, qui vitam suam in stabulo forte, *forte, inquam, hoc ipso in loco ubi Jesum Maria peperit*, egerat, et quando ad regiam dignitatem vocabatur, gregem patris sui pascebat, atque ita veluti a stabulo et pabulo ovium ad regium thronum vehebatur, uti diserte ipse fatetur, *Psal. lxxviii. 70, 71, 72.* In stabulo igitur cum nascitur filius ejus, annon patrem suum refert? *Episcop. Inst. Theol. L. iii. c. 12. p. 175.*

* *Gen. xviii. 19.* See *Burnet's Boyle's Lect. pag. 536. fol.* 'God called *Abraham* out of his own country, and made him

But though the Deity was pleased to manifest himself, in a more frequent and familiar manner, to *Abraham*; yet were not the rest of the world wholly overlooked. There were, no doubt, many other shining lights, and eminent professors of pure religion, who, like *Lot* in the midst of *Sodom*, were as eminently preserved, and supported in that profession: we see *Laban* and *Bethuel* acknowledging the *Lord**; and the former of them, notwithstanding the mixture of idolatry in his household†, favoured with a vision‡. Nor was the spirit of prophecy, or divine revelation, confined to *Abraham*, or to his family. In *Canaan* we meet with *Melchisedeck*, king, and priest of the most high God§: who is acquainted with the blessing promised to *Abraham*, and confirms it to him; and to whom the patriarch himself pays homage. *Abimelech* king of *Gerar* receives an admonition from the *Lord*, and readily pays a due regard to it||; the same sense of religion and virtue descends to his son¶; from whence we learn, that this country

travel from place to place, to make him thereby famous in the world, and to invite men by that means to inquire after his profession, his hopes, and his religion. *Allix*, Reflect. B. ii. c. 12.

* *Gen.* xxiv. 31, 50. † *Gen.* xxxi. 19, 30. ‡ *Gen.* xxxi. 24.

§ Perhaps the Patriarch *Shem* himself. Vid. *Cumberland*, de Leg. Patr. p. 424, &c. *Bedford*, Scrip. Chron. p. 318. *Lightfoot*, Misc. 1010. The same opinion is maintained by many other authors mentioned by *Calmet*, Dict. Vol. II. p. 177. *Comp. Sharpe*, Rise and Fall of *Jerusalem*, p. 1, &c. and prolegom. in *Hyde* opusc. p. xxi.

|| *Gen.* xx.

¶ *Gen.* xxvi. 10, 11.

was at that time far from arriving at that great degree of corruption, which it reached in a few generations after. In Arabia we find *Job*, and his three friends, all of regal dignity, as some say*, entering into the deepest points of divinity, and agreed about the unity, omnipotence, and spirituality of God; the justice of his providence, and many other fundamentals of religion; as also mentioning a divine inspiration or revelation, as no very uncommon thing †. *Eliphaz* had his visions and revelations‡ as well as *Job*, though in a lower degree§; and the latter expresses his faith in much stronger terms than are elsewhere to be met with near his time; if according to the addition made to the seventy, he was the fifth from *Abraham*||, or according to others, contemporary either with him, or *Isaac*¶. Though in truth, it is not very easy to settle either the date of that piece**, or the import of several expressions in it. Some

* Vid. LXX. in fin. *Job*, *Tobit* ii. 16. Vulg. Lat.—*Job* insultant *Reges*. Comp. Letter to the author of *Div. Leg.* 1765. p. 57.

† Vid. *Cleric*. in *Job* vi. 10. xxiii. 12. xxix. 4. xxxiii. 15. 23.

‡ C. iv. 12, 15, 16.

§ See *Patrick*, App. to Par. on *Job*, p. 59.

|| See *Calmet*, Dict. or *Costard's* Observations, p. 13, or *Heath*, p. 24. or *Findlay* against *Voltaire*, Pt. 3. § 3.

¶ *Jurieu*, Crit. Hist. Vol. I. p. 18. *Shuckford*, B. vii. p. 136, &c. *Selden* de Jur. Nat. &c. L. vii. c. 11. *Goguet*, Vol. I. Dissert. ii.

** That it could not be more ancient than the time of *Moses* may be inferred from the mention of letters and writings, c. xiv. 23, 24. which had no existence before they were communicated

place it in the days of *David* or *Solomon* *, others bring it down as low as the captivity: nor are they without their reasons(*m*). However, all seem to

to the Israelites from Mount Sinai, as is made highly probable by the authors referred to below, in note *F*. p. 147.

* *V. Vitringa* in *Jes.* Proleg. p. 9.

(*m*) See some of them in the *Five Letters* on Inspir. p. 99. and *Le Clerc* on *Job* i. 6, 8, 11, 22.—ii. 9.—vi. 10.—xi. 10, 22.—xxiii. 12.—xxvi. 12.—xxx. 27.—xxxviii. 3.—xlii. 7. *Id.* Sentim. de Theolog. L. ix. p. 177, &c. et Biblioth. Chois. Tom. I. a. 1. Add *Chaldaismi* in indice ad *Cler.* Comm. Tom. IV. with *Findlay*, p. 433, 434, *n*.

The mixture of Chaldee in the composition which *Le Clerc* makes out in many instances, beside the *in pro im*, (*Peters's Crit. Diss.* p. 133.) seems of some moment towards determining it to be more modern than is usually imagined, and is, I apprehend, rather too slightly passed over both by the author of *Crit. Diss.* and those other eminent writers he produces; though *Le Clerc*, with his usual modesty, leaves the consequence from thence to the date of the book wholly undecided: nay, he himself assigns a reason why the latter is no necessary consequence from the former: *Jobus, nimirum, ad Euphratem in Husitide habitavit, ubi lingua Chaldaica, aut Chaldaicæ adfuit obtinebat.* *Id.* in c. xv. 13.

As to the famous passage in c. xix. 25. on which he gives his judgment with more freedom, I must produce the conclusion, though somewhat of the longest, in his own words. *Jam ex ipsis totius hujus loci verbis satis liquere potest, Jobum de resurrectione sua non agere; quam nunquam veteres hic quæsvissent, nisi pravis interpretationibus transversa acti fuissent; ut conjicere est ex Judæis, qui verba Hebraica sequuti, dogma, quod alioqui credunt, hinc exsculpi posse non putarunt. Sed id ipsum, cum ex multis aliis locis, in quibus satis aperte Jobus ostendit statum animorum, post mortem, tunc ignotum fuisse, tum ex totius libri argumento facile colligitur. Quæritur in eo, cur qui non sunt deteriores aliis qui boni habentur et revera sunt, interdum inusitatis calamitatibus premantur; quod quomodo consentire queat*

agree that, whoever was the author of it, it is built upon a real character; and that decorum is preserved so as generally to suit the notions in it to the patriarchal times*: and what religious notices might be gathered from this dramatic history, supposing it known in those times, may be seen at large in a judicious writer†.

cum justitia divina, nec Jobus, nec amici possunt comminisci; imo nec Deus ipse, ubi Jobum postea adloquitur, docet. Nimirum solutio problematis, et una consolatio, qua Jobi animus pacari poterat, peti debuit ex alterius vitæ cognitione; quam si novissent Jobi amici, vetuissent eum usque adeo perturbari et lamentari: esse enim dixissent aliud tempus præmiorum virtutis, idque expectari ab eo debere, post hanc vitam mortalem; et eo majora præmia relaturum, quo graviores calamitates constantius tulisset: quibus præmiis mala hujus vitæ Deus abunde esset pensaturus. Jobus ipse hoc ad animum revocasset, nec usque adeo æstuasset. Quod si talia eorum mentem non subiissent, Deus certe, si res jam revelata erat, dixisset, monuissetque Jobum, sibi visum fuisse tot malis ejus virtutem explorare; ut magis in ea ipse firmaretur, aliique eam imitarentur, quibus similia contingerent; nec esse cur sibi duritiem & propemodum injustitiam exprobraret; se enim non propter singularia quædam peccata passum esse eum tantis & tot subitis malis opprimi, sed ut ejus virtus magis eniteret, exemploque aliis esset; cæterum effecturum se ne hominem constantiæ suæ pœniteret, æternis & eximiis in eum collatis præmiis. Quæ oratio, (si rem tum patefecisset Deus) multo ejus summæ sapientiæ convenientior erat quam creatio crocodili & hippopotami, aliaque id genus; quæ Jobum quidem terrere potuerunt diviniæ potentiæ metu, sed solari vix potuerunt. Hæc qui ad animum revocabunt, facile intelligent, nihil esse cur, veluti per fiducias, conemur resurrectionem & vitam æternam hinc extorquere. *Le Clerc's* opinion is confirmed by *Heath* in *loc.* Add *Durell*, ib. p. 67, &c.—But compare *Taylor*, ib. c. 24.

* See the *Theological Repository*, p. 70, &c.

† *Taylor*, Scheme of Script. Div. c. 24.

To proceed: In Chaldea we meet with *Balaam*, a true prophet*; yet one who, from his own personal merit, had no pretensions to the word of God; since he so notoriously loved, and followed *the wages of unrighteousness*; and at length justly perished among the idolatrous *Midianites*†; having taught them to seduce and corrupt those, whom he knew to be the chosen people of God‡. Considering, I say, the character of this person, he seems to have had no particular title to the gift of prophecy (n);

* See *Patrick*, App. to Par. on *Job*, p. 60.

† *Numb.* xxxi. 8.

‡ *Numb.* xxiv. 9. and xxxi. 16. *Mich.* vi. 5. *Rev.* ii. 14.

(n) Whatever might have been his former behaviour, it was certainly very bad in the whole of this affair; during which, he had the fullest revelations, and yet was continually disobeying, or endeavouring to defeat the intent of them; as may be seen in Bp. *Butler's* Sermon on that subject, and *Shuckford's* Connection, B. xii. p. 314, &c.

As to the particular *manner* of these revelations, we may, I think, suppose them to have been all alike made in vision, dream, or *trance*, [as our translators have interpreted one hereafter mentioned, and which some circumstances render very probable, notwithstanding what has been suggested to the contrary by Bp. *Newton* *] though from the narration it is equally difficult here, as in some other parts of scripture, to distinguish between real fact delivered in the most literal sense, and visionary, symbolical representations, such as occur in *Gen.* xv. 5, &c. *1 Kings* xxii. 19. *Job* i. 6. ii. 1, &c. xxxviii. *Is.* vi. 1. xx. 2, 3. *Jer.* xiii. 1—7. xviii. 3, 4. xix. 1, 2. xxv. 15, 17. xxvii. 2, 3. *Ezek.* iii. 1, 2. iv. 6, &c. v. 1—4. xii. 3, &c. *Hos.* i. 2, 3. iii. 1—3. [v. *Pocock* in loc.] *Zech.* i. 8. iii. 1. and perhaps *Gen.* ii. 21—24. and xxxii.

* *Works*, v. 1. Disc. p. 76.

and therefore we may suppose that in those days it was not so uncommon a favour, but might be

2, 24. vid. *Theodoret*. (though Dr. *Clarke* gives another interpretation of this last passage, *Serm.* xix. p. 126. *Dubl. Ed.*) and *Smith's Sel. Dis.* c. 6. To which we may add those visible appearances to *St. Stephen* and *St. Paul*, *Acts* viii. 55, 56. xxii. 6, &c. [see *Elsner*, *Comm.* in *Matt.* v. 1. p. 38.] with that account of a star being seen by the wise men. *Matt.* ii. 9, 10, [*Elsner*, *ib.* p. 34, &c.] and perhaps the whole story of *Christ's temptation in the wilderness*, as is made very probable in *Farmer's Enquiry into its nature and design*, printed A. D. 1761. Comp. *Mason* on *Matt.* iv. 11. and *Jenning's Lectures*, B. I. c. vi. p. 365, or *Harwood*, *Introd.* to the N. Test. c. v. § p. 178. That of the *Angel* meeting *Balaam* in the way, seems to be thus explained by himself, *Numb.* xxiv. 3, 4. and 16. where he alludes to the very circumstance of his *eyes being open*, and yet he had no use of them without another *opening* by the Deity, c. xxii. 31. on which account they are said, with equal propriety, to have been before *shut*, c. xxiv. Nor is it a very easy supposition that instead of betraying the least token of surprise at hearing the ass speak, which was so natural to any person awake and in his perfect senses, he should persist in his blind fury, and make the following reply, more like one under the disorder attending a dream: *I would there were a sword in my hand, for now would I kill thee*, c. xxii. 29. Nor is the *Angel's* being thrice prevented from slaying *Balaam*, merely by the ass's turning away thus often, v. 33. less unaccountable; if we are resolved to take the whole story literally. Nor does it seem probable that he, who was said to be in the retinue of the princes of Moab, *Numb.* xxii. 21. should at any time be so far separated from them in the way, as to give room for such a remarkable transaction, without their knowledge, as by the account it appears to be. 'Ita dico, in negotio *Bileami*, totum illud quod in via ei contigisse dicitur, & quomodo asina loquuta fuerit, in visione prophetica factum esse; quia in fine historiae explicatur quod *angelus Dei* loquutus fuerit.' *Maimon.* *Mor. Nevoch.* P. ii. c. 42. To the same purpose *R. Levi Ben. Gerson*; and *Philo* seems to be of the same opinion, by his omission of this very remarkable circumstance,

conferred on many other persons likewise, in other parts of the world*, whose history is not delivered down to us †: and upon the whole, it seems probable that, as *in every nation, those who feared God and worked righteousness, were accepted of him* ‡, so he was pleased to manifest himself, wherever men were disposed to make a proper use of that manifestation: and in such time, manner, and degree, as would best answer the ends of his good providence, and most effectually promote the interest of religion.

as is observed by *Shuckford*, B. xii. p. 315. Add *Memoirs of Lit.* April, 1710, p. 14. and *Jortin's Dissertations*, Diss. v. p. 189. *Leibnitz* endeavours to prove the same thing in his history of *Balaam*, Gen. Dict. Vol. VI. p. 678. Which, I think, is pretty clear in his case, though some of those others above-mentioned may perhaps belong to that species of revelation by *action*, which is explained at large, in *Div. Leg.* B. iv. sect. 4. and B. vi. sect. 5. Nor does the reference made to this part of *Balaam's* history by *St. Peter* determine any thing with regard to the literal sense of the passage before us; or exclude the prophetic scenery supposed; since it is observed to be merely a translation from an Hebrew writer of uncertain authority, who puts words into the ass's mouth that are not mentioned in the original account of *Moses*. See *Benson* on *2 Pet.* ii. 16. However, we may safely conclude with *Jortin*, that 'since *Balaam* relates it as a fact, and *Moses* recorded it as *Balaam* gave it; and other prophets have described their visions like real facts, and the moral use and application is the same either way; it is no wonder that *St. Peter*, mentioning the story, did not meddle with the distinction between real and visionary transactions, which concerned not his purpose in the least.' *Ib.* p. 191.

* See *Judg.* vii. 13, &c. and notes below.

† Vid. *Cleric.* Prolegom. Diss. iii. 7. 2. de Script. Pent. p. 36.

‡ *Acts* x. 35.

Not to insist upon the numberless traditions of supernatural appearances, and the common belief of them, all over the world*; which notion can hardly be supposed to have arisen at first, without a good foundation, though numberless impostures (which yet are ever imitations of something real, and almost a natural consequence of its reality †) have rendered all reports of that kind, for these many ages, very suspicious.

But to proceed. When it had pleased God to adopt *Abraham*, and some part of his posterity, in a peculiar manner, and to establish his *Covenant* with them‡; we find all possible care and condescension used, to train them up by degrees in suitable conceptions of their Creator; a frequent correspondence held with them; new promises given; in order to strengthen and confirm their faith, and fix their dependence on the God of heaven. He reveals himself to *Isaac* and *Rebecca*;

* See *Patrick* on *Numb.* xxii. 9. Append. to *Job*, p. 60, &c. *Huet.* Quæst. *Alnetan.* c. 2. n. 1, 2. *Shuckford*, B. i. p. 47.

† See *Adams's* judicious answer to *Hume's* Essay on Miracles, p. 110, 111. Good and evil angels under some former dispensations of religion might appear and act in a sensible manner: but under the present dispensation they may for wise reasons (particularly, because we are now sufficiently instructed in their nature and agency) be wholly invisible; nor may we be capable of distinguishing their secret internal impressions from the suggestions of our own minds; or the external, kind assistances of good angels, or the malicious injuries of evil angels, from the common course of providence. *Taylor's* Scheme of Script. Div. c. 12.

‡ *Rom.* ix. 5.

and foretells the condition of their two sons*; renews the promise made to *Abraham*†; blesses his son *Isaac*; miraculously increases his substance; and soon makes him the envy of the neighbouring princes‡. He converses in the same manner with *Jacob*; and repeats the same promise§; gives him the right of primogeniture; engages to be with him, and keep him, in all places whither he should go||. This he confirms by many extraordinary blessings; and frequent appearances¶; vouchsafing to talk with him face to face**; to bestow all kinds of riches on him; and strike the terror of him into all the cities round about††. And yet we find all this little enough to keep up, even in *Jacob*, a tolerable sense of duty, and dependence on his God: After the first vision he is surprised, and hesitates; and seems to make a kind of stipulation with his Maker. *If*, says he, *God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again*

* *Gen.* xxi. 22, 23. From this circumstance of *Rebecca's* going to inquire of the Lord, *Leland* infers, that there was at that time in *Canaan* a prophet or prophets distinct from *Abraham* and *Isaac*, to whom persons might have recourse to know the will of God. *Advantage, &c.* of Rev. Vol. I. Pt. i. c. 2. p. 78. n.

† *Gen.* xxvi. 24.

‡ *Gen.* xii. 13, 14.

§ *Gen.* xxviii. 13, 14.

|| *Gen.* xxviii. 15.

¶ *Gen.* xxxii. 1. xxxv. 1, 9.

** *Gen.* xxxii. 29.

†† *Gen.* xxxv. 5.

to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God*: that is, if he will preserve and prosper me in my undertakings, he shall be my God, rather than any other: And it appears not to have been till after many such revelations, and deliverances, and his being also reminded of them †; that he set himself, in earnest, to reform the religion of his own family, by driving out all strange gods ‡. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean; and change your garments, and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; And I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went §.

* Gen. xxviii. 21, 22. See *Le Clerc* on the place.

† Ch. xxxv. 1.

‡ Ch. xxxv. 2, 3.

§ The idolatry here mentioned, may perhaps be thought chiefly to relate to the Shechemite women in *Jacob's* household, Gen. xxxiv. 29. See *Shuckford*, B. vii. p. 164. In support of which opinion it may be observed, that the words Elohi hannekar, above rendered *strange gods*, more properly signify the *gods of the stranger*. Deos alienigenæ. Vulg. L. However that *Jacob* himself had yet but very imperfect notions of the Deity, particularly of his *omnipresence*, is observed by *Le Clerc* on Gen. xxviii. 16. and to the same purpose *Cyril Alex.* L. iv. p. 115 there cited. And that the sense of religion was not great among his sons, appears from their behaviour to the Shechemites, and from so many of them conspiring the destruction of the most innocent and amiable *Joseph*.

Having been informed, that the above account of *Jacob's* vow has been by some judged too degrading; I shall here set down the observation made on it by an ingenious friend, Dr. *Taylor*,

Thus was God obliged to treat, even with the *Patriarchs* themselves, by way of positive *Covenant*, and express compact, to give them a portion of present temporal blessings, as introductory to, and an earnest of future *, spiritual ones; and engage

“ I am persuaded, translators and critics have not done justice to the good old Patriarch. His vow consists of two parts. I. A recapitulation of the promise made to him in the preceding vision [*Gen.* xxviii. 13, 14, 15.] v. 20, 21. II. The subject matter of the vow which he grounded upon it, v. 22. The recapitulation of the promise runs thus. *Seeing* [עַם]* God will be with me, [וְ] *and* will keep me in the way wherein I go, [וְ] *and* will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, [וְ] *and* I shall return again to my father’s house in peace (or in prosperous circumstances) [וְ] *and* seeing the Lord will be my God; III. The vow follows, v. 22. [וְ] *and*, *Therefore* † this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house [a place dedicated to his worship] and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.”

* That from the beginning of the world each patriarchal covenant, or blessing, was to be understood as a *pledge* of other distant and superior ones, may be seen in Lord *Barrington’s Essay on the several Dispensations of God*, p. 20, 24, 25, 59, 62, 69.

* This particle עַם, *if*, is not here *conditional*, but *causal*, quoniam, quandoquidem; as *Gen.* xxiii. 13. *Numb.* xxii. 20. *Judg.* xi. 9. *Jer.* xxiii. 38. *Ezek.* xxxv. 6, &c. See *Noldius*.

† In a series of copulatives the last assumes a signification different from the preceding copulatives. So *Gen.* xxv. 34, [וְ] *and* Esau did eat and drink, [וְ] *and* rose up, [וְ] *and* went his way: [וְ] *and* thus Esau despised his birth-right. And in the Greek Epigram,

Δυλος Επιλήτης γενομένη, και σωμα' ανυπηζος,
Και πειναι Ιζος, ΚΑΙ Φιλος αθαναιος.

Here, I presume, the last και is to be rendered by *tamen*, *veruntamen*, *nihilominus*. So in this place under consideration, the last [וְ] *and*, which precedes the vow, should be rendered *then*, or *therefore*. But our translators have

them in his service by immediate visible rewards; till they could be led on to higher views; and were prepared, by the bringing in of a better hope, to draw nigh unto him. And we may observe what care was always taken, to suit his dispensations to the state of the world, and introduce each as soon as it was wanted, and in such a way as was most necessary, to correct disorders and reform abuses, as they arose; and thereby ever keep up a face of religion; and gradually increase the substance of it: in the same manner, as Providence always took care to impart to mankind, so much knowledge of the world, the ways of cultivating it, and arts of living, as was then requisite to make life a blessing to them; though their knowledge of both kinds was neither of so refined a nature, nor so high a degree, as it must reach, by the experience and improvements of after-ages.

Mankind were scarcely got out of their *childhood* yet, with regard to what may be termed the *theory of religion*; and notwithstanding there might be some extraordinary persons, who had a more enlarged prospect of things, and entertained more

given it this sense, not before the vow, but before the last article of the recapitulation of the promise; and so have not done justice to the good old Patriarch's character. I have looked into *Pagnin's* interlineary version, and find that the Latin translation will enable you to form a just idea of this criticism. Only observe, that *Montanus*, his revisor and corrector, has printed the *et* before the last article of the recapitulation, which we render *then*, in the *Italic* character; intimating, I suppose, that the copulative there is redundant; in order the better to make out the common way of interpreting the place; but this does violence to the original, and aggravates the mistake. *Comp. Purver on Gen. xxviii. 21.*

worthy sentiments of the divine Providence, such as *Enoch, Noah, Abraham*; yet these were far superior to the times in which they lived; and we have reason to think, that the generality both in this, and some later ages, extended their views no farther than the present life, and its conveniences*: and though from the confused remains of ancient tradition, they acknowledged some power above them; and frequently applied thither for direction in affairs; yet, it was in the petty affairs of this world only; and their belief and worship were framed accordingly. How many of these superior powers there might be, or how far their supposed influence might reach, they knew not: uncertain whether there was one Supreme Governor of the whole world, or many co-ordinate powers, presiding over each country†, climate, or particular

* This seems to have been the case even with *Abraham* himself for some time, who, upon having an extraordinary promise made to him by God in a vision, *Gen. xv. 1. Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*; rises no higher in his answer, than only to request an heir for his substance, v. 2, 3. *And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed; and lo, one born in my house is mine heir.*—Unless this be interpreted in the same sense with that general earnest desire of posterity so common in his time, and for which *Allix* has endeavoured to account, from the no less common expectation entertained by each particular family of having the *Messiah* descend from them [*Reflect. Pt. i. c. xv, &c.*] and which might therefore well be included in *Abraham's* request.

† *2 Kings xviii. 34, 35.*

place*; gods of the *hills*, and of the *valleys*, as they were termed in later times†; they thought, the more of these they could engage in their interest, the better; and therefore, wherever they came, like the *Samaritans*, they sought the manner of *the God of the land*; and served him together with their own gods‡. Thus was the world running apace into idolatry, and ready to lose all proper ideas of the true God, and his worship; had he not been pleased to interpose, and take effectual care to preserve these pure in some one nation; to be kept apart from the common contagion, and made, as it were, the repository of true religion; and a channel to convey it to the rest of mankind; as soon, and in as high a degree, as they should become capable of receiving it.

To this purpose, he makes way for the removal of *Jacob* and his family, to one of the most polished parts of the world at that time; and introduces them into it in so advantageous a manner, as to give them opportunity of imparting somewhat of the true religion, with advantage, to the most considerable families in it§; and without any danger of sharing in those corruptions which were getting

* See *Numb.* xxiii. 13, 27.

† 1 *Kings* xx. 23, 28. Vid. *Calmet*.

‡ 2 *Kings* xvii. 33.

§ It is very apparent from the *Mosaic* history, that the Hebrews were never held in such detestation or abhorrence by the Egyptians, but that they would freely converse, though they might not eat bread with them. *Owen*, B. L. s. 8. And ‘ when

ground there*. They are placed by themselves in a fruitful part of *Egypt*, bordering on that country out of which they had come, and into which they were at length to return†. Here they multiply exceedingly; yet by their occupation‡,

they departed out of Egypt we are expressly told, that a great multitude went also with them, who are all with good reason supposed to have been so many proselytes to their religion; as *Strabo* testifies. *Geogr. L. 16.*'

* 'Although the *Egyptian* priests were not, in my humble opinion, now idolaters; yet God, well knowing the infinity of wealth now pouring in upon them, and foreseeing the consequent increasing corruptions, always attendant upon great national wealth; kindly provided against them, by placing the wisest and best man in the world (*Joseph*) guardian of that people in general; and at the same time, the high favourite of their King, and ally of their priests, and continuing him in those characters for a long train of years; which, to my thinking, was a most adorable scheme to recover, promote, preserve, and if possible, perpetuate, their piety, virtue, and wisdom.' *Rev. Exam. Delaney, Vol. III. c. 9. p. 194.*—'I am certain, they were not idolaters when *Joseph* presided in *Egypt*; nor were they such gross idolaters, even when the children of *Israel* came out of *Egypt*; for leeks and onions were then a favourite food—although afterwards—they came to be deified.' *ib. 199.*

† *Pyle Paraphr. on Gen. xlvii. 4.*

‡ See *Gen. xlvi. 33, 34.* 'And here we cannot but admire his *wisdom* who found out and evacuated a land for them, I mean that of *Goshen*, in every respect suitable to the purpose: a land where they might live distinct by themselves, and yet daily converse with the most celebrated nation then upon earth; a land lately deserted by the *Shepherd Kings*, and their subjects, and therefore well adapted for the reception of *Shepherds* again. Nor can we less admire his *goodness*, who, when he had spied out this land for them, was pleased to detach from his country and kindred another person of eminent qualities and great piety,

are kept a separate people; and rendered more averse to the manners and religion of their task-masters, by a long and severe oppression: which might at first have been occasioned by their opposition to the growing idolatry*; and refusal to incorporate themselves with that infected nation: and the continuance of it became very necessary afterwards, both to keep up that opposition, and to inure them to restraint and government: but that it might have the effects intended, yet not proceed so far as to reduce them to an entire subjection to that more potent people, through a despair of any deliverance, the precise time of this their trial was foretold to *Abraham*†; and as soon as it had been accomplished, and they had cried for help to their God‡; they are brought back, in as wonderful a way as they had been sent thither; which also was foretold to *Jacob*§; and repeated by *Joseph*||; all the circumstances whereof are at large related in their history; and I may add, with all those characters of truth and consistency, which might be shewn to receive new confirmation, from every such attempt to bur-

and to send him, even *Joseph*,—as a kind of ambassador before them, to procure an interest for their settlement in it.' *Owen*, B. L. s. 8.

* See *Chandler*, Vind. O. T. pag. 487. and *Owen*, ib.

† *Acts* vii. 6.

‡ *Exod.* ii. 23.

§ *Gen.* xlvi. 4. and xlvi. 21.

|| *Gen.* i. 24, 25.

lesque and expose it, as is made by a late profligate writer*. To proceed,

The God of *Israel* having at length magnified himself over the *Egyptians* and their gods†, by a series of the most astonishing miracles; and rescued his people in such a manner, as must strike the utmost terror into the whole land; and spread his name much farther, by means of the many strangers that used to travel thither‡, in order to be acquainted with the history of that famous nation, from whom the greatest part of the world derived their policy and religion§, having thus made his name great among the heathen||; and worked so conspicuous a deliverance for his chosen people, as might, one would think, have been suf-

* *Moral Philosopher*, *Introduct.* to Vol. III.

† Perhaps by destroying all their images or temples. *Vid. Cleric. and Patr. in Exod. xii. 12. Comp. Numb. xxxiii. 4. Paraphr. Jonath. in loc. and 2 Sam. vii. 23.* The reason of which may be gathered from note (r) below, p. 105. Perhaps by exerting his power upon them in such a manner as served equally to demonstrate the nullity of the gods they worshipped, as to punish the crimes they had been guilty of in consequence of that worship. See this particularised in *Dr. Owen's Intent and Propr. of Script. Mir.* p. 37, &c. and *B. L.* s. 10.

‡ See the notes below, with *Chandler's Vindication of the hist. of the O. T.* Part ii. p. 464, &c. and p. 499.

§ *Vid. Diod. Sic. L. i. Herodot. L. ii. c. 43, &c. et Witsii Egypt. L. iii. c. 13. 16.*

|| That this remarkable punishment of the *Egyptians* was inflicted in great goodness to the generality of that nation themselves on the whole, as well as to the neighbouring nations round them, from whom they derived most of their grossest superstitions, may be seen at large in *Le Clerc on Psal. cxxxvi. 10—17.*

ficient to engage them for ever in his service; yet all this proving ineffectual to correct their infatuated proneness to idolatry, he is obliged to defer their entrance into the promised land for some time, and proceeds to instruct and exercise them in the wilderness; he patiently exhorts, and urges them to their duty, and warns them against all the vices of the people round about them: gives them statutes, and judgments, though not so perfect as they would have been were the subjects of them capable of receiving better, yet much more excellent and righteous than those of any other nation*; and such as were to be a model to the rest of the world†; sends his *angel before them, to keep them in the way*; takes upon himself the civil government of them; and by his presence guards, and directs them in all their undertakings. He conducts them through the neighbouring nations, with repeated signs and wonders(o); and continues

* *Deut.* iv. 8.

† Vid. *Joseph*, contr. Ap. *Selden* de Jur. Gent. &c. passim. *Euseb.* Præp. Ev. L. ix. c. 27.

(o) *Numb.* xiv. 14. *They have heard that thou, Lord, art among this people, that thou, Lord, art seen face to face; and thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them by day-time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night*; v. 15.—*The nations have heard the fame of thee.* Add *Deut.* ii. 25. *Josh.* ii. 10. *1 Sam.* iv. 8.—vi. 6. which places, by the way, furnish us with an answer to that objection of the *Mor. Phil.* Vol. III. p. 183. that ‘had God given any such—authority to the *Israelites*, as is hereafter mentioned—he would have let the people of *Palestine* know it, and in some authentic way or other assured them, that he had given away their country to strangers and foreign-

to try and discipline them, till either they were cured of those corruptions that had been contracted in *Egypt*, or the most incurable part of that generation were cut off* ;—till they were at length tolerably well attached to his government, and established in his worship ;—till they were fit and able to possess the promised land, to which they had an original right † ;—and till the present inha-

ers ; and that if they did not leave the land, and give up all their natural lawful possessions, rights, and properties, peaceably and without opposition, they must be all cut to pieces, men, women, and children :’ though this was not the truth of the case, of which more below. See *S. Brown’s* *Answ. to Christ. as old, &c.* p. 373, 374.

* *Numb.* xxvi. 65.

† This nation, when they demanded admission into Canaan, might have pleaded the *possession of their ancestors* for three successive generations :—that they were the first possessors of some parts [*Gen.* xii. 6. xiii. 3, 9, &c.]—that they had *built altars*, [xii. 7. xxxiii. 20.] and dug several *wells* in other parts of it ; [xxi. 25. xxvi. 18, &c.] and that they had *purchased* more than one place in that country [xxiii. 16, 17. xxxiii. 19.] On the other hand, the ancient inhabitants from the flood could have insisted on no other title than *Prescription* : and farther, however just their plea might have been, we are assured that they had absolutely *forfeited* it by their notorious violation of the law of nature. *Deut.* xx. 18, &c. *Durell*, App. to Parallel Prophecies of *Jacob* and *Moses*, p. 160. Another ingenious Author carries up the right of this people much higher. ‘ We are told that the nations of the earth had an inheritance assigned them, and that it was by Divine appointment. Moreover, that at the general dispersion it pleased God to have a provident regard for a nation which was to come, even for the sons of *Israel* ; and in the distribution of countries, had set bounds to other families, that they should not trespass on the inheritance of *Jacob*, which was his own portion. Thus, limits were prescribed according to the necessities of a

bitants were fully ripe for destruction*. At their entrance into it, he gives a summary recital of their former laws, to this new generation† with more such ordinances‡, both of a ceremonial and moral kind, as were best suited to their present temper and circumstances; and adapted every way to prevent the dangers, and correct the irregularities, to which they became continually liable(*p*); as well

people to come, and to the space which would be requisite for their numbers to inhabit. In other words, the land of *Canaan* was excepted out of the general partition. This space was usurped by the people who gave name to it. They knew the Divine allotment, yet wilfully transgressed: on which account they brought themselves and their posterity under the severest curse, and justified every thing which they afterward suffered for their rebellion: though at the time of their punishment this their guilt was accumulated with additional wickedness and apostacy.' *Bryant's Enquiries into some parts of ancient Hist.* p. 262. *Id. Analysis*, v. 3. p. 206, &c. and below p. 105. *Comp. Lookup Erron. Translat.* p. 57—61.

* *Gen.* xv. 16.

† *Pyle Paraphr.* on *Deut.* p. 2.

‡ *Deut.* i. 3, 5, 27, 31. *Neh.* ix. 14.

(*p*) See *Dr. Burnet's B. Lect.* p. 541. fol. and the author of *Div. Leg.* Vol. II. B. iv. sect. 6. 'It seems not to have been God's intention at first to lay upon them such numbers of ceremonies; for it was only after the commission of the sin of the golden calf, that God laid on them that heavy and troublesome yoke, on purpose to employ all their time, and so keep them from falling into idolatry again. *Allix*, *Reflect.* p. 203. *Ea est indoles vulgi, præsertim apud gentes idololatriæ deditas, ut a se numen coli satis studiose non putet, nisi operoso cultu id prose- quatur; cui indoli Moses sese adtemperavit. At si cum doctioribus hominibus, quales Christo in terras delapso plurimi erant, res ei fuisset, nihil aliud docuisset, quam quod Servator et apostoli discipulis suis inculcavere.—Cleric. in Ex. xxv. 31. Comp. Spencer*

as to prefigure, and by degrees prepare them for* a more perfect dispensation under the *Messiah*. The moral part breathed nothing but equity and benevolence; debarring all kinds of cruelty and oppression, by reminding them of their late heavy sufferings in that respect: it inculcated the greatest humanity, not only towards each other, but likewise toward strangers, servants, enemies; and even the beasts of the field†. The ceremonial

de Leg. *Hcb.* L. i. c. 4. sect. 4. *Trigland* de Orig. et Caus. Rit. *Mos.* *Burnet* de Fid. et Off. p. 17. from *Jer.* vii. 22, 23. [on the other side, see *Shuckford*, Vol. III. p. 151.] If this be a true account of the *Jewish* institution, then though it really was, what it is termed, a *yoke of bondage*, yet nevertheless it might well be imposed by God himself, as being the fittest thing for the people to whom, and the times in which it was delivered, and consequently not unworthy of having God for its author; as a licentious modern writer would insinuate, *Morgan*, *moral Philosopher*, Vol. I. p. 51, &c.

The various wise and good ends served in each part of the *Hebrew Ritual*, may be seen in *Lowman*, *Rational. pass.* That it could not have higher *sanctions*, because it was only a ritual, or have been more *perfect*, consistently with the chief of these ends, *viz.* its preparing men for a better state of religion under the *Messiah*, *vid. ibid.* Part iii. c. 2, 3. *Comp. Durell's* Dissert. on the *Mosaic Inst.* App. to *Parall. Proph. of Jacob and Moses.*

* See *Burnet's Boyle's Lect.* fol. 547. or *Berriman*, *Serm.* xxiii. or *Witsius*, *Ægypt.* L. iii. c. 14. sect. 17.

† *Exod.* xxii. 21—27. and xxxiii. 5, 6, 9—12. *Deut.* v. 14. x. 18. xiv. 21. xvi. 11. and xxii. 1—4, 6, 7. xxiii. 7. xxiv. 10, &c. xxv. 1—4. xxvi. 12. xxvii. 19. *Lev.* xix. 9, 10, 23—37. and xxv. 35—38. See *Leland's* *Answ. to Christ. as old*, &c. V. II. p. 447, &c. *Le Clerc* on *Gen.* viii. 9, 10. *Philo*, de *charitate. Joseph.* *contr. Ap.* L. ii. So utterly false and slanderous is the following assertion of *Ld. Bolingbroke* [*Works*, Vol. III. p. 296] ‘The first principles, and the whole tenor of the *Jewish* laws took them out of all moral obligations to the rest of mankind.’—

parts were solemn and splendid *, apt to engage and fix the attention of a people, whose heart was *gross* ; fitted to inspire them with an awful reverence for the whole ; and withdraw their affections from the pomp and pageantry of idol worship, which had so very surprisingly bewitched the world about that time. It was filled with operose, magnificent rites, to keep them duly employed and attached to it ; and so far incorporated with their civil polity, that the same things were duties of religion, and acts of state ; and the service of God became the great business, as well as entertainment of their lives (q).

Nor was this institution wholly confined to the

* *Welsted*, Scheme of Prov. p. 70, &c. Agreement of the Customs between the *East-Indians*, and the *Jews*, art. 3. p. 23.

(q) See *Univers. Hist.* p. 694. *Edwards's Survey*, Vol. I. p. 242, 255, &c. or *Limborch*, *Anic. Collat.* p. 317.

We may add, that the ceremonial part itself might have a moral view, representing several duties to them in that emblematical, and parabolic way, which was well known, and commonly made use of in those times. See instances in *Burnet's B. Lect.* p. 542. fol.

Other rites were instituted in *Commemoration* of great and signal events, and extraordinary acts of providence towards their nation ; the keeping up a constant remembrance of which could not but be of great use for preserving the love and worship of God amongst them ; for awakening their gratitude, and engaging their dutiful obedience. *Leland*, *Div. Auth. of the O. and N. T.* asserted against the *Moral Philos.* p. 50.

Nor were the public *feasts*, in which they were all obliged to meet at one place, of less use ; by keeping them united together in one body politic. *Le Clerc* on *Exod.* v. 3. and xxiii. 14.

Of the great use of the *jubilce* for the same end. *Id.* in *Lev.* xxv. 10. p. 318.

Jews. The law itself was given to strangers*, and those that accompanied them from *Egypt*; the *Covenant* was made with all the *Gentiles*, that should hereafter become proselytes to their religion†; and sufficient care was taken to communicate it to them, as we shall see presently.

And though the children of *Israel* were not allowed to have any commerce with the *Seven Nations*, but were commanded to destroy them, and possess themselves of their country, on their refusing a submission, and rejecting offers of peace‡: yet, in order to prevent their imagining themselves to be the only favourites of Heaven, and learning to despise and hate the rest of mankind (as they were but too apt to do, and which, to a people under their circumstances, was in some measure unavoidable), they were told at the same time, that it was for the incorrigible wickedness of these nations§ (who of all others had been

* *Deut.* xxix. 11. xxxi. 12. *Josh.* viii. 33, 35. *Exod.* xii. 19, 49.

† *Deut.* xxix. 14, 15. *Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord, and also with him that is not here with us this day.* See *Lev.* xxiv. 22. and *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 60—65. or *Worthington's* Essay, p. 130.

‡ *Deut.* xx. 10, &c. *Josh.* ii. 12. xi. 19, 20. xvi. 10. xvii. 13. See *Univ. Hist.* p. 531, 532. note I. *Owen*, B. L. s. 12. n. p. *Edwards's* Survey, p. 355, &c. *Patrick* on *Ex.* xxiii. 32. *Shuckford* Connection, Vol. III. B. xii. p. 453, &c. *Selden* De Jur. Nat. L. vi. c. 14. *Findlay*, Answ. to *Voltaire*, p. 130, &c.

§ *Lev.* xviii. 24, 25. and xx. 23. See *Leland* against *Christ.* as old, &c. Vol. II. p. 429, &c. ‘The destruction of these na-

favoured with the best means of information, *viz.* from the examples of so many eminent men placed amongst them, and from the judgments of God so remarkably set before them*), that the Lord had driven them out; as he would do *them* also, if they followed their steps†; that if any of these people remained long unsubdued, they would infallibly prove a snare to them‡; and that therefore, as well for their own security, as in execution of the divine vengeance, they were obliged to extirpate them, at least, the present generation§; or to destroy their *national polity*||; and at the same time, were sufficiently warned to avoid their crimes. They were likewise often reminded of their own perverseness, and ingratitude¶; and assured that it was not for their own sakes that they were thus distinguished**; for they had always been a stiff-necked, and rebellious people; but, in regard to the promise made to their forefathers, for the sake of some righteous men amongst them; and on account of the superior wickedness of these na-

tions was more particularly severe, because their idolatry was of the grossest nature; for they offered up their enemies in sacrifice, and even their own sons and daughters unto *Molech*. Taylor's Essay on the Beauty of the Divine Economy, p. 27.

* See *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 56, 57. and 77, 78.

† *Deut.* viii. 19, 20.

‡ *Ex.* xxxiv. 12. *Josh.* xxiii. 13.

§ *Josh.* xvi. 10. *Judg.* i. 25. xxviii. 35. 1 *Kings* ix. 20, 21.

2 *Sam.* xi. 12. 2 *Chron.* viii. 7, 8. See *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 71, 72.

|| *Sykes*, Connect. of Nat. and Rev. Rel. c. xiii. p. 332, &c.

¶ *Deut.* ix. 4—24.

** *Ib.* ix. 6, 7, &c.

tions(*r*);—that the great intent of God was to raise up, and separate a people, which should manifest his power to the heathen; and make his name known through the earth *; which were to be a *kingdom of priests* †, preachers of righteousness, and publishers of true religion over the world: that this design had taken place before they were born, and would be carried on, either by their obedience, or their disobedience; who were to be examples to all others both of the *goodness, and severity of God* ‡. And accordingly, in the remainder

(*r*) That this was such as justly deserved exemplary punishment from the supreme Governor of the world, and that it might with equal justice be inflicted by such persons as received an express, clear commission from him for that purpose, is shewn at large in *Lowman's Diss. on the civil. govern. of the Hebrews*, c. i. p. 13, &c. and c. xii. p. 221, &c. or *S. Browne*, p. 366, &c. Comp. *Bryant's Observations*, p. 265, &c.

Concerning the great propriety of punishing them by the *sword* of the *Israelites*, rather than any other way; both for the better admonition of the *Israelites* themselves, and of their heathen neighbours; since the credit of the gods of every nation so greatly depended on the fate of *war*, see *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 72. *Lowman*, ib. p. 228, &c. *Univers. Hist.* p. 893. vol. not. T. ad. sin. *Jackson's Remarks on Christ. as old*, &c. p. 51.

Many instances of this persuasion occur as low as *Constantine*; to which purpose we have a remarkable speech of *Licinius* in *Euseb. De vit. Const.* c. v. And to which we may add, that as the people in those times did not in the least dispute the reality of each other's deities, no kind of miracles but such as implied superior *power*, could induce any of them to quit their own, for other objects of religious worship. Comp. 1 *Kings* xx. 23—28. 2 *Kings* xviii. 34, &c.

* *Ezek.* xxxvi. 22, 23.

† *Exod.* xix. 6.

‡ *Deut.* xxx, xxxi, xxxii. *Rom.* xi. 22.

of their history, both under their *judges* and their *kings*, we find them frequently rebelling, and as frequently punished for it; so soon as they repent, they are restored to favour; when they relapse, they are again chastised*; all along alternately sinning and suffering; immediate and visible judgments attending each revolt; either oppression in their own, or slavery in foreign countries; till the last great captivity in *Babylon* quite cured them of their favourite, predominant vice *Idolatry*; to which they had been before so unaccountably(s) addicted.

* *Judg.* iii. 8, 12. iv. 2. vi. 1. xiii. 1. *1 Sam.* xii. 9, 10, &c. The propriety of these dispensations, the last great captivity in particular, is well illustrated in *Taylor's Scheme of Script.* Div. c. 32.

(s) *Le Clerc* attempts to give some account of this in his note on *2 Kings* xxi. 11. which well deserves to be considered. *Comp. Patrick* on *Judg.* ii. 12. [and *1 Sam.* viii. 20. where they are so surprisingly urgent for a *king* on the same principle.] 'I can account for it (says an useful writer*) upon no other consideration, but that of the exceeding great temptations there are in all religions, that are a mere mixture of *civil policy* and *priestcraft*, dressed up with all the artifices of external pomp, splendor, and amusement, and made agreeable to the corrupt and vicious inclinations of men. Such no doubt was the *Heathen worship*, to which that of the *golden calf* bore too near a resemblance, both in its original and progress. And when we turn our thoughts to those ages and nations of the world, that are called *Christian*, [and supposed to be under far happier advantages of light and knowledge, than ever the *Jewish* church was], and observe to what extravagances both of notions and practices, the *Romish*

* *Pyle*, Pref. to Paraph. on the O. T. Vol. IV.

But all this while the rest of the world reap the same benefit by them, whether they keep their law, and prosper; or disobey it, and are in distress. One would naturally suppose, that they must partake of the improvements of the *Jews'* religion in some degree, as well as these partook of their corruptions; which appears to have been the case in fact: and as it is observed of *Greece*, that when it was subdued by the *Romans*, itself subdued its conquerors, softened their savage temper, and refined their manners; and afterwards of the *Romans* themselves, that wherever they conquered, they in

communio hath for so long a time, and by the like means, influenced the majority of the nations round, it will, I conceive, much abate the wonder arising from this matter, considered in relation to the church of *Israel*.'

The parallel instance above mentioned, affords likewise a good illustration of the *degree* of their corruption. For that this crime of the *Israelites* did not consist in their absolute rejection of the true God, but only in joining the worship of other gods, and taking them into communion with him, is made plain by Bp. *Warburton*. 'So strong was this universal prejudice of *intercommunity*, that all the provisions of the law could not keep those people from running into the error. For their frequent defection into idolatry, till after the *Babylonish* captivity, was no other than the joining foreign worship to that of the God of *Israel*. It is a vulgar error to imagine this consisted in renouncing the religion delivered to them by *Moses*, as a false one; they all along held it to be true; but, deluded by the prejudice of this *intercommunity*, they were apt to regard the God of *Israel*, only as a local, tutelary Deity.' *Div. Leg.* B. ii. sect. 6. Add B. v. sect. 2. See also *Jurieu*, Crit. Hist. Vol. II. pt. iii. c. 9. *Mede's* Apost. of the latter times, c. x. p. 651. *Le Clerc* on *Acts* vii. 42. *Tenison* of Idolatry, C. vi. p. 110. As to the *intercommunity* among the Heathens, see *Macrob.* L. iii. c. 9. De evocandis diis tutelar.

some respect or other civilised the world*: so may it with much greater justice be said of the *Jews*, that they improved, and reformed the religion of every people, who were either brought under subjection to them, or into whose hands they fell †: who were witnesses both of the power, and justice of their God, either in distinguishing them by express rewards, for their adhering to him ‡; or as remarkably punishing them, for deserting him; and who seem to be well acquainted with the intent of these his several dispensations(*t*); especially,

* This is acknowledged on some occasions by *Tacitus* himself amidst his most satirical censures of the *Roman* policy; *Sequens hiems saluberrimis consiliis absumpta, ut homines dispersi, et rudes, quiete et otio per voluptates assuescerent, &c. Vit. Agric.*

† *Atque utinam nunquam Judæa subacta fuisset, Pompeii bellis, imperioque Titi:*

Latius excisæ pestis contagia serpunt,

Victoresque suos natio victa permit. Rutil. Itiner. v. 398.

‡ This we find them publicly declaring, on the miraculous preservation of *Hezekiah* and his people from the army of the *Assyrians*, *2 Chron. xxxii. 23. And many brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from henceforth.*

(*t*) *1 Sam. iv. 8. Rom. ix. 17.* This may be gathered from the case of the men of *Jericho* in particular, who were fully informed of the several miracles worked in favour of the *Israelites*, *Josh. ii. 9, 10.* and who must have had sufficient warning of God's design therein, either from common fame, or more probably by express revelation; for despising of which they are termed *disobedient* by *St. Peter*, *1 Ep. iii. 20. Comp. Heb. xi. 31.* See *Shuckford*, Vol. III. B. xii. p. 403, &c. And that the same thing might be done afterwards, in many other instances (as in the following note) by their own prophets (who were sent to the nations on that very account), is no less probable; as may be

when they were made the instruments thereof*; and on that account are frequently styled *his servants*†.

Thus did this people, by the various revolutions in their government, and frequent change of their condition, spread the knowledge of their history and religion far and wide; more especially, by the total dispersion of the ten tribes; and the great captivity of *Judah* under the *Assyrians* and *Babylonians*; when by their cleaving more stedfastly to their own God, and refusing to comply with the idolatrous worship of the empire, they were distinguished by many extraordinary interpositions of

seen in the notes a little below; which gives a farther answer to the *Moral Philosopher's* objection mentioned, p. 98 note (o)

* Jer. l. 7. *All that found them have devoured them; and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the Lord, the habitation of justice, even the Lord, the hope of their fathers. The Lord thy God* (says Nebuzaradan to Jeremiah), *hath pronounced this evil upon this place. Now the Lord hath brought it, and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed his voice; therefore this thing is come upon you.* Jer. xl. 2, 3. *Am I now come up without the Lord against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, Go up against this land to destroy it,* says *Rabshakch*, 2 Kings xviii. 25. (though he was mistaken in one point, imagining that *Hezekiah* had forsaken the Lord by *taking away the altars and high places*, and confining all religious worship to *Jerusalem*, ib. v. 22.) Comp. *Is.* xxxvi. 10.—To the same purpose speaks *Pharaoh-Necho*, 2 Chron. xxxv. 21. whose words are said expressly to come *from the mouth of God.* ib. v. 22. This seems to be the most probable sense of both these places notwithstanding *Prideaux's* objections, Vol. I. p. 24. and 54. 8th ed. See *Le Clerc* on 2 Kings xviii. 22. and 2 Chron. supra, and *Ezra* viii. 22. Jer. vi. 6. xl. 2. Comp. 1 *Esdras* i. 27, 28. 2 *Mac.* viii. 36. *Judith* v. 17, &c. and *Arnald* in loc. or *Patrick* on *Esther* vi. 13.

† *Jer.* xxv. 9. xxvii. 6. xliii. 10.

divine Providence; and had several royal proclamations, and public decrees, made in their favour; which bore ample testimony to the sovereign power, wisdom, and justice of the supreme God; as in the successive reigns of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Nabonadius* or *Belshazzar*, and *Darius* the *Mede*; as also of *Cyrus*, *Cambyses*, or *Ahasuerus*, *Darius Hytaspis*, *Xerxes*, *Ahasuerus* the second, or *Artaxerxes**; many of which princes found themselves described before in the *Jewish* prophecies; some of them very expressly; one by name. After these, *Alexander* comes to *Jerusalem*, consults the prophecies of *Daniel*†, and offers sacrifice to the Most High‡; and many of the *Jews* list in his troops§. After his death, *Ptolemy*, making himself master of *Judea*, carries above a hundred thousand *Jews* into *Egypt*; disperses them through every province there; employs the chief of them in his army and garrisons; plants great numbers in *Cyrene* and *Lybia*||;

* *Dan.* iii. 28. iv. 1, 2, &c. vi. 25, &c. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 23. 1 *Esd.* i. 27. ii. 3. viii. 8, &c. *Ezra* i. 3. vi. 6—12. vii. 13. *Neh.* ii. 7, &c. *Esther* ix. 32. and x. Conf. *Joseph.* Contr. *Ap.* L. i. and Ant. L. xi. c. 1. et 5.

As to the effects which these might naturally produce, see *Le Clerc* on *Is.* xli. 25. and *Taylor's* Essay on the Beauty of the Divine Economy, p. 38—43.

† *V.* 9. c. viii. 21. xi. 3.

‡ *Josephus*, L. xi. c. 8. *Prideaux*, Part I. B. vii. p. 487. *Univers. Hist.* Vol. III. p. 345, &c. *Jennings* Lect. V. i. p. 71, &c. though others question it. See *Moyle's* Works, Vol. II. Lett. 4, and 6.

§ *Josephus*, L. xi. c. ult.

|| *Prid.* P. i. B. viii. p. 526. *Joseph.* Ant. L. xii. c. 1.

and gives many more of them extraordinary privileges in *Alexandria**. His son *Philadelphus* procured a translation of their law into *Greek*, the then most universal language; which was a new publication of their religion †; and for which, the *Alexandrian Jews* formerly kept a solemn day of rejoicing ‡ (though afterwards it was turned into a fast, when they found what great use had been made of that version by the *Christians* §). His successor *Euergetes* offered sacrifices, and gave thanks to the God of *Israel* for all his victories; having seen the prophecies of *Daniel* concerning them, and been convinced that he owed them only to that God, whose prophet had so clearly predicted them ||.

* *Prid. ib.* p. 541, 542. *Joseph 2. Contr. Ap. Philo.* computes the number of them settled in *Egypt*, at ten hundred thousand inhabitants.

† A. C. 277. V. *Usher Ann.* When the world, having been united under one great empire, was in the best manner prepared to receive it. *Allix's Refl.* p. 11. And when the use of the *Papyrus* for writing, just found out in that country, had contributed so much to the increase of books, and the advancement of learning. *Taylor, Sch. of Scr. Div. c. 37.* Concerning the end and uses which this translation served, see *Allix, Part ii. p. 161.* An accurate account of the compiling it, may be seen in *Prid. Vol. ii. p. 34, &c.* 8th Ed. But comp. *Bochart. Hieroz. L. ii. c. 18. p. 216.* and *Prolegom. to Grabe's Sept. Tom. II. Prop. 12, &c.*

‡ *Philo. Vit. Mos. L. iii. Comp. Basnage, B. vi. c. 5. sect. 11. Jenkin, p. 93.*

§ Vid. *Sepher Taanith* in *Mens. Teb.* and *Scalig. Not. in Chron. Euseb. Ann. 133. et Prolegom. ad Grabe, Ed. Sept. Tom. II. Prop. V.* This fast is still kept by the *Jews*, on the fifth day of the 4th month *Tebeth*, which answers to our *December*.

|| *Prid. Part II. B. ii. p. 82. Joseph, Contr. App. L. ii.*

Ptolemy Philometor had a comment on the five books of *Moses* dedicated to him by *Aristobulus*; who had been his preceptor *; and permitted *Onias* the high priest to build a temple in his kingdom, after the model of that at *Jerusalem*; and to perform the same worship in it †, whereby the prophecy of *Isaiah* was perhaps fulfilled ‡, that there should be an altar unto the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt §; and by this means, his name became as well known there, as in *Judea* itself; that temple continuing for above three hundred and forty years ||. Under the *Seleucidæ* they were in still higher favour, and enjoyed more extensive privileges, being admitted into all the cities of the lesser *Asia*, and allowed the same rights as any other citizens. When at length *Judea* was reduced to a *Roman* province, this people, and their religion, became no less known over all that vast empire. That they were very remarkably pre-

* *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. L. vii. c. ult. &c. Prid. Part ii. B. i. p. 29. Euseb. Præp. Evang. L. xiii. c. 12. Clem. Alex. Strom. L. i. and v.*

† *Prid. B. i. p. 264.*

‡ *Isaiah xix. 19, 20.*

§ By this prophecy, thus understood of *Onias*, the *Jews* thought themselves authorised in building a temple in *Egypt*, though it was a thing otherwise forbidden by their law. *Allix's Reflect. p. 163. Comp. Glass. Præf. Rhet. Sac. p. 25.* How they afterwards perverted some parts of it by corrupting the old version of the LXX, may be seen in *Owen's Enquiry into the present state of that version, p. 40, &c.*

|| *Jenkin, Vol. I. p. 92. Josephus says 333 years, B. J. L. vii. c. 30.*

served, and prospered under it for some time, is particularly noted in its history*. We find great privileges granted them by *Julius Cæsar*†; and *Augustus*‡, *Tiberius*, and *Vitellius*, each of which emperors sent victims to be offered at the temple of *Jerusalem*§.

* *Dio Cassius* says, Και ἐστὶ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς Ῥωμαῖοις τὸ γένος τούτο, καλεθὲν μὲν πολλακίς, ἀνέχθην δὲ ἐπι πλείστον, ὥστε καὶ ἐς παρρησίαν τῆς νομιμῆς ἐκνικῆσαι. Est id genus hominum (Judæorum) apud Romanos etiam: atque tametsi sæpenumero imminutum fuerit, ita tamen auctum est, ut *legum quoque potestatem vicerit*. L. xxxvii. p. 41. D. Ed. *H. Steph.* The historian probably means no more than that they prevailed so far against the *Romans*, as to live by their own laws, or preserve the free exercise of their religion, notwithstanding those of the country that condemned it; which was an indulgence pretty extraordinary, considering their declared opposition to all other establishments; and the general odium which they incurred sometimes by abusing the favour. Yet it is to be observed, that the *Jews* seldom opposed the *Pagan* religion uniformly, as the *Christians* did; but often pretended that *Moses* had forbidden them to speak against the gods of other nations, or to rob their temples. *Josephus* talks in this way (*Contr. App.* ii. 33.) to please and pacify the *Gentiles*. The historian *Dio* hated the *Jews*, and knew nothing of their religion, as appears in many places of his book.

† *Joseph.* *Contr. App.* ii. id. *Ant.* L. xvi. c. 10, &c. ‘In the second Triumvirate, the *Jews* were particularly taken notice of and favoured. *Antony* introduced them to the senate, where every thing they desired was granted them; they were permitted to use their religious ceremonies, and the rites of their country, and to make sacrifices as their laws required. *Lentulus* also made a decree in their favour, that all such as used the *Jewish* ceremonies at *Ephesus* should be exempted from warfare by reason of their religion. *Taylor*, *ib.* p. 48.

‡ *Philo.* *Leg.* ad *Caium*.

§ *Tertull.* *Apol.* § 26. *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 86. *Allix*, B. ii. c. 25. The same thing had been often done before, particularly by *Antiochus* the Great, (*Joseph.* *Ant.* L. xii. c. 3.) and under *Seleucus*,

And thus did the four great successive monarchies contribute towards propagating the knowledge of the true God in the world; thus, as the last of his prophets had foretold*, *from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, was his name great among the Gentiles*†. And though the *Jews* were never able at once to convert a whole nation‡ to their church, and make it the established religion of the country; yet they gained every where very numerous *proselytes* (*u*) to their

when the *Jews* were in such high esteem, that sovereign princes courted their friendship, and made magnificent presents to the temple; and *Seleucus* furnished out of his own treasury all the expences of it. *2 Maccab. iii. 3.*—So far were they from being always that little inconsiderable nation which some writers represent; particularly *Middleton* and *Bolingbroke*. *Comp. Witsii Ægypt. L. iii. c. 12. sect. 17. Leland, Advantage, &c. Vol. I. Part i. c. 19. Macknight, Truth of the Gospel Hist. b. 3. c. 2. § 5. (*) p. 476. Young. Hist. of Idolatry, Vol. I. p. 267, &c.*

* *Mal. i. 11.*

† *Comp. Isaiah xlv. 6.*

‡ See *Jortin's Disc. p. 89.*

(*u*) Of this number, in all probability, were *Jethro* and his family, among the *Midianites* (*Ex. xviii. 11.*) *Naaman* and his servants, among the *Syrians* (*2 Kings v. 17.*) *Araunah* the *Jebusite* (*2 Sam. xxiv. 23.*) *Hiram*, king of *Tyre* (*1 Kings v. 7. 2 Chron. ii. 12.*) the queen of *Sheba*, *Egypt*, and *Ethiopia* (*1 Kings x. Joseph. Ant. viii. 2.*) In *Solomon's* time, there were found above an hundred and fifty-three thousand strangers or *proselytes* in the land, (*2 Chron. ii. 17.*) without reckoning women and children; (*ib. v. 18.*) and in other lands, very probably, might there be as many, by the miraculous conversion of *Nebuchadnezzar* (*Dan. iii. 28, 29. iv. 34, &c.*) and the other princes above mentioned, (*Esther viii. 17.*) to which we may add *Josephus's* remarkable account of the *Adiabeanian* queen and her son. (*Ant. xxvi. 2.*) In our Saviour's time we read of devout men,

law; and many more to the belief of one supreme God, which was perhaps as much as was then required by Providence; and thereby prepared the minds of men for a more perfect dispensation*: and might have done this with still better success, had they acted more conformably to the genius of their own institution; and not treated all others with so much pride, and ill-nature, as often rendered themselves odious, and contemptible to their neigh-

or *proselytes*, among the *Jews*, of every nation under heaven. (*Acts* ii. 5.) Besides the eunuch of *Ethiopia*, there were *Parthians*, and *Medes*, and *Elamites* (or *Persians* of the province of *Elymais*, *Dan.* viii. 2.) and dwellers in *Mesopotamia*, *Cappadocia*, *Pontus* and *Asia*, *Phrygia* and *Pamphylia*, *Egypt* and *Lybia*; *Cretes* and *Arabians*, and strangers of *Rome*. (*Acts* ii. 9, 10, 11.) See *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 93. or *Lardner's Cred. of G. Hist.* B. i. c. 3. sect. 5.

* It does not appear, that any of the most refined philosophers, those men of admired knowledge and genius, ever converted so much as a single person or village from their idolatrous superstitions; on the contrary, they all meanly submitted and conformed to the idolatry established in their respective countries, and exhorted others to do so too. (See *Doddridge on Rom.* i. 21.) Whereas the *Jews* were instrumental to turn many from idolatry, and to spread the knowledge of the true God far and wide, in many parts of the *Roman* empire, *Babylonia*, *Persia*, &c. *Leland's answer to Moral Philos.* p. 57. Comp. id. *Advant. of the Christ. Rel.* Vol. I. Part i. c. 10.

This seems to be a proof from *fact* against the following assertion of *Lord Bolingbroke*, 'Reason will pronounce, that no people was less fit than the *Israelites* to be chosen for this great trust on every account. They broke the trust continually; and the miracles that were wrought to preserve it, notwithstanding their apostacies, would have preserved it, at least as well, all over the world.' *Ess.* iii. p. 242. What the influence of philosophy was upon the establishment of religion in *Greece*, &c. See *Letters on Hume's Hist.* B. vi. p. 162, &c.

bours; especially in the latter ages of their government*. Though this was in some measure a natural consequence of that seemingly *unsociable* spirit, so necessary in them to prevent any intimate connections, or (which would soon have been the consequence) an intercommunion with the idolatrous religions round them; and might be greatly aggravated by others, on their at length persisting in a settled aversion to those rites, by conforming to which they had suffered so much heretofore.

Besides, the Jewish prophets were often dispatched to foreign countries, to acquaint them with the counsels of the Most High; and to make them *know the Lord*†. *Jeremiah* was ordained a prophet unto the nations‡; who, together with *Isaiah* and *Ezekiel*, prophesied to most of them. *Daniel* particularly describes the fate of the four monarchies; as was observed above. *Amos* proclaims the judgments of God on *Syria*, *Tyre*, *Edom*, *Moab*, and *Ammon*. *Obadiah* is sent to the *Idumeans*; *Jonah* to the people of *Nineveh*, the metropolis of the *Assyrians*; who straightway believe, and repent at his preaching; which shews that God was kind to them, as well as to the *Jews*; and that they had his will in some measure discovered to them before: otherwise they would not have

* Vid. *Juv. Sat.* xiv. ver. 100, 103, 104. *Tac. Hist.* v. 5. *Comp. Witsii Ægypt.* L. iii. c. 13. sect. 16, &c.

† *Ezek.* xxv. 7—17, passim.

‡ *Jer.* i. 5. *Comp.* c. xxvii. and 1 *Esdras* i. 28. 47.

been so capable of understanding the divine message, when it was delivered to them, and of behaving themselves suitably to it*. In like manner; *Nahum* describes the final destruction of *Nineveh*; and *Zephaniah* proclaims the divine vengeance on the neighbouring countries of the *Philistines*, of *Moab* and *Ammon*; as well as *Ethiopia*, and *Assyria* †. And accordingly, their prophets are sought for, and honoured by the greatest princes; who were thereby induced to acknowledge, fear, and reverence the God of heaven; though they did not wholly conform to his will. Thus *Elisha* is applied to by the kings of *Syria* ‡; *Jeremiah* protected by the king of *Babylon* §; *Daniel* honoured, and advanced by the successive rulers of the *Chaldeans*, *Medes*, and *Persians*; as observed above.

Thus did this famous people serve every way to propagate the knowledge and fear of the one true God, either by their prosperity, or adversity; their

* Vid. *Edward's Survey*, &c. p. 296. *Buddei Parerg.* p. 426. and *Lowth on Jonah* iii. 5.

† 'One needs only read their books, to see that the prophet, not only foretold obscure matters, or what particularly concerned their state; but also things of a more splendid nature; the overthrow of cities, of kingdoms; the destruction of whole nations, the destruction of their own city, with its re-establishment. Matters which would render their books very illustrious, and which would cause them to be read, not only by the *Jews*, but also by the neighbour nations, the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Assyrians*, *Persians*, *Egyptians*, &c.' *Allix's Reflect.* B. ii. p. 41.

‡ *2 Kings* v. and viii.

§ *Jer.* xxxix. 11. xl. 1, &c.

conquests, or captivities* ; their separation from the rest of the nations, or their dispersion among them : by the wise laws that were given them ; and by the worthy teachers, which at various times were raised up in the midst of them ; proclaiming the power and justice of the universal Governor of the world ; and foretelling his disposal both of them, and the neighbouring states ; together with the reason of these dispensations †.

From whence it appears, that mankind were far from being rejected by their Maker, during this state of their *nonage* ; though he had his peculiar residence among the *Jews*, and was their more visible guardian, and director. The express terms of his covenant indeed belonged to them, which, as it consisted in temporal things, he was often obliged to interpose, in order to make good the performance of it ‡ ; and which on that very account could not be a more perfect one (w). The

* *Victi victoribus leges dederunt*, says *Seneca* of his people. Aug. *De Civ. D. L.* vi. c. 11.

† See the texts in p. 106. Note (*).

‡ See Bp. *Sherl.* Disc. v. p. 150.

(w) Vid. *Crellii Orat.* 2. Perfectionem sanctitatis ideo Populo *Hebræo* præscribere, et ad illam sequendam eundem acrioribus stimulis incitare, *Moses* Dei nomine non potuit ; quod felicitatem ac mercedem, ob quas pietas colenda esset, terrenæ Reipublicæ otio, et eorum tantum bonorum affluentia terminaret, quæ ad corporis pastum spectant, quorumque usus hujus vitæ circumscribitur cancellis ; ita requirente istius populi infantia : quin etiam illam rempublicam, in qua pietatis suæ fructum Gens *Israelitica* deberet capere, armis et parare et tueri juberet. Unde si totam præceptorum *Mosaicorum* rationem ad ista tempora accommodatam consideres, animadvertes eam isti pietatis

real benefits thereof, the heavenly *Canaan* (of which the first may be conceived as only a type or shadow *), extended to the people of every nation that feared God, and worked righteousness; and he might fix his residence in *Jewry*, as being in the midst of the nations †; in order to dispense the rays of

præmio apprime fuisse consentaneam, &c. *Crell. Eth. Christ. p. 433, &c. Op. Tom. iv.* ‘As they were to continue separate from others, for the preservation of the true religion, they stood in need of temporal promises, that they might have no temptation for temporal gain to fall away into the Gentile superstitions. For since the Heathen ascribed all their worldly successes to the worship of their idols and false gods, there was a necessity, in proportion, that the God of *Israel* should shew himself as gracious to his votaries, as the false gods were supposed to be to theirs; and therefore it is so far from being a derogation to this law, that it abounds so much with the promises of temporal blessings, that it is a particular instance of the wisdom of it; such promises being not only most likely to work upon that stupid low-minded people, but suited also to their particular circumstances and occasions, as they were to be kept separate from other nations.’ *Burnet Boyle's Lect. p. 543. fol.*

* In what sense it may be so conceived, see *Ld. Barrington's Essay on the several dispensations of God to mankind, p. 46, &c. Comp. Pierce on Colos. ii. 9, 10.*

† *Ezek. v. 5.—xxxviii. 12. Vid. Reland. Palæst. L. i. c. 10. Durell. Parallel. p. 160.* ‘They were placed in the centre of the then known world, between *Egypt* and *Arabia* on the one hand, and *Syria*, *Chaldea*, and *Assyria* on the other; among whom the first great kingdoms were erected, and from whence knowledge and learning seem to have been derived to the western nations. And they were also in the neighbourhood of *Sydon* and *Tyre*, the greatest Emporiums in the world; from whence ships went to all parts, and who planted colonies in the most distant countries.’ *Leland, Advantage and Necessity, &c. Vol. I. Pt. i. c. 19.* How very capable of, and remarkably fitted this country was, for a more universal intercourse than any other,

heavenly light more equally and advantageously among them; to whom his chosen people probably were designed to bear a due proportion; as some understand these words of *Deut.* xxxii. 8. *He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the people of Israel**.

We are apt to conceive that the Deity has been partial in his favours to this people; and at the same time, think that they deserved them the least of all people; both which notions are entirely groundless. The favours shewn to them, we have seen, were rather favours to the whole world †; and they only made instruments in God's hand, to hold forth this light to all around them; whereof other nations were to reap the benefit in due time, whether they themselves stood faithful to their trust, or fell for violating it. 'Nay in truth their fall contributed rather to the speedier accomplishment of this design, than could have been expected from their stedfastness. For, to what did their defections ultimately tend, but to supply the Deity with more frequent occasions to exert

with all parts of the earth, the consequence resulting from thence, and for the communication of all the benefits of an universal benevolence is particularly explained in a note to p. 122, 123 of an obscure piece entitled, *Hymns to the Supreme Being*.

* See *Bryant*, above 99, with *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 49. *Buxtorf*, Diss. 2. de Ling. Heb. Confus. § 43. That the *Jews* were spread over all the world about *Christ's* time, as it is said, *Acts* ii. 5. Vid. *Joseph*. B. i. c. 16. *Philo*, Leg. ad *Caj.* id. in *Flacc.* *Lardner*, Cred. B. i. c. 3. or *Basnage*, Hist. B. vi.

† See *Taylor's* Key to the Apostolic Writings. Paraph. on *Rom.* c. iv. p. 22.

himself in the correction of their prevailing errors and their vices? But, *their* errors and vices were the errors and vices of *all* mankind. And therefore those wonderful exertions, which God employed for the reformation of the Jews, were equally adapted to the conversion of the Gentiles among whom they lived. Nor did they fail in their designed effect*.

Nor was this nation worse than any other would probably have been in the like circumstances. The *Canaanites*, we know, behaved worse under all their repeated means of improvement, as observed above†; nor could their descendants, the *Carthaginians*, deserve any better character: nor did the more polite and learned nations, *Greek* and *Roman*, afterwards advance above the same gross errors in religious worship‡. Nay, whether the ancient *Hebrews* were not in some respects more particularly fit to have the *oracles of God* committed to them, has been queried by such as observe their former diligence and great exactness in settling their history, wherein all other nations were remarkably deficient:—their carefulness in distinguishing their genealogies; and preserving their public records, which were so beneficial to the rest of the world§;—their great tenaciousness of an-

* *Owen*, B. L. s. 16.

† Page 103.

‡ See this observation explained in *Fleury's* manners of the *Israelites*, c. xxi.

§ ‘ It may be observed, that the sacred history is distinct, me-

cient rites and customs; and their extraordinary zeal in making proselytes*. And though we may allow them to have been, in general, stupid and perverse; yet if we look over their history with any tolerable degree of candour, we must be convinced that they were very different from the account given of them by some unfair modern writers†. However, the more weak this people were of themselves, the better was God's great end answered, in distinguishing himself, and his revelations by them; the less they did or could do in their own defence, the more illustrious was that very extraordinary providence, which protected

thodical, and consistent throughout; the profane utterly deficient in the first ages, obscure and full of fictions in the succeeding ones: and that it is but just clear and precise in the principal facts about the time that the sacred history ends. [See this observation confirmed by *Patrick on Nehemiah* xii. 11.] So that this corrects and regulates that, and renders it intelligible in many instances, which must otherwise be given up as utterly inexplicable.—Yet this same nation, who may not have lost so much as one year from the creation of the world to the *Babylonish* captivity, as soon as they were deprived of the assistance of prophets, became most inaccurate in their methods of keeping time, there being nothing more erroneous than the accounts of *Josephus*, and the modern *Jews*, from the time of *Cyrus* to that of *Alexander* the Great; notwithstanding that all the requisite assistances might easily have been borrowed from the neighbouring nations, who now kept regular annals.' *Hartley's Observ.* on *Man*, Vol. II. p. 116.

* *Jenkin*. Vol. I. p. 91, 93. *I. A. Danzii* Cura Hebr. in conquirend. prosel.

