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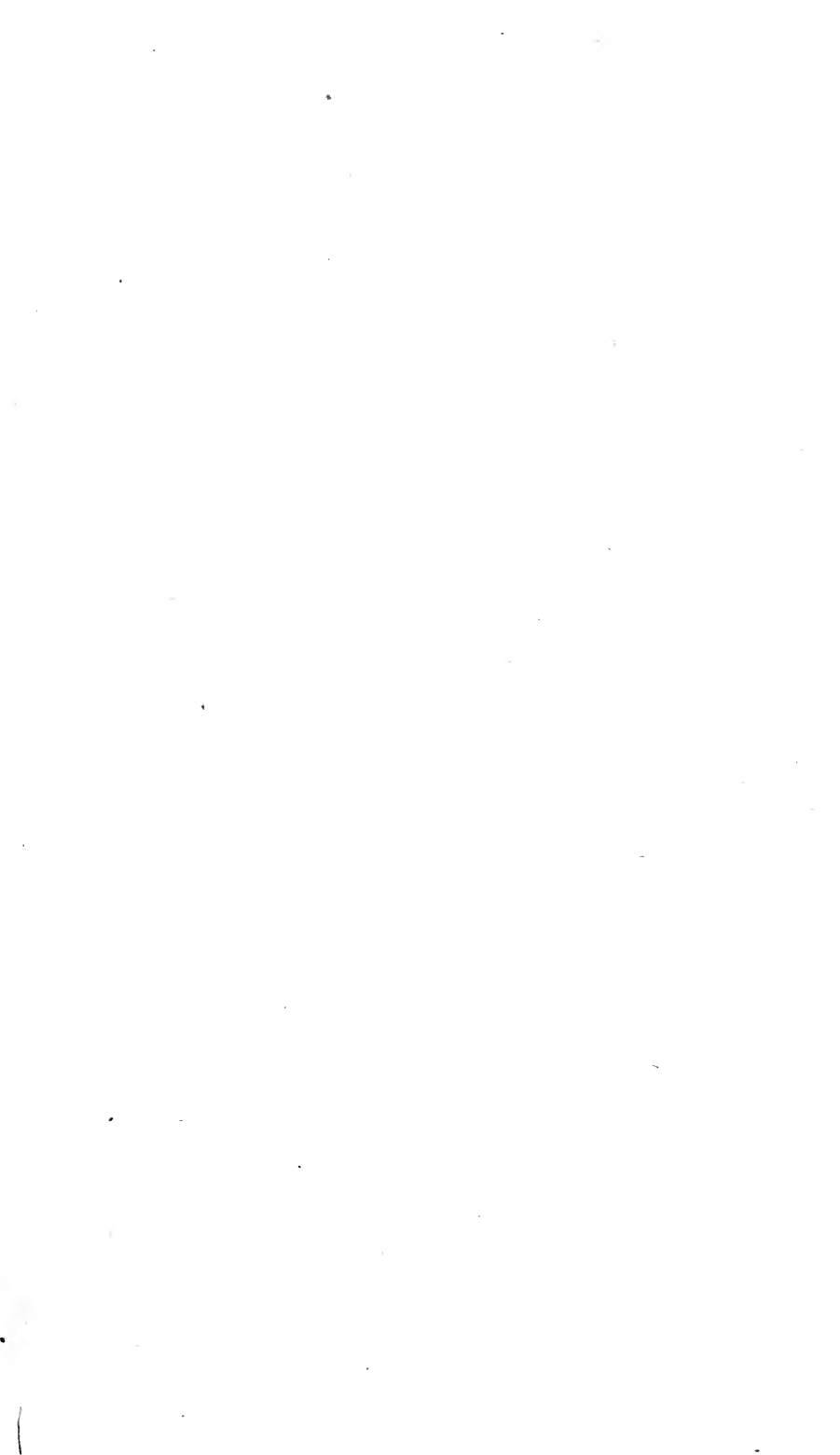
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Dr. LAW'S

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

*THEORY of RELIGION, &c.*

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# CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

## *THEORY of RELIGION:*

IN THREE PARTS.

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

To which are added,

TWO DISCOURSES; the former, on the LIFE and CHARACTER of CHRIST; the latter, on the benefit procured by his DEATH, in regard to our *Mortality*.

With an APPENDIX,

Concerning the use of the word *SOUL* in Holy Scripture; And the state of the *Dead* there described.

A POSTSCRIPT,

And an INDEX to the whole.

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The FIFTH Edition, corrected and compleated.

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By EDMUND LAW, D.D.

Master of St. PETER'S College in CAMBRIDGE,  
And Archdeacon of STAFFORDSHIRE.

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CAMBRIDGE,

Printed by J. BENTHAM, Printer to the UNIVERSITY;  
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M.DCC.LXV.



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TO THE HONOURABLE  
AND RIGHT REVEREND  
F R E D E R I C K,  
L O R D B I S H O P O F  
L I C H F I E L D & C O V E N T R Y.

My LORD,

**T**HE Relation I had formerly the honour of bearing to your Lordship in the University, must be my excuse for the Liberty now taken in presenting to you a Book, the greatest part whereof has several times been offered to the public, and with the contents of which your Lordship has been long acquainted. As that relation was, while it subsisted, one of the most agreeable incidents in my life, I shall be understood

## DEDICATION.

stood to design a compliment to myself, rather than to your Lordship, by laying hold on this occasion to revive the memory of it: and I may with confidence rely upon your usual candour for indulging me in such a piece of vanity, when, at the same time that I am gratifying it by this address, I do the most essential service to the subject of these papers which accompany it. For though I cannot presume so much upon the relation above-intimated, as to expect your Lordship's full concurrence with me in every particular sentiment;—your Lordship knows right well, how very far I was from aiming to make such an use of it in education; how cautious to guard those that were placed under my care against implicit prejudice of every kind:—yet it is natural enough to imagine, that from so advantageous a post, which gave opportunity of forming the most favourable impressions, and which both duty and inclination had determined me by no means to neglect;—from a free friendly intercourse which ever passed betwixt us, and which invited and encouraged me to withhold nothing that I judged  
in



## DEDICATION.

in any respect worthy of your regard; — hence it is easy to suppose, that a similar way of thinking might in general be produced: and if this has been the case in any considerable degree; if it should engage your Lordship publickly to countenance the following discourses, which have received some improvement from your Lordship's observations in private, this will give new life to them, and new cause of rejoicing to their author.

Your Lordship will excuse me, if I am tempted to dwell a little longer on the present subject, than may prove agreeable to your Lordship's inclination: a subject, which has been often dwelt upon with pleasure; and which must always be attended with a secret satisfaction, since it leads to a period wherein so many favourite scenes present themselves to view: when I reflect upon those many amiable qualities, which then began to appear, and which have since exerted themselves so happily in higher stations; and when I am able to flatter myself with having in some measure contributed to the unfolding, and directing some of them. — That clear discernment,  
and

## DEDICATION.

and true judgement of things; that open, honest ingenuity of mind; that chearful, candid, humane disposition; that universal sweetness of temper, and integrity of heart: — these excellent endowments were your own, my Lord, by nature; and they as naturally produced, not only an innocent and agreeable; but a very useful and improving conversation among all your acquaintance. But that early application of them to some solid and substantial parts of science; the nature, origin, and use of our intellectual faculties; — the author, and the end of our Being; the government of other beings in the universe, and our connexions with them; the fundamental principles of virtue, and religion; the laws, rules, rights of society; the grounds of our obedience to civil government, and the bounds of civil and religious liberty; particularly under our own constitution: — that fair and serious turn to a sober examination of the truth in such important points as these; — the love of truth and knowledge in general; more especially that of the *Holy Scriptures*, and all such studies as are properly preparative thereto; — This,  
which

## DEDICATION.

which conspired to distinguish you as an example and ornament to those of your own order here ; which in a singular manner qualified you for the sacred ministry ; and rendered you equal to that eminent and difficult station in the church, to which the Divine Providence, and his late Majesty's great wisdom have been pleased to call you : In this, my Lord, I must beg leave to claim some share ; and consequently in the Fruits which daily flow from thence : that firm and steady adherence to the cause of virtue, loyalty, and liberty ; that charitable, and truly Christian spirit, which appeared to such advantage in your Lordship's late discourse upon a *publick occasion* ; and which will ever more and more display itself, in the mild, prudent, and good government of your Lordship's diocese. — Happy they who live under its more immediate influence, and are duly sensible that they do so !

That the same gracious Providence, which blessed your Lordship with these various talents, and which has hitherto given ample success to the use of them ; may long continue so very valuable a life, and  
grant

## DEDICATION.

grant such a portion of health, as may enable you to persist in accomplishing the same great ends, the glory of God, the good of his church, and benefit of all those committed to your charge, is the hearty prayer of,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP'S

most devoted

and most obliged

humble Servant,

EDMUND LAW.

## P R E F A C E.

THE following discourses were originally part of a larger design, tending to shew 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 progression. A theory, which, when fairly represented, may be supposed to give some satisfaction to many 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 kind of Revelation; chiefly on account of the circumstances, under which it seems to have been communicated; which they are unable to reconcile with the course and order of Divine Providence in other respects: as well as to assist some serious enquirers, who are perhaps equally at a loss in their search after any settled order, in either of these Establishments: but yet, if they could once persuade themselves in general, that one of these proceeded in some sort of uniform *ratio*, and *analogy* with the other; and that both were in a state of *progression*; would probably have patience to wait a while, in hopes of seeing their particular objections gradually removed in each, by the same rules.

Having formerly attempted to clear up some of the chief difficulties that occur in our concep-

tions of the Deity, and his Providence, in a commentary on Archbishop *King's* Essay on the *Origin of Evil*; I have since had the pleasure of seeing those principles which were advanced there, adopted by a late celebrated writer; and adorned with all the graces of poetry: This is a continuation of the same design, of *justifying the ways of God to man*. But being destitute of some means that were necessary to complete it, I could only draw the outlines; and was forced to content myself with venturing these abroad in the present form, (though very sensible that it is not the most inviting to some readers,) rather than be at the pains of throwing it into one close, continued treatise; especially as my small stock of materials would scarcely have been sufficient to have given that its due proportions; and several things of a practical nature must have been retrenched, which this more popular form admits. Though it is freely owned, that a plan of joining speculative and practical things together; of frequently insisting on and inculcating the latter; and of delivering the whole in such a trite, unfashionable way, as may be termed the *foolishness of preaching*; must run no small risk with persons of a more refined and elegant taste; to which this has by no means been adapted.

The *notes* are chiefly calculated for a commonplace, or *Index*; to direct the industrious reader to such authors, more especially among the moderns, as might furnish him with as just and proper observations on each head, as I could think myself capable of producing; what character soever some of them may bear among the learned. And indeed, provided the notions were but good  
and

and feasonable, I have not been very folicitous under whose name, or in what place, and manner, they appeared. It must be confessed, that even some of the lowest class sometimes have several useful things not to be met with elsewhere; though few would think it worth their while to seek there for them; which tends (according to the observation of an eminent writer) to shew the *benefit of general reading*: neither would it be quite fair to borrow any thing from such, without a due acknowledgment; nor can we be understood to answer for any of them, farther than the point reaches, for which they were expressly cited, or referred to. Where any thing seemed necessary to be added or supplied, it will be found either introducing these; or intermixed among them, as occasion offered: and in pursuance of this humble plan, the inserting all new writers as they came forth, or fell in my way, since the first impression, must occasion most of those alterations and additions that have hitherto been made; but which will not be continued: and I ought perhaps to make some apology for having continued them so long. But whenever any new observations, relative to the main design, occurred to me; and it is hardly to be supposed, but that in a course of years some such should occur; the setting them down seemed a debt due to the publick, and will prove so, if they are really of consequence; if not, the doing it should be deemed less prejudicial to all those who are possessed of any former edition.

As for the *two Discourses* annexed; *the former* ought to be considered as consisting only of a few loose *traites*, or general reflections, on a subject which can never be too much attended to; and if  
it

it contain any valuable observations, either speculative, or practical, or of a mixed kind; however obvious, 'tis hoped they will be no less acceptable for their general use: part of the *latter* pretends to nothing more, than a brief, imperfect intimation of the *Scripture-Doctrine*, on a point not yet sufficiently understood; and which, from the reception that and some other points seem lately to have met with, it may be perhaps a part of Christian prudence not to deliver more explicitly; till men appear more willing to submit their vain philosophy to the authority of God's word, and are disposed to examine things with greater attention and impartiality.

The Fourth Edition was in the Press at a distance, when Mr. *Peters's* new Preface came to hand; which hindered me from acknowledging in due time and place the justice he has done in some measure to the memory of *Le Clerc*, by correcting a gross error of the press in that learned Author's comment on *Job xix. 25.* and thereby setting the whole passage in a proper light. I am sorry that what was hinted on the subject, should have given this worthy Gentleman any disturbance; which therefore, after his own example, I have now struck out; and heartily wish, that we could come to as good an agreement about the future condition of the *generality of heathens*; whom he still supposes to be *left for ever in the state of death, so as never more to rise, to happiness at least*, p. 31. Whereas, I would have them left indeed to the uncovenanted mercies of our common Father, without any certain title to immortality; (which I had been endeavouring to prove from several such passages as he there mentions,

*viz.*



*viz. Pſ. cxv. 17. and Eph. ii. 12. and which is all, I think, that can be well concluded from theſe, and the like texts) and yet apprehend that this everlaſting life, which was, in every ſenſe, the gift of God through Chriſt, may be extended to theſe heathens equally with us; as by the ſame Revelation we are taught to believe, that there will be a general Reſurrection of mankind, in order to as general a Judgement; wherein each individual ſhall receive an equitable ſentence, according to the law, or diſpenſation, under which he lived in this world. See Whitby on Rom. ii. 12.*

No claſs of mankind therefore, are in their own nature, capable of *riſing from that ſtate of death* in which they were originally involved; and yet through the *grace of God, (who is the Saviour of all men, eſpecially of thoſe that believe; 1 Tim. iv. 10.)* may any, or all of them, recover out of it; and be *raiſed to unlimited happineſs*: and thereby may the benefit conveyed through the *ſecond Adam*, become in all reſpects equal to the loſs ſuſtained in the firſt; nay rather, much more *abundant*; as the ſame Apoſtle ſeems to declare expreſsly, *Rom. v. 14, &c.* By which means, theſe two diſpenſations will appear conformable to the reſt; the latter being really an improvement on the former. Thus are both the *Old and New Testaments* reconciled together, and every part of each becomes perfectly conſiſtent with all others.

The Note in p.	{	36—	} refers to p.	{	291—
		45—			262
		66—			205
		138—			308
		141—			173 not. (R.)
		153—			265
		164—			173 not. (Q.)
		229—			182
		280—			353
		286—			307 not. (r.)
		315.			

### E R R A T A.

Page 141. l. 5. from the bottom, for *note g.* put R.

— 153. for the Asterisk \* in the Text and Notes, put (H.)

— ib. l. 7. remove the half crotchet ] to *Th. ff.* in the same line.

# PART I.

Want of UNIVERSALITY

IN

Natural and Revealed RELIGION,

No just Objection against either.

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*Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. Rom. 3. 29.*

*For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by Nature the things contained in the Law; these having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves. Rom. 2. 14.*



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Want of UNIVERSALITY  
IN  
Natural and Revealed RELIGION,  
No just Objection against either.

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ACTS XVII. 30.

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

**T**HESSE words contain a declaration of God's most gracious purpose to reform mankind by the coming of CHRIST; and at the same time intimate the preference due to his, above any former institution.

In the foregoing verses the Apostle had been instructing the *Athenians* in the nature of the true God, and his universal providence. He shews them that there is one common father and governor of the world, who has made this earth a fit habitation for the sons of men, and distributed them all over the face of it; who has distinguished the seasons, and divided the nations, and fixed the bounds and periods of each, in so very regular and wise a manner, as might lead all diligent observers of them to a knowledge of their author; and put them upon seeking out some method of expressing their devotion to him. Though here in

fact, (as the Apostle intimates, *ŷ. 27.*) they were all but like men groping in the dark; their notions of the Deity very imperfect and obscure; their worship highly absurd and irrational.

This their ignorance God was pleased for some time to *wink at*, (*ὕπεριδεῖν*) to overlook, disregard, or, as it is in a parallel place, † *He suffered them to walk in their own ways*, to wander through the several mazes into which they had brought themselves; the various sects of superstition and idolatry under which they had fallen: but now he *commandeth all men every where to repent*; or rather publishes, (*παρὰγγέλλει*) proclaims the tidings of salvation to all men upon the easy terms of *repentance*; 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 *Christians*, with joy and thankfulness. But how strangely has the face of things been altered, or rather the nature of them inverted since! When, through the degeneracy of mankind, the benefits of this divine institution become restrained to a few people; and even these are taught to despise it, for that very reason which uses to make a benefit the more valuable, namely, because it is restrained to themselves.

If, say the present unbelievers, *God has made of one blood all nations of men, and is no respecter of persons*; and if he designs this revelation for all men, as he must, if it be of so great use and advantage to them;—Why then is it not actually communicated to all?—Why did he so long, —Why does he still, —*wink at the ignorance of so many*

† Acts xiv. 16.

many nations, and leave them without any means of coming to the knowledge of his truth? Can a God of infinite power and wisdom be disappointed in his aim? Or will the common father of mankind confine his greatest mercies to so few of his children? — And thus every argument of the superior excellency of our religion is made an objection to its divine authority; and what should be a particular motive of gratitude for having received it, is turned into the strongest reason for rejecting it.

In my following discourse I shall consider that part of this objection, which relates to the *Manner* of the *Christian* dispensation; the other, which more immediately affects the *Time* of its delivery, 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 authority, since the religion of nature is on the same foot with it in this respect.

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

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

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

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

Now these are so many talents, which together make up our portion of *reason*, and severally contribute to the 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; 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 food and physic to all constitutions.

To stile this religion of nature absolutely *perfect*, or its light *sufficient*, can only mean, that every one may be as perfect here as God intended him to be, and able to do all that his maker will require of him, or so much as is sufficient to excuse him from *punishment*; which is very true, but  
nothing



nothing to the purpose: for this kind of perfection is far from implying an universal, unchangeable equality in the *law of nature*, or excluding greater light; since it may be very consistent with that diversity of talents abovementioned, and those different degrees of happiness and perfection, which are founded in, and naturally consequent upon it.

As therefore all the gifts of nature are distributed in this partial and unequal manner, how unreasonable is it to object against revealed religion, for its being conveyed in the very same manner! One who believed any thing of a God and his providence, would naturally suppose, that if any revelation were to be made, it would be made according to the same method which is observed in the government of the natural and moral world; at least, he that allows this method to be consistent with the belief of a deity in the one, cannot surely on that account reject the other\*.

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

\* *Chubb* in his late 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 as much reason to assert, that it could not upon the whole have been conveyed in a better way; and consequently the objection drawn from its want of *Universality*, will be of no more force than that from *Inequality* is in the common course of nature; and the two cases will still be exactly parallel. Nor can I find the least proof of the contrary in *Ld. Bolingbroke's* late declamation, (*Works*, Vol. iv. p. 293. &c.) except what arises from the arbitrary supposition of some few divines, and is sufficiently obviated near the end of Part II.

been the more brief on this head, as it has been fully discussed of late by far more able writers †.

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

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

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

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

But

† See Bp. *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 Bp. *Butler's Analogy*, &c. p. 181, 215, &c. 8vo.

‡ 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<sup>us</sup> xxxviii. 32, 34.* *Nich. Klim.* p. 133.

But now, if all these different members of the world had naturally the self-same sense and relish of things; if each man had originally and unchangeably the highest degree of understanding and acuteness; the greatest strength of reason, and fineness of imagination, that is to be met with in any of the species; how very unequal and incongruous must this unavoidable diversity of orders prove! How hard would be the case of them, whose lot is to fill the worst and lowest offices, and yet who find themselves as well qualified for, and as highly deserving too of the best, (since on this supposition, which leaves it so very little in any one's power to benefit either himself or others, there could scarce be any real desert at all) as those that hold them; and who likewise cannot but be as deeply sensible of all that misery and hardship which arises from the want of them! The common intellect and apprehension of man would be but ill placed in an *ox* or *ass*; nor would the genius and temper of some philosophic mind be any better suited to *him that driveth them, and is occupied in all their labours.*

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

How inconsistent also would it be in nature to implant those various senses, appetites, and tastes in all men, which not one in a thousand would have power to gratify! — That sublime degree of reason and reflection, which could only prove its own tormentor! — Not to mention what ill influence such a scheme would have on government

ment itself; how difficult it must be to rule, where every one has the same strength and skill; how hard to obey, when all have equal abilities, and therefore (as they might 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 to mankind themselves, who have both the *forming* and *disposing* of each other; nay, where men are at liberty in a great measure to frame their own natures, and dispositions: where they have no inconvenient or pernicious principle to lay to nature's charge †; no properly innate *notions*, or implanted *instincts* ‡; no truly natural *appetite* or *affection*, to sway or bias them; except that universal sense, and strong desire of *happiness*, which was so absolutely necessary to their preservation (*a*). By these means we have at first  
only

\* Si omnes ingenio pares essent, omnesque in eodem affectu 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 suum 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 suâ industriâ suppleret. Cleric. *Silv. Philol. ad Æschin. Socr.* p. 170, 171.

† See *Ibbot's Boyle's Lect.* 2d sett, Sermon. 5, p. 143, &c. or *King's Origin of Evil*, Note 38, p. 189. 4th Edit.

‡ See Prelim. Diff. to *King.* and Rem. i. p. 75. 4th Ed.

(*a*) To form some notion of this, let it be observed, that when the first foundation of a diversity of sense and intellect is once laid in a greater or less susceptibility of pleasure or pain, by a *perception of ideas* more acute or dull, more quick or slow, and a proportioned *reflection* on them, (which proportion, by the bye, between these two powers [of perceiving and reflecting] is, I believe, in each Person pretty exactly kept up, as to the pitch of their vivacity in both the abovenamed respects, *i. e.* the *force* and *time* of their successive operations, or the momen-

only such thoughts and inclinations instilled into our minds as are agreeable to, and for the most part

tum and velocity of their respective objects) — from hence the whole tribe of *affections*, &c. and the several degrees in each, are very apparently deducible: supposing only this, I say, which seems to lie in the *original stamina* of the body, and is so far not to be accounted for, at least by me; which therefore, and which only I should term *innate*, or strictly *natural*; since every thing besides, that is comprehended under the name of *natural appetite*, &c. is properly so far from being such, that it is evidently posterior in the order of nature, and entirely grounded on the *ideas* which themselves arise from hence, and whose *innateness* in all senses of that word is now generally given up: — supposing then this one foundation laid by nature, a difference herein will be enough to constitute the being more or less sensible, or rational in general; and tend to make it more or less *passionate* or *mild*, eager or indolent, &c. in whatsoever it applies itself to: But can this ever actually determine it to any one peculiar set of objects, or have any tendency towards giving what we mean by a particular genius, taste, or temper? That, and the whole constitution of the human mind, or its predominant qualities, seem to arise afterwards from the particular *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

\* See *Hartley's Observations on Man*, part 1. A book well worth the pains required to understand it, and which I must beg leave to recommend, as exhibiting a very curious history of man's 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 here willing to allow. Perhaps it exceeds the power of human 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 the human 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. This appears sufficiently from a late humorous treatise, where the sagacious Mr. *Search*, in order to reconcile his scheme to common sense, either plays continually on a false and foreign notion of freedom, or is forced to adopt a main part of the real system, even while he is endeavouring to exclude it.

part do in fact arise from our particular place and circumstances in the world; and afterwards find room enough to refine, improve, and enlarge our faculties; to qualify ourselves for, as well as, by a right application of them, to merit some superior station, whenever that shall become void. How regular and beautiful a subordination must this soon produce! How fitly might the *whole body,*

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 these various appearances, which seem so much to require it (of which in the following Note<sup>d</sup>) are solved on other principles; and then indeed this, which, it must be owned, contains something inexplicable, will be of course excluded. I may add here, that neither are those *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 sort of connection with them all, as to be itself in some respect or other influenced by them reciprocally; or (which comes to the same thing) the *mind* will be so far affected in, and through them as to influence it; which we all daily feel: [else how come these parts of our constitution to be constantly applied to with success for the determination of it? Why is pain present or in prospect used to move a man, or arguments and motives urged, if they are really matters of indifference to his *choice*, and have no manner of effect upon it?] As this grows and gathers strength, like all our other faculties; and is equally capable of being impaired, and rectified again: (*King*. Note X. p. 360, 4th Ed.) — As it is limited and subject to its laws, not perhaps wholly different, though of a kind distinct from those  
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body, thus knit together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, increase with the increase of God, would man but enter into the same great plan of exciting industry and labour, and do what lies in his power to promote it, viz. entail benefits and successes as the natural consequence of these; endeavour to suit every one's station to his respective merit and abilities; *i. e.* deal with each person according

of the other appetites: (however such as make it no less governable, *Ibid.* c. v. § 5. sub. 4. p. 372, &c. with Notes 69, p. 366, and 70, p. 371.) and cannot go against these appetites without manifest pain and misery to the person: (*Ib.* note N. p. 241, &c.) — 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 due regular exercise; which we likewise experience; — its operations will become as much the objects of foreknowledge; nor will it be much less easy to account for either the formation, or *increase* of any particular turn of mind, in any given situation, than if all were performed in us necessarily, and at once.

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

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

ording 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 finds it in his power so much to improve and advance, as well as to impair and debase his *nature*; and thereby also change his *state*! what eagerness to excel some! what dread of falling below others! what encouragement for all, to make the best use of their faculties and opportunities! This amicable contest, this perpetual struggle, must certainly make more for the good of the whole, than if all had been passive, and absolutely fixed in any degree of knowledge and perfection; or limited unalterably to any state. (*b*) Upon this plan only could there be place for hope or fear, reward or punishment, the only proper means of governing free, rational agents; and of conducting them to their supreme and truest happiness, which seems entirely to consist in agency; and which can only this way be excited †. This therefore is the method most agreeable

(*b*) See *King's Origin of Evil*, Note 19. p. 108, &c. and Note Y. p. 398, &c. We may add, that the supposition of any such fixed, unimprovable state of *natural* good implies, strictly speaking, no less than the subversion of all virtue or *moral* good; which is nothing but the chusing to communicate the former: [See *King*. R. i. p. 75, 76. 4th Ed.] for which communication there could be no place in such a state, nor consequently any room for any of those ideas which are founded on it.

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

† 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.



able 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 is neither impossible nor unreasonable in itself,\*) it 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 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 First, This influence,  
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† See this described more at large in Bp. *Butler's Analogy*, p. 93, &c. 2d Edit.

\* See *Jenkin*. Vol. i. c. 1. *Enquiry* into the evidence of the Christian Religion. §. 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 is it not oft in the power of a single person to deprive multitudes of life itself, or any of its comforts; of liberty, peace, plenty, arts, improvements, &c? and is not all this unavoidable while men are allowed the free use of their natural powers, which *Chubb* contends for?

of what kind soever it be, must either be absolutely efficacious and irresistible, *i. e.* so strong as to subvert the natural powers of man, and take away his freedom of thinking and acting; and consequently destroy all virtue, merit, praise, reward; *i. e.* all that is good and valuable in religion: — or else it would not be sufficient to answer the ends proposed; nor could it certainly and effectually secure the interest and salvation of mankind. As an *illumination* it must either be disting-

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 Chubb may probably find that in this scheme [of Human Liberty] it must be impossible for any thing relating either to the minds, or outward circumstances of mankind, to remain in a state of perfect uniformity; and then he may be sensible too that the same causes, which among other things that concern mankind, make their religion unavoidably continue in this partial and unequal way, will 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 communication, may still be the means of conveying such superior benefits to those who do come to the knowledge of it, of making such discoveries in the nature both of God and Man, and of affording motives for men's attaining to such a degree of virtue, and true rational happiness, as all their honesty, without such helps, could never raise them to, at least 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 this may be one of its great ends; and this end is in fact obtained, to as high a degree as is consistent with his own scheme of perfect liberty: so that, in the last place, allowing God to *foresee* all the consequences, and events attending such an establishment, *ib. p. 62.* yet this establishment, so circumstanced, may, notwithstanding any

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 the mind: 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

any thing this author has made out to the contrary, come from him. And indeed *Chubb* seems at length to be sensible of that same boasted *objection against the divinity of a revelation from its non-universality* being to *very much weakened*, that he is grown rather 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.

(*d*) See *ABp. King's Origin*, 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; and which must be attended with some satisfaction in degree proportioned to the apprehension of that usefulness, and of a kind perhaps very complex, as arising from variety of causes accidentally associated; yet neither is the kind, nor the degree of this delight so intense, and exquisite, as that which usually accompanies those points which we work out ourselves; which we properly make *our own*, by a free, fair investigation. These truths, though of no more importance in themselves, or 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 *εὐρησια*; and will continue after it, and bear reflection; and which makes them infinitely exceed all others in our estimation. The same thing, as it is come at in the one or the other of these ways, is evidently not the same to *us*: which I can ascribe to nothing more than a consciousness that in the former case we have contributed some-

must either supersede all action and enquiry of our own, and overbear the judgment beyond possibility of doubt, (which yet, from the manner of our acquiring and associating ideas, and forming judgments, is impossible to be conceived, without reversing the whole frame of the human mind; neither would that appear to be at all desirable, as we have seen above) it must, I say, either be inconsistent with the exercise of our other most valuable faculties, or it would come to the same thing with the present use of them; and prove alike capable of being equally neglected or opposed, corrupted or destroyed: it would have no 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.

what 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 real 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, won't it be a little hard to point out, either the rise or reasonableness of this so constant, and so general a delusion; and to account for such ideas as those of merit, esteem, reward, &c. which are entirely founded in it? 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, Essays on the Principles of Morality and Nat. Rel. Part I.*

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 so long as it is limited as above, or he retains the least degree of liberty, is capable of being stifled there; every one might, and most probably would soon disregard it, as much as he does now the many good thoughts, motions, and suggestions, which arise daily in his mind. Nor is there less likelihood of its being perverted to the worst 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 once perverted, there seems to be no room for any remedy upon this scheme; no means are left us to detect the fraud, or folly of any religious pretences whatsoever; no method for mankind to rescue themselves from perpetual delusion (*e*).

Nor

† See *Hutcheson* on the Passions, p. 179, 200, &c. or *King*, N. 28, &c.

(*e*) The subtle author of *Christianity not founded on Argument*, seems to adopt this second method of communicating a religion to mankind, and carries it so far as to supersede all other means, divine or human, that have ever been made use of to support it in the world. He contends for a *constant and particular revelation imparted separately and supernaturally to every individual*, p. 112.

Nor, in the third place, would less inconveniences attend the frequent republication of religion, and working new miracles for the conviction of each particular person that might be supposed

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.

'Tis hard to guess upon what plan this author would defend himself if he were pressed; but for the present he admits one general external revelation to have been made and recorded [though both, upon his principles, must have been extremely unnecessary] and yet labours to dissuade us from examining the contents of it, and most inconsistently attempts to shew, as well from reason as this very revelation, that we ought not to employ our reason at all, either in the proof, or the interpretation of it, or in any thing else relating to the subject, p. 7. &c. A self-destructive scheme! which were it really, as he 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 abovementioned:—of which more hereafter. But that this is far from being the case, may easily be shewn. That *Christ* and his apostles both encourage and enjoin the exercise of reason in religious matters is plain enough from these few texts, *Matth.* xiii. 19, 23. *Mark* viii. 17, 18. *Luke* i. 4. xii. 57. *John* v. 39. *Act.* 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 recommending *Zeal according to knowledge*; though this writer is pleased to tell us, that *such zeal will scarce ever deserve the name*; p. 25.

However, to give this extraordinary scheme of his a scriptural air, he lays hold on some passages of Scripture-history [of which in their proper place] and draws in several 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

posed to want it ; since these repeated publications, when grown common, would in all probability be as little minded as the constant preaching of it is at present. Such a continual series of miracles would

rations 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* and others, on *2 Tim.* i. 6. ] that all of them were subject to the will and reason of those who possessed them ; and to be by them carefully and prudently applied to the particular 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 faculties in their natural state, to enable him to judge of his inspirations, whether they be of divine original or no. When he illuminates the mind with supernatural light, he does not extinguish that which is natural. If he would have us assent to the truth of any proposition, he either evidences that truth by the usual methods of natural reason, or else makes it known to be a truth which he would have us assent to, by his authority, and convinces us that it is from him, by some marks which reason cannot be mistaken in. Reason must be our last judge and guide in every thing.’ *Locke on Enthusiasm* : A chapter which I would beg leave to 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 humbly apprehend, at liberty to suppose that he himself is only *following his own spirit, and has seen nothing* ; and that all these *feelings*

would in time be no miracles at all; they must lose all their force, together with their surprize and novelty; nor could they leave any more lively, or more lasting impressions on us, than such

as

*ings* (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 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. See *King's Origin of Evil*, N. 71. p. 376, &c. 4th Edit.

Nor can he shew that reason, thus assisted, will be insufficient for the purposes of true religion; or make out from the *nature* of these two, that they ought to have no communication with each other. His first allegation, that men by the exercise of their reason do not, nor can be required to *think all alike*, will not come up to his point, as it is neither true, nor necessary. 'Tis false in many matters both of fact and reason, on which all men, that think at all, think in one way; and he has yet to shew why the essentials of the Christian institution may not be included among such; I mean as they lie in the Bible, and so far as our assent is there explicitly required to them, in one and the same precise determinate manner, on pain of forfeiting the privileges of that institution. These essentials he will find to be very few and plain. But though he allows the whole of Christianity to be true and reasonable, yet he seems all along to beg the question, by supposing that it is of such a nature as is incapable of being made to appear so to each person, so far as he is concerned to know, either the substance of it, or its grounds. Hence all the formidable objections against reason's judging of the gospel-truths; which yet hold equally in many other truths of consequence in common life, wherein the common people, notwithstanding, go on very well by the use of their natural faculties, be they ever so weak, or how strongly soever 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 in-

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as may be kept up by those standing records, and visible memorials, which now evidence to us the truth of *Christianity*. Not to mention that both of the foregoing schemes would in some measure put

introduced into the Christian church by *Baptism* [which our author seems to argue for, and goes perhaps a little farther than he will be able to justify, when he asserts that to be *the ordinance of God himself*] and that they have early prepossessions in favour of *Christianity*, [whereof he shews the great use and necessity, and wherein we most heartily join with him;] does this render their religion the less reasonable to them, when they are capable of reasoning about it? Or are they strictly under any other obligation, when they come to age, of taking it upon themselves, than what arises from their conviction of the reasonableness and wisdom of so doing, 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 first, by no means hinders their giving it a fair examination afterwards; so soon and so far as they become qualified for such examination. Nay, if they understand it 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. It does indeed insist upon a right *belief*, and a conformable *practice*, in all persons to whom it has been fairly proposed: And where's 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 always ready to suggest, and willing to allow for, without the least diminution of their use and 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. II. any more than his *working in us both to will and do*, and our being taught to *ask* this of him, proves that we have no occasion to endeavour to *work out our own salvation*. We do not pretend that reason is itself sufficient either to discover all that may be of benefit in religion, or engage us to observe and act up to what it is really able to discover;

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,

cover; and therefore there is room enough for our soliciting the grace of God, as well to strengthen and support this very faculty, as to bring others into due subjection to it; — to lead us into the truth; ---- to make us love and seek it; ---- to guard against every deviation from it; ---and enable us to resist the numberless temptations to vice, ignorance, and a criminal unbelief.

Nor, lastly, would the difficulties and discouragements which human reason is too frequently laid under by the practice of the world, were that in truth so bad at present as this author represents, wholly destroy its influence in the point before us; or prove any thing more than that its province is too much invaded by those, be they *parents, tutors, or magistrates*, who either wilfully or unwarily impose these difficulties; and who alone are answerable for giving any handle for such a plea as he has grounded on them. If the two former constantly betray its cause, by narrowing the minds of youth, and shutting up the avenues of knowledge; if they do not teach them carefully the art of reasoning, and lead them to a fair, free use of reason on every subject within their sphere, and worthy of their enquiry; or if the last intrench upon its rights by interposing their authority in the grand affair of divine worship, beyond barely keeping up the established form, and tolerating others;--- If this were indeed the case now, as I hope and trust it is not; this author, I conceive, should have shewn these proceedings to be warrantable, ere he went on in earnest to draw such a consequence, as that the *whole subject is absolutely out of reason's jurisdiction*. A consequence, which can tend only to revive *Celsus's* calumny against the *Christian* cause, Μη ἐξεταζε, ἀλλὰ πειθευσοῦ; 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* 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

position, would soon become familiar, cheap, and ineffectual to that end; as was hinted above.

Besides, what unity or uniformity of public worship; what decency and order, could be preserved in such a state of things? If men did ever *assemble themselves together*, (the reasonableness

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 to the inconsistencies which this shrewd 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, I think, stands absolutely clear of his exceptions; and has as fully answered the end of its great and good founder, as he has obviated this author's whole performance. 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 Mr. *Whiston*, 1750, and, as it should seem, by the same author; but in so wild and incoherent a way, that I must own 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 but be lost labour to attempt any further confutation. I shall only add a few sentences out of him, and let the reader judge what spirit he is of. 'There can be no objection to an eternal truth, but what is imaginary; there can be no argument for it, but what is the same. Neither therefore is the creation, being material, corruptible, &c. any proof of the being of a God; neither the *New Testament*, of the truth of Christianity; since they are both truths of yesterday, and as such can never be arguments for eternal truths,' p. 52, 53. 'And if the *materiality*, corruptibility, &c. of this present scene of things could not immediately arise from a good and perfect being, they must from something which is in opposition to him.' p. 54.--- 'So that, if the Being of a God, and the truth of Christianity are eternal truths, then, by recommending them to the assent of our reason, we change their nature; by this means, as far as we are able, hindering their efficacy upon our *consciences*.' p. 55.

ness 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; *i. e.* so long as they continue to be men) in such assemblies *every one of them would have a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation*; and what could this produce but tumult, strife, and universal confusion? This, surely, is not so *reasonable* a service, nor so fit for *edification*, as the present; not quite so proper a method to convey and preserve a system of Divine truths in the world, as a regular, settled instruction and historic faith, grounded on a standing, written \*revelation, which holds these forth, together with their proofs, to every one; and offers them to the view and examination of all ages.

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

If then neither all men could be made equally wise and perfect,—nor religion be at once equally communicated to them all; — if the present laws of our nature are the best that could be; — 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

\* The advantage of this, above *Oral Tradition*, may be seen in *Tillotson*, Vol. 2. Fol. Serm. 73. p. 549. or *Le Clerc Harm.* 3 Diff. p. 615.

have been propagated otherwise than in fact it is, namely, in a gradual, progressive, partial manner.

Let it be proclaimed at first never so far and wide, yet the reception and continuance of it must in a great measure, we see, depend on mens own dispositions, both natural and moral. Some previous, as well as concomitant qualifications are requisite to the due exercise, and influence of it, as well in private men, as public states and communities : so that, among a people sunk in ignorance or barbarity; where there is no kind of good order or government established, no regular forms of education instituted and observed; where there is an universal want of discipline, and a dissoluteness of manners; there *Christianity* cannot subsist. *Miracles* were indeed necessary to gain attention, and give authority to it at first; but the perpetuity of them in any kind would (as we have seen) weaken that very attention, and destroy their own authority. When therefore a religion has once been sufficiently promulged by divine authority, 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 else there is no avoiding the ill consequences above-mentioned; namely, perpetual enthusiasm or gross imposture. As a system of divine doctrines and rules of life, it must be subject to the common methods of instruction; and taught as all other science is. Youth of all kinds are to be principled, and grounded in it; and some instructed in those other parts of learning, which may  
fit

fit them for a due enquiry into its original evidence; for understanding the true nature, ends, and uses of it; and conveying the same knowledge down to future ages. Some orders of men likewise must be set apart, and authorized to explain and inculcate it; to defend its doctrines, as well as to inspect and urge the practice of its precepts.

From all which it appears, that ignorant, uncivilized, slavish, and brutish nations, are no less incapable † of duly receiving such an institution, than they are of all those other sciences, arts, improvements, which polish and adorn the rest of mankind, and make life a blessing.

Without some tolerable degree of learning and civility, men do not seem qualified to reap the benefits of the *Christian* institution; and together with these, they generally do receive it; the same human means serving to improve their notions in religion, which help to enlarge their knowledge in all other subjects; and at the same time directing them to, and in a natural way, enabling them to arrive at, the most perfect dispensation of it.

One

† By being incapable of *receiving* it, I mean incapable of receiving *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 arts and liberal accomplishments, in some degree. Most of the *Indians* are, I doubt not, capable of understanding the 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, without 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.

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

And

§ This is more fully explained in the following discourses, Part II.

† That the *Chinese* in particular, from whom some have thought that the strongest argument might be drawn against what is here suggested, and whose learning and education have 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 missionaries*, 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. 11. note P. or *Le Comte's memoirs*, passim. I shall give one palpable instance from the last mentioned author in a branch of philosophy, for which they have been oft particularly celebrated. All nations have ever been astonished at *eclipses*, because they could not discover the cause of them: there is nothing so extravagant as the several reasons some have given for them; but one would wonder that the *Chinese*, who, as to astronomy, may claim superiority 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 fright-

And as barbarous and savage nations are unable to hear the truth; so vicious, debauched, 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 enquiring after: nay, much better would it be, if these were always quitted too, together with the other. *Christianity* cannot immediately transform mens minds, and totally change the general temper and complexion of any people; but on the contrary, it will thereby itself undergo considerable alteration; and its own influence and effect in a great measure depend thereon: *With the pure it will be pure*, and they that are otherwise will soon

frightned at the noise, lets go his prey. Persons of quality, who have read our books, have for these several years been undeceived: but the old customs (especially if the sun loseth his light) are still observed at *Pekin*, which, as is usual, are both very superstitious and very ridiculous. While the astronomers are on the towers to make their observations, the chief Mandarines belonging to the *Lipou* fall on their knees, in a hall or court of the palace, looking attentively that way, and frequently bowing towards the sun, to express the pity they take of him; or rather to the dragon to beg him not to molest the world, by depriving it of so necessary a planet. *Le Comte*, p. 70. Ed. 1738. comp. p.93, &c. and lett. 8.

From their notorious ignorance of, and, by consequence, contempt for the rest of the world, and great averfeness to any communication with it, till of very late years, we may easily account for this slow progress of theirs, both in the knowledge of nature and 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 excellent author. Comp. *Barnardine's* account of *China*. c. 9. --- But this will come in more largely under the III<sup>d</sup> Part.



soon defile it; will either corrupt it with 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 establishment.

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 remarkable ‡) is it owing that true religion makes no greater progress in the East and West *Indies*. Though, it must be owned, great and good things have been done in it of late, by *societies* established for that purpose; and none perhaps have been more diligent and discreet than our own: which providence seems to have countenanced, in an especial manner, opening a way for far greater undertakings of this kind, by that immense tract of territory lately ceded to us in *America*, where we are at full liberty to proceed in the good and glorious work of civilizing the natives, and communicating our Religion to them in the greatest purity we ever yet enjoyed it,

† 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 *Bp. Warburton's* observation at the end of Sect. 6. p. 306, &c. of *Div. Leg.* 2d Ed. As to the latter, we cannot but observe the great and general prejudice, which must prevail in both the *Indies* against all *Europeans*, from the injurious treatment they have often received from us, as may be seen in almost every late account of voyages, &c. See *Travels of Jesuits* Vol. 2. passim; particularly p. 370\*. Nor are the frequent quarrels among Christians themselves, and their ill usage of each other in the articles of trade especially, a less prejudice against their profession:

it, without opposition from any rival power. An opportunity, which has been often and earnestly wished for by our missionaries. May we not fail to make the proper use of it!

But it would exceed the limits of this discourse, to enquire into the state of every Heathen country, in order to see what probable reasons might be assigned, for either their first rejecting, or not still retaining *Christianity* \*. Perhaps it may be enough to have given these general hints; which though they were 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 censure its ways with man, in matters of the last importance. But, I hope, arguments may be drawn from them, sufficient to stop the mouths of our adversaries: a more particular discussion of which, will be the subject of some following discourses.

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

And

sion: which ever received the greatest check from the divisions raised among its propagators; as was remarkably the case not long ago in *China*. See *Mod. Univ. Hist.* Fol. V. 3. 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 *Bayle's Dict.* art. *Leon*. Vol. III. p. 773. Comp. *Benson's* Appendix to his Reasonableness, &c. p. 302, 303.

\* See Dr. *Fortin's* discourses concerning the truth of the Christian Rel. Disc. 1. and remarks on *Eccl. Hist.* Vol. III. p. 428, &c.

And first, Though I see no reason to affirm with some, that God takes equal delight in the various kinds of worship, which come to be established in the world; and that a specific difference in religion is, in itself, and abstractly considered, 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 to approach as near it as they can; and may be said to approve every approach to it, and prefer that to its opposite; in the same manner as he does every other excellence, and improvement of the human mind; where he intends perpetual advancement, as we have seen: yet from what has been already said, thus much will appear, *viz.* That one of these is in some measure a necessary consequence of the other, during the present laws of nature, in the moral and intellectual world; a difference of rank, and capacity, among men, must needs produce an equal difference in their religious notions, as was shewn above; such difference therefore, in degree of perfection, is made necessary by the constitution of things, and the general dispensations of Providence; and what by the ordinary course of Divine Providence is to men in some circumstances rendered unavoidable, that the Divine Goodness will, in these circumstances, most undoubtedly excuse, and accept with all its imperfections\*.

The

\* See *Rymer's General Representation of Rev. Rel. c. 6.* 'Tis 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.

The same thing obtains remarkably in each particular system, even in those of *Christianity* itself; which to different persons, and in different times and places, appears in a very different light: though so much always, every where, lies level to all, as is absolutely required of each; and so much also as will, or might, have a very considerable influence upon their lives and manners. And the same may in a great measure be affirmed of *modern Heathens*; the generality of whom still preserve, in some degree, the great fundamental principles of one supreme *God*, a *Providence*, and *future State*; as authors of the best credit have assured us †.

2. As to the case of those people in general, we may consider, that if they have fewer and less advantages than others, their natures and capacities must likewise be inferior; to which their future state may be proportioned: God is not obliged to make all men equally perfect in the next world, any more than in this; and if their capacity be rendered less than that of an ordinary *Christian*, a lower degree of happiness may fill it. However, we need not be extremely solicitous about their estate; much less cast any ungrateful imputation on the Governour of the world, for not having dealt so bountifully with them as with ourselves; since we know that, in all cases, every one will at length be *accepted according to that he has, and not according to that he has not*; and that *to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required*. We know that all their souls are

† 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.

are in the hand of a most merciful Creator, all *whose ways are equal*; and who will most assuredly deal with every one, according to what is just and right. But of this more hereafter.

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

The benefit of the Christian institution above all others appears, in that it naturally *fits* men for an higher degree of happiness, as well as *entitles* them to it, by positive covenant. It gives them more just and worthy notions of the divine Being, and the relation they bear to him; and of the duties which result from that relation. It explains, improves, exalts all those virtues and good dispositions, which are the 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 warm incitement to, the practice of our duty; and affording all fit, 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*. 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 this world, its vanities and vices; and an improvement in all those graces and good habits, which are absolutely and indispensably 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 reasonable, just, and holy an institution! How strongly must it recommend itself to every man's judgement and conscience, when once rightly understood! And what infinite reason have we to give continual thanks unto the Father, who hath not only prepared for us an *inheritance*; but likewise laboured to make us *meet to be partakers of it, among the saints in light!* And *how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* How disingenuous, and ungrateful must it be, to refuse and put it from us! How dangerous, to contemn and blaspheme it!

Rather, may the mercies of God, in *Christ Jesus*, engage every one of us in time to obey the divine precept in the text; to shake off all our vices, such as the heathens of old delighted in, and which betray too many now a days into the like state; and blind their eyes, and harden their hearts, against all possible conviction,—namely,  
pride,

\* Acts xx. 21. V. infra Note . . . p. . . and Jeffery's Tracts, V. 11. p. 233. or Bp. Bradford's B. Lect. Sermon. 9.

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 is, in some respects, of as great force at present; — *because the days are evil*. As infidelity still abounds, and the *love of many waxeth cold*, we, who profess the faith of *Christ*, and think we have more perfect understanding of it, and are to communicate the same to others; we ought to *contend* so much the *more earnestly* for it, and labour to *adorn the doctrine* of our Lord in all things. To our daily prayers, therefore, let us add our constant endeavours, that the *kingdom of God may come* on those who have not yet received it; and be restored in purity, and perfection, to such as have 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*.





## PART II.

### The Scheme of PROVIDENCE,

With regard to

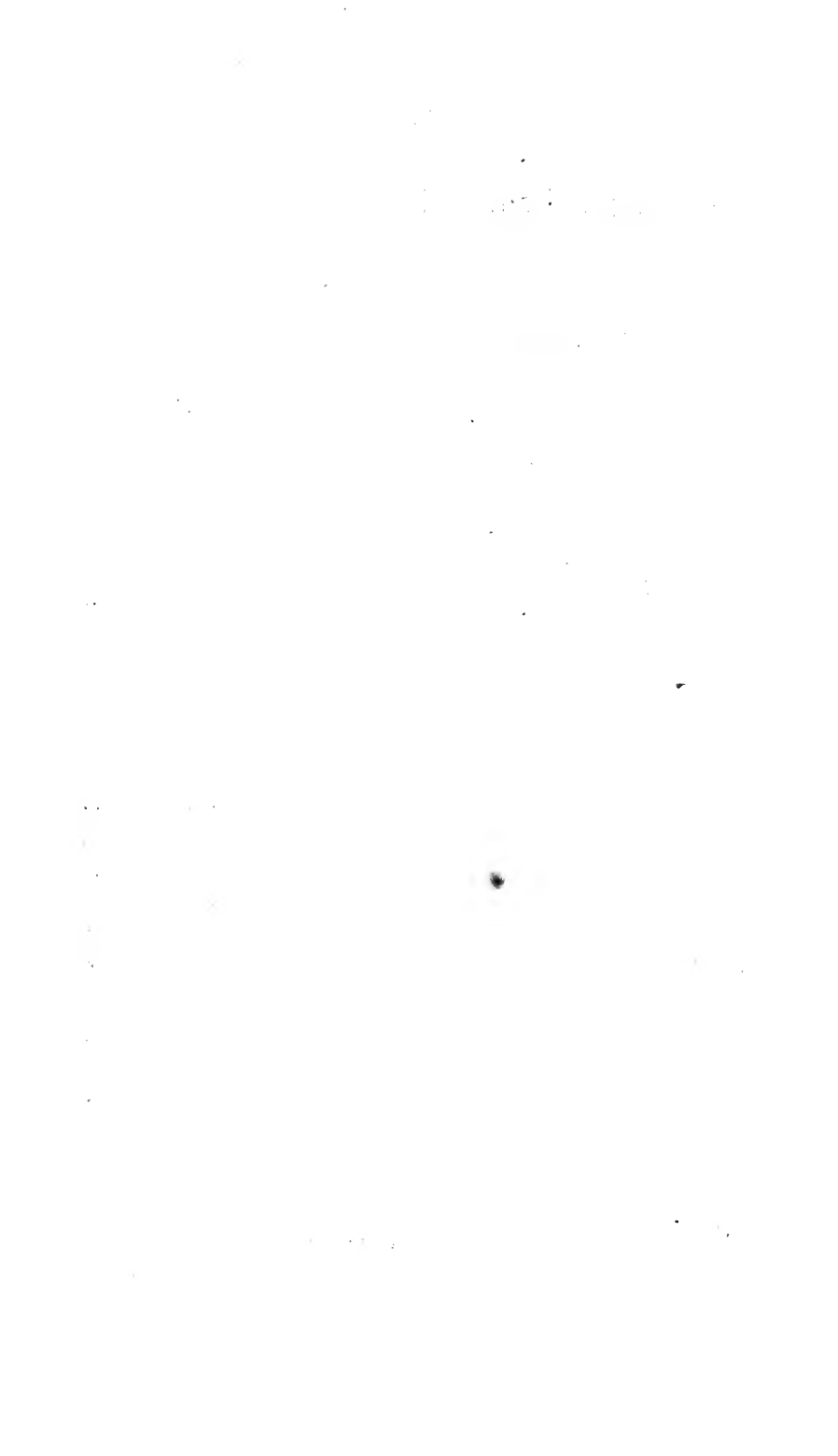
### The *Time* and *Manner* of the several Dispensations of Revealed Religion.

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

*If wisdom and understanding be to be found with the ancient, and in length of days, that time is the oldest from which men appeal to the infancy of the world; and this advances more the veneration that is always due to the grey hairs of the aged, who must be presumed to know more than the young; who likewise shall have much to answer, if when they come to be old, they do not know more, and judge better than they could, who were old before them. And this is the best way to preserve the reverence that is due to age, by hoping and believing that the next age may know more and be better, than that in which we live; and not to rob that of the respect that will still be due to antiquity, by unreasonably imputing it to the time which we have outlived.*

Ld. Clarendon. Ess. p. 220.



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The Scheme of PROVIDENCE,

With regard to

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

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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 whatever view we consider this, it will appear most worthy its divine Author. The precise *time* in which he was manifested, though that has been made the subject of more cavils, ancient and modern, than any other circumstance attending it, yet I doubt not but, upon a fair examination, may be discovered to bear the same characters.

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

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

When the *fulness of the time* || was come. — The apostle in this chapter is comparing the ages of the world, to the life of man, and its several stages ; as infancy, childhood, youth, maturity. If we reflect on this comparison, we shall find it very just in general ; and that the world itself, or the collective body of mankind, as well as each particular member, has from very low beginnings proceeded by a regular gradation in all kinds of knowledge ; has been making slow advances towards perfection, in its several periods ; and received continual improvements  
from

\* Heb. ix. 26.

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

‡ C. Blount, [or the author of a letter to him signed A. W. lately 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.

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

from its infancy to this very day \*. And though in both cases this progress be sometimes interrupted, and the course of this world and its inhabitants appear, like that of the heavenly bodies, to suffer some retrogradations; yet we have reason to believe, that these are such, for the most part, in appearance only; that this very lett, where it is real, makes way for a more rapid progress afterwards; (like rivers pent up to produce a larger stream, or a ram retreating to return with greater force) which seems to bring matters into the same state, upon the whole, as if they had been all the while progressive: and may itself be necessary, in order to produce an equal or proportionate happiness among the different nations of the earth (g). Farther; every one that  
looks

\* For a general explanation of this, see *Edwards's Survey of all the Dispensations of Religion, &c.* vol. I. p. 396. and vol. II. p. 615.-21, &c. Dr. *Worthington's Essay on Man's Redemption*, c. 8. &c. *Taylor's Scheme of Scripture Divinity*, 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.