† See the *Moral Philosopher*, Vol. I. p. 225, &c. [with *Leland's* answer, Vol. I. p. 207. *Worthington's* Essay, p. 105, 106.] and *Bolingbroke*, passim.

them. The less capable they were of inventing the great things contained in their books, the more apparently did these point out another author; and prove incontestably, that they had such intelligence communicated to them from above. Thus they were, in the hands of God, a certain means of bringing men by degrees to the knowledge of the truth. They were his *witnesses*, as He himself terms them *, *that he was God*. The first production, and original state of mankind, the history of the world and its government, manifested by frequent interpositions, and express predictions of the most remarkable events; was necessary to be known, and well remembered: memoirs of this therefore were to be secured somewhere; and in such a manner as to be of use to every age. And this the *Jews* effected; being dispersed among all nations, and yet continuing a distinct people; by which means these great truths were both preserved pure, and effectually propagated in most parts of the world. Their law was a *schoolmaster* †, to teach them the first rudiments of religion, who were to instruct and improve others; restraining them from every kind of deviation into idolatry, by the sanction of immediate punishments, and encouraging them to persevere in the worship of their God, by present temporal rewards, with a prospect of future blessings, till they, as well as the rest of the world, were got out of their *minority*;

* *Isaiah* xliii. 10. 12.† *Gal.* iii. 24.

able to comprehend and walk by a more perfect rule; and fit to enter on, and make a proper use of their *inheritance*;—till the *fulness of the time was come*:—which is the next great period we are to consider.

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

The *patriarchs* had standing visible memorials of God's presence and protection, as well as frequent and familiar converse with him; thereby sufficiently assuring them of his favour, and inviting them to his service: the *law* was given to his peculiar people by *angels*(*b*), in all the appearances of pomp and terror, to astonish and awe them into obedience; the *prophets* were sent to denounce variety of judgments against their dis-

* *Matth.* xxi. 33. *Jer.* vii. 25.

(*b*) *Acts* vii. 53. *Gal.* iii. 19. *Heb.* ii. 2.

obedience;—to threaten them with the severest plagues on their apostasy;—to promise them proportionable blessings upon a return to their duty; and by both means prepare them for, and gradually open to them, the prospect of that universal Blessing, the true end and great completion of all his promises,—the MESSIAH; in whom were laid up *the sure mercies of David*; mercies of an higher nature than any of those which they were then expecting; who should procure for them a more noble and extensive kingdom, than they had ever dreamt of: should make them brethren and fellow-citizens with all the world here, and fellow-heirs to a more valuable inheritance in the world to come*: who, notwithstanding their great blindness, and perverseness, and numberless transgressions, should at length deliver them from all their adversities; and finally restore them, and *all mankind*, to the favour and full enjoyment of their God.

* ‘During these circumstances—God was pleased that a law-giver should be born among the Jews, of another nature than he whom they expected, and infinitely more useful to them. Instead of a temporal king, who might have increased their power and renown, but would not have lessened their ignorance, nor their vices, God sent them a king worthy of him, who taught them how they ought to live here, to be eternally happy after this life: and shewed them, that, instead of being members of a little common-wealth, and enemies to the rest of mankind, they ought to look upon the whole world as their native country, and all men as their fellow-citizens: a thought worthy of those, who already professed to believe, that all men are equally the work of God.’ *Le Clerc, Causes of Incred.* p. 267.

The doctrines he taught, contain a summary of the most important truths, (though not delivered in any systematic*, artful method, nor adapted in any respect to vicious palates) giving us the most worthy notions of the Deity, and affording the strongest motives to love, fear, and obey him;—the greatest incitement to resemble our blessed Saviour in holiness, and every virtue of the heavenly life.

The benefits he conferred, were the rescuing us from the power, and redeeming us from the penalty of sin; repairing the breach made in our nature by the first *Adam*, and restoring to us the lost communion with our Maker; not indeed in the same open, visible manner as at first; which is neither necessary for, nor suitable to these ages of the world; but by the more secret, silent influences of his holy *Spirit*; which are equally efficacious (*e*) if duly attended to, and improved; enabling us to attain unto all that perfection which he requires, or we, in the present state, are capable of; and thereby entitling us to some higher degree of

* That there is less ground to suspect them of imposture on this account, and that they are thereby of much greater *use*, see *Leland's* answ. to *Christ. as old*, &c. Vol. II. p. 166, &c. and p. 245, 246. Add *Crell. Resp. ad Q. Tom. II. p. 322*, &c. and *Jeffery's* Commencement Sermon. on *Heb. i. 1.* in which he has considered the subject more at large, and shewn particularly, 'Why God thought fit to deliver the doctrine of our religion and happiness in the form of a *history*, rather than in any other method.'

(*e*) See *Wollaston*, p. 106, or *King*, p. 376, 4th ed.

happiness, and glory in another. He cancels the original *covenant** of works; and purchases a new one full of grace and mercy; freeing us from the whole of *Adam's* curse, viz. *death*, or utter *extinction*†; and finally assuring us of a complete victory over both that, and *hell*‡, by the gift of *eternal life*, and happiness. This is the true import of the Christian institution; and in this sense it must appear to be indeed a *gospel*, or *good tidings of great joy to ALL people* §: which therefore ought to be reserved till mankind were able to comprehend and ready to receive so great a blessing; till they were fit to make the proper use of such a scheme of infinite goodness, and philanthropy. As nothing greater could come after this, and this was to be offered once for all; (otherwise, as the apostle says||, *Christ must often have suffered since the foundation of the world*; often in every country, and as often in vain; his offers of salvation by their cheapness slighted, his sufferings disregarded;) as no farther manifestation of God's will could be

* In what sense *covenants* are understood, was hinted above, p. 56, note *i*.

† See p. 56, note *.

‡ *Rev.* xx. 14.

§ In what respects Christianity exceeded all former institutions, may be seen at large in *Edwards's* Survey, p. 313, 323. The effects, which it will some time *certainly* produce, are well described by *Worthington*, *Essay on Man's Redemption*, c. 11, &c. who supposes, perhaps not on so good grounds, that these will be attainable even *in this life*.

|| *Heb.* ix. 26.

made to man either in terms more full and express, or in a way more kind and condescending; it was fit that all suitable provisions should be made for the reception, and continuance of it in the world; all proper preparations used to fix, and ascertain its evidence; as well as to explain its worth, and make men sensible of the necessity for it. To this purpose the *Jews* were to be trained up to the expectation of it by a series of prophecies, foretelling the time, place, and every circumstance of the *Messiah's* advent; and describing the true nature of his kingdom: their law was to continue till it had guarded them from idolatry, and secured their dependence on the one supreme God; till they had attained to such rational conceptions of his nature and providence, as qualified them for a more pure and perfect way of worshipping him; and enabled them to communicate it to the rest of the world. The *Gentiles* were to have sufficient experience both of the weakness of their understanding in searching after God, and the infirmity of their corrupted nature, in not acting up to what they did discover; sufficient to make them wish and hope for some heavenly guide, which in fact the wisest of them did; as particularly appears from two remarkable instances, in *Socrates's* discourse upon *prayer*, and *sacrifice**; and in *Aristotle's*

* See *Plato's* second *Alcibiades* near the end. More passages to the same purpose are collected by Dr. *S. Clarke*, *Evidences*, Prop. 7. and *Young*, *Dissert.* Vol. 1.

declaration just before his death, [if the account of it be genuine] concerning the reasonableness of believing that the gods would at length come down from heaven, to instruct and relieve mankind*. Thus was the consciousness of their defects requisite in the heathens, to prepare them for, and dispose them to embrace a remedy, when it should be offered; and the *Jewish* economy was equally requisite, to fit *thém* for administering this remedy; the one made its value then better understood, the other rendered its evidence more incontestable throughout all ages. No stronger testimony than that of prophecy could be given, to confirm its truth; nor any greater token of its usefulness, than that which appeared in the miserable state of the heathen world without it; both highly contributed to procure *Christianity* its due regard and esteem in the world; but neither of them could have taken place, had it been from the beginning, as the above-mentioned objection† supposes.

* *Auctor de Pomo* [de quo vid. *Fabric. Bibl. Gr. Tom. II. L. iii. p. 166.*] *Cæl. Rhod. Ant. L. xvii. 36.* [See *Bayle's Dict. Art. Aristotle*, note Q.] *Stanley Vit. Phil.* Concerning the tradition of his having conversed with a *Jew*, see *Gen. Dict. Vol. II. p. 267.* and *Prid. Conn. Part. i. B. vii. p. 475 and 480.* 8th ed. See also a remarkable passage in *Jamblichus Vit. Pythag. c. 28.* To the foregoing observation *Bolingbroke* replies, that 'the complaints and expectations of these men were founded in proud curiosity and vain presumption.' *B.'s Works, Vol. V. p. 220.* as if it were a piece of vanity and presumption in any reasonable creature to be desirous of learning, what would here most effectually recommend it to the favour of its Creator; and merely pride and idle curiosity, to know what would become of it for ever hereafter.

† Pag. 42.

We see then that some time, in general, must have preceded the publication of the gospel; and we ought to consider, that if it were delayed a while longer than we can particularly account for, yet as much as that period may seem to have lost, so much we of these latter ages manifestly get by the delay; it is so much nearer to us; and thereby its light and evidence more clear at present; its heat and influence proportionably stronger; for all which we have occasion enough: and well must it have been for us that it came so late, if its evidence decrease so fast by length of time, as these very same objectors would insinuate*. How do we know but that it might be delivered about the middle age of the world; and be upon the whole nearest to the several generations; and a just proportion kept between the length of time, during which *Christ's* future advent was to be foretold and expected; and that in which his past appearance is to be commemorated? We are hasty, and short-sighted: our views limited to a few years; and we become impatient at finding any of them pass over, before the whole plot is unravelled; and would have all brought on the stage at once: but it is far otherwise with the great God, to whom a thousand years are as one day; who has an immensely large progressive scheme, con-

* *Christ. as old*, c. 12. p. 163, 8vo. from *Craig.*: of which see *Rotheram's Dissertation*, *Edinb.* 1743. *Phil. Trans.* No. 257. *Broughton against Tindal*, Part iii. p. 5, &c. *Randolph*, Part ii. p. 34. &c.

sisting of many underparts, and intermediate steps; all placed in their proper periods, and each rising upon the past; and the whole conducted in that gentle, regular manner, which is best suited to the moral government of a world of intelligent, free agents, and most becoming a Governor of infinite wisdom and goodness.

But to be more particular. The period in which our Saviour came into the world may be conceived to be the *fulness of time*, and fittest for such a dispensation, on the following accounts.

First, as that age appeared to want it most:

Secondly, as it was the most able to receive and propagate it: and,

Thirdly, as it was the best qualified to examine its evidence, confirm its truth, and convey it down to future ages.

First, that age wanted it most; both in regard to *morals* and *religion*.

1. It stood in the greatest need of a reformation in *morals*; as it appears to have been the most profligate of any upon record.

As to the *Jews*, we are told, that both their magistracy and ministry were then corrupted to the last degree;—their laws against the worst of villains rarely executed (*p*);—their most sacred

(*p*) The low state of their *Sanhedrim* about that time, may be seen at large in *Lightfoot*, Op. Lat. Vol. II. p. 370, 671, &c. Their gradual corruption and degeneracy is observed by *Strabo*, L. xvi. p. 761, 762. Ed. *Lut. Par.* 1620.

offices, not excepting that of the high priesthood, set to sale;—the temple turned into a place of merchandise;—their priests made of the lowest of the people, and devoted entirely to self interest, and the lowest kinds of traffic;—the whole nation split into factions; hating, and persecuting, and devouring one another*.

In short, the account which their own historian gives of them, not long after this time, will be sufficient to decide the point, who concludes it with this declaration; that if the *Romans* had delayed taking vengeance on them, he believes their city must either have been swallowed by an earthquake, or a deluge, or destroyed by fire from heaven, as *Sodom* was; since it produced a much more impious generation(*r*).—But this remarkable wicked-

* See *Lightfoot*, Op. Lat. Vol. II. p. 148, 272, &c. *Edwards's* Survey, Vol. I. p. 389, &c. *Lardner*, Cred. of the G. Hist. B. i. c. 5. *Benson*, Hist. of planting the Chr. Rel. Vol. II. p. 234, &c. *Le Clerc*, Proleg. ad Hist. Eccl. sect. 1, 2. *Basnage*, B. i. c. 5, &c. *Whitby*, Necessity, &c. of Chr. Rev. c. 2.

Nor is this at all surprising, since the reigning party among them were at that time *Sadducees*. *Joseph. Ant.* xviii. 2. Add *Wall's* note on *Acts* v. 17.

(*r*) *Josephus*, B. J. L. xvi. c. 16. Remarkable is the description which the *Talmudists* give of that generation in which *Messiah* should come. *Talm. Bab.* in *Sanhedr.* fol. 97. *When the son of David cometh, the synagogues shall become stews; Galilee shall be destroyed, Gablah shall be desolate, and the men of the borders of Israel shall go from city to city, and the wisdom of the scribes shall be abominated, and religious persons shall be scorned, and the faces of that generation shall be as dogs.* Vid. *Lightf. Harm.* N. T. p. 326.

ness of the *Jews* will be considered in another respect hereafter.

Nor were the *Gentiles* less corrupt, nor does it seem easy to conceive the generality of them to be sunk lower in all kinds of vice and sensuality, than they were at that time, (notwithstanding all their improvements in some other respects;) as may sufficiently appear from the description given of them by St. Paul*, the *truth* of whose *witness* is most abundantly confirmed by their own writers (*y*).

* *Rom. i. 21, &c.* As to the great and general corruption of the world at this time, more particularly in regard to its private and *domestic* situation in the two important articles of *marriage*, and of *servitude*; and the very seasonable reformation of each by the Christian institution, see *Robertson's* Sermon, before the Soc. in Scotland, 1755.

(*y*) *Seneca de Clem. i. 23.* says, that in the reign of *Claudius*, in five years, more parricides were condemned and punished, than had been known in all the past ages: a proof of the extreme degeneracy of those times. ‘*Ecce Romana respublica, quod non ego primus dico, sed auctores eorum unde hæc mercede didicimus tanto ante dixerunt, ante Christi adventum, paulatim mutata, et ex pulcherrima atque optima, pessima atque flagitiosissima facta est. Ecce ante Christi adventum post deletam Carthaginem, majorum mores non paulatim ut antea, sed torrentis modo præcipitati: adeo juvenus luxu atque avaritia corrupta est.*’ *Augustin. de Civ. D. L. ii. c. 19. & id. ib. c. 21. Conf. Sallust. B. C. Patere. L. ii. c. 1. Senec. Ep. 7. et De ira, L. ii. c. 8, &c. cum Sucton. Tacit. Petr. Arb. passim.* ‘*Si Ethnicorum mores paulo ante Christum et paulo post intueamur, quæ fuit doctissima ætas, pessimos et sceleratissimos fuisse comperiemus, ut docent qui eorum temporum historiam conscripserunt. Bella civilia temporibus Marii et Sullæ; status reipub. Rom. perturbatissimus, qui proxime sequutus est: bella iterum civilia Cæs. et Pomp.*

2. But secondly, The world at that time more especially wanted a reformation in *religion*; and was grown weary of all former institutions. The *Jewish* law had fully answered its end, and in a manner ceased of itself; the ceremonial part of their economy began rather to be a yoke of servitude, and an unnecessary burden to them; the moral was in a great measure lost in their loose casuistry, and vacated by their traditions (z). The sense of the

tum etiam triumvir. Principatus ipse *Aug.* et multo magis *Tib. Calig. Ner. et Dom.* ne ulterius pergant, cloacæ fuerunt flagitiorum et scelerum apud *Romanos*; qui tamen *Græcos* passim quasi se deteriores describunt. *Sall. Cic. Sen. Tacit. Suet.* aliique, cum a nobis hodie leguntur, etiamnum indignationem in improbos illius ævi homines nobis movent: ne proferam *Pers. et Juven.* Poetas satiricos, qui forte modum excessisse, in castigandis moribus sui ævi, possent. *Itaque prævæ religionis effectus sistere non potuit philosophia, et paucorum contra torrentem nitentium conatus irriti fuere.* Cler. Prol. Eccl. Hist. sect. 2. c. 1. 20. add *Whitby*, Necessity of *Christ. Rev.* c. 8. *Moshem.* de Rebus *Christ.* ante *Constantinum*, c. 1. sect. 21. *Harwood*, Introd. to the N. T. c. 2.

(z) *Quare vastatum est forum Bethene tribus ante Jerusalem annis? Quia verba sua verbis Legis præponebant.* Gem. Bab. Metz. c. 7. *Ex quo multiplicati sunt discipuli Schammai et Hillelis,—multiplicata sunt schismata in Israele, et facta est Lex, quas; Lex duplex.* Gemara Sanhedrim, c. 10. Eorum tum religio, quantumvis scripturas regulam suam pronunciarent, traditionibus omnis generis præcipue nitebatur; quas non tantum scripturis præferebant, sed iisdem omnem scripturis autoritatem derogabant. *Marc.* vii. 7—9. *Tenuerunt Dominum cum illis contraxisse fœdus juxta legem Traditionis.* Baal Turim in *Gen.* i. 3. *Tenebant scriptam legem deficere comparatam legi non scriptæ.* Tanch. fol. 4. *Legemque scriptam ob mercedem doceri posse, non item non scriptam.* Maimon. in *Thalm. Torah.* Perck. 1. *Light-foot*, Op. Lat. Vol. I. p. 517. Vide plura testimonia, ibid. Vol. II.

prophetic writings had been darkened and debased by their corrupt glosses; and the key of true knowledge taken away, by those very persons that should have opened the scriptures and imparted that knowledge to them.

Philosophy had shewn its utmost force in the great masters of Athens and Rome; and was just able to afford light enough to discover its own errors and defects, and to refer them to a better guide; as we have seen above. Its votaries having been long tossed to and fro, among the various systems which human wit had invented, were at last left in absolute uncertainty; unable to decide amongst them, and influenced by nothing more than some dark hints of tradition(A); and that be-

p. 31. or *Eng. Harm.* 236, 237. Comp. *Buxtorf De abbrev. Heb.* p. 226, &c. and *Mod. Univ. Hist.* B. xx. c. 1. note D. 'At these times their school-learning was come to the very height;—so that now in a double seasonableness doth *Christ* the divine wisdom appear, and set in amongst them, at twelve years old beginning, and all the time of his ministry after, going on to shew them their wisdom, folly; and his own word and doctrine, the divine oracles of wisdom. In a double seasonableness, I say, when their learning was now come to the height, and when their traditions had to the utmost made the word of God of no effect.' *Lightf. Harm. N. T.* Vol. I. p. 206. id. p. 652.

(A) This appears to have always been the case in most of the best things which they deliver on the most important subjects, as may be easily discerned by the abrupt manner in which they commonly retail such sentiments; by their seldom reasoning on them long consistently; or being able to pursue their natural consequences: from whence methinks any indifferent person would conclude, that they had never traced such out by their

came one of its most flourishing sects which professed to doubt of every thing: accordingly, we

own reason, nor were the original discoverers of them; at least, I could not help concluding so from hence; as well as from their frequent citing of *tradition*, and some *sacred* records; and appealing to what they have *heard* upon such subjects. I might have set down numberless expressions, that confirm this observation, though I do not doubt but the same thing has been observed by many others: however, I shall point out some remarkable passages from *Plato* to this purpose. *Philebus*: Οἱ μὲν παλαιοὶ κρείονες ἡμῶν καὶ ἐγγυτέρω θεῶν οἰκνῶντες ταύτην φημὴν παρεδῶσαν. Id. *Epist.* vii. Πείθεσθαι δὲ ἔτιωσ αἰεὶ χρῆ παλαιοῖς τε καὶ ἱεροῖς λόγοις, οἳ δὲ μὴ θυβῶσιν ἡμῖν ἀθάνατον ψυχὴν εἶναι, δίκασσας τε ἰσχεῖν, καὶ τινεῖν τὰς μεγίστας τιμωρίας, ὅταν τις ἀπαλλῆξῃ τὸ σωματός. *Gorgias*: Ταῦτ' ἔστιν, ὦ Καλλικλείης, ἃ ἐγὼ ἀκήκως πιστεῦσα ἀληθῆ εἶναι, καὶ ἐκ τούτων τῶν λόγων τοιοῦνδε λογιζομαι συμβαίνειν. Ὁ θάνατος κ. τ. λ. *Phaedo*: Παλαιὸς μὲν ἐν ἔστι τις ὁ λόγος ἔτος ἢ μεμνημένα, ὡς εἰσιν ἐνθενδὲ ἀφικόμεναι ἐκεῖ, [αἱ ψυχαὶ] καὶ πάλιν γε δευρὸ ἀφικνῶνται. καὶ γίνονται ἐκ τῶν τεθνεώτων. Id. *ibid.* Ἄδῃ καὶ λεγεται μεγαίστα ὡφελεῖν ἢ βλαπτεῖν τὸν τελευτήσαντα εὐθύς ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς ἐκείσε πορείας. Λεγεται δὲ ἔτιωσ, ὡς ἀρα τελευτήσαντα ἕκαστον ὁ ἕκαστῃ δαιμῶν, ὅσπερ ζῶντα εἰληχεῖ ἔτος, ἀγειν ἐπιχειρεῖ εἰς δὴ τινα τοπῖν, οἳ δὲ τῆς συλλεγεγῆσας διαδίκασσασμενῆς εἰς ἀδῃ πορευεσθαι κ. τ. λ. *Ibid.* Πολλοὶ δὲ εἰσὶ καὶ θανμασοὶ τῆς γῆς τοποὶ, καὶ αὐτῇ ἂν οἶα, ἔτε ὅση ὑπο τῶν περὶ γῆς εἰωθῶτων λεγειν, ὡς ἐγὼ ὑπο τίνος πεπυσμαι. Καὶ ὁ Σιμμίας, πῶσ ταυτῆ, ἔφη, λεγεισ, ὦ Σωκράτες; περὶ γὰρ τῆς γῆς καὶ αὐτὸς πολλὰ δὴ ἀκήκοα κ. τ. λ. *Apol. Socr.* Εἰ δὲ αὐτὸ οἶον ἀποδῆμῆσαι ἔστιν ὁ θάνατος ἐνθενδὲ εἰς ἄλλον τοπῖν, καὶ ἀληθῆ ἔστι τὰ λεγομενα κ. τ. λ. *Ibid.* Τατε γὰρ ἄλλα εὐδαιμονεσεροὶ εἰσιν οἳ ἐκεῖ τῶν ἐνθάδῃ, καὶ ἡδῇ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἀθανάτοὶ εἰσὶ, εἴπερ γε τὰ λεγομενα ἀληθῆ ἔστιν. *Phaedrus*: Τούτω τοὶ ἐνεκα χρῆ, πάντας τῆς λογῆς ἀνω καὶ κατω μετασσεφροντα, ἐπισκοπεῖν εἰ τις πῆ ῥαῶν καὶ βραχυτερα φαίνεται ἐπ' αὐτῇ ὁδῶ. Ἰνα μῆ ματῆν πολλῆν ἀπίη καὶ τράχειαν, ἔξῃ ὀλιγγῆ τε καὶ λειπῶ. Ἄλλα εἰ τινα πῆ βοθηεαν ἔχεισ, επακήκως Λυσίτῃ ἢ τίνος ἄλλῃ πειρῶ λεγειν ἀναμνησκόμενος. *Ibid.* Λοκῆν γ' ἐχῶ λεγειν τῶν ἡρώτερων. Τὸδ' ἀληθῆς αὐτοὶ ἴσασιν. Id. in *Timaeo*: Εγὼ φρασῶ, παλαιον

find the great advocate and ornament of this sect, *Cicero*, declaring on some of the most important points, that it was impossible to determine on which side lay (not the certainty, for that they did not pretend to discover; but) even the greatest probability*; concluding that in all such cases, it is much easier for him to say what is not his

ἀκχοως λογον, ε' νεε ανδρος. Id. de Rep. 10. fin. Και ε'τος, ω Γλαυκων, μυθος ε'σωθη και ε'κ απωλετο. Και ημας αν σωσειεν, αν πειθωμεθα αυτω. From these few extracts any one that can read *Plato* may judge, whether by his own confession both he and his master *Socrates* did not borrow their notions concerning a future state of rewards and punishments somewhere; whether it be such a gross piece of monk-like superstition and nonsense in old *Suidas* to derive them immediately from the Egyptians, as Mr. *Cooper*, author of the life of *Socrates*, supposes, p. 61. [though he seems to be of the same mind with *Suidas* himself afterwards, when he says, this very thing is observed of all the Grecian Theology, by all ancient authors in general, and agreed to by all moderns, except one, p. 120.] and whether even that other priestly conclusion, that these two philosophers might be originally beholden to some revelation for the best conceptions they had on this most important point, be blasphemy, and merit all the curious epithets with which this extraordinary writer has adorned it.

What reason there is for supposing *Plato* to have borrowed much from the *Hebrews*, may be seen in *Menag. Obs. ad D. Laert. Vol. II. L. iii. sect. 6. p. 139, &c. Ed. Meibom. or Witsii Ægypti. L. iii. c. 13. sect. 4, 5, 8.*

That the *Indians* took the same way of philosophising with him upon these subjects is observed by *Strabo, L. xv. p. 713. Ed. Par. 1620. παραπλεκσσι δε και μυθος ωσπερ και Πλατων, περι τε α'θαρσιας ψυχης, και των καθ' α'δε κρισεων, και αλλα τοιαυτα.*

* Harum sententiarum quæ vera sit, Deus aliquis viderit; quæ verisimillima magna quæstio est. *Tusc. Q. L. i. sect. xi. vid. Cleric. Prol. ad Hist. Eccl. sect. ii. c. 6. de Academicis.*

opinion, than what is (B). Nay, professing that in the grand article of a first cause, if he had dis-

(B) *De Nat. Deor.* L. i. c. 32. Utinam tam facile vera invenire possem, quam falsa convincere. Id. apud *Lact.* L. ii. c. 3. Notwithstanding all the fine things which he had said about the *immortality* of the *soul*, or, what with him amounted to the same, a future state; in which point he seems to be the most sanguine and positive; yet in his *epistles* (where he speaks his real thoughts) we find him giving it all up, and having recourse only to the miserable comfort of a final *insensibility*. L. v. Ep. ult. Ut hoc saltem in maximis malis boni consequamur, ut *mortem*, quam etiam beati contemnere debeamus, propterea quod *nullum sensum esset habitura*, nunc sic affecti, non modo contemnere debeamus, sed etiam optare. L. vi. Ep. iii. Deinde quod mihi ad consolationem commune tecum est, si jam vocer ad exitum vitæ, non ab ea *Repub.* avellar, qua carendum esse doleam, præsertim *cum id sine ullo sensu futurum sit*. Ib. Ep. iv. Sed cum plus in metuendo mali sit, quam in ipso illo quod timetur, desino; præsertim cum impendat, in quo non modo dolor nullus, *verum finis etiam doloris futurus sit*. Id. Ep. 21.—Una ratio videtur, quicquid evenerit ferre moderate; præsertim *cum omnium rerum mors sit extremum*. More passages to the same purpose are collected in *Div. Leg.* p. 387, &c. 2d edit. And among the several apologies which the author of *Cicero's* life has offered for them, this probably will be esteemed the most natural; that *in a melancholy hour, doubts and difficulties* may be supposed to have got the *ascendant* over him. Vol. II. p. 561. 4to. In truth, *Cicero* seems to have been often in the state of mind which he so well describes, *Tusc. Q. L. i. sect. 11. M.*—*Evolve diligenter ejus [Platonis] eum librum, qui est de animo: amplius quod desideres nihil erit. A. Feci meherecule, et quidem sæpius; sed nescio quomodo, dum lego, assentior: cum posui librum, et mecum ipse de immortalitate animorum cœpi cogitare, assensio omnis illa elabitur.* That he had great doubts of a *providence*, is fully shewn by the author of *Ep. ad C. Middleton*, p. 74. note (h). That he both recommended *suicide* as the best refuge in affliction, and had frequent thoughts of putting it in practice, is no less clearly proved by the same writer, p. 76, 77, 78. And

covered the truth, he durst not have divulged it* : and putting the supposition as a matter of probability, that the philosophers were Atheists†. Men began then to be sensible, that human reason was of itself a very insufficient director in this point; and grew weary‡ of the common delusions from pretended revelation. Oracles, omens, portents, were generally exploded§; the old fables of Elysian fields, and Pluto's kingdom, were grown ridi-

though *Cicero* himself declares, upon occasion, that he was with difficulty withheld from it, by the advice of *Atticus*, and the intreaty of his friends: *ibid.* yet it appears too plainly, that this was not owing at last, either to the strength of his judgment or his resolution; to any prudential considerations respecting the state, himself or his relations: so much as to the same notorious want of courage, which disabled him from bearing his misfortunes decently, and which must equally deter him from attempting to end them together with his life.

* *Nihil autem gigni posse sine causis. Atque illum quidem quasi parentem hujus Universitatis invenire difficile: et cum jam inveneris, indicare in vulgus nefas. De Univers. sect. 2.*

† In eo autem quod in opinione positum est, hujusmodi sunt probabilia.—Eos qui Philosophiæ dent operam non arbitrari Deos esse. *De Inventione, L. i. c. 29.*

‡ *Omnis cognitio multis est obstructa difficultatibus, eaque est et in ipsis rebus obscuritas, et in judiciis nostris infirmitas, ut non sine causa et doctissimi et antiquissimi invenire se posse quod cuperent diffisi sint. Cic. Acad. ii. 3. Mihi autem non modo ad sapientiam cæci videmur, sed ad ea ipsa quæ aliqua ex parte cerni videantur, hebetes et obtusi. Id. ap. Lact. L. iii. c. 14, Nescio quis nos teneat error, et miserabilis ignoratio veri. Id. ib. More testimonies to the same purpose may be seen in *Leng. B. Lect. sect. 12. p. 109, 110. fol. Campbell's Necessity of Rev. Leland's Advantage, &c. Vol. II.**

§ *Cic. de Div. passim. Weston's Inquiry into the Rejection of the Christian Miracles, p. 456.*

culous; and given over to poets and painters, as the same author informs us*. Another very learned writer tells us, that they had near three hundred opinions about the *chief good*, and ultimate *end of action*†; that the objects of their devotion amounted to thirty thousand‡; that there were no less than three hundred Jupiters among them§; in short, that they had multiplied their scandalous deities to such a degree, and modelled their superstitious worship in such a manner, that he, and others of the wiser, and more sober sort, were ashamed of them||: not to mention that the prevalence of the *Epicurean* philosophy had rendered both, the divinities and their worship, in a great measure, insignificant¶.—So great want

* *Tusc. Quæst. L. i. c. 10, 11.* Quid negotii est hæc Poetarum et Pictorum portenta convincere? Quis est enim tam excors, quem ista moveant? *Comp. Id. ib. c. 16. et Or. pro A. Cluent. 61.* Nisi forte ineptiis ac *Fabulis* ducimur, ut existimemus ullum apud inferos impiorum supplicia perferre.—Quæ si falsa sint, id quod omnes intelligunt.—*Comp. id. de Nat. D. L. ii. pr.* Nemo tam puer est ut Cerberum timeat et tenebras, et larvarum habitum nudis ossibus cohærentium. Mors nos aut consumit, aut emittit. *Sen. Ep. 24.*

† *Varro ap. Aug. de Civ. D. L. xix. c. 1.*

‡ *Aug. de Cecil. Deif. 4, 5, 6. Jurieu, Crit. Hist. Vol. II. p. 13.* *Prudentius* says, Ter centum millia divum. *Apoth. V. 455.*

§ *Tertull. Apol. c. 14.*

|| See *Jenkin, Vol. I. p. 338.* and *Sartorius de Hypocrisi Gentilium circa cultum deorum.* Add *Jortin's* Remarks on *Eccl. Hist. p. 5.*

¶ See *Le Clerc, Causes of Incred. p. 266. Moshem. De rebus Christ. ante Constantin. L. i. c. 1. sect. 25.*

had they of a thorough reformation in matters of *religion*.

Secondly, That age was also the fittest to receive such a benefit, as well as to propagate it in the world. At the same time that the Jewish œconomy *waxed old, and was ready to vanish away*, it had served to build up a better house; and fitted men for a more perfect institution; and when the eye of reason in the Gentile world had most of all discovered its own dimness, and could do little more than shew the darkness that surrounded them; it then, in the best manner, prepared them to receive and to rejoice in a greater light. The many fine lectures which had been at several times delivered to the Jews, by those able *tutors* and *governors* under whom God had placed them; by *Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon*, and the subsequent *prophets*; though all these were in fact found insufficient to direct their conduct; and most of them then, had been to a great degree, defeated, as is observed above; yet we must allow, that, towards the end of this dispensation, they began in general to be better understood than formerly; upon the erecting of many synagogues, after the Babylonish captivity *, they were more frequently

* Vid. *Buddei Hist. Eccl. V. T. Vol. II. pag. 976. Vitringa, de Synag. L. i. Part ii. c. 12. p. 413, or Patrick on 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15.* who assigns this as one chief cause of their keeping so clear of idolatry in after times, when they had neither prophets nor miracles among them. Add *Prid. Vol. I. p. 389.*

read and inculcated; and under their persecutions, in the time of the Maccabees, more thoroughly studied and regarded; and lastly, by their numerous schools and academies, which flourished in the most corrupt parts of their government*; learning of all kinds had spread itself among them, and got so good footing, as to render them the most capable of discerning these corruptions; and recovering themselves from the errors and abuses above-mentioned; when these were once freely pointed out; so that notwithstanding the prevailing iniquity, which made those, in that respect the worst of times, this people had yet been so far cultivated, as to be able to receive the promised seed; at least much more so than they had been at any time assignable before †.

8th Ed. - That they had synagogues before the captivity, see *Lightfoot*, Harm. p. 609, &c. *Le Clerc* on Ps. lxxiv. 8. and *Jenning's Lect.* B. 2. C. 2.

* See *Vitringa*, Obs. Sacr. L. vi. c. 14. sect. 8, 9. Some of their own authors say, there were near four hundred synagogues in Jerusalem itself; as many academies; and the same number of schools: some reckon four hundred and eighty. [*Buddei Eccl. Hist.* Vol. II. Part ii. sect. 7.** p. 966, &c. *Light. Op.* Vol. II. p. 140, and 197.] That they assembled in these *synagogues* three times a week, vid. id. ib. p. 280. et *Schoetgen.* Hor. Heb. in Act. Apost. xiii. 42. Comp. *Univ. Hist.* B. ii. c. 1. 26. note [q].

† 'Whilst the prophets were in being, to defend the law, the people were negligent; but since there have been no prophets, zeal has succeeded; which is an admirable providence.' *Pascall*, sect. 10, 23.

The same thing had been done to the heathen, in a good measure, by their celebrated legislators and philosophers; who got most of their best notions from travelling into Egypt, Chaldea, and Phœnicia themselves, or from conversing with those who did; such were *Minos*, *Lycurgus*, *Solon*, *Numa*, of whom this has been shewn particularly by learned men*; such was *Zoroaster* in the east, by some supposed to have been servant to *Ezra*†, by others to *Daniel*‡; and such was *Pythagoras* his disciple§. The same end was

* *Gale*, Court of Gent. Part i. B. iii. c. 9, &c. *Witsii Ægyptiaca*, L. iii. c. 13. *Clem. Alex.* Strom. passim. The same is acknowledged by the Greeks themselves. Vid. *Diod. Sic.* ap. *Euseb.* Ev. Præp. Lib. x. p. 480, &c. Ed. *Morell.* *Diog. Laert.* Procem. pr. cum *Casaub.* et al. in loc. imprimis, *Æg. Menag.* Obs. iii. 6. Add *Young*, Diss. Vol. I. c. ult. *Leland*, Advantage, &c. Vol. I. Part i. c. 19. p. 439. note q. *Falster* Amœnitat. philolog. c. 9.

† *Hyde*, Rel. V. P. c. 24. p. 314.

‡ *Prid.* Con. Vol. I. p. 331. *Hyde*, Rel. Vet. Pers. p. 314. He is supposed to have been sometimes endowed with the spirit of prophecy, like *Balaam*, id. ibid. c. 31. p. 382, &c. What ground there is to believe that he clearly foretold the coming of *Christ*, may be seen in *Univ. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 218. Another prophecy, to the same purpose, occurs in p. 222, note R. *Prideaux* and *Moyle* agree in supposing that there must have been two persons of that name, in order to reconcile the Greek and Persian accounts. [*Moyle's Works*, Vol. II. p. 63 and 75.] Others reckon six. Vid. *Buddei* Eccl. Hist. Tom. I. p. 349, &c. What resemblance there is between his history and that of *Moses*, may be seen in *Huet.* Dem. Ev. Prop. iv. c. 5. Concerning his writings, vid. *Fabric.* Bibl. Gr. Lib. i. c. 36. p. 242, &c. or *Bryant*, Anal. of Ancient Mythol.

§ *Prid.* Vol. I. p. 213. *Univ. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 236. note

pursued by *Socrates*, and his disciples*; who prepared the way for a more perfect reformation, by labouring to bring men to the knowledge of one supreme God, and the study of natural religion; by teaching them *humility*, and in all probability, giving them hopes of an instructor from heaven, as was observed above. The same thing was done about the same time, by that celebrated *Socrates* of the *Chinese* (as he is called), *Confucius*†. The same design was carried on by that remarkable dispersion of the *Jews* among all civilised nations, as was observed like-

Z, &c. *Witsius* supra. *Jacot* de Philosophorum Doctrina, Oxon. 1769.

* Operæ pretium fuit talem esse Socratem qualis erat, auctoritatemque ejus augeri, ne apud Græcos discrimen omne virtutis et vitii tandem extingueretur, et omnes in nefanda scelera certatim ruerent; quod ne fieret obstitere et ipse Socrates, et pleræque omnes illæ philosophorum sectæ, quæ ab illo tempore in Græcia ortæ sunt, atque ex ejus schola veluti prodierunt. Deinde cum tempus advenit, quo cœlestem planè doctrinam, qua cultis omnis ille superstitiosus Ethnicorum sublatus est, Deus per Christum in terras dimisit, utilem operam veritati philosophia navavit; ex ea enim Ethnici eruditiores, cum intelligere cœpissent falsas esse majorum suorum religiones, multo facilius postea ad religionem Christianam sunt adducti; quam in rem docti scriptores Christiani, ex ipsius philosophiæ arce, arma in Ethnicos nacti sunt. *Cleric. Silv. Phil. c. 3. sect. 7. p. 216.* See an Essay, attempting to shew, that *Socrates* was a kind of prophet to the Gentiles; and divine inspiration not confined to the Jewish nation, and *Rev. Ex. with Cand. Vol. III. c. 3.*

† Vid. *Burnet, Arch. Phil. p. 20.* *Cleric. Silv. Phil. p. 214.* He is supposed to have been acquainted with the Jewish religion. See *Young's Dissert. Vol. I. p. 293.*

wise; and by the communication of their sacred books; which had been translated into the most common language, and many copies of which were in common hands, ready to be examined*: when at the same time men were both qualified, and disposed to examine them by the increase of general learning and philosophy; which must have helped greatly to polish and improve their minds, notwithstanding all its imperfections above-mentioned; the very discovery of which imperfections, was likewise no inconsiderable proof of its improvement. They had time to digest the precepts and instructions of their own sages, as well as to become acquainted with the history of the *Jews*. Superstition of all kinds gradually wore off, and arts and sciences succeeded; which naturally excite and enliven the genius of any people, and open a free communication with others; and these were then in great perfection, as is too notorious to need particular proof. Nor can what is here said be thought inconsistent with that remarkable degeneracy mentioned under the former head; if we reflect how often, in common life, the same persons who, as to genius and abilities, are the most capable of apprehending and applying instruction, and in that sense, best fitted to receive it; are yet, in another sense, *i. e.* in point of ingenuity, and inclination, as little disposed to admit

* Vid. *Walton*, Apparat. B. Polyglott. sect. 9. Part iii. or *Allix*. B. ii. c. 25. or *Univ. Hist.* Vol. IV. B. ii. c. i. p. 40.

some branches of it; (or who, in understanding may be arrived at very great perfection, when their morals are at a crisis in the other extreme;) on which account they stand in still greater need of a regular course of discipline; and such a juncture may be a very proper one to administer it, and lay a good foundation for their improvement in both these respects*.

Thus were mankind in general trained up, and ripe for a new dispensation; as ready to attend to something of that kind, as able to perceive, and reap the benefit of it, when it should be offered; their curiosity was raised, and their capacity suited to any kind of rational or religious inquiries: nor was it at *Athens* only, that they spent their time in *telling or hearing some new thing*; science and literature had made considerable progress westward; and every where the minds of men were enlarged, and the knowledge of each other increased together, with their commerce.

And thus all things conspired to bring the world on towards a state of MATURITY; and at the same time, the circumstances of it were such as remarkably contributed to spread all kinds of knowledge in the most expeditious and effectual manner. The *Roman empire* had been growing up to

* I leave it to the candid judgment of the reader, whether what is affirmed above be saying, that a *greater degree of wickedness, and a greater degree of wisdom overspread the face of the earth at that time, and that they both were at the same time universal*; as is insinuated by a certain author. Letter to *Whiston*, p. 56.

that extent, which it reached under *Augustus*; and had united the several governments of which it consisted under one head; and settled itself in a general tranquillity: it had carried its language, and arts, almost as far as its arms; had opened a correspondence, and established a commerce, between most parts of the then known world; from whence intelligence was quickly conveyed to *Rome*, and orders as easily dispatched from thence*. *Judea*, the place where the *sun of righteousness* was to arise, had been reduced to a *Roman province*†, whereby regular accounts were taken of all remarkable transactions in it, by the *Roman* governors‡; and *appeals* lay from thence to *Cæsar*: by this means the fame of any extraordinary teacher of a new religion might be published over all the civilised parts of the world; and its professors be much better enabled to advance and propagate it, than could have been expected under any constitution of the world before that time§. If true, it

* The institution of *posts* among the *Romans* is generally attributed to *Augustus*; though we read of them before, on some occasions among the *Persians*, *Herodot.* viii. 98. *Xen. Cyr. Lib.* viii. *Esther* iii. 13. and viii. 10. vid. *Brisson.* de R. P. p. 147. comp. *Campbell* Politic. Survey, v. 2. p. 254, &c.

† See *Lardner*, Cred. of G. H. B. i. c. 10. sect. 10.

‡ See an account of their *acta*, in *Pearson* on the Creed, Art. 4. fin. There is a whole week of the *Acta Diurna Senatus*, published from *Locke* by *Grævius* ad *Sueton. Cæs.* sect. 20. not. p. 35. *Amst.* 1697, which, if genuine, is very remarkable.

§ To which we may add *Mr. Weston's* observation, viz. that by the great extent and union of this empire, when the head of it once became a convert to Christianity, that religion would immediately spread through a large part of the world; as was the

must by these means soon gain ground, and appear to be so; if false, as soon be silenced, and confuted.

For, thirdly, this age was the best qualified to examine the evidence of such a revelation; to confirm its truth, and convey it down to posterity. It was, compared with the foregoing, a learned, curious, and inquisitive age, as we have seen; and therefore likely to be more cautious in things of this nature; not so easy to be imposed upon, or apt to run into every wild religious project. There were men every where ready to expose the *Christian* institution, had it contained any thing either false or frivolous, absurd or immoral; if it had consisted of either enthusiasm or imposture, or any mixture of each. At that time the many sects and factions in the world had whetted themselves by contention, and were perpetual spies upon each other: so that no considerably new form of religion could gain ground among them, without being thoroughly sifted by the adverse parties. The *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, the *Stoics*, and *Epicureans*, were subtle disputants; and all of them eager in opposing the *Christians*. The world had then also sufficient knowledge of the powers of nature to be able to judge of *miracles*; and distinguish them

case in fact. *Inquiry into the Rejection of Christian Miracles*, p. 110, &c.—And it is no less observable, that *Constantine* did not become a thorough convert, till the whole empire was united under himself, upon the death of *Licinius*, vid. *Moshem. de Reb. Christ.* p. 976, &c.

from merely uncommon appearances in it, or any effect of art(c). *Prophecy* had been for some time

(c) It is not my design to enter into the late controversy about the causes why so many heathens for a long time paid so little regard to the *Christian* miracles, though they are allowed to have been competent judges of them. I shall only observe here, that numbers were in fact convinced of their reality, and in a great measure converted by them, as appears from the great stress, which some of these converts laid on them afterwards in their defences of Christianity: and as to others, 1. They might allow them to be true; yet on account of the old intercommunity of deities, and multiplicity of dæmons, for some time draw no consequence from them, in prejudice to their own way of worship. 2. Multitudes of the like nature reported among themselves, might make others at a distance be looked on as less extraordinary. 3. The atheistic notions prevalent among some who had the best opportunity of being informed, might lead them to reject all such on principle. 4. Their usual way of attempting to account for these from such an unmeaning cause as *magic*, must, in a great degree, defeat the effects which they would otherwise have had upon them. 5. The numberless false ones of all kinds propagated over the pagan world, which then began to be seen through, and which had just brought the whole system into dispute; might induce them to view all others in the same light. Beside the common prejudices which opposed all the gospel evidences in conjunction, each of these reasons, no doubt, had its weight in overbalancing every one particularly, so far as reasoning was concerned; especially the last. And yet it would be no very difficult thing to shew, that they reasoned extremely ill upon the point. For, as the multitude of fabulous miracles reported amongst them could be no warrant for their disbelieving those ancient, original ones, wrought among the *Patriarchs* and *Jews* (of which their own were only so many awkward imitations;) but rather, on the contrary, were a confirmation of their truth; so they were far from having any ground sufficient to reject such as were undeniably performed in their own times, unless they had others of equal authority and importance to confront them with; which, I apprehend, was very far from being the case: though such a series of *lying*

withdrawn from the *Jews*; which must make them at first more shy and suspicious of any new pre-

wonders might easily produce a very strong prejudice against all other wondrous things, how differently soever circumstanced; and hinder men from duly attending to this difference of circumstances, (as indeed we find it did with several) since any mixture of trifling, spurious, impertinent ones, is ever apt to prejudice and detract from the true; how far soever this be from any justification of the above-mentioned conduct, which proper care and impartiality in most of them might have prevented. This is all, I apprehend, that can be fairly deduced from such an event; and this, methinks, instead of leading us rashly to receive or to reject all miracles promiscuously, or hindering us from ever looking into the foundation and authority of each, should rather teach us to be very willing at all times to have both of them examined by any hand; and carefully endeavour to distinguish these two kinds from one another, in order to prevent the like thing happening to some even amongst ourselves. Among other unbelievers, *Chubb* lays hold of this objection, though he has it but by hearsay. *Post. Works*, Vol. II. p. 221, 225. The same is often repeated by *Hume*, and well answered by *Adams*, *Ess.* p. 102, 110 and by *Middleton* himself, *Pref. &c. to Let. from Rome*, p. 86, &c.

As to the *propriety* of this proof, notwithstanding all those bars to its reception, see *Weston's Dissertations*, p. 352, &c.

That very much of the fabulous, romantic taste which abounded in many Christian writers, down to the fifth, and some following centuries, might be derived from their old Heathen acquaintance, among whom some of the most eminent historians and philosophers often give no less remarkable and perfectly parallel specimens of the most senseless superstition and credulity, may be seen in *Lardner's* collection of *Jewish and Heathen Testimonies*, V. 4. *passim*. See more particularly the Articles of *Zosimus* and *Damascius*.

That no real *miracle* was ever worked, either by evil spirits or evil men, in direct opposition to a Divine Revelation, is fully proved both from reason and scripture, by *Farmer*, in his excellent dissertation on that subject: who has also fairly shewn, that all the embarrassment and inconsistency in the ancient and mo-

tences to inspiration*. *Oracles* began to cease among the *Gentiles*, by being despised, and gene-

der advocates for the truth of Christianity is founded on the contrary supposition; and it seems hard to conceive how that ingenious writer, who saw so clearly into the vulgar prejudices on that head, and has contributed so largely to the removal of them, should be himself so deeply involved in one of the like nature, as to bear testimony to the existence and operation of human souls departed; which notion of separate spirits he so well proves to have been the ground of all the heathen dæmonology, and all which dæmons he has no less clearly shewn from scripture to be mere *nullities* that have neither *life* nor *action*; that neither know, nor do; nor are any thing real: [V. essay on the *Demoniacs*, p. 232, &c.] Contenting himself (as should seem) with the common answer to those numerous texts, which affirm this total insensibility and inefficiency of all such entities in the most absolute terms, by confining them to a sense merely *relative*; viz. that they have no *corporeal* life, or action: which is no great discovery, since it is included in the very supposition of them;—that they *know not any thing*, nor have a *thought* of any thing which *concerns the present world*: though it is not very easy to comprehend what could be a more interesting object of their contemplation, than the things acted on that theatre where they have borne their part, and for which they are to give a strict account; notwithstanding their present inability to appear on it any longer; or while they retain any kind of memory, how they should entirely forget every circumstance relative to *their* old mansion, as some writers seem to allow; and they might with equal reason admit what the scriptures no less plainly assert, viz. that in *death there is no remembrance* at all, even of *God* himself. But, how far this worthy author may be concerned in these reflections, or what way he would take to avoid the foregoing and like difficulties, were he pressed with them, I shall not pretend to determine, since he has been so brief upon this point, wherein I am sorry to be obliged to differ from him, in any respect.

* We may add, that the ceasing of this, as well as of *miracles*, for a time, would be a means of raising greater surprise among the *Jews* upon the revival of both; and of procuring more at-

rally neglected; *divination* of all kinds was brought into contempt*: and though they were sufficiently desirous of some better light in matters of religion, than what their own philosophy afforded them, as was observed above; yet from the many false lights which had been already held forth to them, and which had served only to mislead and bewilder them, they rather began to despair of finding any true one. Wearied with wandering through the various mazes of error and uncertainty, the very wisest of them gave up all such pretended guides, and looked upon the whole story of revelation as a cheat. Thus men were guarded against any new imposition, though ever so well supported by wit, policy, or learning. Nor would they, surely, be less averse to one appearing in such a mean form, and with such slender recommendations, as the *Christian*;—so destitute of aid from

tention, and regard to the person, who should again appear to have really the gift of them. ‘Gifts granted to the disciples of our Saviour, which none had been partakers of since the time of *Malachi*; God having so ordered it, that the desires of the *Jews* might be the more inflamed for the *Messiah*’s coming; as also that, upon his coming, he might the more easily be discerned.’ *Allix*. Reflect. Part iv. p. 272. How far revelation ceased from the time of *Malachi*; and what reasons are assignable for it, may be seen in *Vitringa*, Observ. Sac. L. v. c. 6—14.

How the return of a miraculous power among the *Jews*, at the pool of *Bethesda*, might prepare them for expecting the *Messiah*, together with the reason for their concealing the fact afterwards, upon the same power’s ceasing; see *Clugett* on *Job* v. 4. Comp. *Whitby*, *ibid*.

* *Dubium non est quin hæc disciplina et ars Augurum*

human wisdom;—so seemingly below what they had hitherto been entertained with by their teachers;—stript of all that pomp and ornament, which attended the *Jewish* institution;—that art and eloquence which adorned each system of philosophy;—a scheme, advanced without all these, and against them;—consisting of a few plain rules of life, and these so strictly pure and perfect, as equally to strike at the corrupt *Scribe*, and haughty *Philosopher*: and therefore such as must be to the one a *stumbling-block*, and to the other *foolishness*;—delivered for the most part occasionally and incidentally;—without any set formal method;—in the most simple, unaffected manner;—by mean, unlettered, obscure persons;—in full opposition to all the reigning passions and prejudices of the learned and great*: under all these disadvantages,

evanuerit jam et vetustate et *negligentia*. *Cic. de Leg. L. ii. c. 13.*

* ‘ It is very remarkable concerning all the *prophecies* of the *New Testament*, as one intrinsic character or mark of the truth and divine authority of the whole, that whereas impostors always, and enthusiasts generally, in setting up any new doctrines, make it their business to raise the expectation of their followers, and to flatter their imaginations with promises of great success; and of God’s interposing in some extraordinary manner to bring into their hands the power and dominion of this present world; our Lord’s promises, on the contrary, are all of a spiritual nature; promises of a proper reward for virtue in a future and an heavenly state; but that at present, what his true disciples had to expect was *persecution* and *sufferings* of all kinds.—Nay, what is still *more* remarkable, and more essentially contrary to the spirit both of imposture and enthusiasm, he foretells the greatest, and most

which are well known to have attended the *Christian* religion in its infancy; if at such a time, and in such circumstances, it was able to support itself, and make its way in the world; and yet be all an imposition, both upon the senses and the reason of mankind; in what a strange situation must mankind have been, in both of these respects! How totally different from what they have ever been before or since! How will the sons of scepticism, who are so apt to stumble at each little difficulty which attends the present plan, in common with all other dispensations, be able to get over this grand one, which has no parallel in history! On the other hand, how fully may each fair inquirer satisfy himself whence such a system of religion must have derived its origin! How soon will an impartial state of the case afford to him the same conviction that it did to them of old, and shew the whole to be nothing less than the *power of God, and the wisdom of God!* Each of these obstacles to its reception gives the strongest attestation to it, when once seriously approved of and embraced; and all together must, when duly attended to, gain it the highest credit and esteem, and be a standing evidence, both of its truth and excellence; a sufficient answer to all suspicions that can possibly be raised, from the prevalence

extensive, and most lasting *corruptions* of his own religion.'—Dr. Clarke, Sermon lxi. on *Matt.* xxiv. 12.

of any imposture in some other age ; from what may have been introduced in a manner contrary to this—by other kinds of persons, and in very different times ;—by policy, or persecution ;—in days of bigotry and superstition.

It has been frequently insinuated by such as are no friends to revelation, that there are certain seasons when any thing will pass upon the world, under the notion of religion* : which observation has, indeed, a good deal of truth in it, with regard to the admission of things marvellous and extraordinary : But, from all that is gone before, I think it sufficiently appears that this age was by no means liable to such an imputation ; that it can neither be charged with ignorance nor credulity ; that it cannot be suspected of any disposition to receive such a doctrine as that of *Christianity*, and from such hands, were it not manifestly true, and of divine authority : and that therefore the strict examination into the grounds thereof, at its first promulgation, and the full conviction which each party must have had, before it would be able to gain admittance with them, might serve for all succeeding generations ; at least, must be allowed to add one of the strongest confirmations to it.

Lastly, this age was the best qualified to hand the foregoing evidences down to posterity. As it was inquisitive and discerning, so it was no less

* *Voltaire's Letters*, L. vii. To the same purpose were some parts in the life of *Homer*, 1st Ed. and several like passages occur in *Bayle's Diet.* and the *Characteristics*.

lettered and historical. The *Augustan* age is remarkable to this day for the number of its writers. There is none better known; scarcely any of which so full and so particular accounts are given. The *Roman* empire had been settled; and the minds of its chief members turned from arms and action to works of genius and speculation: fond of celebrating its conquests, and recording its glory, they gave themselves up to the study of eloquence and good writing. Their chronology had been reformed, and exact reviews taken of the most distant provinces, with the number, names, quality, and estates of their inhabitants(c); and all remarkable acts carefully registered, and transmitted to *Rome*, the capital of the world. In such a state of affairs, no great event could easily lie concealed, or be long called in question. At such a time, therefore, was it not highly proper to introduce this new scene upon the stage of the world, whereby its æra must be fixed beyond future controversy? Had *Christ* come in an obscure, fabulous age, by this time we might perhaps have doubted whether ever there was any such person; at least, whether any thing told relating to him could be depended on. It was by no means therefore fit, that a thing of this consequence should be done in a corner, and left to vulgar report, and vague tradition, to be soon dropped again, or disguised with fiction and romance. This then com-

(c) See *Lardner* Credib. B. ii. sect. 2.

menced in an age of the world, when the copiousness and certainty of its history served both to spread it more universally and preserve it more securely: *when many took in hand to set forth a declaration of those things which were most surely believed among them*, for the use of their friends, both *Jew and Gentile* *; whereby we have more ample and authentic memoirs of church history, than could ever have been expected before that period †; and whereby the time when, the place where, and persons under whom, the most material occurrences happened, were ascertained by writers of different nations, by *Romans, Jews, and Greeks*.

These several circumstances conspire to bring the mission of *Christ* very near the time in which he came. There is one more, which seems to fix it precisely to that period; at least will shew that it could not have been sooner, consistently with the common course of providence, and moral government of the world; admitting likewise the particular scheme already specified, viz. of his descending from the *Jews*; I mean, the circumstance of their being then in so great subjection to the

* See Dr. *Owen's* Observations on the Gospels, *passim*.

† This is to be understood with an exception to the thirty years between *Nero* and *Trajan*; to which time all the common complaint of want of ecclesiastical writers ought to be limited. The cause of this is assigned by *Vitringa*, Obs. Sac. Liv. iv. c. 7. sect. 9. p. 904, &c. Why we have no larger accounts of the *Apostles*, see *Hartley*, Obs. on Man, Vol. II. p. 121.

Roman government, as to have the power of life and death in most cases taken from them (D).

By all that we know of that generation, we have

(D) *John* xviii. 31. How far this was so, see *Lardner*, Cred. B. i. c. 2. sect. 5. Part vii. p. 49, &c. 2d edit. The particular instance of St. *Stephen's* murder, which is brought to prove the contrary by the authors of *Univ. Hist.* [Vol. IV. p. 236. not. R.] does not seem sufficient for that purpose; but rather looks like a tumultuous act of the *zealots*, though his trial might be begun regularly; [see *Basnage*, B. v. c. 2. sect. 8. or *Doddridge*, Vol. III. sect. 15. p. 110.] and the case of St. *Paul*, mentioned in the same book, [note O. p. 257.] seems to shew, not that they pretended to an executive power in his time; but that even their judicial one was sometimes interrupted, to prevent the like outrages. This point seems to be pretty exactly stated in *Millar's* Ch. Hist. c. 7. p. 536. Comp. *Basnage*, *ibid.* sect. 7. and *Whitby* on *John* xviii. 31. or *Krebsii* Observ. in N. T. ex *Josepho*. p. 64, 155, &c. One would think, their own judgment of the thing might be sufficiently inferred from *Hieros. Sanhedr.* fol. 18. col. 1. *Traditio est, quadraginta annos ante excidium templi ablatum fuisse jus vitæ et mortis*, et *ib.* fol. 242. *Quadraginta annis ante vastatum templum ablata sunt judicia capitalia ab ISRAELE.* Comp. *Allix*, Judgment of the *Jewish Church*, &c. p. 49. Though *Lightfoot* is of a different opinion, and produces several instances in confirmation of it. [Op. Lat. Vol. II. p. 371.] *Biscoe* [B. Lect. c. 6.] has made it very probable, that the *Jewish* magistrates had often, even in those times, the power of inflicting capital punishments allowed them; but yet he grants that they were often prevented by the *Roman* governors; [*ib.* p. 225.] it is plain, their state was about that time in great confusion; and it appears, that they durst not exert such a power, upon the occasion above-mentioned; nor in their then circumstances could at last have compassed our Saviour's death in any regular, judicial way, without application to a *Roman* governor; which comes to pretty near the same thing, with respect to the main part of the present argument. Comp. *Doddr.* Vol. II. p. 545. 547. 565. and III. p. 110. 345. 366. *Ottii*. Sj icel. ex *Josepho* p. 225. or *Pearse* com. on *Joh.* xviii. 31.

reason to believe, that if they had been at liberty, they would have cut him off as soon as ever he appeared to correct their errors, and reprove their abuses in religion; to disappoint their fond hopes of temporal grandeur, wealth, and power; and lower their spiritual pride, by reducing them to a level with all such as feared God, of every nation under heaven. And accordingly, when they saw he was not a *Messiah* for their purpose*, we find them immediately resolved to seize and despatch him, as they would undoubtedly have done if they had been possessed of sufficient power: but, being then in a great measure deprived of it, they were obliged to have recourse to art and stratagem; continually lying in wait for something to accuse him of to the *Romans*; and trying all methods to draw him into any act which might be construed treason or disaffection to their government: on which account also we find him behaving with so much caution and reserve before them; keeping in private as much as was possible, and consistent with the end for which he came†;

* How soon their rulers perceived this, and what a quite different conduct it produced at first in them, and the common people, toward him, see *Lardner Cred.* Vol. I. p. 288, &c. Or *Benson Life of Christ*, c. 8. sect. 5. p. 289. The disappointment of the latter also, on their seeing him given up to gross reproaches and grievous sufferings, may sufficiently account for that remarkable change of their behaviour towards him at last, as is explained by *Farmer*, *Inquiry into Christ's Temptation*, p. 98.

† *Luke* v. 16. *John* viii. 1. xi. 54.

charging his disciples not to make him known *; moving from place to place, in order to avoid any tumults, or extraordinary concourse of the people †; preventing his being proclaimed the *Messiah* ‡, and declining any direct answer, when questioned about it §, till he had finished the work of his ministry, and fulfilled every thing in the Scriptures relating to his office (E). No former age of

* *Matt.* xii. 16.

† Sæpe Christus fugiebat hominum turbam dum lacum trajiceret, forte ut vitaret omnem tumultus speciem, utque obviam iret seditionibus, quas homines rerum novarum cupidi, quos multos tunc temporis in Judæa fuisse notum est, potuissent ejus nomine abutentes concitare. Si magna hominum imperitorum multitudo diu congregata fuisset, facile contra Romanos, quorum jugum iniquo animo ferebant, moliri aliquid potuisset, præsertim cum Jesum esse Messiam credere aut suspicari cœperant. Maximi autem erat momenti evangelio exorienti omnes turbas turbarumque vel ipsam suspicionem vitari; parati enim erant primores Judæorum Christum adcurare, apud procuratorem Cæsaris, qui hujusmodi delationibus accipiendis jam nimium propensus erat. Vide historiam administrationis Pilati apud Josephum. Cleric. in *Matt.* viii. 18.

‡ *Mark* iii. 12. *Luke* iv. 41.

§ *John* x. 24. xi. 4, &c.

(E) See *Locke*, Reason. of C. p. 487, &c. fol. 3d ed. [or *Lardner*, Cred. B. i. c. 5. p. 286.] where may be found a full answer to the *Moral Philosopher's* observation on this subject, Vol. III. p. 189. who concludes, as is usual, with a very false account of the matter, viz. that 'our Saviour all along from first to last, [Witness *Matt.* xxvi. 64. *Mar.* xiv. 62. *Luke* xxii. 70. *John* xviii. 37.] disclaimed the Messiahship among them; i. e. the Jews. Comp. *Whitby* on *Matt.* ix. 30.

The same account serves also to confute the idle observation made upon these passages by the author of *Christianity not founded on argument*; who from thence infers that our Lord could have no such meaning as to convince by his miraculous works,

the *Jews* probably was wicked enough to have withstood so many proofs of his being the true *Messiah*; to have rejected him, and been his *betrayers* and *murderers*; and thereby to have accomplished the prophecies, and executed the purpose of God, in sending his Son to die for the world: this generation was so thoroughly such*, as to have done it with too much precipitancy; unless restrained by a superior power: we may add,

p. 48. *no such intention as to prove his own truth and character, by these instances of his power, ib.* in full contradiction to those many other passages, where he expressly appeals to the same *works*, as direct proofs of his divine commission, *Matt.* xi. 4, 5, 21. *Joh.* v. 36. x. 25, 38. xiv. 11. xv. 24, &c. See *Randolph's* Answ. p. 169, 170.

The same is likewise a reply to this author's objection against the truth of Christianity, from *Christ's* not opening his commission before the *Jewish* rulers [*ibid.* p. 48, &c.] so far as he has represented the case truly; for which see *Benson's* Answ. Part iii. Dial. iii. p. 196, &c.

The same observation may be applied, with no less force, against our Saviour's doing the like before the *Roman* governors, which stuck so much with *Woolston*; [*Exact Fitness.* Pref. &c.] to which we may add, that his addressing himself in form at any time to either of these powers, must in all probability have been turned to a great objection against the truth of his mission, whether they had, or had not received him: the first would have been wholly attributed to state policy; the latter might have been urged as implying some extraordinary defect in his credentials: as is well observed by *Clagett* in the case of his not appearing in public; and before the *Jewish* rulers, after his *resurrection*. *Posth. Sermons*, Vol. I. Sermon 1. See also *Benson*, *ib.* p. 216, &c. So that had the whole been conducted in any way materially different from what it was, the case would, as far as now appears, have been no better for those times in which it was transacted, and much worse for all future ages.

* *V. Lightfoot*, *Op.* Lat. 317, 325, &c.

and one that entertained more just notions of religious toleration*; which makes its subjection to the *Roman* government in this respect also, to constitute the FULNESS OF TIME; and affords a circumstance particularly suitable to the coming of *Christ*.

And though this very remarkable wickedness of the *Jews* in some measure counterbalanced their other qualifications for attending to the *Christ*, when he came, and debarred the generality of them from accepting the benefits of his coming; yet it concurred equally to carry on the same design of providence, for the common good: even the vice and folly of them who were induced to reject him, contributed to the advantage and improvement of all those amongst them, who had so much virtue and wisdom left as to receive him; which great numbers of them did†, notwithstanding the vile policy of their rulers; which policy soon brought on that very thing which they were seeking to avoid by it‡—the dissolution of their state; which having now answered the ends it was designed for, gave way to that universal system of religion which was to comport with each poli-

* During that space would be the best opportunity for *Christ's* disciples to promote the interest of his gospel, the *Jewish* people having not the power of life and death in their own hands, and the Roman procurators were not disposed to give any men disturbance, upon account of difference of opinion in religious matters. *Lardner*, Credibility, pt. 11. Vol. xiii. p. 153.

† *V. Jenkin*, Vol. II. c. 32. p. 497.

‡ *John* xi. 48.

tical establishment throughout the world; and its remains served equally to the same purpose, in bearing every where such evident marks of the divine displeasure, as could not but be taken notice of, together with the causes of their punishment*. And thus did the *fall of Israel* become *the riches of the world*, and the rise of a new and more noble dispensation; communicated to all nations, and effectually confirmed in every succeeding generation: of which below.

Thus have we considered some of the most remarkable circumstances attending the age of CHRIST'S advent; which make it appear to be the *fulness of the time*, and fittest for such a dispensation†.

* 'Had the *Jews* been all converted by JESUS CHRIST, we should only have had doubtful witnesses; and had they been quite destroyed, we should have had none at all.' *Pascall. Thoughts*, p. 191. Comp. id. p. 89, 90. 'Istos inimicos meos ipsos qui me occiderunt noli tu occidere. Maneat genus *Judæorum*; certe victa est a *Romanis*; certe deleta civitas eorum; non admittuntur ad civitatem suam *Judæi*, et tamen *Judæi* sunt.—Manent cum signo: nec sic victi sunt ut a victoribus absorberentur. Non sine causa. Per omnes gentes dispersi sunt *Judæi* testes iniquitatis suæ et veritatis nostræ. Ipsi habent Codices de quibus prophetatus est Christus; et nos tenemus Christum. Et si forte aliquando aliquis Paganus dubitaverit cum ei dixerimus prophetias de Christo, quarum evidentiam obstupescit, et admirans putaverit a nobis esse conscriptas; de codicibus *Judæorum* probamus quia hoc totum ante prædictum est, Videte quemadmodum de inimicis nostris alios confundimus inimicos!' *August. in Psal. lviii. ver. 11. Tom. viii. p. 716. Comp. Id. in Psal. xli. et infra note R. p. 184.*

† Most of these circumstances are well summed up by Dr.

· Upon the whole we may observe, that from the very beginning of the world, mankind have always had sufficient means of being instructed in religion; and that its several dispensations have been suited to their respective circumstances and capacities, so far as can be learnt from those very brief accounts that are left us of their history.

We find that in the *INFANT* state of the world, mankind were led by the hand in matters of religion; directed by visible appearances from Heaven on every proper occasion; fed with a portion of this world's goods, and cherished with temporal prospects. The doctrines of religion, and modes of worship, were few and plain; agreeable to their imperfect notions of things, and suited to their simplicity of manners*: and when these were instituted among some principal heads of families, they might, through the longevity of men in those days, be easily held entire, and handed down by *tradition*. When mankind had multiplied, and were dispersed over the face of the earth; and *traditional religion* (notwithstanding the frequent revivals of it by particular revelations) began to be corrupted and defaced; and as soon as a better way of preserving the notices of it was discovered †, *viz.* by the invention, or rather the revelation, of

Robertson, in his *Serm. on Coloss. ii. 26.* See the *Scotch Preacher*, vol. 1.

* See Part iii.

† See *Conybeare Def. of Rev. Rel.* p. 404, &c.

letters(F); God is pleased to afford more clear and ample ones; he singles out a person peculiarly

(F) *Gale* [Court of the Gent. P. i. B. i. c. 10. sect. 4.] brings many testimonies, both from *Heathen* and *Christian* writers, to prove that *Moses* was the original introducer of letters. See also *Gen. Dict.* Vol. IV. p. 417. *G. I. Vossius* Aristarch. 1. 9. and an *Essay upon Literature, proving, that the two tables written by the finger of God in Mount Sinai, was the first writing in the world.* Lond. 1726. From whom it appears, how much letters must have contributed to prevent the increase of idolatry; at least the advancing men into the number of Gods; by preserving a more particular account of their first rise and following actions. *Comp. Univers. Hist.* p. 720. *N. T. Gussset* Com. Ebr. p. 7, 8. and *Daubuz* on Rev. Prelim. Disc. p. 2, &c. Which last writer shews, that it was as necessary then to give the *Israelites* letters, to supply the use of all their symbols, and take off their inclination to symbolical idolatry; as it was afterwards to communicate the art of *printing*, in order to correct a no less gross idolatry in the *Christian* world, by transmitting all useful knowledge much more easily and extensively, than could have ever been done before by writing, *ib.* p. 12. ‘*Moses*, who was skilled in the learning of the Egyptians, without doubt understood their manner of writing; and if the letters represented animals, he must have composed a new alphabet, when the law forbade them to make the likeness of any thing; that is, we are to suppose, of any living creature, or of any of those luminaries that were worshipped in the heathen world. *Pococke’s* Description of the East, Vol. I. p. 228. *Comp. Conjectural Observations on the Origin and Progress of Alphabetic Writing*, printed A. D. 1772. Many proofs of God’s having communicated the art of alphabetical writing first to *Moses*, as well as reasons for that conduct, have lately been set forth by *Worthington*, *Essay*, c. 8. But this point seems to be brought to the highest probability by *Winder*, *Hist. of Knowl.* Vol. II. Add *Bryant*, *Anal.* v. 3. p. 123. To this may be added *Bp. Clayton’s* account of the *written mountains* mentioned in a *Journal* from *Grand Cairo* to *Mount Sinai*, which, as the learned editor observes, contain in all probability the *ancient Hebrew character*; which the *Israelites*, having learned to

eminent for piety and obedience; takes him under his immediate protection; communicates his councils freely to him, and makes him a means of discovering that knowledge to many other nations, and reforming the religion of every country to which he was sent. The same favour is continued to some of his posterity, and with the same design; they are removed to and fro; and every where miraculously preserved and multiplied; are united under a *theocracy*, and have a *written law* given them; consisting of the most perfect rules of life that their then state and temper would admit; containing a body of precepts opposite, in most particulars, to the superstitious practices of the people around them: they are entrusted with a history of the original state of the world, and all past dispensations of religion, together with predictions of the future; more especially of that great one, under the *Messiah*, who was to descend from one of their tribes, and whom they were taught to expect by numberless preparatory types *

write it at the time of giving the law from Mount *Sinai*, improved themselves with practising on these mountains, during their forty years abode in the wilderness, p. 34. note (a). Comp. p. 54, &c. et c. contr. *Hottinger in Wagenseil*, p. 432. *Montague*, Ph. Trans. No. vii. for 1766. Vid. etiam *E. Bernardi Tabulam Orbis eruditi Literaturæ a caractere Samaritico deductæ*, &c. auctam a *C. Morton*, 1759.

* *Ld. Barrington* (after *Sykes*) seems to reject the notion of *types*, and will have the *Jewish* dispensation to be only 'such a representation of the gospel as would shew the analogy after the gospel took place, rather than prefigure it before-hand.' *Essay on the several Dispensations*, &c. p. 46. [which likewise seems

and emblems, all tending to point him out more fully to them; and prepare the way for his reception. They become a mighty nation; are distinguished by extraordinary victories under their several governors: the fame of them, and of their God*, spreads far and wide. To keep them duly

to have been the notion of *Le Clerc*, Comm. on 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.]

But is not this somewhat preposterous, by assigning such an use for it as was in a great measure unnecessary, when the more noble institution had in fact taken place, itself *being waxen old and ready to vanish away*? And how shall we be able to reconcile this with the following account of the same author, p. 69? ‘*God afterwards erected this family [of Abraham] into an earthly kingdom, so constituted as to point out a better, and in many proper ways to prepare men, and dispose things for the establishment of it.*’ *De Typis V. Glass.* Phil. Saer. L. ii. Pr. i. Tr. 2. sect. 4. et *Selden.* Ot. Theolog. de eorundem usu et abusu, L. ii. p. 3. *Comp. Div. Leg.* B. vi. sect. 6. *Newt.* on the *Apoc.* c. ii. and *Benson* Dissert. introd. to Suppl. Paraphr. p. 35, &c. with *Graham’s* serm. on *Matt.* iv. 17. p. 9.