(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 upon 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 a state or family, *viz.* courage, industry, frugality, 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 becomes a prey to some more potent rival, who is in the ascending scale, and cultivating those virtues by which the other rose and flourished; till that, going on in the same course, suffers likewise the same  
revolution;

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

volution: 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 to a more universal and equal distribution of the several benefits and blessings among men at large; and the affording each class like means and opportunities of improving themselves in these respects, as well as in the liberal arts, which indeed usually attend upon each other. This seems to be the sentiment of a royal author, well acquainted with the state of the world, and himself a very considerable instrument in some of its revolutions; in more perhaps, than he may at present be aware of. 'Were it not for these great shocks, the universe would continue always the same, and there would be no equality in the fate of nations. Some would be always civilized and happy, and others always barbarous and unfortunate.' *Essay on the progress of the understanding in 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.

follow him, or even understand what he delivers ! The generality still go on step by step in gathering up, and digesting, some small portions of that vast stock of knowledge, which he 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 very slow, and pretty regular advances 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 have place in religious, as well as all other truths\*, among men either taken collectively,

\* A more particular proof of this will be given in the III<sup>d</sup>. 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<sup>t</sup>. III. p. . Nor do we say, that every nation has improved in its religious notions, exactly as it does in learning and politeness; or that one of these ought to keep pace with the other; since a supposed diversity in their original will constitute a very 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 perhaps in the acquirement

tively, or in each individual. Why the case is thus in both; why all are not adult at once, in body and mind, concerns not revelation to account for, so much as the religion of nature; at least they are here, as in the former case, both on the same foot; and the same principles may be applied to each of them. And though in this respect, the divine dispensations seem to differ from human arts and sciences, that these are commonly the most rude and imperfect at first, and every part of them improving by repeated trial; 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 this matter right; we ought to distinguish as well between the delivery of a doctrine, and its general reception in the world; which we know is always according to the measure of the recipients only; and which must chiefly depend upon the state, and qualifications of the age they live in: as also, between the supernatural assistance, and extraordinary impressions, at its first publication; and the ordinary state in which it usually appears, and the common progress it makes, 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  
some-

ment 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 *Dr. Leland's Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation*. V. I. c. 20.



sometime be) 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 appear 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 enquire first, what provision God made for the instruction of mankind in the *infancy* of the world; and whether it was expedient to send his Son upon their first transgression.

Now we have reason to suppose that *Adam*, during his state of innocence, held constant communication with the Deity\*; from whence he received 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 necessary for him, and trained

\* *Gen.* ii. 23, 24. compared with *Matth.* xix. 5. *Mark* x. 7. and *1 Cor.* vi. 16. See Bp. *Bull* on the subject, *Disc.* p. 182, &c. Only let it be observed, that what this learned author, with some others, attributes to divine *inspiration*, in this case, seems to be more naturally accounted for from an express *oral revelation* made to *Adam*.

† *Gen.* i. 28. — 30. ii. 29. See the authors referred to by *Patrick* on *Gen.* ii. 27.

trained up by degrees to as thorough an acquaintance with the nature of God, and the things around him, as was agreeable to his own nature; and consistent with his state and circumstances in the world. But upon his rejecting this guide, and applying elsewhere for knowledge, and setting up to be his own director (*b*); that communication might, both with justice and wisdom, be in a great measure withdrawn from him, and he left to the imperfect notice of his senses; to learn the nature of good and evil, and the way to obtain the one, and avoid the other, by a painful experience\*. Yet was he not left wholly

(*b*) That he intended nothing less than this by eating of the forbidden *Tree* [or trees] 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.*] may be seen in Dr. *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 *painful pleasure*, a destructive gratification, &c. by an *Hendiadis*. The learned and ingenious Dr. *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. iii. 5.* of the very same kind and to the same end, with all his other suggestions of divine powers annexed to various inanimate beings, whereby the world has been deluded ever since: nor does he ascribe to that tree, (though he calls it a mysterious one. p. 19.) any physical effects insinuating any sort of science, which creates the chief part of the difficulty on this point. Mr. *Darvson*, 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 Mr. *Bate* on the same subject.

wholly to himself in the affair of religion ; but directed to such a form of worship, as served to point out, and perpetually remind him, both of the demerit of his crime, and the dreadfulness of that penalty which he had incurred ; and also gave him some hopes of a 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 demanded in its room, by way of ransom and expiation made to the Lord of Life. This, together with the promise of a future deliverance, in *the seed of the woman*, served for the present to afford some comfort to our first parents under their heavy sentence ; and to convince them, that their offended Maker was not wholly implacable ; as well as to lead their posterity to such notions of religion, and kind of worship, as should constantly reconcile them to the Deity, and remove the guilt of their particular offences ; and also prepare them for the great *atonement*, to be offered in due time ; which was to take off the whole of *Adam's curse* \*, and restore both him and his posterity to that *immortal life* which he had forfeited (*i*): Nay, raise them to a much higher degree  
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\* What that was, may be seen in *Hallet's Discourses*, Vol. II. p. 276, &c. Bp. *Sherlock's Use and Intent of Proph.* p. 142, 143. 2d Ed. *Taylor on Or. Sin*, passim ; or at the beginning of *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity* ; or in the Second Discourse hereunto annexed.

(*i*) After all that has been wrote upon the subject of *sacrifices*, I am still forced to ascribe their *origin* to divine appointment ;

of happiness, than he could be conceived to enjoy in his paradisaical state\*. And that this rite, with all its circumstances, was enjoined by God himself, and explained to our first parent, is more than probable, even from the short account we have of those times; since we find his  
two

ment: and as to the *intention* of them, though we may conceive some to have been at first enjoined as proper *acknowledgements* of God's dominion over the creatures, and of man's holding that share of it which was delegated to him from his hand, and enjoying all earthly blessings through his bounty; — some by way of positive *multā, 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 in some measure 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 Modern notions of Sacrifices. App. II. pass.*] and obtaining future *favours* from him: yet there were others that seem to have had a higher view, [or such view might be joined with some of those others abovementioned] denoting somewhat properly *vitari-ous*, as well in *suffering*, as in the *reward* annexed to it, or the *privileges* conveyed by it; and in a more special manner describing the terms of that great covenant, 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 them always were to be treated; and leading them gradually to as just and worthy notions of God and themselves, as they became capable of receiving. --- But to ascribe

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

two sons bringing their offerings to a certain place \*, and well apprised (by some visible tokens no doubt †) when they were accepted; as that of animal *sacrifice* was rather than the other: and most likely accepted for that very reason, because it had been appointed by God himself, and was performed agreeably to his command (k).

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ascribe such an institution, as this of sacrificing animals, wholly to the invention of men, especially to the men of those times, seems very unnatural: of which more in the following notes, and *Life of Christ. n. π.*

That this had actually such an effect upon the *Jews*, as we last mentioned; that they were led to expect an atoning sacrifice, or something equivalent to it, from the *Messiah*, and commonly thought and spoke of him in that capacity, seems probable from *John's* account of *Christ* at his very first appearance. *Joh. i. 29.* [See *Le Clerc*, or *Lightfoot Harm. 529.* or *Doddridge Fam. Ex. V. I. p. 121. n. a.*] and again ver. 36. from *Isaiab liii. 7. Comp. Acts viii. 32. and Rev. v. 12.* Though *Dr. Sykes* endeavours to shew, that the expression *Lamb of God*, has no manner of allusion to any thing *sacrificial*. *Scrip. Doctr. of Redemption. c. 5. N<sup>o</sup>. 469.*

\* *Heb. xi. 4. Vid. Interp. & Grot. in Gen. vi. Comp. Judg. vi. 21. xiii. 23. and Lev. vii. 21.* See also *Taylor's Scheme of Script. Div. p. 144.*

† *Gen. iv. 3, 4.*

(k) See *Bp. Sherlock's Use and Intent of Prophecy, p. 73, &c.* or *Rymer's Represent. p. 30. Ridley's Christian Passover, &c.* This one article of the distinction made between *Abel's* offering, and that of *Cain*, which according to the history, was so notorious as to deject and irritate the latter, and which cannot, I think, be accounted for otherwise than by the interposition of God; nor that remarkable interposition solved on other principles, than *Cain's* presuming to omit the prescribed *victim*, through his want of *faith*, *Heb. xi. 4.* (otherwise his portion of the fruits of the ground, might well appear to be as just and natural a tribute of devotion from one in his province, as some part of the flock was from his brother; as we have not the least intimation of any other difference in the sincerity of their dispositions, whereon to ground the above distinction between them:)

The *time* of their worship, seems likewise to have had the same origin; as well from God's blessing, and sanctifying the *seventh* day\*; and the ancient method of reckoning by *weeks* †; (a method much more ancient than the observation of the seven *planets* ‡,) 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, or probability of its arising from some human invention (1).

And

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. f. 2.

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 cloathing themselves.

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

\* *Gen. ii. 3. Exod. xvi. 25, 26.*

† *Gen. viii. 10, 12. xxxix. 27. Eccles<sup>us</sup> xxii. 12.*

‡ *V. Vitfii Ægyptiac. L. iii. c. 9.*

|| *Joseph. contra Ap. L. ii. Exod. xvi. Philo de op. mund. Selden de jur. n. L. iii. c. 10, 11, &c. Euseb. evang. præp. xiii. 12. Grot. de ver. L. i. c. 16. and Allix's reflections, B. i. c. 7.*

(1) 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. *Durcell*, 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.* part 1. f. 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.]  
thews

And that in those days they had frequent intercourse with the Deity, and were made sensible of his peculiar presence in some places, appears farther, from his discourse with *Cain*, both before and after the murder of his brother \* ; as also from *Cain's* complaint of being hid from his face † ; and his going out from the *presence of the Lord* ‡. Nor is it at all likely that *Adam*, who seemed to be so well acquainted with the *voice of God in the garden* || upon his fall, should never have heard it there before, on other occasions.

In

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 their skins, appears to me as plain, as that the tending and taking care of such was their chief business and occupation. Nor can I comprehend what merit there could be at any time in their making *offerings unto the Lord their God of that which cost them nothing*, of that which they could not eat ; or how they came to distinguish [which they did very early] between *fat* and *lean* ; 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

\* *Gen. iv. 6, 9.*

† *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.* *Comp. Fleming's Christology. B. ii. c. 7.*

|| *Gen. iii. 8, 10.* The curious reader may be entertained with some ingenious conjectures concerning a *full system of religion and morality* communicated to *Adam* about this time, which *Mr. 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. Diff. sect. 16. p. 456.*

In these 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*

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 a *Noacho* adhibita; scil. mundæ quotquot erant *Gen.* viii. 20. Hic sacrificiorum usus cùm 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 naturâ suâ 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. Bp. *Clayton’s Answer to Delaney*, in the blood-eating controversy; or *Essay on sacrifices*, p. 165, &c. or *Mr. Dawson’s New translation of the three first chapters of Gen.* 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 the gods should ever be pleased with the mere waste of their own productions.’ p. 13. Thirdly, It gives one a very degrading idea of their ‘goodness, to consider them as entering into a kind of merchandize with mankind, in the matter of their favours,’ p. 14. And p. 20, ‘The demand of the life of a perfectly innocent creature, to be offered up in sacrifice to God, could give but small encouragement to hope, that God intended to favour a guilty one.’

But



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

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 *advantage* from them, yet nevertheless expect some dutiful acknowledgement of the benefits which they confer on others, and require frequent testimonies of their love; and why should not we imagine a sincerely devout sacrificer to the Deity, able to interpret his devotion in the same sense? or if led to a more gross interpretation of it, why may we not even suppose the Deity condescending in that case to set him right, by some such kind exhortation 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 *merchandise* in any sort of sacrificial offerings, than in those other of vows, prayers, praises, and thanksgivings, which still make up an essential part of our religion; from their relation to which, the former always derived all their value, [Vid. *Essay*, p. 19, &c.] and were perhaps only a strong, lively manner of expressing them; [Qui sacrificat, id idem significat actione & gestu, quod qui precatur ore suo profitetur. *Vitringa* Diff. 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 unavoidable in the then low state of reasoning] than does the inward tribute of a *broken and a contrite heart*, which is still requisite on some occasions as well as the outward, publick profession of our 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

\* *Heb.* xi. 27.

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  
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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 dependence on, him for a continuance of them, and a pledge of their obedience, in applying each to the good purposes for which he had bestowed them? without the least dread of affronting him by an implication that he either wanted something, or reaped some kind of benefit by their presents.

Nor need even such as had the most imperfect notions of his power and bounty, apprehend this to be any dangerous misapplication of these gifts, on a persuasion that he had required it; though without some tradition of that, *Socrates* himself [p. 10.] might perhaps justly doubt of the propriety, and acceptableness of this kind of worship: as he had the like scruples about *prayer*, [*Plat. 2. Alib.*] 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, [otherwise we should indeed have no room to believe they ever were], then will this 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 owners.

The case, I apprehend, will not be much different as to the *life of an innocent creature*; for if this creature be considered as man's property, why may not the oblation of it be assigned by way of composition, mulct, or commutation for such faults as he is sensible of, and serve as a significant representation, and acknowledgement of such his sense; and be accepted by the offended 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, [as much removed perhaps from the comprehension

of the ground, or keepers of cattle; employed sufficiently in cultivating and replenishing this new world; and through the curse, brought on it by their forefather, forced with him to eat their

sion of mankind in those times, as some others, then very obvious ones, may possibly be now from us] it answers these ends for the present never the less; and is more like all other parts of the divine œconomy, which serve for various purposes, immediate and remote.—But if we admit these uses, they will make it improper for this rite to have been instituted *before the fall*; which is another objection, p. 22. And if they will warrant the supposition of its being instituted at all by God, it must be instituted with a *merciful design*; and as such, every dutiful compliance with it would be conceived, in some respect, to better the condition of the worshipper, as far as he could carry his thoughts on that condition; how dark soever his notions might be, as to the time and manner of completing it.

Upon the whole, I cannot help concluding it to be more probable in itself, and more analogous to the general course of things, that this so universal a practice of sacrificing animals, however odd and unaccountable it may seem to be in some respects at present, how much soever inferior to some modern notions of the world, and its all-perfect Governor; 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 ingenious writer has so well described. And I submit it to his candor, whether the supposition of its coming from one who might have farther views in it than could appear at first sight, or be at once accomplished; be not as likely to remove his difficulties, as attributing it wholly to the invention of men, at a time when it is agreed between us, that they were capable of inventing very little; and who, if they could see so far before them as to strike out such a form of worship, must (we may think) have likewise been apprised of some of the same difficulties, which would always attend it. And lastly, whence soever it did come, whether such a persuasion as this gentleman entertains, of its being fundamentally wrong, and in every light so glaring an absurdity, be not as hard to reconcile with the belief of God's express acceptance of the same on some occasions; his permission of it all along to his distin-

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

Besides, *Adam* himself continued nine hundred and thirty years, an eye-witness of the power and

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distinguished favourites; and at last formally enjoining, and establishing it with the minutest circumstances; and this, without any such intimation as is given in other cases, of its being all merely a compliance with some of their own customs, or their prejudices.

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

‡ ‘*Laëtantius* is to prove that God has *human passions* — to prevent being misunderstood, and to provide a proper subject for these passions, he contends strongly for God’s having a *human form*; no discreditable notion at that time in the church.’ *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.

\* *Και γαρ ἐκ τῆς ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ κόσμου ἐπιπλεῖον βεβηθηθῆσαι τὴν ἀνθρώπων φύσιν, ἕως, προκοπῆς γενομένης εἰς συνέσειν, καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς ἀρείας, καὶ τὴν εὐρεσίαν τῶν τεχνῶν, δυνήθωσι καὶ καθ’ ἑαυτῆς ζῆν, ἔχρηζοντες αἰεὶ ἐπιτροπευούσιν καὶ οἰκονομῶσιν αὐτὰς μετὰ παραδοξῆ ἐπιφανεῖας τῶν ὑπηρετῶμενων τῷ τῆ θεοῦ βεβηθηματι.* *Orig. cont. Cels.* p. 216. Ed. Cant.

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 creation of man, and his first situation in the world †; as well as his present state of punishment, and prospect of a future redemption; which were exhibited together, and doubtless explained to him, upon his fall. He was all that while, a living monument both of the justice, and mercy of God; of his extreme hatred, and abhorrence of sin; as well as his great love, and long-suffering 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 easily be gathered from that transaction in paradise, in whatsoever sense we understand it; not to mention that the garden of *Eden*, the great scene of this transgression, might perhaps still 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,

\* 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.

‡ *Allix*, Reflect. p. 62. supposes it to continue till the deluge.

|| *Gen.* iv. 26.

or, as that text is better rendered in 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, sometime after, sprang a person so very eminent for goodness and devotion, as to be exempted from *Adam's* sentence, and the common lot of his sons: who, after he had walked with God three hundred years, and prophesied to his brethren †, and forewarned them of the approaching judgment, was translated, that he should not see death ‡. This very 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 all such might hope at length to see and enjoy their Maker. To *Adam* himself, if he was then alive (as the *Samaritan* account makes him to be above forty years after) it must have been a lively and affecting instance of what he might have enjoyed, had he kept his innocence; as well as an earnest of the promised victory over the evil one; and a strong ground of confidence that he, and the rest of his posterity, should not be left entirely  
in

\* See *Shuckford*, Vol. I. p. 42, &c. *Van Dale's* Orig. & progr. idol. c. 2. *Stillingfleet*, Iren. c. 3. p. 73. 4to.

† *Jude* xiv.

‡ *Heb.* xi. 5. comp. *Ecclesiast.* xlv. 14. and *Arnald* upon *Wisdom*, iv. 10. '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.

in their present state; but 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*, another prophet; who was contemporary both with *Adam* and *Noah*, and well acquainted with the counsels of God; as appeared from his foretelling that that part of the curse which related to the barrenness of the earth, would in a great measure be taken off; as it was, in his son's days†. At length, when by the unlawful mixture of the two families of *Cain* and *Seth*, the latter also was corrupted; and the whole world became full of *unbounded lust*, and impurity‡; of rapine and violence||: when those *giants* in wickedness§, had filled the earth with tyranny, injustice, and oppression; and the whole race of men were grown entirely *carnal\*\**, and abandoned: God, whose spirit had been hitherto *striving* with them, was at length obliged, even in mercy to themselves, as well as their posterity, to cut them off; after having raised up another prophet††, to give them

\* See Bp. *Bull's* Discourses, Vol. I. p. 343. Vol. II. p. 585, &c. Dr. *Worthington* argues farther, 'that this translation of *Enoch* was moreover an intimation to mankind, that, if they overcame the depravity of their nature as he did, they should be delivered from the ill consequences of it as he was; the chiefest of which was death, temporal and eternal, both which he avoided:' and this ingenious author supposes him to be a type of many others being able to do the very same. *Essay*, p. 72, &c.

† *Gen.* v. 29. See Bp. *Sherlock's* Use and Intent, p. 89, &c. and *Ogilby* on the Deluge.

‡ *Gen.* vi. 2. || *ver.* 11. § *ver.* 4. \*\* *ver.* 3. *Seeing that really he is [nothing but] flesh.*

†† *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

them frequent warning of their fate; and allowed them a hundred and twenty years for repentance\*.

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

But

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.

\* *Gen.* vi. 3. This dispensation [of the Deluge] as all the rest, had relation to the morals of mankind; and the evident design of it was to lessen the quantity of vice and prophaneness, 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 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 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. Divin. c. 18.

† *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 Christian Revelation. Vol. I. c. 1.



But we are to remember, that the world was still but in its state of *childhood*; which it most aptly resembled, in those extraordinary aids, and 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 possibly extend; in order to obviate some mistakes, which are commonly made in the history of those times, by setting out wrong; and supposing the first man to have been once superior to all his posterity †, both in natural abilities, and actual knowledge, because more innocent than they; and imagining the primitive religion more perfect, because it was more naked, plain, and simple than that in after times: by which means, we are forced to make the state of the world often go backwards, rise and fall again; and abound with breaks and inequalities; instead of observing that regular, even 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 clear and extensive covenant with mankind in the person of *Noah*; who was a new instance of his power, his justice, and goodness; and whose family had been sufficiently convinced of his supreme dominion over the earth and heavens; of his utter abhorrence of sin; and his deter-

† 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 Divin. c. 10. *Adam*, when created, may be considered as a child, without knowledge, learning, and experience. *ib.* p. 32.

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 ever it was before; might safely be propagated by tradition; and did not stand in need of any farther revelation.

But when by degrees many of them † had corrupted this tradition in the most essential parts, especially with relation to the object of their worship ‡; and instead of one supreme God, had set up several orders of inferior ones; and worshipped all the host of heaven; (as they began to do in the time of *Peleg*, the fifth from *Noah*) and at the same time were uniting under one head,  
and

\* 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* *ib.* c. 18.

† Vid. *Winder's* *Hist. of Kn.* 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 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, but does not deny the truth of the former so much as the latter, and all in a breath.

and forming an *universal empire*; and erecting a monument or 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 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 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 capable of improving by them, and disposed to regard them. We find *Peleg* had his name prophetically given from that *dispersion*, which was to happen in his days ||; and not only his father

*Eber,*

\* That this is the meaning of the word עֵצ. *Gen. xi. 4.* which our translators have improperly rendered *name* here, see *Goguet*, *Introd. p. 2.* \*

† *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.* Some understand it literally of a local descent of the *Son of God*, attended by the Divine *Shechinah*. *Tenison*, of *Idolatry, c. 14. P. 4.*

‡ *Pf. lv. 9.* *Le Clerc*, *ibid.* & *Prolegom. in Com. Diff. 1. § 3.* & in *Gen. xi. 9.* Add *1 Cor. i. 10.* and *Vitringa Obs. Sac. L. i. c. 9. § 6, &c.* *Shuckford*, *Vol. I. B. iii. p. 146,* or *Hutchinson* on the *Confusion of Tongues.*

§ 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 *Mr. Rotheram's Sermon* on the *Wisdom of Providence* in the administration of

*Eber*, but all the heads of families, mentioned in the eleventh of *Genesis*, from *Noah* to *Abraham*, are with some reason supposed to have had the spirit of prophecy, on many occasions. However, *Noah* was undoubtedly both priest and prophet; and living till *Abraham* was near sixty years old, might well be able to keep up a tolerable sense of 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 continuing the faith and worship of the true God among his descendants †.

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

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. 'It was in *Chaldea*, *Canaan*, *Egypt*, and the neighbouring countries, says a learned writer, [Dr. *Leland*, Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation. Vol. I. P. i. c. 19. p. 435.] that the great corruption first began; or at least these 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. Partiii. p. . 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. & *Chrysostom.* Orat. de Perf. Char.] and might serve as the *Prototype*, or model for ship-building. *Evelyn* on Navigation and Commerce. p. 18.

† 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 Vestigiis Rel. Patriarch. inter Gentes. *Bremæ*, 1757.

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

With this view *Abraham* is called; who 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 into covenant with him, and engages to be his present guide, protector and defender; and to

\* The attendants and effects of idolatry are well described by the author of *Wisdom*, c. xiv. 23—29. *So that there reigned 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 shameful 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. T.* Part ii. p. 474. *Judith* v. 8. *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*; 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*, Dict. 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.

to bestow, not only all temporal benefits on him, and on his seed \*; but to make some of them the means of conveying a blessing of a higher kind to all the nations of the earth; who should in an extraordinary manner be *blest 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 far less worthy of them. But we cannot think that it was so much on his own account that he was thus distinguished; or that *for his sake only* ‡, *faith*, 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,

\* That the promise of possessing all the land from *Egypt* to *Euphrates* (*Genes.* 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 *Moral Philosopher*, 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.

‡ *Rom.* iv. 24.

ed, 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 \*. 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 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

\* *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. & *Cleric.* in *Gen.* xvii. 10.

Others derive it from *Joseph*. *Univerf. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 527. note r. and pag. 453. note u. Add *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 97. *Grot.* Ep. 327.

Others suppose it introduced by *Ishmael*, [*Rev. Exam.* Vol. II. 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 Ægypt.* L. iii. c. 6. *Bochart.* *Geogr.* L. iv. c. 32.

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

§ *Prideaux*, Part i. B. iv. p. 225. *Comp. Hyde De Rel. Vet. Pers.* c. 2. and 3. and *Univerf. Hist.* pass. 'Tis remarkable that the *Lacedemonians* retained the memory of him for above 1600 years, and under their king *Areus* claimed kindred with the *Jews*, as being of the stock of *Abraham*. 1 *Maccab.* xii. 21, &c. *Joseph.* *Ant.* L. xii. 5. [see *Waterland's* Postscript to *Script. Vind.* Part ii. p. 142. or *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 53. and 90. How this might

And as he was let into the various counsels of the Almighty, and taught to reason, and reflect upon them; as he was fully apprised of his just judgment in the miraculous overthrow of the four wicked cities \*, with the particular circumstances of it †; as well as his most gracious intent of providing a Redeemer for all mankind, and rejoiced to see his day ‡, and saw it; 'tis very probable,

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. 'Tis likewise observed, that the *Persians* adhered to 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. & *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, beside the four principal cities in that valley (*Sodom*, *Gomorrhah*, *Adma*, *Zeboim*, or *Bela*, *Gen.* xiv. 2. *Deut.* xxix. 23.) there were nine other inferior ones destroyed [called the *daughters of Sodom.* *Ezek.* x. 46, &c.] which agrees with the account of *Strabo*, *Geogr.* L. xvi. *Comp. Cleric.* *App. Com.* in *Gen.*

† *Gen.* xviii.

‡ *Joh.* viii. 56. ἠγαλλιασατο, *gestiebat*, longed earnestly. *Bp. 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. P<sup>t</sup>. ii. which 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 Synopf.* *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*. Nempe 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 fortè, fortè, inquam,



bable, that he and his family would propagate these doctrines, together with their consequences, wheresoever they went \*.

But though the Deity was pleased to manifest himself, in a more frequent and familiar manner, to *Abraham*; yet were not the rest of the world quite overlooked. There were, no doubt, many other shining lights, and eminent professors of pure religion, who, like *Lot* in the midst of *Sodom*, were as eminently preserved, and supported in it: 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, wholly confined to *Abraham*, or to his family. In *Canaan* we meet with *Melchizedeck*, 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

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*quam, 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 vehabatur, uti diserte ipse fatetur, Pj. lxxviii. 70, 71, 72. In stabulo igitur cum nascitur filius ejus, annon patrem suum refert? Episcop. Inst. Theol. L. iii. c. 12. p. 175.*

\* See *Burnet's Boyle's Lect.* pag. 536. fol. 'God called *Abraham* out of his own country, and made him 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. 428, &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.*

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 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 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 bring it down as low as the captivity: nor are they without their reasons.

\* *Gen.* xx.

† *Gen.* xxvi. 10, 11.

‡ Vid. LXX. in fin. *Job.* *Tobit* ii. 16. Vulg. Lat.—*Job* insultant *Reges*.

§ Vid. *Cleric.* in *Job* vi. 10. xxiii. 12. xxix. 4. xxiii. 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.

‡‡‡ *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. Differt. ii.

sons (*m.*) However, all seem to agree that, whoever was the author of it, it is built upon a real character; and that decorum kept up, as to suit the notions in it to the patriarchal times: and what

(*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. — xxxi. 27. — xxxviii. 3. — xlii. 7. Id. *Sentim. de Theolog.* L. ix. p. 177, &c. et *Biblioth. Choif.* Tom. I. a. 1. Add *Chaldaismi* in indice ad *Cler.* Comment. Tom. IV.