* ‘Here we may justly admire the singular providence of God, which thus made way for the propagation of knowledge over all the earth. *David* was God’s chosen instrument for extending the *Hebrew* state to its greatest dimensions. And then, at a time when the nation was in the greatest extent of power and territory, and reached to and verged upon so many different countries; so that more notice would be taken of what passed in that potent state;—then, I say, *Solomon* was raised up, and endued with such extraordinary talents by God himself, to be the instrument of this greatest benefit to mankind. This prince’s conspicuous and superlative wisdom drew the attention of the world; and their curiosity led them into that flourishing country, where they might, among other entertaining things, have an ample opportunity of gaining a full knowledge of LETTERS, or alphabetical *writing*. This was discovered by *divine revelation* at first. But as the *Hebrew* nation had not been sig-

attached to his worship, he raises up a succession of prophets, who cease not to exhort, and urge them to their duty;—to reprove them for their repeated breaches of it;—to remind them of their dependence on that God, who had already done so great things for them; and to assure them of still greater, on a performance of their duty; as also to threaten them with the severest punishments, on their defection: which always came to pass accordingly; and were dispensed in so very visible and exemplary a manner, as could not but surprise the nations round them; and plainly discovered him to be, not only a God of the *Jews*, but the supreme Governor of the whole world, and Lord of Heaven and Earth; which was the principal end of all; and to effect which, their prophets are often sent to foretel the fate of the neighbouring kingdoms, and to acquaint them with the knowledge of the Most High. This is the great design, which was still carrying on; and which his own people, though they frequently endeavour to cross it, are yet obliged to execute, whether they will or not; and equally promote it by their successes and their sufferings. They were to be like so much leaven, in the mass of mankind;

nificant enough, to engage men to much attention to their arts or knowledge, God in his providence thought fit to raise up these two great successive princes into such a conspicuous point of light, to be the means of rendering the knowledge of LETTERS more general, and thereby of humanizing and improving all nations in the most useful sciences.' *Winder*, Hist. of Knowl. Vol. II. p. 59, 60.

and when they themselves were once thoroughly penetrated and prepared, he disperses them among all nations, to diffuse the same spirit, and contribute to the reformation of others: and it is observable, that the same long *captivity*, which cured them of their great proneness to idolatry, served also to distribute them over most parts of the world; and together with them, the knowledge and worship of the one true God, then more deeply imprinted in their hearts(G).

(G) It has been observed, that the *Jews* were removed to *Babylon*, when that empire was in its most flourishing state, and most frequented by philosophers, [*Young's Hist. Diss. Vol. I. p. 292.*] who travelled thither from all parts, and thereby in a good measure became acquainted with the *Jewish* history; as many of them are supposed to have been. [See the authors above in note * p. 143.] And, it is well known, that at the end of this captivity, the greatest part of the *Jews*, and those of the greatest eminence, staid behind, and settled in *Chaldea*, *Assyria*, and other eastern provinces; notwithstanding several decrees granted by the kings of *Persia* for their return; [*Prid. Part i. B. iii. p. 136, &c. Univ. Hist. B. ii. c. 1. p. 5.*] from whence it is probable, that some of their descendants were spread so far as the *East Indies*, where their posterity continues to this day; as appears from the accounts of many modern travellers. See *Hamilton's New Account of the East Indies, Vol. I. p. 321, &c. Edinb. 1727.* and *Modern part of Univ. Hist. B. xviii. c. 7. sect. 22. note q.* We have a remarkable passage to this purpose related by *Bundy*, in the preface to his translation of *Lamy's Apparatus Biblicus*, as follows: 'The Rev. Mr. *Long*, lately returned from *Fort St. George*, in the *East Indies*, assures me, and gives me leave to declare it to the world from him, that the *Gentoos* (a people in the *East*, who from their customs and other circumstances, are by the most judicious believed to be the descendants of those of the *Jewish* ten tribes, who never returned from the *Babylonish* captivity) have a temple at *Chillembrum*, near *Porto Novo*, on

When at length the *Jews* had attained to some competent sense of religion, and were so firmly attached to it, as to be fit to communicate the same sentiments to the *Gentiles*, to whom they were by this time sufficiently made known; and these also, by what they had heard of the *Jewish* prophets, and seen of their sacred books, together with their own improvements in religious knowledge, were able to receive and relish some more perfect institution; when both *Jew* and *Gentile* had been prepared to expect a new revelation; when they began to want its aid, and were most sensible of their wants; and therefore like to be best disposed to accept, and apply the remedy: and when the state of the world was such, as most of all favoured the communication, and secured the continuance of it: when the dark, fabulous ages were well over, and succeeded by one remarkably learned and

the coast of *Coromandel*, which they call *Zuliman's* temple, which they resort to with the same devotion as the *Jews* formerly did to that at *Jerusalem*; and that it is divided into courts, in the same manner as *Pere Lamy's* is, and is built much after the same plan which is there given.' Comp. *Bernier's* voyage to *Surat*, &c. Collection of Voyages, &c. Vol. VIII. p. 237.

An account of *Jews* and *Jewish* customs discovered in *China*, *Bengal* and *Madagascar*, as also in *Africa* and *America*, both North and South, may be seen in the authors referred to by *Jenkin*, Vol. I. c. 2. p. 104, &c. and many more in *Fabricius*, Lux Ev. from c. 32. 50. or *Basnage*, Hist. B. vi. and vii. where we have an ample account of their being spread over the four quarters of the world. Comp. *Travels* of the *Jesuits*, Vol. II. p. 27. note (*). and p. 264, &c. or *Millar's* Hist. of the Ch. c. 8, 9. and *Adair's* Hist. of *American Indians*, 15—194.

historical : when arts and commerce had extended themselves, together with the Roman empire and its language, over most parts of the known world ; and thereby opened a way for any new discovery, and enabled mankind with more ease and expedition to search into, and thoroughly examine it : and more particularly, when that country which was to be the scene of all this, had been reduced to a Roman province, and thereby exact accounts were taken of its state and inhabitants ; so that the person who was to work this great reformation there, could not be long hid from the rest of the world : when the government of it had likewise been put under such a form as was extremely suitable, and even necessary to the due exercise and execution of his ministry : in this period of the world *Christ* came ;—nor could he, as far as we can see, have come so seasonably at any other.

Whoever attentively considers these several circumstances, though he may not perhaps allow every one of them ; yet he will, I believe, find something so remarkable in many ; especially in the extraordinary coincidence of so many ; as may induce him to think, that there might be sufficient reason for deferring this dispensation to so late a period.

Thus it appears that God has all along acted equally and impartially for the good of mankind, in matters of religion ; though in very different manners, according to their different circumstances

and capacities;—that his several dispensations have been gradually opened, so as regularly to rise out of, and improve upon each other;—and lastly, that the state of knowledge, and perfection in the world, has hitherto been *increasing*.

The like method will appear to have been continued under *Christianity* itself; it was in its *infancy* in *Christ's* time; who communicated the things of it to his disciples, by little and little, as they were able to bear them*; beginning with the plainest and most obvious; laying the foundation during his ministry, and conversations with them after his resurrection †; and leaving the more full opening of it till the descent of the *Holy Ghost* ‡; which likewise led them gradually into its several truths. For some time the apostles themselves were ignorant of *Christ's* true office, and the spiritual nature of his kingdom. They could not conceive that he was to suffer for the whole world §; they expected nothing but a temporal

* *Mark* iv. 33. *John* xvi. 12. ‘The Christian Religion was not properly set up in the world during the life of Christ, though he was the illustrious and divine author and founder of it: and the reason is plain and obvious, viz. because many of the peculiar glories, duties, and blessings of it, as they are described in the Acts, and in the sacred Epistles, did really depend upon those facts which had no existence in Christ's own lifetime, viz. his death, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation.’ *Watt's Harmony of all the Religions which God ever prescribed*, c. 10.

† *Acts* i. 3. *Luke* xxiv. 27, 44.

‡ As to the *fact*, see Bp. *Gibson's* 3d Past. Let. sect. 3, 4, and 6. For the *reasons* of it, see *Misc. Sac. Ess.* i. p. 157, &c.

§ *Matth.* xvi. 22. *Luke* xviii. 31, 34.

prince*; and thought that his kingdom was to be confined to a remnant of the Jews†. Even after the descent of the *Holy Ghost*, St. Peter wants a particular revelation to convince him that the Gentiles were likewise to be admitted‡ into the same covenant: the disciples are astonished, that on *them* also was poured out the gift of the *Holy Ghost*§; and contend with him about it||; and afterwards prevail on him and others of the brethren to dissemble it¶. Many yet insisted on the point of *circumcision***; and most of them concluded that the world would speedily come to an end††. Which error might be permitted to continue in the church for some time, on account of that extraordinary courage and resolution, which it infused into the primitive Martyrs, and which helped so very greatly to support them under all their trials, as well as to excite them to a more liberal distribution of their goods, *to all that had need*.

And though a much larger and more compre-

* *Matth.* xx. 21, &c.

† *Acts* i. 6. and c. x. The use of this may be seen in Div. Leg. Vol. II. B. iv. sect. 6.

‡ *Acts* x. 6, &c. xi. 5, &c. v. *Benson*, Ess. on Inspir. Paraphr. p. 319.

§ *Acts* x. 45.

|| *Acts* xi. 2.

¶ *Gal.* ii. 11, 13.

** *Acts* xv. 1, 5.

†† See *Burnet*, de Stat. Mort. et Res. c. 7. p. 145, &c. *Clarke*, Sermon. 21, on *John* xxi. 22.

hensive view of the whole plan was imparted by *Christ* himself, after his ascension, to *St. Paul**, who was endowed with greater accomplishments, and a larger stock of learning, and who laboured more abundantly than they all †; yet perhaps it may be questioned, whether he also was not left in some degree of uncertainty about this last point(η), to which the *Δυσνοητα* in his writings,

* *Gal.* i. 16, &c. See *Misc. Sacr. Ess.* ii. p. 40, &c. and *Locke's* Synops. to Comm. on *Ephes.*

Concerning the propriety of choosing this apostle at that particular time, see *Locke*, Reasonableness, p. 508. Works, Vol. II. 2d Ed.

What is meant by his *gospel*, and that it was not contradictory to what the other apostles had delivered, as is so frequently affirmed by *Morgan* and *Bolingbroke*, see *Locke* on *Rom.* xvi. 25. with *Whitby* on *Gal.* i. 7.

† 1 *Cor.* xv. 10.

(η) Comp. *Rom.* xiii. 11. *Locke*, *ib.* [contr. *Taylor* in loc. p. 352.] 1 *Cor.* i. 7. and xv. 51. 2 *Cor.* v. 2, 3, 4. and 1 *Thess.* iv. 15, 16, 17. with *Grotius*, and *Wall's* note on the last place. Add *Grot.* Append. ad Comm. de Antich. Op. Tom. IV. p. 475. *Lowth* on Inspir. p. 225. 2d Ed. or *Benson* Append. to Paraphr. on 1 *Tim.* v. 23, &c. *Whiston* on *Rev. Cor.* 2. [contr. *Whitby*, 2d Disc. after 2 Ep. *Thess.*] and note μ. p. 265. Since, as our Saviour has declared, *of that day and that hour knoweth no man*, we have the less reason to be surprised, if its coming be spoken of indistinctly, and on some occasions represented in more general terms as being near at hand to all. See *Chandler*, on 1 *Thess.* iv. 15. 2 *Thess.* 2.

But if this notion seems too harsh, the difficulty may be solved otherwise more easily, upon a supposition that the time of each man's death is, in respect of himself, really *contiguous* to that of his resurrection—a doctrine which not only *St. Paul*, but two other apostles also, *St. James* and *St. Peter*, have taught very expressly, and which appears to deserve a little more attention than is usually given to it. This point is very well proved by

taken notice of by *St. Peter*, [2 Ep. iii. 16.] are with great probability supposed to relate*.

In this respect, the Christian institution may be said to have been but in its *childhood*, even under the apostles. We find it for some time mixed with Judaism†, and subject to carnal ordinances: the apostles of the circumcision seem not to have any distinct knowledge of the general freedom from the ceremonial law‡: *St. Paul* is forced to

Taylor, ib. p. 354, 355, though he there seems to have declined entering into the *ground* of it. For which, see the last discourse here annexed.

* Vid. *Mill*. Proleg. passim, et *Whitby* in 2 *Pet.* iii. 16.

† Indulgendum et dandum quid erat ingenio Legi Mosaicæ et Institutis Synagogarum assueto, donec tandem quidam ad altiorem deducti ætatem sponte hos apparatus moresque desererent. *Bohmer*, de extraord. prim. Eccl. Statu. Ed. 2. Diss. xii. p. 420.

Ratio nascentis Ecclesiæ non permisit, ut eodem momento omnia emendarentur quæ Scholis Judæorum accepta referenda, &c. Id. ib. p. 428.

See *Edwards* Survey, p. 598, &c. ‘As to their outward way of living, they conformed themselves to the rest of the Jews, observed all the ceremonies of the law, even to the offering of *sacrifice*; which they continued to do as long as the temple was standing. And this is what the fathers called giving the synagogue an *honourable interment*.’ Aug. Ep. 19. *Fleury*, Manners of the Christians, p. 31. Nay, fifteen bishops of Jerusalem in succession were circumcised, till the destruction of it under *Adrian*, according to *Eusebius*, Eccl. H. L. iv. c. 5. Comp. *Sulp. Sever.* L. ii. p. 142. Elz. Tum. Hierosolymæ non nisi ex circumcissione habebat ecclesia sacerdotem, &c. But by this emperor’s treatment of the Jews, their whole constitution, civil and ecclesiastical, was effectually dissolved. See note q. p. 197.

‡ *Acts* xxi. 26. See *Benson*, Hist. of first planting Christianity, Vol. II. p. 209, where the reasons of this gradual disco-

conceal his preaching to the *idolatrous Gentiles*, for several years*; a distinction of days†, of meats and drinks‡, and other legal ceremonies§, are observed, to gratify the Jewish converts, and avoid giving offence to weaker brethren||: they are obliged to comply with such in the toleration of many things burdensome to the flesh, and unprofitable as pertaining to the conscience; and the observance of some is judged necessary to be enjoined, or at least recommended to certain *pro-*

very are assigned. Add his Essay, concerning the abolishing of the ceremonial law annexed to paraphrase on *Titus*. Or *Watt's* Harmony of all the Religions prescribed by God, c. 11.

* *Gal.* ii. 2. See Pref. to Misc. Sacr. p. 15, 26, &c. *Benson*, Hist. Vol. II. sect. 3. *Doddridge* supposes that the point here concealed, was the *exemption*, not of the *Gentile converts* only, but of the Jews *themselves*, from the observance of the *Mosaic* ceremonies, as what they were no longer bound to under the *Gospel*, any farther than as the peace and edification of others were concerned in it. See Vol. V. sect. 3. note *d.* and other places there referred to.

† *Acts* xiii. 14. xvi. 13. *Col.* ii. 16.

‡ *Rom.* xiv. 3. *1 Cor.* viii. 13.

§ *Acts* xvi. 3.

|| F. *Spanhemius* in Diatrib. de rit. quibusd. Tom. II. Op. p. 906. Sedulo observasse animadverti plura ex *Judaica disciplina* in *Apostolicam Ecclesiam* introducta esse ex Christi vel Apostolorum praxi et observantia, quanquam *sine mandato*; aut si mandati in modum, non talis tamen, quod, ut ait *Spanhemius*, *omnes Christianos semper et in perpetuum obstringeret*; sed quod duntaxat *infirmorum*, ritibus Judaicis penitus immersorum, gratia retentum est. Hac quippe prudentia agebant Apostoli ut in his externis moribus se facile componerent ad infirmitatem conversorum, tum ex *Judæis*, tum ex *Gentilibus*, prout disertis fatetur verbis Paulus. *Bohmer* de Extraord. prim. Eccl. Stat. Diss. xii. p. 529. The same judicious author collects from *Spanheim* twenty

selytes, by a public decree*, which has in some places been insisted on for several ages, after all the ends and uses of it ceased.

The many extraordinary *gifts* of the Spirit, which attended the church at that time, were no less evident signs of its weakness; which stood in need of all these interpositions †, than the frequent appearance of *angels* had been heretofore: whereas in its more confirmed and settled state, these *helps* ‡ became unnecessary; the natural and ordinary evidence, the regular stated methods of instruction, being abundantly sufficient. The same observation might be confirmed from that frequent misapplication of these very gifts, so far as to occasion tumults and confusion in the public

instances of this; concluding with that famous decree mentioned in the next note. Denique hinc etiam referri possunt quæ Apostoli ex Lege *Mosis* in gratiam zelotarum ad tempus adhuc observanda constituerunt. Act. xv. 20.

* *Acts* xv. 28, 29. See *Benson*, Hist. of planting Christ. Vol. II. p. 56. where the best account seems to be given of that decree, from the 17th and 18th of *Levit.* See also Misc. Sac. Ess. iv. and *Doddridge*, Vol. III. p. 234, 240. Comp. *Lardner*, Remarks on *Ward's* Dissertations, c. 7. and *Bowyer's* Apostolical Decree.

† *Edwards* Survey, p. 600, 606, &c. add *Hickes's* Spirit of Enthusiasm exorcised, p. 27—30. The particular occasion there was for each, may be seen in Misc. Sac. Ess. i. p. 153, &c.

‡ *Ἀντιλήψεις*, 1 *Cor.* xii. 28: parallel to this, and explanatory of it, is *Acts* xx. 35, *ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων*. What these *helps* were, and what necessity there was for them in the church, see *Benson*, ib. c. 1. sect. 6. p. 72. or *Misc. Sacra*, Ess. i. p. 58, &c.

assembly, (with reverence I speak it) even in the midst of an effusion of the Spirit*; insomuch that they sometimes *came together not for the better but for the worse* †. Even in those days, the *mystery of iniquity* began to work ‡; many factions and schisms arose; many tares were sown, together with the good seed, and sprang up with it, and choked it. No sooner had *Christianity* got rid of the yoke of the *Jewish* law, than it was contaminated with *Jewish fables* § and traditions. The *Gentile* converts were some time in laying aside their inveterate superstitions ||; and afterwards introduced an impure mixture of their *philosophy* ¶: this soon produced innumerable sects and *heresies*; which take up the greatest part of the history of those times **, and gave rise to the multitude of silly spurious books that then gained credit in the church ††. Instead of attending to the plain, popular sense of scripture, its expounders fly to fan-

* 1 *Cor.* xiv. See Div. Leg. Vol. II. B. iv. sect. 6.

† 1 *Cor.* xi. 17.

‡ 2 *Thess.* ii. 7. 3 *Ep. John* ix. *Jude* xii. V. *Bohmer* de extraord. prim. Eccl. Stat. Diss. xii. § 18.

§ See *Basnage*, Hist. of the *Jews*, B. iii. c. 22.

|| See *Bingham's* Antiq. B. xvi. c. 5.

¶ See *Bibl. Univers.* Tom. x. et *Cleric.* Epist. Crit. iv. 148, &c. cum *Mosheim*. Comm. de turbata per *Platonicos* ecclesia, in vers. *Cudworth*, Syst. Vid. id. de rebus Christ. ante *Const. M.* Sæc. i. sect. 62, et Sæc. ii. sect. 25, 33, 34, &c.

** See a summary account of it in *Le Clerc*, Ep. Crit. iv.

†† V. *Fabric.* Cod. Apocr. N. T. or *Jones's* New Method of settling the Canon.

ciful allegories*; raise a number of mysteries; and maintain continual *opposition of science, falsely so called*.

And though the plan of our redemption was delivered, and its essential parts recorded, during the extraordinary assistance of the *Holy Ghost*; and in some respects the primitive *Christians* seem to have the advantage of others; as being better acquainted with the style in which it was written; and some apostolical traditions, which might give light to it†: yet it by no means follows, that the

* ‘Hunc (scil. *Philonem*) haud ita multo post culpabili affectatione sequuti sunt patres et scriptores ecclesiastici, tam suam quam lectorum operam ludentes: sive quod is omnium primus annotata in sacram scripturam tentaret, sive potius quod *Philonem* primo in hunc modum scribentem reppererint. Certum sane est eum *christianis* scriptoribus diu plurimum arrisisse; quorum nonnulli eum adeo ad amussim imitari ambiebant, ut sacra volumina, alioquin in se perspicua, fœde obscurarint, obductaque allego-riarum suarum fuligine minus sincera præbuerint.’ *Light-foot*, Op. Tom. II. p. 848. Comp. *Cleric. Hieron.* Q. 2. p. 41.

† Which yet is but of very little weight, as may be seen in *Le Clerc*, Ep. Crit. iv. p. 146, &c. Bp. *Taylor*, Lib. of Proph. sect. 5. N. 3. or *Whitby*, Diss. de S. Scrip. Int. passim. ‘Sunt equidem qui sentiunt patres, eo quod N. Testamenti scriptoribus propiores essent, idoneos magis fuisse sensus scripturæ judices, sive interpretes; quod tamen falsissimum esse experientia duce compertum est. Ex trium enim primorum seculorum scriptoribus haud pauca in hoc opere interpretamenta con-gessimus ab omni veritatis specie aliena. Ostendant nobis patrum patroni unicum scripturæ pericopen, quæ alias obscura cum esset, ab iis sit lucem mutuata. Hoc autem admiranda Dei providentia contigisse existimo, ne ex humano judicio divinarum scripturarum autoritas penderet. Nisi enim experientia, scientiæ magistra, compertum esset patres primævos et apostolis propiores.

true genius and extent of this revelation, must be as well understood by the generality of these converts, as it could be by any that came after them. What our Saviour said of *John* the Baptist, that *the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he*; greater in his knowledge of the nature and constitution of that kingdom: the same may be said of common *Christians* in that period; many of less merit, and lower abilities, but living in a more enlightened age, might prove superior to them, in what may be called the *theory*, or speculative part, of their religion; with regard to which only, I would always be understood (1).

haud minus quam cæteri, cæspitasse; pronum esset propter insignem eorum pietatem et dona quorundam spiritualia eorum vestigiis instituisse.' *Whitby*, ib. Epil. p. 346. 'That such *Traditions* were not long preserved by the church. *Id.* Pref. Disc. p. 40, 41.

(1) What has been here said, may perhaps be supposed to contradict an established rule of interpreting scripture, which is laid down by an approved writer in the following words: viz. 'That we should have an especial regard to the practice and usage of the first and purest ages of the church, and those that were nearest the times of the apostles.' The reason assigned is, 'Because the primitive Christians had better advantages of knowing the mind of the apostles, and the sense of their writings, merely by living so near the Apostolic age, than the greatest industry or learning can furnish us with, that live at this distance. And to suppose that the Christians who lived in those early days, would either carelessly lay aside, or wilfully deviate from the rules and orders which the apostles gave to the church by the direction of God's spirit, is a great reflection upon the providence of God and his care of the church;—and upon the memory of those glorious confessors and witnesses to Christianity, who planted the gospel with their preaching, and watered it with

The plain fundamental doctrines and rules of life were then, no doubt (as they have generally

their blood, and on whose credit and testimony the authority of the scripture-canon itself does very much depend. So much reason is there for our paying a due deference to the judgment and practice of the primitive Church in doubts relating to the writings and institutions of the Apostles.' *Lowth's Directions*, p. 63, 64, 65. This is in some measure just; and when the case is fairly stated, what has been delivered will not appear so contrary to it as may at first be apprehended. I own, the rule and reason holds in some degree, as well in matters of belief, as practice; but then I think, it should in the former case be restrained to matters, which those who had a divine authority expressly determined to be such; and of the latter kind, such as they have enjoined as of perpetual necessity, (which may be found perhaps to be much fewer than we usually imagine;) and not extended to every thing which these good men either permitted, or approved, or even complied with themselves; since such things might be expedient, and even necessary for the then time and state of Christianity; yet afterwards ceasing to be so, vanish of themselves; or become liable to be dropped, or done away, in other ages, which would admit, and probably might require very different institutions. Many instances of this have often been alleged by writers on the controverted points both of church government and discipline; which need not here be mentioned. Allowing then their full merit to the confessors, saints, martyrs, &c. and a precedency in certain respects to the most primitive times;—allowing that they best knew the usages and orders of the apostles, and most faithfully observed and copied them; yet these very practices and orders might not be of absolute necessity, (because not registered in their epistles;) and consequently that knowledge be but of little consequence; nor comparable in other respects to that which we enjoy: nor will it be any reflection on the *providence of God*, or *his care of the Church*, if these first constitutions should at length be altered, and the grounds of them forgot; nay, there would rather be more room for making such a reflection, were we obliged to conform now-a-days in all points to the state and usage of the church in

been) well known; and the first Christians took

those times which so very few have proper means of understanding; and when they do thoroughly understand them, will see how much the different parts of it have varied from each other in some points; and of how little weight many others are, wherein they all have for some time agreed. Nor can I apprehend but that each church has still a right to judge of the several occasions, the end, and importance of such points, and to determine for itself accordingly, as to its *government* and *ordinances*; notwithstanding any *deference due to the judgment and practice of the primitive Church*: wherever we are allowed this liberty by the apostles and inspired persons, and only left under such general directions as *ευσχημονως και κατα ταξις*, 1 Cor. xiv. 40. More especially since we are enjoined to use the same freedom of judgment in deciding upon these, as well as in matters of much greater consequence, *Phil. i. 10. iv. 8. 1 John iv. 1.* See *Abernethy's Discourse on Rom. xiv. 5. Tracts, &c. p. 250.*

What a different face the church *really primitive* wore, from that which she put on in a few generations afterwards; and how many early alterations were made every where in ecclesiastical matters, merely upon human authority, may be seen at large in *Boehmer's Dissertations*, and his *Jus Eccl. Prot. passim*: an author well worth the perusing, and who, though he wrote above sixty years ago, yet seems to be known to very few amongst us. One would have hoped this catholic doctrine of *church authority* in fixing the sense of scripture, should have vanished by this time, as it has been so thoroughly exposed in all its shapes by a variety of truly Protestant writers, both of our own and other communions, about the beginning of the present century. I shall cite a passage from one of them, who seems to be almost out of date, but well deserves a new edition. ‘After all, there is no such *agreement* as is pretended, among fathers or councils in the interpretation of particular texts. I desire to know, where that *general and uninterrupted sense of the Christian church* about *things hard to be understood*, is to be found? Are there not various and different interpretations among the fathers and first writers? Did they interpret every text the same way? or were their interpretations always the most reasonable and judicious? or not

good care to act up to them, deserving this cha-

sometimes very weak and absurd? And how can we depend upon the general sense of the first writers, when that has been so various and diverse, and there is no such thing as a *general and uninterrupted sense* to be found among them?—I am sorry — should advance such a notion at this time of day, when the wisest men every where are beginning to quit the search of sacred truth from the writings of the fathers, and seeking in it the scriptures themselves. I add, where these are agreed together in the sense of scripture, it is not their *authority*, but their *reason* which ought to govern.’ *Occasional Paper* for the years 1716-17-18. Vol. III. No. 4. Let. ii. p. 14, 15. See also an excellent pamphlet entitled *Irenicum Magnum*, printed A. D. 1700.

To what has been said above, give me leave to add the testimony of an eminent writer, whose affection to the *Church* is most unquestionable, and whose authority with many will have the greatest weight. ‘There is not, it may be, a greater obstruction in the investigation of truth, or the improvement of knowledge, than the too supine resignation of our understanding to *antiquity*; to what was supposed long since to be done, or what was thought or known to be the opinion of some men who lived so many ages before us: I say, *supposed* to be done; because we are so totally ignorant of all that was originally done from that time that deserves the name of antiquity, that we know nothing of what was done in ancient times, but by the testimony of those men who lived so many hundred, nay, thousand years after the persons lived, or the things were done, of which they give us the account. So that we were in a very ill condition, if it any way concerned us to know what was said or done in those times, of which we have so dark and obscure, at least very questionable relation and information given to us. And as we are liable to be misled in the forming our practice or judgment by the rules and measures of antiquity, with reference to the civil and politic actions of our lives; so antiquity will be as blind a guide to us in matters of practice or opinion relating to religion; otherwise than as that antiquity is manifest to us in the *Bible*; which as it is the most ancient record we have, of what was said or done in the world from the beginning thereof, so it informs us sufficiently of all that we are obliged to think or do; and whatsoever

racter, that *they lived better than they reasoned* (κ). Though perhaps even thus much can only be

is too hard for us there to understand, is in no degree necessary for us to know; and yet we may lawfully endeavour to inform ourselves of what is difficult there, though we may be deceived in our inquiry; because there is no *penalty* upon being deceived. The custom is so universal, amongst those who wrestle to support the strength of every opinion in religion, to appeal to the judgment and the practice of the *primitive times*, that standers-by are apt to believe that every one of the litigants knows very well where to find the judge to whom he appeals; and yet there was never any difficulty reconciled and determined by that judicatory: nor in truth do the appellants well understand what themselves mean by the appeal they make; nor would have reason to acquiesce in the judgment, if they could receive it by agreeing upon it.' Ld. CLARENDON, of the Reverence due to Antiquity, Essays, p. 218. See more to this purpose from the same author below in note (L).

(κ) See *Le Clerc's* Eccl. Hist. of the two first Cent. passim, and Ep. Crit. et Eccl. Ep. iv. *Boehmeri* Dissert. Jur. Eccl. ant. Diss. xii. p. 528, &c. Lord *Clarendon's* Essays, p. 218, &c. *Calamy's* Defence of Mod. Noncon. Part i. p. 134, &c. or *Daille* or *Barbeyrac*, Pref. to *Puffendorf*, &c. *Whitby*, Diss. in Pref. sect. 4, 5, &c. et Epil. *Taylor* Liberty of Proph. c. 8. *Ibbot B.* Lect. Part ii. Sermon. iv. or *Edwards's* Free Disc. on Truth and Error, c. 7. or his Remains; at the end of *Patrologia*, p. 145. is a catalogue of authors that have freely censured the *fathers*: to which we may add most of the foreign Protestant divines, who seem to have no such high notions of their authority, as some among us used to entertain. The learned *Mosheim* speaking of *Hicks's* opposition to *Cudworth's* notion of the Lord's Supper, says, Quod autem opponat ei nihil fere habet præter novitatem et dissensionem antiquorum doctorum, quos *patres* nominant: in quo argumento firmitatem dudum viri sapientes et eruditi desiderarunt. Infinita enim repudianda nobis forent, quæ sine controversia vera sunt, si ad hanc exigenda essent normam. Præf. *Cudw.* vers. not. Cæen. Dom. Comp. id. Inst. Hist. Christ. Ant. Sæc. ii. Par. ii. c. 3. sect. 10. et Sæc. iv. c. 3. sect. 14.

affirmed of them in the very primitive times*; during the extraordinary assistance of the holy

p. 325. The celebrated *Budde*, in his judgment on *Le Clerc* [de Theolog. Patrist. Isag. L. ii. c. 3. sect. 3. p. 489.] seems to own, that the learning of the generality of the fathers, is to be rated according to the times in which they lived, and that those were much inferior to our own in this respect; which is all that I am here concerned for. Vid. *Bud.* ib. sect. 10. p. 508. add *Dodwell*, Diss. in *Iren.* Pref. et Diss. i. *Wolton* Reflections, c. 29. p. 389, &c. 2d ed. *Waterland*, Importance, c. 7. Let the following just apology of the honest writer above-mentioned, serve for all that is or may be said upon the present subject. *Nec ut carpamus veteres, aut contemptui exponamus, a nobis hæc dicuntur; sed ut historicæ legibus parcamus, quæ nihil dissimulari patiuntur, neve nimia auctoritas iis tribuatur; qua temere admissa, inania multa quasi religionis christianæ dogmata proponuntur; quod iis qui religionem divinitus revelatam amant, pati nefas est.* *Cler. Hist. Eccl.* p. 534.

* Nor will even thus much be allowed by a very able and impartial author, whom I have often been obliged to cite, and whose affection to the cause of Christianity appears sufficiently in this, and many other of his works, which I wish more of our countrymen were duly acquainted with, and valued as they well deserve. Quæ si probe reputentur, nemo mirabitur proxime post apostolorum tempora ea a christianis dicta et facta esse, quæ vix hodie apud doctiores et probiores dici aut fieri possent. Itaque evangelium postea plenius intellectum et altius in animum demissum majores fructus protulit, et etiamnum profert. Ab ethnica, hoc est, imprurissima vita, ad insignem sanctimoniam plerique tam subito transire non poterant; nec pristinam ignorantiam extemplo, insigni evangelii cognitione, mutare. Passa hoc forte est divina providentia ne apostolorum discipuli evangelii auctores fuisse viderentur, neve sola eorum sanctimonia christiana doctrina commendata videretur; vel ut semper magnum interesset discrimen inter magistros et discipulos; quo doctrinæ evangelicæ divinitas magis cluceret; aut alia de causa quam comminisei nunc non possumus. Interim de re constat, quam cave negaveris, quod rationem sat commodam ejus proferre nequeas, aut

Spirit: and whilst the original evidence of those great truths, that were the objects of their faith and hope, was clear and strong; whilst its influence upon their minds continued in all its vigour, and they were often obliged to have recourse to its aid for consolation, under the many dangers and distresses to which they stood no less frequently exposed: from which extraordinary cases, we are not to form our notions of the state of any institution; as was observed in the beginning*: nor are such cases any just objection to the gradual progress of religion here supposed. Neither were the first Christians different from other men, as soon as these extraordinary impressions ceased†; as soon as they were at ease in the

quod tibi divinam providentiam decuisse non videatur. *Cleric Eccl. Hist.* p. 392, 393. *Comp. Id. de Jacobi Ep. ib.* p. 410. *Et Boehmer de prim. Eccl. stat. extraord. Diss.* xii.

* Part ii. p. 51.

† Ὡς δ' ὁ ἱερός των Αποστόλων χορός διάφορον εἰληζει τὰ βίβη τέλος, παρεληλυθει τε ἡ γενεα ἐκείνη των αὐταις ἀκοαῖς της ἐκ' Ἰδευ σοφίας ἐπακροσαι κατηξιωμενων, τηρικαυτα της ἀθεσ πλανης την ἀρχην ἐλαμβανεν ἡ συστάσις, δια της των ἑτεροδιδασκαλων ἀπατης, οἱ και ἀτε μηδενος ἐτι των Αποστόλων λειπομενα, γυμνη λοιπον ἤδη τη κερφαλη, τῷ της ἀληθειας κηρυγματι την ψευδωνυμον γνωσιν ἀντικηρυττειν ἐπεχειρεν, *Euseb. Hist. Eccl. L. iii. c. 26.*—'The strict morals or behaviour of the primitive Christians; their sobriety, chastity, humility, &c. shone in their greatest splendour, during the lives of the apostles; but degenerated so much daily from the period in question, that there was no difference in the fourth century, between the manners and conduct of the Christians, and those of other people.' *Bayle, Gen. Dict. Vol. VII. p. 770. N.* From the description *Julian* gives of the licentiousness, the luxury, and lewdness of that town in particular, where Christians

world; and left to the common course of it, and became involved in all its fashions, forms, and interests; having all along *this treasure in earthen vessels*, that the *excellency of the power might be of God, and not of them* (L).

first received their name, (vid. *Misopogon* or *Antiochensis*, passim), we are not permitted to form any high idea of their purity in those days: and however aggravated such an account may be, as *Am. Marcell.* owns it to have been, (L. xxii.) yet we cannot help supposing, that there were some grounds for so severe a charge against their practice; though the same emperor was sensible of the superior excellence and perfection of their moral principles and institutes. Vid. infra, p. 193. Comp. *Moyle's Works*, Vol. II. p. 204, &c. with *Vitringa's Dissertation* on the State of the Church, from Nero's time till Trajan. Obs. Sac. L. iv. c. 7, 8.

(L) 'It is with religion, as it is with arts and sciences; the first essays are seldom perfect; they arrive not to their height at first; they require a gradual improvement. And so it is here: the primitive *Christians* were not grown up to that perfection of knowledge and understanding, which was designed by the author of our religion. *Christianity* was in its infancy, at most in its childhood, when these men wrote; and therefore it is no wonder that they *spake as children*, that they *understood as children*, that they *thought as children*: this was according to the œconomy they were then under. And besides, they had not time and leisure to search into the Christian doctrines, nor had they laid in a sufficient stock and fund for that purpose; they being but newly adopted into the Christian church: yet they were willing to appear in its behalf, to defend it as well as they could, which was accepted by Heaven.' *Edwards's Patrol.* p. 57. 'Let me not be censured, though I should be so bold as to say, that we should have understood the scriptures much better, if we had not had the writings of the fathers; for they have obscured and depraved them by their different and contrary comments; they have raised controversies, they have taught men to

When *Christianity* is countenanced by the civil power, and thereby gains protection against out-

quarrel and dispute about the sense of many texts, which otherwise are obvious; and about several matters of practice, which are evident enough in themselves; some of which are superstitious,' &c. *ib.* p. 135. 'I could here also take notice, how the writings of the fathers do generally justify those rites, usages, and ceremonies, which were preparatives to popery. For my part, I have been ashamed to see how some men sweat to answer several places in the ancient fathers' works, which the *papists* allege in defence of their ceremonies and superstitious observances.' *Id.* *Free Disc. on Tr. and Err.* p. 234.

'Nor is there any one Christian church in the world, that at this time doth believe all that the fathers did believe and teach in their time, even in those things in which they did not contradict each other: nor is it the worse for not doing so: nor is there any one church in the Christian world, that at this day doth enjoin and observe all or the greater part of what was enjoined and practised in the primitive church. And therefore it is very little better than *hypocrisy*, to pretend that submission and resignation to the ancient fathers, and to the primitive practice; when they very well know, that the learning and industry of pious men who succeeded the fathers, and the great skill in languages which they have arrived to, together with the assistance they have received from them, have discovered much which was not known to them, and made other interpretation of scripture, than was agreeable with their conceptions: and that the difference of times, the alterations of climates, the nature and humour of nations and people, have introduced many things which were not, and altered other things which were, in the practice of the *primitive church*, and observed in the primitive times.— And we have no reason to believe that such introductions or alterations are unacceptable to God Almighty, or that he ever meant to limit posterity, when his church should be propagated and spread over the face of the earth, to observe all that was at first practised when all the Christians in the world might have been contained in two or three great cities.— And we may piously

ward violence from its ancient enemies, it loses much of its internal purity, and suffers many ways

believe, that our Saviour himself and his apostles, who knew well how far the church in time would be extended, would not have reduced the Christian faith and doctrine into so little room, and left so little direction for the government thereof, if they had either expected such a union of opinion and judgment in all propositions which might arise, or be drawn from the former, as some men fancy to be necessary; or if they had not intended or foreseen that in the latter, very many things would depend upon the wisdom and discretion of Christian princes; who, according to the customs and manners of the nations where Christianity should be planted, would establish and alter many things, as they saw from time to time like to advance, and contribute to the growth and practice thereof.'

'But what then? shall *antiquity* be despised by us, and the great learning and piety of the first lights, the reverend fathers of the church, be undervalued, and their judgment looked upon without reverence? God forbid. We resort to antiquity as the best evidence of what was then done, and think we have the same liberty in the perusal of the monuments thereof, those conduits which convey to us the information of what was then done, as in other history; which, it may be, hath been transmitted with more care and exactness; to consider the improbability of this matter of fact, and so doubt the veracity of it; the prudence and fitness of another, and think it might have been better done. And so we look upon the fathers, and what they said, and what they did, with full reverence, though not with full resignation; we admire their learning and their piety, and wonder how they arrived at either, in times of so much barbarity and ignorance, in those places where they lived: and thank God for enlightening them to give testimony for him in those ages of darkness and infidelity, and for the instruction and information that we have received from them; and our reverence is the greater to them, for having seen so much in so great darkness, and yet we cannot but think that darkness hindered them from seeing all. And when we consider the faction and distemper of the times they lived in, we may, without lessening the estimation we have for them, believe that distemper and faction might have some influence upon

by the connexion with its new friends: as soon as it becomes established in the *Roman empire*, it partakes of the imperial pomp and pageantry; and admits the pagan ceremonies*. We find it

them, and mislead them in some particulars. And when they so often contradict one another in many things, and many of them themselves in some, it cannot be reasonable to oblige us to submit in all things to which they all consent, if our reason makes it manifest to us that they are in the wrong; though I do not know that we do dissent from them in any such particular, yet we see all that they did, and we may modestly believe that they did not see all that we do.—In a word, many men do believe, that religion and truth have suffered much more prejudice by the too supine submission and resignation to *antiquity*, and the too much modesty and bashfulness that restrained men from contradicting the ancients, than they have, or are like to do, by our swerving from those rules and dictates which they have prescribed to us; and we shall have well complied with the advice of the prophet, *Jer. vi. 16.* when we have stood upon the *old ways*, and seen the *old paths*, informed ourselves of what they said, and what they did; though we do not lie down to them and acquiesce in all that pleased them. He who will profess all the opinions which were held by the most ancient fathers, and observe all that was practised in the *primitive times*, cannot be of the communion of any one church in the world; as he who would follow the politic maxims of antiquity, and the rules heretofore observed among other nations, and it may be in his own, will be found a very inconvenient counsellor in the present affairs of any court in *Europe.* *Id. Clarendon, of the Reverence due to Antiquity, Ess. p. 223, 4, 5, 6. fol.*

* See *Middleton's Letter from Rome*, 4th ed. 'Tum maxime vitari cœpit, cum minime debuerat; Imperio ad fidem adducto, sed et imperii pompa ecclesiam inficiente: ethnicis ad Christum conversis, sed et Christi religione ad ethnicæ formam depravata,' &c. *Turretin, de variis Chr. Rel. fatis. Orat. Acad. Genev. 1708, p. 15. Comp. Next. on Dan. c. xiv. and Boehmer, Jus Eccl. Protestant. sect. 12. p. 8, 9. et § xvii. &c. Ed. v. 1756.* 'Veræ pietatis in locum ingens variarum superstitionum agmen sensim

split into new schisms and heresies; torn with ambitious contests, and perpetual struggles for wealth and power*: perplexing doubts and difficulties raised in points of doctrine; subtile distinctions and refinements made in its precepts; and both

suffectum est, quæ partim ex receptis temere sententiis, partim ex præpostero profanos ritus imitandi studio, partim ex insita omnium hominum mentibus ad vanam quandam religionis ostentationem propensione, profectæ sunt. Crebræ primum in Palæstinam, et ad eorum sepulchra, qui pro veritate occubuerant, profectioes institutæ sunt, quasi hinc sanctitatis semen, salutisque certa spes domum referri possit. Ex Palæstina deinde, locisque sanctitatis opinione verendis, pulveris seu terræ portiones, tanquam efficacissima contra vim malorum remedia, ablatae, et caro ubique pretio venditæ, et redemptæ sunt. Supplicationes porro publicæ, quibus Deos olim populi placare volebant, ab his sumptæ, magnaque multis in locis pompa celebratæ sunt. Templis, aquæ certis formulis consecratæ, imaginibus sanctorum hominum, eadem virtus ascripta, eademque jura tributa, quæ Deorum templis, status et lustrationibus antequam Christus venisset, adscripta fuerant. Ex his speciminibus conjecturam facile sagaciores facient, quantum pax et tranquillitas, per *Constantinum* parta, rebus Christianis nocuerit.' *J. L. Mosheim*, Inst. Hist. Christ. Ant. Sæc. 4. Par. ii. c. 3. sect. 2. p. 312.

* Vid. *Ammian. Mar. J.* xv. et xxvii. *Socr. Eccl. H. L. i. c. 22, 23.* *Boehmeri Dissert. Jur. Eccl. passim.* 'Sub cruce ut plurimum integra erat Ecclesiarum salus; postquam vero, maxime *Constantini* tempore, potentia et divitiis crescere cœpit, a vero mox descendit scopo; et ex clericorum fastu et avaritia, singuli, non quæ Christi, sed quæ sua, quærere inceperunt; et inde Ecclesia ambitionis atque avaritiæ palæstra facta esse videtur. Quid itaque mirum, quod suprema lex Ecclesiastica quoque huc unice directa fuerit, ut avaritiæ clericali satisfaceret; thesauri Ecclesiastici, sub specie *boni operis*, auferentur; et *dominatus sacer*, seu *hierarchia*, magis magisque ab initio quidem occulte, sed mox manifeste, stabiliretur; et tandem in monstrum illud *Monarchiæ Romanæ* excreverit?' *Id. Jus Eccl. Protestant. p. 13. Halæ, 1720.*

often confounded in many an idle controversy (M): till at length, almost the whole church of *Christ*

(M) Sicut olim arbori vitæ prælata arbor scientiæ maxima dederat mala, ita tunc quoque curiosam eruditionem pietati antehabitam, et *ex religione artem factam*: cui deinde consequens fuerit, ut ad exemplum eorum qui turrim *Babylonicam* ædificabant, affectatio temeraria rerum sublimium dissonas locutiones et discordiam pareret. *Grot. V. R. C. L. ii. c. 1. p. 277. Ut in illis temporibus, says Erasmus very justly, ingeniosa res fuit esse Christianum. Comp. Basil. ap. Damasc. Hilar. ad Const. Euseb. de Vit. Const. L. ii. c. 61. Ammian. M. L. xxi. fin. Barbeyrac, Pref. to Puf. sect. 19. Taylor, Lib. Proph. sect. 2. No. 26. Turretin, ib. p. 16, 20. Mably, Obs. on the Romans, B. iii. p. 235.* ‘At first the teachers of Christianity discoursed it with more simplicity, after the manner of Christ and his apostles, as may be seen in *Clemens Romanus*: but afterward, as learning came into the church, they turned the form of Christianity from that of a *law*, into that of an *art*. They early separated all the matters of truth from the matters of duty; which the holy scriptures never do. This separation was more useful to speculation and dispute, than to life and practice: but so it went on, till there was no one of the liberal arts more artificial and subtle than the art of religion. Then the systems of Christianity came into esteem, and were multiplied; and every point of doctrine was disputed, opposed, and defended with the greatest niceness that could be. Few were able to distinguish what was human in matter and form, from what was divine; and fewer dared to own it. But, by this means, none but those who had learning and sagacity, could comprehend the doctrine of Christianity: and the people found it so difficult to understand, what the learned had made almost unintelligible to themselves, that they despaired of knowledge, and acquiesced in ignorance.’ *Jeffrey on Phil. i. 10. Tracts, Vol. II. p. 337.* ‘The several *schemes* of Christianity in different ages are set down in the same place, and so very well described, that any common Christian by perusing them may easily see what system he is of.

To give the reader a general idea of his method, I shall here add his principal divisions, as well as the substance of what is

seems to be overwhelmed with *Popery* and *Mahometanism*; for which judgment it was too fully ripe(x): though perhaps the latter of these two

delivered under them, from p. 338, and 366. containing, 1. The simplicity of the truth of Christianity, in the ages next after the apostles to St. *Augustine*, *i. e.* till after *A. D.* 404. 2. The rudiments of the art of Christianity in the ages following them, from St. *Augustine* to *P. Lombard*, *i. e.* between *A. D.* 404, and 1141. 3. The subtilty and corruption of Christianity, from *P. Lombard*, to *Luther*: joined with the grossness of idolatry and superstition in practice: *i. e.* from *A. D.* 1141, to 1517. 4. The reformation of the state of Christianity among some Protestants, from *Luther*; rejecting the corruptions, retaining the art; since *A. D.* 1517. 5. The restoration of the simplicity of Christianity; not only rejecting the corruptions, but also the art; considering Christianity as a law, or act of grace.—In the first period of time, Christianity was virtue and piety, without any mixture of learning. In the second, it was nature and grace, with a tincture of learning. In the third, it was church and sacraments, with the extremest subtilty, and abundance of superstition. In the fourth, it was Christ and faith; being a refinement upon the doctrine of the second period. In the next period of time, we hope it will be piety and virtue, as in the first; with an improvement from the best *Greek* and *Roman* moralists, corrected and perfected by the gospel of Christ.

(x) See *Sale* Prelim. Disc. to the *Koran*, sect. 2. Add *Grot. de Ver. R. C. L.* vi. c. 1. note. ‘In the mean time (as Mr. *Rotheram* observes, Sermon on the Wisdom of Prov.) the remains of learning were saved in the East from amidst the general wreck, by the removal of the seat of empire from *Rome* to *Constantinople*; which otherwise must have perished entirely, when the Northern nations overran the western empire.—So far was this step from causing the downfall of the empire, that it was a means of saving a part of it: which answered two great purposes, and doubly served religion. The eastern or Greek church was saved from the spiritual usurpation of the Romish; and learning was preserved from the fury of Gothic barbarism, to be an instrument in due time of retrieving Europe from the tyranny of su-

(notwithstanding the fraud and imposture in it), may have proved a seasonable corrective of the former; by its rapid progress giving some check to that anti-christian tyranny, which was then growing predominant; and by its more tolerant spirit, preserving the remains of those particular churches, which would have otherwise been exterminated; and thence may appear to have been in the main, a reformation(o), how grievous soever its oppressions proved on its establishment.

perstition.' As in effect it did upon the downfall of that empire, and the seizing this its metropolis by the *Turks*; [A. D. 1453.] which obliged the Christians of the Greek church to betake themselves for refuge into *Italy* and the adjacent parts, whereby the study and knowledge of the Greek language was there much propagated. *Worthington*, c. 8. Comp. *Gerdes Hist. Evang.* sect. xvi. p. 10. Other benefits arising from this revolution may be seen in the *Complete Collection of Voyages*, &c. B. i. c. 2. sect. 16. p. 515. A character of these emigrants, with some account of their works, may be seen in *Foster's Essay on Accents*, p. 209, 215, &c. 2d ed. That such as these, or their contemporaries, or any set of learned men in the foregoing century, were able to forge all the classic authors except half a dozen, can hardly be supposed by any one but a *Jesuit*. See an extraordinary performance of father *Harduin*, entitled *ad Censuram Script. Vet. Prolegom.* ed. *Land.* 1766.

(o) See *Reflections on Mohammedism*, &c. printed 1735, wherein the author attempts to shew that *Mohammedism* may have been ordained for the good of Christianity, to withstand the corruptions of it in times past; and to increase and enlarge it in times to come, p. 5, &c. 'The *Turks* in general honour *Christ* and *Christianity*—have a great opinion of the sanctity of our religion—and in many places respect the Christian clergy who live among them, notwithstanding their hatred of the Laity in some countries: one sect of them particularly, believes that *Christ* is *God*, and the Redeemer of the world; and that he

But this is a subject too disagreeable to dwell upon; nor am I inclined to aggravate the faults of

shall judge it at the last day. These are distinguished by the name of the good followers of the Messiah.' *Worthington*, B. Lect. V. 2. p. 246. Comp. *Young on Idol.* v. 2. p. 185, &c. All authors agree, that what gave *Mahomet* the greatest room to advance his new religion (beside the weakness of the *Roman* and the *Persian* monarchies, see *Mod. Univ. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 18. fol.) was the distracted, ignorant, corrupt state of the eastern church at that time; the miserable contentions, and most horrid persecutions, on every religious pretence; the dissoluteness of all sects and parties; and it is evident, that this impostor contributed not only to reform the morals of a great part of the eastern world, but likewise reduced them from polytheism and gross idolatry, to the belief and worship of one God; which was the principal doctrine he set out with at first, and gained great reputation by; and which he made the ground of his pretended mission. His system must have the same effect still wherever it prevails, as it does very largely in several heathen countries, being so much superior to any other species of religion settled in such countries; it contains a great deal of pure *Christianity*; it enforces the virtues of charity, temperance, justice, and fidelity, in the strongest manner; it prohibits extortion, and all kinds of cruelty, even to brutes; and binds its votaries to the strictest order, regularity, and devotion. (V. *Bayle* Art. *Mahomet*, not. L. *Hottinger* Hist. Or. p. 315, &c.) Several sects of them believe in *Christ*, (vid. *D. Millius* de Rel. *Moham.* Diss. x. p. 344, &c. *Reland* de R. M. p. 25, &c. and Sir *P. Ricaut's* Hist. B. ii. c. 11, &c. or *Millar*, p. 230.) and entertain as worthy notions of him to the full, as some of the *Papists* do at present. (See *l'Alcoran des Cordeliers*; and *Bayle*, Gen. Diet. Vol. vii. p. 326, B.) One may see to what height the *Romish* corruptions were grown in *Mahomet's* time, by his reproaching the *Christians* with their associating to God their doctors and monks (*Koran* ix. 31.) and by his surprising mistake of the *Virgin Mary*, for the third person in the *Trinity*: which yet is not much worse than the account given of her by *Cybil*. (See *Reland's* Four treatises on *Mah.* p. 174, &c. or *Salé's* Prelim. Disc. p. 35, and his *Koran*, c. v. p. 98.) How this mistake of *Mahomet's* came about

former ages*. All that I would observe is, what appears from the most transient view of ecclesiastical history, that the rise and progress of *Christianity* has, in the main, been similar to that of all other dispensations;—that both the *external* and *internal* propagation of *Christianity* was carried on in the same gradual manner.

As to the first, the *Jews*, who had before been made use of to spread the knowledge of the true God, and his providence, and prepare men for a more perfect institution, by their frequent dispersions over the east; are here much more so (when they were better qualified for it, and less liable to be corrupted by the heathen, among whom some of them were so long to sojourn (P) by their dis-

may be seen in *D. Millii Diss. de Mohammedismo ante Moham.* p. 346, 347. And what havoc those most lamentable controversies on this subject made in his time appears from the confession of a learned writer; who tells us, that it obliged him to drop his design of giving us the history of these churches. Pref. to *Prid. Life of Mahomet.* See also *Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist.* Vol. III. p. 42, &c. V. p. 453, &c. his 1st charge, and *Taylor's Essay on the Divine Economy*, p. 52, 54, 65, &c.

* These have been fully set forth, in *Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History.*

(P) See *Le Clerc, Causes of Incred.* p. 264, &c. In fact, none of them that we know of, however bad they were, and are in other respects, have fallen from their own God, to the idolatrous worship of their neighbours any where, during this their long and miserable dispersion; a tenth part of which suffering would have been the utter ruin of any other people, and totally destroyed the very name of these in any former times. This must be thought remarkable by every one who thinks at all about it. Nor has their case been less extraordinary in Christian countries, where they have never been permitted to rest

persion over the whole world, at the destruction of their temple and government, by *Titus*, and under the following emperors, especially *Hadrian* (Q);

long in any kingdom; where frequently, in every age, the public eye is turned upon them by some new persecution; and yet, notwithstanding all this, they are believed to be more numerous on the whole at present, than they have ever been in their most flourishing estate, in their own land. The authors of *Mod. Univ. Hist.* allow them to be upwards of three millions. B. xx. c. i. p. 620. fol.

(Q) He sold them at fairs for the same price as horses. [*Hier. in Jer.* p. 342.] *M. Glycas* says, the stated price was four *Jews* for one bushel of barley. [*Annal. ap. Worthington*, B. L. s. 13. ubi plura.] and would not suffer any of them so much as to set foot in, or come in view of *Jerusalem*, say some [*Aug. Civ. Lib.* xv. c. 21. *Sulp. Sev. Hist.* S. L. ii. c. 31. *Hil. in Ps.* xlviiii.] or of any part of *Judea*, according to others. [*Hier. in Dan.* 595. *Tert. Apol.* c. 21.] Nor could they obtain even this privilege from any of the succeeding emperors (except *Julian*) but with great difficulty, and only for one day in a year, to see and bewail its ruins; and that upon paying a considerable sum; [*Hier. in Zeph.* c. 2. *Univ. Hist.* B. iii. p. 40. *Euseb. E. H.* 21. 6. *Comp. Basnage, Hist. J. B.* vi. c. 9. sect. 28, 29. et *Witsii Exercit. Acad.* 12. 16.] a rigour, as has been observed, that was never used towards any other people conquered by the *Romans*. ‘ Thus all the attempts of that perfidious nation towards the recovery of their former state, served only to aggravate those calamities, with which they had been so often threatened by their prophets; and to reduce them to the deplorable condition in which we now behold them; being a crew of contemptible vagabonds, dispersed all over the world, without king, temple, or pontiff; driven from their own country, and not daring to set foot in it, even as passengers and strangers. The edict of *Adrian* excluding all *Jews* from *Jerusalem*, extended to such of them as had embraced the *Christian* religion; so that they too being obliged to quit the city, the church was by that means delivered from the servitude of the law; for till that time, not only the bishops of *Jerusalem* had been chosen from among the circum-

and thereby every where publish, and prove the truth of their own, as well as the gospel prophecies(r); and become the very strongest evidences, because unwilling ones, in favour of *Christianity*.

cised *Christians*, but all the converted *Jews* joined to the observance of the gospel that of the law.' *Univ. Hist.* ib. p. 41. *Sulp. Sev.* ib. et *Moshem.* de Reb. Christ. Sæc. 2. sect. 38. (*)

(r) *Deut.* xxviii. *Matt.* xxiii. 35, 38, &c. *Luke* xxi. 24. *Deut.* xxxii. 21. *Rom.* x. 19. *Jer.* xv. 4. xxv. 9. *Hos.* iii. 4. *Isai.* vi. 9, &c. xlii. 22, &c. *Bossuet* [*Univ. Hist.* p. 304.] observes a singular instance of divine providence, in preserving this people so much longer than any of those who formerly conquered and enslaved them, v. g. the *Assyrians*, *Medes*, *Greeks*, and *Romans*; and still continuing them distinct and separate from all the other nations among whom they live: with other reasons of this extraordinary dispensation he assigns the following, viz. That hereby we may find in unsuspected hands those very Scriptures, which foretel both the blindness and unhappiness of these same *Jews*, who notwithstanding keep them so religiously.

He makes the like observation on the *Samaritans*, a sect so weak, that it seems to be upheld on purpose for a check upon the others; and to confirm their evidence, by bearing an independent testimony to the antiquity of *Moses*, and the authenticity of his writings, ib. p. 406.

In what a remarkable manner every curse described by *Moses* has been to the full inflicted on that miserable people, may be seen in *Patrick* upon *Deut.* xxviii. *Comp. Mod. Pt. of Univ. Hist.* B. xx. c. 1.

Nor less completely were all *Christ's* predictions fulfilled, with regard to the judgments inflicted on the same people at the dissolution of their government, as may appear from the history of those times, set forth by a learned writer. See observations on our Lord's character and conduct, by Bp. *Newcome*, pt. 1. c. 3. l. 1. *slay them not*, says the Psalmist, *lest my people forget it*, but scatter them abroad, [*Ps.* lix. 11.] *which words are so apposite to their condition*, that some authors have imagined that Psalm to contain a prophetic description of it, as is intimated from St. *Austin*, by Dr. *Bandincl*, *Serm.* 2. p. 71.

And as the *Roman* empire, by its increase and settlement at the time of *Christ's* coming, contributed remarkably to this end, so did it no less

Hallet [Disc. Vol. I. p. 3, &c.] supposes, that in *Ps.* li. 14. *the blood-guiltiness* there confessed relates, not to that of *David* himself, which accompanied his other sin of *adultery*, (as is intimated in the *title*, purporting that occasion of it, though no mention be made of the latter in the whole *Psalms*;) but to the murder of *Messiah*, which the body of the *Jews* are to acknowledge in those words. This he confirms from ver. 16—19, which could not possibly be true of *David's* days, but must be written prophetically, for the general use of the *Jews* since the destruction of *Jerusalem*. This he observes of some other psalms, particularly *Ps.* lxxiv. 3, 9, &c. The like is observed of *Ps.* xxii. lxix. lxxxviii.; in which the several passages which expressly describe the crucifixion of our Lord, are pointed out by *Vitringa*, Obs. T. I. L. ii. c. 3. p. 380. And the like observation is made on *Ps.* xci. by *Peters*, [Crit. Diss. on *Job*, p. 300, &c.] which he thinks was composed for the use of the *Israelites* in the wilderness, upon erecting the *brazen serpent*; and which perhaps they might have been taught to repeat at the same time they were looking up to that great standing type or emblem of him, who was to *bruise the serpent's* head, ver. 13. and comp. *John* iii. 14. xii. 32, 33.

If this appear to be the case in so many of the *Psalms*, how strongly does it justify our Lord's appeal to them as treating of him! *Luke* xxiv. 44. And what a noble argument may arise hence, for the conviction and conversion of that extraordinary people to whom they were originally communicated, when once the *veil, which is on their hearts*, shall be taken away; as by the same spirit of prophecy we are assured it shall! Vid. *Fenwick* on the Titles of the *Ps.* p. 116, &c. Add *Jortin* on *Ps.* cx. Rem. on *Eccl.* Hist. Vol. III. p. 305. Add to all this, that the *ten tribes*, who had no hand in the rejection of the *Messiah*, may probably be at length recalled from their dispersion and remitted with the rest of their brethren, in a joint conversion to Christianity; as several texts referred to below. [Note τ.] seem to imply.

afterwards by its decline and dissolution; at which time *Christianity* [as well as general literature] was spread abroad with its remains, among the *Northern* nations, and carried to the remotest isles; in the same manner as the *Greek* philosophy had been dispersed over all *Asia*, upon the dissolution of *Alexander's* empire*.

By these and the like means, was the gospel divulged every where; and the sound of it might be said to have *gone into all the earth, and its words unto the ends of the world*†: and where it has prevailed, it ever prevailed more entirely than any other religion did; which makes a great abatement in the disproportion that heathenism in general may seem to have in its numbers, above *Christianity*‡. And though some nations seem, at first view, to have lost it again; yet, upon a more strict survey, we may discover a great deal of it blended and disguised in their several systems; which we have

* Vid. *Rollin*. A. Hist. Vol. VII. Introd. p. 6. ‘The seeds of Christianity, which had been spread over the whole body of the Roman empire, were preserved in all those fragments into which it was now broken, and even conveyed by many of its barbarous conquerors beyond its utmost limits.’ *Rotheram* on the Wisdom of Prov. p. 40. To which we may add, that the spirit of *Liberty*, so requisite to the due growth of this good seed, and to which the Roman empire had not been very favourable, was at the same time diffused over its remains; those nations which overturned it, however barbarous in other respects, being favourers of free or limited governments. See *Spirit of Laws*, B. xvii. c. 5.

† *Rom.* x. 18. See the authors below.

‡ *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 347.

reason to think will, at length, be found of them in greater purity and perfection; and like good seed duly sown, revive in its proper season. Nor is it now in so narrow a compass as is generally imagined*. Though there be many large countries where it is not publicly established, or formally professed; yet there are some traces, both of this and former revelations, in most parts of the world; as appears from several modern writers†. Its effect, even among some rude and unpolished people, has been already very considerable, and will, we trust, appear to be still more so, when they become fully ripe for it; which may perhaps prove the case with them much sooner than we are apt to imagine. And as some struggles and slight disorders, both in the natural and civil body, generally make way for a more complete soundness, and then are themselves cured: so it may appear to be in the body spiritual. Thus the thick cloud of *Popery*, that has been so long hanging over the western church, was in part dissipated at the *Reformation* (which during the fire of persecution raised up some bright examples of true primitive piety, refining many parts of the Christian world from all the dross they had contracted

* Vid. *Fabric. Lux. Evang.* c. 36, &c. or *Millar Hist. Prop.* c. 7, 8, &c.

† See many of them cited, and more referred to, by *Jenkin, Fabricius* and *Millar*. Add *Young's Hist. Diss.* Vol. II. p. 218, &c. with that remarkable testimony of *Cosmos Indicopleustes* in *Sharpe's Serm.* on the want of Universality, p. 55, &c.

in former ages*, and which helped greatly to amend the discipline of that very church, which refused to admit any material alteration in her doctrines†; and the rest of this gloomy system, by its approximation to the worship of some *heathens*, may serve to lead them more insensibly out of their remaining ignorance; and be no improper introduction to a more perfect state of religion among them; and when it has answered that end, its own superstition may be abolished‡, and the heavy judgments inflicted on them, so far tend to alarm and convince the *Jews*, (whose blindness it has hitherto confirmed§;) that it may become

* See *Worthington's* Essay, p. 152, &c. *Turretin* de Christ. Doctr. Fatis. p. 29. *Moshem.* Inst. Hist. Eccl. Sæc. xvi. sect. 11.

† *Hakewill* Apol. p. 547. *Collier*, Eccl. H. Vol. II. p. 138, 139. How much the Reformation contributed to improve that church, both in science and morals, may be seen in *Robertson*, Hist. Ch. V. B. xii. p. 449, &c.

‡ *Worthington* has fixed the term of antichrist, foretold by *Daniel*, xii. 7. at 1260 years, according to the usual computation; viz. a *time*, 360; *times*, or twice a time, 720; and *half a time*, 180: dating its commencement A. D. 618, and consequently its expiration A. D. 1878. p. 203. He adds, *St. Paul* assures us that *that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first*. The falling away, we see, is come. This impediment is removed in these our days. There is no want of a defection from the faith, to retard his coming. Were our Lord now at the door, as he cannot be far off, there is but too much ground for that question, *When the Son of man cometh [i. e. according to W's interpretation, for the destruction of antichrist] shall he find faith on earth?* B. Lect. v. 2. Disc. xvii. p. 214. Comp. Dr. *Parry's* Tract on the same subject, p. 140, &c.

§ See *Brett's* Narrative of the Jewish Council; *Phenix*, Vol.

upon the whole productive of a clearer light than ever, and at length prepare the way for a purer, as well as more enlarged state of *Christianity*, among both *Jews* and *Gentiles* (s.)

But not to dwell on conjectures ; this we know assuredly, that every people, nation, and language shall at length know and embrace the true reli-

I. p. 543, compared with *Manasseh Ben Israel's* Defence, ib. Vol. II. p. 401.

(s) *Edward* Survey, p. 715. *Scott* Christian Life, Part ii. Vol. II. c. 7. p. 489. Some great end will most undoubtedly be served by the permission of *Popery* so long, after the *mystery* of its *iniquity* is seen through even by the generality of its professors ; and which can therefore be upheld merely on political views ; as seems to be in a great measure the case with it at present. When its dominion throughout *Europe* is no less visibly declining, and a religious toleration is advanced, amongst the most bigoted professors of it, even in the house of *Austria* itself. During its very darkest ages, which afford the strongest objection to that *progress* in religion which we suppose, *Christianity* was still spreading wider and wider, in the more distant parts of the world ; and where *popish* converts now become the seed of *Christians*, and may not improperly be compared to the proselytes of the gate among the *Jews* ; being probably the first fruits of the harvest, God intends to have among the heathens of those parts ; and after they are fully converted, may be most serviceable to promote the conversion of others. [See *Jurieu*, Pref. to *Accompl. Proph.* or *Millar*, Vol. II. p. 230, 364] We may affirm that *popery* there, is still better than *paganism* ; and by its so great resemblance of the pagan superstitions, (particularly in the point of images) it more easily insinuates itself among such people ; and its permission therefore, may be considered in some respects, as no very unfit introduction to a more perfect state of religion there in future ages, whenever they shall become capable of it. See *Colliber's* *Impar. Inqu.* p. 138. 2d edit. with *Gage's* Survey of the *West Indies*.

gion; and all kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of Christ(τ).

Secondly. As to what may be called, more particularly, the *internal* propagation of *Christianity*, or the comprehension of the whole gospel scheme; the same method is carried on, though not in so very visible a manner, or capable of being distinguished by such remarkable periods. That perfect *analogy* between religion and the common course of nature, which has been so well displayed by a late writer*; holds no less true, I believe, in this respect; and that as all arts and sciences, with every improvement both in natural and civil life, are still drawing nearer to perfection; as we become daily better acquainted with the system of the world;—with the nature of the heavens and earth;—with that of our own body and mind;—in short, as every branch of knowledge has been

(τ) *Ps.* ii. 8. xxii. 27. lxxii. 11. lxxxvi. 9. *Isa.* ii. 2. ix. 7. xi. 9—11. xl. 5. xlix. 6. lii. 10. lv. 5. lvi. 7. lx. 9—11. lxvi. 18, 22. *Ezek.* xxxvii. 21, &c. xxxix. 23, 29. *Dan.* ii. 44. vii. 14, 27. *Hos.* i. 10. iii. 5. *Joel* iii. 1, &c. *Am.* ix. 14. *Mich.* v. 4. *Zeph.* iii. 9. *Zech.* ix. 10. xii. 10. xiv. 9. *Mal.* i. 11. *Matt.* xxiv. 14. *Mark* xiii. 10. *Luke* iii. 6. xxi. 24. *Acts* xiii. 47. *Rom.* viii. 19, &c. xi. 25. xiv. 11, &c. 1 *Cor.* xv. 25. 2 *Cor.* iii. 16, &c. *Rev.* xi. 15. xiv. 6.

From such texts as these does *Worthington* infer that the kingdom of *Christ* will be an *universal theocracy*, whereof that under the *Jews* was in some respects typical; *Ess.* 292, &c.—where there shall be universal *holiness*, 392, and obedience to the gospel precepts in their strictest sense, 309; and either an *universal language*, or a perfect *union* in faith and worship, 308.

* Bp. *Butler*.

all along enlarging and improving itself; and every successive age not only enjoys the discoveries of the foregoing, but adds still more valuable ones of its own*; so it is probable, that the knowledge of religion alone is not wholly at a stand; but on the contrary, that as we continually advance in the study of GOD'S *works*, we shall come to a proportionably better understanding of his *word*: as by all these means, human reason is still growing more perfect; so by the same means, divine revelation will gradually clear up; and *Christianity* itself draw nearer to its *fulness*.

What is here supposed, has been remarkably confirmed in fact since the *Reformation*; about which time those extraordinary discoveries of *printing*†, and the use of the *compass*, with some others, in *Europe*, jointly contributed to the dispersion of *learning*, and enlargement of *commerce* over the world; and at the same time, gave a new publication of *Christianity*; and in much greater purity

* See Part iii.

† The great effect this had in carrying on the *Reformation* may be seen in *Gerdes Hist. Evang. Sec. xvi. p. 5, &c.* The want of it is strongly set forth by Dr. *Robertson, Hist. Ch. V. n. x.* 'The invention of the art of making *paper*, and of *printing* are two considerable events in literary history. It is remarkable, that the former preceded the first dawning of letters, and improvement in knowledge towards the close of the 11th century, the latter ushered in the light which spread over *Europe* at the æra of the *Reformation*.' *ib. p. 236. Comp. id. V. III. p. 449, &c.* To which we may add *pointing*, which was brought to perfection shortly afterwards. *Essay on the use of Stops, Ann. Repr. for 1759. p. 413.*

than it had been in before, for many centuries. Ever since which time, all these improvements have been continually gaining ground. New light has been given to the prophetic, and other more abstruse parts of scripture, in every successive age, and almost by every writer; as a very able judge assures us*. The grounds of our religion are in general much better understood, more rationally explained, and properly vindicated; and from what appears at present, we have reason to think, they will be still more and more so†. We may venture to affirm,

* *Newton on Dan. c. 1.*

† ‘ At tandem, superiore præsertim seculo et hoc nostro, cum disciplinæ omnes et quæ pertinent ad antiquitatis linguarumque demortuarum intelligentiam, et quæ rerum ipsarum cognitionem tradunt, et quæ veri in quavis arte inveniendi ac exponendi rationem docent, ad multo majorem perfectionem adductæ essent; antiquissima illa religionis divinitus revelatæ monumenta multo melius explicari, certioraque ex iis consecraria duci, capitaque omnia Theologica rectius tradi cœperunt, quam unquam antea ab apostolorum ætate factum fuerat. Quod multo citius contigisset, si majores nostri judicio suo maluissent uti quam alieno; neque enim ingenia defuisse puto posterioribus seculis, sed artem duntaxat, quæ nimia cæcaque admiratione priorum oppressa jacebat. Quare contigit idem Theologiæ Christianæ, quod philosophiæ; quæ tum demum cum fructu, ut par erat, excoli et perfici cœpit, cum homines cœpere recordari, sibi rationem non minus esse datam quam *Aristoteli*; excussa que admiratione antiquitatis, dogmata ejus ad examen revocare. Ut igitur qui nunc pulcherrima recentiorum in philosophia inventa oblivioni mandari vellent, ut *Aristotelea* decreta sola iterum obtinerent, tenebras luci præferre merito censerentur: ita qui nunc nos revocant ad elementa ad prima veluti tentamina *patrum* Græcorum aut Latinorum, plurisque ea fieri volunt quam quæ nunc scimus; ii virum adultæ ætatis pertinaci studio longaque experientia edoctum, ad pue-

that in our own nation, there never were more free and worthy notions of the Deity, and his providence; nor were the various dispensations of religion ever generally so well understood as they are at present. Never was real knowledge so fully and equally dispersed among all parties, and professions of men. Nor is there any sect, however wild and extravagant it may have been at its first setting out, but evidently partakes of these improvements.

And though, while the minds of men are warm and eager in the quest of truth, and daily teeming with new inventions, many monsters will spring up and strange errors and absurdities be advanced, in such full freedom of inquiry and debate; though this increase of knowledge be attended with an increase of libertinism; and an evil spirit of in-

ritiæ ruditatem redire volunt; majorique in pretio habere quæ puer animo agitabat, quam quæ adultus maturo judicio pensavit. *Inimici sunt profectus omnis in sacris literis, adeoque ipsius veritatis. Talenta divinitus nobis data, et nuper mirum in modum aucta, minuere atque infodere omni ope conantur. Quod ab iis perfici nec Deus, nec homines sinent, donec in aliquo terrarum angulo literæ et veritatis amor vigeant.* Cleric. Ep. Crit. iv. p. 151, &c. Comp. id. Q. Hieron. 3. p. 45, &c. Id. Dissert. ii. sect. 13. Proleg. ad Comment. p. 28, with Ibbot B. Lect. Part ii. Serm. iv. p. 119. and *Lactant*, de Orig. Err. L. ii. sect. 7. To which may be added *Wotton's* two excellent chapters on the *Philol.* and *Theol.* learning of the *moderns*, Refl. c. 28 and 29, and *Worthington Essay*, c. 8. and *Mosheim*, Eccl. Hist. Cent. 17. s. 1. xxv. &c. 8vo. How much all useful learning is indebted to the Gospel may be seen in *Jortin's* charge upon that subject, Disc. V. 7.

fidelity and profaneness be at the same time gone abroad; yet is this neither so uncommon a thing, nor unconformable to the course of Divine Providence, as to make us despair of seeing it attended with the usual consequences: we have still reason to trust, that when truth and knowledge have got the better of error and superstition, this spirit of reformation will reform and rectify itself; and we shall have more and more of the true life and spirit of our religion, as we draw nearer to those times, wherein the word of prophecy has fixed its reign.