The mixture of *Chaldee* in the composition, which *Le Clerc* makes out in many instances, beside the *in pro im*, [see Mr. *Peters's Crit. Diff.* 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 ingenious author of *Crit. Diff.* 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, himself assigns a reason why the latter is no necessary consequence from the former: *Jobus, nimirum, ad Euphratem in Hufitide habitavit, ubi lingua Chaldaica, aut Chaldaicæ adfinitis 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 quævisissent, nisi pravis interpretationibus transversæ acti fuissent; ut conjicere est ex Judæis, qui verba Hebraica sequuti, dogma, quod alioqui credunt, hinc exculpi 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 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

what religious notices might be gathered from this dramattick history, fupposing it known in thofe times, may be feen at large in *Taylor*, Scheme of Script. Div. c. 24.

To proceed: In *Chaldea* we meet with *Balaam*, a true prophet \*; yet one who, from his own perfonal merit, had no particular pretentions to the word of God; fince he fo notoriously loved, and followed *the wages of unrighteousnefs*; and at length juftly perifhed among the idolatrous *Midianites* †; having taught them to feduce and corrupt thofe, whom he knew to be the chofen people of God ‡. Confidering, I fay, the character of this perfon, he feems to have had no

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quo gravioreſ calamitateſ conſtantius tuliffet: quibus præmiis mala hujus vitæ Deus abunde eſſet penſaturus. Jobuſ ipſe hoc ad animum revocaſſet, nec uſque adeo æſtuafſet. Quod ſi talia eorum mentem non ſubiiffent, Deus certe, ſi reſ jam revelata erat, dixiffet, 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 conſtantix ſuæ pœniteret, æternis & eximiis in eum collatis præmiis. Quæ oratio, (ſi rem tum patefeciffet Deus) multo ejus ſummæ ſapientix convenientior erat, quam creatio Crocodili & Hippopotami, aliaque id genus; quæ Jobum quidem terrere potuerunt divinæ potentix metu, ſed ſolari vix potuerunt. Hæc qui ad animum revocabunt, facile intelligent, nihil eſſe cur, veluti per ſiduculaſ, conemur reſurrectionem & vitam æternam hinc extorquere. *Le Clerc's* opinion is confirmed by *Mr. Heath* in *loc.* — But compare *Taylor* ib. c. 24. who has made it probable that *Job* profeſſes his belief of both theſe articleſ, and on that very account is ſaid to have ſpoken the thing that is right of God, which hiſ friendſ did not. c. xlii. 7, 8.

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

† *Numb.* xxxi. 8.

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

particular title to the gift of prophecy (*n*); and therefore we may suppose that in those days it was not so uncommon a favour, but might be conferred on many others likewise, in other parts of

(*n*) Whatever might have been his behaviour before, it was certainly very bad in the whole of this affair; during which, he had the fullest revelations, and yet was always either directly disobeying, or endeavouring to defeat the intent of them; as may be seen in Bp. *Butler's* 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 made in vision, dream, or *trance* [as our translators have interpreted one hereafter mentioned, and which some circumstances render very probable] though from the narration it is equally difficult here, as in some other parts of scripture, to distinguish between real fact in the most literal sense, and visionary, symbolical representations, such as occur in *Job* i. 6. ii. 1, &c. xxxviii. 1 *Kings*, c. xxii 19. *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. *Zech.* i. 8. iii. 1. and perhaps *Gen.* ii. 21—24. and xxxii. 2, 24. *vid. Theodoret.* (though Dr. *Clarke* gives another interpretation of this last passage, *Serm.* xix. p. 126. *Dubl. Ed.*) and *Smith's* Sel. Disc. c. 6. To which we may add the story of *Christ's* temptation in the wilderness, as is made very probable in *Farmer's* judicious *Enquiry into its nature and design*, printed A. D. 1761. Comp. *Mason* on *Matt.* iv. 11. That of the *Angel* meeting *Balaam* in the way, seems to be thus explained by himself, *Numb.* xxiv. 3, 4. (when rightly rendered) where he alludes to the very circumstance of his eyes being shut for some time, c. xxii. 31. Nor does it seem very 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 the knowledge of any of them, as by the account it appears to be. 'Ita dico, in negotio *Bileami*, totum illud quod in via ei contigisse dicitur, & quomodo asina loquuta fuerit, in visione prophetica factum esse, quia in fine historię explicatur quod *anglus Dei* loquutus fuerit.' *Maimon.* Mor. Nevoch. P. ii, c. 42. To the same purpose *R. Levi Ben. Gersom*; and *Philo* seems to be of the same opinion, by his omission of this circumstance, as is observed by *Shuckford*, B. xii. p. 315. Add *Memoirs of Lit.* April 1710, p. 14. and Dr. *Fortin's* Dissertations. Diss. v. p. 189. *Leibnitz* endeavours to prove the

of the world \*, whose history is not delivered down to us †: And upon the whole, it seems probable that, as in every nation, those who feared God and worked righteousness, were accepted of him ‡, so he was pleased also to manifest himself, 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.

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 foundation, though numberless impostures (which yet are ever imitations of something real,

the same, 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 abovementioned may perhaps belong to that species of revelation by *vision*, which Bp. Warburton explains at large, *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 prophetick 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 Dr. *Fortin*, 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.

|| 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.

real, and almost a natural consequence of it \* ) have indeed rendered all reports of that kind, for these many ages, very suspicious.

But to proceed. When for the reasons above-mentioned, and perhaps many others, it had pleased God to adopt *Abraham*, and part of his posterity, in a peculiar manner, and to establish his *Covenant* with them † ; we find all possible care and condescension used, to train them up by degrees, in suitable notions of their Creator ; a frequent correspondence held with them ; new promises daily given ; to strengthen and confirm their faith, to fix and preserve their dependance on the God of heaven. He reveals himself to *Isaac* and *Rebecca* ; and foretels 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 primo-ge-

\* See *Adams's* judicious answer to *Hume's* Essay on Miracles, p. 110, 111. Good and evil angels under 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. Divin. c. 12.

† *Rom.* ix. 5.

‡ *Gen.* xxv. 22, 23. From this circumstance of *Rebecca* going to enquire of the Lord, Dr. *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 Revelation, Vol. I. Pt. i. c. 2. p. 78. u.

|| *Gen.* xxvi. 24. § *Gen.* xii. 13, 14. \*\* *Gen.* xxviii. 13, 14.

geniture; 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 surpris'd, and hesitates; and seems to make a kind of stipulation with his Maker. *If, says he, God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God §*: that is, if he will preserve and prosper me in my undertakings, he shall be my God, rather than any other: And it appears not to have been till after many such revelations, blessings, 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 ‡‡.*

Thus

\* *Gen.* xxviii. 15 † *Gen.* xxxii. 1. xxxv. 1, 9. ‡ *Gen.* xxxii. 29.

‖ *Gen.* xxxv. 5. § *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.*



Thus was God obliged to treat, even with the *Patriarchs* themselves, by way of positive *Covenant*, and exprefs compact; to promise to be their God, if they would be his people; to give them

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*Gen.* xxxiv. 29. See *Shuckford*, B. vii. p. 164. In support of 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 *Cyrrill. 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; in order to preserve the strictest regard to every appearance of truth, rather than a particular attachment to any favourite system, I shall here set down the observation made on it by an ingenious friend. '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.] *ψ.* 20, 21. II. The subject matter of the vow which he grounded upon it, *ψ.* 22. The recapitulation of the promise runs thus. *Seeing [DN]* \* God will be with me, [*γ*] and will keep me in the way wherein I go, [*γ*] and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, [*γ*] and I shall return again to my father's house in peace (or in prosperous circumstances) [*γ*] and seeing the Lord will be my God; II. The vow follows *ψ.* 22. [*γ*] 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.'

\* This particule *DN*, if, is not here *conditional*, but *causal*, quoniam, quandoquidem; as *Gen.* xxiii. 13. *Numb.* xxii. 20. *Judg.* xi. 9. *Jer.* xxxiii. 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. [*γ*] and *Esau* did eat and drink, [*γ*] and rose up, [*γ*] and went his way: [*γ* and] thus *Esau* despised his birth-right. And in the Greek Epigram,

Δελος Επιπέλητος γενομένη και σωμα' αναπήρος,  
Και πειριαν Ιρος, και φιλος αθλιατοις.

Here,

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

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\* 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 an *Essay on the several Dispensations of God*, by the late Ld. Barrington, p. 20, 24, 25, 59, 62, 69.

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

Mankind were scarcely got out of their *Childhood* yet, with regard to what may be called the *theory of religion*; and notwithstanding there might always be some extraordinary persons, who had a more enlarged prospect of things, and entertained more worthy sentiments of the divine Providence, such as *Enoch, Noah, Abraham*, and the like; yet these were far superior to the times in which they lived; and we have reason to think that the generality, both in this, and some later ages, extended their views no farther than the present life, and its conveniences\*: 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 accordingly. How many of these superior powers there might be, or how far their 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 place ‡; gods of the *hills*, and of the *valleys*,

\* This seems to have been the case even with *Abraham* himself for some time, who upon having this extraordinary promise made to him by God in a vision, *Gen. xv. 1. I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*; rises no higher in his answer, than only to request an heir for his substance, *ψ. 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 understood of the general desire of posterity so common in his days; and which *Allix* has endeavoured to account for. Reflect. on *Gen. c. xv. &c.**

† *2 Kings xviii. 34, 35.* ‡ See *Numb. xxiii. 13, 27.*

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

To this purpose, he makes way for the removal of *Jacob* and his family, to one of the most improved and 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 much danger of sharing in those corruptions which were getting ground there ‡. They are placed by themselves upon

\* 1 *Kings* xx. 23, 28. Vid. *Calmet*. † 2 *Kings* xvii. 33.

‡ 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,

upon the borders of *Egypt*, where they multiply exceedingly; yet by their very occupation \* are still kept a separate people; and rendered more averſe to the manners and religion of their neighbours, by a long and ſevere oppreſſion: Which, though it might at firſt perhaps have chiefly been occaſioned by their oppoſition to the growing idolatry †; yet became very neceſſary afterwards, both to keep up that oppoſition; and to inure them to reſtraint and government: And that it might have the effects intended, but not proceed ſo far as to reduce them to an entire ſubjection, and conformity to that more potent nation, through a deſpair of any deliverance; the pre- ciſe time of this their trial was foretold to *Abraham* ‡; and as ſoon as it had been accom- pliſhed, and they had cryed for help to their God ||; they are brought back, in as wonderful a way as they had been ſent thither; which alſo was foretold to *Jacob* §; and repeated by *Jo- ſeph* \*\*; all the circumſtances whereof are at large related in their hiſtory; and, I muſt add, with all thoſe characters of truth and conſiſt- ency, which might be ſhewn (were this a place for it) to receive new confirmation, from every  
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ing, was a moſt adorable ſcheme to recover, promote, preſerve, and if poſſible, perpetuate, their piety, virtue, and wiſdom.' Rev. Exam. with candour, 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 after—they were deified.' *ib.* 199.

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

† See *Chandler*, Vind. O. T. pag. 487.

‡ *Acts* vii. 6. || *Exod.* ii. 23. § *Gen.* xlvi. 4. and xlviii. 21.

\*\* *Gen.* i. 24, 25.

such attempt to burlesque and expose it, as is made by a late profligate writer\*.

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 from them, in such a manner as must strike the utmost surprise and 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, I say, made his name great among the heathen §; as well as worked so conspicuous a deliverance for his chosen people, as might, one would think, have been sufficient to engage them for ever in his service; he proceeds to instruct, and exercise them for some time in the wilderness; he exhorts, and intreats them to their duty, and warns them against all the vices of the people round about; gives them statutes, and judgments more righteous \*\* than those of any other nation; and such

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\* *Moral Philosopher*, Introd. to Vol. III.

† Perhaps by destroying all their images or temples. Vid. *Cleric. & Patr.* in *Exod.* xii. 12. *Comp. Numb.* xxxiii. 4. *Paraphr. Jonath.* in loc. & *2 Sam.* vii. 23. The reason of this may be gathered from note (r) p. 91.

‡ See the notes below, with *Candler's* Vindication of the history of the Old Test. Part ii. p. 464, &c. and p. 499.

|| Vid. *Diod. Sic.* L. i. *Herodot.* L. ii. c. 43, &c. et *Witsii Ægypt.* 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, may be seen at large in *Le Clerc* on *Psal.* cxxxvi. 10.—17. \*\* *Nebem* ix. 13.

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 guides, guards, directs them in all their undertakings. He conducts them through the neighbouring nations, with repeated signs and wonders (o) ; and continues

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

† *Exod. xxiii. 20.—23. xxxii. 34.* Probably *Christ* himself, who seems to have spoken unto *Moses* in Mount *Sina*, *Acts vii. 38* ; and whom the children of *Israel* are said to have tempted in the wilderness, *1 Cor. x. 9.* [Comp. *Whitby*] to which also some refer *Heb. xi. 26.* Vid. *Doddridge* in loc. Nor is it less probable, that the same divine person who created the world, [*Col. i. 16.*] had also the government and administration of it from the very beginning ; appearing to our first parents, to the Patriarchs and their posterity [*Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.*] sometimes in the name and character of *Jehovah*, *Exod. xxiii. 21.* or the presence of God. *ib. xxxiii. 14.* sometimes as his *Angel*, *Isai. lxiii. 9.* the captain of his host, *Josh. v. 13, 14.* the messenger of his covenant, *Mal. iii. 1.* though under the name of *Michael*, the Archangel, he was more particularly distinguished as the tutelary Prince of *Israel*, *Deut. xxxii. 8, 9.* according to the seventy, *Dan. x. 21. xii. 1. Rev. xii. 7.* See *Peirce* on *Phil. ii. 7, 9, 10.* *Heb. i. 7, 9. &c. Taylor*, Scheme of Script. Div. c. 15. p. 162. *Jortin*, Discourses p. 18. note \* 2d Ed. *Delap. Concio ad Clerum* in *Heb. xiii. 8.* *Fleming's Christology*, B. ii. c. 6. *Tenison* of *Idol. c. 14. P. 5.*

‡ The necessity for this, is well explained by *Bp. Warburton*, *Div. Leg. B. v. sect. 2.*

(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 foreigners ; and that if they did not leave the land, and give up all their natural law-

nues 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 a kind of original right \*; and till the present inhabitants were ripe for destruction †. At their entrance into it, he gives a summary repetition of their former laws, with more such ordinances ‡, both of a ceremonial and moral kind, as were best suited to their temper and circumstances; and adapted every way to prevent the dangers, and correct the irregularities, to which they became constantly liable (*p*); as well as to pre-

ful 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.

\* 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 perhaps 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.

† *Gen.* xv. 16.

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

(*p*) See *Dr. Burnet's Boyle's Lect.* p. 541. fol. and the author of *Div. Leg.* Vol. II. B. iv. sect. 6. 'It seems not to have been God's



prefigure, and by degrees prepare them for\* a more perfect dispensation under the *Messiah*. The moral part breathed nothing but equity, and benevolence; it dissuaded them from all kinds of cruelty and oppression, by reminding them of their late heavy sufferings; and inculcated the greatest humanity, both towards each other, toward strangers, servants, enemies; and even the beasts of the field †. The ceremonial parts were solemn

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 fatis studiose non putet, nisi operoso cultu id prosequatur; 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 & apostoli discipulis suis inculcavere. — Cleric. in Ex. xxv. 31. Comp. Spencer de Leg. Heb. L. i. c. 4. sect. 4. Trigland de Orig. et Caus. Rit. Mos. Burnet de Fid. & 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 loose modern writer would insinuate, *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's Rational. passim*. That it could not 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. 3. Comp. Dr. *Durvell's* Dissert. on the *Mosaic Institution*, App. to Parallel 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,

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; and withdraw their affections, from the pomp and pageantry of idol worship; which had so very surprisngly 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 mixed and incorporated with their civil polity, that the same things were duties of religion, and acts of state; and the service of God became the constant business, as well as entertainment of their lives; supplying the place of all other entertainments (q).

Nor

&c. xxv. 1,—4. xxvi. 12. xxvii. 19. *Lev.* xix. 9, 10, 23,—37. and xxv. 35,—38. See *Leland's Aniw. 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.’—

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

(q) See *Univerf. Hist.* p. 694. *Welfed*, p. 72, &c. *Edwards's Survey*, Vol. I. p. 242, 255, &c. or *Limberk*, *Amic. Collat.* P. 317.

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

Other rites were instituted in *Commemoration* of great and signal events, extraordinary acts of providence towards their nation; the keeping up a constant remembrance of which could not but be of great use for preserving the love and worship of God amongst them, awakening their gratitude, and engaging their dutiful 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 to them; by keeping them united

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Nor was this institution wholly confined to the *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 profelytes 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 to have no commerce with the *Seven Nations*; but were commanded to destroy them, and possess themselves of their country; on their refusing to submit to certain terms, and rejecting offers of peace (‡): yet, to prevent their imagining themselves the only favourites of Heaven, and learning to despise, and hate the rest of mankind; (as they were but too apt to do, and which, to a people under their circumstances, was in 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  
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together in one body politic. *Le Clerc* on *Exod.* v. 3. and xxiii. 14.

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

(§) *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. *Edwards's* Survey, p. 355, &c. *Patrick* on *Ex.* xxiii. 32. *Shuckford's* Connection, Vol. III. B. xii. p. 433, &c. *Selden* De Jur. Nat. I. vi. c. 14.

\* *Lev.* xviii. 24, 25, and xx. 23. See *Leland* against *Christianity as old*, &c. Vol. II. p. 429, &c. 'The destruction of these nations

favoured with the greatest means of information, viz. from the examples of so many eminent men placed amongst them, and from the judgements of God so remarkably set before them †) that the Lord had driven them out; as he would do *them* also, if they followed their steps ‡: that if any of these 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; and on account of the superior wickedness of these nations (r): that the great intent

nations 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. †† *Ib.* ix. 6, 7, &c. ‡‡ *Ib.*

(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 *Lewman's* Dissertation on the civil government

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, all over the world: that this design had taken place before they were born, and would be carried on, whether 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 of their history, both under their *judges* and *kings*, we find them frequently rebelling, and as frequently punished for it; as soon as they repent, they are restored; when they relapse, they are again chastised ‡; all along alternately sinning and suffering; immediate and visible judgements attending each revolt; either oppression in their

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ment of the *Hebrews*, c. i. p. 13, &c. and c. xii. p. 221, &c. or *S. Browne*, p. 366, &c.

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

Many instances of this occur as low as *Constantine*; to which purpose we have a remarkable speech of *Licinius* in *Euseb. De vit. Const.* c. v. To which we may add, that as the people in those times did not in the least dispute the reality of each others deities, no kind of miracles but such as 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. &c. *Rom.* xi. 22.

‡ *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 illustrated in *Taylor's Scheme of Script. Div.* c. 32.

own, or slavery in foreign countries ; till the last great captivity in *Babylon* seems to have quite cured them of their favourite, predominant vice *Idolatry*; to which they had been before so unaccountably (s) addicted.

But

(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 communion* hath for so long a time, and by the like means, influenced the majority of the nations around, 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 another able writer. ‘ So strong was this universal prejudice of *intercommunity*, that all the provisions of the law could not keep those people from running into the error. For their frequent 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; this we shall shew at large hereafter.’ *Div. Leg.* B. ii. sect. 6. This he has done in B. v. sect. 2. See also *Jurieu*, Crit. Hist. Vol. II. Part iii, c. 9. *Mede*’s Apostasy of the latter times, c. x. p. 651. *Le Clerc*  
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\* *Pyle*, Pref. to Paraph. on the O. T. Vol. IV.

But all this while, the rest of the world reap almost the same benefit by them, whether they keep their law, and prosper; or disobey it, and are in distress. One would naturally suppose, that they must partake of the improvements of the *Jews'* religion in some degree, as well as these partook of their corruptions. And this appears to be the case in fact: and as it has been 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 civilized 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 of the power, and justice of their God, either in distinguishing them by rewards, for their adhering to him; or as remarkably punishing them, for deserting him; and who seem to be well acquainted with the intent of these his dispensations (*t*); especially,

on *Acts* vii. 42. As to the *intercommunity* among the Heathens, see *Macrob.* L. iii. c. 9. De evocandis diis tutelaribus.

(*t*) 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 seen in the notes a little below; which gives a farther answer to the *Moral Philosopher's* objection mentioned. p. 85. q. (2).

cially, when they were made the instruments thereof\*.

Thus by the various revolutions in their government, and frequent change of their condition, they spread the knowledge of their history and religion far and near; more especially, by the total dispersion of the ten tribes; and the great captivity of *Judah*, under the *Assyrians* and *Babylonians*; when by their cleaving more stedfastly to God, and refusing to comply with the idolatrous worship of the Empire, they were distinguished by many extraordinary interpositions of Providence; and had several royal proclamations, and public decrees, made in their favour; which bore testimony to the supreme power, wisdom, and justice of their God; as in the successive reigns of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Nabonadius* or *Belsazzar*, and *Darius the Mede*; as also of *Cyrus*, *Cambyses* or *Abasuerus*, *Darius Hystaspis*,

\* Jer. i. 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 Rabshakeh, 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. Isaiah 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 Pridcaux's objections, Vol. I. p. 24, and 54. 8th Ed. See Le Clerc on 2 Kings xviii. 22. and 2 Chron. supra, and Jer. vi. 6. xl. 2. Comp. 1 Esdras i. 27, 28. 2 Mac. viii. 36. Judith v. 17, &c. and Arnald in loc.*



*Hystaspis*, *Xerxes*, *Abasuerus* 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; employs the chief of them in his army and garrisons; plants great numbers in *Cyrene*, and *Libya* §; 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, as it were, a new publication of their religion\*\*, and for which, the

*Alex-*

\* *Dan.* iii. 28. iv. 1, 2, &c. vi. 25, &c. *2 Chron.* xxxvi. 23. *1 Esdras* i. 27. ii. 3. viii. 8, &c. *Ezra* i. 3. vi. 6, --- 12, vii. 13. *Nehem.* ii. 7, &c. *Ester* ix. 32. and x. *Conf. Joseph.* *Contr. Ap.* L. i. & *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.

† *Josephus*, L. xi. c. 8. *Prideaux*, Part i. B. vii. p. 487. *Univerf. Hist.* Vol. III. p. 345, &c. though others question it. See *Moyle's* Works, Vol. II. Lett. 4, and 6.

‡ *Joseph.* L. xi. c. ult.

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

|| *Prid.* ib. p. 541, 542. *Joseph.* 2. *Contr. Ap.*

\*\* When the world, having been united under one great empire, was in the best manner prepared to receive it. See *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. See *Taylor*, *Sch. of Scr. Div.* c. 37. Concerning the end and uses which this translation served, see *Allix*, Part ii. p. 161. A more accu-

*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 fully predicted them ‡. *Ptolemy Philometor* had a comment on the five books of *Moses* dedicated to him, by 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 *Isaiab* 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

rate 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.

† Vid. *Sepher Taanith* in *Mens. Teb.* and *Scalig.* Not. in *Chron.* *Euseb.* Ann. 133, et Prolegom. ad *Grabe*, Ed. Sept. Tom. II. Prop. 5. This fast is still kept by the *Jews* here, 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.

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

|| *Prid.* B. i. p. 264.

\*\* *Isa.* xix. 19, 20.

†† By this prophecy, the *Jews* thought themselves authorized in building a temple in *Egypt*, though it was a thing otherwise forbidden by their law. *Allix's* Reflect. p. 163. Comp. *Gloss.* Præf. Rhet. Sac. p. 25.

ing 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 all over that vast empire. That they were very remarkably preserved, 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*,  
*Vitellius*,

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

† *Dio Cassius* says, Και ἐστὶ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις τὸ γένος τῆτο, κολαθὲν μὲν πολλὰκις, ἀυξήθη δὲ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον, ὥστε καὶ εἰς παρθρησιαν τῆς νομισεως ἐκνικησαι. 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; which they did every where, and 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, as the *Christians* did; but 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 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*

*Vitellius*, all sending victims to be offered at the temple of *Jerusalem*\*.

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

ceremonies at *Ephesus*, should be exempted from warfare by reason of their religion. *Mr. Taylor*, *ib.* p. 48.

\* *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*, 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 represent; particularly *Middleton* and *Bolingbroke*. *Comp. Witsii Ægypt. L. iii. c. 12. sect. 17.* and *Leland*, *Advantage &c.* Vol. I. Part i. c. 19.

† *Mal. i. 11.*

‡ *Comp. Isa. xlv. 6.*

§ See *Dr. Fortin'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. 9. Joseph. Ant. viii. 2.*] In *Solomon's* time, there were found above an hundred and fifty three thousand strangers or profelytes 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, [*Ester viii. 17.*] to which we may add *Josiphus's* remarkable account of the *Adiabentian* queen and her son,

more to the belief of one supreme God, (which was as much as was then required) 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 them; especially in the latter ages of their government †. Though this perhaps was in some measure, a natural consequence

son. [Ant. xxvi. 2.] In our Saviour's time, we read of devout men, or *profelytes*, 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 *Libya*; *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. *Advantage of the Christian Religion*. 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.

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

quence of that seemingly *unfociable* spirit, so necessary in them to prevent any intimate connections, or (which would have soon been the consequence) an entire 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, which they had suffered so much for conforming to.

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 judgements of God on *Syria*, *Tyre*, *Edom*, *Moab* and *Ammon*. *Obadiab* 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 (as is observed by a late writer ‡) 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 been so capable of understanding the divine message, when it came to them; and of behaving themselves suitable to it §. In like manner, *Nabum* describes the final destruction of *Nineveh*; and *Zephaniah* proclaims the divine vengeance on the neighbouring countries of the

*Phi-*

\* *Ezek.* xxv. 7, — 17, &c. passim.

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

‡ *Edwards's Survey*, &c. p. 296.

§ *Vid. Buddei Parerg.* p. 426. and *Lowth* on *Jonah* iii. 5.

*Philistines*, of *Moab* and *Ammon*; as well as *Ethiopia* and *Affyria*\*. And accordingly, their prophets are occasionally sought, and honoured by many of 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.

And thus did this famous people every way conduce to propagate the knowledge and fear of the one true God, in almost every nation; either by their prosperity, or adversity; their conquests, or captivities§; their separation from the rest of the nations, or their dispersion among them: both by the laws, that were given them; and by the prophets, which at various times were raised up in the midst of them; proclaiming the power and justice of the universal Governour of the world; and foretelling his disposal both of them, and the neighbouring states; together with the reasons of it ||.

Thus

\* † One needs only read their books, to see that the prophets 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*, *Affyrians*, *Persians*, *Egyptians*, &c.' *Allix's Reflect.* B. ii. p. 41.

† *2 Kings* v. and viii.

‡ *Jer.* xxxix. II. xl. I, &c.

§ *Videli victoribus leges dederunt*, says *Seneca* of this people. *Aug. De Civ. D. L.* vi. c. II.

|| See the texts in p. 95. Note \*

Thus were mankind far from being rejected by their Maker, during this state of *nonage*; though he had his peculiar residence among the *Jews*, and was their visible guardian, and 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 real benefits thereof, the heavenly *Canaan*, of which the first may be con-

\* See Bp. *Sherl.* Disc.v. p.150.

(*w*) Vid. *Crellii* Orat. 2. Quare nec *Moses* nec philosophi perfectam virtutem præscribere potuerint. Perfectionem sanctitatis ideo Populo *Hebræo* præscribere, & ad illam sequendam eundem acrioribus stimulis incitare, *Moses* Dei nomine non potuit; quod felicitatem ac mercedem, ob quas pietas colenda esset, terrenæ Reipublicæ otio, & eorum tantum bonorum affluentia terminaret, quæ ad corporis partum spectant, quorumque usus hujus vitæ circumscribitur cancellis; ita requirente istius populi infantia: quin etiam illam rempublicam, in qua pietatis suæ fructum Gens *Israëlitica* deberet capere, armis & parare & tueri juberet. Unde si totam præceptorum *Mosaicorum* rationem ad ista tempora accommodatam consideres, animadvertes eam isti pietatis præmiis apprimè fuisse consentaneam, &c. *Crell.* Eth. Christ. p. 443, &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 owed 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 'tis 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's Boyle's Lect.* p. 543. fol.



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 his 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 the Deity as 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 perhaps are entirely groundless. Their favours, we have seen, were rather favours to the whole world ||; and they only instruments in the hand of God, to hold forth this light to all around them; whereof other nations

\* In what sense it may be so conceived, see Lord *Barrington's* Essay on the several dispensations of God to mankind, p. 46, &c. Comp. *Peirce* on *Colos. ii. 9, 17.*

† *Ezek. v. 5. -- xxxviii. 12.* Vid. *Reland. Palæst. L. i. c. 10. Durell. Parallel. p. 160.* 'They were placed in the center 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. P. 11. 12. 13.*

‡ See *Jenkin, Vol. I. p. 49.* That the Jews were spread over all the world about *Christ's* time, as it is said, *Aelsing, Hist. Joseph. B. i. c. 16. Philo, Leg. ad Caj. id. in Flacc. L. 1. c. 1. Cred. B. i. c. 3. or Basnage, Hist. B. vi.*

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

nations were sure to reap the benefit, in due time ; whether they themselves stood faithful to their trust, or fell for violating it.

Nor perhaps were they worse than any other nation would have been, in the like circumstances. The *Canaanites*, we know, behaved worse under all their early advantages, and repeated means of improvement ; as 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 exactness in settling their history, wherein all other nations were remarkably deficient : their carefulness in distinguishing their genealogies ; and preserving their records, which was so beneficial to the rest of the world † : their great

te-

‡ Pag. 90.

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

† ' It may be observed, that the sacred history is distinct, methodical, 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. 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

tenaciousness of all old rites and customs; and their extraordinary zeal in making profelytes \*. And though we may allow them to have been, in general, somewhat 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 †. But the more weak and sottish 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 them. And the less capable they were of inventing the great things contained in their books, the more apparently did these point out another author; and prove more incontestably, that they had such communicated to them from above. However, 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,

the requisite assistances might easily have been borrowed from the neighbouring nations, who now kept regular annals. *Hartley's Observations on Man*, Vol. II. p. 116.

\* *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 91, 93. *I. A. Danzii Cura Hebr. in conquirendis profel.*

† 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*.

§ *Isai.* xliii. 10, 12.

terpositions, and exprefs predictions of the moſt remarkable events ; was neceſſary to be known, and well remembered : Memoirs of this therefore were to be kept ſomewhere ; and in ſuch a manner, as to be of uſe to all ages. And this the *Jews* effected ; being diſperſed among all nations, and yet ſtill kept a diſtinct people ; by which means theſe great truths were both preſerved pure, and propagated to moſt parts of the world. Their law was a *ſchoolmaſter* \*, to teach them the rudiments of religion, who were to inſtruct and improve others ; it was added to the religion of the *patriarchs*, *becauſe of tranſgreſſions* † ; i. e. becauſe mankind had almoſt univerſally fallen from the *patriarchal* religion ‡ : or added after the promiſe, to conclude all under ſin §, and ſhut them up unto the faith which ſhould afterwards be revealed ||, to convict them of guilt, and convince them of the neceſſity of laying hold on thoſe terms of grace which were to be offered, in due time. Their whole inſtitution was a ſtate of diſcipline, and *Bondage under the elements of this world* †† ; a ſort of ſervile confinement, and tutelary regimen ; conducting them by preſent, temporal rewards, and earthly proſpects ; affording only a dark, diſtant intimation of better things ; and introducing theſe in figurative representations, types, and emblems : till they, as well as the reſt of the world, were got out of their *minority* ; able to walk by a more perfect rule ; and fit to enter on, and make a proper uſe of their *inheritance* ;

\* Gal. iii. 24.

† Ibid iii. 9.

‡ See Mr. Bate's Examination of Chubb, p. 90, &amp;c.

§ Gal. iii. 22.

|| Ib. v. 23.

†† Gal. iv. 3.

ritance; — 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 much 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 *Houſholder* 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, highest of all.

The *patriarchs* had standing memorials of God's presence and protection, as well as frequent and familiar converse with him; assuring them of his favour, and thereby inviting and alluring them to his service: the *law* was given to his peculiar people by *angels* (b), in all the appearances of pomp and terror, to astonish and awe them into obedience; the *prophets* were sent to denounce variety of judgements against their disobedience; to threaten them with the severest plagues on their 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 great, universal Blessing, the true end and completion of all his promises, — MESSIAH; in whom were laid up *the sure mercies of David*; mercies of a much higher nature than any of those which they

† *Matth.* xxi. 33. *Jer.* vii. 25.

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

they were then expecting; who should procure for them a far more noble and extensive kingdom, than they had ever dreamt of; should make them brethren and fellow-citizens with all the world here, and fellow-heirs to a more valuable inheritance in the world to come\*. Who notwithstanding their blindness, and perverseness, and many transgressions, should certainly deliver them from all their adversities; and finally restore them, and *all mankind*, to the favour and full enjoyment of their God.

The doctrines he taught, contain a system of the most agreeable and important truths, (though not delivered in any systematic †, artful method, or adapted in any respect to vicious palates) giving us the most worthy, amiable notions of the Deity, and affording the strongest motives to love and obey him; the greatest incitement to resemble

our

\* ‘ 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.

† 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* ans. to *Christ. as old*, &c. Vol. II. p. 166, &c. and p. 245, 246. Add *Cröll. 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.’

our blessed Saviour himself in goodness, 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 are capable of, in the present state; and thereby entitling us to some higher degree of happiness, and glory in another. By his own blood he cancels the original *Covenant* \*; 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

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

\* In what sense *covenants* are understood, was hinted above, p. 50. note i.

† See p. 49. 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 Dr. *Worthington*, *Essay on Man's redemption*, c. 11, &c. who supposes that these will be attainable even *in this life*. The sub-

to be reserved till mankind were able to comprehend, and duly 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 but once for all; (otherwise, as the apostle says \*, *Christ must often have suffered since the foundation of the world*; often in every country, and as often in vain; his offers of salvation by their cheapness slighted, his sufferings disregarded) as no farther manifestation of God's will could be made to man either in terms more full and express, or in a way more kind, and condescending; it was fit that all suitable provisions should be made for the reception, and continuance of it in the world; all proper preparations used to fix, and ascertain its evidence; as well as to explain its worth, and make men sensible of its true use and necessity. 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

substance of his scheme is thus laid down, p. 253.—‘ My persuasion is, that our redemption by Christ will, when it hath its perfect work, be productive of all those great and happy effects:— That the human nature shall, before the end of the gospel-age and consummation of all things, be delivered from sin, sorrow, and sickness, and all the other miseries and evils of this life, proceeding from the fall of our first parents, and in the end from death itself; without tasting of which, it shall be translated from an earthly paradise, which it shall once more enjoy, to an heavenly one, which it shall enjoy for ever. And moreover, that all the disorders of nature in general shall be rectified, and that there shall be a redemption of the whole creation to its first state, as well as of man, the Lord of it.’ How far this differs from the Hypothesis of *Burnet*, or *Asgill's* famous *argument*, may be seen in the same place.

\* *Heb.* ix. 26.



of the *Messiah's* advent; and describing the nature of his kingdom: their law was to continue till it had effectually guarded them from all kinds of idolatry, and secured their dependence on the one supreme God; till they had attained to such rational notions 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 nature, in not acting up to what they might, and did discover; sufficient to make them wish and hope for some heavenly guide, (to inform them how they came into their present state of ignorance and imperfection, and how, and when they should be able to get out of it,) which in fact the wisest of them did; as particularly appears from two remarkable instances, in *Socrates's* discourse upon *prayer* and *sacrifice* \*; and in *Aristotle's* declaration just before his death, [if the account of it be genuine] concerning the reasonableness of believing that the gods should come down from Heaven, to instruct and relieve mankind †. Thus was the consciousness of their defects

\* 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. I.

† *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 observation above, Lord *Bolingbroke* replies, that 'the complaints and

defects requisite in the heathens, to prepare them for, and dispose them to embrace a remedy, when it should be offered; and the *Jewish* œconomy was equally requisite, to fit *them* for administering this remedy; the one made its value 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 objection \* supposes.

We see then in general, that some time must have preceded the publication of the gospel; and we ought to consider, that if it were 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; 'tis so much nearer to us; and thereby its light and evidence more clear at present; its heat and influence proportionably stronger; all which we have occasion enough for already: and well it is for us that it came so late, if all its evidence decrease so fast by length of time, as these very same objectors would insinuate.

expectations of these men were founded in proud curiosity and vain presumption.' 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!

\* P. 42.

ate \*. And how do we know but that it might be delivered about the middle age of the world; and by that means be nearest to the several generations; and the most just proportion kept between the length of time, during which *Christ's* future advent was to be foretold and expected; and that in which his past appearance is to be acknowledged, and commemorated? We are hasty and short-sighted: our views limited to a few years; and we become impatient at seeing any of them pass over, before the whole plot is unraveled; and would have all brought on the stage at once: but it is far otherwise with the great God, to whom a thousand years are as one day; who has an immensely large progressive scheme, consisting of many underparts, and intermediate steps; all placed in their proper periods, and each rising upon the past; and the whole conducted in that regular, gentle manner, which is best suited to the moral government of a world of intelligent free agents, and most becoming a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness.

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

First, as it 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,

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

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

1. That age stood in the greatest need of a reformation in its *morals*; as it appears to have been the most wicked and abandoned of any upon record.

As to the *Jews*, we are told, that both their magistracy, and ministry were then corrupted to the last degree; their laws against the worst of villains never executed (*p*); their most sacred 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 wholly to interest, and the lowest kinds of traffick; the whole nation split into sects, and 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 determine the point before us, 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 up by an earthquake, or a deluge, or destroyed by fire from heaven, as *Sodom* was; since  
it

(*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.

\* 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 surprizing, since the reigning party among them were at that time *Sadducees*. *Joseph. Ant.* xviii. 2. add *Wall's* note on *Acts* v. 17.

it produced a much more impious generation (r). —But this remarkable wickedness of the *Jews* will be considered, in another respect, hereafter.—

Nor were the *Gentiles* less corrupt, or even capable of being more so; nor does it seem possible to conceive human nature to be sunk lower in all kinds of vice and sensuality, than they were at that time; (notwithstanding all their improvements in other respects) as may sufficiently appear from the description given of them by *St. Paul*\*, whose witness is true, and most abundantly confirmed by their own writers (y)

2. But

(†) *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 synagogue shall become stews; Galilee shall be destroyed, Galilee 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.*

\* *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 society 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 juvenis 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 Sueton. Tacit. Petr. Arb. passim.* ‘*Si Ethnicorum mores paulo ante Christum et paulo post intueamur, quæ fuit doctissima ætas, pessimos*

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 almost ceased of itself; the ceremonial part of their œconomy 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

fimos 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.* tum etiam triumvir. Principatus ipse *Aug.* et multo magis *Tib. Calig. Ner.* et *Dom.* ne ulterius pergam, 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 *Perf.* et *Juven.* Poetas satiricos, qui forte modum excessisse, in castigandis moribus sui ævi, possent. Itaque *prævae religionis effectus sistere non potuit philosophia, et paucorum contra torrentem nitentium conatus irriti fuere.* *Gler. Prol. Eccl. Hist. sect. 2. c. 1. 20. add Whitby, Necessity of Christ. Rev. c. 8. Messem. de rebus Christianis ante Constantinum, c. 1. sect. 21.*

(z) *Quare vastatum est forum Bethene tribus ante Jerusalem annis? Quia verba sui 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, quasi Lex duplex.* *Gemara Sanhedrin, 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. Torab. Perck. 1. Lightfoot, Op. Lat. Vol. I. p. 517.* Vide plura testimonia, *ibid.* Vol. II. p. 31. or *Eng. Harm. 236; 237. Comp. Buxtorf De abbrev. Heb. p. 226, &c. and Mod. Pt. of Univ. Hist. B. xx. c. 1. note D.* 'At these times then their school-learning

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

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

learning was come to the very height, *Hillel* and *Shamai* having promoted it to a pitch incomparably transcendent above what it had been before; and accordingly now began the titles of *Rabban* and *Rabbi* [Comp. *Matth.* xxiii. 7, 8.] *Rabban Simeon* the son of *Hillel* being the first president of the *Sanhedrim* that bare a title; for till these times, their great and learned men had been called only by their bare proper names. 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.' *Lightfoot*, *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 own reason, nor were the original discoverers of them; at least,

flourishing sects which professed to doubt of every thing: and accordingly, we find the great ornament of this sect, *Cicero*, declaring on some of the most important points, that it was impossible

I could not help concluding so from hence; as well as from their frequent citing of *tradition*, and some *sacred records* for them; and appealing to what they have *heard* upon such subjects. I might have set down numberless expressions, that confirm the observation, though I do 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 κρείττους ἡμῶν καὶ ἐγλυπτερωτέρω θεῶν οἰκνυτές ταυτὴν φημὴν παρέδωσαν. Id. Epist. vii. Πειθεσθαι δὲ ἔτις αἰεὶ χρῆ παλαιοῖς τε καὶ ἱεροῖς λόγοις, οἱ δὲ μνηστῆσιν ἡμῖν ἀθανάτου ψυχῆν εἶναι, δικαστὰς τε ἴσχειν, καὶ τινεὶν τὰς μεγίστας τιμωρίας, ὅταν τις ἀπαλλαχθῆ τῆς σωματός. *Gorgias*: Ταῦτ' ἐστίν, ὦ Καλλικλείης, αἱ ἐγὼ ἀκηκῶς πιστεύω ἀληθῆ εἶναι, καὶ ἐκ τῶν τῶν λόγων τοιοῦδε λογιζομαι συμβαίνειν. Ὁ θάνατος κ. τ. λ. *Phædo*: Παλαιὸς μὲν ἂν ἐστὶ τις ὁ λόγος οὗτος ἢ μεμνημένα, ὡς εἰσὶν ἐνθενδὲ ἀφικομεναὶ [αἱ ψυχαὶ] καὶ πάλιν γε δευρὸ ἀφικνυνται, καὶ γίνονται ἐκ τῶν τεθνεώτων. Id. Ibid. Ἄ δὲ καὶ λέγεται μέγιστα ὠφέλειον ἢ βλαπτεῖν τὸν τελευτήσαντα εὐθὺς ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς ἐκείσε πορείας. Λέγεται δὲ ἔτις, ὡς ἄρα τελευτήσαντα ἕκαστον ὁ ἕκαστε δαιμόνιον ὅσπερ ζῶντα εἰληχθεὶς ἔτις ἀγεῖν ἐπιχειρεῖ εἰς δὴ τινα τόπου, οἱ δὲ τὴν συλλεγεμένην διαδικασαμένους εἰς ἄδην πορευεσθαι κ. τ. λ. Ibid. Πολλοὶ δὲ εἰσὶ καὶ θαυμαστοὶ τῆς γῆς τοιοῦτοι, καὶ αὐτὴ ἔτε οἷα, ἔτε ὅση ὑπὸ τῶν περὶ γῆς εἰώθωτων λέγειν, ὡς ἐγὼ ὑποτινὸς πεπευσμαι. Καὶ ὁ Σιμμίας, πῶς ταῦτα, ἔφη, λέγεις, ὦ Σωκράτης; περὶ γὰρ τῆς γῆς καὶ αὐτὸς πολλὰ δὲ ἀκηκῶς κ. τ. λ. *Apol. Sacr*. Εἰ δὲ αὐτοῦ οἷον ἀποδημησῆαι ἐστὶν ὁ θάνατος ἐνθενδὲ εἰς ἄλλου τόπου, καὶ ἀληθῆ ἐστὶ τὰ λεγομενα κ. τ. λ. Ibid. Ταῦτε γὰρ ἄλλα εὐδαιμονοστέροι εἰσὶν οἱ ἐκεῖ τῶν ἐνθάδε καὶ ἤδη τοῦ λοιποῦ χρόνου ἀθανάτοι εἰσὶ, εἴπερ γε τὰ λεγομενα ἀληθῆ ἐστίν. *Phædrus*: Τότε τοὶ ἐνεκα χρῆ, πάντας τῆς λογῆς ἀνω καὶ κατω μεταστρέφοντα, ἐπισκοπεῖν εἰ τις πῆ ῥάων καὶ βραχυτέρα φαίνεται ἐπ' αὐτὴν ὁδὸς. Ἴνα μὴ ματην πολλὴν ἀπίη καὶ τραχείαν, ἔξου ὀλιγὴν τε καὶ λειαν. Ἀλλὰ εἰ τινα πῆ βοήθειαν ἔχεις, ἐπακηκῶς Λυσίη ἢ τίνος ἄλλης πειρω λέγειν ἀναμιμνησκομενος. Ibid. Ἀκοῆ γ' ἔχω λέγειν τῶν πρώτερων. Τοῦδ' ἀληθῆς αὐτοὶ ἴσασιν.



possible 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, 'tis much easier for him to say what is not his opinion, than what is (B). Nay, professing that in the grand article

σιν. Id. in *Τίμαιο*: Εγω Φρασω, παλαιον ἀκηκως λογον, ἔ νεκ ἀνδρος. Id. de Rep. 10. fin. Καὶ ἕτος, ὡ Γλαυκων, μυθος ἴσωθη και ἐκ ἀπώλετο. Καὶ ἡμας ἀν σωσειεν, ἀν πειθωμεθα αὐτω. 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 the late author of the *Life of Socrates* supposes, p. 61. [though he himself seems to be of the same mind with *Suidas* 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 elegant 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 Ægyptiaca*, L. iii. c. 13. sect. 4, 5, 8.

That the *Indians* took the same way of philosophizing with him upon these subjects is observed by *Strabo*, L. xv. p. 713. Ed. *Par.* 1620. παραπλεκσι δε και μυθος, ὡσπερ και Πλατων, περι τε ἀφθαρσιας ψυχης, και των καθ' ἑαυτα κρισεων, και αλλα τοιαυτα.

(†) *Harum sententiarum quæ verâ 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.*

(B) *De Nat. Deor. L. i. c. 32. Utinam tam facile vera invenire possem, quam falsa convincere. Id. apud Laert. L. ii. c. 3. Notwithstanding all the fine things which he had said about the immortality of the soul; in which point he seems to be most sanguine and positive of any; yet in his epistles (where he is the most likely to speak his real thoughts) we find him giving it all up, and having recourse only to the miserable comfort of insensibili-*

ticle of a first cause, if he had discovered the truth, he durst not have divulged it \*\*: and putting the supposition as matter of probability, that the Philosophers in general were Atheists ††. Men began

ty. L. v. Ep. ult. Ut hoc saltem in maximis malis boni consequamur, ut *wertem*, 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. Sed hæc consolatio levis est; illa gravior, qua te uti spero; ego certe utor. Nec enim dum ero, angar ulla re, cum omni vacem culpa; et si non ero, *sensu omnino carebo*. id. Ep. iv. Deinde quod mihi ad consolationem commune tecum est, si jam vocer ad exitum vitæ, non ab ea Repub. avellar, qua carendum esse doleam, præsertim *cum id sine ullo sensu futurum sit*. Id. ib. Sed cum plus in metuendo mali sit, quam in ipso illo quod timetur, desino; præsertim cum impendeat, 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 and illustrated by Bp. Warburton, Div. Leg. p. 387, &c. 2d Edit. And among the several apologies which the ingenious author of his life has offered for them, this probably will be esteemed the most natural; that even here, *in a melancholy hour, doubts and difficulties* may be supposed to have got the ascendancy over Cicero, Vol. II. p. 561. 4to. In truth, he 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 mehercule, et quidem sæpius; sed nescio quomodo, dum lego, assentior: cum posui librum, et mecum ipse de immortalitate animorum cœpi cogitare, assensio omnis illa elabatur. That he had great doubts of a *providence*, is fully shewn by the learned author of *Ep. ad C. Middleton*, p. 74. Note (b). That he both recommended *suicide* as the best refuge in affliction, and had frequent thoughts of putting it in practice, is no less clearly proved by the same judicious writer, p. 76, 77, 78. And though he himself declares, upon occasion, that he was with difficulty withheld from it, by the advice of *Atticus*, and the intreaty of his friends: *ibid.* yet it appears too plainly, that this was not owing at last, either to the strength of his judgement, or his resolution; to any prudential considerations respecting the state, himself, or his relations: so much as to the same notorious want of  
courage,

began then to be sensible, that human reason was of itself a very insufficient director; 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 ridiculous, and given over to poets and painters, as the same author informs us ‡. Another very learned writer of the same time

courage, which disabled him from bearing his misfortunes decently, and which must equally deter him from attempting to end them together with his life. But to do him justice, we must own that he had many good qualities, and that at last he died like a man.

\*\* Nihil autem gigni posse sine causis. Atque illum quidem quasi parentem hujus Universitatis invenire difficile: et cum jam inveneris, indicare in vulgus nefas. De Univerf. 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. Laët. 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's Boyle's 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.*

‡ *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 illum 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.* From hence it seems to follow, that *though such absurdities as these above, continued in the*

time 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*, or supreme gods, among them ‡; in short, that they had multiplied deities to such a degree, and modelled their worship in such a manner, that he, and others of the wiser sort, were ashamed of them §: not to mention that the prevalence of the *Epicurean* philosophy had rendered both, in a great measure, insignificant ||. So great want had they of a thorough reformation in matters of *religion*.

Secondly, That age was also the fittest to receive such a benefit, as well as to propagate it in the world. At the same time that the *Jewish* œconomy waxed old, and was ready to vanish away, it had served to build up a better house; had raised their minds above itself, and fitted them for a more perfect institution; and when the eye of reason in the Gentile world, had most of all 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 rejoice in a greater light.

the worship of the Heathen world, to this very age; yet we need not, nor fairly can, allow that they wanted such general knowledge, as might have led them to discern these absurdities in their general practice. *Winder*, Hist. of Kn. Vol. II. p. 338.

\* *Varro* ap. *Aug.* de Civ. D. L. xix. c. i.

† *Aug.* de Cecil. Deif. 4, 5, 6. *Jurieu*, Crit. Hist. Vol. II. p. 13.

‡ *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 Christianis ante Constantinum, L. i. c. i. sect. 25.

light. The many fine lectures which had been at several times delivered to the *Jews*, by those *tutors* and *governors* under whom God had placed them; by *Moses*, *Joshua*, *Samuel*, *David*, *Solomon*, and the subsequent *prophets*; though all of them in fact found insufficient to direct their conduct; and most of them then, to a great degree, defeated and perverted, 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 more *synagogues*, after the *Babylonish* captivity\*, they were more frequently read and inculcated; and under their persecutions, in the time of the *Maccabees*, more thoroughly studied, and regarded; and lastly, by their numerous schools, and academies, which 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;

\* Vid. *Buddei* Hist. Eccl. V. T. Vol. II. pag. 976. *Vitringa*, de Synag. L. i. Partii. 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 ever after, when they had neither prophets nor miracles among them. Add *Prid.* Vol. I. p. 389. 8th. Ed. That they had *synagogues* before the captivity, see *Lightfoot*, Harm. p. 609, &c. and *Le Clerc* on Pf. lxxiv. 8.

† 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. *Lightfoot*, 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. *Univerf. Hist.* B. ii. c. 1. p. 26. Note [Q].

mentioned; when they were once freely pointed out to them, and opposed: so that notwithstanding the prevailing iniquity, which made these, in that respect the worst of times, their minds had yet been so far cultivated, as to be able to receive the promised seed; at least much more so, than they had been at any time assignable before\*.

The same thing had been done to the heathen, in a good measure, and from the same source, by their great lawgivers, and philosophers; who got most of their best notions from travelling into *Egypt*, *Chaldæa*, 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 disci-  
ple.

\* '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.

† *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.* Obf. iii. 6. Add *Young*, Diff. Vol. I. c. ult. and *Leland*, Advantage, &c. Vol. I. Part i. c. 19. p. 439. note q.

‡ *Hyde*, Rel. V. P. c. 24. p. 314.

|| *Prid. Con.* Vol. I. p. 331. *Hyde*, Rel. Veter. *Perf.* 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. *Pri-  
deaux* and *Moyse* agree in supposing that there must have been

ple\*. The same end was pursued by *Socrates*, and his disciples †; who prepared the way for a more perfect reformation, by labouring to bring men to the knowledge of one supreme God, and the study of natural religion; by teaching them *humility*, and giving them hopes of an instructor from heaven; as was observed above. The same thing was doing 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 nations, as observed likewise; by the communication of their sacred books; which had 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.

\* *Prid.* Vol. I. p. 213. *Univerf. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 236. note Z, &c. *Witsius* supra.

† 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 plane doctrinam, qua cultus omnis ille superstitiosus Ethnicorum sublatus est, Deus per Christum in terras demisit, utilem operam veritatis 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. *Rev. Ex. with Candour*, Vol. III. c. 3.

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

been long ago translated into the most common language, and many copies of which were in their hands, and ready to be examined \*: when at the same time they were both qualified, and disposed to examine them, by the increase of general learning, and philosophy; which must help greatly to improve and polish them, notwithstanding all its imperfections abovementioned; the very discovery of which imperfections, was likewise no inconsiderable argument of its improvement. They had time to digest the precepts, and instructions of their own sages, as well as become acquainted with the history of the *Jews*. Superstition of all kinds gradually wore off, and arts and sciences succeeded; which naturally excite, and enliven the genius of any people; and open a free communication with others; and these were then in great perfection; as is too notorious to need particular proof. Nor can what is here said, be thought to be at all inconsistent with that remarkable degeneracy, and corruption mentioned under the former head; if we reflect how often, in common cases, the same persons who, as to abilities and genius, are the most capable of apprehending and applying any instruction, and, in that sense, best disposed to receive it; are yet, in another sense, *i. e.* in point of ingenuity, and inclination, as little disposed to admit some branches of it; (or who in understanding may be arrived at very great perfection, when their morals are at a crisis in the other extreme;) on which account they want it still the more; and such a juncture may be a very

\* Vid. *Walton*, Apparat. B. Polyglott. sect. 9. Part iii. or *Allix*, B. ii. c. 25. or *Univ. Hist.* Vol. IV. B. ii. c. 1. p. 40.



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 well inclined to attend to something of that kind, as able in a good measure to perceive, and reap the benefit of it, when it should be offered; their curiosity was raised, and their capacity suited to any religious enquiries: 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 men's minds were enlarged, together with their commerce.

And thus all things conspired to bring the world 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. All this while the *Roman empire* had been growing up to that vast extent, which it reached under *Augustus*; and had united the several governments under one head; and settled itself in a general tranquility: 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 dispatched from thence †. *Judea*, the place where the *sun*  
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\* I leave it to the judgement 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 Mr. *Whiston*, p. 56.