I am far from imagining that *Christianity* is yet come to its mature state; that it is understood in the whole extent, or held in its utmost purity and perfection, by any one church*. But as when it was first preached, men were fit to hear, and profit by it in a competent degree; as that was a proper time to divulge it, in order to improve the world; which it did very considerably†; excelling all

* ‘It will not be thought any imputation on *Christianity*, that all its mysteries and doctrines have not been as yet so fully discovered and understood by the several sects and parties of *Christians*, as to come to a settled agreement concerning them; if it be considered, that no human science hath been brought to such perfection as not to admit of farther improvements, many of which began to be cultivated long before the commencement of *Christianity*.’ Pref. to *Worthington’s Essay*, p. 7. Comp. *Burnet*, de Fid. et Off. c. 5. p. 80. c. 8. p. 177. *Boehmer Jus Eccl. Protestant.* p. 21, &c.

† See Bp. *Gibson’s 2d Past. Lett.* or *Worthington’s Essay*, c. 7.

former dispensations; refining the conceptions, even of those who did not formally receive it*; and yet was itself for some time but partially communicated†, and imperfectly understood: so now it is of much greater advantage to the world in general; and yet still capable of increase; it waits for its own *fulness*: nor shall mankind receive the proper influence of it, till their minds be much farther opened and enlarged, their reason more freely exercised, in this great *mystery* of divine love.

We cannot but be sensible, that the scriptures are

* This is very visible in the writings of those philosophers who came shortly after its promulgation, as *Epicletus*, *Arrian*, *Plutarch*, *Max. Tyrius*, and more especially *Antoninus*, who is well acquainted with the *Christian* virtue of *Humility*, and frequently insists upon it. The like may be observed of *Porphry* and *Hierocles*, [See passages in *Burnet*, de Fid. et Off. p. 29.] as also of *Seneca*, whom several ancient writers esteemed almost if not altogether a *Christian*. [See *Jones's* Method of settling the Canon, Part iii. c. 12. sect. 3.] The like observation is made, with great justice, on their *forms of devotion*, by *Jortin*, Disc. p. 228, 229, and an instance added by *Owen* [B. L. s. 23.] from *Arrian*, L. ii. c. 7. where he says the words *κυριε ελεησον*, were taken from the *Christian* church, and adopted by the wiser Gentiles. *Τον Θεου επικαλυμενοι δεομεθα αυτα, κυριε ελεησον*, *Deum invocantes, precamur eum. Domine miserere nostri.* The same thing is owned by the emperor *Julian*, in his advice for a reformation of their philosophy, by taking in the *Christian* morals. Ep. ad *Arsac*. 49. Vid. *Cave*, Introd. p. 32, &c. *Leng*, B. Lect. fol. sect. 12. p. 111. *Jenkin*, Part iii. c. 5. p. 386. *Whitby*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 44.

† The several periods of this communication are accurately settled by the author of *Misc. Sac.* in his abstract of the *Sac. Hist.* and Pref. p. 14, &c.

very far from being thoroughly understood by us, who are of so reformed a church;—live under such an excellent government;—and in this enlightened age;—not even those parts of them which treat of past states, and dispensations; much less those which regard futurity. How long is it since men were so very ignorant of its doctrines, as to fix that horrid one of *absolute personal reprobation* upon *St. Paul* himself? and it is to be feared, that almost equally hard things are yet believed of him, and some other inspired writers. We are still apt to confine the gospel of our Lord, as his primitive disciples for some time did, to particular nations, churches, sects, opinions*;—to contend vehemently, either about things in their own nature abstruse and difficult to be understood, and therefore not necessary to be determined; or such lighter matters, as the ceremonies,

* ‘It has been the common disease of Christians from the beginning, not to content themselves with that measure of faith which God and the scriptures have expressly afforded us; but out of a vain desire to know more than is revealed, they have attempted to discuss things of which we can have no light, either from reason or revelation: neither have they rested here; but upon pretence of church-authority, which is none; or tradition, which for the most part is but figment; they have peremptorily concluded, and confidently imposed upon others, a necessity of entertaining conclusions of that nature: and to strengthen themselves, have broken out into divisions and factions, opposing man to man, synod to synod, till the peace of the Church vanished, without all possibility of recal.’ *J. Hales*, of Schism, p. 180. Comp. *Bochmer*, Diss. Prelim. ad Jus Eccl. Protestant. sect. 22, &c.

circumstances, and outward forms of its administration *; instead of explaining and recommending the true nature, end and import of it; of being intent upon enlarging its real kingdom; and taking care to maintain those works, which are intrinsically *good*, and ever *profitable unto men*†:

* ‘The emperor *Justinian*,’ says *Joh. Claubergius*, in his *Institutions*, ‘did us the service, and himself the honour, by abrogating the scrupulous observation of starchy subtil forms and niceties, to reduce the study and practice of the law to its native simplicity and plainness. It would be happy for the Christian world, could it find a man who would do so much in favour of theology; who, rejecting litigious intricacies, needless curiosities, and vain niceties, which the school-philosophy has introduced into theology, would reinstate it in its ancient majestic purity. If, (what *Hen. Altius* slightly attempted) under every head of divinity, verbal controversies were separated from real; and in every controversy what *did not* concern the question in debate, was distinguished from what *did*; a multitude of disputations would be for ever silenced. But this is rather to be wished, than expected in our days; as it is safer to lament the faults of our age than to reprove them.’ *Werenfelsius* of *Logomachys*, Eng. p. 15. Lat. ed. V. I. p. 25. De quo V. *Stoll*. *Introd.* ad *Hist. Lit.* p. 571.

† *Tit.* iii. 8, 9. ‘The *great offence*—which in all nations, and in all ages, has hindered the propagation of the gospel of truth, has been a hypocritical zeal to secure by force a fictitious uniformity of opinion, which is indeed impossible in nature; instead of the real *Christian* unity of sincerity, charity, and mutual forbearance, which is the *bond of perfectness*.’ *Clarke*, *Serm.* xviii. Vol. VI. 8vo. ‘And yet among those who have embraced the gospel of *Christ*, there never was the least room for dispute about any *fundamental*; all Christians, at all times, and in all places, having ever been baptized into the profession of the same *faith*, and into an obligation to obey the same *commandments*. And it being notorious that all the contentions that ever arose in the Christian world, have been merely about the several *additions*

instead of attending to that *more excellent way*, which the same great and good apostle showed us *;—that *bond of perfectness*, which he has so earnestly exhorted us to *put on* above all things †;—which he has taught us to esteem above all *faith*, and *knowledge*, or any miraculous *gifts*.

But though the face of *Christianity* be still miserably darkened, and deformed; though some nations seem to be in their *childhood* yet, and cannot receive it; and others grow so vicious and abandoned as to be ready to reject it:—though in some ages it seems to have been hid in darkness, and sunk under ignorance and superstition; in others, borne down with the torrent of licentiousness: yet, we have reason to conclude that upon the whole, its power is still visibly, or invisibly, enlarging over the world; and that it will go on to do so, till the kingdom of *Christ* be fully come;—till it be *within us*, and known by all, from the least to the greatest;—till the *everlasting gospel* ‡ go forth, and be so thoroughly understood and embraced, as to bring on the *fulness of the Gentiles*; and by their means, the restoration of God's ancient people the *Jews*; as he has often foretold §; and so *the whole*

which every sect or party, in direct contradiction to the express command of their Master, have endeavoured presumptuously to annex, by their *own* authority, to *his doctrines*, and to *his laws*.' Id. Serm. lxxx.

* 1 *Cor.* xii. 31.

† 1 *Coloss.* iii. 14.

‡ *Rev.* xiv. 6.

§ See the texts above, note (τ) p. 204. Many more to the

*earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea**.

From hence it appears, that the objection mentioned in the beginning of these discourses, is really groundless; and that the several queries there urged admit of a sufficient reply.—That nothing in the time, and manner of the Christian dispensations, proves inconsistent with infinite wisdom and goodness:—that God is by no means partial, in the distribution of his blessings; but at all times takes care of all mankind:—and that this great plan of revelation was carried on, in the best manner, for the world *in general*: which ought chiefly to be regarded by us, as it is in the eye of our common Father. When we come to particular ages, and nations, it is the same as with particular persons; the same benefits cannot be conferred on all; and the dispensations of religion become perfectly analogous to those of providence in the course of both the natural, and the moral world †. If Christ was to come once for all, he must appear in some particular time and place; which could

same purpose are collected in a note to Part ii. c. 11. p. 187. fol. of *Kidder's Dem.* To which may be added, *Whitby*, App. to Comm. on *Rom.* xi. and Treatise on the true *Millen.* c. 2. *Barnet*, de Stat. Mort. App. *Worthington's Essay*, p. 295. *Taylor* on *Rom.* xi. 26. p. 344. *Lowth* on *Isai.* xi. 11. Comp. *Jortin*, Rem. on E. H. Vol. III. p. 423, &c. and *Hallet*, Vol. III. Disc. x. and *Worthington*, B. Lect. S. 14. fin.

* *Is.* xi. 9. *Hab.* xi. 14.

† See this more at large in Bp. *Butler's Analogy*, Part ii. c. 6, &c.

not be equally near to all the successive generations of mankind; nor could all have the same privileges, of seeing and conversing with him in the flesh; and as they are *blessed* who have not seen, and yet believed; so are they too effectually, (though perhaps in a lower degree) who having not so much as heard of *Christ*, are yet in a good measure qualified to receive his doctrine, were it fairly delivered to them.

The great scheme of our redemption in *Christ* was laid before the world began*; and if we take that account which the Scriptures give of its design, we shall find the greatest of its benefits extended to all mankind; namely, the covenant for restoring the whole posterity of *Adam*, to that *immortality* which he forfeited. *The GIFT OF GOD is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*†. Or, eternal life is not in any respect a property of our own nature, as derived from *Adam*; but an additional privilege conferred by God, as the purchase of our Saviour and Redeemer *Christ*. *Death was abolished, and life, and incorruptibility*‡, or a

* *Eph.* i. 4. *Col.* i. 26. *Tit.* i. 2. 1 *Pet.* i. 20.

† *Rom.* vi. 23. *Comp.* v. 15. and *Hallet's Observat.* Vol. I. p. 326, &c. or *Layton's Tracts*, in 2 volumes 4to. which contain an answer to all that was written in defence of the Soul's natural Immortality in that author's time.

‡ Ἀφθαρσία, 2 *Tim.* i. 10. *i. e.* of the body raised, 1 *Cor.* xv. 52. That the *Christian revelation* of immortality lays the chief, if not the whole stress on a *resurrection*, is plain from the texts cited to that purpose by *Benson* on 1 *Thess.* iv. 13. See more to the same purpose, in the following discourse on the nature and end of death.

life in incorruption*, fixed in the divine decrees from the beginning, in view of *Christ's* future ransom†; though not so fully *brought to light*, or published to the world, till its actual accomplishment.

As to any particular privileges that can be supposed to be annexed to the bare belief in him, or explicit profession of such belief; we have reason to suppose, that no less benefits were enjoyed by those good men of old, who by the dim light of prophecy, or tradition, beheld his day, and rejoiced in it; who saw these promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and *embraced them*‡. Faith in him to come was the same, in proportion to the evidence, as in him past; and must be equally virtuous or meritorious §. So far then it might be the same thing whenever he came.

And when we speak of the *Christian* scheme being *necessary to salvation*, we should understand *salvation* in the scripture sense of that word; as implying a particular *state* of happiness; or as the *Christian's heaven*||; not as the sole condition of

* 1 *Cor.* xv. 42, 53, 54. where the same word is used.

† *Matt.* xx. 28. *Mark* x. 45. *Acts* xv. 11, 18. *Gal.* iii. 17. *Eph.* i. 4. 1 *Tim.* ii. 5, 6. 2 *Tim.* i. 9. *Heb.* ix. 15. 1 *Pet.* i. 20. *Rev.* xiii. 8.

‡ *Heb.* xi. 13. *Gal.* iii. 8.

§ See *Denne's* Serm. Prop. G. p. 53, &c. or *Williams, B.* Lect. fol. sect. 8. p. 232, 233.

|| See *Rymer's* Represent. of Rev. Rel. p. 104. or *Whitby* on *Rom.* ii. 14.

enjoying everlasting *life*; or as strictly necessary in all men, to the avoiding absolute misery; or escaping the pains of *hell*. He has told us, that in his Father's house are many *mansions*; states suited to every degree of holiness, and virtue: and as it often appears that men under very different dispensations here, differ but almost insensibly from each other, in the abovementioned qualifications; can we conceive, that their future state of retribution shall be so infinitely different as those of *heaven*, and *hell*, are commonly believed to be? No doubt, there are great advantages and sure promises, belonging to those, who have been so happy as to be included in the *Christian* covenant; and so honest as to hold it in faith, and purity. But let not such exclude others from the mercies of their common Lord; or murmur at the *good man of the house*, if these also receive every man his *penny**. Whether they shall not sometime hereafter be called into the *vineyard*, and at length become acquainted with that person who has done so great things for them, as well as us†; or what amends may be made them for the want of those advantages which we here enjoy; is known only to that God of all mercies, in whose hands they are. What our Saviour said of the *Gentiles*, in contradistinction to the *Jews*, may be no less true

* *Matt.* xx.

† See *Stainoe's* Enquiry into the State of those men in another life, who never heard of *Christ* in this, from *Rev.* xx.

between *Christians*, and the rest of the world that never heard of *Christ*, but yet are prepared to enter, and in a good measure worthy to be admitted into his kingdom;—who have duly attended to that *candle of the Lord*, which is set up in the breast of every man; and which would naturally lead such proficients to the clearer light of his gospel;—*other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd**. To them likewise at length may *the times of refreshing come, from the presence of the Lord†*. —However, the case of such will undoubtedly be very different from that of those, who perversely reject the counsel of God against themselves; resolved to trust to their own strength, and going about to establish their own righteousness; and not submitting themselves unto the righteousness of God‡.

To conclude, with our blessed Saviour's admonition in reply to a like curious query§, *If I will, that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*

Let us, instead of judging others, or hastily determining of their respective states, take care to set a due value on, and to secure our own salvation: instead of charging God foolishly, and un-

* *Joh. x. 16.* Comp. *Matt. viii. 11.* and *Luke xiii. 29.*

† *Acts iii. 19.* Comp. *Rom. viii. 22.*

‡ *Rom. x. 3.*

§ *John xxi. 22.*

gratefully, for not having imparted the same benefits to all men, which we ourselves enjoy; let us rather be giving him particular thanks for this his *unspeakable Gift*; and endeavour to employ it to his glory. Let us be intent on studying the word of God; and careful to interpret it in such a manner, as may do honour to its author; and at all times encourage a free, fair, and an impartial examination of it*. It is now high time to do this,

* I must here beg leave to refer the reader, to that excellent *conclusion*, which accompanies Bp. *Hare's difficulties*, and *discouragements* in the *study of the scriptures*. Supposed to have been written by Dr. *S. Clarke*. Dr. *Benson's* note on the last verse of *2 Pet.* iii. is likewise so very apposite to the case in hand, that I cannot avoid citing some part of it. 'This may reprove those slothful Protestants, who will not read the scriptures with that care and attention, which is requisite to the understanding of them:—and much more those, who are professed enemies to increasing knowledge; who would have all new discoveries carefully suppressed; and would have Christians steadily adhere to the articles and traditions received from their fallible forefathers: *i. e.* We are never to gain more knowledge, never (by any means) to grow wiser. Whereas, what reason can be assigned, why we should not reject the mistakes of our forefathers, as they rejected those of the church of *Rome*, and of their forefathers? They who are afraid of *new light*, and increasing knowledge, seem to betray a bad cause, and to be conscious that their opinions will not stand the test of a severe examination. And they plainly contradict this advice, or direction of *St. Peter*, *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*'

Some excellent *rules* for studying the holy scriptures, may be found in *Jeffery's Discourses* on *2 Tim.* iii. 15, 16, 17. Take the following specimen of his taste and temper. 'If to this [the history of the *occasion* of each discourse in the *epistles*] be added some *literal* rather than *doctrinal* exposition; and men

and to awake out of sleep, since our visitation is much nearer than when we first believed: and it is devoutly to be wished, that we could be persuaded to examine our own state, before others

come to the word of God to fetch their religious opinions from thence, and do not, for the governing the sense of the scriptures, bring their opinions with them thither; this, with an honest and good heart, will help men to understand the truths of God, and the truths of religion. And he that is thus taught of God, being the disciple of him and his Son, shall have an idea of religion most pure and divine.'—Tracts, Vol. II. p. 259. 'This would appear fully to every judicious Christian, if the folly of men had not mixed itself with the wisdom of God; and the doctrine of Christianity had been preserved in the original purity and simplicity, with which it was delivered by the Divine Author, and such as it is still in the divine records which are the standard thereof. What these mixtures and adulterations of the doctrine of religion are, which have prevailed in any place or age, need not be named to him, who is resolved to answer the character of a disciple of Christ, and to admit nothing for Christianity or any part of it, but what is taught of God. And if with this caution, men inquire after the truth, as it is in Jesus, they shall easily find it in the holy scriptures, without any alloy: though it be never so hard to find it any where else. If after such inquiry and information, the man has judgment to discern the differences that are between one part of religion, and another; as before he did discern the differences that are, between one part of the holy scriptures, and another, he shall establish such a notion of religion, and such a method of studying it, that no seducer can alienate him from his religion; no time can make him weary of searching into it. He will find an entertainment to his mind for ever in the contemplation of God, according to the manifestations he has made of himself in his word, and by his works; and the employment of heaven, which will be eternal, is happily begun on earth. Happy is the man, who hath from his youth been accustomed to this exercise! his improvement will be great, and his end blessed.' Ib. p. 260.

are obliged to do it for us *; that we were heartily disposed to help and forward, rather than check the progress of every serious inquiry; and stop any farther improvements in the knowledge of that, which of all things deserves, and wants it most †;—rather than withstand a general reformation in religion, by rigorously insisting on, and obtruding such things for doctrine, as are found to be but the commandments of men, and very foreign to the essence of Christianity, instead of either entertaining that anti-christian kind of spirit which calls down fire from heaven on all who

* ‘Is it not a standing argument that Religion has been too much confined in all countries, that the body of the Clergy have never reformed themselves; and that all Reformations have ever been forced upon them, and have generally been attended with the most horrible persecutions, and dangerous convulsions in the state?’ *Priestley on Civ. Gov.* p. 138.

† ‘The next step towards the increase of Christ’s kingdom must be a farther improvement of Christianity, and of those who receive and profess it. The church of *Rome* is not the only church that wants amendment. Other Christian societies, which have separated themselves from her, and from her grosser defects, are departed more or less from the original simplicity of the gospel, and have mixed some doctrines of men with the word of God, and so stand in need of some improvement. It is therefore to be hoped, that a time will come when religion will have a fairer and a more alluring aspect; when Christians will be united, not in opinion as to all theological points; for that is impossible, whilst men are men; but that they will be united in benevolence and charity, in intercommunion, and in one *common and simple profession of faith.*’ *Jortin’s Remarks on E. H.* Vol. III. p. 445. Comp. *Le Clerc*, de eligenda inter dissentientes Christianos sententia, annexed to his ed. of *Grot. de Ver. Rel. Christ.*

do not immediately receive us ; which delights in straitening the way that leads to life, and shutting others out from the kingdom of heaven ; or incurring the woe denounced against those hypocrites, who are desirous of lading men with heavy burdens, —with binding upon them things which are too grievous to be borne ; and which they know or might know, that none need touch with one of their fingers*.

As we see the faults and follies of past ages, a double woe will be upon us, if, instead of taking warning by them, and avoiding the like ; we are resolved to tread the same steps, and thereby fill up the measure of our fathers.

Let *us* then, who have opportunity afforded us for this purpose, think on these things, and study to discern *the signs of the times* ; that we may be prepared for them, and profit by them : that we may not only save ourselves in the day of trouble, but also contribute somewhat to the safety of our

* *Matt.* xxiii. *Luke* xi. ‘ That religion which has no goodness, has no truth in it : for the religion, which God has given us, is entirely for our good. *Sobriety* is good ; for the individual in the first instance, and for the society in the second. *Righteousness* is good ; for the society in the first instance, and for the individual in the second. *Godliness* is good for both ; as it enforces sobriety and righteousness ; and as it engages the protection of the supreme Governor of the world. There is nothing in Christianity but these ; and what is subservient to these ; and such a religion none who understand their own good, and wish well to others, can either be desirous or willing to be discharged from.’ *Jeffery on Phil.* i. 10. Vol. II. p. 380. a piece well worthy the perusing.

Jerusalem; and be ready to defend it, whenever, or from what quarter soever, the enemy cometh.

As we live in a more enlightened age, and are intrusted with a greater share of talents; let us be persuaded to walk worthy of it, and endeavour to excel others as much in our improvements. Above all things let us labour to bring forth the genuine fruits of our religion, in true holiness and virtue; and daily draw nigh unto God, in the imitation of his *moral perfections*; which is the sum and substance, the great end and aim, of all *religion*.

THEORY.

PART III.

THE PROGRESS OF
NATURAL RELIGION AND SCIENCE,
OR
THE CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE WORLD
IN GENERAL.

Antiquity I unfeignedly honour and reverence; but why I should be bound to reverence the rust and refuse, the dross and dregs, the warts and wens thereof, I am yet to seek.—As in the little, so in the great world, reason will tell you, that old age, or antiquity, is to be accounted by the farther distance from the beginning, and the nearer approach to the end: and as grey beards are for wisdom and judgment to be preferred before young green heads, because they have more experience in affairs; so likewise for the same cause, the present times are to be preferred before the infancy or youth of the world, having the history and practice of former ages to inform us, which they wanted.—In disgracing the present times therefore, you disgrace antiquity properly so called.

HAKEWILL, *Apol. B.* v. p. 133.

Certainly every *Medicine* is an **INNOVATION**; and he that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils: for Time is the greatest **INNOVATOR**: and if Time of course alter things for the worse, and Wisdom and Council shall not labour to alter them for the better, what will be the end?

BACON, *Ess.* xxiv.



THE PROGRESS OF
NATURAL RELIGION AND SCIENCE,
OR
THE CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE WORLD
IN GENERAL.

ECCLES. vii. 10.

Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.

THE badness of the times, has been a common topic of complaint in every age*; and that they are growing worse and worse continually, is what some persons think themselves obliged to assert, how hard soever they may find it to account for this perpetual depravation. The former of these arguments, if urged only to expose and give a check to some particular, predominant vices (for which indeed all ages have afforded too much

* See Dr. *Ibbot's* Serm. on New Year's Day, v. 1. sect. 16. compare Bp. *Fleetwood's* Charge at his primary Visitation at *Ely*.

room), may sometimes be of use, and even necessary. But when the latter is added to it, and both carried so far as to make us discontented with ourselves, and uneasy towards one another;—to set us a quarrelling with the station and society in which we are placed; a murmuring at, and speaking evil of the government we live under;—despising every human constitution, and even repining at the conduct of divine Providence, and mistaking the issue of its dispensations to such a degree as must confound our judgment and unhinge our faith in the unlimited wisdom and goodness of their Author:—when things are come to such a pass, it is high time to correct an error of this kind, and inquire into the true state and history of the world, in the above-mentioned particular.

In order to which, I purpose in the first place,

I. To shew the falsity of this complaint in several respects.

II. To point out so many of its ill consequences as may be sufficient to justify the Preacher's observation in the text, viz. that this way of judging is no very *wise* one.

The design of the book from which these words are taken, was to examine into the course of this world in general; to consider the nature of its enjoyments, and the ends commonly proposed by us in our pursuit of them. No one saw farther into these things, or better understood their real value; none had a mind more refined, and ele-

vated above them, or could in a more lively manner display the vanity and emptiness thereof on some occasions, than king *Solomon*; yet, where he meets with such persons as treat the subject so very injudiciously, that they both disparage the works of God, by representing them to be ever going backward, and on the decline; and distract the minds of men, by teaching them to undervalue and condemn the present benefits, through an invidious retrospect to former days:—when matters are placed in this light, we find him absolutely disapproving of the view, and all those questions which arise from thence; intimating, that the foundation of them is not *true* in fact.

To make this appear more fully, let us consider some of the advantages of life, both *natural* and *acquired*; in order to see, whether there be any signs that these are now dispensed in a less liberal way than formerly, or whether the reverse is not more probable.

As to the fruitfulness of the earth and clemency of seasons, the temperature of the air and influence of heavenly bodies, the vulgar mistake of their continual decay, and tendency to dissolution, has long since been exploded*.

* A sufficient confutation of it may be seen in *Hakewill*, Apol. passim. There is a little book on the same subject by *Jo. Jonstonus*, a *Polander*, and entitled *de Naturæ Constantia*, Ed. *Amstel.* 1632. which contains some valuable observations, though the author owns that his work is chiefly extracted from *Hakewill*, p. 160.

Whatever might have been the employment of man, had he continued innocent (who must have been originally designed for some employment, since we find *Adam* not exempted from the care of *dressing* and *keeping* that delightful spot of ground on which he was placed*); upon his fall, a state of greater toil and labour became necessary, in order to secure the virtue, health, and safety of the species, in any tolerable degree†: on which account the earth is represented as lying under an extraordinary *curse* of barrenness; which has been generally thought to have continued and received additions at the *deluge*; and very plausible reasons were assigned for this opinion‡; which commonly prevailed till a learned prelate§ shewed us, from the circumstances of the history, that the direct contrary was fact||. For some time

That some climates are more mild and temperate now than they were in former times, See *Hume's* Essays Mor. Polit. &c. Ess. xi. Add Phil. Trans. V. 58, No. 9. and that this is chiefly owing to the lands being better cultivated, may be seen in *Observations* on the *Statutes*, p. 189, and 321. 2d Ed.

* *Gen.* ii. 15.

† See *King*, Or. of E. p. 172, note 33. 4th Ed. and the authors there referred to. To which add *Worthington's* Essay on *Man's Redemption*, who has treated this point more particularly, c. 3. p. 64, &c.

‡ These are collected in *Univ. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 106.

§ Bp. *Sherlock*, Use and Intent of Proph. Disc. iv. Comp. *Worthington* on the same subject, Ess. p. 84, &c.

|| The great fertility of the earth immediately after the deluge, is what some think gave rise to the stories of the *Golden Age* among the poets;

— cum fruges tellus inarata ferebat,
Nec renovatus ager gravidis canebat *Aristis*, &c.

afterwards, the longevity of mankind was very necessary, for peopling the world and propagating arts*; though I should think it difficult to point out the natural causes of this longevity, and the following changes; at least, such as can be made consistent with the forementioned opinion†. Since, if the earth were corrupted to such a degree at the universal deluge as to lay a foundation for the shortening the period of human life, this effect, one would imagine, should have been more evident while these same causes must be fresh, and operate most forcibly, notwithstanding all the

* See *Hakewill*, p. 42. *Joseph. L. i. c. 3.* *Winder*, p. 78, 79. *Le Clerc* on *Gen. v. 27.* *Cum pauci essent homines in terris, necesse erat parentes diu vivere, ut liberis suis auxilio essent, et se contra feras, aliaque vitæ incommoda, una tutarentur: alioqui si parentes sæpe liberos impuberes orbos reliquissent, aut ea ætate interiissent, qua liberi rudiores nondum sibi satis prospicere poterant, de multis familiis actum fuisset. Cum omnia experientia discerentur, neque ea posset in liberos adolescentes transmitti; ut ea posteris usui esset, diu cum illis parentes vivere oportuit.—Hæc certe longævitas in rudi ætate et scribendi imperitia, ad historiæ et annorum certam memoriam servandam plane necessaria erat: cum nec sic quidem satis incolumis ad nos pervenerit. Id. ib.*

† Some of the supposed ones are set down by the last mentioned writer; who, after all, is forced to recur to a particular Providence for the event, with the noted *Rabbi*, who determines it to have been *Opus Providentiæ, non Naturæ.* *Comp. Buddei, Hist. Eccl. Vol. I. p. 151.* or *Dawson* on *Gen. iv. v. p. 59. 67.* *Worthington* supposes a decay in the constitution of *Noah's* sons, immediately occasioned by the rains and waters of the deluge, *Ess. p. 74, &c.* Had such a cause been adequate to the effect, would there not have been some appearance of its taking place much sooner; and not by halves, and at such distant periods; as in the following note?

strength of its original stamina ; not to repeat the proof that this supposed corruption is a vulgar error. This great change, therefore, seems to have been owing to a positive appointment of the Deity, distinct from, and subsequent to, that of *Noah's* flood, and introduced for reasons which took place some ages after it ; and may be conceived as a *new dispensation*, necessary for the future government of the world, in every age(u).

(u) See *Taylor* on Orig. Sin. p. 67. ‘When God had determined in himself, and promised to *Noah*, never to destroy the world again by such an universal destruction, till the last and final judgment ; it was necessary, *by degrees*, to shorten the lives of men ; which was the most effectual means to make them more governable, and to remove bad examples out of the world ; which would hinder the spreading of the infection, and people and reform the world again by new examples of piety and virtue : for when there are such quick successions of men, there are few ages, but have some great and brave examples, which give a new and better spirit to the world.’ *Sherlock* on Death, c. 3. sect. 2. ‘Sin brought death in first, and yet man lived almost a thousand years. But he sinned more, and then death came nearer to him : for when all the world was first drowned in wickedness, and then in water, God cut him shorter by one half ; and five hundred years was his ordinary period. And man sinned still, and had strange imaginations, and built towers in the air ; and then about *Peleg's* time, God cut him shorter by one half yet : two hundred and odd years was his determination. And yet the generations of the world returned not unanimously to God ; and God cut him off another half yet, and reduced him to an hundred and twenty years.—But if God had gone on still in the same method, and shortened our days as we multiplied our sins, we should have been but as an *Ephemeron* ; man should have lived the life of a fly, or a gourd.—But God seeing *Man's thoughts were only evil continually*, he was resolved *no longer to strive with him*, nor destroy the *kind*, but punish *individuals* only, and single persons ; and if

However, in *David's* time, we find the life of man fixed to the same length *in general* that it has at present*; and ever since, have reason to believe, that the constitution of mankind in general, as well as the state of the earth, and heavens, whereon that ever must depend, has, at all times, been much the same as we now find it †; and may rest

they sinned, or if they did obey, regularly their life should be proportionable.' *Taylor, Life of Christ*, p. 305. I shall here add the observation of a friend, which is connected with the present subject.—It is very plain by the unoccupied spaces and superfluous produce of the earth, that it was intended to be inhabited by many myriads more than ever existed upon it, and whose existence has only been prevented or cut short by the unrighteous inventions of men; this complete replenishing of the earth would probably have been the consequence of *Adam's* obedience: but his fall having broken in upon this scheme, it became the wise and good providence of God to limit the generations of men to a certain proportion, and to keep the balance in such sort, that maugre all the inventions of men themselves to prolong human life, or to increase the species, the earth should never be stocked with inhabitants beyond such a proportion, till they were duly disposed to apply the aids and expedients of religion to their preservation and felicity. To multiply mankind, while iniquity abounds, and the love of so large a majority is waxen cold; or in other words, to replenish the earth, whilst the appetites of its inhabitants are so inflamed, would only be to multiply new generations of cut-throats and oppressors, whose engrossing maw would quickly reduce the species to [perhaps far below] the ordinary proportion.

* *The days of our years are three score years and ten, &c.* Ps. xc. 10. This is entitled a prayer of *Moses*, but cannot be of that date which the title imports, since in *Moses's* time, most of the persons mentioned in scripture lived to an age far exceeding that standard.

† See Sir *W. Temple's* Works, Vol. I. p. 276, &c. Sir *T. P.*

satisfied, that the original promise has ever been, and will be made good; that *while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease**, or be less useful to mankind; and therefore may conclude, that the distribution and enjoyment of, what I call, the *natural advantages* of life, is so far from a continual decline, that these have been at all times in themselves pretty equal, and rather improving†, as they receive assistance, which they do very greatly, from the

Blount, Ess. iv. p. 188, 192, &c. or *Ld. Bacon's Hist. of Life and Death*. *Hakewill*, B. iii. c. 1. sect. 7, &c. *Hist. of Caribbee Islands*, B. ii. c. 24.

That the *stature* of man in this age is the same as it was near three thousand years ago, appears from *Greaves's* account of the monument in the *Egyptian pyramid*. *Derham*, Phys. Theol. B. v. c. 4. note 4. Add Diss. Crit. de Hominibus specie et ortu inter se non differentibus, c. 4. inter *Fabricii* Opusc. *Hamb.* 1738; and *Hakewill*, B. iii. c. 3, 4, 5. and some late accounts of several tribes among the *Patagonians*. The same observation is made of man's *age*, by *Plot*, N. H. of *Staffordshire*, c. 8. sect. 102. Of his *strength*, by *Hakewill*, B. iii. c. 5. sect. 5. That we have had several very late instances of persons, whose *longevity* exceeded that of the *patriarchal* age, may be seen in *Worthington's* Essay, p. 417. Comp. *Huet*. Alnet. Quæst. L. ii. c. 12. sect. 4. *Morton's* N. H. of *Northamptonshire*, c. 8. *Jonston*. de Naturæ constantia, Prop. v. Art. I. 11. *Campbell's* Political Survey, C. 4. It appears from the London accounts during the interval of thirty years, viz. from 1728 to 1757 inclusive, that 2979 persons were living at 90, 2 at 100, 10 at 110, and 1 at 138. *Phil. Trans.* Vol. LII. Part i. Art. 11.

* *Gen.* viii. 22.

† The comparative mildness of the *seasons* is shewn by *Hume*. *Polit.* Disc. x, Ess.

acquired ones; which we are in the next place to consider.

The late invention of *arts* and *sciences* is usually insisted on, and very justly, in our dispute with *atheists*, against the *eternity* of the world; and their continual *progress*, though perhaps seldom attended to, seems to be a point no less necessary to complete the argument. For if it can be shewn, either that these which we now have, or others of equal use, were discovered long ago, and dropped again, and subject to their several revolutions, as has been asserted by a profligate writer*, why should not we grant from *analogy*, that the world itself has undergone the like changes? that the same *time* and *chance* has happened to all things concerning it and its inhabitants?—But I find no ground to believe that there have been such vicissitudes in nature, or so much as one valuable art, or very useful branch of science, wholly lost since the creation to this day (v).

* ‘Arts and sciences grow up, flourish, decay, die, and return again under the same or other forms, after periods which appear long to us, however short they may be, compared with the immense duration of the systems of created being. These periods are so disproportionate to all human means of preserving the memory of things, that when the same things return, we take frequently for a new discovery, the revival of an art or science long before known.’ *Ld. Bolingbroke, Ess. iii. p. 236.* See also his *Letter*, occasioned by one of *Abp. Tillotson’s* Sermons; *Works, Vol. III. p. 265, &c.* The same wild system has since been supported by *Toulmin, Antiquity and Duration of the World, 1780.*

(v) For proof of this, see the pretended instances of lost arts

In a history of the world, which has been proved

in *Pancirollus*, which, upon examination, will appear all to be either manifestly false, or frivolous; or of such trifles as have been dropped by disuse. 'In what *Pancirollus* says of certain arts, which according to him were known to the ancients, and have been since lost, there are almost as many mistakes and puerilities as words: The arts which he speaks of, either never existed, or they exist to this day, and in a more perfect state than ever.' *Gouguet*, Pref. p. 7(*). To which may be added *Wotton's* Pref. to *Refl. on anc. and mod. L.* 'I will agree—that several arts in the world have been lost, and others, after a time again revived; but then these have been such arts as have been more curious than useful; and have rather been ornamental than beneficial to mankind; and there has been some good reason to be given for their disuse; either by their growing out of fashion, or by some more easy and commodious invention. Thus the art of *glass-painting* was lost about the time of the Reformation*, when the images of saints were not so highly esteemed, and churches began to be more gravely adorned. Thus the use of *archers* in an army has been laid aside since the invention of pikes and guns. But who can imagine that the art of the smith and the carpenter should ever be forgot after the first invention; unless we could suppose that houses, and all sorts of utensils and conveniences

* This seems to be a vulgar error. See *glass-painting* in *Chambers's Cyclopaedia*, or *Spectacle de la Nature*, Vol. III. p. 219. or *Mr. Walpole's Anecdotes of Painting*, Vol. II. p. 15, &c.

Of *Cement*, *Spect. ib.* p. 228. Add *Motte's Abr. Phil. Trans.* Vol. II. Part iv. p. 62, 63. From hence it may be concluded, that the firmness of that *Cement* which is observable in old walls, &c. must in a great measure be the effect of time, and owing more to the attractive contiguity of its several ingredients, and the continual transudation of that lime, nitre, salts, &c. of which the mortar consists, than to any peculiar skill shewn by the ancients in its original composition.

If *Monsr. Lorryot's* so much celebrated discovery* of a *Cement*, made by *quick lime*, equal to that which he has attributed to the *Greeks* and *Romans*, were of much consequence in this case, we should in all probability have heard more of it since its first publication.

* See his *Practical Essay* on that subject, reprinted, London, 1774.

by a late unexceptionable writer* to be of all others the most ancient and authentic, and which carries its accounts as high as could be expected from any history; even to the forming and first peopling of the world itself, and the original division of the nations: in this, we have the birth and genealogy, the names and characters, of the several founders of each state and kingdom, as well as the inventors even of manual arts, delivered down(w); and from the sober air of truth, and

should grow out of fashion; and it would be the mode for men to live like colts and wild asses? Unless men could be supposed to forget the use of eating and drinking, I am confident they could never forget the art of plowing and sowing, and pressing the grape.' *Nicholls's Conf.* Part. i. And the same may be said of navigation, notwithstanding all that *Ld. Bolingbroke* advances to the contrary. *Ess.* iii. p. 236. See more of this in *Wotton's* Pref. p. 14, &c. 2d ed. *Comp. Mod. Part of Univ. Hist.* B. xviii. c. 12, Sect. 6. *Fin. and Goguet*, on the origin of Laws, Arts, and Sciences, or the *Chron. Index* of inventions and improvements, in *Biogr. Brit.* vol. ult.

* *Newton*, *Chron.*

(w) *Cain builded a city*, or the first city, *Gen.* iv. 17. add *Gen.* x. 8, 9, &c. *Jabal was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle: and his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all such as handle the harp and the organ: and Tubal Cain was an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron; or a forger of arms.* *Gen.* iv. 20, &c. After the flood, *Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard*, *Gen.* ix. 20. or being a husbandman, he planted vines together, and improved the fruit of them, [*v. Cleric. or Patrick* in loc.] So late as *Abraham's* time, we find there was enough of the best land unoccupied for both him and *Lot* to choose out of; *Gen.* xiii. 9. which (as the author of *Biblioth. Bibl.* observes, p. 335.) is a most illustrious testimony for the late peopling of the world,

that simplicity which runs through the whole narrative, have much more reason to depend upon it, than on the boasting fabulous antiquities of *Greece* and *Egypt*: to obviate which, was probably one great design of this relator (x). From

and by consequence for the truth of the *Mosaic* history of the creation and deluge; inasmuch as it appears by this, that the most pleasant and most fruitful country of the whole earth, and which, in a few hundreds of years afterward, was so exceeding populous; was yet in the days of *Abraham* so very thinly peopled, that even large tracts were left in a manner uncultivated and without proprietor. So little ground is there for that assertion of *Ld. Bolingbroke*, on which he builds very largely; ‘ Nations were civilized, wise constitutions of government were framed, arts and sciences were invented and improved, long before the remotest time to which any history or tradition extends.’ Vol. IV. p. 231.

(x) *Historia sua Moses Israelitarum animos a vicinorum fabulis, adeoque religionibus, quæ sæpe iis nitebantur, alienare aggressus est.*—Non modo mundum creatum docet, quod videntur etiam credidisse, vel potius ex veteribus monumentis scivisse, vicini; sed etiam quot fuissent ætates ab initio mundi ad sua tempora ostendit, singulasque *personas generatus* enumeravit, ut ingenti illi numero *ætatum*, qui ab *Ægyptiis* jactabatur, et in sua quidem regione fuisse dicebatur, verum opponeret.—Vide *Jactationes Ægyptiorum de gentis suæ antiquitate apud Ezek. xxix. 3.* et quæ habemus ad *Num. xiii. 23.* At ostendit *Moses, Gen. x. 6.* post diluvium demum a *Chami* posteris, a *Babylone* illuc profectis, fuisse cultam *Ægyptum*. Plurima etiam de generatione hominum in sua regione, deque diluvio, mentiebantur *Ægyptiis*; quæ habet *Diodor. L. i.* Multa jactabant de rerum omnium apud se inventionem, quæ apud eundem leguntur. Quorum pleraque obiter confutat *Moses* alia plane narratione, aliisque rerum inventoribus indicatis. Vide quæ diximus ad *Gen. iv. 21, 22.* *Osiridi* etiam suo agriculturæ, et vini e racemis exprimendi inventionem tribuebant *Ægyptiis*, quæ *Noachi* fuit, ut docet *Moses Cap. ix. 20.* *Cleric.* Proleg. ad Comm. Diss. iii. de script.

whom we learn, that neither the planting of the world, nor the introduction of arts and sciences, were of so early a date, as they have usually been represented*.

Pent. p. 37. Id. in indice ad *Vineam*—Originem etiam musicæ, quanquam initio rudis, omittere noluisse videtur *Moses*, ut ostenderet mentiri *Ægyptios*, qui ejus inventionem *Thouthi Ægyptio*, amico *Osiridis*, qui post diluvium vixit, acceptam ferebant. *Diod. Sic. L. i. p. 15.* Ed. *Rhod.* *Plato* de Leg. ii. p. 577. *Tubal-Cainem* quoque omne æris et ferri opificium expolientem, contra *Ægyptios* a *Mose* memoratum credibile est; illi in *Ægypto*, regnante *Osiride*, dictitabant, in *Thebaide* ueris et auri cudendi inventis artibus, arma esse facta, quibus occidendo feras, et terram colendo, eam studiose cultiorem redderent, et q. seq. ap. *Diod. L. i. p. 14.* Id. in *Gen. iv. 21, 22.* *Num. xiii. 23.* *Chebron* quidem septem annis ante *Ægyptiacam Tanin* condita fuerat—Obiter retundit *Moses* *Ægyptiorum* superbiam, qui se primos mortalium, suasque proinde urbes omnium antiquissimas jactabant, *Ezek. xxix. 3.* *Diod. Sic. L. i. Bibl. p. 9.* *Justin. L. ii. c. 1.* *Cleric.* in *Num. xiii. 22.* *Comp. id. in Es. xviii. 2.*

* Though *Noah* and his sons had, doubtless, some knowledge of the inventions of the Antediluvians, and probably acquainted their descendants with such of them as were most obvious and useful in common life; yet it is not to be imagined that any of the more curious arts, or speculative sciences, were improved in any degree, supposing them to have been known or invented, till some considerable time after the dispersion.—For on their settling in any country, they found it employment sufficient to cultivate the land (which yet for want of separate property, and security in their possessions, in those early times, they improved no farther than barely to supply their necessities), and to provide themselves habitations and necessaries, for their mutual comfort and subsistence*. Besides this, they were often obliged to remove from one place to another, where they could more conveniently reside; and it was a great while before

* Vid. *Thucid. L. i. sub in.*

Most eminent nations, like great families, have at all times been fond of crying up their pedigree, and carrying it as high as possible*; and where no marks remain of the successive alterations in their state, are apt to imagine that it has always been the same. Hence the many foolish pretences among the ancients, to their being *aborigines* of the countries they had inhabited time out of mind: hence were they led to make their several *gods* the founders of their government†. They knew but very little of the world; and the tradition which they had of that little was so far mixed and corrupted with romance, that it served only to confound them‡. Upon the removal of

they came to embody themselves together in towns and cities, and from thence to spread into provinces, and to settle the bounds and extent of their territories*. Two or three ages at least must have been spent in this manner; and it is not very likely they should amuse themselves with celestial observations in particular, when they had so many more pressing affairs to mind. *Univ. Hist. B. i. c. 2. p. 173.*

* V. *Macpherson*, Origin of ancient *Caledonians*, &c. Diss. I.

† *Datur hæc venia antiquitati, ut miscendo humana divinis, primordia urbium augustiora faciat*; says *Liv. Pref. Hist. L. i.* very honestly. The same humour among Christian countries, of carrying up the original of their churches either to some apostle, or apostolical person, is no less honestly censured by *Moshem. de Rebus Christ. ante Const. M. p. 84, &c.*

‡ The grounds of the uncertainty of ancient history may be seen in *Stillingfleet, Or. Sac. B. i. c. 1. sect. 16. 18, &c. Comp. Bryant's accurate acct. of it, pass. Of the Egyptian in particular, see Shaw's Travels, p. 417. 442. Comp. Baker on Hist. and*

* *Stillingfleet, Or. S. B. i. c. 1. sect. 16.*

this cloud, by the more diligent and accurate inquiry of the moderns, we see ancient history beginning to clear up, the world puts on a very different face, and all parts of it appear conformable to each other, and to the late better known course of things; as is made out very clearly, in various instances, by a learned and ingenious writer*.—We find the *marvellous* in all the annals of those times, and more especially in the great point of their antiquity, exceedingly reduced†,

Chron. Reflect. c. 10, and 11. *Shuckford*, Vol. II. B. viii. *Winder*, Vol. II. c. 10. sect. 4, &c. Bp. *Clayton's* Remarks on the Origin of *Hieroglyphics*, p. 58, &c. *Gognet*, Vol. III. Diss. iii. p. 269. That the *Babylonish* empire was not so old as has been pretended, See *Le Clerc* on *Gen.* x. 10. Concerning the fabulous antiquity of the *Chinese*, See *Conclusion* of *Mod. Hist.* II. p. 95. Fol.

* *V. Bryant Analysis*, pass.

† 'Till men come to a scrutiny, they are very apt to imagine that a number is vastly greater than it is. I have often asked people to guess how many men there have been in a direct line between the present king of *England* and *Adam*, meaning only one man in a generation; the king's father, grandfather, &c. The answer made upon a sudden conjecture, has always been, *some thousand*; whereas it is evident from a calculation, there have not been two hundred. For the space of time between *Adam* and *Christ*, let us take the genealogy of our Saviour, preserved by *St. Luke*, in which the names between *Adam* and *Christ*, exclusive of both, are but seventy-four. From the birth of *Christ* to the birth of the king, were sixteen hundred and eighty years. Let it be supposed, that in the list of the king's progenitors, every son was born when his father was twenty-five years old, which is as early as can be supposed, one with another. According to this supposition, there were four generations in every hundred years: *i. e.* in those sixteen hundred and eighty-three years, there were sixty-seven generations;

and our own plain accounts still more and more confirmed: whence we may be convinced, that both the peopling and cultivation of the earth arose at first from a few, low beginnings; that it very gradually spread itself from some one *centre**;

which sixty-seven, added to the foregoing seventy-four, will make no more than a hundred and forty-one.' *Hallet on Heb.* xi. 7. Note a. p. 17. Comp. *Goguet*, Vol. III. Diss. iii. pr. *Bryant Anal. Anct. Mythol.* pass.

* This has been observed by *Is. Casaubon* in one respect, viz. in relation to *language*. *Est enim verissimum*, says he, *linguas ceteras eo manifestiora et magis expressa originis Hebraicæ vestigia servasse, et nunc servare, quo propius ab antiqua et prima hominum sede abfuerunt*, &c. A confirmation of it in some other respects, may be had from the following *very remarkable* particular, as *Hartley* justly calls it; *Observ. on Man*, V. II. p. 113. 'It appears from history, that the different nations of the world have had, *cæteris paribus*, more or less knowledge, civil and religious, in proportion as they were nearer to, or had more intimate communication with, *Egypt*, *Palestine*, *Chaldea*, and the other countries that were inhabited by the most eminent persons amongst the first descendants of *Noah*; and by those who are said in scripture to have had particular revelations made to them by God: and that the first inhabitants of the extreme parts of the world, reckoning *Palestine* as the centre, were in general mere savages. Now all this is utterly inexplicable upon the footing of infidelity; of the exclusion of all divine communications. Why should not human nature be as sagacious, and make as many discoveries, civil and religious, at the *Cape of Good Hope*, or in *America*, as in *Egypt*, *Palestine*, *Mesopotamia*, *Greece*, or *Rome*? Nay, why should *Palestine* so far exceed them all, as it did confessedly? Allow the scripture accounts, and all will be clear and easy. Mankind after the flood, were first dispersed from the plains of *Mesopotamia*. Some of the chief heads of families settled there, in *Palestine*, and in *Egypt*. *Palestine* had afterwards extraordinary divine illuminations bestowed upon its inhabitants, the *Israelites* and *Jews*. Hence its inhabitants had the purest notions

and that it has at all times proceeded by pretty near the same slow, regular steps as it does at present.

Since we have looked into past times more narrowly, we prove the ancients to have been far less expert and knowing, than by a superstitious reverence for every thing remote, we once were accustomed to suppose: and as well from the present state of those particular nations, which used to pride themselves most on their extraordinary advancement, and long possession of the sciences, as from the remaining specimens of skill in their forefathers, when fairly (γ) represented, we find

of God, and the wisest civil establishment. Next after them come the *Egyptians* and *Chaldeans*; who, not being removed from their first habitations, and living in fertile countries watered by the *Nile*, *Tigris*, and *Euphrates*, may be supposed to have preserved more both of the antediluvian and postdiluvian revelations; also to have had more leisure for invention, and more free communication with the *Israelites* and *Jews*, than any other nations. Whereas those small parties which were driven farther and farther from each other into the extremities of heat and cold, entirely occupied in providing necessaries for themselves, and also cut off by rivers, mountains, or distance, from all communication with *Palestine*, *Egypt*, and *Chaldea*, would lose much of their original stock, and have neither inclination nor ability to invent more.' Comp. *Bryant*, Anal. pass. Of the several arts, customs, religious rites and civil institutions which first arose in *Asia*, see Conclusion of *Mod. Hist.* p. 120. fol. Any one that fairly examines history will find those accounts more probable, than that extraordinary supposition of Ld. *Bolingbroke*, viz. that science may have come originally from west to east. Ld. *B.*'s Works, Vol. IV. p. 14.

(γ) It may indeed be imagined, from the great extent of some ancient cities, such as *Thebes*, *Nineveh*, *Babylon*, as well

no great reason to envy them their best acquirements, so far as concerns real use; for all the worth that fashion and fancy may give things is out of the question*.

as from the enormous size of several public works in those parts, that the ancient nations were much more populous, and that arts have once been in much greater perfection, than they now appear in the world; but upon second thoughts, I fancy it will be found, that this was rather owing to an unnatural, gigantic taste, which then prevailed (as *Winder* observes, *Hist. of Know.* Vol. II. p. 334.) in their architecture, statuary, and other arts, as well as in their frame of government and politics, than to any real improvement in either of these respects; as may be gathered from the vast numbers of men usually employed on each occasion; which is a sign, that instruments of expedition and convenience were not had in the former case, *ib.* p. 321; and that the means of living comfortably at home, were no less wanting in the latter; which might be the occasion of so many serving abroad in wars, and made the ancient armies so very numerous as they are commonly represented, *ib.* p. 323. This notion is confirmed, from observing the like monstrous undertakings carried on entirely by the labour of multitudes, in countries where there could be no room for our suspecting any extraordinary skill, viz. *Mexico* and *China*. See *Hume*, *Polit. Disc.* D. x. Though what the author of a *Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind*, [*Edin.* 1753.] has adduced to the contrary, well deserves farther consideration. *Comp. Mod. U. Hist.* fol. Vol. III. p. 644. not. f. g. On the supposed populousness of those northern nations which overran the Roman empire, see *Geddes*, *Misc. Tracts*, Vol. III. No. 6. p. 13. *Robertson*, *Hist.* Ch. V. p. 4. *Mallet's Northern Antiquities*, V. 1. C. ix.

* Why the sciences of men's brains have been more subject to vicissitudes, than the arts of their hands, see *Sprat*, *Hist. R. S.* p. 118, &c. 3d ed. 'The operations of the intellect are more fixed and uniform than those of the fancy or taste. Truth makes an impression nearly the same in every place;

Some of them indeed describe their knowledge in high strains ; and perhaps for their times, and in comparison with some of their neighbours, it may have been considerable ; and yet it is more than probable, that such accounts are chiefly owing to their ignorance of the true state of the rest of mankind, as is the case remarkably with the *Chinese*, a people so much celebrated by themselves, and their implicit followers ; who yet, upon more strict examination, have appeared in most things of consequence, and where most might have been expected from them, least of all to deserve a character : so that nothing but their as small acquaintance with the *Europeans* formerly, as ours with them, could possibly give rise to those extravagant sentiments and sayings, that are recorded of each other (z).

whereas the ideas of what is beautiful, elegant, or sublime, vary in different climates.' *Robertson*, Hist. of Ch. V. p. 322.

(z) See the 1st Part, p. 32, note (*) ; to which may be added *Jenkin's Reasonableness*, Vol. I. p. 340, &c. *Wotton's* and *Baker's Reflections*, under the heads *physic* and *astronomy*. These and many other authors shew us, how little able the *Chinese* were to make any proper observations in their so much boasted science of the heavens, till they were shewn the way by missionaries : as also how monstrously inaccurate both their chronological and astronomical tables were found to be. See *Costard's Letter* in *Phil. Trans.* for 1747. *Du Halde*, their panegyrist, says, They have applied themselves from the beginning of their empire to *astronomy* ; yet when he comes to explain himself, all their proficiency appears to be a little low, judicial *astrology*, Vol. I. fol. Eng. p. 394. So ignorant were they in *geography*, that their literati seeing a map of the world in the hands of the *Jesuits*, took one of the two hemispheres,

The same may in great measure be affirmed of

which contained *Europe, Asia, and Africa*, for the empire of *China*, p. 280. [Comp. Travels of *Jesuits*, Vol. II. p. 304.] Some of their curious notions in *religion* may be seen, p. 254. 652. 655. 657. Their skill in *metaphysics* has been touched upon by *Gurdon*, B. Lect. sect. 14. p. 425, &c. Their *mechanics* may be judged of, from the *Jesuit's* account of their taking the first watch he brought thither for a living creature. *Boyle* on final causes, p. 230. Their civil *policy*, from the appointment of an officer in *Peking*, and other large cities, to destroy every morning all the infants exposed in the streets; which amounted to a very considerable number. *Mod. Un. Hist.* fol. Vol. I. p. 175. Their method of communicating any science, from their yet being without an *alphabet*. See *Phil. Trans.* Vol. LIX. p. 495. Some specimens of their *morals* may be seen in *Anson's Voyage*, p. 398. 4to. or *Leland*, Advantage, &c. Vol. II. Part ii. c. 4. Of their *government*, *Anson*, B. iii. c. 10. Of the bribery and corruption which reign through their whole empire, from the highest tribunals down to the lowest offices, *Mod. Un. Hist.* fol. Vol. III. p. 578. 'Upon the whole, the *Chinese* appear to be little better than a nation of signal hypocrites, who boast of the equity and excellence of their laws, and stick at no violation of them; and under the fairest outside, and pretence of justice and probity, indulge themselves in all manner of extortions, fraud, and villany.' *Ib.* p. 581: add Conclusion of *Mod. Hist.* p. 100. fol. or *Torrceen's* short account of their reigning vice, *Osbeck Voyage*, Vol. II. p. 238, &c. So far are they from being qualified to teach the *Europeans* morality! That most of those of learning and quality among them border upon *Atheism*, *ib.* Vol. IV. b. xviii. c. 7. sect. 14. not. G. Comp. Mons. *Barbinai's* Letters, *ib.* c. 9. sect. 11. note P. An attempt was lately made [but the foundation of it has been questioned. Vid. *Montague* against *Needham*, and *Phil. Trans.* Vol. LIX. No. LXVI.] to shew that many of their ancient *characters* are the very same with those of the *Egyptians*, with whom they must once have had a considerable communication, and from whom they probably derived most of their science, together with many of their customs and religious

the *Egyptian* learning*. Though this country has been stiled the Mother of Arts†, as well as Mistress of Religion‡; and was, no doubt, as early polished as most countries: yet if we be allowed to judge of her improvement in other parts of science, from that most important one, and that which in all reason should have been most cultivated, I mean *medicine*; of which she also

institutes; which would prove an effectual confutation of the pretended antiquity and authenticity of their famed annals. Vid. *Needham*, Epist. de Inscriptione Ægyptiaca. *Romæ*, 1761. et Reponse aux deux Lettres de Monsieur *Bartoli*. The same observation was made long ago by *M. Martinius*, Hist. Sin. L. i. p. 23. A. D. 1659. Comp. *Huet*, Hist. of Commerce, c. 10. and *Goguet*, on their History and Chronology, Vol. III. Diss. iii. p. 284, &c. with the curious extracts from their historians, *ib.* p. 300. 308 (*). *Guignes* de l'Origin des *Chinois*: and the Letters of *M. de Mairan*, with some judicious *Remarks* on them, in *Gent. Mag.* March, 1766. add *Sharp*, Prolegom. ad Opusc. *T. Hyde*, p. 14, &c. and *Mod. Un. Hist.* fol. Vol. XVI. c. 9. p. 95. or *Laughton*, Hist. of Anc. *Egypt*, Introd. p. 20.

* 'The truth is, there want not grounds of suspicion, that the old *Egyptian* learning was not of that elevation, which the present distance of our age makes us apt to think it was; and a learned man hath, in a set discourse, endeavoured to shew the great defects that there were in it*. Neither can it, I think, be denied, but, according to the reports we have now concerning it, some parts of their learning were frivolous, a great deal magical, and the rest short of that improvement which the accession of the parts and industry of after-ages gave unto it.' *Stillingsfleet* Or. S. B. ii. c. 2. p. 75. add *Wotton*, Refl. c. 9. Sir *T. P. Blount's* Ess. iii. p. 153, &c. *Vitringa* com. in *Jes.* Vol. I. p. 540, &c. *Wood's* Essay on *Homer*, p. 117, &c.

† *Macrob.* Sat. L. i. c. 15. Comp. note (x) supra, p. 236.

‡ *Id.* L. vii. c. 13. et *Ammian.* Marc. L. xxii. *Herod. Euterp.*

* *Conring.* de Herm. Med. c. 10, 11, 12.

claims the first invention*, we shall not have much room to admire her highest advances. ‘It must evidently appear, says a learned writer, that the *Egyptians* could have no such physicians in the days of *Moses*, as *Diodorus* and *Herodotus* seem to suppose: it is much more probable that long after these times they were, like the *Babylonians*, entirely destitute of persons skilful in curing any diseases that might happen amongst them; and that the best method they could think of, after consulting their oracles, was, when any one was sick, to have as many persons see and speak to him as possibly could; so that if any one who saw the sick person, had had the like distemper, he might say, what was proper to be done in that condition †.’ From which single in-

* *Plin.* N. H. L. vii. c. 56.

† *Shuckford*, Connect. B. ix. p. 367. *Babylonii* (teste *Herodot.* L. i. et *Strab.* G. L. xvi.) languentes in forum efferebant, ut viri qui eos adirent, consulerent hortarenturque ad ea quæ ipsi faciendo effugissent similem morbum, aut alium novissent effugisse.—Idem factitabant *Lusitani* et *Egyptii*, *P. Verg.* De Inv. Rer. L. i. c. 20. Conf. *Strab.* G. L. iii. et *Plutarch.* de Occult. vivend. That the same was done in other countries, see *Harle*, H. Essay on the State of Phys. in the *O. T.* p. 4. ‘The *Egyptian* practice of physic depended much on astrological and magical grounds, either the influence of some particular planet, or some tutelar dæmon were still considered [*Wotton*, p. 119.]; which precarious foundation must needs depreciate their skill, and stop any increase of knowledge which might be made on other principles.’ *Un. Hist.* Vol. I p. 219. Αἰγυπτίοι λεγούσι ὅτι ἄρα τὸ ἀνθρώπου τὸ σῶμα ἐξ καὶ τριακόντα διεϊληφότες δαιμόνες, ἢ θεοὶ τινὲς αἰθεριοὶ, εἰς τοσαῦτα μέρη νεμεμημένον—ἄλλος ἄλλο τι αὐτῶν νεμεῖν ἐπιτετακται—καὶ δὴ ἐπικαλόντες αὐτῶν ἰωνῆται τῶν μέρων τὰ παθήματα. *Cels.* ap. *Orig.* L. viii. p. 416. Ed. Cant. Nor

stance of the state of this most necessary art, in those times and places, as well as its first rudiments, in like manner described by an able judge*,

was the method which they are said to have taken of establishing its rules by law [*Diod. Sic. L. i. p. 74. Shuckford, B. ix. p. 362. Chandler, Vind. of O. T. Part ii. p. 442. Goguet, Vol. II. 247.*] like to make any great progress in that science. That *surgery* was by much the oldest branch of *physic*, and that this art in general made but very slow advances, till, after some ages spent in collecting observations, it came to the height of reputation under *Hippocrates*: [where it stood many ages more, and where, as a *science*, some say it stands yet] see *Drake's Notes to Le Clerc, Hist. Phys. Part. i. B. i. c. 17, &c.* What progress could be made in *anatomy* during the ancient superstition of the *Egyptians*, may be seen *Diod. Sic. L. i.* In embalming, the body was opened with much ceremony; the person who performed it fled as soon as he had done his office, and all who were present pursued him with stones, as one who had incurred the public malediction; for the *Egyptians* regarded with horror every one who offered any violence to a human body. *Goguet, Part i. B. iii. c. 1. Art. ii.* The same superstition prevails among the *Chinese*. See *Lett. Edif. T. xvii. p. 389. T. xxi. p. 147, &c. T. xxvi. p. 26.*

A tolerable account of the ancient state of *physic*, may be seen in a note to p. 85 of *Young's Hist. Diss. Vol. II.* Add *Harle's Ess. p. 80, &c.* or *Barchusen de Medicinæ Orig. et Progr. Dissert. i. et xviii.* or *D. Le Clerc, Hist. Phys. passim.*

* *Celsus* inventionem artis scienter ponit, L. i. scribens.—Notarunt ægrorum qui sine medicis erant, alios propter aviditatem primis diebus cibum protinus sumpsisse, alios propter fastidium abstinuisse; et levatum magis morbum eorum qui abstinuissent: itemque alios in ipsa febre aliquid edisse, alios paulo ante eam, alios post remissionem ejus; et optime iis cessisse qui post finem febris id fecissent.—Hæc similiaque cum quotidie inciderent, diligentes homines talia animadvertentes ad extremum perceperunt quæ ægrotantibus utilia forent. Sic Medicinam ortam inter omnes constat.' *C. Cels. ap. Pol. Verg. de R. I. L. i. c. 20. Comp. Quintil. L. ii. c. 18. Add Wotton,*

we may, I think, be satisfied in what condition the rest then were, in other parts of the world, as also of their improvement since in all respects*.

Refl. c. 26. p. 341, &c. 2d ed. *Max. Tyr.* Diss. xl. 234. *Barchusen*, Diss. i. iii. p. 11, &c.

‘How simple the beginnings of this art were, may be observed by the story or tradition of *Æsculapius* going about the country with a dog and a she-goat always following him; both which he used much in his cures; the first for licking all ulcerated wounds, and goat’s milk for diseases of the stomach and lungs. We find little more recorded of either his methods or medicines; though he was so successful by his skill, or so admired for the novelty of his profession, as to have been honoured with statues, esteemed the son of *Apollo*, and worshipped as a god.’ *Temple’s Works*, Vol. I. p. 280. This observation seems to come with some weight from so professed an admirer of all that relates to the *ancients*. To which we may add, that the very notion of a *god of physic*, with his several temples and their apparatus, will demonstrate the low state in which that art must then be; since his priests and practitioners, who were to keep up his credit by performing now and then something extraordinary, if they could have done many real cures, would never have needed to recur to so much superstition, artifice, and juggle, as was practised all along, while such a notion subsisted. Vid. *Le Clerc* on *Æsculapius*, *Hist. Ph.* c. 28, &c. of the ancient *anatomy*, ib. 104, 125. of *chemistry*, p. 146.

* See *Nicholl’s Conf.* Part. i. p. 81, 82. 1st ed. or *Goguet* de *L’Origine des Loix, des Arts, &c.* Paris, 1758. *Edinburgh*, 1761. Part i. B. iii. and Part ii. B. iii. c. 2. Art. i. ‘We may observe, that the progress of the arts and sciences in the first ages was exceeding slow, even among those nations who pursued them with the greatest constancy and keenness. The tedious imperfect methods they had of communicating their thoughts, must have formed a very great obstacle to the improvement of human knowledge. For many ages mankind knew no better ways of writing, than painting and hieroglyphics. Both these ways of writing are extremely defective: they are capable only of representing sensible objects: symbols are

Many are indeed carried on much faster in some places than in others; and some brought to so great perfection in one country, as to seem almost incapable of any increase for several ages; which proves against an exact, equable improvement under each period, and in each particular, which never was contended for: but it is no argument against improvement in general, much less any evidence that these attainments grow daily worse: and notwithstanding this, or any other limitation, which might be admitted, yet from some of the

quite unfit for communicating, with precision, abstract ideas. For which reason, mathematics in particular could make but little progress, till after the invention of alphabetical writing. This invention has, no doubt, contributed infinitely to the perfection and progress of the sciences. Yet at first, its utility must have been inconsiderable. It is only by communicating their ideas, that men can improve their discoveries. But the mere invention of letters was not sufficient for this purpose. They wanted some kind of matter, flexible and easily transported, on which they might write long discourses with ease and expedition: this was not discovered till long after. Marble, stone, brick, metals, wood, &c. were at first used for writing, or rather engraving upon. When so much time was necessary to write a few sentences, it could not be expected that the sciences should make a very rapid progress. Besides, these kinds of books could not be transported from place to place, but with great difficulty. Accordingly we find that the sciences remained in a state of great imperfection among all the ancient nations.—Human knowledge has made greater progress within these last hundred years, than in all antiquity; which is chiefly owing to the expeditious and easy methods we have of communicating and publishing all our discoveries.' *Ib.* c. 2. Art. vi. p. 275. *Comp. Sketches of the Hist. of Man, V. I. B. 1. s. 5.*

great outlines of nature ; from plain appearances, in many remarkable æras, and most considerable events ; we seem to have ground sufficient to conclude, that on the whole they always are, and have been, in the main, *progressive*.

Now this progress in *arts*, will necessarily bring with it a proportionable improvement of other natural advantages ; such as health, strength, plenty, urbanity : each of these tend, in some respect or other, to polish and adorn the face of nature, and lead us to apply its laws to our respective uses, much more effectually than could be obtained otherwise. By these we are enabled to reap its several benefits, in ways more easy and compendious, with less time, labour, and expense : the world is stocked more plentifully with inhabitants, and each of them supported in a way more easy and advantageous to itself and all around it. In short, every thing in life becomes more comfortable ; and life itself may be said to attain a longer date, by means of both a better and more early education*. That this has been

* There is a sense in which these latter generations in general have the advantage of the ancients, and in which they may be said to outlive them—viz. in that they live more in less time. It is a common observation, that children ripen and become men sooner in these latter ages, than formerly they did.—Notwithstanding our prejudices in other respects, we esteem so well of ourselves in this, that we think we are more knowing in every science and profession of life, and more capable of business than our ancestors, not far backwards, were at double our age.

the case in latter ages, seems too clear to be denied by any person who will be at the least trouble to compare them with the most extravagant account of the precedent*. It is no great compliment to

And in confirmation hereof, some traces in Scripture may be observed, whereby it appears, that the state of childhood continued much longer in the infancy of the world, than at present; and seemed to bear proportion to the greater length of men's lives. And the same is observed by heathen authors.' *Worth. Ess.* p. 422, 423. 'In other classes of animals, the individual advances from infancy to age or maturity; and he attains, in the compass of a single life, to all the perfections his nature can reach; but in the human kind, the species has a progress as well as the individual; they build in every subsequent age on foundations formerly laid: and in a succession of years tend to a perfection in the application of their faculties, to which the aid of long experience is required, and to which many generations must have combined their endeavours.' *Ferguson, Ess.* on the Hist. of Civil Soc. p. 7.

'When nations succeed one another in the career of inquiries and discoveries, the last is always the most knowing. Systems of science are gradually formed. The globe itself is traversed by degrees, and the history of every age when past is an accession of knowledge to those who succeed. The *Romans* were more knowing than the *Greeks*; and every scholar of modern Europe is, in this sense, more learned than the most accomplished person that ever bore either of those celebrated names.' *Ib.* p. 44.

* — 'When men began to unite into societies, to clothe themselves, and build cottages, and apply themselves to agriculture; the persons who fell upon the first hints of these rude contrivances, were esteemed such mighty benefactors to mankind, that they could never sufficiently express their gratitude to them. Hence they were made immortal, and divine honours were paid to them; and hence it is well known arose the godship of *Jupiter*, *Bacchus*, *Minerva*, *Ceres*, and the rest of that tribe of deities: but there is not a *plough-boy* now that would not have been a god, even to *Jupiter* himself, had he lived in his days, with his present skill in husbandry.' 'Had the

the present times to say, we are improved in all manual arts, as well as those of government (α), the

mystery of printing been invented in ancient times, *Guttenberg* of *Mentz* might have been a god of higher esteem throughout *Germany*, than *Mercury* or *Jupiter* himself. [*Worth. Ess.* p. 160.] Which we cannot think improbable, since his assistant *Fust* or *Faust*, attained the title of *conjuror* for it, in so late times and such a place as *Paris*.

(α) The modern governments, at least in *Europe*, are better calculated for the general good of the governed, which is now known to be the only end of government, than the ancient ones. The world being divided into smaller kingdoms and states, these become checks upon each other, and by their mutual vigilance the mischievous designs of each aspiring prince is with more ease and safety curbed or punished. [That all great empires degrade and debase the human species, v. *Robertson*, *Hist.* Ch. V. p. 3, &c.] The *balance of power* is kept up amongst them in general, as well as in most of the separate constitutions, by a due mixture of liberty, the grand preservative of public spirit, and best excitement to each private virtue. That horrid spirit of heroism, and desire of conquest, seems to be pretty well extinguished: those deadly feuds, and desolating factions, are in a great measure abated: and 'if at present there are fewer revolutions in *Christendom*, it is because the principles of sound morality are more universally known; men are less savage and fierce, and their understanding is better cultivated; and perhaps all this is owing to men of learning, who have polished *Europe*.' *Exam. of Machiavel's Prince*, p. 18, 19. 'We begin to be cured of *Machiavelism*, and recover from it every day. More moderation is become necessary in the councils of princes. What would formerly have been called a master-stroke in politics, would be now, independent of the horror it might occasion, the greatest imprudence. Happy is it for men that they are in a situation, in which, though their passions prompt them to be wicked, it is however for their interest to be humane and virtuous.' *Montesquieu*, *Spirit of Laws*, B. xxi. c. 16. Add *Worthington's* observations on this subject, *Ess.* c. 8. p. 173, &c. *Ferguson*, *Ess.* p. 201. and *Hume*, *Pol. Disc.* xxi. who makes it appear, that human nature in

social ones, and even our very amusements*: the thing shews itself every where; and it is no less

general enjoys more liberty at present, in the most arbitrary government of Europe, than it ever did during the most flourishing period of ancient times. See also his *Hist. of Eng.* Vol. II. which gives sufficient ground for the following observation. ‘Those who, from a pretended respect to antiquity, appeal at every turn to an original plan of the constitution, only cover their turbulent spirit, and their private ambition, under the appearance of venerable forms; and whatever period they pitch on for their model, they may still be carried back to a more ancient period, where they will find the measures of power entirely different; and where every circumstance, by reason of the greater barbarity of the times, will appear still less worthy of imitation. Above all, a civilized nation, like the *English*, who have happily established the most perfect and most accurate system of liberty, that ever was found compatible with government, ought to be cautious of appealing to the practice of their ancestors, or regarding the maxims of uncultivated ages as certain rules for their present conduct.’ *Ib.* c. 23. fin. *Comp. Various Prospects of Mankind, &c.* p. 94 (*). *Goguet* on the imperfection of ancient Governments, Vol. II.: B. vi. fin. and *Bp. Ellys* on that of our own. *Tracts on Liberty*, Pt. ii. or *King’s Essay on the Eng. Constitution*, p. 3, &c. where a just account is given of the several constitutions now in Europe.

* See *Worth. Ess.* p. 210. or *Priestley* Pref. to *Hist. of Electr.* p. 18, &c. Whether we of this nation are arrived at the just standard of *elegance*, or have exceeded it, may be learnt from the description of each state, in the *Appendix to a Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind in Ancient and Modern Times*, p. 329, &c. I shall add one part of it in illustration of the words above. ‘If elegance comes short of the just standard, and is not yet arrived at its proper maturity, human life must necessarily be deprived of the enjoyment of many conveniences of which it is capable, and the manners of mankind must incline towards fierceness and superstition. If carried no farther than the just limit, it produces a more commodious method of living, gives rise to the invention of many new refinements, heightens

plain *a priori*, that it must be so. If, as the *Psalmist* says*, *One day telleth another, and one night certifieth another*; if, according to the prophet *Daniel*†, *many run to and fro*, (travel by sea and land) and thereby *knowledge is increased*; if by repeated observation and experience, by frequent intercourse and extensive commerce, the world grow (as it does unavoidably) in any respect more perfect; this will, by that affinity and union long since observed between the parts of science‡, derive some perfection on each sister art.

This effect will, in a good measure, follow, if the world be but supposed to continue in the same natural state in which it was created, and the genius of mankind keep where it was originally; nay, this must be the case, if both do not grow worse and worse, and in a very great degree:

the splendor and magnificence of society, tends to render mankind social and humane, begets mildness and moderation in the tempers and actions of men, and helps to banish ignorance and superstition out of the world; and thus far it contributes to the perfection of human society.'

* *Psal.* xix. 2.

† *Dan.* xii. 4.