† The institution of *posts* among the *Romans* is generally attributed to *Augustus*; though we read of them long before, on  
some

of righteousness was to arise, had just 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*: and by this means the fame of an extraordinary teacher of a new religion would soon be published, over all the civilized parts of the world; and its professors be much better enabled to advance and propagate it, than could have been expected under any other constitution of the world before that time ‡: If true, it must by these means soon gain ground, and appear to be so; if false, as soon be 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, in comparison of those before, a learned, curious, and inquisitive age, as we have seen; and therefore like to be more sceptical, and cautious in things of this nature; not so easy to be imposed upon, or apt to run into every religious

some occasions among the *Persians*. *Herodot.* viii. 98. *Xen. Cyr.* Lib. viii. *Esther* iii. 13. and viii. 10. vid. *Briffon.* de R. P. p. 147.

\* 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 Mr. *Locke* by *Grævius* ad *Sueton. Cæs.* sect. 20. not. p. 35. *Amst.* 1697. which, if genuine, is very remarkable.

‡ To which we may add the observation of Mr. *Weston*, 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 case in fact. *Enquiry 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. *Mosheim.* de Reb. Christ. p. 976, &c.

ous project. There were men every where ready to confute and 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 a mixture of each. At that time the many sects and factions in the world had whetted themselves by contention, and were perpetual spies upon each other: so that no considerably new religion could gain ground among them, without being thoroughly sifted by the adverse parties. The *Pbarisees* and *Sadducees*, the *Stoics* and *Epicureans*, were subtle and perverse disputers; and all of them eager enough to oppose the *Christians*. The world had then also sufficient knowledge of the powers of nature, to be able to judge of *miracles*; and distinguish them from any uncommon appearance, or effect of art (c). *Prophecy* had been for  
some

(c) It is not my design here 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 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 fully informed about them, 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 began then to be seen through, and which had just brought the

some time withdrawn from the *Jews*; which must make them at first more shy, and suspicious of any new pretence to inspiration \*. *Oracles* began

whole system into disrepute; might induce them to view all others in the same light, and not think any of them worth a serious examination. Beside the common prejudices which opposed all the gospel evidences in conjunction, each of these reasons, no doubt, had its weight in over-balancing this powerful 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 aukward imitations;) but rather on the contrary, were a confirmation of their truth; [see *Considerations*, p. 76, 77.] so they were far from having any ground sufficient to reject or disregard 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 wonders* might easily produce a very strong prejudice against all other wondrous things, how differently soever circumstanced; and hinder them from 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 a due 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, *Cobb* lays hold of this objection, though he has it but by hearsay. *Posth. 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*, *Pref. &c.* to *Let. from Rome*, p. 86, &c.

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

\* We may add, that the ceasing of this, as well as of *miracles*, for a time, would likewise be a means of raising greater surprise

began to cease among the *Gentiles*, by being despised, and generally 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 reason and philosophy afforded them, as was observed above; yet from the many false lights, which had been already held forth, and which had only served to mislead and bewilder them, they rather began to despair of finding any true one. Tired out with wandering through the mazes of error and uncertainty, the wisest of them gave up all such pretended guides; and looked upon the whole story of revelation as a cheat. Thus men were sufficiently guarded against any new imposition, though never so well supported by wit, policy, or learning. Nor would they, surely, be less averse to one that came without all these: — to one appearing in such a form, and with such recommendations, as the *Christian* scheme; — so destitute of aid from human wisdom,

surprise among the *Jews* upon the revival of both; and of procuring more attention, and regard to the person, who should appear really to have the gift of them again. ‘Gifts granted to the disciples of our Saviour, which none had been partakers of since the time of *Malachi*; God having so 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 that power’s ceasing; see *Clagett* on *Joh* v. 4. Comp. *Whitby*, *ibid*.

† *Dubium non est quin hæc disciplina et ars Augurum evanuerit jam et vetustate et negligentia. Cic. de Leg. L. ii. c. 13.*

dom, and subtilty; — so seemingly below what they had hitherto been entertained with; — stripped of all that pomp and ornament, which attended the *Jewish* institution; — that art and eloquence, which adorned each system of philosophy; — consisting of a few plain rules of life; and these so strictly pure, and perfect, as equally to strike at the corrupt *Scribe*, and haughty *philosopher*: and therefore such as must needs be to the one, a *stumbling block*, and to the other, *foolishness*; — delivered for the most part occasionally, without any set method; in the most simple, unaffected manner; — by mean, obscure persons; — in full opposition to all the reigning passions, prejudices, and interests of the learned and great\*: under all these, and the like disadvantages, which are well known to have attended the *Christian* religion in its infancy; if at such a time, and in such

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

This observation is a very just one, and better founded than the proposition which this learned and judicious writer makes the title of his whole discourse, *viz.* That the *abounding of iniquity is the cause of its abounding more*; which I apprehend is as far from being universally true *in fact*, as it is from being well supported in the said Discourse.

circumstances, it was able to support itself, and make its way in the world; and still be all an imposition, both upon the senses, and the reason of mankind; in what a strange situation must mankind have been, in both of these respects! How different from what they have ever been before, or since! How will the men who are so apt to stumble, and strain at each little difficulty, which attends the present scheme, in common with all others; be able to get over this great, unparallel'd one, of such an imposition [were it one indeed] prevailing so far, and in such a manner as this did\*? Or rather, have they not from hence some reason to allow of its pretensions? Some room to admire with us, how sure must its foundation be! How strong the outward proofs of its divine authority! How great its inward force and efficacy! This to a fair enquirer, who will weigh the case with any tolerable impartiality, should now afford the same conviction that it did of old; and shew it to be nothing less than the *power of God, and the wisdom of God*. Each of these obstacles to its reception, gives the strongest attestation to it, when once approved of, and embraced; and all together must, when duly attended to, gain it the highest esteem; and  
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\* If it be a greater difficulty to assign any other adequate cause of this effect, beside the reality of that event; or if the other supposition be (as a certain author terms it) *more miraculous* than that event; then, by the confession of Scepticism itself, it should *command our belief or opinion*. And that this is the case here, I apprehend we may maintain, till some new principles in human nature be discovered, from which such an appearance can be solved with greater probability than has been hitherto done. See *Philos. Essays concerning Hum. Und. by D. Hume, sect. 10.*

be a standing evidence, both of its truth and excellence; a sufficient answer to all suspicions that can be raised, from the prevalence of any fable, or imposture in any other age; from what may have been introduced in a manner directly contrary to this; by other kinds of persons; and in very different times; by policy, or persecution; in days of bigotry, blindness, and superstition.

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

Lastly, this age was the best qualified to hand it down to posterity. As it was an inquisitive, and discerning one, so it was no less lettered, and  
historical.

† *Voltaire's Letters*, L. vii. To the same purpose are some parts in the life of *Homer*, 1st Ed. and several passages in *Boyle's Dict.* and the *Characteristicks*.



historical. The *Augustan* age is remarkable to this day for the number of its writers. There is none better known; scarcely any, of which so full and particular accounts are given. The *Roman* empire had been just settled; and the minds of its chief members 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 lately reformed, and adjusted; exact reviews were taken of the most distant provinces; the number, names, employments, quality, estates, of their inhabitants, registred (c); and all remarkable acts and occurrences, transmitted to *Rome*, the capital of the world. In such a state of affairs, no great event could lie concealed, or be long called in question: At such a time therefore, was it not highly proper to introduce this new, surprising scene upon the stage of the world; whereby its æra must be fixed beyond all 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 relating to him could be well depended on. It was by no means fit, that a thing of this consequence should be done in a corner, and left to vulgar report, and uncertain tradition; to be soon dropt again; or blended, and disguised with fiction, and romance: this therefore commenced in an age of the world, when the copiousness and certainty of its history served, both to spread it more uni-

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(c) See *Lardner's Credibility*, B. ii. c. 1. sect. 2.

verfally, and preserve it more fecurely : *when many took in hand to fet forth a declaration of thofe things, which were moft furely believed among them, for the ufe of both Jews and Gentiles* (†); whereby we have more ample and authentic memoirs of church hiftory, than could ever have been expected before that period \* ; and whereby the time when, the place where, and perfons under whom, the moft material occurrences happened, were afcertained by writers of different nations and profefions ; by *Romans, Jews, and Greeks.*

Thefe feveral circumftances confpire to bring the miffion of *Chrift* very near the time in which he came. There is one more, which feems to fix it precifely to that ; at leaft will fhew, that it could not be fooner, confiftently with the common courfe of providence, and moral government of the world ; admitting likewise the particular fcheme already fpecified, *viz.* of his defcending from the *Jews* ; I mean, the circumftance of their being then in fubjection to the *Roman* government, fo far as to have the power of life and death, in moft cafes, taken from them (D).

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(†) See Dr. *Owen's* Observations on the Gofpels, *paſſim.*

\* This is to be underftood with an exception to the thirty years between *Nero* and *Trajan* ; to which time all the common complaint of want of ecclefiastical writers ought, I think, to be limited. The caufe of this is affigned by *Vitringa*, *Obf. Sacr. Lib. iv. c. 7. ſect. 9. p. 904, &c.* Why we have no larger accounts of the *Apoftles*, fee *Hartley*, *Obf. on Man, Vol. II. p. 121.*

(D) *John* xviii. 31. How far this was fo, fee *Lardner*, *Cred. B. i. c. 2. ſect. 5. Part vii. p. 49, &c. 2 Edit.* The particular inftance 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 feem fufficient for that purpoſe ; but rather looks like an *aét* of the *zealots*, though his trial was begun regularly ; [fee *Baſnage,*

By all that we know of that generation, we have reason to believe, that if they had been at liberty, they would certainly have cut him off, as soon as ever he appeared to correct their gross errors, and reprove their many abuses in religion; to disappoint all their fond hopes of temporal grandeur, wealth, and power; and humble their spiritual pride, by reducing them to a level with all such as feared God, of every nation under heaven. And accordingly, when they saw he was not a *Messiah* for their purpose \*, we find them immediately

*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 then interrupted, to prevent the like outrages. This point seems to be pretty exactly stated in *Millar's* Ch. Hist. c. 7. p. 536. Comp. *Basnage*, *ibid.* sect. 7. and *Whitby* on *John* xviii. 31. One would think, their own judgement of the thing might be 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* [*Boyle's* Lect. c. 6.] has made it very probable, that the Jewish magistrates had often, even in those times, the power of inflicting capital punishments allowed them; but yet he grants, that they were often prevented by the Roman governours; [ib. p. 225.] 'tis plain, their state was about that time in great confusion; and it appears, that they durst not exert such a power, upon the occasion above-mentioned; nor, in their then circumstances, could at last have compassed our Saviour's death in any regular, judicial way, without application to a Roman governour; which comes to pretty near the same thing, with respect to the main part of the present argument. Comp. *Doddr.* Vol. III. add. not. p. 20.

\* How soon their rulers perceived this, and what a different conduct it produced at first in them, and that of the common people, toward him, see *Lardner's* Cred. Vol. I. p. 288, &c. *Benson's* Life of Christ, c. 8. sect. 5. p. 289. The disappointment  
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diately resolved to seize, and dispatch him; as they would undoubtedly have done, if they had had sufficient power: but being, in a great measure, deprived of it, they were obliged to have recourse to stratagem; continually laying wait for something to accuse him of to the *Romans*; tempting him, and trying all methods to draw him into any act, which might be construed treason, or disaffection to their government: on which account also we find him behaving with so much caution, and reserve before them; keeping in private, as much as was possible, and consistent with the end for which he came \*, charging his disciples not to make him known †; moving from place to place in order to avoid tumults ‡; preventing his being proclaimed the *Messiah* ||; and declining any direct answer, when quest-

of the latter also, on their seeing him given up to the greatest sufferings, may sufficiently account for that remarkable change of their behaviour towards him at last, as is explained by *Farmer*. Enquiry into Christ's Temptation in the wilderness, p. 98.

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

† *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 suspensionem vitari; parati enim erant primores Judæorum Christum adcusare, apud procuratorem Cæsaris, qui hujusmodi delationibus accipiendis jam nimium propensus erat. Vide historiam administrationis Pilati apud Josephum. Cleric. in *Matt.* viii. 18. Comp. infra p.

|| *Mark* iii. 12. *Luke* iv. 41.

questioned about it \*; till he had finished the work of his ministry; and fulfilled every thing in the Scriptures concerning him (E). No former age of the *Jews* probably was wicked enough, to have withstood so many evident proofs of his being the true *Messiah*; to have rejected him, and been

\* *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* observations 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 observation made upon these passages, by the author of *Christianity not founded on argument*; who from thence infers, that our Lord could have no such meaning as to convince by his miraculous works, p. 48. no such intention as to prove his own truth, and character, by these instances of his power, ib. in full contradiction to those many other passages, where he expressly appeals to the same works, as direct proofs of his divine commission, *Matt.* xi. 4, 5, 21. *Joh.* v. 36. x. 25, 38. xiv. 11. xv. 24, &c. See *Randolph's* Answ. p. 169, 170, &c.

The same is likewise a reply to this author's objection against the truth of christianity, from *Christ's* not opening his commission before the *Jewish* rulers, [ibid. p. 48, &c.] 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* governours, which stuck so much with *Woolston*; [*Exalt Fitness*. Pref. &c.] to which we may add, that his addressing himself in form at any time to either of these, must in all probability have been turned to a great objection against the truth of his mission in after ages, 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 *Dr. Clagett* in the case of his *Resurrection*. *Posth. Sermons*, Vol. I. serm. 1. See also *Benson*, ib. p. 216, &c. So that had the whole been conducted in a way different from what it was, the case would, as far as now appears, have been no better for those times in which it was transacted; and much worse for all future ones.

been his *betrayers*, and *murderers*; and thereby to have accomplished the prophecies, and executed the good purpose of God, in sending his Son to die for all the world: this generation was so thoroughly such \*, as to have done it with too much fury, and precipitancy; unless restrained by a superior power: which makes their subjection to the *Roman* government, in this respect also, to constitute the FULNESS OF TIME; and affords a circumstance particularly requisite, and suitable to the coming of *Christ*.

And though this very remarkable wickedness of the *Jews*, in some measure, counterbalanced all their other qualifications for attending to the *Christ* when he came; and debarred the generality of them from the benefits of his coming; yet it concurred equally to carry on the same design of providence, for the common good of the world: even the vice, and folly of them who were led to reject him, contributed to the advantage and improvement of those who had so much virtue and wisdom left, as to receive him; which great numbers of them did †, notwithstanding the vile policy of their rulers: and this soon brought on that very thing which they were seeking to avoid by it (‡), the dissolution of their state; it having now fully answered the ends it was designed for, as a body politic, gave way to that universal system of religion which was to comport with each political establishment throughout the world; and its remains served to much better purposes, in bearing every where such evident  
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\* Vid. *Lightfoot*, Op. Lat. 317, 325, &c.

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

(‡) *Jah.* xi. 48.

marks of the divine displeasure, as could not but be taken notice of, together with the causes of their punishment (†). And thus did the *fall of Israel* become *the riches of the world*, and rise of a new, greater dispensation; communicated to all nations, and by this means most effectually 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 when they are taken together, make it appear to be the *fulness of the time*, and fittest for such a dispensation.

I have omitted some topics commonly made use of in this argument, such as that of an *universal peace* at that time; and the great *expectation* of the *Messiah*, among the *Jews*; since the one appears to be false\*, at least 'twas foreign to his

(†) '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.' *Pascal's Thoughts*, p. 121. *Comp. id. p. 89, 90.* 'Istos inimicos meos ipsos qui me occiderunt noli tu occidere. Maneat genus *Judaeorum*; certe victa est a *Romanis*; certe deleta civitas eorum; non admittuntur ad civitatem suam *Judaei*, et tamen *Judaei* sunt. — Manent cum signo: nec sic victi sunt ut a victoribus absorberentur. Non sine causa. Per omnes gentes dispersi sunt *Judaei* 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 *Judaeorum* 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 g. p.*

\* *Masson's Jani Templum referatum*, with *Buddens* on the same subject; or *Basnage, Hist. Polit. Eccl. Vol. I. p. 114.* or *Vitringa in Is. ii. 4. p. 72.*

That the *Jews* had never less peace among themselves than  
at

his birth \*; any otherwise than as a good means for conveying the tidings of it more easily, and safely through the world; (in which sense it was included under the settlement of the *Roman* empire; but that is not the sense in which it is usually insisted on :) the other though true †, yet was not gratified in the manner in which they did then expect him, but a quite different one; which therefore, so far as it was a wrong one, though it helped to raise their attention to JESUS CHRIST at first, yet might be said to tend as much afterwards to deaden and disappoint it. We may add, that though the *Jews* had sufficient ground for expecting such a person, from their prophetic writings; and this expectation of theirs in general be a good argument against them now, to prove in what sense their forefathers did interpret some of these writings; yet was this expectation in itself (more especially perverted as it then was) so far from being any particular qualification of the time, at least any circumstance proper to confirm the truth and credibility of his mission; that it might as well be supposed to have a contrary effect, in giving a handle to impostors; as we find it actually did to two *Theudas*es, to *Simeon Athronges*, *Judas of Galilee*, *Simon Magus*, *Dositheus* ‡; and afterwards *Barcochebas*, and many others ||.

Nor

at that time, may be seen in *Josephus*, *Philo*, or *Univ. Hist.* Vol. IV. c. 11. p. 196, &c.

\* See *Woolston's Exact Fines*, &c. p. 91.

† How far it was so, together with some of the causes and the consequences of it, may be seen in *Lightfoot*, Vol. I. p. 751, 752, 209, 210, 337.

‡ Vid. *Origen contra Cels.* L. i. & vi. et *Calmet. Dict.*

|| Vid. *Joseph.* B. J. L. ii. c. 2. &c. A List of them may be seen in *Kidder's Dem.* Part iii. p. 167, &c. fol. or *Wagenfeil's* *Confutation*



Nor have I urged the *general notion* which prevailed over most of the *world*, of some *great prince* that then was to appear; since this (were it never so consistent with *Christ's* real character) can only prove that there were some prophecies, which might be so interpreted as to give occasion to that rumour \*; and the objection returns, with equal force, against its being prefixed to that time by any prophecy: the difficulty is still the same, Why had it not a more early date in prophecy, which might have raised a proportionably more early expectation? — But this has been already accounted for.

Upon the whole; we may observe, that from the beginning of the world, mankind have always had sufficient means of being instructed in religion; and that the several dispensations have all along been suited to their respective circumstances, and capacities, so far as can be learnt from those very brief accounts that are left us of their history; from which 'tis also probable, that if we had more full ones, we should see this more clearly.

In

futation of R. *Lipman*, Carm. Memor. (*Tela ignea satanæ*, p. 233, &c.) See also Dr. *Fortin's* Remarks on Eccl. Hist. Vol. III. p. 331.—That there would not have been so many false Messiahs, about that time more particularly, unless a true one had been promised, and on that account expected, see Bp. *Newton* on Prophecies, Vol. II. p. 266, &c.

\* As to the *Sibylline oracles* so much divulged about this time, many of which seem to have been extracted from the *Jewish* prophecies concerning the *Messiah's* coming, and might serve to turn the attention of the world that way, the reader may consult *Prid. Con.* Vol. III. P. ii. B. ix. sect. 9. p. 633, &c. 8th Ed. *Le Clerc* on Is. xi. 6. pronounces the whole collection of them an imposture. Id. Eccl. Hist. p. 599, &c. Comp. *Fortin*, Rem. on E. H. p. 283. &c. *Cave*, Hist. L. p. 34. or *Fabric. Cod. Apocr.* p. 300.

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

\* See Part iii.

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

(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 inventor of letters. See also Gen. Dict. Vol. VI. p. 417. *G. I. Vossius* Aristarch. 1. 9. and an *Essay upon Literature*, proving, that the two tables written by the finger of God in Mount Sinai, was the first writing in the world. Lond. 1726. From which author it appears, how much letters must have contributed to prevent the increase of idolatry; at least the advancing men into the number of Gods; by preserving a more particular account of all their actions. Comp. *Univerf. Hist.* p. 720. *N. T. Guffet* 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 their symbols, and take off their inclination to symbolical idolatry; as it was afterwards to communicate the art of *printing*, in order

ed to afford more clear and ample ones; he singles out a person particularly eminent for faith and obedience; takes him under his immediate protection, by way of positive covenant; communicates himself expressly to him, and makes him a means of discovering that knowledge to other nations; and reforming the religion of every country into which he was sent. The same favours are continued to some of his posterity, and with the same design; they are removed to and fro; and every where miraculously preserved, blessed, 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

to correct a no less gross idolatry in the *Christian* world, by transmitting all useful knowledge much more easily, and universally, than could have ever been done before by writing, *ib* p. 12. 'Moses, who was skilled in all 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.' Dr. *Pococke's* Description of the East, Vol. I. p. 228. 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. Knowl. Vol. II. To this may be added a late 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 write, at the time of giving the law from *Mount Sinai*, diverted themselves with practising on these mountains, during their forty years abode in the wilderness, p. 34. note (a). Comp. p. 54, &c. et e contr. *Hottinger* in *Wagenseil*, p. 432. Vid. etiam *E. Bernardi Tabulam Orbis eruditi Literaturæ a characterẽ Samaritico deductæ*, &c. auctam a *C. Morton*, 1759. Add *Kennicott*, Dissert. ii. p. 147, &c.

admit of; containing a body of precepts opposite, in most parts, to the superstitious and idolatrous practices of the people round them: they are intrusted with a history of the original state of the world, and all past dispensations of religion in it; together with predictions of the future; more especially of that great one, under the *Messiah*, who was to descend from them; and whom they were taught to expect by numberless preparatory types\*, and figures; all tending to point him out more fully to them; and pave the way for his reception. They become a mighty nation; are distinguished by extraordinary deliverances, successes, and victories under their several governours: the fame of them, and of their God †, spreads far and wide. To keep them

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

But is not this somewhat preposterous, 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. Glaff. Phil. Sacr. L. ii. Pr. i. Tr. 2. sect. 4. et Salden. 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’s excellent Dissert. Introd. to Suppl. Paraphr. p. 35, &c.*

† ‘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 terri-

them duly attached to his worship, he raises up a succession of prophets, who cease not to warn, exhort, and urge them to their duty; to reprove and correct them for their repeated breaches of it; to remind them of their dependance on that God, who had already done so great things for them; and to assure them of still greater, upon their obedience; as also to threaten them with the severest punishments, on their defection: which always came to pass accordingly; and were dispensed in so very visible, and exemplary a manner; as could not but strike surprize, and terror into all the nations round them; and plainly enough discovered him to be, not only a God of the *Jews*, but the supreme Governour of the world; and Lord of Heaven and Earth; which was the principal end of all; and to effect which, their prophets are often sent to 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 car-

tory, 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 significant 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.*

carrying on ; and which his own people, though they perversely oppose, and frequently endeavour to cross it, are yet obliged to execute, whether they will or no ; and equally promote it by their successes, and their sufferings. They were to be like so much leaven, in the mass of mankind ; and when they were once thoroughly prepared themselves, he disperses them among all nations, to diffuse the same spirit, and contribute to the improvement, and reformation of others : and 'tis observable, that the same long captivity, which cured most of them of their great proneness to idolatry, 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 firmly impressed upon their hearts (G).

When

(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.] and legislators ; 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. 124.] And 'tis well known, that at the end of this captivity, the greatest part of them, and those of the greatest eminence, staid behind, and settled in *Chaldea*, *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 'tis probable, that some of their descendants 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 *Gentous* (a people in the *East*, who from their customs and other circumstances,

are

When at length the *Jews* had attained to some tolerable sense of religion, and were so well attached to it, and confirmed in their hopes of the *Messiah*, as to be fit to communicate the same to the Gentiles; to whom they were by this time sufficiently known; and these also, by what they had heard of the *Jewish* prophets, and seen of their sacred books, together with their own improvements in philosophy, were able to receive, and relish a more perfect institution; when both *Jew* and *Gentile*, had been prepared to expect a new revelation; when they began to want it the most; and were most sensible of their wants; and therefore like to be the most disposed to accept, and apply the proper remedy: and when the state of the world was such, as most of all favoured the communication; and helped to secure the continuance of it: when the dark, fabulous ages were well over; and succeeded by one remarkably learned and historical: when arts, and sciences, and commerce, had extended themselves, together

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 *Chillebrum*, near *Porto Novo*, on the coast of *Coromandel*, which they call *Zuliman's* temple, which they resort to with the same devotion as the *Jews* formerly did to that at *Jerusalem*; and that it is divided into courts, in the same manner as *Pere Lamy's* is, and is built much after the same plan which is there given.' 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 to 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.

ther with the *Roman* empire, and language, over most parts of the world; and thereby opened a way for any new discovery, and enabled mankind, in general, with ease and expedition to search into, and thoroughly examine it: and more particularly, when that part of the world which was to be the scene of all this, had just been reduced to a *Roman* province, and thereby exact accounts were taken of its state and inhabitants; so that the person who was to work this great reformation in religion there, could not 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 full execution of his ministry: in this period of the world *Christ* came;—nor could he, as far as we can see, have come so opportunely at any other.

Whoever attentively considers these several circumstances, though he may not perhaps allow every one of them; yet he will, I believe, find something so remarkable in many; especially in that extraordinary coincidence of so many; as may induce him to think, that there might be very good reason for deferring this dispensation to so late a period. And though I am very far from imagining this to be the whole of the case, or supposing that we can discover all the reasons of it; yet I trust, so many have been already pointed out, as may serve to justify the divine conduct in this respect: at least, I hope, we may be allowed to say, that there is something in them.

And thus it appears that God has all along acted equally for the good of mankind, in matters of religion; though in very different manners,



ners, 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 that the state of knowledge, and perfection in the world, has hitherto been *increasing*.

The very same method might be shewn to be continued under *Christianity* itself; if it were not too much beyond the subject of this discourse. It was in its *infancy* in *Christ's* time; who communicated the things of it to his disciples, by little and little, as they were able to bear them \*; beginning with the plainest, and most obvious; laying the foundation, and first principles of the doctrine, during his ministry, and conversation with them after his resurrection †; 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 nature of his kingdom. They could not conceive that he was to suffer, and die for the whole world ||; they expected nothing but a temporal prince §; and thought that his kingdom

was

\* *Mark* iv. 33. *Job*. 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 life time, viz. his death, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation.' *Watts's Harmony* of all the Religions which God ever prescribed, c. 10.

† *Acts* i. 3. *Luke* xxiv. 27, 44.

‡ As to the *Faet*, see Bp. *Gibson's* 3<sup>d</sup> 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.

§ *Matth.* xx. 21, &c.

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 †: the disciples with him are astonished, that on *them* also was poured out the gift of the *Holy Ghost* ‡; and others of the brethren contend with him about it ||; and afterwards prevail on him to dissemble it §. Many yet insisted on the point of *circumcision* (†); and most of them concluded that *christianity*, and the world itself, would speedily come to an end \*\*.

And though a much larger and more comprehensive view of the whole scheme was given by *Christ* himself, after his ascension, to St. *Paul* ††; that chosen vessel; 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

\* *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.

‡ *Acts* x. 45.

|| *Acts* xi. 2.

§ *Gal.* ii. 11, 13.

(†) *Acts* xv. 1, 5.

\*\* See *Burnet*, de Stat. Mort. et Ref. c. 7. p. 145, &c. *Clarke*, Sermon. 21. on *Job*. xxi. 22.

†† *Gal.* i. 16, &c. See Misc. Sac. Eff. ii. p. 40, &c. and *Locke's* Synopf. to Comm. on *Ephes*.

Concerning the propriety of chusing this apostle at that 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 *Ld. Bolingbroke*, see *Locke* on *Rom.* xvi. 25. with *Whitby* on *Gal.* i. 7.

‡‡ 1 *Cor.* xv. 10.

ty about this last point \*, to which the  $\Delta\upsilon\sigma\nu\omicron\eta\lambda\alpha$  in several of his writings, 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

\* *Comp. Rem.* 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 *Theff.* iv. 15, 16, 17. with *Grotius*, and *Wall's* note on the last place. Add *Grat.* Append. ad Comm. de Antichr. Op. Tom. IV. p. 475. *Lowth* on Inspir. p. 225. 2d Ed. or *Benson's* Append. to Paraphr. on 1 *Tim.* v. 23, &c. *Whiston* on *Rev.* Cor. 2. [contr. *Whitby*, 2d. Disc. after 2 *Ep. Theff.* and the note below, p. .] Since, as our Saviour has declared, *of that day and that hour knoweth no man*, we have the less reason to be surpris'd, if its coming be spoke of indistinctly, and on some occasions represented in general terms as being near at hand to all.

But if this notion seems too harsh, the thing may be solv'd 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, seem to 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 *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.

‡ See *Edwards's* 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. But by this Emperor's treatment of the *Jews*, their whole constitution civil and ecclesiastical was effectually dissolved. See note Q. p. .

not yet to have any distinct knowledge of the general freedom from the ceremonial law \* : St. Paul is forced to conceal his preaching to *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 the 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 *profelytes*, by a public decree \*\*, which has been generally insisted on for many ages, after the ends and uses of it ceased.

The many miracles, and extraordinary *gifts* of the Spirit, which attended the church at that time, were no less eminent signs of its weakness ; (which stood in need of all these interpositions, as

\* *Acts* xxi. 26. See *Benson*, Hist. of first planting Christianity, Vol. II. p. 209. where the reasons of this gradual discovery are assigned. Add his Essay concerning the abolishing of the ceremonial law annexed to the paraphrase on *Titus*. Or *Watts'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. 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.

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

as one well observes \*) than the frequent appearance of *Angels* was, under the former administrations: Whereas afterwards, in its more confirmed and settled state, these *helps* † became unnecessary; the natural and ordinary evidence, the regular and stated methods of instruction, being abundantly sufficient. The same observation might be confirmed from the frequent misapplication of these very gifts, so as to occasion tumults, and confusion in the public assembly, (with reverence I speak it) even in the midst of that plentiful 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 often sprang up with it, and choaked it. No sooner had *christianity* got well rid of the yoke of the *Jewish* law, than it was corrupted with *Jewish fables* \*\*, and traditions. The *Gentile* converts were some time in laying aside their old errors, and superstitions ††; and afterwards introduced an impure mixture

\* *Edwards's* 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. Sacra. Ess. i.* p. 153, &c.

† *Ἀντιληψεις*, 1 *Cor.* xii. 28. parallel to this, and explanatory of it, is *Ἄετις* xx. 35. *αντιλαμβανειται των αδευνητων*. What these *helps* were, and what necessity there was for them in the church, see *Benson*, *ib.* c. i. sect. 6. p. 72. or *Miscellanea Sacra*, *Ess. i.* p. 58. &c.

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

|| 1 *Cor.* xi. 17.

§ 2 *Theff.* ii. 7.

\*\* See *Easnage*, *Hist. of the Jews*, B. iii. c. 22.

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

mixture of their *philosophy*\*; this soon produced innumerable sects, and monstrous *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 abounded and gained credit. ‡. Instead of attending to the plain, popular sense of scripture, they fly to fanciful allegories ||; raise a number of mysteries; and maintain continual *opposition of science, falsely so called*. For under all their shew of science, not much solidity, or real knowledge; not much true learning is to be met with: nor indeed had they much room to cultivate it in those times.

And though the whole scheme of our redemption was completely delivered, and all its essential parts recorded, during the extraordinary assistance and inspection of the *Holy Ghost*; and in some respects the primitive *christians* seem to have the advantage of others; as being better acquainted with the stile in which it was wrote; and some apostolical traditions, which gave light to it:

\* See *Bibl. Univers.* Tom. x. et *Cleric. Epist. Crit.* iv. 148. &c. cum *Moshem.* 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. *Fabricii* Cod. Apocr. N. T. or *Jones's* New method of settling the Canon.

|| ‘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 repperint: Certum sane est eum *christianis* scriptoribus diu plurimum arrisisse; quorum nonnulli eum adeo ad amussim imitari ambiebant, ut sacra volumina, alioquin in se perspicua, foede obscurarint, obductaque allegoriarum suarum fuligine minus sincera præbuerint.’ *Light-foot,* Op. Tom. II. p. 848. *Comp. Cleric. Hieron. Q.* 2. p. 41.

it †: yet it by no means follows, that the true genius, import, and extent of this revelation, must be as well understood by the generality of them, as it could be by any that came after them. What 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 easily prove equal, if not 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 (I).

The

† 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 Prophecy, sect. 5. N. 3. or *Whitby*, Diff. 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 congestimus ab omni veritatis specie aliena. Ostendant nobis patrum patroni unicam 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, haud minus quam cæteri, cæspitasse; pronum esset propter insignem eorum pietatem et dona quorundam spiritualia eorum vestigiis insituisse.’ *Whitby*, ib. Epil. p. 346. That such *Traditions* were not long preserved by the church. Id. Pref. Disc. p. 40, 41.

(I) What has been here said, may 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 plain fundamental doctrines, and rules of life were then, no doubt, (as they have always been)

*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; upon the honour of our holy religion, which, upon this supposition, could not maintain its first constitution so long as most human polities have done; and upon the memory of those glorious confessors and witnesses to christianity, who planted the gospel with their preaching, and watered it with 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 judgement 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, I hope, will not appear so contrary to it as may 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 first case be restrained to matters, which those, who had a divine authority, expressly declared and determined to be such; and of the latter kind, such likewise 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 such persons permitted, or approved, or even complied with themselves; since such things might be very tolerable and 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 dropt, or done away, in other ages, which would admit, and probably might require different institutions. Many instances of this have often been alledged by writers on the controverted points both of church-government and discipline, rites, canons, &c. which need not here be mentioned. Allowing then their full merit to the glorious company of confessors, saints, martyrs, &c. and a precedence in certain respects to the most primitive times: allowing that they best knew the Apostles usages and orders,  
and



been) well known; and these they took good care to act up to; and deserve this character, that

and most faithfully observed and copied them; yet these very practices and orders too might not be of absolute necessity, [because not registered in their epistles;] and consequently that knowledge be but of very 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 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 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 occasions, the end, and importance of such, and to determine for itself accordingly, as to its *government and ordinances*; notwithstanding any *deference due to the judgement and practice of the primitive Church*; wherever we are allowed this liberty by the apostles and inspired persons, and left under such general directions only as *ευσχημονως και κατα ταξιν*, 1 Cor. xiv. 40. Nay, when we are enjoined to use that freedom of judgement in deciding upon these, as well as matters of much greater consequence, *Phil. i. 10. iv. 8. 1 Joh. iv. 1.* See *Abernethy's* excellent 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 forty 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 forgot, 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,

that *they lived much better than they reasoned* (K). Though perhaps even thus much can only be affirmed

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 sometimes very weak and absurd? Don't they often differ, not only from *one another*, but sometimes from *themselves*, at different times, and in different parts of their writings? 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 it in the scriptures themselves. I add, where they are agreed together in the sense of scripture, 'tis 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.

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 frequent appeal, and 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 judgement 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

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

as that antiquity is manifest to us in the *Bible*; which as it is the most ancient record we have of any kind, 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 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 judgement 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 judgement, if they could receive it by agreeing upon it.' *Ld. CLARENDON*, of the Reverence due to Antiquity, *Essays*, p. 218. See more from the same author below in note (L).

(κ) See *Le Clerc's* *Ecclesiastical Hist.* of the 2 first Cent. passim, and *Ep. Crit. et Ecclesiast.* Ep. iv. *Boehmeri* *Dissert. Jur. Eccl. ant.* *Ld. Clarendon's* *Essays*, p. 218, &c. *Calamy's* *Defence of Mod. Noncon.* Part i. p. 134, &c. or *Duille*, or *Barbeyrac*, *Pref. to Puffendorf*, &c. *Hickes*, *Diss. in Pref. sect. 4, 5, &c.* et *Epil. Taylor's* *Liberty of Proph.* c. 8. *Abbot's* *Boyle's* *Lect.* Part ii. *Serm.* iv. or *Edward'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 *Mishem*, speaking of *Hickes's* opposition to *Cudworth's* notion of the Lord's Supper, says, *Quod autem opponat ei nihil fere habet præter novitatem et disensionem antiquorum doctorum, quos patres nominat: 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. Cœn. Dom. Comp. id. Inst. Hist. Christ. Ant. Sæc. ii. Par. ii. c. 3. sect. 10. et Sæc. iv. c. 3. sect. 14. p. 225.* The celebrated *Buddeus*, in his judgement on *Le Clerc* [*de Theolog. Patrist. Isag. L. ii. c. 3. sect. 3. p. 489.*] seems to own, that the

Spirit: and whilst the original evidence was clear, and cogent; and its impressions strong and lively upon them\*; while they believed that the world was just at an end; however, like to end soon with themselves, by reason of the many dangers, and distresses to which they were daily exposed: from which extraordinary cases, we

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*, *Diff.* in *Iren.* Pref. et *Diff.* i. *Wotton's* *Reflections*, c. 29. p. 389, &c. 2d Ed. *Waterland*, *Importance*, c. 7. Let the following just apology of the honest writer abovementioned, serve for all that is or may be said upon the present subject. *Nec ut carpatum veteres, aut contemptui exponamus, a nobis hæc dicuntur; sed ut historicæ legibus pareamus, 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 with 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, impurissima vita, ad insignem sanctimoniam plerique tam subito transire non poterant; nec pristinam ignorantiam extemplo, insigni evangelii cognitione, mutare. Ejusmodi fructus, ut cæteri omnes, non nisi sensim maturefcunt. Errant ergo qui quo antiquiores christiani fuerunt, eo meliores fuisse existimant. Evangelium ab infantia animis instillatum, et longa consuetudine firmatum, ne eruditionem qua illustratum postea est memorem, animos scelicius subiit, et ad omne virtutum genus vehementius accendit. Simile quiddam in veteribus Judæis videre licuit, qui ægerrime a *Mosè* et prophetis ab idololatria revocari se passi sunt, et subinde in eam relapsi; a qua tamen posteriores Judæi abstinere, etiamsi ille-*

cebris

we are not to form our notions of the state of any institution; as was observed in the beginning\*: Nor are such any objection to the gradual progress of religion here supposed. Neither were the first christians different from other men, as soon as these extraordinary hopes, and terrors ceased †; as soon as they were at ease in the world;

cebris et suppliciis sæpe sunt tentati. Sed tamen christiani apostolici ævi infinito intervallo ethnicos cognitione rerum divinarum et sanctimonia morum plerumque superabant; quamvis ejusmodi non erant quales esse debuissent. Passa hoc forte est divina providentia, ne apostolorum discipuli evangelii auctores fuisse viderentur, neve solâ eorum sanctimonia christiana doctrina commendata videretur; vel ut semper magnum interesset discrimen inter magistros et discipulos; quo doctrinæ evangelicæ divinitas magis eluceret; aut alia de causa quam comminisci nunc non possumus. Interim de re constat, quam cave negaveris, quod rationem sat commodam ejus proferre nequeas, aut quod tibi divinam providentiam decuisse non videatur. Non est, si verum amamus, quid a Deo fieri, ex nostra hominum cæcorum sententia, par fuerit, in historia quærendum; sed quid re ipsa factum sit; ejusque, si possumus, sique ita ferat animus, probabiles, quatenus licet, rationes reddendæ. *Cleric. Eccl. Hist.* p. 392, 393. *Comp. Id. de Facobi Ep. ib.* p. 410.

\* Part ii. p. 46.

† 'Ως δ' ὁ ἱερός των Αποστόλων χορός διαφορῶν εἰλήθει τε βίη τελος, παρεληλυθει τε ἡ γενεα ἐκείνη των αυταις ἀκοαίς της ἐκ θεσ σοφίας, ἐπακκσαι κατηζιωμενων, τηνικαυτα της ἀθεσ πλανης την ἀρχην ἐλαμβάνουν ἡ συστάσις, δια της των ἑτεροδιδασκαλων ἀπατης, οἱ και ἀτε μηδενος ἐτι των Αποστόλων λειπομενα, γυμνηλοιπων ἤδη τη κεφαλῇ, τῷ της ἀληθείας κηρυγματι την ψευδωνυμου γνωσιν ἀντικηρυττειν ἐπεχειρουν, *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 first received their name,

world; and left to the common course of it; and once 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).

When

[vid. *Misopogon* or *Antiochenfis*, 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. Marcellinus* 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. . . . Comp. *Meyle'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 *spoke 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* Patrologia, 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 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*

When *christianity* is countenanced by the civil power, and thereby gains protection against outward

*papists* alledge in defence of their ceremonies and superstitious observances. Why do *protestants* strive to excuse the *fathers* in this, and to palliate their writings? This is not the thing that is to be done; but rather let them confess plainly, that even those early *fathers* were in some measure infected." 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 alteration 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 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 judgement 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

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

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 judgement 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 that distemper and faction might have some influence upon 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. It would be a very impudent thing to say, that St. *Austin* was not a very pious and devout man, of a most christian temper and exemplary humility; or that St. *Jerom* was not a very learned man and a profound scholar: but no degree of modesty will oblige a man to believe, that the former had the knowledge of the learned languages; or of all that learning which hath flourished in *Europe* since that time; or that the other was not a very angry man, easily transported with passion, and did not,

with



ways by the connection with its new friends : as soon as it becomes established in the *Roman Empire*, it partakes of all the imperial pomp and pageantry ; and admits the pagan ceremonies\*.

We

with all necessary ingenuity, set down the words or the sense of his adversary.—We may have a very just esteem of the gravity and judgement of St. *Ambrose*, and of the piety and eloquence of St. *Chrysostom*; and yet believe that they were both too credulous in the point of *miracles*, and may smile at some of those which they too much extolled, because we have the same information which they had.—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 antient 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*.' *Ld. 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. Newt. on Dan. c. xiv. and Boehmer, Jus Eccl. Protestant. sect. 12. p. 9.* Veræ pietatis in locum ingens variarum superstitionum agmen sensim 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 refer-

We find it immediately split into new heresies, and schisms; torn with ambitious contests, and struggles for wealth and power †: perplexing doubts, and difficulties raised in points of doctrine; subtile distinctions, and nice refinements made in its precepts; and both often confounded in many an idle controversy (M): till at length almost

ri possit. Ex Palæstina deinde, locisque sanctitatis opinione vrendis, pulveris seu terræ portiones, tanquam efficacissima contra vim malorum remedia, ablata, 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, statuis 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. Meibemii* Inst. Hist. Christ. Ant. Sæc. 4. Par. ii. c. 3. sect. 2. p. 312.

† Vid. *Amnian. Mar.* L. 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 descivit 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 satisfieret; thesauri Ecclesiastici, sub specie *boni operis*, auferentur; et *dominatus sacer*, seu *hierarchia*, magis magisque, ab initio quidem occulte, sed mox manifeste, stabiliatur; et tandem in monstrum illud *Monarchiæ Romanæ* excreverit? Id. *Jus Eccl. Protestant.* p. 13. *Halæ* 1720.

(M) Sicut olim arbori vitæ prælata arbor scientiæ maxima dederat mala, ita tunc quoque curiosam eruditionem pietati antehabita, et *ex religione artem factam*: cui deinde consequens fuerit, ut ad exemplum eorum qui turrim *Babylonicam* ædificabant, affectatio temeraria rerum sublimium dissōnas 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. *Amnian. M.* L. xxi. fin. *Barbeyrac,*

almost the whole church of *Christ* seems to be overwhelmed with *Popery* and *Mahometanism*; for which

*rec.* Pref. to *Puf.* sect. 19. *Taylor*, Lib. Proph. sect. 2. No. 26. *Turretin*, ib. p. 16, 20. *Mably*, *Obf.* 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: and this was the foundation of the doctrine of religion which is an art. 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.' *Jefferys* 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 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.

which indeed it was too fully ripe (N). Though perhaps the latter of these two (notwithstanding the mixture of imposture in it) may have proved a seasonable and necessary corrective of the former; by its amazing progress giving some check to every branch of antichristian tyranny, which was then growing predominant; and by its more tolerant spirit preserving the remains of those particular churches, which would have otherwise been wholly exterminated; and may appear to have been, in the main, a real and considerable reformation (O). But

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.

(N) See *Salé's* Prelim. Disc. to the *Koran*, sect. 2. Add *Grot. de Ver. R. C. L. vi. c.1.* not. 'In the mean time (as Mr. *Rotheram* observes, Sermon on the Wisdom of Providence) 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 over-ran 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 superstition.' As in effect it did upon the downfall of that Empire, and the seizing this its metropolis by the *Turks*; 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. A character of these emigrants, with some account of their works, may be seen in Mr. *Foster's* Essay on *Accents*, p. 209, 215, &c. 2d Ed.

(O) See *Reflections on Mohammedism*, &c. printed 1735, wherein the author attempts to shew that *Mohammedism* may have been

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

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. 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 *Modern Part of Universal History*, 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 'tis evident that he contributed not only to reform the morals of a great part of the world, but likewise reduced them from polytheism and 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. [Vid. *Hottinger Hist. Or.* p. 315, &c.] Several sects of them believe in *Christ*, [vid. *D. Millius de Rel. Moham. Diff.* 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. Dict. 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 surprizing 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 *St. Cyril*. [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 came about may be seen in *D. Millii Diss. de Mohammedismo ante Mohammedem*, p. 346, 347. And what havoc those most lamentable controversies on this subject made, appears from the confession of a learned writer, who tells us, that obliged him to drop his design of giving us the history of these churches. Pref. to *Prid Life of Mahomet*. See also *Dr. Fortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist.* Vol. III. p. 42, &c. and *Mr. Taylor's Essay on the Divine Œconomy*, p. 52, 54, 65, &c.

fections of past ages. All that I would observe, is what appears from the most transient view of ecclesiastical history, namely, that the rise, and progress of *Christianity* has, in the main, been similar to that of all other dispensations; that both the name of *Christ*, and the nature of his religion, were discovered; or as we may say, 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 noble institution, by their frequent dispersions all over the east; are here much more so, (when they were much better qualified for it, and less liable than ever to be corrupted by the heathen, among whom some of them were so long to converse) [P] by their dispersion over the whole world, at the destruction of their temple, and government, by *Titus*, and under the following

[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 most miserable dispersion; their seeming so long to be utterly rejected by him; 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 a little remarkable by every one who thinks at all about it. Nor has their case been less extraordinary in Christian countries, where they have never been permitted to rest long in any kingdom; where frequently, in every age, men's eyes are turned upon them by some new general persecution; and yet, notwithstanding all this, they are universally believed to be more numerous in the whole at present, than they have ever been in their most flourishing estate, in their own land. The authors of *Modern Univerf. Hist.* allow them to be upwards of three millions. B. xx. c. 1. p. 620, fol.

ing emperors; especially *Hadrian* (Q); and thereby every where publish, and prove the truth of their own, as well as the gospel prophecies (R); and become the best evidences, because unwilling ones, in favour of the *Christian* religion.

And

(Q) He sold them at fairs for the same price as horses, [*Hier.* in *Jer.* p. 342.] and would not suffer any of them so much as to set foot in, or come in view of *Jerusalem*, say some [*Aug. Civ. Lib. xv. c. 21. Sulp. Sev. Hist. S. L. ii. c. 31. Hil. in Pf. 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 condition, served only to heighten and aggravate those calamities, with which they had been so often threatened by the prophets; and to reduce them to the deplorable state, in which we now see 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 circumcised *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. Hes. 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

And as the *Roman* empire, by its increase and settlement at the time of *Christ's* coming, contributed remarkably to this same end, so did it no less

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.

The like observation he has made of 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 still miserable people, may be seen in *Patrick* upon *Deut.* xxviii. *Comp. Mod. Pt. of Univ. Hist.* B. xx. c. 1.

*Hallet* [*Disc.* Vol. I. p. 3, &c.] supposes, that in *Pf.* 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*, 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*. The like he observes of some other *Psalms*, particularly *Pf.* lxxiv. 3, 9, &c. The like is observed of *Pf.* 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 *Pf.* xci by *Peters* [*Crit. Diff.* 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 hence arise, 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 *Titles of the Pf.* p. 116, &c. Add *Jortin* on *Pf.* cx. *Remarks on Eccl. Hist.* Vol. III. p. 305.



less afterwards by its decline and dissolution; at which time *Christianity* was scattered abroad with it, 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, without an hyperbole, to have gone into all the earth, and its words unto the ends of the world †: and where it has prevailed, it prevailed more entirely than any other religion could; 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, at first view, seem to have quite lost it again, or greatly abused and corrupted it; yet, upon a more strict survey, we discover a great deal of it mixed in their several systems, and hid under different names; which we have reason to think, will, at length, be found of them more fully; and like seed sown, revive in its own season. Nor is it now in so narrow a compass as is  
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\* 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.' Mr. *Rotheram* on the Wisdom of Providence, 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.

generally imagined ||. Though there be many large countries where it is not 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 §: and though we often find it blended with impure rites, and gross superstitions, among a barbarous people; yet at the same time we find, that it has had a very considerable effect, even upon such; and will, we trust, in time lead them to a more pure and perfect profession of it, when they become ripe for such a manifestation: and as some corruptions, both in the natural and civil body, generally make way for a more perfect soundness, and then are themselves cured: so may it be in the body spiritual. Thus that thick cloud of *Poperly*, which has been so long hanging over the western church, and was in part dissipated at the *Reformation* (which during the fire of persecution raised up some shining examples of true primitive piety, refining many parts of the Christian world from all the dross they had contracted \*, and which helped greatly to amend, at least the discipline of that very church, who refused to admit any material alteration in her doctrines †;) may still, by its resemblance to the worship of *beathens*, lead them more easily and insensibly out of their grosser errors; and be no

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|| Vid. *Fabricii Lux Evang. toti orbi exoriens*, c. 36, &c. or *Millar's Hist. Prop.* c. 7, 8, &c.

§ See many of them cited, and more referred to, by *Jenkin*, *Fabricius*, and *Millar*. Add *Young's Hist. Diff.* Vol. II. p. 218, &c.

\* See *Worthington's Essay*, p. 152, &c. *Turretin de Christ. Doctr. Fatis*, p. 29.

† See *Hakewill's Apology*, p. 547. *Collier, Eccl. H.* Vol. II. p. 138, 139.

improper introduction to a more pure religion among them; and when it has served that end, its own idolatries be abolished; and by its judgments alarm, and convince the *Jews*, (whose blindness it has hitherto confirmed\*) and so be productive of a brighter light than ever; make way for a still 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 last embrace the true religion; and all kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of Christ (T).

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\* See *Brett's Narrative of the Jewish Council*; *Phenix*, Vol. I. 543. compared with *Menasseh Ben Israel's Defence*, ib. Vol. II. p. 401.

(s) See *Edwards's Survey*, p. 715. or *Scott's 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, even after the *mystery of its iniquity* is seen through by the generality of its own professors; as seems to be in a great measure the case at present. Even during its darkest ages, which afford the very strongest objection to that *progress* in religion we suppose, *Christianity* was still spreading wider and wider, in the more distant parts of the world; and where *popish* converts now become the seed of Christians, who 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 may be considered therefore, in some respects, as no very unfit introduction to a more perfect state of religion in future ages; whenever they shall become capable of it. See *Colliber's Impartial Inquiry*, p. 138. 2d Edit. with *Gage's Survey of the West Indies*.

(T) *Pf.* 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.

M

*Ezek.*

Secondly. As to what may be called more particularly the *internal* propagation of *Christianity*, or the comprehension of the whole gospel scheme; the same method is carried on, though not in so visible a manner, or capable of being distinguished by such remarkable periods. That perfect *analogy* between religion and the common course of nature, which has been so well displayed by a late writer, \* holds no less true, I believe, in this respect; and that as all arts and sciences, every improvement in natural and civil life, are still drawing nearer to perfection; as we become daily better acquainted with the system of the world, as well as that of the universe; with the nature of the heavens, and earth; with that of our own body, and mind; in short, as every branch of knowledge has been all along enlarging, and improving itself; and every successive age, not only enjoys the discoveries of the foregoing, but adds still greater, and more valuable ones of its own †; so it is probable, that the knowledge of religion alone is not at a stand; but on the contrary, that as we continually advance in the study of GOD's works, so we shall come to a proportionably better understanding  
of

*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. *Mch.* 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 Dr. *Worthington* infers, that the kingdom of *Christ* will be an *universal theocracy*, whereof that under the *Jews* was in some respects typical; *Ess.* 292, &c. — where there shall be universal holiness, 302. and obedience to the gospel precepts in their strictest sense; 309. and either an *universal language*, or a perfect union in faith and worship, 308.

\* Bishop *Butler*.

† See Part iii.

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 two extraordinary discoveries of *printing*, and the use of the *compass*, in *Europe*, jointly contributed to the dispersion of learning, and enlarging of *commerce*, over the world; and at the same time, gave a new publication of *Christianity*; and in much greater purity, than it had been in before, for many centuries. Ever since which time, all three have been continually gaining ground. New light has been given to the prophetic, and other more abstruse parts of scripture, in every successive age, and almost by every writer; as a very able judge assures us\*. The grounds of our religion are in general much better understood, more clearly and rationally explained, and vindicated; and from what appears at present, we have reason to think, they will be still more and more so†. We may venture to say, that

\* *Newton on Dan. c. i.*

† ‘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 nimiam cæcæque admiratione priorum oppressa jacebat. Quare contigit idem Theologiæ Christianæ, quod philosophiæ; quæ tum demum cum fructu, ut

that in our own nation, there never were more free and worthy notions of God, and his providence; nor were the designs, and various dispensations of religion ever generally so well understood as they are at present. Never was learning and 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; while they are in continual agitation, and daily teeming with new inventions; many monsters will spring up (as may naturally enough be expected) together with it; and strange errors and absurdities be advanced, in such full freedom of enquiry, and  
debate;

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 ac prima veluti tentamina *patrum* Græcorum aut Latinorum, plurisque ea fieri volunt quam quæ nunc scimus; ii virum adultæ ætatis pertinaci studio longa que experientia edoctum, ad pueritiæ 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's* B. Lect. Part ii. Serm. iv. p. 119. and *Lactant.* de Orig. Err. L. ii. sect. 7. To which may be added *Watton's* Two excellent chapters on the *Philol.* and *Theol.* learning of the *moderns*, Resl. c. 28, and 29. and *Worthington's* Essay, c. 8.

debate ; and though this increase of knowledge be attended with an increase of libertinism, and extravagance of all kinds ; and an evil spirit of infidelity, and profaneness, be at the same time gone abroad ; yet is this neither so uncommon, or unconformable to the course of Divine Providence in other respects, as to make us despair of seeing it attended with the usual consequences : we have still reason to trust, that when truth and knowledge have once fully got the better of error and superstition, this spirit of reformation will at length reform and rectify itself ; and we shall have more and more of the true life and spirit of our religion, as we draw nearer to those times, wherein the sure word of prophecy has 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 particular church \*. But, as when it was first preached, men were fit to hear, and profit by it in a competent degree (as we have shewn ; ) as that was a very proper time to divulge it, in order to improve the world, which it did very considerably †, excelling all former dispensations

\* ‘ 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. Let. or *Worthington’s Essay*, c. 7.

fations of religion, and systems of science; refining the notions, even of those who did not formally receive it\*; and yet was itself for some while but partially communicated†, and imperfectly understood: so now, 'tis of much greater advantage to the world in general; and yet still capable of increase; it waits for its own fulness: nor shall mankind receive the proper influence, and advantage of it, till their minds be much farther opened; their reason more fully exercised, in this great *mystery* of divine love.