‡ *Omnes artes quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, et quasi cognatione quadam inter se continentur. Cic. pro Arch. Poet. Id. de Orat. l. 3. Est illa Platonis vera—vox, omnem doctrinam harum ingenuarum et humanarum artium uno quodam societatis vinculo contineri. It would be mere impertinence to bring instances in proof of this. A strong confirmation of it may be seen in Priestley's Hist. of Electr. P. iv. sect. 3. p. 500, &c.*

much greater than has ever been pretended. But as the point before us can be no longer called in question, than till the matter is duly stated, we have not so much occasion to give a direct proof of it, by descending to particulars, (which indeed would be infinite, and most of which appear too obvious to need naming) (€), as to point out, what

(€) The reader may see a list of them in *Pancirollus*, de Nov. Repert. or *Almeloveen's* *Inventa Nov. Antiqua*, as also in *Edwards*, *Glanvill*, *Wotton*, Sir *T. P. Blount*, *Perault*, *Gedoyne*, *Spratt*, *Hist. R. S.* and others, who have appeared for the *moderns*, as I apprehend, with superior advantage, in the late controversy on this subject. A more minute detail of each improvement, and its gradual progress in the world, may be seen in *Goguet's* *Treatise on the origin of Laws, Arts, and Sciences*, and their progress among the most ancient nations: or in *Priestley's* *Hist. of Philosophy*, particularly under the present state of *Vision*, period i. 'It cannot be denied, but that the reading of ancient authors is very useful to us; but, if it were possible that we should be as ancient as they are, and that they should be in our place, and read our writings as we read theirs, would they get no benefit by it? they would without doubt learn more from our works, than we can from theirs.' *Le Clerc. Parrhasiana*, c. 4. p. 179. To which may be added, the just observation of *Bayle*, 'That if these authors were to come back to the world, they would see that many things were supposed to be contained in their books, which they never dreamt of.'

After an enumeration of particulars, *Ray* determines that the writers of antiquity excel us chiefly in those arts which are concerned in polishing their language. *Philosoph. Lett.* between *Ray* and his correspondents, p. 241. Whether the ancients or moderns were in general the greater *geniuses*, seems to be a point as difficult and unnecessary to determine, as it is foreign to our present inquiry. I shall only observe here, that if the latter have much greater helps and advantages in some respects, which may appear to set them below the former in this article, yet there are others, in which they have no less disad-

is more material, and perhaps less taken notice of, the farther connection which this *progress of arts* has with our *religious knowledge* of each kind.

By religion in general, I mean the way of promoting our most perfect happiness upon the whole, together with that of others, in this life; as well as qualifying us for, and by particularly recommending ourselves to the divine favour, securing to us some higher degrees of it in the next. Now the knowledge of this, whether natural or revealed, will appear to have held pace in general with all other knowledge, from the beginning; and these three branches of science seem to have been, in the main, similar and synchronous, as indeed they ought to be; otherwise perpetual disappointment and confusion would ensue, as was in part observed before*.

The first race of men had so much knowledge imparted to them as they could either then want or well be capable of; so much as they had either means or leisure to employ; and higher notices, could they have been administered, would have tended to disqualify them for their more immediate occupations in that part of life. They were placed in a world capable of affording all

vantage, particularly this of *Language*; since we are under a necessity of learning many languages, before we can come at that stock of knowledge which lies locked up in them; whereas they seldom wanted above one.

* Part i. p. 8, 9, 10.

gratifications suited to their mortal frame, and made for its support; and were designed to glorify their Maker's goodness in the free enjoyment of them for some time here; as well as to expect a reparation of its decays, with farther manifestations of the same goodness, somewhere hereafter. Their first employment, therefore, was to learn the present use and application of these natural benefits themselves, as well as to lay a foundation for communicating them to future generations, which were to inhabit the same place for many ages. And accordingly their notions of the world, and of its governor, and consequent opinions in religion, both natural and positive, were such as might be expected from men in such circumstances*. As to the latter, and more especially that great article of it which concerned the restoration of human nature; they had only a general, indeterminate expectation of some great redeemer who was to arise among them†: which yet was very sufficient to keep up their hopes, to secure a dependence on their Creator and Governor; especially when revived by so many earnest of present temporal blessings: but when,

* What these opinions might be, is at large described by *Winder*, *Hist. of Knowl.* Vol. I. c. 2. sect. 2. though whether our first parents *thought so clearly on the subject*, as this author, and *those celebrated moderns* he there mentions, [p. 36.] I much question.

† See Bp. *Sherlock*, *Use and Intent of Proph.* sect. 2, or *Winder*, *Hist. of Knowl.* p. 26, 27.

or where, or upon what plan that redemption was to be effected, they knew not; and perhaps it might be unnecessary to impart this to them, as it was probably above their comprehension. To preserve an intercourse with the Divine Being, it is likewise probable that they had positive directions about consecrating to him some part of their goods, together with the times and places for presenting this before him; by way of acknowledgment of his present bounty, and application for the continuance of it; as well as in deprecation of his displeasure, whenever they became sensible of having incurred it by abusing that bounty; and lastly, as the settled means of always having access to him, and obtaining acceptance with him. Hence was the origin of *sacrifices**, as they may be distinguished into *expiatory*, *euctical*, and *eucharistical*; and this seems to have been the substance of the primitive religion; which was as plain and simple as the times.

When the ideas of mankind grew more complex, religion by degrees became so too; and spread itself, together with their other notices; all which were in some measure supplemental, and subsidiary to it. Each new degree of knowledge, in any part of nature, was a new opening of the human mind; still more and more displaying the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, in the original con-

* See Part ii. p. 56. note i, and p. 58, 59. notes k, and l. with *Winder* on the subject, p. 30.

stitution of things, and the construction of animals; as well as in the constant, regular preservation of each species, and pointing out their various ends and uses; thereby enabling man, to whom they were all subjected, to enter farther into this constitution himself; as well by receiving and enjoying the benefits thereof more perfectly, as by distributing the same more copiously, and both ways paying his most acceptable tribute of duty and devotion to the common Parent.

When the lives of men began to shorten, we find arts increasing faster in proportion; as it was fit they should; since otherwise many valuable discoveries would have dropped before they could have been brought to any tolerable perfection, or applied to common use; there being then no other repository for such, beside the memory of their inventors: till at length came the art of alphabetical *writing*, which drew along with it all the other arts; helping at once to spread and to perpetuate them. And it is worth observing, as was just hinted before*, that about the same time,

* Part ii. p. 165. and *Winder*, Hist. of K. p. 221, 222. 'A discovery of this kind [an Alphabetical Character] at the period when Providence thought proper to contract the term of human life within the narrow boundary of seventy years, became necessary to advance the progress of science, as well as to enlighten and prepare men's minds once more for the reception of revealed truths, which had been so generally perverted [by that idolatry whereof symbolical writing was the great source,] in order to prevent such a perversion of it for the future.' *Conject. Observ. On Alphabetic Writing, 1772.*

more frequent, and more full revelations were communicated to the world; which thereby became better qualified to receive, to preserve, and to propagate them; as they were likewise dispensed in a way best suited to its own state; and which most effectually supplied its wants, and tended to give greater light and improvement both to it and to each other: as is shown particularly above, Part II.

We have seen in some measure, how the case stood both with religion and science, in the *antediluvian* and *patriarchal* ages; and are sufficiently acquainted with those alterations it received under the *Israelites* and *Jews*; by various additional institutes, and a succession of prophets: not very unlike to which, was a light held forth to the east, by their great oracles, *Zoroaster* and *Confucius*; and to most parts of the west, by a long series of their philosophers; as is observed in the same place*.

To these, in its proper season, succeeds *Christianity*; which surpassed them all, as much as the times of its promulgation were superior, in all kinds of knowledge, to the past; and which was evidently as great an improvement upon *natural* religion, properly so called, as it was upon any of the former dispensations. Though perhaps there may be some room to doubt, whether even those ages, enlightened as they were above the former,

* Part II. p. 143.

were capable of receiving all the improvement which it was calculated to impart, whether the world was yet able to admit it, in its utmost purity and perfection. On the contrary, there seem to have been so many dregs left of *Jewish* superstition and *Gentile* philosophy, as required a long time to purge them off: and from one of which it had no sooner got well clear, than it became immersed and clouded in the other*. In its early days, we find it loaded with the refuse of each crabbed system; which was brought in to explain mysteries, or rather make them, in the gospel: till by degrees, itself is made a matter of high speculation and refinement; and such nice disputes † raised about the doubly distinct natures of its author, and the abstract nature, or separate subsistence of the human soul; as served, one of them to fill the eastern church with blood and desolation, and at length subject it to the *Mahometan* yoke ‡; the other to introduce the doctrine of *purgatory*, and with it a long train of *popish* errors: which ended in a western tyranny, over both soul and body §.

* Part ii. p. 178.

† See *Constantine's* excellent letter on this subject in *Euseb. de Vit. Const.* c. 66, 67, &c. add *Bower's Hist. of the Popes*, Vol. II. passim. Or *Priestley, Hist. of Corruption*, v. 1. p. 1.

‡ Part ii. p. 193. note N.

§ Some explanation of the latter of these two grand articles has been hazarded in the following Discourse on *Death*, with the

Both these sects have indeed a long while been suffered to oppress the *Christian* world; and if they prove altogether so bad as we have been used to suppose, the large spread and long continuance of them is not at present easily accounted for: but we hope they may be found really not such*; and that the same wise and good ends will

Appendix; the former must be reserved till the times will bear a more impartial inquiry than they seem capable of admitting at present, while so much prejudice and so many penal laws surround it.

* ‘Popery itself (says *Worthington*, *Ess.* p. 156.) begins to be ashamed of some of its grosser errors; and its divines of late have been forced to explain them in a manner more agreeable to truth and scripture.’ [And the same thing may be observed of the *Mahometan* doctors in their comments upon the *Koran*, as appears remarkably all through *Salé’s* notes]. ‘Moreover, that persecuting spirit, which was the reproach and scandal of *Christians*, is, God be praised, in a good measure abated among all sorts and denominations of them; and we do not now hear so much of *Christians* being burnt and tortured by *Christians*. Nor do *Papists* at present seem to thirst so much after *Protestant* blood.—It is observed likewise, that there is not that ignorance and immorality to be objected against the *Papists* now, as formerly; learning being no less propagated among them than *Protestants*: many good and pious books are published by their clergy; nor are they so very scandalous in their lives, as in the ages preceding the Reformation; but they in general are exemplary in their behaviour, and afford us patterns in some things which we might profit by.’ The like has been observed of the *Mahometans* above.

Concerning the influence that improvements in science will have on the state and progress of reformation in religion, see *Mosheim’s Eccl. Hist.* by *Macklaine*, 8vo. Vol. V. App. 2. p. 104, &c.

appear to be accomplished by them, in due time, as have been evident in most other dispensations*.

However, at the next great æra, which is justly styled the *Reformation*, there appeared sufficient tokens of this progress in general knowledge, and these succeeding so fast on each other, that they cannot readily escape the slightest observation†. Here the other above-mentioned branches of it are again united, and affording their mutual assistance and support; science of all kinds, human and divine, revives; and has been since continuing to improve, and to draw with it all collateral advantages, down to the present times.

The more we know of human nature, and be-

* Of which more may be seen in Part ii. p. 196, and 202, in notes.

† See some of the particulars in Part ii. p. 205. and *Worthington's* account of the progress of learning after its revival, *Ess.* p. 200, &c. To which we may add, that the avenues to learning of all kinds have been planned out and opened by *Ld. Bacon*; the nature and most intimate recesses of the human mind unfolded and explained by *Locke*; the frame and constitution of the universe by *Newton*; (to name no other writers of our own) in a more perfect manner, than ever was done or attempted, since the foundation of the world. Eundo per præcipua scientiarum quibus eruditionis circulus absolvitur, genera, demonstrare possem doctorum virorum labore et industria ad istud fastigium deducta pleraque, simulque methodo tam concinna tamque perspicue proposita, ut juvenibus hodie eo pervenire facile fit, quorsum olim senibus vix adspirare licuit. *Buddeus* de bonarum literarum decremento nostra ætate non temere metuendo. A. D. 1714.

come conversant with the art and end of living; the more enlarged and adequate conceptions must we have of natural religion; and thereby be better able to comprehend, and apply revealed*: the more we are acquainted with the faculties of our own *soul*, the better qualified must we be to regulate and improve them;—to direct the reasoning power and assist the memory, in each of which points very considerable discoveries have been made of late:—the more we know of the *body*, the more able we are to prescribe a regimen, and remedy the several disorders of it: and (though it seems to be the intent of Providence, for reasons obvious enough†, that *physic* in particular should not receive the same degrees of improvement with some other arts, yet) perhaps it would not be hard to demonstrate, that we are actually able to administer it, in a more perfect manner now than formerly‡; that our observations on the disorders, and defects in each of these, have multiplied rather than the disorders and defects themselves; excepting such as probably arise, and propagate

* Vid. *Walchii* Orat. de Incrementis quæ nostra ætate Stud. Theol. cepit; recitat. MDCCXXV.

† Some of the many ill consequences of its being in the power of physicians to prolong the life of a tyrant, oppressor, &c. beyond the common date, may be seen in *Sherlock* on Death, c. 3. sect. 2, 3. and the Discourse here annexed, on the Nature and End of Death.

‡ ‘This art is wonderfully simplified of late years, has received great additions, and is improving every day both in simplicity and efficacy.’ *Hartley*, Vol. II. p. 378.

themselves, from some particular, predominant vices*.

The more we know of the *world*, the more we view its order, beauty, symmetry;—the uniform laws by which it is governed;—the just arrangement, and mutual subserviency of all its parts; (and I need not observe how much this kind of learning has of late increased †;) the more we see

* If some new distempers have arisen of late, it is likely others of an older date have ceased; as is observed by *D. Le Clerc*. ‘Fuerant ergo morbi, nonnullorum siderum instar, orti certo tempore, postea extincti sunt; suntque alii, quos ortos quidem non ita pridem, novimus, sed quorum finem nondum videmus.’ *Dissert. de Lepra Mosaica*, p. 9. Several instances occur in *Barchusen*, de *Medic. Orig. et Prog. Diss. v. sect. 6.* Comp. *Arnot’s Hist. of Edinburgh*, B. 2. C. 2. p. 238.

† Of this, and the benefit the world receives from it, see *Worthington*, *Ess.* p. 94, &c. ‘And if *natural philosophy* in all its parts, by pursuing this method, shall at length be perfected; the bounds of *moral philosophy* will also be enlarged.’ *Newt. Opt.* B. iii. ‘Since things really differ in themselves, in our use of them, and in our conduct about them; the more we know of nature the more we may improve both our virtue and our power of converting natural objects to the real advantage both of ourselves and others: and since our own actions, and especially our moral habits, have so mighty an influence to raise or to debase us; the more we know ourselves and the wonderful œconomy of our moral frame, the better we shall be enabled to adjust that happy temperament; to maintain that regular subordination of our faculties, appetites, and affections, in which so great a part of our virtue and our happiness consists. Every advance therefore in the observation of nature carries with it a proportionable improvement of the moral science. And not only the bounds of this science are extended, as we enlarge our prospect of the disposition and events of things; but the certainty of it is most satisfactorily evinced, when we discern uniform and established

the goodness and perfection of its Architect; and are more fully satisfied that he designed its several inhabitants for happiness; and must approve of every regular, consistent method which they take to promote it.

Such observations on the present world enable us to argue from it to *another*; and conclude that this other will most probably go on in the like way; as consisting of the like inhabitants, and conducted by the same hand. As the present world has generally improved hitherto, we may expect that it shall continue to do so; and that the next will likewise be still more and more improving: and by the same rule, perhaps each part and member of it, in its respective order and proportion; every distinct *class*, as it rises above others, through all the coexistent *scale* of beings, may preserve the same uniformity in point of *succession* too; that these may follow upon each other, by a no less regular progress, in a growing happiness, through all eternity: and thus the whole creation be, every way, for ever beautifying in its Maker's eye, and drawing still nearer to him by still higher degrees of resemblance; as is suggested by an elegant writer*.

analogy between their natural constitution, which our senses perceive, and that moral constitution, which religion supposes. *Tunstall's Acad.* Part i. p. 84, 85. And that *supernatural* light or knowledge will be increased in the same way, its hinderances being of the very same kind, see Bp. *Butler's Analogy*, p. 262, &c. 2d ed.

* *Addison's Spectator*, No. 111.

To these deductions of human reason, revelation adds new light, and confirmation; (as it is in like manner itself illustrated and established by them:) it carries on and completes the notices of natural religion; by express declarations of the unlimited goodness of the Creator towards *all* his works;—by giving *us* in particular, a positive assurance that we shall be disposed of in another state, according to our several qualifications: fixing and ascertaining our hopes of arriving in due time at those blessed *mansions*; where we shall find room for the free exercise, and full enjoyment of each good moral habit, and intellectual accomplishment which we have formed here:—furnishing ample motives for our perseverance in this course, and guarding against every deviation from it; especially against that very dangerous attendant on the noblest dispositions, pride, and self-sufficiency:—holding us in a strict dependence on that God, who is to be both our guide thither and our great reward there; in whose hands we always are, and ought to wish ourselves; and to whose bounty alone we owe, and should be always sensible that we do owe, *every good and every perfect gift* *.

Lastly: The more we trace the ways of Providence in the *moral* world, as also the manner of its conducting every *dispensation* of revealed religion; (and we have every day better and better

* *James* i. 17.

means of tracing them;) we learn more of the purposes of each than those before us could; and from the manner in which this prospect has already been opened, have ground to think it will still more and more enlarge; and though we are yet far from being able to comprehend the whole plan, (which is not to be wondered at in beings, which so lately sprung from *nothing*;) yet we do comprehend enough already, to convince us that there is a wise and good one, laid down from the beginning, and executed in a regular gradation; and from thence also may infer, that it will still be farther answering its several ends, and still appearing more and more to do so:—that the *manner* how this is to receive its due completion will unfold itself, as we are proceeding in the study of it; adding our own observations to those of times past, and *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*; as we do those of the *natural* world with one another; whereby we have discovered several of its general laws, unknown to former ages, and probably by them judged undiscoverable: and from some others, just beginning to discover themselves*, find more room daily to believe, that the case will be the same with those who shall come after us.

And thus it may be made appear, that the means of knowledge *natural, moral, and revealed*, have been imparted, in a much more ample manner than ever to *us, on whom the ends of the world are come.*

* V. Priestley's *Hist. of Electricity.*

Why a more proper application of them does not always follow, must be accounted for on other principles (γ): that by all these means the world

(γ) The same grand principle of *human liberty*, which renders it morally impossible for any thing relating to the minds or circumstances of mankind to remain long in a state of perfect uniformity, as observed above, [Part i. p. 17. note c.] may go a good way towards accounting for that partial and unequal manner of implanting, propagating, and preserving any religious notices among mankind, from the beginning of the world to this day; as well as for their various degrees of either improving under, or neglecting and abusing these, together with all the other gifts of Providence; and thereby making way for farther dispensations in succeeding ages, suitable thereto; and though I am sensible, that what has been advanced with regard to the *suitableness* of every dispensation to the exigencies of the world, so as to effect a *gradual improvement*, in the most general sense, may seem at first sight to require a great many qualifications; from the long reign of idolatry before and during the *Jewish* establishment; and from the like lamentable state of *Paganism* still; together with that of *Popery* and *Mohammedism*, under the gospel: yet even granting this in its full force; allowing for every general *corruption* of religion through most of the climes and ages of the world; as well as the particular degeneracy thereof in several parts and periods of the same:—still if we judge of its state, [as we use to form a standard for human nature] not from the very worst and most brutal parts thereof; or from places where it lies under the most unnatural restraints; but rather from the best point of light, in which it may be placed, among the wiser and more sober part of its professors in each sect; and measure its proficiency in some of those nations where common sense has had room to exert itself, and common honesty and ingenuity been suffered to attend it in any degree;—where the free use of the understanding has once been admitted in religious matters:—[and where this is not the case with any people, religion is quite out of the question; being no more concerned in their affairs, than as mere matter of form, or some political machine:]—If we take such a view of religion, and put the best sense on each article

may, and ought to have more true *religion*, and

which it seems capable of, and which the ablest of its advocates have advanced in its defence;—[without which, we are only going to delude ourselves:—] If we allow their due weight to those different glosses put upon some of its oddest points of doctrine and discipline: its seemingly unaccountable rites and ceremonies;—and to the several specious motives for either tolerating, or establishing such among a people stupid enough to approve them, and hardly capable of relishing better:—if we make our inquiry into the state and progress of religion through the whole known world in this fair and free manner, and take care to set out low enough at first,—much lower, I conceive, than has been commonly imagined; [I mean not so much in respect of the divine revelations themselves, as the capacity of mankind for reasoning upon them, and their disposition to apply them;] if we reflect on the same slow gradual increase of corruptions, in this and every other point; and their as slow and gradual remedy;—if we consider the many difficulties that attend the raising and keeping up a tolerable spirit of liberty and ingenuity in any people for any long time;—the many dangerous abuses to which liberty itself lies constantly exposed;—the difficulty of preserving proper care and industry;—a right sense of, and due attention to, their interests;—a purity of morals, and integrity of heart;—or of restoring these in any country where they have once begun to decline;—if we reflect upon the world's great proneness and propensity to a decline in these respects,—together with the causes of all this;—we shall not, I believe, be much surprised at the same thing happening in religion; or imagine its course to be either unconformable to, or altogether unconnected with, that of all *common things* about us. Again, as its evident connexion with some of the particulars above mentioned must oblige us to allow of frequent lets, and long retrogradations, in the course of religious knowledge, in most parts of the world; so the relation which it bears to, and the advantage it receives from others, may perhaps authorise us to suppose that this course, like to that of theirs, will, notwithstanding such lets, still be in the main, and at the long-run appear to have been, really *progressive*. Thus, from the very nature and importance of the forementioned benefits, it seems probable that when these once get footing any

sound *morals*, now than formerly, will scarcely

where, they will gain ground, and propagate themselves to other places; and draw along with them every thing of consequence that has a near relation to them; and when religious knowledge stands in this relation, as it does often unavoidably: it must even in the common course of things [contrary to the nature of mere ignorance, or matters of empty speculation,] it will support and spread its main and most important branches, [such as the supremacy and superintendence of some one God, and a state of final retribution, &c. which have been, and are every where preserved among the heathen. See Part i. p. 38. and *Grot. de V. R. C. L.* iv. c. 12.] and thereby both promote, and be itself promoted by the general advances of the world; and *synchronize* with most of its more valuable improvements. [See *Hartley's Obs.* Vol. I. p. 360.] That this must be the case, in some degree, we seem to have sufficient grounds for proving *à priori*: and from a true state of the *fact*, with all its circumstances, it is probable, that this would not appear, even now, to be repugnant to it on the whole; however, that some time or other we may discover things to stand thus; or at least have room to suppose that they appear so in the eye of the great Governor of the universe; it is plain, *all* times and places are not equally adapted to the introduction of discoveries either in common science or religion; and it seems no less clear, from what we now know of the *Jewish* dispensation, in particular, and the frequent revelations that accompanied it; [which were at first all put under a *carnal* cover, in order to engage their affections, and induce them to take that care, which otherwise they would not have taken, in the keeping of them so long as was requisite, (See *Louth's Directions*, p. 161, &c.) and afterwards find that these manifestations were unfolded by degrees, and illustrated as the *day-star* began to arise in their hearts]; and from what has been observed above, p. 172. 205, of the age wherein *Christianity* itself was published, that men have not been *always capable of receiving all the light* [*Winder*, Vol. II. p. 336]. from each religious institution, which it was fitted ever to convey. It may perhaps be deemed sufficient if they, to whom any such was given, were so far qualified to *hear and profit by it*, [ib. p. 193.] as to receive somewhat of it themselves, and hand it

admit a doubt: but whether it actually has or

down to others in a *competent degree of purity*; and give it such a *sure foundation* in the world, as would be able to support it till all circumstances should concur which must contribute to its *fulness*, and carry it on to a *state of maturity*. Many of these circumstances seem for some time to have been concurring in several parts of the world; and therefore may be looked on as so many natural means co-operating to produce this effect there, in the general theory of religion: allowing for the variations issuing from that principle of *freedom* above-mentioned. And if we view the present growth of science in those parts of the world which we are best acquainted with; and the established methods of preserving and perpetuating it;—remembering the connection each of these has with the rest, and with religious investigations as well as others to which they may be applied, to which *application* likewise men seem to be now no less disposed:—considering this, I say, it is scarcely possible to think that such improvements should either themselves be ever wholly lost among mankind, or not at length become the means of raising and refining others; and thereby of accelerating a certain *progress*, and advancing it to greater heights, in that of *religious*, as well as every branch of *common* knowledge; at least that *this* appears to be on the recovering hand, and rising higher and faster by their means, than it could ever be conceived to rise without them: which is, I humbly apprehend, as much as I am concerned to maintain at present, and shall conclude with the observation of a learned friend, ‘The divine dispensations were not intended to force men to be virtuous; which indeed is a contradiction. Under any dispensation men may, and will be wicked. For [*Dan. xii. 10.*] while *many are purified*, and *made white and tried* (even by the wickedness of their contemporaries) *the wicked shall do wickedly*; under the brightest dispensation they will walk on in darkness, and *none of them shall understand*; but *the wise only shall understand*. To the same purpose, *Rev. xxii. 11.* How general therefore soever an apostasy may be, many even by that very apostasy, and the persecution which attends it, may by such trial be made white and purified; and consequently the wickedness, even greater wickedness of the wicked, doth not

not becomes a very different inquiry*. Though perhaps something may be said in favour of the present times in both these respects.

prove a retrogradation in moral or religious principles: for the advances of religion are not to be measured by the wicked, who will do wickedly, and still be unjust and filthy, but only by the wise and righteous, who understand and make a proper use of the divine dispensations. By this rule true religion may have still been advancing in the world. Comp. *Taylor*, Scheme of Script. Div. C. 3. or p. 34.

* 'It does appear to me very *probable*, to say the least, that *Jews* and *Christians*, notwithstanding all their vices and corruptions, have, upon the whole, been always better than the heathens and unbelievers. It seems to me also, that as the knowledge of true, pure, and perfect religion is advanced and diffused more and more every day; so the practice of it corresponds thereto: but then this, from the nature of the thing, is a fact of a less obvious kind: however, if it be true, it will become manifest in due time. Let us suppose a person to maintain, that civil government, the arts of life, medicines, &c. have never been of use to mankind; because it does not appear from any certain calculation, that the sum total of health and happiness is greater among the polite nations, than among the barbarous ones. Would it not be thought a sufficient answer to this to appeal to the obvious good effects of these things in innumerable instances, without entering into a calculation, impossible to be made? However, it does here also appear, that, as far as we are able to judge, civilized countries are, upon the whole, in a more happy state than barbarous ones, in all these respects.' *Hartley's Observations on Man, &c.* Vol. II. p. 176. Comp. *Laget's Influence of the Christ. Rel. on the Welfare of Society*, Sermon. 4.

To the same purpose are the reflections of another judicious writer; who, after describing one of the most shocking instances of barbarity among the *Americans*, adds, 'It will point out to us the advantages of a religion that teaches a compassion to our enemies, which is neither known nor practised in other religions: and it will make us more sensible, than some appear to be, of the

First : That in point of knowledge we exceed the wisest among ancient heathens, who either practised, or at least permitted and connived at the worship of monstrous deities, and most unnatural rites, is readily allowed, and with great reason attributed to the superiority of the *Christian* dispensation ; in comparison with which, former ages are justly termed *days of darkness* : and that we of the Reformation do as much excel the dark times of *monkery*, in rational, true piety, might perhaps be as easily granted ; and, with equal justice, attributed to the superior excellence of our own dispensation. We have indeed less shew and ceremony now than ever ; less perhaps of the *form of godliness* in general ; but, it is hoped, not less of its real *power*. Unprofitable austerities are exchanged for that more *reasonable service*, which renders the Deity amiable, and the imitation of him useful to mankind ; which makes each worshipper more happy in himself, and helpful to his fellow creatures*. There seems to be

value of commerce, the arts of a civilized life, and the lights of literature ; which if they have abated the force of some of the natural virtues, by the luxury which attends them, have taken out likewise the sting of our natural vices, and softened the ferocity of the human race, without enervating their courage.' Account of the *European Settlements in America*, Vol. I. p. 192. Whether the *Chinese* or *Turks* are not still more wicked than the *Christians*, may be seen in the authors referred to by *Benson*, *Reason*. of Christ. Rel. App. p. 303. Add *Memoirs of Dr. Lardner*, p. 81, 82.

* ' They take very unprofitable pains, who endeavour to persuade men that they are obliged wholly to despise this world,

much less of *superstition*, and reliance on such things as can at best be but *means* to religion, and often hardly that; nay, rather tend to take men off the proper principle, and substitute a very different speculation in its room; teaching them to *compound* for real goodness, the substance of all true religion, by that which has not so much as even its shadow; and leading them to contend about that emptiness with such a temper as could not possibly be exercised or entertained in any thing that bore a near relation to the other, which

and all that is in it, even whilst they themselves live here. God hath not taken all that pains in forming and framing and furnishing this world, that they who were made by him to live in it should despise it; it will be enough, if they do not love it so immoderately, as to prefer it before him who made it: nor should we endeavour to extend the notions of the *stoic* philosophers, and to stretch them farther by the help of Christian precepts, to the extinguishing all those affections and passions, which are and will always be inseparable from human nature; and which, it were to be wished, that many Christians could govern and suppress and regulate, as well as many of those heathen philosophers used to do. As long as the world lasts, and honour and virtue and industry have reputation in the world, there will be ambition and emulation and appetite, in the best and most accomplished men who live in it; if there should not, more barbarity and vice and wickedness would cover every nation of the world, than it yet suffers under. If the wise and honest and virtuously disposed men quit the field, and leave the world to the pillage, and the manners of it to the reformation, of persons dedicated to rapine, luxury, and injustice; how savage must it grow in half an age? Nor will the best of princes be able to govern and preserve their subjects, if the best men be without ambition and desire to be employed and trusted by them.' *Ld. Clarendon, Ess. Mor. & Div. p. 96. fol.*

is more solid : it seems, I say, as if there were less of this spirit ; and that there would be yet less, would all those who are sensible of its remains unite in opposition to it, with that zeal and soberness which true religion will inspire.

As to that spirit of *infidelity*, which so remarkably prevails at present ; they who are confident that they understand religion thoroughly, and profess it in its utmost purity ; such persons will condemn this humour of examining all parts of it, as idle and of ill consequence : they who are not so sanguine, will conclude that there are very good ends to be served by it ; whatever be the fate, or the intent, of such men as most injuriously oppose religion : these will believe that there is the same necessity for permitting this *heretical turn* in general, as for any particular *heresies* ; and that thereby already truths of importance are *made manifest*, and grievous errors detected*. They

* ‘ Since Christianity began to be depraved by adventitious mixtures, there never was an age in which there has appeared so generally as in the present a disposition to embrace whatever fair inquiry discovered to be the real doctrine of Scripture, without any regard to the authority of men, or to the established distinctions of sects : and no where has this liberal spirit prevailed so much as in those countries in which infidelity has been suffered, for the longest space of time, to propose all its objections freely, and without the fear of persecution or legal penalties. But the effect of its opposition has hitherto taken place only in part. The heart of a good man triumphs in conceiving the period when it shall have fully taken place ; in anticipating the time when Christianity shall become in the writings and in the apprehensions of Christians, as it truly is in the New Testa-

see and lament the consequences of our long neglecting to review old establishments; but suffering the *public wisdom* of past ages, and those not the most knowing or enlightened, to serve here, and here only, for all the following ones (ε).

ment, not a system of nice speculations and contentious subtilties, but a series of plain principles, evidently founded in scripture, unmixed with the arbitrary explications and precarious conclusions of fallible men, all naturally touching the heart, commanding congruous affections, and by their joint force, directly inculcating piety and virtue, and promoting the reformation and happiness of mankind.' *Gerard's Diss. on the Genius and Evidences of Christianity*, Diss. II. sect. 3. p. 417. Comp. *Price's Four Dissertations*, p. 137 (+). 365, &c. and *Priestley on Government*, Pt. iii.

(ε) 'There is not a greater solecism in the world than the common one of continuing customs after the reasons for them are ceased.' *King's Essay on the Eng. Const.* 'But there are few Christian princes who lay this to heart, and [most] divines have quite other things in their thoughts: their great business is to maintain what is established, and to dispute with those who find fault with it. On the other hand, knowledge or resolution is wanting; and there is not enough of honesty or greatness of soul to confess the truth. Few writers have the courage to speak so impartially, as the famous author of the history of the Reformation in *England* has done, in the preface to his second volume. It is thought by many persons, that all would be ruined if the least alteration was made. Some of these defects are now become inviolable customs and laws. Every body fancies true and pure *Christianity* to be that which obtains in his country, or in the society he lives in; and it is not so much as put to the question, whether or not some things should be altered. As long as *Christians* are possessed with these prejudices, we must not expect to see *Christianity* restored to an entire purity.' *Causes of the present Corruption of Christians*, Part ii. p. 271. How applicable these reflections are to the present age, and this nation in particular, may be seen by the reception which

They think that there has been so much *wood, hay, stubble*, built on the foundation, as must take a considerable time to be removed; especially when they see some men got no farther yet, than to doubt whether there be occasion to have any thing removed, or even to deny that there is reason either for attempting, or so much as wishing, for a farther reformation.—They observe light and liberty at the same time advancing with an equal pace, and offering their mutual help, as they do generally*, to separate this trash from the *gold, silver, precious stones*; many having taken the *fan* in hand, and resolved thoroughly to purge the floor; though some may be but too apt to throw away part of the good seed, together with the *chaff*; which has been but too generally, and, perhaps too, ever will be, the case.

every fair proposal for any farther reformation meets with. See *Free and Candid Disq.* 1749. with the *Appeals* and *Supp.* and the specimen of an *Universal Liturgy*, printed A. D. 1761. To which add an excellent Dedication by the late author of the *Essay on Spirit*, and *Hartley*, Vol. II. Prop. lxxxii. p. 270, &c. and *Jortin*, passim. After all, to find faults and to amend them requires very different talents; previously to any material alterations in the liturgy and offices of our church, there seems wanting a new version of the whole Bible [towards which very large collections are now ready to be offered, when any person sufficiently qualified is willing to undertake that task]; and since the very disposition of examining the original text of one half of it is but just reviving here, that happy time seems to be at some distance from us.

* See *Winder's* Description of the benefits of *Liberty*, civil and religious. *Hist. of Knowl.* Vol. II. c. 21. sect. 3. or *Gerard*, *Diss.* II. sect. 3. p. 415, &c.

Secondly; As to the present *morals*, it may perhaps be a question, whether they grow worse upon the whole, when it is considered, that the less vices, as well as uneasinesses, of past times are soon forgot, and only the most flagrant, notorious ones appear upon record* ;—that we are apt to judge those evils greatest, which we feel ourselves, and that good least, which seems to rival and eclipse our own, and raises envy, in the room of admiration ;—that hence one of them becomes aggravated, the other extenuated most unduly (‡). On which account, the predominant vices of our age and country, grievous as they are, may not probably be greater or more general than the reigning ones of former times, but we more immediately concerned with them, and suffering under them (η) ; and it is to be remembered

* History has kept no account of times of peace and tranquillity ; it relates only ravages and disasters. *Voltaire*, *Mod. Hist.* Vol. IX. c. 211. *Comp. Goguet*, Part ii. B. i. p. 3.

(‡) See Bp. *Fleetwood's* 2d Charge, p. 6, &c. *Ibbot's* Sermon on *Eccl.* vii. 10. *Le Clerc*, *ib.* *Brown's* Causes of Vulgar Errors, B. i. c. 6, &c. That the same principle, *i. e.* of envy, is at all times no less apt to prevail in the decrying of the present state of *literature*, may be seen in an eminent author's note on *Hor.* A. P. l. 408. p. 213. 2d Ed. This kind of reasoning is also well supported in a *New Estimate of Manners and Principles*, 1760.

(η) ' They who will take the pains to look into the records of former times, and view the religion and policy of our own and our neighbour nations, from the time that Christianity was first planted in them (and, God knows, the prospect that we have in most of them before that blessed season is very dark and unpleasant) will be best able to judge and prescribe what venera-

that these come attended with the forementioned advantage of light and liberty, in such a degree, as we can never be too thankful for it; and which, we hope, will speedily help to correct the vices: the one enabling any serious person to discover their evil consequences, the other allowing him scope to censure and expose them; and through both these means each kind and degree of wickedness may now become rather more open and apparent than of superior strength and malignity. So that concerning the present times, we have some room to believe, that they are not worse than all before them, as to *morals* (θ).

tion is in truth due to *antiquity*: and it may be, he who taketh the best survey of them, will hardly find a time in which he would wish rather to have been born, or persons with whom he could more usefully and happily have conversed, than in this very time in which he hath been born, how vicious and wicked soever; or those worthy persons with whom he hath or might have lived, how depraved soever the greater number is; as it hath always been.' Ld. *Clarendon*, *Ess.* p. 227. What times there were formerly, about the 12th century in particular, may be seen in Ld. *Littleton's* *Hist. of H.* II.

(θ) A very just account of the morals of the first ages of the world, may be seen in *Goguet* on the origin of Arts, &c. Part i. B. vi. c. 4. I believe it would be hard to produce modern instances of cruelty and barbarity in any civilized state, whether in war or peace, equal to such as were decreed publicly, and executed without the least seeming remorse, even by the politest people of antiquity; witness their frequent sacking of towns, refusing quarter, and slaying at least all the males; their triumphs, torturing and killing slaves; their proscriptions, poisonings, exposing and murdering children; [V. *Findlay's* *Answ. to Voltaire*, App. p. 531, 534. (**)] rapes, incest, &c. which need no aggravation. Not to mention that savage, deso-

Perhaps I may be allowed to advance a step farther, and suppose them to be better in some respects, and that we have certain virtues of the first magnitude now in greater perfection; particularly more of true well regulated extensive *charity*, than ever appeared since the time of primitive *Christianity* (1).—But if this be deemed a

lating way of making war, which constitutes the body of their history; that horrid treachery, and bare-faced iniquity, which appear on many occasions; that notorious breach of national faith, and open violation of public decency, prevailing in their councils, and avowed by express declarations, whenever the particular interest of their country seemed to be promoted by it. Numberless examples of this occur among the *Greeks*, as well as *Romans*, even in the politest ages of their government. See *Hakewill*, L. iv. passim, or *Johnston* de Naturæ constantia, Punct. iii—ix. Sir *T. P. Blount*, Ess. p. 145. *Hume*, Polit. Dis. x. Spirit of Nations, B. iii. c. 21. and *Ferguson*, Hist. of Civ. Soc. Pt. 4. § 4. Mr. *Barrington* having recited several old statutes made against certain practices very common in those days, adds, 'These are injuries *non nostri generis, nec seculi*: notwithstanding the general inclination to decry every thing modern, I cannot but imagine that the inhabitants of this country are in the eighteenth century infinitely more virtuous than they were in the thirteenth; and that the improvements of the mind and regard for social duties have gone hand in hand with the increase of learning and commerce; nor have I any doubt but that, if any thing like a regular government continues in this island, succeeding ages will not only be more refined and polished, but consist of still more deserving members of society. I would ask those who think otherwise of the comparison between ancient and modern times, whether they suppose, that in the thirteenth century any one would have thought of sending 100,000*l.* to the inhabitants of *Lisbon* after an earthquake, or would have subscribed to clothe the French prisoners?' Observ. on the most ancient Stat. p. 137. 3d Ed.

(1) I may add, that there seems to be a more perfect resigna-

mistake, proceeding from too partial fondness for the present times, I trust it will be also deemed a pardonable one, amid so much most evident partiality against them; especially, as it is on the

tion to the will of God, and acquiescence in his providence, among all ranks of men; a greater firmness in enduring pain; more cheerfulness and courage in submitting to death, among the generality, even of lowest education; in short, that mankind may be said to grow more spiritual and *intellectual*, in these and many other respects, than they have been in former ages; which may in a great measure be owing to the many excellent *practical* pieces and tracts of *Devotion*, which now abound every where; and which must be allowed to be much more *rational* and judicious, than those of former times. 'I think it may be said, in honour of the present age, that [with a few exceptions] controversy is carried on with more decency and good manners, than in any former period of time that can be named; which, together with the *toleration* granted by law, in this and other protestant countries, for all persons to worship God in their own way; and that *Christian* charity and moderation, which is generally shewn towards those that differ from us, seems already to be attended with good effect.—The setting up of so many *charity-schools*, as have of late years been erected in these kingdoms;—the forming of *religious societies*, and other good means, have greatly contributed to the promoting the knowledge and practice of virtue and religion among us.' *Worthington*, Ess. p. 157, 158.

Upon the whole, we have reason to conclude, that the *restoration of letters* was so far from being *fatal to Christianity*, or that this has been *in decay ever since*, (as a late noble writer, much more conversant with some kinds of politics than the present subject, has been pleased to affirm) [*Letters on the Study of History*, p. 175.] that, on the contrary, this, wherever it took place, has greatly tended both to the illustration of its evidence, and the increase of its power, over the minds and consciences of men; and that, in many respects, it has really flourished more from this than from any other period of time since its original establishment.

charitable side, and tends to make them really better than they would be, did worse opinions of them universally prevail.

Which brings me, in the last place, to the *consequences* that attend the other way of thinking.

These have been hinted at in the beginning of this Discourse; and might be shewn more fully, to affect the honour of God, our own comfort, and that of others; inasmuch as the foregoing supposition casts a cloud over all the works of God;—confounds our notions of his wisdom, power, and goodness;—raises distrust, if not a disbelief of all his perfections, and thereby deadens our devotion towards him;—damps and discourages the study, and destroys the pleasure that would arise from a survey of both the *natural* and *moral* world, and from reflections on the station we hold in them;—renders us far less sensible of the happiness that lies within our power, and, by consequence, makes us receive less;—not only hinders men from growing better, but actually makes them worse; and suffers the world daily to decline, through a persuasion that it is designed to do so;—it having been observed by an able author, that those writings which *villanize* mankind, have a very pernicious tendency towards propagating and protecting villany, and help the most of all to teach, invite, and encourage it (x); in the same manner

(x) In proof of the foregoing observation, not to mention here such foreign authors as *Esprit*, *Rochefoucault*, and *Bayle*, who seem to have taken a deal of perverse pains to eradicate all

as those which perpetually dwell on the dark side of things, and all the difficulties that attend our

seeds of humanity out of the human breast ;—sufficient evidence may be had from a famous writer of our own, the author of the *Fable of the Bees* ; who by a shew of superior penetration into the low motives and ignoble passions, which are but too apt to sway people ;—by pointing at the most plausible methods whereby a politician may sometimes *avail* himself of these, as well as serve some present interest of the public in the indulgence of them ;—by a droll way of describing things, and dwelling altogether on the foibles of the worst and weakest of mankind :—draws such an odious, and at the same time humorous picture of the species, as has at once diverted, and debauched the principles of more men among us, than perhaps any other writer of late years.

And though we allow the observation of an abler author of the same stamp, *viz.* that *principles* have seldom such an immediate influence on the temper or behaviour of men, as a predominant *passion* or a settled *habit* ; yet we may insist upon it, that the former of these, when perverted, help very much to strengthen and encourage any kind of irregularity in the latter ; at least, they are exceedingly apt to discourage any attempt to subdue an exorbitant passion or inveterate habit—they destroy all vigorous endeavours towards establishing right methods of self-government—they indispose us for attending to that moral discipline, which is so necessary to conduct ourselves with innocence and usefulness through life ; and yet so difficult to be preserved in full opposition to the stream of evil custom, or the tide of vicious inclination. Such principles especially as are advanced in the forementioned book, instead of exciting us to partake of, and strive to promote the happiness of our fellow-creatures, and to delight in paying a grateful homage to our common Parent ; must rather bring us to a fixed contempt and hatred of them, give us unworthy, narrow notions of the Creator and Governor of this world, and cut off all the prospect of enlarging or improving them in any other. They must cause a decay of public spirit, and a want of public faith ; a decline and a gradual dissolution of private honour, truth, and common

searching into the ways of God, serve only to darken the view still more, and multiply those

honesty: the very least that can be expected from them is an indolent, unsatisfying state of mind within one's self, and an aversion towards any pains or trouble in the serving or supporting others. And though such a deep discovery of the springs of action may shew us how men may be most easily led; yet, were it all true, it would shew, at the same time, that such creatures are scarcely worth the leading; since it palls all the pleasure of conversing with them; strikes at the very root of universal benevolence, which alone can supply that pleasure; blasts every social disposition, and all the *charities* of private life: in short, destroys all that is great and good or amiable in mankind, or which can make any station eligible amongst them.

But farther, if there be a real system of things pre-established upon quite different principles,—then must such schemes of government at length prove as useless as uncomfortable; being wholly founded on a false bottom, and at every turn opposing what they never can overthrow; since he who framed this system will assuredly take care to support it in his own way, whether we will or not; and if the original plan on which it was formed, and the laws calculated to direct it, be thought of themselves insufficient to that end, there is still ground [from nature and reason, setting aside positive declarations] to believe, that he would rather interpose sometimes to secure the establishment thereof, than suffer it to be quite ruined and reversed. The Governor of which system, therefore, ought to be attended to in all good policy; and our political plan framed in some kind of conformity to that great model; by a careful contemplation of the chief end and prepollent quality in each part of his works;—by a studious survey of all the dignity, and harmony, and happiness, conspicuous in the general conduct of them. But in such schemes as we are now examining, the supreme Governor of the world is either quite omitted, or introduced in so degrading a manner as makes him even dependent on, and obliged to, an evil principle for the beauty and chief benefit of his work: it gives so base an idea, both of

very difficulties. How much better is the intention, end, and effect of those writings, which place

this system and its Author, as must shock any one who is willing to entertain the least degree of reverence or regard for either, or has any just concern even for himself, as being unavoidably linked in close connexion with a system, from whence he is like to receive so little either of true honour or advantage.

How much more just a theory might be erected on sound morals, and a sense of religion! which would make all true, rational pleasure coincide with them, and render the present state of things, not only uniform and absolutely desirable in itself, but also the direct road, the natural passport to a better:—which, beside a great share of good in present possession, must fill the soul with hope of infinitely greater hereafter:—where every virtue would, in every one, essentially promote and perfect those of others, and each conspire to exert the natural effects of all, in universal happiness; without that motley mixture of the contrary qualities, which can at best but indirectly, and accidentally, and by their being extraneously over-ruled, produce any part thereof. For, after all, when once we come to understand ourselves, we shall find that vice in general does, in its own nature, and in every degree of it, tend to produce misery or prevent happiness, either mediately or immediately, in every system [from whence indeed it has its name, and on account of which it has been, and ever ought to be, prohibited by divine and human laws;] though this its tendency may probably be over-ruled in many particular cases; or it may be suspended or superseded by the introduction of opposite qualities, which, through the unavoidable imperfection of language, are often mistaken for it; or it may be in such a manner really blended and confounded with these, as to be hardly distinguishable from them: or in such a degree counterpoised and balanced by some jarring principles or inconsistent species of its own, that its effects are not so plain and obvious, especially in large societies, and very complex bodies, where more than ordinary skill is requisite, to compute the consequences of each particular act or habit, and assign to each influence its proper cause. But this grows more apparent in

human nature in its fairest light, and represent the *lovely form* as worthy of its Author; as well

small families and private constitutions, where *vice*, of every sort and size, is seen to create proportionable corruption and disorder in the body politic, as surely as *venom*, or a poison properly so called, does in the natural one; though, in some critical circumstances, such a violent struggle and convulsion may be raised thereby in both of them, as may occasion very extraordinary effects; and two bad qualities in contest with each other, instead of ruining, may possibly relieve an oppressed constitution, as sometimes *bina venena juvant*. Yet still, notwithstanding some such very unusual phenomena, the distinct properties and regular production of natural bodies, as well as those of moral qualities, are both fixed and discoverable: in the main, we are tolerably well apprised, what naturally conduces to the preservation and prosperity of each; and on the whole may rest well satisfied, that if the latter were composed of such a number of rank heterogeneous principles as the same author is inclined to suppose, they would not long subsist as we now find them, nor could the world possibly go on so well as it has done, and does. So far is that position therefore from being just, which this same author has put into the very title of his book, *viz.* that *vice*, properly so called, whether private or public, is a real *benefit*, that the reverse is strictly true in general; which might be proved as clearly by an induction of particulars, as Sir *W. Temple* has made out in one strong case, which was this author's leading instance; *viz.* that of *luxury*, or excess, being of advantage to a beneficial *trade*. See *Temple's Observations on the Netherlands*, p. 66. fol. [Comp. *Hutcheson's Remark*, No. ii.] But granting all the facts to be just as this author states them, were the bulk of mankind altogether as vile and vicious as he represents them; yet would it be of no real service to lay open such a sink of pollution, and thereby only spread the infection farther still and faster; it cannot be of so much use to exhibit men entirely *as they are* in their very worst light, as it must be, to place them where they oft really have been, and where they always might and ought to be. Nor can such views of the world prove

as of those that serve to display the beauty and beneficence of the divine economy, and produce an assurance of that paternal care, and providential conduct of us here, which brings the truest enjoyment, and most grateful acknowledgment of

any entertainment to one that is either desirous of concurring in any measure for the improvement of it, or of contributing at all to the ease and agreeableness of his own situation in it.

But I proposed to make only some general observations on the genius and main drift of this celebrated book, as a specimen of such sort of writings; the particulars of it having been sufficiently confuted long ago; and I shall conclude with observing, that the celebrated author of the *Characteristics*, and this writer, who so constantly opposes him, are evidently in two extremes; the first contending for a benevolence quite pure in kind, and perfectly disinterested, and without any other end than its own exercise; which is neither reconcileable to fact, nor to the frame of such beings as we are at present; the latter centering all in *self* immediately, and constituting its chief good in some of the very lowest gratifications: which is alike groundless, but attended with worse consequences. Between these there is manifestly a middle way, whereby the *moral sense*, and that of *honour*, &c. may be formed by way of *habit*, really distinct from, and striking previously to any private views; and generally with greater force too, than could be produced by the most vigorous and intense reflection; yet this may be so far qualified by a mixture of the other passions, and so well directed to the best and noblest ends by reason, as to keep clear of all the absurdities of the former system, which runs so naturally into rank *enthusiasm*; and likewise to avoid the ill consequences that attend the latter, which is so apt to sink us into the very dregs of vice and *villany*. This has been just proposed above [Part i. note (a) p. 11, &c.] and I find no sufficient ground to doubt of its being in itself the most conformable to the true nature of mankind in general, and best adapted to promote the highest degree of happiness in social life. A more particular examination of both the systems above-mentioned may be seen in *Brown's Essays on the Characteristics*.

all present benefits; and likewise must beget a joyful hope and expectation of more solid and substantial ones hereafter!

The *consequences* of the foregoing doctrine might be urged farther, in regard both to the *atheist* and the *deist*: to convince the one, that all things have not gone on at random; but that there are plain tokens of a wise plan, and a regular government laid down; and, from what has already past, great reason to think that more of the same wisdom will ever appear, and in a still more perfect manner: to show the other, that as the several dispensations of revealed Religion have hitherto been by a like progress conformable to those of Providence, in both the natural and moral world, this may come from the same author; and receive yet farther increase, which these do daily, as they are better understood.

But if this be not the case in any degree here, we seem to have nothing left whereon to ground an *analogical* argument (which yet is our best natural argument) for an hereafter:—no visible footsteps of wisdom and goodness, to conduct us in our search after a first cause:—no settled foundation for our hopes of futurity, the basis of all natural religion: all is chaos and confusion thus far, and therefore may be so, for aught we know, eternally;—in short, the divine government must, on this supposition, be inferior to most human administrations (λ).

(λ) This hypothesis, how extraordinary soever it may appear,

Thus then we see, how necessary it is to form just conceptions of the past state of the world,

has met with an ingenious advocate in a Discourse entitled, *The influence of the improvements of life on the moral principle considered*; designing to show, that in proportion to the increase of the former, there is a *constant decrease* in the latter. This Author was obliged by his own hypothesis to allow the main point, viz. that the PRACTICE OF VIRTUE is not under any such decline, but rather in fact *better secured as men become more civilized*, p. 7. as the *improvements of life have so far enlightened the minds of men, that they readily discern the connexion between certain moral duties and their own private interest*; ib. and yet he asserts, that by the very same means the STATE OF MORALITY in the world degenerates daily, p. 6. His reason is, because *the direct tendency of every improvement of life is to bring about the practice of morality without the principle*, p. 7. We have indeed hitherto been taught to *know a tree by its fruits*, and deemed it the surest way to judge of any man's principles from the constant course of his *practice*; but by this new system we are to understand, that these have very small connexion with each other; and that there are some other connexions, which will bring about the same thing more effectually. Now since the subject of morality has been reduced to a science, and as such, built on rational principles, the sense of all the terms relating to it has been pretty well agreed upon, and it is generally understood to include thus much; *The doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness*. [Tracts on Morality and Religion prefixed to King's Or. of E. 4th Ed.] or as it is elsewhere described (*Orig. of evil*. No. 52. p. 266. 4th Edit.) obedience to God is the *principle*, the good of mankind the *matter*, our own happiness the *end*, of all that is properly termed *moral virtue*. This has been shown to be the true theory of virtue; and that, strictly speaking, nothing less than a regard to the divine will, and a consequential view of happiness, during the whole of our existence, can be its adequate principle and end, so as to form an invariable connexion between every part thereof, and our proper duty. Not that a distinct, actual view either of this principle or end is al-

especially with regard to that important point, *religion*; in order to judge in what condition it

ways possible, or requisite even in the best regulated minds here, to render such a course of action, as is denominated virtuous, acceptable to, and rewarded by the Deity. Nor is it necessary to exclude all prospect of inferior advantages: though the less general such a prospect is, the less virtue there will be in any particular action (as is observed in Prelim. Diss. to *King*;) provided any such particular benefit be not the sole view in performing it, without which we should never have engaged in such performance. As there are several good ends set in subordination to each other, it may, it is hoped, considering human frailty, be sufficient if we take any one of them, and run it up to the supreme, ultimate end upon occasion; (as is observed in the Tracts before *King*, ib.) if we keep hold of any one link of the chain, so as to be able to draw after it a regular train of really beneficent acts; nay, sometimes we are entitled to the same privilege, if we be led to it by nothing more than a mere habit, association, or affection; (as is made out in the same place) or else we should be forced to exclude from the character of virtuous, not only the *bulk of mankind*, but many of the most able philosophers; and it would be hard to brand a steady, uniform course of action, which is so right in the *material* part, with the name of *artificial* (p. 8.) or *sham virtue*.

These several qualifications have been laid down in a plan of morals, in order to render it not only rational in itself but of some real use, and applicable to what daily occurs in common life. But in truth, the ingenious author now before us seems to have nothing of this kind in his thoughts, when he *estimates the state of morality* in the world; contenting himself with carrying on a traffic among its natural *conveniences*, which he conceives may do the business; though how this will ever reach such happiness as may be termed the *ultimate* end of morality, p. 8. or indeed any *moral* happiness at all, is not perhaps so easy to discover. Will it be able to produce the same kind of self-satisfaction, as arises from the consciousness of *merit*, and the well grounded expectation of *reward*? or any other satisfaction in any wise equal to it? If this end could perfectly, or even *in a great measure*, be answered, p. 8. by any such *mean*; he would

will probably be for the future; and in what manner we should conduct ourselves with refer-

do well to show us, how we may distinguish that from one of the *real sanctions of morality*, *ib.* What these same *sanctions* are, he has not indeed told us explicitly; which would perhaps have been a little inconvenient, since if he here intends those that relate to the divine will, whether in this life or another, it may be a farther difficulty to show, how these can be *found less conducive to private good*, p. 8. than the *artificial* ones; as they most certainly secure it on the whole, which the others do not. If he speaks here only of some *present* good, it is no great wonder if a remote prospect of futurity do not affect a man so nearly, as the immediate consequence of things about him: though that too, when rendered present to the mind by due reflection, often yields a portion of happiness superior to any sensual object whatsoever; and to do this seems a much easier task, than the working out such a certain train of temporal conveniences, as will be sufficient to *supply its place*.

Again: The *ultimate end of morality*, says he, *is private happiness*, p. 8. And what is virtue, but the direct way to this end? or where lies the great object of virtue, but in the obtaining of this by the most efficacious and consistent means? How then can the *bulk of mankind*, or any body else, be wrong in *cultivating* the mean, *only so far as they think it productive of the end?* *ib.* except we revive the old *stoical* principle, of following virtue for its own sake, and without any other end; which principle has, it must be confessed, been most effectually rooted up by modern improvements; as they have taught us to look somewhat farther into the true nature and consequence of things, than either to act without any end at all, or to mistake means for ends; and esteem that for itself, which was originally required of us, because it leads to something else; and is still of no other use, or excellence, than as it does so: a thing that is only *good in itself*, or absolutely so, *i. e.* good to no end, being in reality good for *nothing*, as was observed long ago by *Socrates*. *Xen. Memorab. B. 3. c. 8.* We cannot therefore distinguish between that which naturally leads to the ultimatum of all private happiness, and *real virtue*; since nothing is materially good on any other account than as it properly conduces to

ence to it. If it has hitherto been really progressive, we find good reason to expect the same

such end, nothing really bad or vicious farther than it tends to the contrary; and the producing of the first among mankind entirely, and uniformly, must ever be true virtue, call it either *moral* or *artificial*, so long as we have any meaning to the word; and the pleasure ordinarily attending such a disposition in the person himself, and the production of the same in others, together with a return of like good offices from them; or the additional and extraordinary attainment of some degree of happiness, over and above all these, upon the same account; will be, one of them the *natural*, the other the supernatural *sanctions* of it. Why the former of these should not, in their proper place and order, be admitted as well as the latter, I know not; nor why it should be deemed any degradation, or *degeneracy* in virtue, if, like religion, (which is built upon the very same principle) it be *profitable to all things*; and better our condition both in *the life that now is, and in that to come*. We have no law against attending to the lower of these ends; nay, the constitution of our nature evidently demands it of us: the only fault is, if we stop there, as was observed above; and which perhaps is no more general, than the acting upon habit, or affection, or without any distinct view at all; which will oft be the case with many of us unavoidably.

The designed production therefore of good, *natural* good, may be justly said to constitute moral good, how much soever is to be deducted for the imperfection of the motive: this will be the true, only *rule* of moral actions; and a *conformity* to it most agreeable to the *will of God*; nay, the only sure way of discovering what his will is, so far as that is considered as the foundation of morality. Men may indeed, and too often do, promote the happiness of others on what is in the worst sense styled a private, selfish view; and as often produce partial good by the introduction of a more general and extensive evil; which actions thereby become either vicious, or at best, to the agent himself, wholly indifferent: but to promote the true happiness of others in any degree, absolutely, as such and so enjoined; though with a view to our own good upon the whole;

progress still farther. We have strong motives to go into this scheme ourselves, and clear directions how to proceed in it. Instead of looking back, and labouring to confine it to the model of past times, or even tie it down to its present state and model of improvement*, we learn rather, with the great *Apostle*, to *forget those things which are behind, reaching forward unto those things which are before, and pressing toward the mark*†.

otherwise it would not be reasonable in us, but romantic; this will ever be true virtue, grounded on a proper principle, and directed to a proper end; and farther than this, we really know nothing either of its nature, principle, or end; nor of its *sanctions*.

* ‘Were the best formed state in the world to be fixed in its present condition, I make no doubt that in a course of time it would be the worst. History demonstrates this truth with respect to all the celebrated states of antiquity; and as all things (and particularly whatever depends upon science) have of late years been in a quicker progress towards perfection than ever, we may safely conclude the same with respect to any political state now in being.’ *Priestley on government*, p. 130.

† *Phil.* iii. 13, &c.—I shall here add the sentiments of an illustrious writer, and an excellent judge of the world; who, had I met with him sooner, would have saved me the trouble of saying any thing upon the present subject; and whose whole treatise is so curious, as to make the length of this, and some other specimens cited from it, excusable. ‘It is an extraordinary improvement that divine and human learning hath attained to, since men have looked upon the ancients as fallible writers, and not as a *ne plus ultra* that could not be exceeded.—And I do in truth believe (with a very true respect to the writers of the 3d, 4th, and 5th ages) that there have been many books written and published within these last hundred years, in which much more useful learning is not only communicated to the world than was known to any of those ancients, but in

And, to use the same *Apostle's* advice, *Let us therefore, as many as desire to be perfect, be thus*

which the most difficult and important points which have been handled by the fathers are more clearly stated, and more solidly illustrated, than in the original treatises and discourses of the ancients themselves.—If, then, in truth, all kind of learning be in this age in which we live, at least in our own climate, and in some of our neighbours, very much improved, beyond what it ever was; and that many errors, and some of no small importance, have been discovered in the writings of the ancients; why should we resort and appeal to antiquity for any other testimony than for *matter of fact*; and thereto without restraining our own inquiry, or rational conjectures.—We do not flatter ourselves, if we do believe that we have, or may have, as much knowledge in religion as they had; and we have much to answer, if we have not more:—It would be a good spur to raise our industry, if we did believe that God doth expect a greater perfection from the present age in learning, in virtue, in wisdom, and in piety, from the benefit and observation which he hath afforded us in all the precedent ages: From their defects, we have an argument to be wary, and to reform; and from what they did well, we have their counsel and assistance, and may the more easily improve what they did; and we have all the obligations upon us to mend the patterns we have received, and leave them with more lustre to our posterity; who are bound to exceed us again in knowledge, and all degrees of perfection: whereas *a looking back*, and prescribing rules to ourselves from *Antiquity*, retards and lessens even our appetite to that which we might easily attain; we may as well resort to old men to teach us to run, and to throw the bar: if our bodily strength grows and increases when theirs decays, the vigour of our mind doth as much exceed theirs; and since we set out after they rest, we ought to travel farther than they have done, when we carry all the landmarks with us. It is a caution near as old as Christianity, *Nihil magis præstandum est, quam ne pecorum ritu, sequamur antecedentium gregem; pergentes non qua eundem est, sed qua itur.* It has always been a disease in the world, too much to adore those who have gone before, and like sheep to tread in their

minded. As we have the best means of effecting this within our power; as we live under the

steps, whether the way they went were the best or not. *Seneca* thought, that nothing involved men in more errors, *quam quod ad rumorem componimur; nec ad rationem sed ad similitudinem vivimus*; that we consider more what other men have thought or done, than whether they did think or do reasonably. Nor is it out of *modesty* that we have this resignation, that we do in truth think those who have gone before us to be wiser than ourselves; we are as proud and as peevish as any of our progenitors, but it is out of *laziness*; we will rather take their words, than be at the pains to examine the reason they governed themselves by. But there is hope, the present age will buoy itself up from this abyss of servitude; and by their avowed endeavours to know more than the former have done, will teach the next to labour, that they may know more than we do: which virtuous emulation should continue and grow to the end of the world.

‘It may be, the common proverbial saying, that *the world grows every day worse and worse*, prevails with many to believe that we have a good title to be so; and that it is vain to strive against our fate; nay, some men think, that there is prescription enough in the Scripture, as if there was such a general decay, that the last age shall be worse than any that have gone before; in which, I conceive, men are very much mistaken. It is very true, that both *St. Paul* and *St. Peter* have foretold, that *in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemous, &c.* Yet they do not tell us, that these men, which have made a great party in the world in every age, shall prevail and corrupt the rest; nay, they say the contrary. *They shall proceed no farther, for their folly shall be manifest to all men.* So that we may hope and endeavour to accomplish this prophecy, that the graver and the more modest, the humble, the pious, and the chaste part, shall be able to discountenance, to suppress, to convert, or to extirpate the other. We may as warrantably take a measure of those times from that declaration of *St. Peter*, in the 2d of the *Acts*; *It shall come to pass in the last days, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your*

mildest of governments; and enjoy the blessing of *liberty* in that perfection which has been unknown to former ages, and is so still to most other nations*; a blessing (suffer me once more to re-

daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Here is no decay attends this fulness of time; no resort to *antiquity*, to chalk us out the way to knowledge and understanding. We are not sure that those last days, to which both those prophecies refer, are not already past; but we may be sure, that if we spend that time which God shall vouchsafe to give us in this world, in that manner as he expects we should, and as he hath enabled us to do if we will; we shall leave as fair examples of wisdom, virtue, and religion to those who shall succeed us, as any have been left to us by those who have gone before us: and our posterity pursuing the same method, the last age will appear at the day of judgment less undaunted than any that hath gone before it.' Ld. *Clarendon* of the reverence due to antiquity. *Ess. Mor. and Div.* p. 238, &c. dated *Montpellier* 1670. *Comp. Jonston de Naturæ Constantia.* Punct. x. p. 156, &c. That there will be a more rapid progress toward perfection in the latter ages of the world, and that the last will exceed all others, is made highly probable by *Worthington*, *Ess. on Redemp.* c. 13, 14. There is something to the same purpose worth taking notice of in the *Exemplar*, p. 387, &c. *Comp. Worthington B. Lect. V.* 2. p. 224, &c.

* Remarkably ingenuous is the testimony which a celebrated foreigner, the author of *L'Esprit des Loix*, bears to the excellency of our *civil* constitution in this respect; which deserves to be reflected on by every intelligent *Englishman*, and will, it is hoped, in time produce the same amiable spirit in the *ecclesiastical*. *Comp. De Lolme pass.*

‘It is the part of men, so guarded from the dangers that attend the search of truth in other countries, so blessed with time and opportunity, so adorned with learning and the free use of scripture, to study the Word of God with assiduity and faithfulness; not as though we were already perfect; but searching after farther improvement; confessing ingenuously in the true

mind us of it) which includes every thing valuable in life, and has the greatest tendency to accelerate the progress abovementioned: let us, instead of making it either a covering for *sedition** against such a government, or a cause of gratifying our *maliciousness* against each other, be rather diligent in using it to the good purposes for which it is bestowed; and render ours as much superior to those nations that are deprived of it, as other countries are observed to have been in the like circumstances.

Let us concur with this auspicious course of providence, and contribute our best endeavours towards carrying on this amiable progress, by every serious, fair, and free inquiry: *free*, not only from all outward violence and clamour, but also from (what our most holy religion with the greatest reason equally condemns, as being the root from whence these evils spring) all inward bitterness, wrath, hatred †:—learning to bear with

spirit of Protestantism, which disclaims infallibility, that if our church should in every doctrine it advances “justify itself; its own mouth would condemn it: and if it should say, I am perfect, it would prove it perverse, *Job ix. 20.*” It is the business of its members to bring it to perfection by degrees, as they themselves improve in the knowledge of the *Gospel.*’ *Taylor’s Essay on the Beauty of the Divine Economy*, p. 62.

* That this is the particular meaning of *κακία* 1 *Pet. ii. 16.* Vid. *Benson* in loc.

† ‘Young people ought to be taught, that there is no *heresy* so *bad*, nor so *contrary* to the spirit of *Christianity*, as to believe it to be proper or lawful to *hate* or *persecute* a fellow-creature and a brother, for an *opinion*, which he declares, in the sim-

the mistakes of each other in this, as well as in other matters; nay, rather the more here, since these mistakes are of the highest consequence, and this the only proper method to remove them: thus labouring, as well to reform the errors of our brethren in love, as to promote and to confirm their knowledge of the truth; *not for that, in either case, we have dominion over their faith; but as being helpers of their joy* *. And thus shall religion be at length suffered to partake the benefit of those *improvements*, which every thing beside enjoys.

I desire it may be observed here once for all, that when I mention *improvements* in religion I do not intend a discovery of any new points, or improving upon the original revelation itself †, in things essential to the general doctrine of salvation; but only a more perfect comprehension of what was formerly delivered; a view of the extent and excellence of this great mystery concealed from former ages; and which was received but partially, at least by the bulk of mankind, as was observed above ‡; and soon adulterated to such a degree, as (I beg leave to repeat it) may take yet more time to rectify; especially, when so much rubbish has been continually thrown upon the Scriptures, both by translators and ex-

plicity and sincerity of his heart, he has impartially examined, and thinks he finds to be agreeable to the sense of Scripture.' *Thoughts on Education*, p. 28.

* 2 Cor. i. 24.

† See Part ii. p. 179.

‡ Ibid. 175.

positors ; as, if we set aside the care of a particular providence, which has in this respect (so far as relates to the Text*) been very remarkable † ; might make us justly wonder they have not sunk under such a load. This has, in these parts of the world, been for some time clearing off, by the help of a more sound philosophy ; as well as by more sober rules of criticism ; more close, consistent methods of interpretation ‡.

Though perhaps even here, it would not be a difficult task, were it not too invidious, to suggest means of yet farther improvement. Perhaps we ought to attend more to the nature of the *Hebrew* idiom, than we are used to do, and observe the vast disparity between the eastern way of speak-

* The *Jesuits* are said to have held frequent consultations some time ago about censuring and correcting of *St. Paul's Epistles* ; [Sir *E. Sandys's Europæ Speculum*, p. 165, &c.] If other societies had been as industrious to correct the *comments* on them, and review the doctrines deduced from them, it might not perhaps have been amiss.

† See *Jones's New Method of settling the Canon*, Part ii. c. 2, &c.

‡ ' I cannot but hope, that when it shall please God to stir up persons of a philosophical genius, well furnished with critical learning, and the principles of true philosophy ; and shall give them a hearty concern for the advancement of his truths ; these men, by exercising upon theological matters that inquisitiveness and sagacity, that has made in our age such a happy progress in philosophical ones, will make explications and discoveries, that will justify more than I have said in praise of the study of our religion, and the divine books that contain the articles of it. For these want not excellence, but only skilful unveilers.' *Boyle's Excell. of Theol.* p. 47.

ing and our own; for want of which, it is to be feared, we oft retain the words without the original meaning, nay, with a very different one*; and by adhering too *strictly* to the letter, are apt to overstrain most things, and carry them both beyond common sense, and the import of the subject. Perhaps even our very reverence for these sacred writings misapplied, our too unguarded zeal to do them honour and support their authority, in every view, against that church which substitutes another in its room, may have contributed to cast a cloud over the whole; which makes us afraid to examine this book with the same freedom that we do, and find we must do, every other book which we desire to understand:—I mean the notion of an *absolute*, immediate *inspiration* of each part and period; even where the writers themselves, by the very manner of expressing themselves, most effectually disclaim it †:

* —Quo clarius appareat Orientalium Scriptorum stylum, audacioribus translationibus refertum, non ex more nostro loquendi hodierno debere exponi, *quæ maxima pene est interpretum culpa*. Cum sensum ἐησεως investigant, magis attendunt quid ipsi intelligi vellent, si ita nunc loquerentur: quam quid olim inter populos, non minus opinionibus et ingenio, quam temporibus et locis a nobis remotos, intelligi potuerit. *Cleric. de Stat. Sal. App. Com. Gen. p. 378.*

† See instances in *Whitby* on the *N. T.* Gen. Pref. p. 6. Several authors by the influence or *inspiration* of the Holy Ghost, in this case, mean no more than a *particular Providence*, superintending the Scriptures; yet are afraid to relinquish the old term, how improperly soever they apply it. And we may ob-

which, beside the bad effects it may be supposed to have at present, when once it appears to have no good foundation in these holy writings (μ), it is

serve, how hard some good men strain to introduce this sort of inspiration *indirectly*, even when they are obliged to own, that *prima facie* it cannot be justified. Thus *Doddridge* on 2 *Cor.* xi. 17. 'It seems indeed not very just and natural to interpret this, as spoken by immediate suggestion; yet it being in present circumstances, very proper the Apostle should speak *thus*, the *H. Spirit* might by a general, though unperceived influence, lead him into this tract of thought and expression.' *Fam. Exp.* Vol. IV. sect. 18. note a. *Comp. Paraphr.* ib. Vol. III. sect. 33. p. 233. note f.

(μ) As I would not give unnecessary offence in such a tender point, which most writers are still very unwilling to give up, expressly, though they seem forced to treat it either in a confused or a contradictory way, I shall beg leave to explain myself a little upon this head.

The true sense then of the *divine authority* of the books of the *O.T.* and which perhaps is enough to denominate them in general $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\pi\upsilon\epsilon\nu\sigma\omicron\iota$, seems to be this; that as in those times God has all along, beside the inspection or superintendency of his general providence, interfered upon particular occasions, by giving express commissions to some persons (thence called *prophets*) to declare his will in various manners, and degrees of evidence, (see *Smith*, *Sel. Disc.* N. 6.) as best suited the occasion, time, and nature of the subject; and in all other cases, left them wholly to themselves: in like manner, he has interposed his more immediate assistance, (and notified it to them, as they did to the world) in the *recording* of these revelations; so far as that was necessary, amidst the common (but from hence termed *sacred*) history of those times; and mixed with various other occurrences; in which the historian's own natural qualifications were sufficient to enable him to relate things, with all the accuracy they required. This seems to be at last allowed by *Abp. Potter*, in his elaborate *Discourses on the Subject of inspired Direction*: which he compares to a skilful rider's guidance of his horse,

to be feared, will produce a worse, by tending to discredit that *partial* one, whether of *guidance*, and

Prælect. p. 132. who yet sometimes gives up the reins, and suffers him to take his natural course. See p. 140, 156, 158, 165, 169, 194, 195, and 196. The scripture-language is in this respect paralleled with that of the old *Pythian* oracle, where *Plutarch* says, non Dei vox est, non sonus, non metrum; sed fœminæ. Under the same inspiration are included several instances of mere human infirmity, or ignorance, p. 202, and want of memory, 203, and even *various lections*, 198. Is all this any more than what we commonly mean by a providential permission? or can any other influence of the Spirit be introduced here, besides such as may be supposed to concur with the operations of mankind in the ordinary acts of providence, and where a supernatural interposition would have been unworthy of its author? which mixture of divine and human, in the same times, things, persons, and their history, appears conformable to the other works of God; and affords many circumstances of credibility, which, though some of them seem to come in by the by, and are often contained in a mere parenthesis; yet furnish a much clearer evidence of the truth, and will in all ages more incontestably confirm, the genuineness of that relation which is attended with them, than if such revelations had been all made and recorded at one time, by themselves and by men altogether over-ruled in their delivery.

This likewise appears in a good measure to have been the case with the *N. T.* writers; who, notwithstanding the things they were to deliver, are mostly of greater consequence, and more closely connected in point of time, place, and other circumstances; notwithstanding the extraordinary assistance of the *H. Spirit*, which was to abide with them, and lead them into all necessary truth; and for the most part either the thing itself shows, or they give us distinct intimation, when they have recourse to that assistance: yet from the very form in which they usually express themselves, it must appear that this influence is no less frequently suspended; it being perhaps peculiar to the *Son of God* himself, to have the *Spirit* at all times *without mea-*

superintendency, (if that can properly be called such) or of *suggestion*, which upon some occasions

sure, or limitation: [see *Doddridge* on *Joh.* iii. 34. *Fam. Ex.* Vol. I. p. 162]. And beside the more fundamental truths, how oft do the same persons condescend to treat of other inferior controversial matters; useful indeed, some to the then present, some to all future times; but surely of a very different nature from the former; and in the delivery of which that influence and assistance does not seem so requisite! How justly do they place the evidence of facts, on their own senses only! declaring *what they have seen and heard*; which at all times may and which alone can at any time be produced as proper proof. In reasonings, how beautifully do they add their private judgment, and in affairs of smaller moment, even their conjecture or opinion, to what they had received from the *Lord* himself! where circumstances show us the expediency of such additions; and where common sense was, and will be always, equally sufficient to distinguish one from the other; as it is to interpret the whole scripture without any infallible guide.—But common sense is too often laid aside in subjects of this nature. Many good men think, they can never do too much to decry it; to set the Bible at variance with it; to carry the whole up beyond its reach; though by schemes merely of their own invention, rather than forming any judgment from what they really find in that sacred book. Not content with a *moral evidence* of its *truth*, which is clear, strong, and every way sufficient for the conviction of all fair inquirers; (vid. *Jacquelot de la Verité, et de l'Inspir. &c.* c. 6. p. 45.) they must needs introduce another, where is no room for it; and insist on such *universal, absolute infallibility*, as never can be made out, to those who are not already persuaded of it; (and who can have no other evidence for such persuasion, than the same moral one, on which that *truth* is grounded) and which is at last either useless, or inconsistent with those natural proofs, which constitute the credibility of this and every other history so circumstanced. Is not a moral evidence enough to assure us of the genuineness and incorruptness of these writings? Why should it not then, where it can take place, be

they do claim ; which is very requisite to secure a due authority to them ; and which, when pru-

sufficient for the authors themselves to proceed on in their writing? and equally ascertain the truth of what they have written? and why should the generality of the *composition* (were any great stress ever to be laid upon it) be deemed altogether divine; when the *conveyance*, which so much effects that, and in which so many parts of it have suffered, is allowed to be no more than human? Most persons now begin to see, that there is at least some mixture of this latter, in the *language*; and I believe, upon due consideration, it will appear that there is no greater difficulty to admit it in the *matter*, upon several occasions; nor perhaps any danger in extending that observation to the *writings* of the Apostles, which a very cautious author on this subject has applied to their *conduct*. ‘If we consider how strong a temptation they would have been under to think too highly of themselves, if they had been under a *constant* plenary inspiration, it may appear a beauty in the divine conduct to have left them in some instances to the natural weakness of their own minds, (Comp. 2 *Cor.* xii. 7, 9, 10), and sometimes to suspend those extraordinary gifts in particular, as he did those of healing, (Comp. 2 *Tim.* iv. 20. *Phil.* ii. 27.) still providing by other hands, a remedy for those ill consequences which might have arisen from an uncorrected mistake.’ *Doddridge, Lect. Part. vi. Prop. cxvi. p. 330.*

I trust the candid reader will believe that I can have no intention here to degrade the holy Scriptures, in any respect, but rather to free them from an unnecessary load of objections, and render them more useful to the chief purposes for which, I humbly apprehend, they were designed; hoping thus much may serve to occasion some more accurate inquiry into this important subject; which has indeed been frequently discussed in different parts of the Christian world; but never, so far as I know, with that fairness, freedom, and impartiality, which the thing evidently requires: and whether this be a proper time to canvass it thoroughly;—whether the generality of Divines be qualified to form more just and clear conceptions of it now, than formerly; is with all deference submitted to better judges. See the au-

dently distinguished from the other, has, and we trust, ever will appear to have, sufficient ground to support itself.

To this blind reverence for the *words* of holy Scripture, perhaps I may be allowed to add another, full as great, relating to the *sense*: not the true, genuine one; for which we cannot surely have too much concern; but one which sometimes widely varies from it, and yet is very apt to slip into its place;—the commonly received, *traditional* one. This doctrine we learn from those very adversaries, which in the former case we were striving to oppose: and though indeed it have a shew of humility and a proper deference to public wisdom; yet in time, probably, may be attended with no better consequences: if men will not distinguish pure, primitive *Christianity*, from that which oft may happen not to be such, and if in this point, which of all others is most deserving of their care and caution, they content themselves with the opinion of the multitude, and take that for a sufficient rule, which they know to be far from even excusing those who have the means of judging for themselves;—and which they would be ex-

thors on this subject in note (11), p. 174. with *Middleton's* Miscel. Tracts, N. 1, 2. *Warburton's* Serm. vi, p. 225, &c. and part of a posthumous treatise of *Castalio* on the interpretation of Scripture; considered under the threefold distinction of *Oracles*, *Testimonies*, and *Opinions*; inserted in *Wetsten's* N. T. Vol. II. p. 884, &c. or *Benson's* Essay on Inspiration, annexed to his Paraphrase on 1 *Tim.* and *Torcnson's* Disc. on the four Gospels, p. 62, &c.

tremely unwilling to abide by in almost any other case*.

But I should be sorry to be found so far contradicting my general design, as to make things in any respect worse at present than they really are. On this subject I could hardly avoid hinting at some of those impediments, that seem to lie most in our way toward perfection; and hope at this time, of day such a hint may be hazarded without offence: and trusting, that notwithstanding these or any other impediments, we have encourage-

• ‘Do not we blame the *Papists* for their implicit faith; for believing as the church believeth? And how are we better than they, if we take up our religious principles on trust, and do not carefully adjust them by the standard of Divine revelation? Perhaps those who have gone before us, who yet may be allowed to have been pious and virtuous men, did not see the truth in this and some other cases; and good reasons may be given why they did not: but must not we therefore endeavour to understand it? Must their knowledge be the precise measure of ours? or must the truth and word of God be limited by any human understanding whatsoever? What if they had known but one half of what they did know, must we never have known more? What if they were under strong prejudices of education, and would not examine? What if they so revered the opinions of other good and learned men, or imagined these points to be of so sacred a nature that they durst not examine? or, what if they fancied them so much above all human comprehension, that it was their duty not to examine? or so clear and certain, that there was no need to examine? or of such weight and importance, that it was impious to examine? Whatever their foibles, or whatever their fetters were, what is that to us? Are we not bound to follow *Christ*, and to call him alone Master?’ *Taylor* on Or. Sin. p. 623. 2d ed.

ment enough left to proceed with cheerfulness and vigour in this same progress, till every thing which lets, in God's good time be taken away, and true religion, righteousness, and virtue, shine in perfect beauty: *till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

REFLECTIONS
ON THE
LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF
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THE true intention of the Gospel writers was not to give a complete account of all the things that *Jesus* did (*a*), or of all the reasons, and occasions of them; but only to record so many naked facts (*b*), as would be abundantly sufficient

(*a*) How far this was from being so, may be seen in *Le Clerc*, Harm. Diss. p. 587. from *John* ii. 3. Add *John* xx. 30, 31. 1 Cor. xv. 5. and *Macknight*. Prelim. Obs. to Harm. passim. The same appears to be the case with several of our blessed Saviour's reasonings, where the Evangelists, particularly *St. John*, 'use a shortness of style; and for the most part, may be supposed not to relate them at large as they were spoken; but to set down the principal heads thereof, leaving their conciseness to be supplied by the care and attention of the devout reader.' *Clagett*. Sermon. Vol. II. p. 88. where a remarkable instance is produced to this purpose.

(*b*) "To make evident who that master was whose disciples they professed themselves, their business was to tell how they

to lay a sure foundation for our faith in his divine mission, and by that faith lead us to the happiness which it conveys.

knew him, what miracles he had wrought, and all those other particulars which we read in their gospels: in which they make use of no disquisitions, but, in a plain and faithful narrative, declare their knowledge of these matters. And this looks like the singular care and wisdom of divine providence, that nothing of human invention might be said to be mixed with the Gospel, which could not have been prevented, had the apostles in their writings set down, not only what they themselves had seen, but their conjectures also, and deductions from the actions and sayings of our Saviour!" *Le Clerc*. Harm. Diss. p. 611. Comp. *Jacquelot*. de la Ver. et de l'Inspir. des Livres du V. et N. S. Part ii. c. 6. p. 301. 305, &c. or *Duchal*, Sermon. 1. Comp. *Simpson's* Essay on Christianity being delivered in an historical Way.

"It doth not appear that ever it came into the mind of these writers to consider, how this or the other action would appear to mankind, or what objections might be raised upon them. But without at all attending to this, they lay the facts before you, at no pains to think whether they would appear credible or not. If the reader will not believe their testimony, there is no help for it; they tell the truth, and attend to nothing else. Surely this looks like sincerity, and that they published nothing to the world but what, upon the best evidence, they believed themselves." *Duchal*, p. 97, 98. It is likewise remarkable, that through the whole of their histories, the Evangelists have not passed one encomium upon *Jesus*, or upon any of his friends: nor thrown out one reflection against his enemies; although much of both kinds might, and no doubt would, have been done by them, had they been governed either by a spirit of imposture or enthusiasm. Christ's life is not praised in the gospel, his death is not lamented, his friends not commended, his enemies not reproached, nor even blamed; but every thing is set down just as it happened; and all who read are left to judge, and make reflections for themselves; a manner of writing which the historians would never have fallen into, had not their minds

And indeed the account which we find there delivered, plain as it is and simple (and by that simplicity, the more credible) (c), is in itself of so very extraordinary a nature, and exhibits such an amazing scene of exalted wisdom and goodness, as must, when duly attended to, convince us that it could have no less than a divine original.

That the great Messenger or Mediator of a new Covenant between God and all mankind, fixed in the divine decrees from the beginning, foretold by the ancient prophets;—announced by an host of angels;—that he should at length appear, not only in the form but real nature of Man, and in its most imperfect and forlorn state, under all the wants and weaknesses of infancy;—that he should receive the divine communications in slow degrees (d), and mixed with all the infirmities of childhood!—That after such a degree of knowledge and wisdom had been imparted to him as was far above his present situation, he should nevertheless continue for the best part of thirty (e)

been under the guidance of the most sober reason, and deeply impressed with the dignity, importance, and truth of their subject." *Macknight*, Harm. Prel. Obs. p. 65. Comp. Dr. *Gerrard's* *Disser.* Diss. i. sect. 2. or *Lardner's* two very excellent Discourses on the internal Marks of Credibility in the N. T. *Memoirs of his Life*, &c. p. 240, &c.

(c) See *Gerrard's* 1st Diss. on the Evidence of Christianity.

(d) *Luke* ii. 52. vid. *Whitby*.

(e) His deferring it to that age was, as *Lightfoot* observes, according to the *law*, *Num.* iv. 3. 23. 35. 43. 47. That at the commencement of this office he was very properly prepared for

years under a silent subjection to his parents, in a low, laborious employment; that when he entered on his ministry, and was endowed with full powers for the discharge of it, and able to destroy his several adversaries with a single word, he should undergo the various assaults of those, who eagerly pursued him with rancour for no cause, but one that merited a very different return; viz. his labouring to rescue them from their captivity to sin and Satan, and restore them to the liberty of the sons of God, by reconciling them to his government, from which they had so long deviated;—by raising them from that abject state of degeneracy and corruption, into which they were fallen;—reclaiming them to a right sense of their duty, and thereby reinstating them in the divine favour, and rendering them meet to be partakers of a happy immortality:—all this contains such an amazing instance of the most benevolent condescension in *Jesus*, as must, one would think, provoke our love and gratitude, though we were not able to account for every circumstance attending it. Just reasons however may be assigned for most of them, and in particular for his appearing in this way, and acting

the execution of it, by a due exercise of private meditation and intense devotion, as well as by a lively prefiguration of the principal difficulties that attended it, is well shewn, in *an Inquiry into the Nature and Design of Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness*, by *H. Farmer*.

in that humble sphere which he chose, rather than any other.

From all God's dispensations relative to the government of mankind, in matters of religion, it is plain, that though he affords evidence sufficient to convince impartial judgments in every case, yet there is none of such a violent nature as to confound their understandings, and compel their assent: but had Christ come from heaven in the full brightness of his Father's glory, attended in some such manner as the *Jesuit* missionary was pleased to represent to his *Chinese* auditory*; had he made his first appearance publicly among the *Jewish* rulers, proclaiming his divine commission, and demanding their submission to his authority by a train of stupendous miracles, so that none of them should have been able to withstand him;—this method, beside its giving too much countenance to the wrong notions they had entertained of the Messiah's kingdom, and introducing them without proper qualifications, and upon principles directly opposite to its real constitution;—this would have been too forcible and overbearing to have left any room for merit, any exercise of faith and its attendant virtues in those who by such means became his followers, and the relation of it would have been of too suspicious a nature to engage the belief of distant ages and remote nations; it would

* See that very remarkable discourse in *Millar*, Prop. Christianity, vol. 2. p. 291.

have been very far from affording any trial of that humble, upright, and ingenuous temper, which is the chief glory of each sincere worshipper of God; the discovery and exercise whereof was to be one great end of the *Messiah's* office, as to encourage and reward it is the true aim of all religious dispensations.

Secondly, The circumstance of our Saviour's being introduced in so low a state as that of a common infant, appears no less proper to confirm the truth and reality of his mission. In order to prepare the world for his reception, to keep up an expectation of him, as well as to distinguish him when he did appear, the several qualifications, relative to his descent and pedigree, were at large described long before. It was promised, in particular, that he should be of the tribe of *Judah*, family of *David*, &c.; but if he had appeared at first in an adult state, how could he have borne any more relation to one tribe or family than another? If what some of the *Jews* advanced, from their traditions (*f*); that *when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is*, were true, would it not have been impossible for any such prophecies as these to have received their accomplishment, and extremely difficult for the people, to whom he was primarily sent, much more for others, to have come to a sufficient certainty about him.

(*f*) *John* vii. 27. Vid. *Whitby* and *Bp. Chandler's Def.* p. 250, and *Vind.* p. 429.

Thirdly, This circumstance, that Christ, the great deliverer of mankind, should himself be subject to so many difficulties in the course of his undertaking, however harsh and humiliating it may appear, yet furnishes one of the strongest evidences that both his commission and his qualifications for the discharge of it were from above. Had *Jesus* studied under the ablest masters of those days, we might have ascribed his eminent accomplishments to their assistance and direction; but when absolutely destitute of all such aid he bursts out of obscurity at once with a lustre that surpasses all the wisdom of those sages, we cannot but look out for some superior cause of these extraordinary effects. To proceed,

When, in the prosecution of this generous undertaking, he meets with a most unkind reception from that nation to whom he had been originally promised, and who were so fully instructed and prepared to expect him;—instead of publicly displaying all the powers with which he was invested, and admitting all that homage, which the high character of such an heavenly messenger might have demanded (*g*); instead, I say, of accepting

(*g*) These Divine powers were principally designed as the seal of his mission, and accordingly were very rarely applied to different purposes: which appropriation of his miracles to their original intention served to point that out more clearly, and keep it constantly in view, to manifest the wisdom and necessity of the works themselves, and to preserve their dignity and authority, which would have been greatly impaired by a more general application of them; and as Christ seldom applied them

that due tribute of esteem and veneration which must naturally attend the opening of his divine commission with the plain, honest, and undesigning populace; but which would have no other effect upon the inveterate prejudices and ingratitude of their rulers than to make them still more obstinately bent on resisting the counsel of God against themselves, and rejecting, and despising the gracious offers he had to make;—instead of magnifying his office, and claiming that distinction and regard which was the least due to the faithful execution of it, He chooses to avoid every instance of extraordinary respect which might have a tendency to raise their envy; (*h*) he con-

to any purpose foreign to their grand intention, so it was in a peculiar manner necessary, that they should not be employed merely to protect and preserve himself from the calamities to which human nature in general, or the particular malice of his enemies, exposed him. Had he saved himself by miracles from all the difficulties and distresses which attended his situation in life, where had been his conflict, his victory, his triumph? or where the consolation and benefit his followers derive from his example, his merit, his crown? Sufferings were the theatre on which he displayed his divine virtues: and they were both the ground of his advancement to the glorious office of our Redeemer, and a natural means of inspiring him with compassion towards all who were to follow him.' *Farmer's Inquiry into Christ's Temptation*, p. 71, 72. *Comp. Benson's Life of Christ*, p. 34.

(*h*) To name one instance out of many. A strong proof of this appears in his forbidding the leprous person to divulge the manner of his cure, [as he did others in like cases, for the same reason;] and likewise in ordering him to present himself to the priest's examination, who was to judge of and bear testimony to his being perfectly cured; and who might otherwise

ceals his pre-eminence under the mean garb of poverty, and suits the several parts of his conduct to his present situation ; withdraws himself out of the common road of popularity, confining his wonders for the most part to private and obscure villages, till he had done enough to fix a firm belief of his doctrine, and secure a due submission to his authority amongst these his faithful followers ;—till he was ready to conclude the whole in a more public manner, by witnessing his last *good confession*, both to the *Jewish* and to the *Roman* magistrates, by declaring the true end of his coming into the world, and bearing testimony to his unblamable conduct in it, before these iniquitous judges ; and (which was the necessary consequence, without either violently over-ruling them, or miraculously escaping from them), sealing the same confession in his blood.—Consistently with the same humble plan, the persons he chose for partners in this work were of the meanest class, as well in station as abilities, who could only follow him upon the lowest views, and would at every turn be urging and impatient to have these accomplished : nor were they to be let into his real aim, but by slow steps, and after a long series of gentle discipline. Such persons were in many

have taken occasion to complain of him as a violater of the law, and an invader of the sacerdotal office. *Matt.* viii. 4. *Mark* i. 44. *Luke* v. 14. See *Le Clerc, Harm.* p. 92. or his *Add. to Ham.* on *Matt.* viii. 4, or *Lightfoot, Harm.* Vol. I. p. 648, or *Benson's Life of Christ*, c. 9.

respects most difficult to be dealt with; yet, on the same account, the fittest instruments in that for which they were intended, namely, to testify what they had so frequently seen and heard: and on all accounts proper to afford the most unexceptionable evidence to futurity; such as could by no means be supposed to have been capable of themselves either to conceive a scheme so great as that of converting *a world*, or to entertain the least hope of accomplishing it if suggested to them by any others; such as wanted both the courage and conduct to attempt this vast design with any prospect of success; such, lastly, as he must suffer often to doubt, demur and to dispute with him; sometimes to distrust, desert, and even deny him; to convince after-ages, that they were such as could not, with the least shew of reason, be suspected of having at first concerted all this of themselves, or carried it on afterwards among themselves, or at last effecting what they did effect of it by any methods merely human (*i*).

(*i*) Mirum est quam parum acuti essent apostolorum nonnulli; sed data opera tales a Christo electos fuisse verisimile est; ne dum putabant se intelligere quis esset, quidve moliretur, quidpiam ingenio suo freti, quod Evangelio noceret, aggredierentur; neve possent, dogmatum quæ nunciabantur, inventores haberi. *Cleric.* in Joh. xiv. 7. Comp. id. Ecc. Hist. Ann. xxvii. 14, 15. How different is the character of St. *Paul*, and with what propriety therefore was his call deferred till different qualities and talents became of equal use to the propagation and defence of the Gospel! Vid. *Locke*, Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 500, &c. fol. *Cumming's* Serm. on *Matt.* xi. 5. Scotch Preacher, V. 1.

With these did Christ hold conversation during the whole course of his ministry; affectionately complying with their weakness, and patiently enduring their perverseness, in order to correct and cure them both; to strengthen their faith by degrees, and free them from all superstitious fears; opening their eyes and enlarging their understandings so far, that at length they might, *even of themselves, judge what was right*, and teach the same to others. To these, and by them to the world, he sets a perfect pattern of humility and resignation to the will of God; of meekness and the most extensive benevolence to man; demonstrating to what height virtue may be carried, under the most disadvantageous circumstances, and shewing the practicableness of each part of our duty, in the greatest difficulties. With what an unwearied zeal and constancy does he labour to dissuade and drive men from their ruin! in what endearing manner does he strive to draw and win them over to their true solid interest, and raise their minds above the little unsubstantial interests of this lower world! *Little children, yet a little while I am with you,—but let not your hearts be troubled; I go to prepare a place for you. Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

Having denied himself all the enjoyments of this world, and at length laid down his life in executing the great plan of conducting men to a

better; he rises again to revive the hopes of his desponding followers, and converses frequently and familiarly with them, to confirm them in the faith, by a full assurance that he had all power in heaven and earth.—And great occasion was there for such ground of comfort to them, who thought they had lost him, for whose sake they had parted with all the little comforts they possessed—greater yet to reform and rectify their notions concerning him, and all their expectations from him; which were still fixed on prospects of some temporal advancement, notwithstanding all that he had taught them to the contrary (*k*), nor could they help concluding that he would at this time make use of all his power in the destruction of his enemies, and erecting the so long expected kingdom, to which every other kingdom of the earth should bow. But he soon shews them how far this was from being any branch of his office, as described by the prophets; how inconsistent with his whole demeanour in discharging it; that on his very first entrance on it he had rejected the

(*k*) That the true scope of his whole Sermon on the mount was to correct the carnal notions they had entertained of the *Messiah's* kingdom, and the bad dispositions they were under in consequence thereof; and that this is the right *key* for opening the proper meaning and connection of that Sermon, is demonstrated at large by *Blair*, Paraphr. on the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of *St. Matt.* and throughout his discourses on that subject.—That it contains all things which were necessary to the salvation of those hearers, to whom our Saviour at that time addressed himself, *ib.* Vol. iv. S. 20. p. 301.

offer of these kingdoms, and their glory, and that for the future they must think of renouncing all their narrow, national prejudices of the same kind :—that instead of coming a *Messiah* to bless his people in their sense, by distinguishing them from all the rest of mankind in things, to which they had no better title, and of which they were not likely to make any better use;—by not only delivering them from their subjection to any other nation, but reducing every nation into an absolute submission to themselves;—that he was come to bring them blessings and deliverances, and raise them to a dominion of quite another kind;—to bless them by turning every one of them from those iniquities to which they were enslaved;—to deliver them from their spiritual chains of darkness, death, and misery; and lead them to the light of life, and happiness in his heavenly kingdom: This they were to become the means of opening to the rest of the world, and inviting mankind to enter with them into that inheritance; as their forefathers had been the great instruments of bringing men to the knowledge of that one true God, who is the author of it; that as these his followers had all along seen ample proofs of his divine legation to this purpose, and were now to be let into the nature and design of his undertaking, so they should shortly be invested with sufficient powers to carry it on without him, and enabled to proclaim and propagate it to the ends of the earth. After forty days spent by Christ in

preparing his disciples for this great work of establishing a kingdom of so very different a kind, and to be established by ways so totally different from what they had hitherto imagined, he meets them all together, leads them out to some distance from *Jerusalem*, takes leave of them with his last solemn benediction, and having promised to give them yet further proof of his care and love by sending them another comforter, ascends visibly before them into Heaven.

Having taken a short view of our blessed Saviour's conduct, more particularly in private life, and run over some of the steps of his *humiliation*; let us stop a little to reflect upon the peculiar excellence of such a character, and observe some of the signal benefits, which we receive from this part of his conduct.—Whenever we turn our thoughts toward the infinite perfections of the most high God, and try to form some adequate comprehension of them, though they appear well worthy of all adoration, yet is our view of them but faint and dim, on account of their sublimity and distance from us, and the views we may have of them are apt rather to excite astonishment and awe, than move the softer, more endearing passions or affections; and therefore the ideas of loving and delighting in God, were such as the most elevated heathen writers could not reach: nor indeed had they among all the crowd of their divinities any one proper object of such tender sentiments.

But here the Deity lets himself down to our capacities, stands on a level with us, and becomes an object of our tenderest affections; discovers himself under the intimate relations of a friend, a father; displays such an affecting scene of the mildest and most merciful condescension, as must strike even the dullest, warm the coldest heart.

The Lord who knows our frame, sees that we are not capable of beholding him in his full glory, and therefore kindly draws a veil over it, suiting his several dispensations to the feeble subjects of them. He sends a messenger in our own state and circumstances, who being encompassed with our infirmities, experiencing our difficulties, and having a fellow-feeling of all our troubles, might shew how well qualified he was to bear with us, and teach us to bear them; to have compassion on the ignorant, and those that were in error; pointing out the true way to happiness, and enabling us to walk therein; leading us gently by the hand*, inviting and encouraging us to come to God through him. *I am the way, the truth, and the life; he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. All that my Father hath is mine: I and my Father are one, as I and you are one.*

Thus he, who was to his own people formerly the *Lord of Hosts*, a mighty God and terrible, jealous, avenging; and whose worship was styled *fear*, (a worship fitly accommodated to such

* *Lactant. de Ver. Sap. L. ix. 24.*

people;) is now to men of more enlarged minds, under this proportionably more indulgent dispensation, *the God of all joy and consolation; the Father of mercies*; whose children and heirs we are said to be; whom we are taught to approach in a more liberal way, with a true filial assurance; whose darling attribute is goodness; and the first principle and great commandment in his law, the end and the completion of it, *Love*.

These amiable representations, illustrated in the most free, familiar, and agreeable manner, must above all things tend to strengthen and confirm our faith, enliven and invigorate our hope, and draw our whole soul after him that so loved us, and lived amongst us: especially that, which was the very greatest instance of affection for us, his voluntarily laying down his life, to reclaim us from a state of misery and disobedience, and reconcile us to the gracious government of our heavenly Father. This cannot but endear his *character* to all men, who are capable of giving attention to it; and will in a much nearer and more tender manner unite him to us, and make the contemplation of him more affecting, than that of any other Being, however great and glorious, who has not undergone the like kind office, or appeared in such lights to us.

And though, in order to direct our reason to the principal object of religious worship, we are oft reminded who it was that originally provided this redemption for us; yet in that other, no less

essential (perhaps with the bulk of mankind the predominant) part of our nature,—the *passions*; we are necessarily touched in a more sensible manner, with a view of its accomplishment which is so very obvious to our present comprehensions, and so analogous to what we find and feel among ourselves; and may be satisfied, that the benevolent Author of our being will make due allowances for this kind of predilection, so far as it becomes unavoidable, which is in some degree the case at present universally; and every one that reflects upon the general turn of his own mind in his devotion, will, I believe, find it to be so: which is in this respect an experimental proof of the propriety and beauty of the plan before us.

And as this dispensation was well suited to the frame of human nature in general, and an improvement on the foregoing one to the *Jews*; so it was no less properly accommodated to the state of the heathen world; and no less necessary in the circumstances under which they then were, and must in all probability have continued.

The founders and supporters of religious institutes among the Gentiles, had no better ground for them than uncertain tales concerning some apparitions of their fictitious deities, or as blind vague reports of their transactions; some of these ill devised by these votaries themselves, others in great part copied from true scripture history or primitive tradition; but all of them so blended with every kind of vice and folly, to comply with

the general corruption, and suit the several tastes and tempers of particular countries, as at length rendered the whole little more than a compound of absurdity and immorality, and made their very worship and devotion impious. Their system of doctrines and subsequent rites must thereby be extremely complicated, and vary according to the various degrees of superstition and impurity that reigned amongst them: yet were so far all of the same cast and complexion, that there could be no great room for a competition with each other, in point of either authenticity or excellence: it would be hard to distinguish between the different sorts of evidence producible in different places for the one, or of the reasons that might be alleged to vindicate the other; since *custom* was the common and chief plea for both; since both were equally uncertain in their origin, and alike *unprofitable as pertaining to the conscience*. So that when any species of idolatry was once established in a nation, it must with the generality be either a point of necessity to abide by it, since they could find no better, or appear a matter of indifference, whether they should exchange it for any other, or admit that other along with it, as occasion served; and this might well be left to the determination of the state.

Such were the circumstances of the heathen world, when *Christ* appeared, to put an end to all those *lying vanities*, and turn men to the *living and true God*; by exhibiting a plan of religion in

every respect worthy of such a Being, and which would lead to the love and likeness of him.

Farther: men had been so long used to the notion of supernatural appearances, and messages from Heaven, and a *pretence* to these been made the ground of every article of faith and mode of worship; that nothing but a *real one*, more clear and unexceptionable, could prove effectual toward bringing the generality to a firm belief in one true, spiritual God; and induce them to worship him *in spirit and in truth*, and assure them of always gaining access to him, through one sole all-sufficient *Mediator*. Dry, abstract reasoning, would go but a little way with the vulgar, who require something strong and visible to strike them; nor would a few transient signs and dazzling wonders serve to make any such impressions last. Of these they had already but too many reported among them; and the more common such reports grew, the less were they regarded; not only on account of their suspicious evidence, though that was enough to blast and discredit them; but chiefly for want of some connection with a regular course of instruction, and a set of doctrines worthy of such a divine interposition; and expressly produced as vouchers for these doctrines, and applied to confirm that interposition.

This did *Christ* frequently perform in the most public manner; and hereby did his institution outshine every part of heathenism, as well in point

of evidence afforded to it, as of instruction conveyed by it. From whence might be drawn another proof, both of the usefulness of such a plan, and of the great necessity that there was for it.

But I proceed to some remarkable circumstances in our Saviour's life, and manner of teaching.

As to the former, we cannot but observe a surprising mixture of humility and greatness, dignity and self-degradation, in his general demeanour; both which were equally instructive in their turns. Sometimes we find him solemnly asserting the high dignity of his commission, at other times the meekest and the lowest of the sons of men; sometimes informing his followers that he could command legions of angels were it necessary; at others, apprising them, that he should be more destitute of common conveniences than even the beasts of the field, or birds of the air; now telling them that a greater than *Solomon* was amongst them; now stooping so low as to wash their feet. Conscious of his own power and just prerogative, yet all submission to the powers in being; complying with their laws and institutions, however inconvenient to him; and paying their demands to the uttermost, though at the expense of a miracle. On some occasions, publishing the character and office which he bore; on others, industriously concealing them, in order to prevent the hasty misconstruction of his friends; to guard against the inveterate malice of his foes, and gain sufficient time to fix a good foundation for the faith of all.

—None ever was more eager and zealous in the cause of God; none ever was more attentive and resigned in his own: he patiently endures all kinds of outrage offered to his person, as well as the very frequent insults on his reputation, and intercedes for the forgiveness of his murderers: yet when his Father's honour is concerned, he vindicates it with uncommon warmth: he publicly chastises the profaners of his temple; and threatens the severest punishment to all such as continued to blaspheme the power and spirit by which he was acting. He is ready to receive publicans and harlots; disdains not to converse with heretics and schismatics; persons most odious and of worst repute; but whom he sees to be truly penitent and desirous of instruction: while he rejects the formal, sanctimonious hypocrite, and reprimands the self-sufficient *Pharisee*. He detects, and with authority rebukes, the sophistry of the proud, perverse querist; but satisfies every scruple, and resolves each doubt, of the sincere and humble searcher after truth, even before they are intimated to him. He cherishes the broken-hearted, comforts the desponding, strengthens and supports the weak and wavering, condescends to the infirmities of the meanest, that has the least spark of goodness in him; but never gratifies the vanity, or gives way to the petulance of the greatest.

Which mixture of so various and seemingly

opposite qualities, that constituted the foregoing contrast, did not proceed from any variation in his own temper, but wholly in that of those among whom he conversed. He steadily adheres to the same principle, and constantly pursues one plain and uniform design of doing all the service possible, on all occasions, to all sorts of people : of doing it in the most agreeable manner too, whenever that becomes consistent with their real interest : sympathising with them in their several states and dispositions, suiting himself to every one's circumstances and capacity, applying to each part of the human constitution for access, and watching every motion of the heart to gain admittance : being himself ever affable and easy of access to all that seriously applied to him ; accepting any invitation ; nay, making a voluntary tender of his company whenever he knew it would be seasonable and acceptable : indulging the most secret wish of such as would receive an obligation from him ; and enhancing that by his engaging readiness to confer it. He submitted to the lowest offices for the sake of others, and was at every body's service that desired his assistance. He admitted the meanest company when he had a prospect of doing any good upon them ; and was content to lose the reputation of being a good man, that he might the more effectually serve the ends of piety and goodness*.

* *Lowth's Directions*, p. 197.

His conversation was free and familiar, open and undisguised, sober and rational : his carriage clear from all affected singularity ; all rigid and unnatural severity ; and any of those austere forbidding airs, which used to be put on by other teachers, and procure them so much awe, upon the like occasion. His very miraculous works were no less evident signs of mercy, goodness, generosity, than of power ; and equally adapted to convince the understandings and engage the affections of those who partook of them, as to remove their several maladies, or to relieve their wants, his first public miracle being no more than a proper act of kindness or humanity ; in preventing the confusion of a poor relation, by a very seasonable supply of what was wanting in his entertainment on a solemn occasion : which want perhaps could not have otherwise been supplied ; and was most probably occasioned by the extraordinary concourse his own presence drew thither(σ) ; his last being an instance of the

(σ) *John* ii. 1, 2, &c. At such times the *Jews* were wont to make such entertainments, and some of the ancient prophets relieved the necessities of the indigent, in the like generous manner.—Elsner, p. 68. This, notwithstanding all these evident marks of benevolence in this miracle of our blessed Saviour, beside many others that might have been mentioned ; [such as his giving countenance to a due celebration of that divine Institution which soon afterwards grew into so much disrepute, and justifying that liberal use of all God's creatures which came to be so extravagantly censured (see *Jortin's* Remarks, Vol. II. p. 18. or *Theol. Repos.* Vol. III. No. 3.) yet,] has met with no better treatment, than any other circumstance attending either

most undeserved compassion, in calmly healing

his character or mission. *Chubb* has been at the pains to revive some of *Woolston's* idle objections on this head, without either making any improvements on them, or taking the least notice of the large and clear answers given to them; as is the common way with this kind of writers. He dwells upon the *harshness, impropriety, and fallaciousness*, of *Christ's* reply to his mother; and urges the *intemperance*, which must have been promoted by this miraculous production of wine. *Post. Works*, Vol. II. p. 185, 6, 7, 8.

As to the *harshness*, which arises chiefly from the word *woman*, in our own language; it has been shewn, that *γυνή* is a term used by the best writers very consistently with the highest respect; and as such, most undoubtedly applied elsewhere to the same person; *Joh. xix. 26*. That the phrase *τί μοι καὶ σοί*, was no more than a common expression of some gentle rebuke for intermeddling in another's province; *2 Sam. xvi. 10. xix. 22. 2 Kings iii. 13. 2 Chron. xxxv. 21.* and might be exceedingly proper, and even necessary at *Christ's* first opening his commission, in order to guard against any suspicion of his mother's having *concerted matters with him*; (as the same author would insinuate, p. 168.)—to prevent her interfering at all in it, or pretending to any influence or authoritative direction, in the case of working miracles especially, which was of public concern: and so the following words may be taken interrogatively, *ἔτι ἢ ὥρα μᾶ;* *Is not the time of my ministry now come?* To which we may add, that whatever apparent slight or severity occurs in this or any other circumstance where she is introduced, it may have been ordered providentially (as the same thing seems to have been done on the like account in other cases, v. g. that of *St. Peter* more remarkably;) to guard against those many gross abuses of her name and interest, those very grievous corruptions that in after-times were set up in the church of *Christ*, and supported chiefly by that near relation which she bore to him according to the flesh. To the same purpose may be applied those other seemingly disparaging accounts, which he is pleased to give of such relations, in comparison of those, who stood related to him in a much higher sense, viz. a heavenly one,

the wound of one of those who came with eager-

Matt. xii. 46—50. *Mark* iii. 31—35. *Luke* viii. 19—21. xi. 27, 28. See *Clarke's* xvii. Sermons, p. 236. [and on the same principle might be founded that remarkable estrangement between *John* the Baptist and our blessed Saviour, notwithstanding their being so very near relations; as is observed by *Doddridge* on *Joh.* i. 31. *Fam. Ex.* Vol. I. p. 122. note c. Add *Jortin*, Disc. v. p. 194. 2d ed. and *Dr. Bell's* Inquiry.] As to his *hour not being come*, if taken in another sense, i. e. of doing any thing for her benefit in particular; that may relate to the *hour* of his death; agreeably to the common use of this word in the Gospel, (comp. *Joh.* vii. 8. 30. viii. 20. xii. 27. xiii. 1. xvii. 1.) In like manner at the very beginning of *Christ's* ministry, the Devil is said to depart from him for a season, *Luke* iv. 13. though that was so late as till his last suffering, called their *hour*, i. e. that of his enemies and the power of darkness, *Luke* xxii. 53.) for which, to prevent all secular views, he might prepare her at the very entrance into his office; signifying that she was to receive no kind of worldly advantage from it till he left the world; and when that time came, he recommended her accordingly to his beloved disciple; who took her to his own home, and provided for her as if she was his own mother. So far was *Christ's* reply from any of that *fallacy* and *contradiction*, with which this author has been pleased to charge it, that even on this imperfect view of the case, we may be able to discern clear tokens of the same divine wisdom and disinterested goodness here, which shines out in each of his other discourses.

Nor is there any more ground for that other suggestion of *excess*, from the *guests having drunk so freely as to exhaust plenty of wine*; *ib.* p. 188. since from the known regulations at all marriage feasts, there was no danger of it; from the low circumstances of the person entertaining here, no room to apprehend that any extraordinary plenty could be provided; but rather the contrary: nor from what *Christ* supplied, the least encouragement given to intemperance, during the remainder of the feast, which lasted several days; commonly seven: and wherein, if we will suppose that this wine must have been all drank up, which we have no occasion to do; [see *Jennings*, Lect. B. iii. c. 2.

ness* to take away his life; at the same time

p. 136.] as much might easily have been consumed by an extraordinary conflux of the people in a few days, as would perhaps have otherwise held out the rest. [V. *Lamy*, Com. in Harm. p. 109.] So little reason was there any way for such rude insults on this part of our blessed Saviour's history, that it might easily be shewn to be of a piece, and bear the same characters of wisdom and goodness with the rest. As the Gospel was first to be offered to his own countrymen (to whom the promises were made), *whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear*; and whose rejecting of it turned to the more immediate benefit of the rest of the world; so was this public occasion very properly made use of for the opening of it, in the first place, to his kinsfolk and acquaintance; who, if they were not before acquainted with his divine mission from any miracles performed in private, [though it is very probable, that some of them were, his mother in particular; see *Doddr.* on *John* ii. 3.] had hereby a fair opportunity of fully canvassing its evidence, and consulting him upon it, during all the festival; might easily have satisfied each other about the truth of his pretensions, and entitled themselves to the honour of being his first disciples: though for no less wise and good reasons, most of them were permitted to lose all such opportunities of being instructed by him, to shut their eyes and harden their hearts amidst the clearest and the strongest evidence, and at length become of all men the most inveterate adversaries, both against him and his doctrine: which yet, instead of impairing the credit of either, served to illustrate it the more, and render it more incontestable to others in all ages; by clearing the whole from all possible suspicion of any family contrivance;—of being carried on by private compact; (as the same conduct in the rulers did effectually from the charge of its being any part of their own national policy;) or having been calculated for the separate interest of any particular place, or party of men whatsoever. Nay, every one of those persons, who either rejected him at first, or afterwards forsook him, without ever being able to discover the least circumstances of such a design, affords plain proof of the contrary; as might be made appear beyond all contradiction.

* *Malchus* had come out, with violence, to apprehend him;

shewing, that with the same ease he could have delivered himself, or destroyed these his enemies.

The like might be observed in every other case, where he exerted an extraordinary power; which he did, in a manner peculiarly suitable to his own character*.

But what we are now considering in the life of *Christ*, is its more ordinary course, and common tenor, which we find chiefly conversant in *social duties*, as these come into use most frequently, and are of the most general benefit to mankind; and setting us a pattern of performing these, which was the most inviting to us, the most imitable by us, and the least capable of being mistaken, or perverted: a pattern not only of perfect innocence, but likewise usefulness in every circumstance and situation; of joining sometimes in such relaxations both of mind and body, as would tend to the comfort and support of each.—Of undergoing all the toils and difficulties, labours and distresses, to which we are subject, with so much patience, constancy, and perseverance, as would prevent our ever sinking under them; and at

and had perhaps treated him with some peculiar insolence, so as to provoke *Peter* to cut off his ear.' *Benson*, p. 439. He is supposed to be one of those servants who smote *Christ* upon the face [*Mark* xv. 65.] even after a miraculous power had been exerted in his favour.

* A proof of this, and a specimen of the moral or spiritual, as well as prophetic import of our Saviour's miracles, may be seen in *Jortin's* Remarks on *Eccl.* H. Vol. II. p. 16, &c.

length make us *more than conquerors* over them. A pattern of particular affection and esteem for friends ; of general kindness and good will toward enemies ; of gratitude and love for each good office ; of meekness and a most forgiving temper under any ill usage ;—submission and obedience to superiors, either in church or state, so far as is consistent with our duty to the supreme Governor (τ) ;—of mildness and condescension to inferiors ;—of justice, fidelity, benevolence and charity to all. In short his whole life was a lecture of true practical philosophy, and each part pointed

(τ) In proof of this, beside the instance already given of his most scrupulous exactness to avoid the least appearance of intruding on another's office ; we may observe, that when he is obliged to expose the great hypocrisy and villany of the *Jewish* doctors, who were the most injurious adversaries of his cause, he carefully distinguishes between their authority or commission, and the exercise thereof ; between their public teaching, and their practice.

The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses's seat ; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do ; but do not ye after their works ; for they say, and do not. Matt. xxiii. 2, 3. Hoc dicit Christus, ne putaretur aut adversarius esse *Mosis*, aut eorum odio, aut cupiditate principatus, ipsos in sequentibus reprehendere. Et quoniam defectus in personis, non professione, erat ; providet, ut, personarum ratione posthabita, muneri, ministerio, et professioni ipsi, sua dignitas integra maneat. *L. Brugens. in loc. Comp. Wolzogen, p. 370.*

So far is our Saviour's history from consisting of that angry opposition to his superiors, as such ; or from discovering that envious, aspiring, factious disposition, which some persons have had either the weakness or the wickedness to suggest.

out some virtue proper for our imitation*. [For this we have the testimony of unbelievers themselves. "In Christ we have an example of a quiet and peaceable spirit, of a becoming modesty and sobriety, just and honest, upright and sincere; and above all, of a most gracious and benevolent temper and behaviour. One who did no wrong, no injury to any man, in whose mouth was no guile; who went about doing good, not only by his ministry, but also in curing all manner of diseases among the people. His life was a beautiful picture of human nature, when in its native purity and simplicity; and showed at once what excellent creatures men would be, when under the influence and power of that Gospel which he preached unto them †].

Which brings me in the next place to his *manner of teaching*: and this was likewise the most natural, easy, and familiar that could be imagined. He generally draws his doctrine from the present occasion; the conversation carrying on; or the objects surrounding him; from the most common occurrences, and occupations, from the time of the day, the season of the year; the service of the *Jewish* synagogue (v), or their solemnities;

* See some of the principal of these virtues specified in Bp. *Fowler's* Design of Christianity, c. 5. or *Duchal*, on Christ's general Character, Sermon. 1, 2, 3.

† *Chubb*, True Gosp. of *J. Christ*, sect. 8. p. 55, 56.

(v) Thus, he alludes sometimes to the *manner of teaching* there; *Matt. x. 27. Quod in aure auditis, prædicate. Doctor qui auditoribus aliquid traditionale prælegebat et exponebat,*

from some extraordinary accidents, remarkable places, or transactions, and the like.

non quidem clara voce rem efferebat, sed leni susurro, Hebraica in aurem interpretis mussitabat; qui deinde id sonore sermone vernaculo enuntiabat populo. *Lamy*, Harm. p. 187. Comp. *Lightf.* in loc. et in *Matt.* iv. 23. [Where another allusion occurs in the latter part of the verse, about proclaiming on the house top. *Lightf.* Vol. II. p. 180.] Sometimes to the lesson read therein: *Luke* iv. 17. Vulgo sentiunt interpretes casu traditum Domino librum *Isaiaë*; sive potius divina providentia procurante ut ille traderetur, ubi clarissime de Christo prophetatum erat. Verum magis eluxit divina providentia si hoc Sabbato legeretur pars illa *Isaiaë*, in qua invenit locum ubi scriptum erat, *Spiritus Domini super me*: Sic incipit cap. lxi. *Isaiaë*, quod legebatur Sabbato 1mo aut 2do mensis Tisri, ut videre est in lectionariis Judæorum. [Comp. *Lightf.* in loc. or *Wait's Gosp. Hist.* B. ii. s. 5.] Hoc autem anno vitæ ejus circa quem hæremus, æræ Christianæ 31mo, duo illa Sabbata, in quibus *Isaias* prælegebatur, incidebant 1mum in 8vam diem Septembris, alterum in 15mam. Congruit illud tempus parabolis sementis, quas modo proposuerat Dominus ab ipsis rebus præsentibus, ut sapientiam ejus decebat. Etenim in mense Tisri semen terræ mandabatur; ut videre est in illis verbis paraphraseos Chaldaicæ in *Ecclesiastem* xi. 2. *Da portionem bonam seminis agro tuo in Tisri, et ne cohibearis a seminando etiam in Chisleu.* Id. Harm. p. 258. To which may be added *John* x. 1, &c. as below, and *John* vii. 37, 38. *Lamy* pursues this circumstance of *Christ's* alluding to the lesson for the day so far, as by it to adjust the time and order of several passages in the Gospels, v. g. *Luke* x. 25-37. Idcirco autem hanc parabolam *Samaritani* refero ad tempus quod pentecostem subsecutum est; quia hanc parabolam videtur Dominus proposuisse in synagoga, occasione scripturæ quæ tunc ibi legeretur. Illud enim, *Ecce quidam legis-peritus surrexit tentans eum*, indicat sedisse hunc legis-peritum, et de more proposuisse quæstionem Domino; quam ille solverit, convertens animum et oculos legis-periti ad ipsam Scripturam modo lectam; quod indicat illud, *Quomodo legis*, &c. Locus autem Scripturæ, ut puto, erat

Thus, upon curing a blind man, he styles himself *the light of the world*; and admonishes the *Pharisees* of their spiritual blindness, and inexcusable obstinacy in refusing to be cured and enlightened by him*. On little children being brought to him, he recommends the innocence and humility of that state, as very proper qualifications for all those, who would become members of his church; and under the same figure, intimates the privileges that belong to all such†. On being told, that his mother and brethren came to seek him; he declares to all those among his disciples, who were desirous of learning, and disposed to follow his instructions, that they were equally dear to him, and should be equally regarded by him, as his very nearest friends and relations‡. Beholding the flowers of the field, and the fowls of the air, he teaches his disciples to frame worthy notions of that providence which supports them, and therefore will support beings

versus 5tus cap. 6ti *Deut.* quod caput legebatur ultimo Sab-
bato mensis *Ab*, uno aut altero mense post pentecostem. *Id.*
p. 219.

The same author observes, that the order of time being generally neglected, both by *S. Mark* and *S. Luke*; their narratives are to be regulated as well by the foregoing observations, as by comparing them with *S. Matt.* who was an eye-witness of most things, and therefore went by a *local memory*. *Comp. Newt.* on *Dan.* p. 152. or *Hartley*, *Observ.* Vol. II. p. 103.

* *John* ix. 5, 39, 41.

† *Mark* x. 14, 15. *Matt.* xviii. 4, 5, 6, 10.

‡ *Matt.* xii. 47. *Mark* iii. 32. vid. *Benson*, c. 10. sect. ii.
Other instances of this kind may be seen below, p. 343.

of a rank far superior to them*. Observing the fruits of the earth, he instructs them to judge of men by their fruits, and not to be themselves unfruitful, under all the means of grace†. Taking notice of their bad behaviour at a feast, he first gives general advice to both the master and his guests‡, to the one that he should direct his mu-

* *Matt.* vii. 26, 28. *Luke* xii. 24, &c.

† *Matt.* vii. 16. *Luke* vi. 43, &c.

‡ The not attending to our Saviour's manner of instructing occasionally, and by a special instance then occurring, [though he was far from insisting on that very particular instance, farther still from confining his doctrine to it,] instead of laying down immediately the principle, which either would extend to that and the like instance, or produce an equivalent, as the case required;—this has given room for a great deal of indecent drollery, on *Luke* xiv. 12. 13. from *Chubb*. [Post. works, p. 24. &c.] as if, instead of directing our beneficence to such in the first place as wanted it most, which is all that can fairly be implied, and which is surely unexceptionable, *Christ* had confined his direction to that one particular mode of hospitality; and required all his disciples, who were of ability, to invite the poor, lame, blind, &c. to their tables: to entertain such there, and such only: which would, as *Chubb* says in the same strain, p. 27, be something extraordinary.

I shall add two or three parallel passages, which may perhaps help to procure this a more favourable interpretation; at least, will shew the precept to be not so very *peculiarly Christian*, as this same gentleman is pleased to represent, in order to burlesque and expose it: [ib. p. 26, &c.] And in truth, with just as much probability, as he thinks *washing the feet* is one of the positive institutions that belong to Christianity, annexing it to Baptism and the Lord's Supper. ib. p. 277.

Cic. Off. 1. 15. Hoc maxime officij est, ut quisque maxime opis indigeat, ita ei potissimum opitulari; quod contra fit a plerisque, a quo enim plurimum sperant, etiamsi ille his non

nificence to such as stood most in need of it *, to the other, that they beware of that eager affectation of place and distinction which was so troublesome to the rest, and generally ended in their own mortification; and afterwards brings them to the

eget, tamen ei potissimum inserviunt.—*Plin. Epist. ix. 30.* Volo eum qui sit vere liberalis, tribuere patriæ, propinquis, affinibus, amicis; sed amicis dico pauperibus: non ut isti, qui iis potissimum donant, qui donare maxime possunt. Hos ego, viscatis hamatisque muneribus, non sua promere puto, sed aliena corripere.

With regard to the last mentioned precept of washing the feet, which *Chubb* pretends to be of perpetual obligation, [and which some sects of Christians have not understood much better,] give me leave to add the explanation by *Michaelis*, *Introd. to the N. T. p. 254.* The washing of feet was, in the Eastern Countries, commonly the first kindness shewn to a traveller, who was to be hospitably received; whence it is sometimes put for hospitality in general, 1 *Tim. v. 10.* When therefore *Christ* washed the feet of his disciples, and taught them to condescend in like manner, to their inferiors; it amounts to as much, as if he had instituted the law of hospitality, among all his future disciples. Now as strangers are the objects of this law, and not persons who live together in the same place, he by this commandment, obliged all his future disciples to love each other, and abolished the distinction between *Jew* and *Heathen*. This is the true meaning of this action of *Christ*, which many have interpreted so strangely. *Comp. Bohmer. Diss. xii. p. 550,* who among the things retained in the primitive Church, without sufficient authority, reckons *lotio pedum mimica, a salvatore minime mandata.* That this was not to be interpreted literally, or understood as a standing ordinance in the Church, is well shewn by *Dr. Bell, on the Lord's Supper, p. 142. &c.*

* This is all that *Christ* can be supposed to mean, *Luke xiv. 12, 13.* When in his way of instructing occasionally, and by a special instance then before him, he exhorts his followers, when they *make a feast to call the poor, the maimed, &c. V. Crell. Op. Tom. ii. p. 55. with Le Clerc, Whitby, Grot. in loc.*

consideration of a better entertainment, to which they were all invited; but of which few among them would shew themselves worthy*. From meat and drink, he leads them to the eating of his body, and drinking his blood, in a spiritual sense; the being nourished with his doctrine, and edified by his example†. From outward washing, to the purifying of the heart, and cleansing the affections‡. From tasting of the fruit of the vine after the Paschal supper; to the celebration of an eternal festival of freedom, rest, and happiness in another world||. From the *salt*, he takes occasion

* *Luke* xiv. 7. 16. Comp. *Doddr.* in loc. Thus, probably, a wedding procession passing by gave occasion to the beautiful Parable of the ten Virgins. *Wynne* on *Matt.* xxv. 1.

† *John* vi. 31, 53, &c. See a like allusion on the mention of *meat*, *John* iv. 32. The same thing, in all probability, occasioned that remarkable answer to the *Syrophanician* woman, *Matt.* xv. 26. *Mark* vii. 27. in which he calls the heathen *Dogs*, not in conformity to his own sentiments, but to the common language of the *Jews*; glancing perhaps as he spoke it, at those who sat at table with him, and thereby secretly reproving the insolence of such harsh language and hard thoughts. See *Lamy*, Harm. 31, and *Lightfoot*, in loc.

‡ *John* xiii. 8.

|| *Matt.* xxvi. 29. *Luke* xxii. 17, 18. Ex occasione vini conspicui et proprie dicti, Christus docet discipulos se non amplius celebraturum cum iis ullam *liberationem*, nisi postremam illam qua ex omnibus malis resurrectione liberabuntur. Describit cœlestem illam hilaritatem *potione vini*, non tantum quia hujus rei incidit mentio, paulo postquam vinum bibisset; sed quia *bibere vinum* in Scriptura perinde est ac convivari [vid. *Esaiæ* c. xxii. 13. xxiv. 9.] felicitas vero sub imagine convivii describitur, ut c. viii. 11. Addit *vinum* hoc fore *novum*, quia apostoli antea nunquam hanc felicitatem gustaverint. Sæpe

to acquaint them with the nature of their office, which was to season the minds of men, and preserve them from the contagion of this world; as well as give them a true taste and relish for the enjoyments of a better; and at the same time reminds them of the absolute necessity for their duly executing this their office; otherwise, instead of being the best, the purest, and most useful; they would become the most worthless, and most incurable among mankind*. Those that were fishers, he teaches how to catch men†: and shews them how much this would resemble their former employment, in taking of all kinds into their net, both bad and good; which were at first inseparable, but would at length be carefully distinguished from each other‡. Seeing the money-changers, he exhorts his disciples to lay out their talents to the best advantage§. Being among the sheepfolds, he proves himself to be the true shepherd of souls, describing the particulars in which his character answered that of a good shepherd, even so far as to the *giving* or *laying down his life for the good of his sheep*||, i. e. exposing himself to

Christus a rebus corporeis ad spirituales transiens eas iisdem vocibus exprimit. *Cleric. in Matt. xxvi. 29.*

* ‘ If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith can you season it?’ *Mark ix. 50.* vid. *Cleric. Luke xiv. 34.* vid. *Whitby in loc.*

† *Luke v. 10. Mark i. 17.*

‡ *Matt. xiii. 47.*

§ *Matt. xxv. 27. Luke xix. 23, 45.*

|| *John x. 11. 15.* Or that discourse of Christ’s which is here referred to, might be drawn from *Isa. xl. 11.* part of that

certain death in the protection and defence of his flock from beasts of prey. Among vines, he discourses on the spiritual husbandman and vine-dresser; and draws a parallel between his vineyard, and the natural one*. At the sun rising, he says, *I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.* q. d. The sun arises to set again in a few hours, and may fail many of you, ere you have finished your journey: but every one that receives and governs himself by my doctrine, shall have a constant and continual guide, sufficient to direct him to eternal life†. Upon the appearance of summer in the trees before him, he points out some equally evident signs of his approaching kingdom‡. At the season of fruits, he puts the *Jews* in mind, that the time was come when some fruit would be expected from them, in return for all the labour that had been bestowed upon them; and intimates the judgment that would shortly

chapter being the lesson appointed to be read about that time; as *Lamy* gathers with some shew of probability. To which we may add, that the title of *shepherd*, so frequently given by the prophets to *Messiah*, [*Ezek.* xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24. *Zach.* xiii. 7. *Ps.* lxxx. 1.] was by the *Jews* applied peculiarly to him. Vid. *Allix.* Judgment of Jew. Chap. 304. And he applies it to himself accordingly. *Matt.* xxvi. 31. *Mark* xiv. 27. from *Zech.* xiii. 7.

* *Matt.* xxvi. 30. *John* xv. 1. See another allusion, in all probability, to a *Vine* before him, in *Doddridge* on *Joh.* xv. 1.

† Vid. *Doddr.* on *Joh.* viii. 12. com. *Wetsten* in *Joh.* i. 5. p. 838.

‡ *Luke* xxi. 29. *Matt.* xxiv. 32.

overtake all such among them as were found to be finally unprofitable*. When the harvest comes on, he reminds them of the spiritual harvest, or the gathering of his church; admonishes them to labour diligently in that work, and add their prayers to Heaven for success†. From their slaves having been lately made free in the sabbatical year, he takes occasion to proclaim a greater and more noble freedom from the slavery of sin‡. And from the *Jewish* ceremony of fetching water on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, in commemoration of the miracle wrought for their forefathers in the thirsty wilderness; he introduces an offer of that true *living water*, which should be unto them a well springing up unto everlasting life; the gospel of immortal happiness and salvation which he preached; and the plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive||. Upon a report

* *Matt.* xxi. 33. *Luke* xiii. 6.

† *Matt.* ix. 38. *Luke* x. 2. A like comparison between the season of a spiritual harvest, and some circumstances in the natural one, occurs *Joh.* iv. 35, 36. *Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth, receiveth wages; and gathereth fruit unto life eternal.* In which words *Jesus* alludes to the number of *Samaritans* coming to him, and who now began to appear in sight. He points towards them, and calls upon the Apostles to behold the agreeable sight, and consider his approaching harvest. *Benson*, *Life of Christ*, p. 123, 386. Comp. *Clarke* in loc.

‡ *John* viii. 32. V. *Newton* on *Daniel*, p. 149. Comp. *Whiston*, 6. Diss. p. 311.

|| *John* vii. 37, &c. Comp. *John* iv. 10. where the same

that certain *Jews* were massacred by the *Roman* governor in the midst of their devotions; and that others had lately met with a no less untimely death by the fall of a tower in *Jerusalem*; he guards his audience against the common vice of censoriousness, in judging such as these to be the greatest sinners, because they were the most eminent sufferers; and exhorts them all to repent of their own crimes, before the divine judgments overtook them; which would shortly fall upon

image is made use of on the like occasion. Vid. *Cleric. ib. et in v. 14.* Et *Lamy, Harm. p. 324.* In *Joh. vi. 38.* The first of the passages may likewise be considered as a more particular allusion to the *lesson for the day.* In *Sabbato circa hunc novissimum diem tabernaculorum* occurrenti legebatur *lv. Isaiaë;* quod animadversione dignum est. Sic enim incipit illud caput, *Omnes sitientes venite ad aquas, &c.* et in eo legimus; *quærite Dóminum dum inveniri potest;* inde Dominus materiam disserendi sumpsit; quod verisimile est sæpius fecisse, in templo et in synagogis, ubi per singula Sabbata legebantur sacri codices ex ordine. Id. *ib. p. 325.*

That remarkable expression, in administering the sacrament of the last Supper, *this is my body,* [*Mat. xxvi. 26.*] is no less evidently allusive to the *Paschal Lamb,* termed the *Lord's Passover.* [*Ex. xii. 11.*] or the *Body of the Passover,* according to the Jewish form of celebrating this feast; [*Maimon. Cham. Umatsah. c. 8. sect. i. et vii.*] as likewise the words, *this is my Blood of the new Covenant,* *ib. 28.* or the *new Covenant in my Blood,* [*Luke xxii. 20.*] are a manifest application of the very terms made use of in the institution of the old Covenant. *Ex. xxiv. 8.* Comp. *Heb. ix. 22.* That in the former instance, *Christ* accommodated himself to each minute circumstance of the *Jewish* ceremonial, as in *taking up* the bread with *benediction, breaking, distributing* it, &c. is shewn by *Ugolinus, Dissert. de Rit. in Cœna Dom. ex Antiq. Paschal. illustrat. Thes. Ant. Sacr. Vol. xvii.*

that people, and be the more distinguishable, as coming attended with the very same circumstances*. From *Herod's* late rashness in having led his army out to meet the king of *Arabia*, who came against him with superior forces, and defeated him†; a lesson is laid down to all who entered on the Christian warfare, that they should first well weigh, and carefully compute the difficulties that attended it, before they were engaged in a matter of such consequence‡. From the robberies which were more particularly frequent in that age|| and place§, he forms a beautiful story of a certain traveller, who fell among thieves, was stripped, and wounded, and could find no relief from any of his own country or communion, but met with it in one of those, from whom he had the least reason to expect any, being so much used to despise that people, and their way of worship¶. From whence he forces his

* *Luke* xiii. 1-5. *ωσαντως απολεισθε*, thus, in this manner, ye shall perish. Vid. *Grotius*, *Doddridge*, *Whitby*, in loc. Comp. *Benson*, p. 381, 420.

† *Joseph. Ant. Jud. Lib. xix. c. 7.* V. *Newton* on *Dan.* p. 149. and Comp. *Whiston*, 6 Diss. p. 312.

‡ *Luke* xiv. 31.

|| *Joseph. Ant. Jud. Lib. xx. c. 6. Id. B. J. c. 5. & in Vit.* p. 2, 3.

§ So many robberies and murders were committed on this road, which lay through a kind of wilderness between *Jerusalem* and *Jericho*; that *Jerom* tells us, it was called the *bloody way*, *Doddr.* on *Luke* x. 30. Comp. *Poli Synops. or Lightfoot*, *Hor. Heb.* in loc.

¶ That this notorious enmity between the *Jews* and *Samaritans* was then carried to the greatest height, at least by the

opponent to approve this amiable instance of humanity, even in the odious character of a *Samaritan*; and thereby shews him incontestably that the like good office would no less become a *Jew* in the like circumstances*. And from what happened about that time, namely, that those, who obtained the kingdom of *Judea*, went to *Rome* to be confirmed in it; and on their return, called such to account as had been wanting in their duty, and took ample vengeance on those who rebelled against them, (which was the case under *Archelaus*, a few years before our Lord delivered that parable†;) he gives his followers to understand, that after he had ascended into heaven, and taken possession of his kingdom, he would come again in power and great glory, and not

former, appears wherever mention is made of the latter: vid. *John* viii. 48. *Luke* ix. 53. *Ecclus.* l. 25, et *Arnold*, *ibid.* The consequence of such their enmity toward clearing and confirming those points wherein they agreed, is well drawn by *Bossuet*, *Univ. Hist.* p. 405, 417, &c.

* *Luke* x. 30, &c. Vid. *Cleric.* *ib.* v. 36. Concerning the *Jewish* interpretation of *Lev.* xix. 33. their limitation of the word *neighbour*, and our Lord's address in avoiding the imputation of directly opposing their established doctrine on that head; see *Lamy* *Com. in Harm.* p. 220. *Prohibitum est eos (Gentiles) a morte liberare, si de morte periclitentur, &c.* (*comp. Lightf.* in *Luke* x. 29.) *Tam impiam doctrinam si prima fronte impetiisset Dominus, clamitasset legis-peritus eum traditionibus doctorum adversari. Verum oculis subjiciens exemplum eximie charitatis, quam legis-peritus non poterat non laudare, sic eum constringit, ut teneatur contrariam et saniozem doctrinam suo calculo comprobare.* *Comp. Doddr.* in *Luke* x. 33.

† *Joseph.* *Ant. Jud. Lib.* xviii. c. 14, 15.

only punish that rebellious nation of the *Jews*, with exemplary judgments; but convict and condemn all those who wilfully opposed his gospel; as well as those who continued to despise and disregard it*. Such was our Saviour's constant method, that whenever men proposed to him any curious question, or related to him any particular fact or event, in expectation of having his observations upon it, he constantly turned the matter into an occasion of giving some practical instructions to the persons themselves with whom he was conversing †.—But I proceed with the general detail of his allusions to the things present, which is laid down by an excellent author, and though it may look like repeating some of the articles above, yet I trust the insertion of it here will be excused on account of the different applications made, and the variety of uses pointed out. “In the spring, our Saviour went into the fields, and sat down on a mountain, and made that discourse which is recorded in St. *Matthew*, and which is full of observations, arising from the things which offered themselves to his sight. For when he exhorted his disciples to trust in God, he bade them *behold* the fowls of the air; which were then flying about them, and were fed by Divine Providence, though they did not *sow* nor *reap*, nor *gather into*

* *Luke* xix. 12. Vid. *Cleric.* et *Clarke* in loc. or *Harwood*, Introd. to the N. Tes. c. 8. § 6.

† V. *Clarke's* Serm. on *Luke* xiii. 2, 3. where several instances of this kind are produced.

barns: He bade them take notice of the lilies of the field which were then blown, and were so beautifully clothed by the same Power, and yet toiled not like the husbandmen, who were then at work. Being in a place whence they had a wide prospect of a cultivated land, he bade them observe how God caused the sun to shine, and the rain to descend upon the fields and gardens, even of the wicked and ungrateful: And he continued to convey his doctrine to them under rural images: speaking of good *trees*, and corrupt *trees*, of *wolves in sheep's clothing*, of grapes not growing upon thorns, nor figs on thistles, of the folly of casting precious things to dogs and swine; of good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. Speaking at the same time to the people, many of whom were fishermen, and lived much upon fish, he says, *what man of you will give his son a serpent, if he ask a fish?* Therefore when he said, in the same discourse, to his disciples, *ye are the light of the world; a City that is set on a Hill cannot be hid*; it is probable, that he pointed to a City within their view, situated upon the brow of a Hill. And when he called them the *salt of the earth*, he alluded perhaps to the husbandmen, who were manuring the ground with it; and when he compared every person who observed his precepts, to a man who built a house upon a rock, which stood firm; and every one who slighted his word, to a man who built a house upon the sand, which was thrown down by the winds and

floods: When he used this comparison, it is not improbable that he had before his eyes, houses standing upon high ground, and houses standing in the valley, in a ruinous condition, which had been destroyed by inundations." *Jortin Dis.* p. 213, &c. 2d Ed. Comp. *Benson*, p. 396.

Going from *Bethany* to *Jerusalem* with his disciples, as they passed over a mountain, he said, *if ye shall say to this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done.* *Matt.* xxi. 21. When he says, *Luke* xxii. 25. *The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors*, he alludes to the vanity of some wicked princes of those times, who deserved the title of robbers, much better than of benefactors, (vid. *Cleric.* in loc.) When the woman of *Samaria*, (*John* iv.) wondered that he should ask water of her, he took occasion to represent his doctrine, under the image of *living water*, or water which flows from a spring. When he was by the sea-shore, *Matt.* xiii. he spake three parables to the people, concerning a sower; because it was then probably seed-time, as others have observed. At the time of the *passover*, alluding to it he says, *John* v. 24. He that heareth my word, *μεταβλησκειν* is passed from death unto life, (*Grot.*). When he speaks of the fig-tree, which had borne no fruit for three years, and was to be cut down, if it produced none the next year, he alluded perhaps to the time that he had spent in preaching to the

Jews, as well as to their obstinacy, and to the punishment which would follow it.

Many more instances might be given, where *Christ* has formed his arguments and exhortations on such things as offered themselves to him; applying each most aptly to his present purpose: and where this does not so immediately appear, we have reason to believe it is chiefly owing to the omission of some circumstances in the history; as is observed by a very eminent writer (x). It may be farther observed, that *Christ* is no less intelligible to his auditors, by alluding in a familiar way to all their customs, proverbs, maxims, &c. speaking always precisely in the character of a *Jew*, and in exact conformity to what such understood best, and had been most used to; what had been described or appointed in their sacred books. Thus he takes the very form of his first sermon on the Mount, from those *blessings* and *cursings* on two Mountains, the publishing whereof was enjoined to the *Israelites*, upon their entrance into the Holy Land*. The same method he con-

(x) See *Newt.* on *Dan.* p. 148. note *a*, where many of these instances of our Saviour's speaking *pro re nata* are produced. Comp. *Lightfoot*, Op. Lat. Vol. I. p. 146. on *Matt.* x. 29. *Luke* xii. 6.—p. 417. *Matt.* x. 9, 10.—p. 468. *John* iv. 35. et Vol. II. p. 45. *Matt.* xxi. 21.—p. 288. *Matt.* v. 24. *Schoetgenii*, Hor. Heb. p. 143. in *Matt.* xvi. 18. et *John* vi. 50. Bp. *Hoadley's* Sermon, on *Matt.* xi. 30. pr.

* V. *Deut.* xxviii. *Josh.* viii. the former in *Matt.* v. and the latter in *Luke* vi. 24. The manner of which solemnity has been described at large by some of their writers. V. *Lightfoot* on *Matt.* v. 3. 4. Op. T. II. p. 20.

tinues to the last, when on the cross he begins to repeat, or as it were, gives out, the 22d Psalm, which so very clearly describes the sufferings and death of the *Messiah*; which prophecy he was at that very time fulfilling, and thereby ascertaining and appropriating this character to himself*.

Hence, lastly, we may observe, the necessity for a careful attention to the particular occasion, time and place; as well as the situation, posture, gesture, &c. in which our Saviour spake, in order fully to comprehend the propriety, the force and beauty of his discourses; which should remind us of the allowances that ought in justice to be made, for the seeming uncouthness of some things in them at this day, for want of specifying such circumstances, and make us sensible of the value of those authors, who throw so much light on several passages of scripture, by endeavouring to supply these same circumstances †.

* *Matt.* xxvii. 46. *Mark* xv. 34. That a whole Psalm or Song is sometimes referred to by reciting the first words of it, may be gathered from *Exod.* xv. 1, &c. compared with v. 21. ib. See *Pilkington's* Remarks, p. 129.

To which may be added, that his very last words, *Luke* xxii. 46. *into thy hands I commend my Spirit*, are those of Ps. xxxi. 5.

† I shall beg leave to add an instance of this kind, where our blessed Saviour's conduct does not seem to have been sufficiently understood, for want of attending to the circumstance abovementioned. *John* viii. when the woman, said to be apprehended in adultery, is brought before our Lord, merely with a malicious view of drawing him into a difficulty, whatever determination he should give; v. 6. we find him *stooping down* and *writing on the ground*. Where it is observable that he does

In this manner did *Christ* make every object and event serve for a monitor and remembrancer

nothing, but in as exact conformity as the place would admit to the trial of the adulterous wife prescribed by God in *Numb.* v. ii. &c. where the priest was to stoop down, and take some of the dust from the floor of the tabernacle, v. 17. and likewise write out the curses denounced upon that occasion, v. 23. By that act therefore Christ declares himself willing to take cognizance of this affair, if they were willing to abide the consequence: viz. according to their own traditions to be involved in the same curse if they proved equally guilty: on which account, this way of trial was abolished by the *Sanhedrim* about that very time, since that sin, says the Jews, grew then so very common. See *Lightf.* on v. 3. It is likewise probable that Christ might by his countenance and gesture shew these hypocrites how well he was aware both of their ill design in thus demanding judgment from him, and of their own obnoxiousness to the same punishment, which *Moses's* law appointed for that crime; and which through a pretended zeal, they took upon themselves the power of executing, though they were no less guilty of the very *same sin*: as is most probably implied in his words to them, John viii. 7. according to the interpretation of some late writers, (v. *Kyrke Obs. Sac. in loc.*) and at the same time seeming to be so far otherwise employed as not to take any notice of their confusion when thus much was intimated to them, he gives them a fair opportunity to slip away (which they prudently laid hold of) ere he proceed any farther." The most probable account of our Saviour's stooping and writing, is that which is contained in an interpolation, as it is reckoned, at the end of the 8th verse in some copies, that what Christ wrote were the sins of the woman's accusers; which how effectual it was to their shame and confusion, appeared from the event. *Worthington*, B. Lect. V. i. p. 180. Imitabatur Christus ut quidam sentiunt, gestum sacerdotis, qui uxorem suspectam exploraturus sese inclinabat, pulveremque à pavimento sanctuarii colligebat, quem aquæ infusum præberet fæminæ huic quæ suspecta erat. Judæi docent nos aquas Zelotypiæ non nocuisse uxori adulteræ, nisi ipse maritus insons esset. Adulter autem cum adultera pariter tumore ven-

of his instructions; which by these means, must be better apprehended and retained, than they could be in any continued course of reasoning or artificial method of arrangement whatsoever*.

Again it is observable, that he delivered many things by way of *story* or *parable*, a most engaging and a most effectual method of instruction; gradually informing those who were disposed for information, and not too violently disgusting those who were not†. This way of teaching, is of all

tris et putredine femoris corripiebantur. *Maimon.* in *Sotah.* c. 2. Hæc inter aniles Rabbīnorum fabulas esse numeranda dicit quispiam. Attamen constat testimonio *Josephi*, tum et sacri codicis, olim deum manifestis pœnis occulta delicta puniisse. Dici ergo potest quod judicium Dei reveriti, quia a culpa forsā non erant immunes, excesserint scribæ et pharisæi omnes. *Lamy Harm.* p. 329. See the thing more at large in *Lightf.* on *Joh.* viii. 6. 9. and Vol. ii. p. 1080. A vindication of the authenticity of this whole passage, with an explanation of its several ends and uses, may be seen in *Benson's* Dis. on the subject, life of Christ p. 637, &c. Comp. *Worthington*, B. L. sect. V. i.

* See Dr. *Jeffery*, referred to in not. *. p. 126. Ed. 6. And add *Cumming's* Serm. on *Matt.* xi. 5. *Scotch Preacher*, v. i. p. 281, &c. *Simpson's* Essay on Christianity, being delivered in an historical way.

† See *Le Clerc*, *Harm.* p. 183. The same thing is elegantly described, and well applied by the author of *Dialogues concerning education*, p. 363, &c. The like may be observed of the many *figurative* expressions, which our Saviour uses upon some occasions. See *Claget* upon *Joh.* iv.

On the same account it was, in all probability, that he so generally chose to express himself in the very words of some ancient *prophet*, more especially in matters that were like to give offence. And to the same purpose it has been observed, that he never spoke in parables at all, till the *Jews* had manifested such a wicked and perverse spirit, as to ascribe his

others the most apt to raise, and fix the attention, and set each faculty of the mind on work: It gains the freest admission into both head and heart; it strikes the deepest; sticks the longest; gives the most delight, by leaving something for the hearers themselves to discover; and disoblige least, by putting them upon making their own application. On these accounts, it has been admired in all nations, and was particularly celebrated in the East (ω). It was the custom of the wise men among the ancients, to clothe their instructions in apt stories and suitable comparisons; this they did at once to please and to instruct; to excite men's attention by gratifying their curiosity; and to quicken their memory by entertaining their fancy*: Our Saviour took this method to recommend his weighty instructions, and make them sink into the minds of his several auditors. The same method was likewise proper on other accounts, viz. to deliver some of the mysteries of the gospel with a degree of obscurity and reserve; both to excite a proper industry in searching into the *deep things of God*, and to punish

miracles to a confederacy with *Beelzebub*. *Benson's Life of Christ*, c. 7. § 1, 2. An answer to the pretended obscurity of them may be seen, *ib.* § 3. p. 266, &c.

(ω) *Jerom.* on *Matt.* xiv. *Whitby* on *Matt.* xiii. 10. *Nichol's Conf.* Vol. 1.

* As well as to prepare them occasionally, for a proper reproof and admonition, in the most effectual and least offensive way, by making themselves judges of such criminality in a parallel case.

the sloth and negligence of those men, who grudge taking any pains to learn God's will and their own duty; this reason, our Saviour himself assigns, why he speaks to the multitude in parables, *Matt.* xiii. 10. &c.* Among many other excellent purposes to which *Christ* applied this method; in a manner the most delicate and masterly, it was peculiarly fitted in the last place, to insinuate such points, as more immediately opposed the inveterate prejudices of all those to whom he preached; more especially of his disciples; and which, though necessary for their information so far as might help afterwards to reconcile their thoughts to these things, when they were able to recollect that they had been intended, and foretold from the beginning; yet were not at that time to be laid down in a more open manner; such as related chiefly to the external circumstances of his person, and the proportionable effects of his doctrine upon both *Jew and Gentile*†.

As to the fundamental parts of his religion and his manner of declaring them; both these were easy and obvious, such as the weakest and most ignorant (unless affectedly so) could not mistake; and proposed in that plain, popular way to which they were the most accustomed, and in which they would be most likely to apprehend him:

* *Lowth Dis.* p. 185. *Comp. Jaquelot de la verité,* &c. p. 318. *Lamy Harm.* 248, 253. *Lightfoot in Matt.* xiii. 3. or *Harm.* c. 31. § 37.

† *Vid. Jaquelot,* p. 319, &c.

The *Eastern* writers, are well known to abound with brief maxims; parabolic or proverbial expressions; and extremely popular forms of speech*: In which such a dry detail of circumstances and restraining clauses, as is made use of in our reasoning, would have been little relished or regarded; and which style of theirs may be justified both in point of certainty and perspicuity; since to one who is tolerably well acquainted with that language, the main drift lies commonly very obvious under all these strong and significant, however highly figurative and bold expressions. Nor is there any great difficulty in supplying all the proper qualifications which of course arise in every subject; and will have an allowance made for them so long as either common sense, or common equity and candour is admitted. And it is worth remarking, that wherever *Christ's* words seem capable of different senses, we may conclude that to be the true one, which lay most level to the comprehension of his auditors; allowing for those figures of speech, which were so very frequent and familiar with them, and which therefore are no exceptions to this general rule, this necessary *canon* of interpretation, which of all others, I think, wants most to be recommended.

The bulk of his doctrine was purely practical, always highly pertinent to the case in hand, and of an apparent tendency to the most beneficial

* Vid. Assize Sermon. at *Carlisle*, on *Matt.* v. 40. 1743.

purposes: and he is so far from seeking reputation by an artful and elaborate manner of expounding it; that he barely proposes each point, together with its proper sanction, and leaves it to shine forth by its own light. It is neither versed in nice speculations, nor involved in pompous paradoxes, nor adorned with flowers of rhetoric. We find it free from all ostentatious and unnatural flights, as well as from that load of superstition which encumbered every other system: consisting of solid and substantial duties; containing general comprehensive rules to try them by; and grounded on such never failing principles of action, as must enable his disciples to determine for themselves, and judge aright in each particular case; as for instance, in that of the *sabbath*; which, like all other solemnities, was instituted for the sake of man, and therefore should be made subservient to his good*; and in that, to the glory of his Maker, which are inseparable from each other. In *meats* and *drinks*, and every thing, by consequence of the same kind†; which as being merely external things, must likewise be of an indifferent nature; and therefore could not of themselves *defile a man*‡. In that of *oaths*, the several kinds whereof were all of the same import, as including the same virtual appeal to God; and therefore should alike exclude all fraudulent, equivocal, evasive arti-

* *Mark* ii. 27. Vid. *Cleric*.

† *Col.* ii. 21.

‡ *Matt.* xv. 18. *Mark* vii. 15. See *Lightf. Harm.* p. 237.

fices*. In that of *vows*, which bind only to things lawful, and by which none could exempt themselves from duties of a prior and perpetual obligation†. In that of *contracts*, which confer a right to the thing contracted for; more especially the solemn one of *matrimony*, which ought not to be rashly violated by either party, or dissolved for any cause less than such an one as must prove inconsistent with the very foundation and original end thereof, v. g. fornication or *adultery*‡. And by that universal rule of *mercy* being preferred to *sacrifice*, whenever a *moral* and a *positive* precept interfere with one another§.

Such doctrine must appear, not only excellent itself, and taken independently; but more especially so, in the circumstances under which it was delivered; as formed in full opposition to, and utterly subversive of, the several false maxims, advanced by the *Jewish* teachers of our Saviour's time: in which respect it must be doubly useful, i. e. as an instruction in several truths of the last importance, and a guard against so many popular errors; and may be considered as another instance of his exquisite manner of accommodating things,

* *Matt.* xxiii. 16, &c.

† *Matt.* xv. 6. *Mark* vii. 11.

‡ *Matt.* v. 32, &c. compared with 1 *Cor.* vii. 15. and *Wolf* ib. Vol. III. p. 407. That this should be understood, rather as a capital *instance*, of such an inconsistency, than as the sole restraining clause of a divorce, vid. *Kyrke*, Obs. Sacr. vol. i. p. 25. *Pool* in loc. p. 166, 167. or *Whitby*, on 1 *Cor.* vii. 15.

§ *Matt.* ix. 13. xii. 7.

both to the general benefit of mankind, and the particular exigencies of his hearers.

Lastly, our Saviour's arguments must carry something of a peculiar force and poignancy along with them, and be attended with extraordinary conviction and astonishment; as he knew thoroughly *what was in man*, and therefore could speak to his heart directly*; as he saw into the most secret views of all those whom he had to deal with; and often shewed them plainly that he did so, removing the latent prejudices of his weaker friends, by obviating their several doubts and difficulties, and that before they durst give utterance to them†: by answering such objections as had been made in private, or out of his hearing‡: by refuting every plausible pretence, and laying open all the stratagems of his most subtil adversaries; detecting

* *Matt.* ix. 4. xii. 25. *Mark* xi. 5. ix. 33, 34, 35. *Luke* v. 22. vi. 8. ix. 47. xi. 17. *John* vi. 61. 70. xvi. 6. 30. See other instances in *Claggett* on *John* vii. 33, 34. *Lamy, Harm.* on *John* v. 14. p. 272. *Benson, Life of Christ*, c. 5. sect. 11. 3. And *Light-foot* on *John* i. 48.—*Harm.* p. 535.

† Comp. *John* xvi. 19. 30. et *Cleric.* in *John* xi. 22.

‡ This seems to have been the case in *John* vii. 15, 16.—xxvii. 28. and many other places, where that circumstance is not expressed. Comp. *Luke* xxii. 61. See *Benson's Life of Christ*, c. 5. § iv. and § xxi. where several texts are explained by the consideration of *Jesus*, his knowing the hearts of men; and that he could talk to their thoughts as we do to another's words or actions. Comp. Dr. *Harwood's* new *Introd.* to the N. T. c. 8. § 1. Where many ingenious observations occur to the same purpose.

their hypocrisy, exposing their true aim; and thereby cutting off all possibility of reply: on which account, his word must be *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword*.—Many instances whereof will occur upon a diligent perusal of the Gospels*.

Thus did *Christ* live and teach; shewing himself to be as much superior to the rest of the world, in each of these respects, as he was in his miracles.

There was an extraordinary man among the Greeks, who has often been compared to *Christ*, there being a great resemblance between them, in some very remarkable particulars. *Socrates*, like *Christ*, lays out all his time, in going about to admonish and reform his countrymen; which, he assures them, was a *ministry enjoined* him by the Deity, for their benefit, to whom he declares that he was *given* or *sent* by God; with the utmost firmness, bearing all the injuries, and affronts, to which he was exposed on that account. He frequently resorts to places of public concourse, and generally grounds his discourses on what occurs there, making use of every place, and season, and occasion, to inculcate his philosophy. He chooses a state of poverty to make his character more un-

* The argument from thence in favour of Christianity, may be seen in *Bourn's Discourses on the Parables*, Vol. III. Sermon. i. p. 6. &c.

exceptionable, by shewing that he himself practised that self-denial which he taught*: he avoids meddling with affairs of the public; declines all posts of authority amongst his fellow citizens; as such in those bad times must have precipitated his fate, before he had fixed ground sufficient for their reformation. He perseveres in sifting and examining their prejudices, in order to detect their ignorance and expose their presumption†, and mortify their pride, on all occasions; and declares that he must persevere in the same disagreeable course‡, even when he saw that the loss of his life would certainly attend it§: nay, that he would continue this course, though he were to die ever so often for it. When merely out of private pique or envy, he is delivered up to his enemies, and on a prosecution brought to his trial, instead of having recourse to the usual way of supplication, or applying to the passions of his judges, he proves to them, that they ought not to admit of any such application; he informs their reason, and proceeds just so far in his own defence, as to assert his *innocence*, and shew them the great *sin* of persecuting and oppressing it.

Instead of seeking, or permitting, any other means to avoid his death, he signifies that it was

* Vid. *Plutarch Advers. Colet. Op. Vol. II.*

† *Plat. Apol. Sect. 9.*

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Xenoph. Mem. Lib. iv. Fin.*

free and voluntary in him, since it had become necessary for the world; and meets the instruments thereof, with the utmost calmness and serenity.

He left none of his philosophy in writing, but took good care, as he said, to imprint it deeply in the hearts of his disciples; and indeed, the effects which his instructions and example had upon them, were prodigious*.

Some other circumstances of the like kind might be pointed out, were we to draw a strict parallel between these two very eminent persons, considered as public teachers. But, without derogating from the character of *Socrates*, we may affirm that he was far surpassed by *Christ*, as well in the importance of his doctrines as in the candid, clear, convincing manner of delivering them; free from that control, that sophistical method, that captious way of interrogating and arguing with which *Socrates* often labours to perplex and confound his opponent, rather than set forth the truth; and always laid down in that plain artless simplicity, that naked purity and perfection which distinguish *Christianity* from every other system of religion or philosophy.

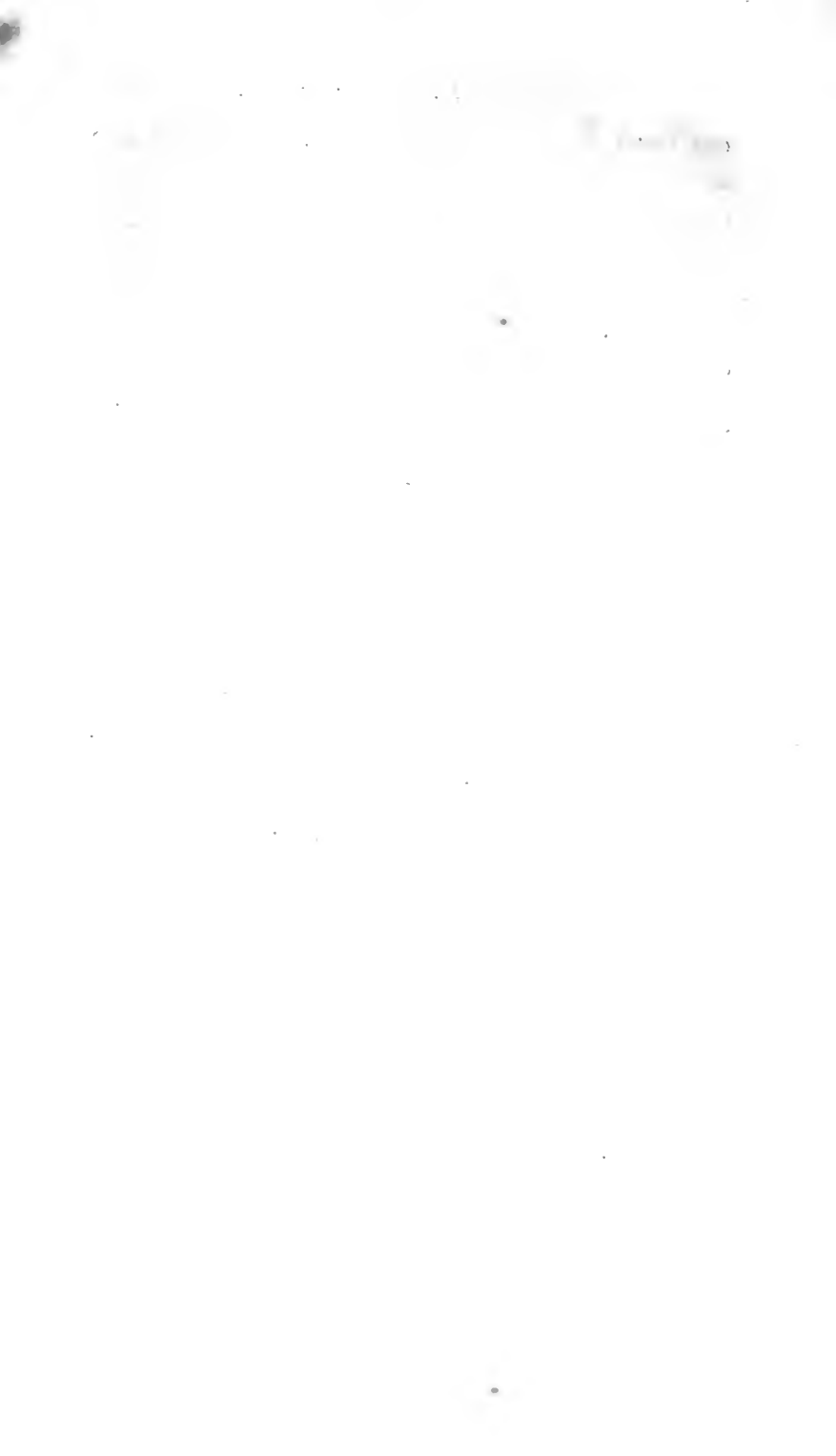
From these slight strictures on a character justly reputed one of the most complete among men; when it is placed in opposition to that of *Christ*

* Vid. *Charpentier* Life of *Socr.*

our Lord, it is easy to distinguish which has the advantage* ; as is freely owned by some modern unbelievers†. The same thing would appear yet more clearly, were the latter to be drawn out at large, and in contrast with any other of the most celebrated legislators or teachers. But such a comparative view seems to be little necessary to its illustration : and I content myself with touching on some few of those remarkable circumstances in the life of *Jesus*, which were recorded by his first disciples, as the *evidences* of his being the Son of God ; which brought such multitudes to believe on him at that time, and which one would think sufficient to produce the same belief in every age ; as they have done with the generality wherever they have been fairly offered to them ; and with the best and wisest men, who have given themselves leave duly to reflect upon them.

* This may be seen at large in *Macknight's Truth of the Gospel History*.

† See the parallel in *Rousseau's Treatise on Education*, and *Voltaire's Essay on Toleration*, c. 14.



THE
NATURE AND END
OF
DEATH
UNDER THE
CHRISTIAN COVENANT.



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HEB. II. 14, 15.

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, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.

THE author of this epistle had in the foregoing part of it been proving, that both Christ, *who sanctifieth the world, and they who were sanctified by him, were brethren; of the same seed, and alike children of the promise wherein all the nations of the earth were to be blessed:* whence he infers,

forasmuch then as the children [mankind in general] are partakers of flesh and blood or mortal by nature; he also, who was to be the captain of their salvation, must likewise take part of the same nature, and suffer in it; that he might not only shew them, how death was to be overcome, but actually procure an abolition of it;—that by submitting to this degradation for a while himself, Jesus might for ever rescue all his brethren from it; and at length raise them to the same state of glory which he now enjoys:—That it was a work worthy of infinite wisdom and goodness; or became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make this humiliation of their head a step thereto; that he [Christ] by the grace of God, or through the love of the Father, should taste death for every man; and thereby, as it is in a parallel place †, deliver the whole creation from the bondage of corruption, under which they had groaned, and travelled in pain together until now; and thus defeat and vanquish our great adversary, who had so long subjected us to such a state of vanity; and finally exalt the whole world to the highest degree of happiness and perfection, by that very thing, which had been introduced in order to debase and ruin it. Thus, by once undergoing this last evil*

* *Joh. iii. 16*

† *Rom. viii. 22. Comp. Heb. ii. 14, 15.* A continual apprehension of being for ever under the dominion of Death, is the bondage or slavery here mentioned. *Sykes, ib.*

incident to our frame, he has taken off its force, and gained a final victory over it: this death is now disarmed of its terrors; and man delivered from that abject state of anxiety, to which the ancient heathen were, and we must have been necessarily reduced; being constantly sensible of its continual approaches towards us; and having no sure prospect of being ever freed from its dominion over us.—This is the true import of that *great salvation* we obtain through *Jesus Christ*; which, whenever it is well understood in the world, will be judged *worthy of all acceptation*: in order to which, let us take a farther view of this important subject; which I propose to consider more distinctly, under the following heads of inquiry:

I. In what sense we are *delivered from death* by the sufferings and death of Christ.

II. Why so much of the *power of death* is still permitted to continue in the world.

III. What *notions* of it are now proper and agreeable to the *Christian* state.

I. In what sense are we delivered from death by the sufferings and death of Christ?

To determine this, it will be necessary to examine the scripture sense of the word *death*, and this may be best seen, where it is first used, in that denunciation which brought *Adam* and his posterity under it; and where we must suppose it

used in all the plainness and propriety of speech imaginable*. And accordingly, we find the original here†, as full and emphatical as words can make it. They are rendered, Thou shalt *surely*, —but might with more propriety have been rendered, Thou shalt *utterly die*‡. Which one would think sufficiently explained in the sentence passed on our first parents; where they are reminded of their original, and of that condition to which this great change should reduce them. *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* Now what do we imagine they could understand by this denunciation, but a resumption of that natural *life* or conscious existence, which their Creator had been lately pleased to confer? the forfeiting which must include a loss of all those benefits, that then did, or ever could proceed from him. This, and no-

* Gen. ii. 17.

† מות מות Comp. Gen. xxxvii. 33. Ex. xxi. 19. where the same reduplication of the word signifies *entirely, totally*, and should have been so rendered here. See this farther confirmed in *Taylor*, Script. Div. Ch. ix. p. 104.

‡ *Athanasius* thinks, that the doubling the expression denotes Μη μονον αποθνησκειν, αλλα και εν τη τβ θανατω φθορα διαμενειν. [L. de *Incarn. verbi.*] He should not only die, but remain in the corruption of death, as we should all have done, had not the *second Adam* obtained for us a happy resurrection. Vid. *Patrick* on Gen. ii. 17. with *Taylor's* Scheme of Script. Div. p. 104. And more especially, *Ibbot's* Sermons, Vol. II. s. xxx. p. 182—3—4.

thing less, must be implied in that most solemn sentence: nor can we conceive the unhappy subjects of it to have been at that time so very ingenious, as to explain it away, by distinguishing upon the several component parts of their constitution; and concluding, that by death no more was intended, than only a separation of these same parts, while the principal of them was still *living* in some different *manner*; or that it was a continuation of their conscious *being*, though in some other *place*. No: this was the philosophy of after ages: concerning which, all I shall say at present is, that one of its most eminent patrons cannot help observing, that *he does not find it in the Scriptures*(z). These, in their obvious meaning, represent the *whole* man, individual, person, or being, as included in the sentence here addressed to him; nor do they take notice of any other circumstance in the whole case, beside that, so often mentioned, of his returning to the *dust, or ground*

(z) *Tillotson*, Vol. II. fol. Serm. 100.—This is very tenderly expressed; and the reason that great author gives for it, not unsuitable to the prejudices of his time: whereas if he had considered the point more fully, I presume, he would have found the Scripture not *taking this natural immortality for granted*, as he imagines, but rather laying down *the contrary*; and the New Testament every where insisting on it, as the very ground of the whole Christian covenant; through which alone, we attain to immortality, or *everlasting life*. In order to form a better judgment of this, we should carefully examine the Scripture language; and see what all those several terms and phrases may imply in the original, which are supposed to include the doctrine above mentioned: for which, see the APPENDIX.

*from whence he was taken**: and might not the first pair as well expect, that the same *breath of life*, which the Lord God had breathed into their nostrils, whereby man became a living soul, should still survive the execution of that sentence; or that *the dust* itself should praise God; as that any kind of knowledge of, or communion with him, should continue in that state of darkness, and destruction, to which they were then doomed?

Thus did death enter into the world, and reign in it, through that *one transgression*.—Let us in the next place see how this reign is destroyed, and we delivered from it by the *obedience* of our Lord:

This will appear more clearly, from the *date* of that deliverance which is every where represented in the same Scripture, as commencing at the *re-*

* *Gen. iii. 23.* ‘As the threatening was only in general, *Thou shalt die*; and it does not appear by the history, that man had any notice given him of a *spiritual* death, (or the necessity of *sinning*) nor of *eternal* death, (i. e. a necessity and eternity of *torment*) so it would seem surprising, if it had not been often said by some men, (which was yet never proved by any) that death, natural, spiritual, and eternal, was threatened.’ *Jeffery*, Select. Dis. p. 22. ‘When *Adam* was told that if he offended he should die, he could not then understand by Death a future punishment after Death, but rather an annihilation of his soul, and a dissolution of his body, and a returning to the same insensibility from which he had been called into being.’ *Jortin*, Sermon. Vol. VII. p. 283. How the same learned author could elsewhere adopt the contrary doctrine, and make it the burden of his discourses, as he seems to have done, is somewhat surprising.

urrection; nor can any thing else constitute the full opposition above-mentioned; for if death be a return to *dust*, then nothing but a *reviving*, or a resuscitation from that dust, can be the reversing of it, or a proper recovery from it; and accordingly, to this, and this alone, St. *Paul* confines the contrast he has drawn at large, between the first and second *Adam*. *Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead; and as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive**; which life is not therefore an

* Which words, (as a very competent judge of Scripture language has assured us) *directly affirm*, ‘that a resurrection, or being *made alive* again, is granted, assured, and executed, by, and in *Christ* alone; and *evidently suppose*, 1. That the dead are not *made alive*, till the *resurrection*; for the *resurrection of the dead*, and being *made alive*, are here expressions of the same signification. 2. That, had not a *resurrection* been provided, we should *never* after death have been *made alive*.’ *Taylor’s* Script. Doctr. of Orig. Sin, p. 24. Comp. *Doddridge* on *John* iii. 15. *Fam. Expos.* Vol. I. p. 154. and *Jeffery* Select Disc. p. 64.

The same thing is very properly termed by Bishop *Sherlock* [Disc. ii. p. 76.] a *calling men from the grave into being*; or the *making dead bodies into living men*; p. 300. which second creation of all men, by our blessed Saviour, his lordship justly parallels to the *calling them out of nothing at the first creation*; or the restoring to them *that life, which he at first gave*; *ib.* or the *calling man into life again, out of the same state of dust and ashes, from which he was at first formed a living soul*. *Ib.* Disc. vi. p. 209.

Add *Id.* Disc. Vol. II. p. 207. ‘He—goes down—to the grave, and his iniquities follow him; and will rise with him again, when God calls him to appear and answer for himself.’ *Ib.* p. 278. The fear of death can be allayed by nothing, but the hope of *living again*;—*death* is a *sleep* from which we

inherent property of our original nature, but a *free gift* to us*, procured by Christ, and accordingly termed *the grace*, or *gift of God*, and *the gift by grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord*†: who on that account is pleased to style himself *the resurrection and the life*‡; who is called *our life*§; and said to have *the keys of hades and of death*; opening for us the true and only way to immortality, through the gate of the *resurrection*; and without whom there is no admission to it; *but the wrath of God abideth on us*||. So far is it from truth, that immortal life may be discovered by the light of nature; that on the contrary, we are

expect to *wake* to immortality.—The same notion is consistently pursued by his lordship. Use and Intent of Proph. p. 69, 75, 91, 93, 116, 118, 142, 143, 239, 240. 2d edit.

That nothing else but this *compound being*, which is wholly *destroyed by death*, and whose constituent parts are renewed at the *resurrection*, can with any propriety be denominated *man*; see in the same eminent writer, *ib.* p. 86.—What insurmountable difficulties have arisen from considering these constituents separately, may be seen, *ib.* p. 101, &c.

It is something surprising to think that a mere rational mind should be the same individual with a *man*, who consists of a rational mind, a sensitive soul, and a body. This carries no probability with it at first sight: and reason cannot undertake much in its behalf. *Ib.* Disc. p. 204.

* *John* v. 40. vi. 33, 51, 57. x. 10, 28. xiv. 6, 19. xvii. 2, 22. 1 *John* ii. 25. v. 11, 12, 13.

† *Rom.* v. 14, 15, 16, 17. vi. 23. viii. 2. The resurrection of the dead, *through*, or *in Jesus*, *Acts* iv. 2. 1 *Cor.* xv. 22, 57. 1 *Pet.* iii. 7.

‡ *John* xi. 25.

§ *Col.* iii. 4.

|| *John* iii. 36.

taught to believe it was Christ only who *abolished death*, and *brought immortality to light*, (or revealed it,) *by his Gospel*:—that the heathens, ignorant of this, *have no hope*; or no *ground* for their hope*; and that if there were no resurrection, the very best of men, even they who are *fallen asleep in Christ*, are *perished*†. But now Christ being himself risen from the dead, and thereby become *the first-fruits of them that slept*; we are as certain of our own resurrection, as that he our head is risen for us. Hereby we become *children*, or *heirs of the resurrection*; and have an infallible title to *immortal life*, through this *adoption*; that is, the *redemption of our body*‡. We now know, that we shall not *perish for ever*§, or be finally *lost*; but live in him; or (as he himself constantly explains it) be raised up again *at the last day*||. We may *with boldness* approach to God *by a living way*, which Christ hath consecrated to us *through the veil*; that is, *his flesh*: through him

* ‘Scholars may reason of the nature of the Soul, and the condition of it when separated from the body; but the common *hopes* of nature receive no support from such inquiries.’ Bp. *Sherlock*, Disc. ii. p. 85. ‘We die and moulder to dust; and in that state, what we are, or where we are, nature cannot say.’ Id. ib. Vol. IV. p. 79.

† The true import of this phrase, and the argument from it, is well established by *Alexander*, Paraphr. on 1 *Cor.* xv. p. 28, &c.

‡ *Rom.* viii. 23.

§ *John* x. 28.

|| *John* iii. 16.—vi. 39, 40, 44.

we have gained the *victory*; may join in St. *Paul's* triumph over *death and the grave**; and have infinite reason to express our gratitude for it, with the same good apostle; *thanks be to God, who giveth us this victory*, through our Lord *Jesus Christ*. But,

2dly, If death be vanquished, why then doth so much of its *power* still subsist in the world? Why is this *pause* permitted in the course of our existence; and life dropt awhile, in order to be resumed? How comes it to pass, that we do not rather *live on*, than die to rise again?—and in what manner shall we be revived? as some distinguish the two questions of St. *Paul*†, from the

* 1 *Cor.* xv. 55.

† 1 *Cor.* xv. 35. Πως εγερσονται οι νεκροι; *Why* are dead men raised to life again? or how is it that such persons shall be recalled into being who now are as if they had never been? See *Locke* on the place, note *h.* who seems to have given the first hint of adjusting the above queries to their distinct replies; though we are sorry to observe a piece of confusion in the same note, very uncommon to that accurate writer, occasioned by his inverting the order of the same answers just after he had stated them, and thereby appearing to postpone the 36th verse to those that follow. Other commentators are forced to admit the two-fold question, yet in handling the first, either run it into a foreign inquiry about the *possibility* of the thing, or sink it into the second, as wholly relative to the *manner* of effecting it. That the word πως may with equal propriety be rendered *why*, as well as *how*, will appear sufficiently from the parallel places, *Matt.* xvi. 11. xxii. 12. *Mark* iv. 40. viii. 21, &c. in which passages it seems to bear the very same sense as δια τι and in several others both of the N. T. and other writers, when it is used interrogatively.

distinct answer which he gives to each, *viz.* that in the common course of nature here, the decay and dissolution of things precedes a reviviscence [*that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die;*] that such a change of states is no less necessary; and—that it would be as *foolish* to expect the contrary in this case, as to expect that seed-corn should grow up, without any of that alteration in its texture, which is occasioned by the change of seasons*, soil, and situation.

Let us proceed then to inquire into the propriety of our either living on still in the present state, or being removed into some other, without such a change as death produces.

As to the former supposition, it is plain, that in what state soever mankind were originally made, they could not have subsisted all together in the present world, nor been supported in such numbers as now take their turn there, in succeeding generations†; the inhabitants of this globe must have been confined to a few individuals; and these been frequently removed, both to make room for others, and by way of advancement to themselves; without any of that pain or perturbation, anxiousness or dread, which usually precedes or attends the conclusion of their present

* Comp. *John* xii. 24.

† Δὸς ἀλλοίς τόπον δεῖ γενεσθαι καὶ ἀλλες, καθάπερ καὶ συγενεθ, καὶ γενομενος εχειν χωραν, καὶ οικησεις, καὶ τα επιτηδεια. Αν δ' οἱ πρωτοι μη ὑπεξαγωσι, τι ὑπολειπεται; Arrian, Epictet, Diss. p. 558. Edit. Upton, 1741.

life.—How far this might have been the case, had man continued as he came out of the hand of his Creator, holy and innocent, we cannot say, but are very sure, that when this innocence was lost, when sin had entered, and evil habits spread and propagated themselves in the world; men were neither fit to live on in it, as long as they pleased; nor to be removed out of it in such a way as might appear most agreeable to them; but rather must be held in a rigorous dependence, both to preserve themselves, their due time, in such existence here; and put them on the most effectual means of making some provision for a better state.

If after a long life idly spent in this world, each of us were sure of being lightly removed into some other region; we should in all probability be no more concerned about it, than at taking a journey into some foreign country: or could we at any time, without either pain, or the apprehension of any, quit our abode here, and convey ourselves to the realms above; how ready on every slight occasion would each be to despatch himself thither! how rashly would all of them rush into their Maker's presence, however unfit and unprepared to meet him! Or must the sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth be obliged to send his messengers (as he did for *Elijah*) to conduct us thither, whenever we may be disposed to change our station? This surely must appear no less indecent and incongruous; on all accounts, being neither

more worthy of the Divine Majesty; nor better suited to the nature of man; who, though he be endowed with large capacities, considering whence he sprang lately, and placed high in the rank of creatures, several classes of which are entirely subjected to him; yet is he at his best estate of but a very limited understanding, and by no means qualified to have the entire disposal of himself; or to be fully let into the manner, how he is to be disposed of in the next world; which were he at present able to comprehend, he would in all probability make no proper use of such knowledge, but become apt to pervert it to some evil purpose.

It might be necessary therefore to have such a veil drawn over the whole, as is now done by death; while man is fixed here for some time, in a state of discipline and probation: under general laws, to be foreseen, and in some measure influenced by himself; and of which therefore he may avail himself so far as to enjoy a good degree of present happiness, as well as render himself meet for some superior station, when he shall be called to it. Here he is at first produced, and formed to act his part upon this present stage; a short one indeed, but such as may be sufficient to constitute a real character, and lay a just foundation for eternity: then the scene closes in so solemn a manner, as must, if anything can, *alarm* him, and excite some vigorous endeavours to prepare for his appearance in the next state, which

is of infinite importance, and opens with a public trial; when all persons shall be gathered from all quarters of the world, and *stand together before the judgment-seat of Christ*; at once to receive their doom for all things done in the body, at whatever distance of time, to which doom their respective deaths consigned them.

Farther, such a dispensation as this of death, however disagreeable it may sometimes appear to us, is yet in our present circumstances of great and general service; and the apprehension of it absolutely necessary for the government of mankind, considered either as in a state of natural culture, and training up for society with one another here; or, in order to prepare them for a higher degree of moral happiness, and mutual fellowship with Saints and Angels hereafter. The frequent warnings of it are of no less use, to check the enormous growth of wealth and power, in any particular stage or member of it; and thereby cut off the very extensive views, and curb the hardy attempts of arbitrary and aspiring men:—to keep the balance more even among those higher orders, and prevent that tyranny and oppression, which would naturally attend some deep-laid schemes of overthrowing it;—to restrain the exorbitant degrees of vice and villany in those of lower stations, by the various terrors which attend the prospect of it, and by its frequent visible infliction;—to correct the sallies of intemperance, and lust, by bringing their sad effects so fully to view;—by

being the most powerful means of breaking wrong associations, and reforming evil habits; since this is the very strongest and most general alarm, raised and collected from all quarters of our constitution*;—by putting us upon rousing ourselves from sloth and supine negligence, and recollecting in what a precarious state we are;—by preventing our being ever wholly immersed in the low cares, and sunk under the load of any crosses and calamities of this same transitory life:—helping us to raise our thoughts and expectations to a better, enabling us to keep them more intent upon it;—to fix our hearts there, where our real treasure lies, and whither we are in so sensible a manner daily hastening [H].

* See *Hartley's Essay on Man*, Vol. I. p. 466.

[H] ‘ In general, to all mankind *death* is no small benefit, as it increaseth the vanity of all earthly things, and so abateth their force to tempt and delude; hath a tendency to excite sober reflections; to induce us to be moderate in gratifying the appetites of a corruptible body; to mortify pride and ambition; and to give a sense of our dependence upon God. And when death, at too great a distance, was not sufficient generally to gain these important ends; when mankind abused a life prolonged near a thousand years, to universal excess and violence; [*Gen. vi. 12, 13.*] God was pleased after the deluge to vary this dispensation by shortening our days, and gradually reducing them to threescore and ten, or fourscore years. And if the degeneracy of the *Antediluvians* were the occasion of this reduction of human life, (as seems most probable) then it will be true, that as *DEATH entered into the world by Adam's sin*, so the *HASTENING of death*, or shortness of life, *came upon all men*, by the sin of that vicious generation; and by their *disobedience* we are all again so far *made sinners*; not

These are very obvious moral considerations on the subject of the divine œconomy, in suffering death, and the general apprehensions of it, to prevail in such a world as ours. Nor are there perhaps others of less moment, which conduce to the same end by shewing it to be *naturally* fit and necessary for such disordered and corrupted bodies as we bear about us to be dissolved, in order to eradicate those various *traces* which may have been formed and fixed in them by inveterate *associations*, and which perhaps could not otherwise have been reversed, even on the most sincere resolution of returning to a better conduct: that so, *sin* might not be *immortal in our bodies*, but these being new moulded, totally, thoroughly refined and rectified, might become more commodious habitations for the *spirits of just men*

as a punishment for their crimes, but we may well suppose in mercy and goodness,—that the wild range of ambition and lust might be brought into narrower bounds, and have less opportunity of doing mischief; and that death, being set still nearer to our view, might be a more powerful motive to regard less the things of a transitory world, and to attend more to the rules of truth and wisdom.—Thus I judge of the present shortness of life; and we cannot err much, if at all, if we think that God, upon occasion of *Adam's* sin, constituted our life frail, laborious, and sorrowful, and at length to be concluded by death; not to punish us for another man's sin, but to lessen temptation, and to promote our spiritual good: for in several places the Scripture directly affirms that affliction and suffering is the chastisement of our heavenly FATHER; and particularly applies our common *mortality* to the forementioned good purposes. See *Psal.* xxxix. xlix. xc. *Eccles.* i. ii. &c.' *Taylor's Script. Doctr. of Orig. Sin.* p. 67, &c.

made perfect;—might be changed from *natural* bodies to *spiritual*. And if such change be necessary, as we are taught by the best authority to believe it is*, it seems to be but of little consequence *when*, or *in what manner* this be made; whether we are to *sleep* first, or be found like those of the last generation: since the times of our dying and rising again are, in reality, *coincident* †; and our change either way alike *momentary*: nor will it be any more to us than *the twinkling of an eye*, as the apostle terms it; neither shall *those that remain unto the coming of the Lord*, prevent us who were *fallen asleep*, or enter into *the joy of their Lord* before us; but both we and they shall, *at the sound of the last trump*, be caught up together, to meet the Lord in the air, and so be ever with him ‡.

But how many uses soever may be assigned for such a dispensation as this of death, we are still to remember, that it must be but an imperfect sketch of some few of those various ends, that are contained in this great plan of providence, whereof so very small a part at present lies before us; a more complete display of which will probably constitute no inconsiderable portion of our future happiness, when *we shall know even as we ourselves are known*; when our *whole spirit, soul, and body*,

* 1 Cor. xv. 50.

† See Taylor on Rom. p. 334.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. 1 Thess. iv. 15, &c.

shall be presented blameless at the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Which brings me to consider,

3dly, What *notions* of death are now proper and agreeable to the Christian state.

Now this results from and has been in a good degree anticipated under the foregoing heads.

For if among the heathen, whom our apostle points out in the latter part of the text, the great dread of death, and that perpetual bondage consequent thereon, arose from their surveying it as the last evil, which puts a period to their whole existence [many of them contending that it did so [⊙]]; and none, as we have seen, having ground sufficient to satisfy them of the contrary]; we, who are taught to look upon it in another light, ought to be affected with it in another manner. To them indeed death had a terrible sound, and could not but be attended with a train of the most melancholy reflections, whenever they were forced (as they were frequently), to reflect upon it. This would unavoidably be mixing with all

[⊙] *Æsch. Eumen. v. 655. Eurip. Troad. v. 487, 631, &c. Mosch. Ep. Bion. v. 100—105. Catull. 5, 6. Lucret. 3. 842, &c. 987, &c. Lucan Lib. iii. v. 39, 40. vii. v. 470, 471. viii. v. 395, 396. Sen. Trag. Tro. A. 2. Chor. Cæs. et Cat. in Sal. c. 51, 52. Cic. pro Clu. c. 61. Comp. id. sup. p. 122. n. [B] *Plin. N. H. Lib. iii. c. 7. ib. vii. c. 56. Sen. Ep. 54, 71, 99. Id. Consol. ad Pol. c. 27. et ad Marc. c. 19. Epictet. Arr. L. iii. c. 24. Celsus ap. Origen. L. v. Plutarch. Op. p. 100. E. Comp. Cleric. in Eccl. iv. 2, 3. Whitby on 2 Tim. i. 10. Campbell, Necess. of Rev. § 4. Chandler on 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.**

their entertainments; and when it did so, would as unavoidably allay and spoil their relish; which we find some of them confessing and complaining of*. This was the sword continually hanging over their heads by a single hair; the spectre always haunting their abode, which, whatever some professed libertines might pretend, would cast a sudden damp on every joy; it would leave no present gratification free from anxiety; and as to any future prospects, through what a gloom must each considerate person view these prospects, which were all to be cut off so very soon, and either close in a final absolute extinction, or, if he should be called to life again, that life commence a state of punishment and suffering, to which he must be conscious he was but too liable! In this case how could man, even a comparatively wise and good man, contemplate himself any otherwise than as *walking all his life-time in a vain shadow*, and at last *lying down in sorrow*?

But how entirely is this scene changed under the Christian dispensation! What a different apprehension must we now have of death, when we know that it is so far from injuring any of our most rational pleasures, or destroying such pursuits, that it rather puts us into a capacity of enjoying them more perfectly, and opens a way to our more free and uninterrupted prosecution of

* *Cic. Tusc. Q. 1. 11, 13.—de Fin. 1. 38.—Mors, quæ quasi saxum Tantalò, semper impendet.*

them to eternity! A way, which though, for reasons intimated above, it must be in some measure gloomy still, yet is there little left to terrify;—much to support and comfort us, when we come into *the shadow of this vale* of death;—enough to brighten up its horrors, and convert them into a crown of glory;—to make us even rejoice that we are got so near the end of our warfare, to a place of rest and peace, from whence we may survey those blissful seats of Paradise that are prepared to receive us, and to which it immediately conducts us. The heathen had at best but feeble arguments for, or rather faint guesses at, and wishes of, an hereafter; and in the meantime were tossed to and fro among their several confused systems, fluctuating in perpetual doubts; and on each disappointment ready to give all up, and fly to the most miserable of comforts, utter *insensibility*, for refuge*. How vastly different is our case, who have so firm a ground of expectation to rely on, and that strong consolation which results from it, in all difficulties and distresses! who can at all times *lay hold on the hope that is set before us, as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast*; God himself having given us not only express promises, *in which it is impossible for him to lie*, but also infallible proofs, and actual instances, of what the generality of heathens were

* Vid. *Cic. Considerat. n.* [B] p. 128. *Portus enim præsto est. æternum nihil sentienti receptaculum.* Id. *Tusc. Disp. v.* 40.

used to think impossible*, a *resurrection* from the dead. And though, as being *partakers of flesh and blood*, we are still *naturally mortal*, nor was it Christ's intent to alter our whole frame instantaneously, by translating us into some different order of beings, as he must have done, had he freed us from all natural corruption; and which (as we have seen above) would have been highly improper, so long as there were the seeds of moral corruption yet remaining in us:—yet has he chosen to improve our nature gradually, and procure a proportional enlargement of its privileges; which he did in the most effectual manner, by laying hold of the same nature, and lifting it up from the body of sin, by his doctrine and example, by a life of perfect innocence, consummate virtue, and complete *obedience unto death*.

And thus, by the mediation of the second *Adam*, are we delivered from the most dreadful part of the sentence entailed on the first; that which denounced death absolutely, and indeterminately, and thereby left man in a state of unlimited subjection to it; or rather, this death, which though in one sense it still preserves its power over the world, and will and ought (as we have seen) to preserve it, during the whole of this probationary state;—and likewise on account of that sin where-

* *Plin.* N. H. L. ii. c. 7. *ib.* L. vii. c. 55. *Cels.* ap. *Orig.* v. p. 240. *M. Anton.* xii. 5. See *Whitby* on 1 *Thess.* iv. 13. and *Hallet's Discourses*, Vol. I. p. 298.

with it is closely connected, has still the appearance and the name of an enemy [*the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*;] this, I say, to us is become a very different thing from what it was to our first parents and the generality of their offspring, before the dawning of that prospect which our Lord has opened by his coming into the world. It is now so far from the extinction of our being, that it becomes the great improvement and the exaltation of it:—the end of all our labours in one state, and the commencement of our recompense in another. In which view, God will not appear either to have *made all men for nought*, or suffered them to be entirely subject unto *vanity* even here: the present life, however frail and transitory, if thus taken in relation to, and as connected with another, is very far from being a contemptible gift:—much may be done in this bad world, if we but make a proper use of it, towards rendering ourselves *meet to be partakers* of a better:—the ground of the heart may be prepared;—the seed of virtue sown;—the heavenly plant so far produced and forwarded, that whenever it shall be removed to a more favourable clime, it may spring up, and flourish in immortal life: and our being informed that it certainly will do so, must be the strongest motive and encouragement for thus labouring cheerfully in our Lord's vineyard; for being *stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding* in his work; *forasmuch as we know that our labour shall not be in vain.*

Our title to this immortality is now so sure, that we are addressed as already in possession of it*. We are said to have *already passed from death to life*†.—We are taught to consider this our temporary dissolution as no death, in the original, proper sense of the word‡: since we cannot have any apprehension that it will leave us under *the bondage of corruption*, and in the *blackness of darkness* for ever; but, on the contrary, are assured that it leads us to *the glorious liberty of the children of God; to an inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.*

Thus is *mortality swallowed up of life*; and we henceforth are said not to *die* §, but *sleep*; as Christ pronounces of those two whom he had raised||, and as the intermediate state of every Christian is described by his apostles¶: and in his

* *Heb.* xii. 22, 23. See *Benson* on *1 John* iii. 14. and *Eph.* ii. 6.

† *John* v. 21. *1 John* iii. 14.

‡ Quando homo peccator incipit credere in Filium Dei vera et viva fide, et illius principii vitæ particeps evadit, per quod æternum illud exitium superaturus est; tum simul dicitur superasse mortem temporalem, quæ solummodo confiderabatur ut æternæ mortis ministra. Ac proin credens non dicitur *mori*, etiam quoad corpus; quia *nexus* qui inter hanc et æternam mortem erat, sublatus est. *Vitringa*, *Observ. Sacr. Lib. ii. c. 7.* p. 351. ‘Death is as nothing, compared to what it would otherwise have been to the sinner; and the felicity of heaven is so sure, and so near, that by an easy and common figure true Christians are spoken of as *already there.*’ *Doddr.* on *Joh.* viii. 51, 52.

§ *John* vi. 50, 51.—xi. 26.

|| *Matt.* ix. 24. *Mark* v. 39. *Luke* viii. 52. *John* xi. 11.

¶ *1 Cor.* xv. 18, 20. *1 Thess.* iv. 13, 14.—v. 10. vide supra.

professed proof of a general resurrection, he declares of all the faithful, that they ever *live to God*; as being still in *covenant* with him*; from whom death itself cannot *separate* them†: nor will the interval between that and the resurrection be of any more account with God than it is of real import to themselves, as we have seen.

Thus, *though in the sight of the unwise we seem to die*, (or drop into a total annihilation,) yet is *our hope full of immortality*; and our departure and dismissal from this mortal state becomes our entrance and admission into it. Well therefore may we now say with the Psalmist‡, *Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. I will lay me down in peace, and sleep; till I awake in the morning of the resurrection.* We may, with the good apostle, cheerfully *commit our souls into the hand of our faithful Creator*: who, we are persuaded, is able to keep that which is committed unto him against that day. What a mild and unterrifying thing must death be, in such a view as this! It is nothing, we see, in the scripture account; nor are we ever bid to fear or *prepare for it*, (as is observed by a pious and judicious writer§;) but to *look and watch for*||, and *hasten unto, that coming of the day*

* *Luke* xx. 38.

† *Rom.* viii. 38, 39.

‡ *Psal.* cxvi. 7. *Psal.* xvii. 15. xlix. 14.

§ *Taylor on Rom.* p. 355. *Comp. Alexander on 1 Cor.* xv. p. 34.

|| *Matt.* xxiv. 42. &c. xxv. 13. *Mark* xiii. 35, &c.

of the *Lord**, which it directly introduces, and which is therefore said to be *at hand* †; to *draw nigh*, and present our *judge* even *at the door* (1). There is nothing therefore terrible in Death, to such as have learned to conceive of it aright, and are ready to abide its consequences. The pains that may attend it are uncertain; oft far from being equal to those we undergo on other occasions; never to be compared with what must

* 2 *Pet.* iii. 12.

† *Rom.* xiii. 12. *Phil.* iv. 5. 1 *Pet.* iv. 7.

(1) *James* v. 7, 8, 9. *The hour is coming, and now is: John* v. 25. Though some of these, and the like passages, may more immediately relate to Christ's first coming to judgment, at the destruction of *Jerusalem*, as some learned men suppose (see *Jortin's* Remarks on *Eccl. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 49, 50), yet are they no less applicable to his second coming in the sense above-mentioned; whereof the former has been generally considered as a type; and both are usually described in the same terms, *Matt.* xxiv. 29, &c. *Ch. Aug. Heumannus* in 1 *Cor.* i. 8. Η ἡμέρα τῆς Κυρίας, est dies extremus Judicii. Quamvis enim *Corinthiorum* nullus hoc die superstes futurus sit; tamen cum a die hominum emortuali ad diem Judicii, nullum vel bene agendi, vel resipiscendi spatium pateat; utraque dies tanquam conjuncta spectatur. *Nov. Act. Erud.* 1759. p. 194. *ib.* p. 204. Observat *Heumannus* in 1 *Cor.* xv. 29. de Baptismo ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν, scripsisse hoc Paulum ad eos, qui cum Judæis statuerint corpus et animum pari somno premi ad diem usque Judicii, simulque utrumque resuscitatum iri. Hæc plerorumque, qui sub vet. Fæd. vivebant, sententia fuit, quemadmodum *Heumannus* *Programmæ A.* 1757. edito docuit. Imo eadem opinio M. CCCC. post C. N. annos in Ecclesiâ Christianâ regnavit. Sed hoc loco eam non impugnat *Apostolus*; verum potius, tanquam a lectoribus suis receptam, et ipse adsumere videtur. *Comp. Alexander.* *Paraphr.* on 1 *Cor.* xv. p. 88, &c.

be endured after it, if we have not already drawn out its *sting*. But if we take due care to be of the number of those, to whom these *great and precious promises* belong; if we have an interest in a well-grounded expectation of them, we shall be so far from dreading and declining, that we cannot well avoid often dwelling on, and ever delighting in, the prospect of that path, which safely leads us to the substance and completion of them. Till we have done this, indeed, we are, and ought to be, in a state of bondage to this *king of terrors*. Nor can we ever so far get the better of them as to behold our change in an agreeable light, or bear the reflection on it with any tolerable quiet and composure of mind:—it will yet fill our cup with bitterness—make our whole life melancholy, and its end confusion and dismay*.

Seeing then, that the all-wise Creator of the world has, for so many good ends, been pleased to put it under the dominion of death; and the all-merciful Redeemer hath so fully done his part, to qualify this seemingly most dreadful dispensation, and convert it into the greatest real blessing; by making it a proper passage to an infinitely more perfect state: Let us be persuaded to do our parts likewise, that these gracious ends may be obtained in us; and, by consequence, that

* Many excellent Reflections on this subject may be seen in A. Tucker's *Light of Nature pursued* V. the last. c. 37.

this necessary means to them may be ever reflected on *with joy*, and *not with grief*: nay, that the thought of this may serve, as it is intended, to the mitigation of all other griefs, and to the improvement and the consummation of our joys; whilst we are ever looking for and longing after that *blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

APPENDIX :

CONCERNING THE USE OF THE WORDS

SOUL, OR SPIRIT,

IN

HOLY SCRIPTURE ;

AND THE

STATE OF THE DEAD THERE DESCRIBED.



APPENDIX :

CONCERNING THE USE OF THE WORDS

S O U L, O R S P I R I T,

IN

H O L Y S C R I P T U R E,

AND THE

STATE OF THE DEAD THERE DESCRIBED.

IN the first place, the words נפש, נשמה, and רוח, in the Old Testament, which are in our version generally translated *soul*, or *spirit*; as well as those of the same import in the New, πνευμα and ψυχη, most commonly denote,

I. PERSONS.

Gen. xvii. 14. (a) That *soul* shall be cut off. Add Exod. xii. 15, 19.—Lev. iv. 2. If a *soul* shall sin through ignorance.—27.—if *any* one (a) of the common people sin through ignorance. Add vi. 2.

(a) נפש

vii. 20.—the *soul* that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice.—21. the *soul* that shall touch any unclean thing. Add 25, 27. and xvii. 10, 15. xix. 8. xx. 6. xxii. 11. If the priest buy any *soul* with his money, xxiii. 30. And whatsoever *soul* it be, that doth any work in that same day, the same *soul* will I destroy from among his people. Add Num. xv. 30, 31. xix. 13, 20. Deut. xxiv. 7. If a man be found stealing *any(a)* of his brethren. 2 Sam. xiv. 14. Neither doth God respect any *person(b)*. Prov. xiii. 2.—the *soul* of the transgressors shall eat violence. Add xiv. 25. xix. 2. Ezek. xviii. 4. Behold, all *souls* are mine; as the *soul* of the father, so also the *soul* of the son is mine. xxvii. 13.—they traded the *persons* of men. Acts ii. 43.—fear came upon every *soul*. Add Rom. ii. 9. xiii. 1. 1 Tim. iv. 1. seducing *spirits*, i. e. seducers. 2 Pet. ii. 14.—beguiling unstable *souls*. Rev. xviii. 13.—the merchandise of gold and silver,—and slaves, and *souls* of men.

2. Secondly, *People*;

As when they are numbered. Gen. xlvi. 15. All the *souls* of his sons and daughters were thirty and three. Add 22, 27. Exod. i. 5. xii. 4. xvi. 16.—according to the number of your *persons*. Num. xxxi. 28.—levy a tribute—one *soul* of five hundred,

(b) Et non tollet Deus animam. Vid. *Cleric.*

both of the persons, and of the beeves, &c.—35.—thirty and two thousand (*c*) *persons* in all.—40.—the (*c*) *persons* were sixteen thousand.—46.—sixteen thousand (*c*) *persons*. 1 Chron. v. 21.—they took away—of *men* an hundred thousand. Jer. lii. 29.—carried away captive—eight hundred and thirty-two (*c*) *persons*. 30.—*Nebuzaradan*—carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred and forty-five *persons*. Acts ii. 41.—the same day were added unto them about three thousand *souls*. Add vii. 14. xxvii. 37. 1 Pet. iii. 20.

—And divided into families. Gen. xlvi. 27. All the *souls* of the house of *Jacob* which came into Egypt. 1 Sam. xxii. 22. I have occasioned the death of all the (*c*) *persons* of thy father's house.

—Or distinguished from other goods. Gen. xii. 5. *Abraham* took *Sarai* his wife, and *Lot*—and all their substance,—and the *souls* that they had gotten in *Haran*. xiv. 21.—Give me the *persons*, and take the goods to thyself. Josh. xi. 14. But every man they smote with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them; neither left they any to *breathe* (*d*). Add 1 Kings xv. 29.

3. Thirdly, *soul*, or *spirit*, often signifies the *man himself*: as *my soul*, i. e. *I*. Gen. xii. 13. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister—and my *soul* shall live because of thee. xix. 20.—let me escape thither,—

(c) נפש

(d) נשמה

and my *soul* shall live. xxvii. 4. that my *soul* may bless thee before I die. Job vii. 15.—so that my *soul* chooseth strangling. x. 1. my *soul* is weary of my life. Add Psal. xxxv. 9. lvii. 4. Matt. xxvi. 38.

My *soul*, i. e. *me*. Num. xxiii. 10.—(e) let me die the death of the righteous. Psalm xxxv. 3.—say unto my *soul*, I am thy salvation. xli. 4. heal my *soul*, for I have sinned against thee.

Thy *soul*, i. e. *thyself*. Esth. iv. 13. Prov. iii. 22. so shall they be life unto thy *soul*. Ezek. iii. 19.—thou hast delivered thy *soul*. Add v. 21.

Thy *spirit*, i. e. *thee*. 2 Tim. vi. 22. The Lord Jesus be with thy *spirit*.

His *soul*, i. e. *himself*. Prov. xi. 17. The merciful man doth good to his own *soul*. Add xx. 2.

Her *soul*, i. e. *herself*. Isai. v. 14. (applied by a prosopopœia to the grave) therefore hell hath enlarged *herself*.

Their *souls*, i. e. *themselves*. Isai. xlvi. 2.—*themselves* are gone into captivity [applied to idols].

Your *soul*, i. e. *you*. 2 Cor. xii. 15. I will very gladly spend, and be spent for *you*(f).

Your *spirit*, i. e. *yourselves*. Mal. ii. 15 and 16. take heed to *your spirit*.

My *spirit* and yours, i. e. *you* and *me*. 1 Cor. xvi. 18.—they have refreshed *my spirit* and *yours*. And in many other places. Thus,

(e) ψε

(f) ὑπερ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.

4. Fourthly, *souls*, i. e. *persons*, are said to *eat*. Exod. xii. 16.—no manner of work shall be done, —save that which every *man* must eat.

To *abhor meat*. Job xxxiii. 20. So that his life abhorreth bread, and his *soul* dainty meat. Psal. cvii. 18. Their *soul* abhorreth all manner of meat.

To *be satisfied*. Ezek. vii. 19.—they shall not satisfy their *souls*.

To *be made fat*. Prov. xi. 25. The liberal *soul* shall be made fat. So xiii. 4.

Or *full*. Prov. xxvii. 7. The full *soul* loatheth an honeycomb.

To *be hungry*. ib. To the hungry *soul* every bitter thing is sweet. Psal. cvii. 9.—he satisfieth the longing *soul*, and filleth the hungry *soul* with goodness. Prov. vi. 30. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his *soul* when he is hungry.

Thirsty. Prov. xxv. 25. As cold waters to a thirsty *soul*.

To *faint*. Psal. cvii. 5.—their *soul* fainted in them.

To *be smote* with the sword. Josh. x. 23.—*Joshua* took *Makkedah*, and smote it with the edge of the sword—them, and all the *souls* that were therein. So 30, 32. xi. 11. 1 Kings xv. 29. he smote all the house of *Jeroboam*: he left not to *Jeroboam* any that *breathed* (g).

Or *cut off*. Psal. lxxvi. 12. He shall cut off the *spirit* (h) of princes.

(See above, under *Persons*).

To be *killed*. Gen. xxxvii. 21.—Let us not kill (*i*) *him*. Num. xxxi. 19.—whosoever hath killed any (*i*) *person*. xxxv. 30. whoso killeth any (*i*) *person*. Josh. xx. 3.—the slayer that killeth any (*i*) *person* unawares. Mark iii. 4.—Is it lawful to save (*k*) *life*, or to kill. Deut. xix. 6.—lest the avenger of blood pursue the slayer,—and kill (*i*) *him*. Add Rev. vi. 9. 11.

Slain. Deut. xxii. 26.—as when a man riseth against his neighbour and slayeth (*i*) *him*. xxvii. 25. Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent (*i*) *person*. Jer. xl. 14.—Dost thou certainly know that *Baalis*—hath sent *Ishmael* to slay (*i*) *thee*. Ezek. xiii. 19. will ye pollute me—to slay the *souls* that should not die?

Devoured. Ezek. xxii. 25.—they have devoured *souls*.

Destroyed. Luke vi. 9.—Is it lawful to save (*k*) *life*, or to destroy it? Acts iii. 23.—every *soul* which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed.

To *die*. Josh. ii. 14.—our (*i*) *life* for yours. (Heb. our *soul* to die instead of you). Judg. xvi. 30.—*Samson* said, Let (*i*) *me* die with the Philistines. Job xxxvi. 14. (*i*) *They* die in youth. Ezek. xviii. 20. The *soul* that sinneth, it shall die.

To *fail*. Isai. lvii. 16.—the *spirit* should fail before me.

(*i*) נפש

(*k*) ψυχή,

To be *lost*. Matt. x. 39. He that findeth his (*k*) *life* shall lose it, and he that loseth his (*k*) *life*—shall find it. So xvi. 25. 26. What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own *soul*? Luke xvii. 33. Whosoever shall seek to save his (*k*) *life*, shall lose it, &c.

Or *kept alive*. Psal. xxii. 29.—none can keep alive his own *soul*. Ezek. xiii. 18.—Will ye save the *souls* alive that come unto you?

And *saved*. Job ii. 6.—but save his (*l*) *life*. Add Mark iii. 4. Luke vi. 9. Jam. v. 20—shall save a *soul* from death.

To be *delivered from death, hell, the pit, or grave*. Josh. ii. 13.—that ye will—deliver our (*n*) *lives* from death. Job xxxiii. 18. He keepeth back his *soul* from the pit.—30.—to bring back his *soul* from the pit. Add Psal. vi. 4. vii. 2. xxx. 3. xlix. 15. God will redeem my *soul* from the power of the grave. Add lvi. 13. lxxxvi. 2. 13. lxxxix. 48. cxvi. 8. Prov. xxiii. 14. Thou shalt deliver his *soul* from hell. Isai. xxxviii. 17.—thou hast in love to my *soul* delivered it from the pit of corruption. Jonah ii. 6.—yet hast thou brought up my (*n*) *life* from corruption.

II. Sometimes these words include ALL LIVING CREATURES.

Gen. i. 20. Let the waters bring forth the

(*l*) נֶפֶשׁ

(*n*) נֶפֶשׁ

moving creature that hath (*m*) *life*.—24. Let the earth bring forth the (*m*) *living creature*—30.—every beast, &c. wherein there is *life*, (Margin a *living soul*)—ii. 7.—and man became a *living soul*.—19.—whatsoever *Adam* called every (*m*) *living creature*, that was the name thereof. vii. 22.—All in whose nostrils was the *breath of life* (*n*). ix. 12.—This is the token of the covenant which I make between you and every (*m*) *living creature*.—16.—that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every (*m*) *living creature*. Deut. xx. 16.—thou shalt save alive (*o*) *nothing that breatheth*. 1 Cor. xv. 45.—The first man *Adam* was made a (*p*) *living soul*; the last *Adam* was made a (*q*) *quickening spirit*. Rev. viii. 9.—the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had (*r*) *life*, died, xvi. 3.—Every *living soul* died in the sea.

III. Sometimes the BODY alone; and that either,

First, *living*. Job. xxxiii. 22.—His *soul* draweth near unto the grave. Ps. cv. 18.—He was laid in iron (Heb. the iron entered his *soul*). Comp. Luke ii. 35.

Or, Secondly, *dead*. Num. v. 2. Whosoever is defiled by the (*s*) *dead*. vi. 6.—He shall come at no (*s*) *dead body*.—11.—He sinned by the *dead*. ix. 6. Defiled by the *dead body* of a man. x. 7.—

(*n*) נשמה רוח (*o*) נשמה (*p*) Ψυχῆν ζῶσαν.
 (*q*) Πνευμα ζωοποιόν. (*r*) Τα ἐχόντα ψυχας. (*s*) נפש

If any of you—shall be unclean, by reason of a *dead body*. (Heb. *dead soul*). xix. 13. Whosoever touched the *dead body* of any man that is dead. Lev. xix. 28. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the *dead*. xxi. 1.—There shall none be defiled for the *dead*.—11. Neither shall he go into any *dead body*. xxii. 4. The *dead*. Job xiv. 22.—His flesh upon him shall have pain, and his *soul* within him shall mourn. (v. *Chappelow*, Comment. ib.) Hag. ii. 13.—If any that is unclean by a *dead body*.

And, thirdly, *buried*. Ps. xvi. 10.—Thou wilt not leave my *soul* in hell: which is repeated Acts ii. 27, 31. Vid. *Beza* and *Whitby* in loc.

IV. Some of the same words stand for the LIFE both of man and beast, and often are so rendered in our version.

Gen. vi. 3. My spirit shall not always strive with man (Heb. the *soul* which I give man shall not continue. vid. *Cleric*. in loc.) vii. 22.—All in whose nostrils was the (*t*) *breath of life* (Heb. breath of the *spirit of life*) died. ix. 5. Your blood of your lives will I require (Heb. blood in your *souls*) xix. 17.—Escape for thy *life*. xxxii. 30.—I have seen God face to face, and my *life* is preserved. Exod. iv. 19.—All the men are dead which sought thy *life*. xxx. 12.—Then shall they give every man a ransom for his *soul*. Num. xvi. 22.—O God, the

God of the *spirits* of all flesh. Vid. *Cleric.* in loc. So xxvii. 16. 1 Sam. xix. 5.—He did put his *life* in his hand—11.—If thou save not thy *life* to-night. Add xxi. 1. xxv. 29.—Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul; but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of *life* with the Lord thy God. 2 Sam. iv. 9. As the Lord liveth who hath redeemed my *soul* out of all adversity. 1 Kings xix. 10.—They seek my *life* to take it away. So v. 14. and 2 Kings i. 14.—Job ii. 6. Behold he is in thine hand, but save his *life*. x. 12.—Thy visitation hath preserved my (*u*)*spirit*. xii. 10. In whose hand is the *soul* of every living thing, and the *breath* of all mankind. xxvii. 8. What is the hope of the hypocrite, when God taketh away his *soul*? xxxiii. 28. He will deliver his *soul* from going into the pit, and 30. Ps. xxxi. 5. Into thine hand I commit my (*u*)*spirit*. xxxv. 7.—A pit, which without cause they have digged for my *soul*. lxix. 1. Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my *soul*. Add lxxi. 13. lxxiv. 19.—Prov. xiii. 3. He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his *life*. xvi. 17.—He that keepeth his way, preserveth his *soul*. Add xix. 16. Eccles. viii. 8. There is no man that hath power over the (*u*)*spirit*, to retain the (*u*)*spirit*. Jer. iv. 30.—They will seek thy *life*. x. 14.—There is no (*u*)*breath* in them. xxii. 25. I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life. xlviii. 6. Flee, save your *lives*. li. 6. Flee—and

deliver every man his *soul*. Ezek. xxxvii. 5, 6.—Thus saith the Lord unto these bones—I will cause (*u*) *breath* to enter into you.—8. There was no (*u*) *breath* in them. Amos ii. 14, 15.—Neither shall the mighty deliver *himself*. Zech. xii. 1.—The Lord which formeth the (*u*) *spirit* of man within him. Matt. ii. 20.—They are dead which sought the young child's (*x*) *life*. vi. 25.—Take no thought for your (*x*) *life*, what ye shall eat.—Is not the (*x*) *life* more than meat? x. 39. He that findeth his (*x*) *life* shall lose it; and he that loseth his (*x*) *life* for my sake shall find it. So xvi. 25, 26. xx. 28.—The Son of man came to give his (*x*) *life* a ransom for many. Mark viii. 36, 37. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own *soul*? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his *soul*? Add x. 45. Luke viii. 55.—her (*y*) *spirit* came again. Add ix. 24, 56. xii. 22, 23.—take no thought for your (*x*) *life*, what ye shall eat,—the (*x*) *life* is more than meat. xiv. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not—his own (*x*) *life* also, he cannot be my disciple. xvii. 33. Whosoever shall seek to save his (*x*) *life* shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his (*x*) *life*, shall preserve it. xxiii. 46.—Father, into thy hands I commend my (*y*) *spirit*; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. Joh. x. 11.—the good shepherd giveth his (*x*) *life* for the sheep. So v. 15, and 17.—I lay down my (*x*) *life*, that I might take it again.

(*x*) $\Psi\upsilon\chi\eta$.

(*y*) $\Pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$.

xii. 25. He that loveth his (*x*) *life* shall lose it.
 xiii. 37. I will lay down my (*x*) *life* for thy sake.
 So v. 38. xv. 13. Greater love hath no man than
 this, that a man lay down his (*z*) *life* for his friends.
 Acts xv. 26. Men that have hazarded their (*z*) *lives*
 for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. xx. 10.—
 his (*z*) *life* is in him, 24. neither count I my (*z*) *life*
 dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course
 with joy. xxvii. 10.—this voyage will be with hurt
 —not only of the lading and ship, but also of our
 (*z*) *lives*. Add v. 22.—Rom. xi. 3.—they seek my
 (*z*) *life*. xvi. 4. who have for my (*z*) *life* laid down
 their own necks. Phil. ii. 30.—he was nigh unto
 death, not regarding his (*z*) *life*. 1 Thess. ii. 8. We
 were willing to have imparted unto you our own
souls. 1 Pet. ii. 19.—let them that suffer commit
 the keeping of their *souls* to him, as to a faithful
 Creator. 1 John iii. 16. Hereby perceive we the love
 of God, because he laid down his (*z*) *life* for us :
 and we ought to lay down our (*z*) *lives* for the
 brethren. Rev. xii. 11.—they loved not their
 (*z*) *lives* unto the death.

Which *life* is placed either, first, in the BLOOD.

Gen. ix. 4. But flesh with the *life* thereof, which
 is the blood thereof, shalt thou not eat. Lev. xvii.
 11. For the *life* of the flesh is in the blood. v. 14.
 For it is the *life* of all flesh, the blood of it is for
 the *life* thereof. Deut. xii. 23.—the blood is the
life, and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh,

(*z*) Ψυχῆ.

[hence called the blood of *souls*. Jer. ii. 34.—in thy skirts is found the blood of the *souls* of the poor innocents.] And accordingly said to be *poured out*. Isa. liii. 12.—he hath poured out his *soul* unto death. Lam. ii. 12.—their *soul* was poured out into their mother's bosom.

Or, Secondly, BREATH. Gen. ii. 7.—God formed man—and breathed into his nostrils the (*a*) *breath* of life. vi. 17.—I do bring a flood—to destroy all flesh wherein is the (*b*) *breath* of life. And so vii. 15, and 22. 1 Kings xvii. 17.—his sickness was so sore, that there was no (*a*) *breath* left in him. Job xii. 10. In whose hand is the *soul* of every living thing, and the (*b*) *breath* of all mankind. xxvi. 4.—whose (*a*) *spirit* came from thee. Add xxvii. 3. xxxiv. 14. If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his (*b*) *spirit* and his (*a*) *breath*. Ps. cl. 6. Every thing that hath (*a*) *breath*. Eccl. iii. 19.—that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts—they have all one (*b*) *breath*. Is. ii. 22. Cease ye from man, whose (*a*) *breath* is in his nostrils. xlii. 5. That giveth *breath* unto the people. Ezek. xxxvii. 9, 10.—Prophecy unto the (*b*) *wind*—say to the (*b*) *wind*—come from the four (*b*) *winds*, O *breath*, and breathe upon these slain.—so I prophesied,—and the (*b*) *breath* came into them. Dan. v. 23.—the God in whose hand thy (*a*) *breath* is. x. 17.—there remained no strength

(*a*) נשמה.

(*b*) רוח.

in me, neither is there (*a*) *breath* left in me. Ja. ii. 26. the body without the (*c*) *spirit* is dead.

Which *breath, spirit, or life,*

Enters into a man. Gen. ii. 7. God formed man,—and breathed into his nostrils the (*a*) *breath* of life. Rev. ii. 11.—the (*d*) *spirit* of life from God entered into them.

Goes forth. Ps. cxlvi. 4. His *breath* goeth forth, he returneth to his earth.

Departeth. Gen. xxxv. 18.—as her (*e*) *breath* was in departing.

Comes again. 1 Sam. xxx. 12.—when he had eaten, his (*b*) *spirit* came again to him. 1 Kings xvii. 21.—let this child's *soul* come into him again. Luke viii. 55.—her (*f*) *spirit* came again, and she arose.

Is taken away. Ps. civ. 29.—thou takest away their (*g*) *breath*, they die.

Received. Acts vii. 59.—Lord Jesus receive my (*f*) *spirit*. (vid. Objections).

Given or yielded up. Jer. xv. 9. She hath given up the (*h*) *ghost*. Matt. xxvii. 50. Jesus yielded up the (*f*) *ghost*. Add John xix. 30.—Acts v. 5, 10.

Expired. Job xxxi. 39.—if I—have caused the *soul* of the owners thereof to *expire* (as in the

(c) *Κωρίς πνευματος.*

(e) *נפש.*

(g) *רוח.*

(d) *Πνευμα ζωης.*

(f) *Πνευμα.*

(h) *נפש.*

margin). Mark xv. 37. Ο δε Ιησους ἐξέπνευσε. So v. 39. and Luke xxiii. 46.

V. These words describe man in respect to his
FUTURE LIFE.

Matt. x. 28. Fear not them—which are not able to kill the *soul*. (vid. Objections). 1 Cor. v. 5.—that the (*f*) *spirit* may be saved in the day of the Lord. 2 Cor. xii. 15. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for (*i*) *you*. Heb. x. 39.—we are—of them that believe to the saving of the *soul*. xii. 23.—the *spirits* of just men made perfect. (vid. Objections). xiii. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you—for they watch for your *souls*. Ja. i. 21.—receive the word, which is able to save your *souls*. 1 Pet. i. 9. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your *souls*. ii. 25.—ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the shepherd and bishop of your *souls*. iv. 19.—let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their *souls* to him. Rev. xx. 4.—I saw the *souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus—and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

VI. In some places they denote the LOWER APPETITES, affections, passions of the mind, or man; or the seat of such appetites, &c.

(i) Ὑπερ των ψυχων υμων.

Gen. xxxiv. 3.—his *soul* clave unto *Dinah*. xli. 8.—it came to pass that his *spirit* was troubled. xlii. 21.—we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his *soul*, &c. Exod. vi. 9.—they hearkened not unto *Moses* for anguish of *spirit*. xv. 9.—my *lust* shall be satisfied upon them. xxiii. 9.—ye know the (*h*) *heart* of a stranger. Lev. xvi. 29.—ye shall afflict your *souls*. Numb. xi. 6. Our *soul* is dried away. Deut. xii. 15.—thou mayest—eat flesh—whatsoever thy *soul* lusteth after. xxiii. 24.—thou mayest eat grapes thy fill, (*k*) *at thine own pleasure*. xxiv. 15.—thou shalt give him his hire—for he is poor, and setteth his (*h*) *heart* upon it. Judg. viii. 3. then their (*g*) *anger* was abated towards him. 1 Sam. i. 10.—She was in bitterness of *soul*.—v. 15.—I am a woman of a sorrowful (*g*) *spirit*. ii. 16.—take as much as thy *soul* desireth. xviii. 1.—the *soul* of *Jonathan* was knit with the *soul* of *David*, and *Jonathan* loved him as his own *soul*. xxii. 2.—every one that was (*l*) *discontented*, gathered themselves unto him. xxx. 6.—the *soul* of all the people was grieved. 2 Sam. xiii. 39.—the *soul* of King *David* longed to go forth unto *Absalom*. xvii. 8.—thou knowest thy father, and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be (*l*) *chafed in their minds*. 2 Chron. xxi. 16.—the Lord stirred up against *Jehoram* the (*g*) *spirit* of the Philistines. Job iii. 20.—Wherefore is light given to him that

(k) כַּנְפֶשֶׁךָ

(l) מֵרֶ-נֶפֶשׁ

is in misery, and life unto the bitter in *soul*? xiv. 22.—his *soul* within him shall mourn. xxx. 16.—my *soul* is poured out upon me, the days of affliction have taken hold upon me. Ps. xxvii. 14. He shall strengthen thine *heart*. xxxi. 9.—mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my *soul* and my belly. xxxv. 25. let them not say in their hearts, *Ah, lo would we have it (ah, ah, our soul, vid. margin).* lxxvii. 2. — my *soul* refused to be comforted. lxxviii. 18.—they tempted God—by asking meat (*m*)for their lust. cvii. 9.—he satisfieth the longing *soul*, and filleth the hungry *soul*. cxliii. 4. Therefore is my *spirit* overwhelmed within me. Prov. xv. 13.—by sorrow of the heart, the (*n*)*spirit* is broken. xvii. 22.—a broken *spirit* drieth the bones. xxiii. 2.—put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to *appetite*. xxv. 28.—He that hath no rule over his own *spirit*, is like a city that is broken down. xxxi. 6. Give wine to those that be (*o*)of heavy hearts. Eccl. vi. 7. The *appetite* is not filled,—9. Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the (*p*)*desire*. Isa. xxix. 8. It shall even be as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his *soul* is empty: behold he is faint, and his *soul* hath appetite. xxxii. 6. To make empty the *soul* of the hungry. xxxviii. 15.—I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my *soul*. liv. 6. — the Lord hath called thee as a woman—grieved in (*n*)*spirit*. lv. 2. Let your *soul* delight itself in fatness. lviii.

(*m*) לנפשם (*n*) רוח (*o*) לטרי נפש (*p*) נפש

10.—if thou draw out thy *soul* to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted *soul*.—11.—the Lord shall—satisfy thy *soul* in drought. Jer. ii. 24. That snuffeth up the wind at her (*q*) *pleasure*. Dan. ii. 3.—my *spirit* was troubled to know the dream. Mic. vii. 1.—my *soul* desireth the first ripe fruit. Hab. ii. 5.—enlargeth his *desire*. John x. 24.—(*q*) how long dost thou make us *to doubt?* *animam nostram tollis*. xii. 27. Now is my *soul* troubled. Acts xiv. ii.—the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their *minds* evil affected towards the brethren. xvii. 16.—his (*r*) *spirit* was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Heb. xii. 3.—lest ye be wearied, and faint in your *minds*. Ja. iv. 5. the *spirit* that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy. Rev. xviii. 14.—the fruits that thy *soul* lusteth after are departed from thee.

VII. In other places they signify the SUPERIOR FACULTIES, and operations of a man's mind;

As when these last are super-added to the former.

Deut. xxvi. 16.—thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy *soul*. Add xxx. 6. Matt. xxii. 37. Mark xii. 30, 33. Luke x. 27. Acts iv. 32.

(*q*) ἕως ποτε την ψυχην ημων αιρεις;

(*r*) Πνευμα.

Or opposed to the *body* or *flesh*. Mich. vi. 7. The fruit of my body for the sin of my *soul*. Matt. xxvi. 41. The *spirit* indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Add Mark xiv. 38. 1 Cor. vi. 20.—glorify God in your body, and in your *spirit*. Add vii. 34. 2 Cor. vii. 1.—let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and *spirit*. Gal. iii. 3.—having begun in the *spirit*, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Add v. 17. Eph. iv. 23. be renewed in the *spirit*, of your mind. Phil. iii. 3. we—worship God in the *spirit*—and have no confidence in the flesh. 1 Pet. ii. 11.—abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the *soul*. 3 John 2. I wish—thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy *soul* prospereth.

First, His *thoughts*. Ps. xxiv. 2. who hath not lift up his *soul* to vanity. xxxii. 2.—in whose *spirit* there is no guile. Acts xix. 21.—*Paul* purposed in the *spirit*—to go to *Jerusalem*.

And *intellect*. Prov. ii. 10. When—knowledge is pleasant unto thy *soul*. xx. 27. The *spirit* of man is the candle of the Lord. Add xxxiii. 8. Mark ii. 8. When *Jesus* perceived in his *spirit* that they so reasoned. 1 Cor. ii. 11.—What man knoweth the things of a man, save the *spirit* of man which is in him?

Secondly, *judgment*. Dan. v. 12. An excellent *spirit*, and knowledge, and understanding—were found in—*Daniel*. Acts xv. 24.—certain which went out from us have troubled you—subverting your *souls*.

Or *conscience*. Num. xxx. 4.—her bond where-with she hath bound her *soul*. So v. 5, &c. Acts xviii. 5.—*Paul* was pressed in *spirit*. 1 Pet. i. 22.—ye have purified your *souls* in obeying the truth.

Thirdly, his *will* and *choice*. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22.—the Lord stirred up the *spirit* of *Cyrus*. So Ezra i. 1. Ps. xxvii. 12. Deliver me not over to the (*s*)*will* of mine enemies. cv. 22. To bind his princes (*s*)*at his pleasure*. Jer. xxxiv. 16. at their (*s*)*pleasure*.

Fourthly, His *courage*, and *resolution* to pursue it. Jos. v. 1.—their heart melted, neither was there *spirit* in them any more. Prov. xviii. 14. The *spirit* of a man will sustain his infirmity. Hag. i. 14.—the Lord stirred up the *spirit* of *Zerubbabel—Joshua*—and the *spirit* of all the remnant of the people, and they came and did work in the house of the Lord. Acts xviii. 25.—being fervent in the *spirit*, he spake and taught diligently. Rom. i. 9. God is my witness whom I serve with my *spirit*. xii. 11. not slothful in business, fervent in *spirit*.

Fifthly, His *care* and *concern*. 1 Cor. v. 3.—I verily as absent in body, but present in *spirit*. Add v. 4.—Col. ii. 5. Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the *spirit*, joying and beholding your order.

Sixthly, His *general temper*. Prov. xvi. 2. All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but

the Lord weigheth the *spirits*. xvii. 27.—A man of understanding is of an excellent *spirit*.

Inclination. Eph. vi. 6.—Doing the will of God (*t*) *from the heart*. Col. iii. 23.—Whatsoever ye do, do it (*t*) *heartily*, as to the Lord.

Or *disposition*. Gen. xxiii. 8.—If it be (*u*) *your mind* that I should bury my dead. Ex. xxxv. 21. they came—every one of whom his *spirit* made willing. Ezek. xiii. 3.—woe unto the foolish prophets that follow their own *spirit*. 1 Cor. ii. 12.—we have received, not the *spirit* of the world, but the *spirit* which is of God.

And thus we have a *Broken spirit*. Ps. li. 17. The sacrifices of God are a broken *spirit*. *Contrite*; Is. lxvi. 2.—to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite *spirit*. *Humble*; Prov. xvi. 9.—Better is it to be of an humble *spirit*. Isa. lvii. 15.—I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble *spirit*. *Faithful*; Prov. ii. 13.—he that is of a faithful *spirit* concealeth the matter. *Patient*; Eccles. vii. 8.—the patient in *spirit* is better than the proud in *spirit*. *Quiet*; 1 Pet. iii. 4.—the ornament of a meek and quiet *spirit*. *A New*; Ezek. xxiii. 31.—make you a new heart, and a new *spirit*. *A Right spirit*; Ps. li. 10.—renew a right *spirit* within me. Or a *Haughty*; Prov. xvi. 18. Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty *spirit* before a fall. *Perverse*; Isa. xix. 14. The Lord hath mingled a perverse *spirit* in the midst thereof. *Hardened spirit*; Deut. ii. 30.—the Lord thy God

(t) עַל הַלֵּב.

(u) אֵת הַלֵּב.

hardened his *spirit*. Dan. v. 20. His *mind* hardened in *pride*. A spirit of *Bondage*; Rom. viii. 15.—ye have not received the *spirit* of bondage again to fear. Of *Error*; Is. xxix. 24. They also that *erred* in *spirit*. 1 Joh. iv. 6.—hereby know we the *spirit*—of error. Of *Antichrist*; 1 Joh. iv. 3.—this is that in *spirit* of Antichrist. *Fear*; 2 Tim. i. 7. God hath not given us the *spirit* of fear. *Heaviness*; Is. lxi. 3.—to give unto them the garment of praise for the *spirit* of heaviness. *Sleep*; Is. xxix. 10.—the Lord hath poured out upon you the *spirit* of deep sleep. *Slumber*; Rom. ii. 8.—God hath given them the *spirit* of slumber. *Uncleanness*; Zech. xiii. 2. I will cause the *unclean spirit* to pass out of the land. *Whoredoms*; Hos. iv. 12.—the *spirit* of whoredoms hath caused them to err. Add v. 4. Or of *Wisdom*; Ex. xxviii. 3.—thou shalt speak unto all—whom I have filled with the *spirit* of wisdom. *Judgment*; Is. iv. 4. When the Lord—shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the *spirit* of judgment. xxviii. 6.—for a *spirit* of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment. *Knowledge*; Is. ii. 2.—the *spirit* of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. *Meekness*; 1 Cor. iv. 21.—shall I come unto you—in the *spirit* of meekness; Gal. vi. 1.—if a man be overtaken in a fault—restore such an one in the *spirit* of Meekness, *Grace*; Zech. xii. 10.—I will pour upon the house of David—the *spirit* of grace. And *Truth*; 1 John iv. 6.—Hereby know we the *spirit* of truth.

VIII. Sometimes both the SUPERIOR and INFERIOR FACULTIES of the mind, or man, are joined together, and represented by the same words promiscuously;

As in Psal. cxliii. 3.—the enemy hath persecuted my *soul*.—4. therefore is my *spirit* overwhelmed—6. my *soul* thirsteth after thee.—7. my *spirit* faileth.—8. I lift up my *soul* unto thee.—12. destroy all them that afflict my *soul*. Luke i. 46, 47. my *soul* doth magnify the Lord, and my *spirit* hath rejoiced. 1 Thess. v. 23. I pray God your whole *spirit*, and *soul*, and body be preserved blameless. Heb. iv. 12. the word of God is quick—piercing even to the dividing asunder of *soul* and *spirit*:—which takes in what is termed both the *sensitive* and *rational* soul. vid. *Pierce* in Heb. iv. 12. Comp. *Krebesij* Nov. Lex. in Voc. πνευμα et ψυχη.

In these several senses do the words above, and some others usually substituted for them, (such as לב Cor, שחיה præcordia, כבד jecur, כליות renes, מעים viscera, καρδια, θυμος, νος, φεγγ, σπλαγχνα, with their derivatives and compounds) occur in Holy Scripture: and in many places they are figuratively applied to the *Deity*.—The words חיה and πνευμα stand often also,

IX. For the HOLY GHOST and his *gifts*.

See Dr. *Edwards's Doctrine of Irresistible Grace*,

c. 2. a book well worth the perusal of all those, who would be masters of the Scripture language.

X. For good and evil ANGELS; as may be seen in any Concordance, or Lexicon.

But neither do these words, nor any other, so far as I can find, ever stand for a purely immaterial principle in man; or a *substance* (whatever some may imagine they mean by that word) wholly separable from, and independent of the body; as may perhaps appear more fully, when we examine the passages usually cited for that purpose.

I proceed, in the next place, to consider what account the Scriptures give of that state to which *death* reduces us. And this we find represented by *sleep*; by a negation of all *life*, *thought*, or *action*; by *rest*, *resting-place*, or *home*; *silence*, *oblivion*, *darkness*, *destruction* or *corruption*.

I. SLEEP.

First, in the case of *good* men. Deut. xxxi. 16.—the Lord said unto *Moses*, Behold, thou shalt *sleep* with thy fathers. 1 Kings i. 21.—when my lord the king shall *sleep* with his fathers. ii. 10. So *David* *slept* with his fathers. xi. 43. *Solomon* xv. 24. *Asa*. xxii. 50. *Jehoshaphat*. 2 Kings xv. 7. *Azariah*. v. 38. *Jotham*. So 2 Chron. ix. 31. xiv. 1. xvi. 13. xxi. 1. xxvi. 23. xxvii. 9. xxxii. 33.

Job iii. 13, 14. For now should I have lien still and been quiet, I should have *slept*; then had I been at rest; with kings and counsellors of the earth. vii. 21.—Why dost thou not pardon my transgression? for now shall I *sleep* in the dust. xiv. 11, 12. As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; so man lieth down and riseth not, till the Heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their *sleep*. (vid. *Cleric.*) Ps. xiii. 3.—lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the *sleep* of death. Ps. xvii. 3.—Thou hast visited me in the *night*, thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing. 15.—I shall be satisfied, when I *awake*, with thy likeness. *Chald.* Par. Matt. xxvii. 52.—the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints that *slept*, arose. John xi. 11.—our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*; but I go that I may awake him out of *sleep*. 13.—*Jesus* spake of his *death*. Acts vii. 60.—And when he had said this, he fell *asleep*. xiii. 36.—*David*, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell *on sleep*, and was laid unto his fathers. 1 Cor. xv. 6.—He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain—but some are fallen *asleep*.—18. Then they also which are fallen *asleep* in Christ, are perished.—20.—now is Christ—become the first-fruits of them that *slept*.—51.—we shall not all *sleep*, but we shall all be changed. 1 Thess. iv. 13.—I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are *asleep*.—14.—them—which *sleep* in Jesus,

will God bring with him.—15.—we which are alive—shall not prevent them that are *asleep*. v. 10. who died for us, that whether we wake, or *sleep*, we should live together with him. 2 Pet. iii. 4.—since the fathers fell *asleep*, all things continue as they were.

Secondly, In the case of *bad* men. 1 Kings xiv. 20. *Jeroboam*—*slept* with his fathers. So—31. of *Rehoboam*. xvi. 6. *Baasha*—28. *Omri*. xxii. 40. *Ahab*. 2 Kings viii. 24. *Joram*. x. 35. *Jehu*. xiii. 9. *Jehoahaz*. *Joash*. xiv. 16. *Jeroboam*.—29. *Menahem*. xv. 22. *Ahaz*. xvi. 20. *Manasseh*. xxi. 18. *Jehoiakim*. xxiv. 6. So 2 Chron. xii. 16. xxvii. 9. xxxiii. 20. Jer. li. 39.—I will make them drunken, that they may—sleep a perpetual *sleep*, and not wake. 1 Cor. xi. 30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many *sleep*.

Thirdly, In the case of *all* men. Dan. xii. 2. Many of them that *sleep* in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, &c. Compare John v. 28, 29.—the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their *graves* shall hear his voice, and shall *come forth*; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, &c.

II. Death is represented by a negation of all LIFE, THOUGHT, OR ACTION; even to good men.

Job iii. 11. Why died I not from the womb? —13. for now should I have *lien still*.—16. as an hidden *untimely birth*, I had not been; as infants

which *never saw light*. xiv. 10. Man dieth—and *where is he?*—14. If a man die, shall he *live* again? [vid. *Chappelow*, on v. 12.] Ps. vi. 5.—in death there is no *remembrance* of thee. xxx. 9. What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? shall the *dust* praise thee? lxxxviii. 10, 11, 12. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in *destruction*? shall thy wonders be known in the *dark*? and thy righteousness in the land of *forgetfulness*? cxv. 17. The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into *silence*. cxlvi. 4. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his *thoughts* perish. Eccles. ix. 5.—the dead *know not any thing*.—6.—their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now *perished*.—10. there is no *work*, nor *device*, nor *knowledge*, nor *wisdom* in the grave, whither thou goest. Is. xxxviii. 18.—the grave cannot *praise* thee, death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot *hope* for thy truth. 19. The living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day. Acts ii. 34.—*David* is not ascended into the Heavens, &c.

III. Death is represented as a REST, and the GRAVE a RESTING-PLACE, HOUSE, OR HOME.

Job iii. 11. Why died I not?—13.—then had

I been at *rest*.—17. there the weary be at *rest*.—18. there the prisoners *rest* together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. xvii. 13.—the grave is mine *house*.—16. they shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our *rest* together is in the dust. Eccles. xii. 5.—man goeth to his long *home*.—7. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. [vid. *Cleric.*] Is. xiv. 15. All the kings of the nations—lie in glory, every one in his own *house*. lvii. 2. They shall *rest* in their beds; *namely*, every one that walketh [or rather, hath walked] in his uprightness. Rev. xiv. 13. That they *rest* from their labours.

IV. A state of SILENCE.

1 Sam. ii. 9. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be *silent* in darkness. Ps. xxxi. 17.—let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be *silent* in the grave. xciv. 17. Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in *silence*. cxv. 17. in sect. ii. Jer. xlvi. 2. —come, and let us cut it off from being a nation; also *thou shalt be cut down* (in the margin, *be brought to silence*.) Ezek. xxxii. 25. They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword: though their terror was caused in the land of the living; —Add 27, &c.

V. OF OBLIVION. Ps. vi. 5. lxxxviii. 12. as above, sect. ii.

VI. OF DARKNESS.

I Sam. ii. 9. as above, sect. iv. Job iii. 5. Let *darkness* and the shadow of death stain it, (*viz.* the day of his birth.) x. 21. Before I go to the land of *darkness*, and the shadow of death.—22. A land of *darkness*, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death; without any order, and where the light is as *darkness*. xii. 22. He discovereth deep things out of *darkness*; and bringeth out to light the shadow of death. xvii. 13.—the grave is mine house; I have made my bed in *darkness*. xxxiii. 28. He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the *light*. Ps. xliv. 19. Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the *shadow of death*. [Add xlix. 19. in sect. vii. Ps. lxxxviii. 12. as above, sect. ii.] cvii. 10. Such as sit in *darkness*, and in the shadow of death. Add v. 14. Eccles. xi. 8.—if a man live many years—yet let him remember the days of *darkness*, for they shall be many. John ix. 4. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the *night* cometh, when no man can work.

VII. OF CORRUPTION AND DESTRUCTION.

Job iv. 18, 19, 20.—He put no trust in his

servants,—how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay; whose foundation is in the dust; which are crushed before the moth? they are *destroyed* from morning to evening; they are *perished* for ever. xxvi. 6. Hell is naked before him, and *destruction* hath no covering. xxviii. 22. *Destruction* and death say, we have heard the fame thereof. Ps. xvi. 10.—thou—wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see *corruption*. xlix. 9. That he should still live for ever, and not see *corruption*.—12.—man being in honour, *abideth not*.—14. like sheep they are laid in the grave, death shall *feed* on them,—their beauty shall *consume* in the grave from their dwelling.—19. He (Heb. His *soul*) shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall *never see light*.—20. Man that is in honour and understandeth not, is like the beasts that *perish*. lxxxviii. 11. Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in *destruction*? (vid. *Clericum*, qui recte deducit *Rephaim*, mortuos, a *rapha* defecit, desiit.) Add Prov. xv. 1. xxvii. 20. Acts xiii. 36. *David*—was laid unto his fathers, and saw *corruption*. 1 Cor. xv. 18. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ, are *perished*. vid. *Hallet*, Disc. Vol. I. p. 313. &c. Comp. 2 Pet. ii. 1.

Agreeably to these representations of our state *in death*, revelation informs us,

I. That we shall not *awake*, or be made *alive*, till the *resurrection*. Ps. xvii. 15.—I shall be sa-

tified, when I *awake*, with thy likeness. John vi. 39. This is the Father's will—that of all which he hath given me, I should *lose* nothing; but should *raise it* up again at the last day. xi. 24, 25, 26. I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he *live*; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. [whosoever *liveth*, or is *alive at that day*. Comp. 1 Thess. iv. 15.] This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not *prevent* them which are asleep. And 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.—we shall not all *sleep*, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. Rom. iv. 17.—he believed—God, who *quickeneth* the dead, and calleth those things which be not, as though they were.

II. That the wicked shall not be *severed* from the righteous till the *resurrection*, the *end of the world*, the *coming*, or *day of Christ*, the *day of the Lord*, THE *day*, THAT *day*, &c.

Matt. xiii. 30. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the *time of harvest*, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.—40. As the tares are gathered, and burnt in the fire; so shall it be in the *end of this world*.—41. The Son of

man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.—49. and *sever* the wicked from among the just. xxiv. 31.—He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other. xxv. 31, 32. When the Son of man shall come in his glory—before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall *separate* them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Add Mark xiii. 26, 27.

• III. We are *upon trial*, or in a state of *probation*, till the *resurrection*, or the *day* of Christ.

1 Cor. i. 8. in sect. xi. Phil. i. 10. That ye may be sincere, and without offence *till the day of Christ*. 1 Thess. v. 23.—I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless *unto the coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Tim. vi. 14. That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the *appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Tit. ii. 12, 13.—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. Heb. x. 35, 36, 37. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For yet a little

while, and he that shall *come*, will *come*, and will not tarry. Ja. i. 12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is *tried*, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. v. 7. Be patient, therefore, brethren, *unto the coming* of the Lord. 1 Pet. i. 7. That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, *at the appearing* of Jesus Christ.—13.—Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end; for the grace that is to be brought to you *at the revelation* of Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12. Looking for, and hastening unto the *coming of the day of God*; wherein the Heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.—14. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be *found* of him in peace; without spot, and blameless. Rev. ii. 25.—that which ye have already, hold fast *till I come*.

IV. Our *Christian course*, and *improvements* in piety in this world, terminate in the *resurrection*, the *coming*, or *day* of our Lord.

Phil. i. 6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it *until the day of Jesus Christ*. iii. 10, 11. That I may know him, and the power of

most undeserved compassion, in calmly healing

his character or mission. *Chubb* has been at the pains to revive some of *Woolston's* idle objections on this head, without either making any improvements on them, or taking the least notice of the large and clear answers given to them; as is the common way with this kind of writers. He dwells upon the *harshness, impropriety, and fallaciousness, of Christ's* reply to his mother; and urges the *intemperance*, which must have been promoted by this miraculous production of wine. *Post. Works*, Vol. II. p. 185, 6, 7, 8.

As to the *harshness*, which arises chiefly from the word *woman*, in our own language; it has been shewn, that *γυνή* is a term used by the best writers very consistently with the highest respect; and as such, most undoubtedly applied elsewhere to the same person; *Joh. xix. 26*. That the phrase *τι ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί*, was no more than a common expression of some gentle rebuke for intermeddling in another's province; *2 Sam. xvi. 10. xix. 22. 2 Kings iii. 13. 2 Chron. xxxv. 21.* and might be exceedingly *proper*, and even necessary at *Christ's* first opening his commission, in order to guard against any suspicion of his mother's having *concerted matters with him*; (as the same author would insinuate, p. 168.)—to prevent her interfering at all in it, or pretending to any influence or authoritative direction, in the case of working miracles especially, which was of public concern: and so the following words may be taken interrogatively, *ἔτι ἢ ὥρα μὲν*; *Is not the time of my ministry now come?* To which we may add, that whatever apparent slight or severity occurs in this or any other circumstance where she is introduced, it may have been ordered providentially (as the same thing seems to have been done on the like account in other cases, v. g. that of *St. Peter* more remarkably;) to guard against those many gross abuses of her name and interest, those very grievous corruptions that in after-times were set up in the church of *Christ*, and supported chiefly by that near relation which she bore to him according to the flesh. To the same purpose may be applied those other seemingly disparaging accounts, which he is pleased to give of such relations, in comparison of those, who stood related to him in a much higher sense, viz. a heavenly one,

the wound of one of those who came with eager-

Matt. xii. 46—50. *Mark* iii. 31—35. *Luke* viii. 19—21. xi. 27, 28. See *Clarke's* xvii. Sermons, p. 236. [and on the same principle might be founded that remarkable estrangement between *John* the Baptist and our blessed Saviour, notwithstanding their being so very near relations; as is observed by *Doddridge* on *Joh.* i. 31. *Fam. Ex.* Vol. I. p. 122. note c. Add *Jortin*, Disc. v. p. 194, 2d ed. and *Dr. Bell's* Inquiry.] As to his *hour not being come*, if taken in another sense, i. e. of doing any thing for her benefit in particular; that may relate to the *hour* of his death; agreeably to the common use of this word in the Gospel, (comp. *Joh.* vii. 8. 30. viii. 20. xii. 27. xiii. 1. xvii. 1.) In like manner at the very beginning of *Christ's* ministry, the Devil is said to depart from him for a season, *Luke* iv. 13. though that was so late as till his last suffering, called their *hour*, i. e. that of his enemies and the power of darkness, *Luke* xxii. 53.) for which, to prevent all secular views, he might prepare her at the very entrance into his office; signifying that she was to receive no kind of worldly advantage from it till he left the world; and when that time came, he recommended her accordingly to his beloved disciple; who took her to his own home, and provided for her as if she was his own mother. So far was *Christ's* reply from any of that *fallacy* and *contradiction*, with which this author has been pleased to charge it, that even on this imperfect view of the case, we may be able to discern clear tokens of the same divine wisdom and disinterested goodness here, which shines out in each of his other discourses.

Nor is there any more ground for that other suggestion of *excess*, from the *guests having drunk so freely as to exhaust plenty of wine*; *ib.* p. 188. since from the known regulations at all marriage feasts, there was no danger of it; from the low circumstances of the person entertaining here, no room to apprehend that any extraordinary plenty could be provided; but rather the contrary: nor from what *Christ* supplied, the least encouragement given to intemperance, during the remainder of the feast, which lasted several days; commonly seven: and wherein, if we will suppose that this wine must have been all drunk up, which we have no occasion to do; [see *Jennings*, Lect. B. iii. c. 2.

1 John ii. 28.—Little children, abide in him; that when he shall *appear*, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his *coming*. iv. 17. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the *day of judgment*.

VIII. The virtuous shall not be *rewarded* till the *resurrection*, &c.

Matt. xiii. 43. *Then* shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. xix. 28.—ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall *sit in the throne* of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of *Israel*. xxv. 19, 20, 21. After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents, came and brought other five talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant;—*enter thou into the joy of thy lord*.—So 23.—34. *Then* shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.—46.—these (the wicked) shall go away into *everlasting punishment*: but the righteous into *life eternal*. Luke xiv. 14.—thou shalt be recompensed at the *resurrection of the just*. John v. 28, 29.—the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the

resurrection of life; vi. 40.—This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and *I will raise him up at the last day*.—44. No man can come to me, except the Father—draw him: and I will *raise him up at the last day*.—54. whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and *I will raise him up at the last day*, xvi. 22. Ye now have sorrow: but I will *see you again*, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. Acts iii. 19. Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, *when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord*. 1 Cor. v. 5. To deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the *day of the Lord Jesus*. 2 Cor. i. 14.—we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours, in the *day of our Lord Jesus*. v. 2, 3, 4.—we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is *from Heaven*. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be *unclothed*, but *clothed upon*; that mortality might be swallowed up of life. (Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 52, 53, 54.—the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed: For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.—Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.) Eph. iv. 30.—grieve not the holy Spirit of God,

whereby ye are sealed unto the *day of redemption*. Rev. xi. 18.—thy wrath is come, and the time of the *dead*, that they should be *judged*; and that thou shouldst give *reward* unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints.

IX. They shall not have *eternal life*, or *salvation*; shall not put on *immortality*; be *received* unto Christ; *enter* into his *joy*; *behold* his *glory*, or be *like him*; till the *resurrection*, &c.

John vi. 54. as above in sect. viii.—xiv. 2, 3. In my Father's house are many mansions.—I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will *come again*, and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also. xvii. 24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am; that they may behold my *glory* which thou hast given me. Acts iii. 20, 21. Jesus Christ—whom the Heaven must receive, until the times of *restitution* of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets. Rom. vi. 5.—if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his *resurrection*. viii. 11.—if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised Christ from the dead shall also *quicken* your mortal bodies, by his Spirit, that dwelleth in you.—17.—if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also *glorified together*.—18. For I

reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory* that shall be revealed in us.—19. For the earnest expectation of the creature, waiteth for the *manifestation* of the sons of God.—23.—not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit: even we ourselves, groan within ourselves; waiting for the adoption, to wit, the *redemption of our body*. Add 1 Cor. xv. 52, 53, 54. as above, sect. viii. Phil. iii. 20, 21. For our conversation is in Heaven, *from whence* also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. Col. iii. 4.—when Christ who is our life shall *appear*, then shall ye also appear with him in *glory*. 1 Thess. ii. 19.—What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, *at his coming*. iv. 14, 15, 16, 17. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep* in Jesus, will God *bring with him*. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to *meet the Lord* in the air: and so shall we *ever be with the Lord*. 2 Thess. i.

6, 7. It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be *revealed from Heaven*.—
 10. when he shall come to be glorified in the saints, and to be admired of all them that believe—in *that day*. 2 Tim. i. 18. The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord, *in that day*. iv. 8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness; which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me *at that day*: and not to me only; but unto all them that love his appearing. Heb. ix. 28.—Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for him, shall he *appear* the second time, without sin, unto *salvation*. 1 Pet. iv. 13.—rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his *glory shall be revealed*, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. v. 4.—when the *chief Shepherd shall appear*, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 1 John iii. 2.—Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that *when he shall appear*, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

X. *They, their faith, labours, and sufferings, are lost, perished, unprofitable; if there be no resurrection.*

John vi. 39, &c. as above, sect. i. p. 396. 1 Cor. xv. 18. Then, (*i. e.* if Christ be not raised) they

also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are *perished*. [Comp. Ps. cxlvi. 4. and Eccles. ix. 6.] 32.—If after the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus; what *advantageth* it me, if the *dead rise not?*—58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not *in vain, in the Lord*. [This supposes, that all their *labour in the Lord* would be *in vain*, if no *resurrection*.] Therefore,

XI. The *resurrection* is the grand object of our *faith, hope, and comfort*.

Acts xxiii. 6.—*Paul* cried out—of the *hope and resurrection of the dead*, I am called in question. xxiv. 15. I—have hope towards God,—that there shall be a *resurrection of the dead*, both of the just and unjust. 1 Cor. i. 7, 8. Ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also confirm you unto the end; that ye may be blameless *in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*. 2 Cor. i. 9. But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which *raiseth the dead*. iv. 10. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus; that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our *body*.—14. Knowing, that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall *raise up us* also, by Jesus. Phil. iii. 11. If

by any means I might attain unto the *resurrection of the dead*. Add 20, 21. as above, sect. ix. 1 Thess. i. 9, 10.—ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his *Son from Heaven*. iv. 17, 18. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be *caught up* together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we *ever be with the Lord*. Wherefore *comfort one another with these words*. 2 Thess. i. 7. as above, sect. ix. iii. 5.—the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient *waiting for Christ*. 2 Tim. i. 12.—I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, *against that day*. ii. 18. Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the *faith* of some. Tit. ii. 13. as above, sect. iv. Heb. xi. 35. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a *better resurrection*. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 5. Blessed be God—which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively *hope*, by the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away; reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God, through *faith* unto salvation; ready to be revealed in *the last time*. See v. 13. above in sect. iv. 2 Pet. iii. 13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, *look for new Heavens, and*

a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 1 John iii. 2. see in sect. ix. above.—v. 3. every man that *hath this hope* in him (of a *resurrection*) purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Rev. i. 9. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and *in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ*. (ἐν τῇ Βασιλείᾳ, καὶ ὑπομονῇ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.) Vid. *Grot.*

XII. The wicked will not be *punished* till the *resurrection*.

Matt. vii. 22, 23. Many will say to me *in that day*, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?—and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. x. 15.—it shall be more tolerable for the land of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, in *the day of judgment*, than for that city. Add xi. 22. xii. 36.—every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof, *in the day of judgment*. xxv. 41. *Then* shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—46.—these shall go away into everlasting punishment. Mark viii. 38. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words;—of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he *cometh in the glory of his Father*, with the holy angels. Luke x. 12.—it shall be more tolerable *in that day* for *Sodom*, than for that city. See

John v. 28, 29. in sect. viii. John xii. 48. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him *in the last day*. Rom. ii. 5, 6.—But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the *day of wrath*, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9. When the Lord Jesus shall be *revealed from Heaven*—in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God;—who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. 2 Pet. ii. 9. The Lord knoweth how—to *reserve* the unjust unto the *day of judgment* to be punished. iii. 7.—the Heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store; *reserved* unto fire against the *day of judgment*, and perdition of ungodly men. Jude 14. 15.—Behold, the Lord *cometh* with ten thousand of his saints; to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. Rev. i. 7. Behold, he *cometh* with clouds; and every eye shall see him; and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. vi. 16, 17. And they said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face

of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great *day of his wrath* is come, and who shall be able to stand?

XIII. All this plainly shews, that the Scripture, in speaking of the connection between our present and future being, doth not take into the account our *intermediate state in death*; no more than we, in describing the course of any man's actions, take in the time he sleeps.

Therefore the Scriptures (to be consistent with themselves) must affirm an immediate connection between *death* and *judgment*. Heb. ix. 27.—It is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this the judgment*. See 2 Cor. v. 6, 8. in Objections.

XIV. For this reason the Scriptures represent the *coming of Christ as near at hand*.

Rom. xiii. 12. The night is far spent, the day is *at hand*. Phil. iv. 5.—the Lord is *at hand*. Jam. v. 8.—the coming of the Lord *draweth nigh*. 9.—the judge *standeth before the door*. Rev. xxii. 7.—Behold, I *come quickly*. 12. I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.—20. He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely *I come quickly*.

XV. Also that *he, his day*, will come *suddenly*, as a snare, a thief, upon all the world; and we are

cautioned to *watch, and be sober*, that it surprise us not unprepared.

Luke xii. 40. Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye *think not*. xxi. 34.—take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you *unawares*. 35.—for as a *snare* shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36.—*Watch* ye therefore, and pray always; that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. Phil. iv. 5. See above. 1 Thess. v. 2. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a *thief in the night*. 6.—Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us *watch and be sober*. 2 Pet. iii. 10.—the day of the Lord will come as a *thief in the night*.—12. *looking for* and *hasting unto* the day of the Lord. Rev. iii. 3.—If therefore thou shalt not *watch*, I will come on thee as a *thief*, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Rev. xxii. 12. 20. See above, sect. XIV.

OBJECTIONS, or Texts usually alleged to prove the contrary doctrine.

I. The dead are said to *speak* and *act*. Isai. v. 14. ib. xiv. 9, 10. Hell from beneath is moved for

thee to meet thee at thy coming : it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Ezek. xxxii. 21. The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him : they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword, &c.

Answe. This is a strong, but very natural and elegant *Prosopopœia*; of which more under Prop. xii. and xxvii.

II. Gen. ii. 7. Man became a *living soul*.

Answe. i. e. A living person. Gen. vii. 22. All in whose nostrils was the *breath* of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. 1 Cor. xv. 47. The first man is of the earth, *earthy*.

III. Persons are said to *go*, or be *gathered* to their people, or fathers : or to *go down* to them, or to their children, into *Sheol*. Gen. xv. 15. Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace. xxxvii. 35.—I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning.

Answe. These phrases, since they are used of whole generations; (Judges ii. 10.) as also of men

who led very different lives; or, which in this case comes to the same thing, different from their respective ancestors; (as in the former text) and whose bodies were disposed of in a different manner; (as in the latter) or deposited in places very remote from each other; (as in both cases) can only mean the general *state of the dead*; in which they are as often said to *sleep* with their *fathers*, &c. to resort *ad plures*. Vid. *Cleric.* in Gen. xv. 15. xxxvii. 35. *Patrick* on 2 Kings xxiv. 6. *Whitby* in Acts ii. 26, 27. *Barrow* on Christ's descent into Hell. Vol. I. p. 557.

IV. Exod. iii. 6. I am the God of thy father, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*. Vid. *infra* ad Luke xx. 38. p. 418.

V. 1 Sam. xxviii. 11, &c. *Saul* and the Witch of *Endor*.

Answ. That this account of *Samuel's* appearance was merely an imposition upon *Saul*, from whose attendants the old woman might learn his present circumstances, and desperate situation, and thence be able to foretel his fate, without such a pretended information from the Prophet's Ghost;—and that *Saul* himself really saw nothing all the while, but judged of the whole transaction from the woman's story, which was framed in conformity to his own superstitious prejudices. See *Le Clerc*. Though we must own with this judicious commentator,

that such a silly lying practice as that of *necromancy*, did indeed imply the vulgar opinion of a separate existence, and that it commonly prevailed amongst the Jews, (nor might the historian himself, perhaps, be altogether free from a tincture of the same prejudice), notwithstanding that all such instances of superstition were condemned both by the law and prophets. Isai. viii. 19. And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God?—for the living to the dead?—An pro vivis *ibimus* ad mortuos?—qui nihil norunt de iis quæ apud vivos fiunt. *Cleric.* ib. Another solution may be seen in Dr. *S. Clarke*, Serm. lxxxv. p. 571. fol. *Dubl. ed.* The gross absurdity of the common interpretation is demonstrated in *Chandler's* Life of *David*. B. 2. c. 16. Comp. *Young*. Diss. on Idolatry. v. 2. p. 37, &c.

VI. 1 Kings xvii. 21, 22. And he stretched himself upon the child three times,—and said, O Lord, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.—And the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

Answ. The soul here signifies *life*, or perhaps *vigour*. *Redeat in viscera ejus*. Heb. Par. *Chald.* et *Syr.* Com. 1 Sam. xxx. 12.—When he had eaten his *spirit* came to him again. Add Jud. xv. 19.

VII. Psal. xxxi. 5. Into thine hand I commend my spirit.

Answe. *Spirit*, can only mean *life*, as the author treats of nothing there but temporal adversity. ver. 7.—thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities.

VIII. Eccles. iii. 21. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward; and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

1. *Who knows* the difference between them?

Answe. No body. For, ver. 19.—that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath. ver. 20. All go unto one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

Or 2. If the two foregoing verses be the objection of an atheist (as is supposed by the judicious writer mentioned below, p. 466). then (as he also observes) these words contain the answer, and ‘ imply, *Who knows this? How can any man be sure of that?* It is evident, *the spirit of man is ascending upwards* (is fitted for, and has a tendency towards things which are above this earth; and therefore must be designed by its Creator for things superior to the mere animal life) *but the spirit of a beast is descending downwards*; namely to the earth:

(grovels upon the earth, and is wholly confined to the low, animal, sensitive life;) it is therefore evident man must have pre-eminence over a beast.'

IX. Eccles. xii. 7. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Answe. By *spirit*, the preacher can only mean *life*, in allusion to Gen. iii. 19, (In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return)—unless we make him contradict all that he had said before, iii. 19, 20. as also, ix. 5.—the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more reward.—10. there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, &c.—That such words mean no more in other writers. Vid. *Cleric. in loc.* and Job xxiv. 14. If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath.—And that this author refers all to the *last judgment*. Vid. *ver. ult.* God shall bring every work unto judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Comp. Dr. *Dawson's* answer to *Steffe's* argument drawn from the two foregoing texts, in two letters annexed to his *Lady Moyer's* Lecture, p. 249, &c.

X. Matt. x. 28. Fear not them which kill the

body, but are not able to kill the soul : (after that have no more that they can do. Luke xii. 4.) but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.

Answ. This is so far from proving such a distinction between soul and body as implies any separate existence of the former from the latter ; or its being capable of suffering in an intermediate state ; that it seems only intended to point out the great distinction between this and the next life ; when, in the common language, soul and body are reunited, and future punishments commence, to the *everlasting destruction* of both, *from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power.* 2 Thess. i. 9. Comp. 1 Cor. v. 5. and 2 Pet. ii. 9. and sect. V. p. 415. It may be observed here, once for all, that when Christ uses the common distinction of Soul and Body, he may be conceived to adapt himself wholly to the popular language and ideas, without giving any confirmation to the *truth* and *justness* of them ; as when he says, *a spirit, (i. e. according to your own notion of it) hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.* Luke xxiv. 39. without determining the reality of such a phantom : which popular way of speaking, used then on all occasions as the most agreeable and most intelligible, should be more carefully attended to by us, in order to guard against all such chimæras as are too often grounded on it. In the same popular manner do the Evangelists treat some of

Christ's miraculous works, when they describe them just according to the vulgar apprehension; v. g. Luke vi. 19. *There went virtue out of him to heal them all*—and Mark v. 30. *Jesus immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned himself about in the press, and said, who touched my clothes?* intending to denote his consciousness of the infirm person's wanting to be cured in a private way, and accordingly making use of the superstitious means, vulgarly deemed effectual to that purpose, of secretly touching some of his garments; which desire of hers, Christ was pleased to comply with (till he had opportunity of producing her in public) and thereby instantly rewarded her faith in his miraculous power, notwithstanding the improper manner in which she had been induced to solicit it, as if such healing virtue could have been produced in, or elicited from Christ, either magically or mechanically, and without his knowledge. Vid. *Cleric. et Grot. in loc. and Comp. Acts v. 15.* where the common people entertain a like opinion of St. Peter's shadow. *Loca, quæ aut inter se aut veritati nobis repugnare videntur, commode plerumque conciliari possunt, si dicamus, Scriptorem sacrum non suam sententiam ubique expressisse, et dixisse quid res sit; sed aliquando ex sententia aliorum aut ex vulgi opinione, &c. Wetsten, N. T. Vol. II. p. 877.* This *rule of interpretation* may be applied to many other points beside those mentioned by that author.

The same observation has been made on the vulgar notion of *possessions* by devils so very prevalent among the Jews about *Christ's* time; where he really cures each disorder without controverting their opinions on the subject (which would have been endless, and answered no good purpose) but rather allows and argues from them occasionally, *ad homines*; casts out these supposed devils, as the Jews themselves frequently attempted to do, and is said to *rebuke* them, (Mark i. 25.) in the same manner as he *rebukes* a *fever* (Luke iv. 19.) or the *winds* and *sea*. Matt. viii. 26. See Dr. *Harwood's* judicious observations on the *Demoniacs*. New Introd. to the N. T. C. 7. § 1. On the same principle also several parables seem to be founded, as that of the rich man and *Lazarus*, below No. xii. that of *unclean spirits walking through dry* (or desert) *places*; and numbers of them *entering into one man, and dwelling there*. Matt. xii. 45. Luke xi. 26. Comp. Mr. *Farmer* on the *Demoniacs* pass.

XI. Matt. xvii. 3.—there appeared unto them *Moses* and *Elias* talking with him.

Answ. 1. This is either merely a vision (ver. 9.)—Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the *vision* to no man, which confounded the apostles: Luke ix. 33.—Or 2. These two might appear in their own glorified bodies; since it is not very clear whether *Moses* also might not have been *translated*, or

rather *raised again*. Vid. *Whitby*, *ib.* and in *Jude* 9. and *Cleric.* in *Deut.* xxxiv. 6. and in *2 Kings* ii. 11. or *Fleming's* *Christology*, p. 68, &c.

XII. *Luke* xvi. 19, &c. The parable of the rich man and *Lazarus*.

Answ. This is designed for no more than a general scenical description of a future state, and the real changes consequent thereupon; without any particular reference to a fact, in either person, time, place, or other circumstances: And in these respects adapted (as is usual in such discourses) to the *inconsistent* notions of the vulgar on this subject. (Vid. *Cleric.* in ver. 23, 24.) *v. g.* the tormented person is at the same time supposed to be both *in* and *out of* the body,—ver. 24. send *Lazarus* that he may dip the *tip of his finger* in *water*, and cool my *tongue*.—As when men are feigned to discourse, &c. among *worms* in the grave. *Isa.* xiv. 9, 10, 11. Vid. *Cleric.* *Ezek.* xxxii. 21. and lay their *swords* under their *heads* there, *ib.* ver. 27. See *Lightf.* *Hor.* *Heb.* in loc. and comp. *Job* xv. 22. xxi. 32, 33. with *Chappelow's* commentary. They who can still conceive such representations as realities, may easily go one step farther, and give a literal sense likewise to the verse immediately foregoing, *Isa.* xiv. 8. The fir-trees *rejoice* at thee, and the cedars of *Lebanon*; *saying*, since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. This has actually been done to the

parallel place in Ezek. xxi. 14—17. which (with some other texts as little to the purpose) is brought to prove a separate state. *Universal Restoration*, p. 272. n. t. A different explanation of this parable may be seen in *Bates's Rationale of Or. Sin*, c. xiii. § 6.

XIII. Luke xx. 38.—He is not the *God* of the *dead*, but of the *living*.

Answ. He cannot be called the God of such as be *finally* dead; but being still *in covenant* with these, (Heb. xi. 16.—God is not ashamed to be called *their God*: *for he hath prepared for them a city*.) they in *effect* live *to him*. (Rom. iv. 17.—who quickeneth the dead, and *calleth those things which be not, as though they were*. See *Parry's Defence of Bp. Sherlock*, p. 77.) though not in reality to *themselves*, or to *one another*: if they did, our blessed Saviour's proof of a *resurrection* from thence, would be utterly destroyed. Vid. *Whitby on Matt. xxii. 31.* or the *Library*, No. 14. They are the *Children of the resurrection*, Luke xx. 36. and as sure of a future life, as if already in possession of it: in the same manner as Christ is termed *the Lord both of the dead and living*, Rom. xiv. 9. and as he says to the penitent thief;—

XIV. Luke xxxii. 43.—*To-day* shalt thou be with me in paradise.—

Answ. *To-day* thou art certain of a place with me in Heaven; it is a thing already done and determined: the words *to-day* being constantly used of any matter then fixed, settled, or declared; though not to commence some months, or even ages after. Gen. ii. 17.—in *the day* that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.—Deut. ix. 1. Hear, O *Israel*, thou art to pass over Jordan *this day*. xxix. 13. That he may establish thee *to-day* for a people unto him. Psal. ii. 7.—Thou art my son, *this day* have I begotten thee. Comp. Acts xiii. 33. and Heb. v. 5. with *Sykes* on Heb. App. i. p. 244. The same may be observed of כָּרָח, *Cras*.

I shall add another interpretation of these words, from the judicious author mentioned at the end of this *Appendix*; though it take up a little more room than I was willing to allow myself. ‘The thief on the cross, I make no doubt, was acquainted with Christ, and had heard him often preach. For he could say, This man has done *εδεν ατρεπον*, *nothing amiss*; nothing inconsistent with his pretensions as *Messiah*. Probably he had been one of his followers; and heard such discourses from him, as John vi. declaring what he had to give was *eternal life*, after the resurrection. This did not suit the temporal expectations of many of his followers, who then left him. After he had left Christ, pursuing his carnal scheme, he fell in with robbers; was taken, cast into prison; and then, having done with all earthly hopes, he began to reflect upon, and relish what he had

heard from Christ; but retaining still a part of his *Jewish* errors concerning the *Messiah's* kingdom, (like the mother of *Zebedee's* children) he imagined Christ could do nothing till he was in actual possession of his kingdom. *Lord, remember me when thou comest into (or in) thy kingdom,* (εν τη βασιλεια σου, Comp. Matt. xvi. 28.) and see if any thing can be done in favour of a poor wretch! Our Lord answers, You need not suspend your hopes till then; even *at present*, and in my low circumstances, I have authority to *assure* you that you shall have a place with me in paradise; not in an *earthly kingdom*, but in paradise; the word by which the *Jews* most familiarly and distinctly expressed the future state of blessedness.' *I say unto thee this day thou shalt, &c.* For this last reading, see *Coteler. Vet. Mon. Tom. III. or Bowyer* in loc.

XV. Luke xxiv. 39.—handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

Answ. Alluding to the vulgar notion of *apparitions*, as above, v. 37.—they were terrified, and *supposed* they had seen a spirit.

XVI. Acts i. 25.—from which *Judas* by transgression fell, that he might go to his own *place*;

εις τον τοπον τον ιδιον.—

Answ. 1. Some put εξ ης παρεβη Ιυδας, in a paren-

thesis: for which reading, see the authorities in *Bowyer's N. Test. Comp. Harwood Not. in loc. et Kyrke Obs. Sac.*

2. If spoken of *Judas*, it may denote that state of punishment, to which his death consigned him; and which was to take place at the day of judgment. 2 Thess. i. 9. 2 Pet. ii. 9.—But what relation can a soul *unclothed*, have to *place*?

XVII. Acts vii. 59.—they stoned *Stephen*, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus *receive my spirit*.

Answ. i. e. my *life*. Col. iii. 3. With whom our *life is hid* in God. If life, either *past* or *future*, can be said to be *hid* with Christ; why may it not, by the same figure, be *received* by him, *committed* to, or *deposited* with, and *kept* by him; as in 2 Tim. i. 12. and 1 Pet. iv. 19.?

XVIII. 2 Cor. v. 8.—willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Answ. This is strictly true, since time unperceived making no distance, or difference in the case, the season of each person's recompense really coincides with that of his death: (which is constantly allowed by those on the other side of the question, would they but as constantly remember, and abide by it) and therefore to be absent from our *natural* body, is to be clothed

with a *spiritual* one: to *depart* hence is to *be with Christ*. *ib.* v. 4. *we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*—That St. Paul hath no thought of an intermediate state, is plain from the first four verses. (We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens: For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be *clothed upon* with our house which is from Heaven: if so be that being clothed, we shall not be found *naked*, &c.) As also from v. 10. plainly referring all to the *general judgment*. See this text, together with the context, judiciously explained by Dr. Dawson at the end of his *Lady Moyer's Lect.* p. 267, &c. Comp. *Alexander's Paraphr.* on 1 Cor. xv. p. 35, 36. who has demonstrated that the phrase *being absent from the body* can have no relation to an *intermediate state*, but rather denotes *the life of Saints after the Resurrection*.

The same reply serves for—

XIX. Phil. i. 21,—24.—to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain:—yet what I shall choose, I wot not: For I am in a strait betwixt two; having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is *far better*. Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you:

i. e. It would be better for me to be imme-

diately released from all my labours; since this *to me* would be an immediate entrance *into the joy of my Lord*; though *to others*, who *abide in the flesh*, that day is at a distance; and at a greater distance from *each*, the longer he so abideth; notwithstanding that this great day, (if we may be allowed to distinguish between time *relative*, and *absolute*) is in itself one and the *same to all*: neither shall they who die first in that sense, attain to it the soonest; nor shall they that remain alive *to the coming of the Lord*, prevent, precede or anticipate *them which are asleep*. 1 Thess. iv. 15. That the Apostle could not be with Christ in any intermediate state, is fully made out by *Alexander* in his explanation of this passage, Paraphr. on 1 Cor. xv. p. 37, &c.

XX. 2 Cor. xii. 2. I knew a man in Christ—(whether in the body,—or whether out of the body, I cannot tell—) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

Answ. This is a vision, [v. 1.—I will come to *visions, and revelations of the Lord*,] in which, things were represented in so lively a manner, as to leave it doubtful, whether they had not been really seen and heard; in which he was *quasi raptus extra se*. vid. *Philo*, ap. *Wetsten*, in loc. and *Farmer* on *Christ's Temptation*. not. u. p. 21. 22. or *Benson*, *Hist. of the first planting the Christ. Rel.* V. ii. p. 7. 2d ed.

XXI. Eph. iv. 9. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first *into the lower parts of the earth*? εἰς τὰ κατωτέρα τῆς γῆς.

Answe. i. e. at his *incarnation*. Vid. John iii. 13. —no man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that *came down from Heaven*; even the Son of man which is in Heaven. viii. 23—ye are from beneath, I am *from above*; ye are of this world, I am *not* of this world.

XXII. 1 Pet. iii. 19. By which also he went and preached *unto the spirits in prison*, τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνευμασι.

Answe. Some copies have πνευμαλι; the other readings refer only to the time of *Noah*, a preacher of righteousness to those *persons*, that were then *tied and bound with the chain of their sins*. Isa. xlii. 7. To open the blind eyes, to bring out the *prisoners from the prison*, and them that sit in darkness, out of the prison-house. vid. *Lorath*, ib. lxi. 1. The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives; and the opening of the *prison, to them that are bound*. Vid. *Whitby*, App. to Acts ii. 27.—That πνευμαλια may mean only *persons*, as in 1 Tim. iv. 1. προσερχοντες πνευμασι πλανοις, see No. I. above.

XXIII. 1 Pet. iv. 6. For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are *dead*.

Answ. i. e. to those who were *spiritually* dead, or *dead in trespasses and sins*. Ephes. ii. 1. ‘By the *dead* I would understand wicked persons, especially the wicked *heathen* referred to, v. 4. and who, v. 6. are said to *walk according to men in the flesh*.—So is the word used, Matt. viii. 22. Luke ix. 60. 1 Tim. v. 6. Rev. iii. 1. And it is particularly used concerning the *Gentiles*, Ephes. ii. 1. &c. and v. 14, and Col. ii. 13.’ *Benson* in loc.

XXIV. Heb. xi. 40. God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not *be made perfect*.

Answ. The word *Τελειωσωσι*, here laid hold of to support the notion of some *imperfect* consciousness supposed to continue in an intermediate state, rather makes for the contrary, since it implies that neither those famous worthies whom the Apostle had been speaking of, nor by consequence any others, who are *fallen asleep*, shall enjoy the benefit of their reward in any sense till they *awake* together at the *general resurrection*; parallel to 1 Thess. iv. 15. and those other texts produced above No. IX. Or it may signify the same as *πληρωσονται*. Rev. vi. 11. till their number be *completed* or *fulfilled*, which comes to the same

thing, and is equally foreign to the present question.

XXV. Heb. xii. 13.—*to the spirits of just men made perfect*; πνευμασι δικαιων τετελειωμενων.

Answ. Either ye shall have access to those who *have finished their course*, i. e. when they have access to God, after the final judgment;—or approach to the *disposition* of such as have attained to the height of holiness and virtue. John xvii. 23. 1 John iv. 17. For the latter sense of the word, see sect. vii. No. 5, and 6. p. 420.

XXVI. *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Answ. ‘St. *Jude* did not mean that those wicked persons were then, and would be always burning in hell-fire. For he intimates that what they suffered was set forth to public view, and appeared to all, as an example, or specimen, of God’s displeasure against vice. The fire which consumed *Sodom*, &c. might be called *eternal*, as it burned till it had utterly consumed them.—A fruitful plain was turned into *cinders*, and the vestiges, or marks and traces of that desolating judgment remained to that time; do yet remain; and are likely to remain to the end of this world.’ *Benson* in loc.

XXVII. Rev. vi. 9. 10.—when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice; saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth!

Ansꝝ. An elegant *prosopopœia*, where the lives of martyrs are represented as a *sacrifice*, acceptable to God, which from the *altar* calls for vengeance; like the blood of *Abel*. Heb. xii. 24. A like *prosopopœia* may be seen in Ps. xvi. 9. My *flesh* shall rest in *hope*. Vid. *Whitby* in Acts ii. 27. and *Comp.* No. I. p. 446.

XXVIII. Rev. xiv. 13. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from *henceforth*;—that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

Ansꝝ. Ἀπαρτι, on which the stress is laid, may either be joined to the following word, as some copies have it; with our English margin: [from henceforth saith the spirit; yea] or to the foregoing one, ἀποθνήσκοντες; and so signify, from henceforth they may be deemed happy, who are removed from the evils coming on the earth, ver. 19, 20. parallel to Numb. xi. 15. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and

let me not see my wretchedness. 2 Kings xxii. 20.—I will gather thee unto thy fathers; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil, which I will bring upon this place. So 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27, 28. Eccles. iv. 1, 2.—they had no comforter;—wherefore I praised the dead, that are already dead; more than the living, which are yet alive. Isa. lvii. 1, 2. none considering, that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace. Comp. *Wetsten* in loc.

This may serve for a specimen of such texts, as are usually alleged on the other side of the question; all which will, I believe, appear even from these short remarks upon them, to be either quite foreign to the point, or purely figurative; or lastly, capable of a clear, and easy solution, on the principle above-mentioned; *viz.* that the times of our death and resurrection are really coincident. Nor can such ever fairly be opposed to the constant, obvious tenor of the sacred writings; and that number of plain, express passages already cited.

I only observe farther, that all *philosophical* arguments, for the contrary tenet, drawn from our notions of *matter*, and urged against the possibility of life, thought, and agency being so connected with some portions of it as to constitute a *compound Being**, or mixed person, are merely

* Bp. *Sherlock*, Disc. ii. p. 86. Disc. iii. p. 114.

grounded on our *ignorance*; and will prove equally against known fact, and daily observation; in the production of various animals; [oviparous and vegetable ones particularly] (κ); as against the

(κ) See *Ellis's Nat. Hist. of Corallines; of Sponges*, Ph. Trans. Vol. LV. XXXI. add Vol. LVII. Pt. ii. XL. and *Hughes's Animal Flower. Nat. Hist. of Barbadoes*, B. ix. p. 293. *Guertner's Urtica Marina. Phil. Trans. Vol. LII. P. i. No. xiii.* and *Baster, de Zoophytis*, ib. No. xxi. p. 108. or *Bonnet, Sur les Corps Organises*, passim. *Comp. Crantz's Hist. of Greenland*, B. ii. c. 3. s. 13, or *Spillanzain's Essay on Animal reproductions*: and a curious paper on the generation of *Aphides*. *Phil. Trans. Vol. LXI. No. xxii.* With *Diquemare's Ess. on Sea Anemonies*, Ph. Trans. V. LXIII. Pt. ii. No. xxxvii.—and *Muller Hist. of Animals, &c. Leipsic, 1774*, or a late account of the *Madrepore's Voyage to the Isle of France*. Lett. xxix. That the same observation may be carried much farther than is usually apprehended, see *Bonomiens. Acad. Comment. Tom. II. Pt. i. p. 122, &c. De Frumento*.—But a more comprehensive view of this curious subject may be had in *Dr. Watson's Essay on the Subjects of Chemistry*, printed A. D. 1771. Some perhaps may get a little insight into the nature of animal life by contemplating it as thus mixed and incorporated with the vegetable. Others may have a like view from considering the case of such persons as have been brought to life again after the lungs were collapsed, the circulation stopped, and to all ends and purposes the soul appeared (as the phrase is) to have taken leave of its body. Vid. *Memoirs of the Dutch Society for recovering drowned persons*. The like may be inferred from some remarkable cases of a long interrupted consciousness in various disorders, particularly that of six months mentioned by *Crousaz*, and cited by *Dr. Beattie* [*Essay on Truth*, p. 83,] though he produces it for a very different purpose, and appears throughout, like some others of his countrymen, entirely devoted to the old doctrine of abstract immaterial substances and their immutable identity, of innate senses, implanted instincts, &c. for want probably of having read any

union of two such heterogeneous principles, as those of our own mind and body are supposed to be.

Try any of these arguments [r. g. that from *extension, divisibility, or the vis inertiae,*] and see whether such a parallel do not strictly hold:—whether these same *qualities, or powers,* may not be in such a manner united with the vital ones, as to act on and influence each other, full as well as the different *substances, or subjects* of them;—whether the very same difficulties do not lie against a communication in each case;—or whether the word SUBSTANCE helps any thing at all toward a solution of them (A). He that carefully attends

thing written lately on the present subject, which might, I apprehend, lead them to a more just and natural way of philosophising.

(A) One of the most candid and ingenious advocates for an intermediate state, after he had judiciously exploded the *Scholastic notion of Substance* as wholly needless, [*Watts's Logic, p. 14.*] finds it convenient here again to introduce something like that, under the name of *principle*, in order to support his notion of the abstract, independent nature of the human soul; by assigning one such principle for *life*, and a different one for *thought, and agency*; and he might with equal propriety have assigned another for *vegetation, sensibility, &c.* and set up each of these on its own bottom, as a distinct existence; or such as might be supposed to *continue in a state of separation* from all the rest. If this be not *multiplying causes without necessity*, it is hard to say what is. I shall give the passage at length, not with any design of exposing that very worthy author, but merely to show the weakness and futility of such conjectures, as some of the best philosophers are forced to adopt, while they are building new systems of pneumatology, to bolster up

to the workings of nature, and sees from whence the various ideas rise in every being, and how oft the several classes of beings run into each other; will not find very much weight in arguments founded upon ontological distinctions only. And were there a thousand such, all tending to establish an essential difference between these two existences; at most they could only show, that the former of them might possibly be conceived to subsist apart from the latter; *i. e.* be sustained in a new manner, and with new properties or perfections, by the Deity; but whether he will actually so sustain it, can, I apprehend, be known only from his *word*; which represents the thing, we see, in quite another light: nor indeed ever seems to countenance these nice speculations, by

an old scholastic hypothesis; and trying to ground these on some of the most popular expressions in a sacred writer. ‘As I acknowledge I am one of those persons, who do not believe that the intellectual spirit, or mind of man, is the proper principle of animal life to the body; but that it is another distinct, conscious being, that generally uses the body as a habitation, engine, or instrument, while its animal life remains; so I am of opinion, it is a possible thing for the intellectual spirit, in a miraculous manner, by the special order of God, to act in a state of separation, without the death of the animal body; since the life of the body depends upon breath and air, and the regular temper of the solids and fluids of which it is composed. And St. Paul seems to be of the same mind, by his doubting whether his spirit was in the body or out of the body, while it was rapt into the third Heaven, and enjoyed that vision; his body being yet alive. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3.’ Essay toward a proof of the separate State of Souls. *Watts’s Works*, Vol. I. p. 521. As we have here a *living body*, while the soul is separated from

treating of *man* in any such intricate, abstracted way. Let those, who esteem it their great wisdom so to do, *go and learn what that meaneth*, which our blessed Saviour says, in answer to a subtle query of the same kind: *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.* Matt. xxii. 29. Mark xii. 24, 27.

Give me leave to subjoin the sentiments of a very pious, worthy divine, eminently well versed in the Scripture-language; I mean the late Rev. Dr. *Taylor*, whom I consulted on this head, and who returned the following answer: ‘I have perused your papers upon an important subject, which wants to be cleared up; and which cannot well be crowded within the narrow limits of a note; but richly deserves to be expatiated upon in a distinct treatise.—They comprehend two points, one relative to the *nature of the human soul, or spirit*, so far as revelation gives us any light; the other, concerning that *state to which death reduces us*. From the collection of Scriptures under the first of these heads, I think it appears, that no man can prove from Scripture, that the human soul is a principle, which lives, and acts, or thinks independent of the body.—As to the other, the ques-

it; so, p. 343, we find separate souls supposed to be *in the same state of immemorial consciousness* [or thought without remembrance] *as the soul is while the body is in the deepest sleep*; i. e. so far as relates to *us*,—to all ends and purposes of personality; and for aught we either do, or ever can know, in *no state of consciousness* at all.

tion is, Do the souls of men, when they die, immediately enter either upon a state of glory in Heaven, or upon a state of misery in the place of torments; and continue conscious, enjoying, or suffering, in the one or the other state, till the resurrection? Or do they remain dead, without thought, life, or consciousness, till the resurrection? Revelation alone can give an answer to these queries: for whatever the metaphysical nature, essence, or substance of the soul be, (which is altogether unknown to us,) it is demonstratively certain, that its existence, both in the manner and duration of it, must be wholly dependent upon the will and pleasure of God. God must appoint its connexion with and dependence upon any other substance; both in its operations, powers, and duration. All arguments, therefore, for the natural immortality of the soul, taken from the *nature* of its substance or essence; as if it must exist and act separate from the body, because it is of such a substance, &c. are manifestly vain. If indeed we do find any thing in the faculties and operations of the mind, to which we are conscious, that doth show, it is the *will of God* that we should exist in a future state, those arguments will stand good. But we can never prove, that the soul of man is of such a nature, that it can and must exist, and live, think, act, enjoy, &c. separate from, and independent of, its body. All our present experience shows the contrary. The operations of the mind depend, constantly and invariably, upon the state

of the body ; of the brain in particular. If some dying persons have a lively use of their rational faculties to the very last, it is because death has invaded some other part; and the brain remains sound and vigorous.—But what is the sense of revelation? You have given a noble collection of texts, which shew it very clearly.—The subject yields many practical remarks, and the warmest and strongest excitations to piety.’

But it might look like begging the question, should we draw out all these in form, together with the consequences of this doctrine, in regard to either *Papist* or *Deist*; till the doctrine itself, which has been so long decried by the one, and so frequently disgraced by the other, shall appear free from the various prejudices that attend it; and be at last understood to have a fair foundation in the *scriptures*, by which we *Protestants* profess to be determined; and when we have duly examined them, may possibly discern, that the *natural immortality* of the human mind is neither necessarily connected with, nor to a Christian, any proper proof of, a *future state* of rewards and punishments.

I shall conclude with a testimony, which the above mentioned truly candid and conscientious writer bears to his adversary, in this point. *Remarks*, annexed to the *Scr. Doctr. of Or. S.* p. 5. ‘ I think he is perfectly just in affirming, that the death threatened to *Adam* was a total forfeiture and extinction of life; and that our present life, and the

resurrection from the dead, is owing to the grace of God, in a Redeemer: for this he has good evidence in Scripture; and honestly deserves the public thanks of the Christian world, for asserting it. For the removal of error, whatever our prejudices may suggest, is so far from being hurtful, that it is of great service to religion.' To the same purpose are *Alexander's* very just Observations on 1 Cor. xv. p. 41, &c.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE these few hints upon the present subject have produced a controversy, which may probably be carried a good deal farther, (though from what has been advanced on the other side, I have found no reason to make any material alterations in the foregoing Discourse and Appendix), it might perhaps be now no improper time to set some of the *consequences* of this and the opposite doctrine in a fuller light; in order to bring the true state of the question into view, and thereby at length remove some of those heavy prejudices, which use to lie against it. But as this seems to be done sufficiently in a short account, published by me in the *Monthly Review*, for *June 1757*, I shall take the liberty to insert the conclusion of that paper, and refer the reader to the rest.

As to the *consequences* of the present question, about which some well-meaning people seem to have mighty apprehensions, it appears that on the one side, there is nothing more than a temporary cessation of thought, which can hurt nobody, except the self-interested *papist*; whose

very gainful system of purgatory is indeed, by this means, most effectually overturned; or the self-sufficient *deist*, whose claim to an inherent principle of immortality, set up for him, as we have seen, by some misjudging Christians to their own loss, is shown to be no less vain, and groundless.

But on the other side there is a manifest derogation from, if not a total subversion of, that positive covenant, which professes solely to entitle us to *everlasting life*. All proper and consistent notions of death, a resurrection, and future judgment, are confounded; in fine, all the great sanctions of the Gospel rendered either unintelligible or useless. These and a thousand other difficulties do we bring upon ourselves, in order to introduce a new scene of existence; which, as it was of our own invention, we might dress up as we pleased; yet have been somewhat unhappy in the decoration. For when we are raising a foundation for it, by our reasonings on the exalted powers of a refined, immaterial principle, we make that principle more pure and perfect than can be conceived in any embodied state, yet all the while imagine it to be in some sort of body, and of a certain shape; and furnish it with a suitably refined vehicle, for its *shekinah*, or habitation.

But alas! when we review this sublime, airy mansion, and begin to compare it with the scripture account of the dead, it sinks again into some

subterranean *limbus*, or prison; we are forced to reduce it all to a state of existence so extremely low and imperfect, that it lies in the very next line to non-existence, a middle state between something and nothing; and to all valuable purposes, so wholly insignificant, as to leave every one just in the same situation in which it found him, with regard to any kind of moral use, or spiritual improvement whatsoever. If this then be the case with the present system, and it cost so much to establish it;—if, for the sake of supporting such an idle, incoherent scheme, we have been giving up the peculiar benefit, and some of the principal parts of Christianity:—if we have complimented natural religion with all the discoveries, and all the privileges, that belong to revelation, it is no wonder that the warm contenders for the former of these institutions, have so indifferent an opinion of, and are so unconcerned about, the latter;—and that we have gained so little ground upon them in our late defences of it. If this, I say, be the case, it is surely right to look about us, and see whether things cannot be put upon some better foot. If we have hurt our own cause, and corrupted Christianity, by an impure mixture of human *wisdom*, falsely so called, or by the dregs of heathen *philosophy*,—designed perhaps to enliven and exalt, but always tending to debase and poison it (M);

(M) Thus, for instance, when we lost sight of the original

if we have disguised the face of it, or rather substituted something else in its room; and thereby

obvious meaning of the word *Death*, as implying a cessation of all natural life, or being a real dissolution and destruction of the whole man; to make something of his sentence, adequate, as we imagine, to the solemnity with which it was denounced, we were obliged to turn this into a *moral Death*, or vicious depravation of his noblest part, the soul; an inherent principle of corruption, derived in the grossest sense, *ex traduce*, whereby even little children (whom our benevolent Lord blesses, and whose amiable innocence he proposes as a proper temper for all the members of his kingdom, *Mark x. 14, 16.*) become objects of God's wrath, and liable to eternal torments, for no other fault except that of being born in unhappy circumstances.

It may likewise merit consideration, whether our keeping in view the proper sense of the *first Death* denounced in general to the race of *Adam*, may not direct us to the true import of that *second Death*, which is threatened to all hardened and incorrigible sinners, after some temporal punishment, [*Matt. xi. 24. Luke xii. 47.*] to be inflicted everlastingly *in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. Rev. xxi. 8.* or as our blessed Saviour has repeatedly expressed the same thing, *in hell, and the fire that never shall be quenched. Mark ix. 43, 46, 48.* Where it is remarkable, that he adheres invariably to the last words of *Isaiah* describing the fate of all such adversaries to God, upon their final overthrow; and which perhaps may be tolerably understood by the annexed interpretation. *And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.*

The prophet evidently alludes to the common custom of conquerors; who, having gained a decisive battle and driven the enemy out of the field, go forth to view the slain; whose dead bodies shall, according to the two different ways of disposing them, either be *interred*, and so eaten up with worms, which continue preying on them while there is any thing to devour;

put arms into the hands of infidels, which they have used but too successfully against us;—if this be so, I ask whether it is not high time to examine our Bibles; and try to exhibit the true Christian plan, as it is there delivered,—and *abide* by it?—to consider, whether we may not safely trust it to its own original basis, without any of those rotten props and clumsy buttresses, which after-ages have been building up for its support? Whether we may not safely rest upon that solid rock of a *resurrection*, and trust to its support without any of those visionary prospects, which imagination is ever apt to furnish us with; but which will ever fail us on a thorough trial?—Whether this *shield of faith* is not sufficient to protect us, and if relied on, would not make our posture of defence more easy and commodious? Nay, whether by this means we might not be able to remove the seat of war into the enemy's quarters—drive the adversary out of all those holds, which we have so long yielded to him, and from whence he has constantly annoyed us—strip him of all that armour, in which he now boasts, and plunge him into that abyss of darkness and despair, out of which the feeble forces of his own frail reason cannot rescue him, nor any

or *burned* in a fire, that ceases not till they be utterly consumed and reduced to ashes; and thereby become a lasting monument of Divine Justice, and a warning to the rest of the world.

prospect of relief be found, till, conscious of his natural weakness and mortality, he becomes convinced of the want of some supernatural strength, to support him under all the doubts and terrors incident to it; till at length he sees the necessity for some superior guide, (as every serious atheist soon must,) to conduct him through this gloomy shade of death, and set himself in good earnest (as it is hoped all such will) to seek after that light which came down from above; and which alone can lead him to the *light of everlasting life*.

Some part of the same Author's apology published in the *Monthly Review* for May, 1760, when he took leave of this subject, may perhaps not unseasonably be here repeated, and serve for a conclusion of the whole. When he ventured to revive this dreaded doctrine, and attempted to rescue it from some of the ugly consequences usually ascribed to it, he was induced to offer such hints, both from Scripture and Reason, as might enable those that were disposed to view the subject with impartiality, in either light, to come at a fair decision: and accordingly, he received a very candid *letter* in print, on that occasion, from a worthy clergyman, the Rev. Mr. *Bristed*, which convinced him, that this and all points of the same kind, if treated in the like calm and dispassionate way, might soon be brought to a satisfactory conclusion, without endangering the public peace, and that all such authors as differed in their inter-

preting some parts of scripture, might nevertheless unite in the genuine spirit of it, by bearing with and assisting one another in love. But if in this case he has judged wrong of the general disposition of the public, who may still be of opinion, that some prudential reasons render it improper for any such questions to be agitated at this day, he readily submits to better judgments, not affecting to appear singular, or be thought wiser than his superiors. He is very far from being contentious; yet has an ardent desire of doing some service to the cause of Christianity in this day of distress, when it is closely attacked on all sides, and ever with most success through that impure mixture of human doctrines and heathen traditions, by which it appears to have been long greatly disguised and grievously defiled: and he cannot but esteem it his duty to promote and encourage every modest inquiry, how far this may be really the case, and what may prove the method most effectual to relieve it. He hopes to be excused for dwelling so largely on these two capital points, our Fall in the first, and our Recovery by the second *Adam*; together with that account of our frame and destination, which he conceives to have a just foundation in the Scriptures, and to be of consequence in explaining the true use and import of Christianity, as there delivered; and how far he has succeeded in this endeavour, he now leaves to the public judgment, without more debate; be-

ing not very eager of obtruding his sentiments, where they are observed with reluctance ; or fond of forcing his way through a crowd of adversaries ; or pleased with continuing in a situation like that of the *Jews* under *Nehemiah*, obliged to *work with one hand* in the rubbish, and *with the other to hold a weapon*.

He had such a favourable opinion of the present times as to make some trial of their disposition ; and was tempted to rely upon that *liberty of prophesying*, which appears to be wisely indulged by our governors, to their own honour, and the common benefit ; and which has remarkably accelerated the progress of religious as well as all other knowledge in this, above any former age : but if he has mistaken either their Temper, or his own Talents, which is very possible ; presuming too much on appearances, and pushing matters beyond what even the present times, greatly improved as they most certainly are within our memory, will bear : if he has deviated too far from the common road, so as to have given unnecessary offence to those that are otherwise minded ; such will find him willing to make all the reparation in his power, by assuring them that they may rest secure as to him, from any more disturbance of this kind ; since he is equally unwilling, to rob any good men of the satisfaction they enjoy in popular opinions, as to expose himself to popular odium by persisting farther in

drawing the Saw of contention upon this or any other point of unavailing controversy. [Comp. *S. Bourn's* Advertisement prefixed to his Discourses in 2 Vols. with Serm. x, xi, &c. and the late excellent piece, entitled, *A short historical View of the Controversy*, 2d ed. or *A warning against Popish Doctrines*, 1767, or *Dr. Priestley's Institutes*, V. 3. Pt. 3. Sect. 4.]



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LONDON :
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.



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