We must surely be sensible, that the scriptures are very far from being thoroughly understood by us, who are of so 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 reprobation*, upon St. *Paul* himself? and it is to be feared, that  
almost

\* This is very visible in the writings of those philosophers who came after its promulgation, as *Epiet. Arr. Plut. Max. Tyr.* and more especially *M. Ant.* who is well acquainted with the *Christian* virtue of *Humility*, among many others, and frequently insists upon it. The like may be observed of *Porph.* and *Hieroc.* [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 Dr. *Fortin*, Disc. p. 228, 229. The same thing is owned by the emperor *Julian*, in his excellent advice for a reformation in their philosophy, by taking in the *Christian* morals. Ep. ad *Arfac.* 49. Vid. *Cave*, Introd. p. 32, &c. *Leng*, B. Lect. fol. sect. 12. p. 111. *Jenkin*, Part iii. c. 5. p. 386. Comp. *Whitby*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 44.

† See the several periods of this communication accurately settled by the author of *Misc. Sac.* in his Abstract of the Sac. Hist. of Ap. and Pref. p. 14, &c.



almost as hard things are yet believed of him, and other inspired writers. We are still apt to confine the gospel of our Lord, as his primitive disciples sometime did, to particular nations, churches, sects, opinions \*; to contend vehemently, either about things in their own nature abstruse and difficult to be understood, and therefore less necessary to be determined; or else such lighter matters, as the ceremonies, circumstances, and outward forms of its administration †; instead of

\* '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, neither from reason nor 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. Boehmer, Diss. Prælim. ad Jus Eccl. Protestant. sect. 22, &c.*

† '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. Alting* 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, p. 16. a book well worth the reading in England. Vid. Stoll. Introd. ad Hist. Lit. p. 571.*

of explaining and recommending the true nature, end, and design 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*\*: instead of attending to that *more excellent way*, which the same blessed apostle shewed 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*; and even the best miraculous *gifts*.

But though the face of *Christianity* be still miserably darkened, and deformed, (of which more below;) though some nations seem to be in their *childhood* yet, and cannot receive it; and others grow so vicious, as to be rather inclined to reject it: though in some ages it seems to have been quite hid in darkness, and sunk under ignorance and superstition; in others, borne down with the torrent of lewdness, and libertinism: though like the sea, it have its ebbs and flows, and leave  
some

\* *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*, Ser. 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*, 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.* Ser. lxxx.

† *1 Cor.* xii. 31.

‡ *Coloss.* iii. 14.

some lands, to gain on others; nay, though sometimes it seem to be at a general stand; and even retreating: yet, nevertheless, we have reason to conclude, that upon the whole, its motion is progressive; and that each very lett tends, in the main, to accelerate this progress (as was observed in the beginning;) that its power is still visibly, or invisibly, enlarging over the world; and that it will always go on to do so, till the kingdom of *Christ* be fully come; till it be *within us*, and known by all, from the least to the greatest; till the *everlasting gospel* \* go forth, and be so thoroughly understood and embraced, as to bring on the *fulness of the Gentiles*; and by their means, the restoration of God's own people the *Jews*; as he has often foretold †; and so *the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

From the whole we have reason to conclude, that the objection mentioned in the beginning of these discourses, is absolutely groundless; — that there is nothing in the time, and manner of the Christian dispensation, inconsistent with infinite wisdom and goodness: — that God is by no means partial, or arbitrary in the distribution of his blessings; but at all times takes care of all mankind: — and that this great scheme of revelation was contrived and carried on, in the best manner, for the world *in general*; which ought chiefly to be regarded

\* *Rev.* xiv. 6.

† See the texts above, note (T) p. 177, 178. Many more to the 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. *Burnet*, App. de Stat. Mort. *Worthington's Essay*, p. 295. *Taylor* on *Rom.* xi. 26. p. 344. *Lowth* on *Isai.* xi. 11. *Comp. Fortin*, Rem. on E. H. Vol. III. p. 423, &c. and *Hallet*, Vol. III. Disc. x.

garded by us, as it is in the eye of our common Father. When we come to particular ages, and nations, it is the same as with particular persons; the same benefits are not, cannot be conferred on all; and the dispensations of religion are perfectly analogous to those of providence in the constant course of both the natural, and the moral world; and these perhaps are capable of being shewn to be the best upon the whole; as may in part appear from the former discourse\*. If Christ was to come once for all, he must appear in some particular time, and place; which could not be equally near to all the successive generations of mankind; nor could all have the same 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, most undoubtedly, (though perhaps in a lower degree) who having not so much as heard of *Christ*, are yet in a good measure qualified to receive his doctrine, were it delivered to them.

The great scheme of our redemption in *Christ*, was laid before the world began †; and if we take the account which itself gives of its design, we shall find the greatest of its benefits extended to all mankind; namely, the covenant for restoring the whole posterity of *Adam*, to that *immortality* which he forfeited. *The GIFT OF GOD is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord ‡.*

Or,

\* See this more at large in Bp. *Butler's Analogy*, Part ii. c. 6, &c.

† *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 wrote in defence of the natural Immortality in that author's time.

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 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 in general, till the actual accomplishment of it by him, in our own nature. As to any particular privileges that can be supposed to be annexed to the bare belief in him, or explicit profession of it; we have reason to think, that no less 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 meritorious §. Nor have we any reason to doubt, but that the same benefits, in kind at least, whatever they be, might accrue from a pious prefiguration of his death, with a lively faith, in *sacrifice*; as now do from remembering it, in the same man-

\* *Αφθαρσία*, 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 in the last Discourse.

† 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* Sermon. Prop. G. p. 53, &c. or *Williams, B.* Lect. fol. sect. viii. p. 232, 233.

manner, in his holy *supper*. So far then it might be the same whenever he came.

And when we speak of the *Christian* scheme being absolutely *necessary to salvation* \*, we should understand *salvation* in the scripture sense of that word ; as implying a particular *state, and degree* of happiness ; or as the *Christian's heaven* † ; not as the sole condition of enjoying everlasting *life* ; or as necessary, in all men, to the avoiding absolute misery ; or escaping the pains of *hell*. He 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 above-mentioned qualifications ; can we conceive, that their states of retribution shall be so infinitely different hereafter, 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 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 *peny* ‡. 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

\* Pag. 41.

† See *Rymer's Represent. of Rev. Rel.* p.104. or *Whitby-on Rom.* ii.14.

‡ *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.

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 perhaps between *Christians*, and the rest of the world, that never heard of *Christ*, but yet are prepared to enter, and in a good measure worthy to be admitted into his kingdom;—who have duly attended to that *candle of the Lord*, which is set up in the breast of every man; and which would naturally lead such 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 frequently, and perversely, *reject the counsel of God against themselves*; resolved to trust to their own strength, *and going about to establish their own righteousness; and not submitting themselves unto the righteousness of God* †.

To conclude, with our blessed Saviour's admonition in a like case ‡, *If I will, that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*

Let us, instead of judging others, or hastily determining of their state; take care to set a due value on, and to secure our own salvation: instead of charging God foolishly, and ungratefully, for not having imparted the same benefits to all, which we enjoy; let us rather be giving him con-

tinual

§ *Job. x. 16. Comp. Matt. viii. 11. and Luke xiii. 29.*

\* *Acts iii. 19. Comp. Rom. viii. 22.*

† *Rom. x. 3.*

‡ *John xxi. 22.*

tinual thanks for his *unspeakable Gift*; and endeavouring to employ it to his glory. Let us be intent on studying the pure word of God; and careful to interpret it in such a manner, as may do most honour to its author; and at all times encourage a free and an impartial study of it ||.

'Tis

|| *Benson's* note on the last verse of 2 *Pet.* iii. is 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 steddily 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 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



'Tis now high time to do this, and to awake out of sleep, since our reformation is much nearer than when we first believed: and it is to be wished, that we ourselves could be persuaded to examine our own state, before others are obliged to do it for us; that we were disposed to help and forward, rather than check the progress of every serious enquiry; and stop any farther improvements in the knowledge of that, which of all things deserves, and wants them most\*; rather than with-  
stand

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 enquire 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 judgement 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.

\* '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

stand a general reformation in religion, by rigorously insisting on, and obtruding such things for doctrine, as are the commandments of men, and very foreign to the essence of it; instead of either entertaining that antichristian kind of spirit, which calls down fire from heaven on all who don't receive us; which delights in straitening the way that leads to life, and shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men; or else incurring the woe denounced against those hypocrites, who are desirous of lading men with heavy burdens, and binding upon them things which are too grievous to be borne; and which they know, that none need touch with one of their fingers\*.

As we see the faults and follies of past ages, a double woe will be to us, if, instead of taking warning by them, and avoiding the like; we are resolved to tread the same steps, and fill up the measure of our fathers.

Let us, who have leisure given us for this very purpose, think on these things, and study to discern *the signs of the times*; that we may be prepared

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.* *Fortin's Remarks on E. H. Vol. III. p. 445.*

\* *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. *Goaliness* is good for both; as it enforces sobriety and righteousness; and as it engages the protection of the supreme Governour 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.

pared for them, and profit by them : that we may not only save ourselves in the day of trouble, but also contribute to the safety of our *Jerusalem*; and be ready to watch over and defend it, whenever, or from what quarter soever, the enemy cometh.

As we 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 end and aim, of all *religion*.



# PART III.

## The PROGRESS of Natural RELIGION and SCIENCE,

OR

## The continual Improvement of the *World in general.*

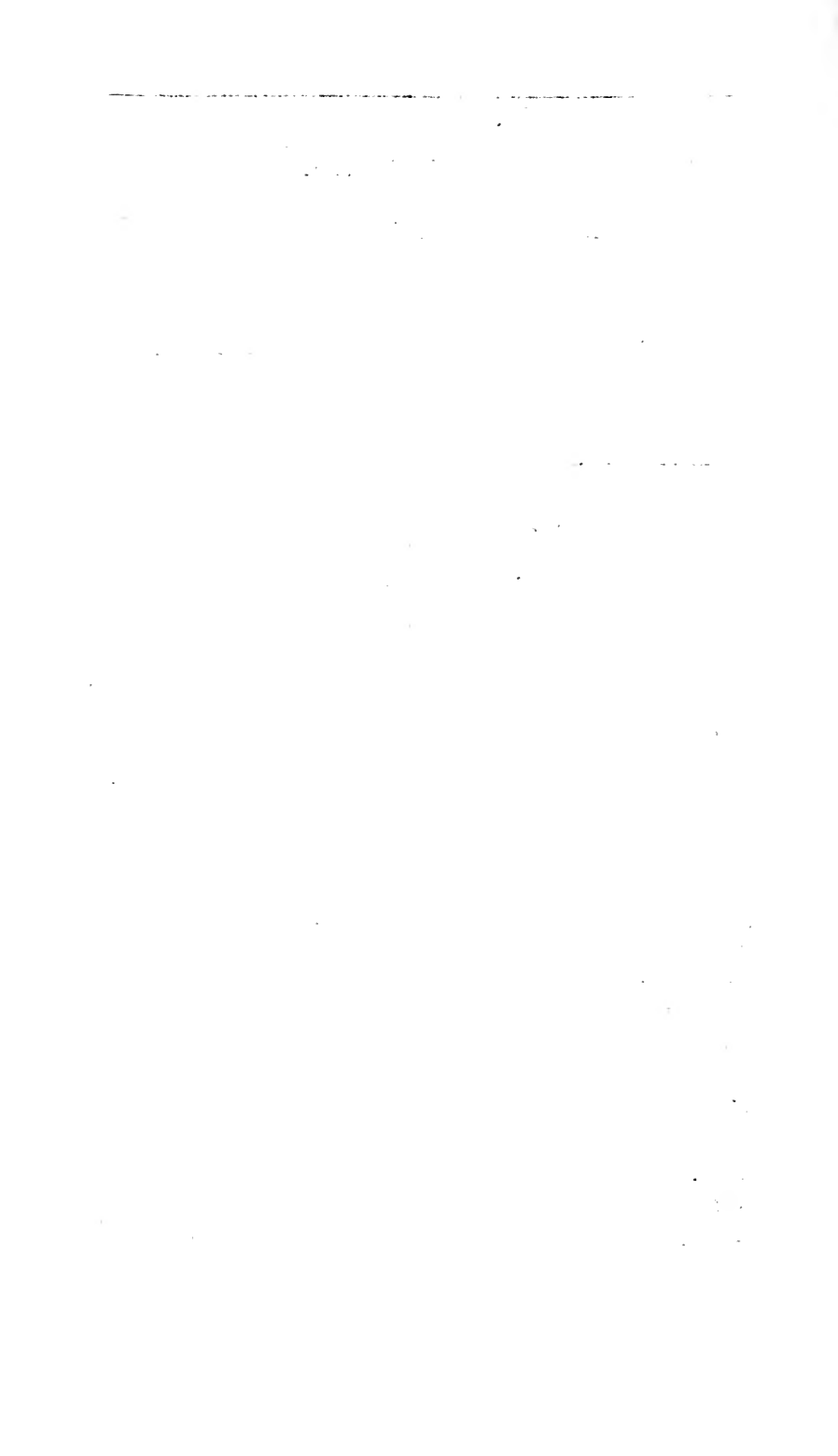
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*Antiquity I unfeignedly honour and reverence ; but why I should be bound to reverence the rust and refuse, the dross and dregs, the warts and wens thereof, I am yet to seek. — As in the little, so in the great world, reason will tell you, that old 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. Book 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.



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The Progress of  
*Natural Religion and Science,*

OR

The continual Improvement of the  
*World in general.*

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ECCLES. VII. 10.

*Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.*

**T**HE badness of the times, has been a common topic of complaint in every *age*; and that they are growing worse and worse continually, is what some persons think themselves obliged to insist upon, with no less vehemence; how hard soever they find it to account for this in any respect. 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 room) may be of constant use, and often necessary. But when the latter is added to it, and both carried so far as to make us discontented, and uneasy with ourselves, and troublesome to one another; — to set us quarrelling with the station, and society, in which we are placed; — a murmuring at, and speaking evil of the government we live under; — despising

ing every human dominion, and even repining at the conduct of divine Providence; and mistaking the issue of its dispensations to such a degree as must confound our judgement, and unhinge our faith in the unlimited goodness, power, and wisdom of their Author: — then, 'tis high time to correct an error of this kind, and enquire into the true state, and history of the world, in the 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. Secondly, To point out some of its ill consequences; which may be sufficient to justify the Preacher's observation in the text, *viz.* that this way of judging is no very *wise* one.

The design of the book from which these words are taken, is to examine into the course of this world in general; to consider the nature of its enjoyments, and the ends proposed in our pursuit of them. No one saw farther into these things, or better understood their real value; none perhaps had a mind more elevated, and refined above them; or could, in a more lively manner, display the vanity and emptiness thereof on some occasions, than king *Solomon*; yet, where he meets with those who treat the subject so very injudiciously, as both to disparage the works of God, by representing them to be ever going backward, and on the decline; and to distract the minds of men, by teaching them to undervalue, and grow weary of the present benefits, through an invidious retrospect to former days: — when things are placed in such a light as this, we find him absolutely disapproving of the view, and all those questions



questions which arise from thence; intimating, that the very foundation of them is not *true* in fact.

To make this appear more fully, let us consider some of the advantages of life, both *natural* and *acquired*; in order to see, whether there be any signs that these are now 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 decay, and tendency to dissolution, has, I think, long since been exploded\*.

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* himself not exempted from the care of *dress*ing, and *keep*ing that spot of ground in which he was placed †;) upon his fall, a state of toil and labour became necessary; in order to secure the virtue, health, and quiet of the species, in any tolerable degree ‡: on which account the earth is represented as lying under an extraordinary *curse*, of barrenness; which has been generally

\* A sufficient confutation of it may be seen in *Hakewill*, Apol. passim. There is a little book wrote on the same subject by *Jo. Jonstonus*, a *Polander*, and entitled *de Naturae Constantia*, Ed. *Amstel.* 1632. which contains some valuable observations, though the author owns that his work is chiefly extracted from *Hakewill*. p. 160.

That some climates are more mild and temperate now, than they were in former times, See *Hume's* Essays Mor. Polit. &c. Ess. xi.

† *Gen.* ii. 15.

‡ See *King's* Origin of Evil, 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.

nerally thought to have continued, and received considerable addition at the *deluge*; and very philosophical reasons were assigned for this opinion §; till of late a learned prelate || shewed us from the circumstances of the history, that the direct contrary was fact \*. For some time after, the longevity of mankind was very necessary, for peopling the world, and learning arts †; though I should think it difficult to point out the natural causes of this longevity, and the following change; at least, such as can be consistent with the forementioned opinion ‡. Since, if the earth

§ See them collected in *Univ. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 106.

|| B. *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.*

† 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 experientiâ 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 ne 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. Dr. *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

earth was 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 most evident, while these same causes must be fresh, and operate most strongly: not to repeat, that this supposed corruption is a vulgar error. This great change therefore, seems to have been owing to a positive appointment of the Deity, distinct from, and subsequent to that of *Noah's* flood, and introduced for reasons which took place some ages after it; and may be conceived as a *new dispensation*, necessary for the future government of the world, in every age (U). However, so early as *Moses's*

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?

(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 judgement; 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 unani- mously to God: and God cut him off another half yet, and reduced him to a hundred and twenty years. And by *Moses's* time, one half of the final remanent portion was pared away, reducing him

*Moses's* days †; we find the life of man fixed to the same length *in general* that it has at present; and ever since, so far as the accounts of ancient times can be relied on, we have reason to believe, that the constitution of mankind in general, as well as the state of the earth, and heavens, whereon that must depend; have, at all times, been much the same as we now find them ||; and may rest

him to three score years and ten.—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 so to strive with him*, nor destroy the *kind*, but punish *individuals* only, and single persons; and if they sinned, or if they did obey, regularly their life should be proportionable.' *Taylor, Life of Christ*, p. 305. I shall here add the observation of a learned and ingenious 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.

† *Pf.* xc. 10. If *Moses* be the author of that psalm, as its title sets forth. See *Hakewill*, B. iii. c. 1. sect. 4.

|| See Sir *W. Temple's Works*, Vol. I. p. 276, &c. Sir *T. P. Blount*, *Ess.* iv. p. 188, 192, &c. or *Ld. Bacon's Hist. of Life and Death*, or *Hakewill*, B. iii. c. 1. sect. 7, &c.

That the *stature* of man in this age is the same as it was near  
three

rest satisfied, that the original promise has been, and will amply 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* \*; and therefore may conclude, that the distribution, and enjoyment of, what I call, the *natural advantages* of life, is so far from a constant gradual decline, that these have been at all times in themselves pretty equal; and rather improving, as they receive assistance, which they do very much, from the *acquired* ones; which we are in the next place to consider.

The late invention of *arts and sciences* is usually insisted on, and very justly, in our disputes with *atheists*, against the *eternity* of the world; and their continual *progress*, though perhaps seldom attended to, seems to be a point no less necessary to complete the argument. For if it can be shewn, either that these which we now have, or others of equal use and importance, were discovered sooner; and dropt again, and subject to their several revolutions; as has lately been asserted;

three thousand years ago, appears from *Greaves's* account of the monument in the *Egyptian pyramid*. *Derham*, *Phyf. Theol.* B. v. c. 4. note 4. Add *Diff. 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.—The same observation is made of his *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. Merton's N. Hist. of Northamptonshire*, c. 8. *Fonston. de Naturæ constantia*, Prop. v. Art. I. II. 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, 242 at 100, 10 at 110, and 1 at 138. *Phil. Transf.* Vol. LII. Part i. Art. II.

\* *Gen.* viii. 22.

ed †; why should not we grant from *analogy*, that the world itself has undergone the like? that the same *time* and *chance* has happened to all things concerning it, and its inhabitants?—But that there actually have been such vicissitudes in nature; or so much as one valuable art, or branch of science, wholly lost since the creation, I know no ground sufficient to believe (v).

In

† ‘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.*

(v) For proof of this, see the pretended instances of lost arts in *Pancirollus*, which, upon examination, will appear all to be either manifestly false or frivolous; or of such trifles as have been dropt by disuse. ‘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.’ *Gaguet, 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

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† This seems to be a vulgar error. See *glass-painting* in *Chamber’s Cyclopaedia*, or *Speſtacle de la Nature*, Vol. III. p. 219. or *Mr. Walpole’s Anecdotes of Painting*, Vol. II. p. 15, &c.

Of *cement*, *Speſt.* p. 228. Add *Motte’s Abr. Phil. Tranſ. Vol. II. Part iv. p. 62, 63.*

In a history of the world, which has been proved by a late unexceptionable writer \*, to be of all others by far the most ancient and authentic, and which carries its accounts as high as either could be wished, or hoped for, from 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 founders of states and kingdoms; as well as the inventors even of manual arts, delivered down (w); and from the very

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, should grow out of fashion; and it would be the mode for men to live like colts and wild asses? Unless men could be supposed to forget the use of eating and drinking, I am confident they could never forget the art of ploughing, and sowing, and pressing the grape.' *Nicholls's Conf.* Part i. And the same may be said of *navigation*, notwithstanding all that Lord *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 Gouget*, on the origin of Laws, Arts, and Sciences.

\* Sir *Is. 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, we are told that *Noah* began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard, *Gen.* ix. 20. which, by his being surprised in such a remarkable manner with the effects of its fruit, seems to have been the first of the kind. So late as *Abraham's* time, we find there was enough of the best land unoccupied for both him and *Lot*, to chuse out of; *Gen.* xiii. 9. which (as the author of *Bibliotheca Biblica* observes, p. 335.) is a most illustrious testimony for the late peopling of the world, and by consequence for the truth of the *Mosaic* history of the creation and

very air of truth, and that simplicity which runs through the whole relation; have much more reason to depend upon it, than on the fabulous antiquities of *Greece* and *Egypt*: to obviate which, was probably one great design of the relator (x).

From

and deluge; in as much as it appears by this, that the most pleasant and most fruitful country of the whole earth, and which, in a few hundreds of years afterward, was so exceeding populous; was yet in the days of *Abraham* so very thinly peopled, that even large tracts of ground were left in a manner uncultivated and without proprietor. So little ground is there for that assertion of Lord *Bolingbroke's*, 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) Historiâ suâ *Moses* Israelitarum animos a vicinorum fabulis, adeoque religionibus, quæ sæpe iis nitebantur, alienare adgressus 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 generatas* enumeravit, ut ingenti illi numero *aetatum*, qui ab *Ægyptiis* jaçtabatur, et in sua quidem regione fuisse dicebatur, verum opponeret.—Vide Jaçtationes *Ægyptiorum* de gentis suæ antiquitate apud *Ezek.* xxix. 3. et quæ habemus ad *Num.* xiii. 23. At ostendit *Moses*, *Gen.* x. 6. post diluvium demura a *Chami* posteris, a *Babylone* illuc profectis, fuisse cultam *Ægyptum*. Plurima etiam de generatione hominum in sua regione, deque diluvio, mentiebantur *Ægyptii*; quæ habet *Diodor.* L. i. Multa jaçtabant de rerum omnium apud se inventionem, quæ apud eundem leguntur. Quorum pleraque obiter confutat *Moses*, aliâ 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 *Ægyptii*; quæ *Noachi* fuit, ut docet *Moses* Cap. ix. 20. *Cleric.* Proleg. ad *Comm. Diff.* iii. de script. Pent. p. 37. Id. in *Indice ad Vincam.* 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*,



From 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 †.

Most nations, like private families, have at all times been unaccountably fond of carrying up their pedigree as high as possible; and where no marks remained of the successive alterations in their

*Osiride, dicuntur, in Thebaide aeris 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 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.*

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

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

their state, were apt to imagine that it had always been the same. Hence the many foolish preferences 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 blended with fiction and romance, that it served only to confound them †. Upon the removal of this cloud, by the more faithful, diligent, and accurate enquiry of the moderns, we see history beginning to clear up, even at this distance; the world puts on a very different face; and all parts of it appear conformable to each other, and to the late well known course of things. We find the *marvellous* in all their annals, and more especially in the great point of their antiquity, exceedingly reduced ‡; and our own plain accounts still

\* *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. Of the *Egyptian* in particular, see *Shaw's Travels*, p. 417, 442. *Comp. Baker* on Hist. and 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 *Hieroglyphicks*, p. 58, &c. *Goguet*, Vol. III. Diff. iii. p. 269. That the *Babylonish* empire was not so old as has been pretended, see *Le Clerc*, on *Gen. x. 10.*

‡ '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*

still more and more confirmed : from which we may be convinced, that both the peopling and cultivating of the earth arose at first from a few, low beginnings ; and very gradually spread itself from some one *center* \* : and that it has at all times

*some thousands* ; 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 ; 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. Differt. iii. pr.*

\* This has been observed by *Jf. Casaubon* in one respect, *viz.* in relation to *language*. *Est enim verissimum*, says he, *linguas caeteras eo manifestiora et magis expressa originis Hebraicae vestigia servasse, et nunc servare, quo propius ab antiqua et prima hominum sede absuerunt, &c.* A confirmation of it in some other respects, may be had from the following *very remarkable* particular, as *Hartley* justly calls it ; *Observations on man, v. ii. p. 113.* 'It appears from history, that the different nations of the world have had, *caeteris paribus*, more or less knowledge, civil and religious, in proportion as they were nearer to, or had more intimate communication with, *Egypt, Palaeftine, 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 *Palaeftine* as the center, 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, Palaeftine, Mesopotamia, Greece*, or *Rome* ? Nay, why should *Palaeftine* so far exceed them all, as it did confessedly ? Allow the scripture-accounts, and all will be clear and easy.

times proceeded by pretty near the same flow, regular steps 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 brag most of their extraordinary advancement, and long possession of the sciences; as from the remains of their forefathers' skill, when fairly (γ) re-

Mankind after the flood, were first dispersed from the plains of *Mesopotamia*. Some of the chief heads of families settled there, in *Palæstine*, and in *Egypt*. *Palæstine* had afterwards extraordinary divine illuminations bestowed upon its inhabitants, the *Israelites* and *Jews*. Hence its inhabitants had the purest notions of God, and the wisest civil establishment. Next after them come the *Egyptians*, and *Chaldaeans*; 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, intirely occupied in providing necessaries for themselves, and also cut off by rivers, mountains, or distance, from all communication with *Palæstine*, *Egypt*, and *Chaldaeae*; would lose much of their original stock, and have neither inclination nor ability to invent more.' Any one that fairly examines history, will find this account somewhat more probable, than that extraordinary supposition of *Ld. Bolingbroke's*, 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 as from the enormous size of several public works in those parts; that the ancient nations were 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

represented, we find no great reason to envy them their best acquirements; so far I mean, as concerns real use: for all the worth that fashion and fancy may give things, is out of the question\*.

Some of them indeed describe their knowledge in high strains; and perhaps for their times, and in comparison with some of their neighbours, it may have been considerable; and yet 'tis more than probable, that such accounts are chiefly owing to their ignorance of the true state of the rest of mankind; as is the case remarkably with the *Chinese*, a people so much celebrated by themselves, and others; who yet, upon more strict examination, have appeared in most things of consequence, and where most might have been expected,

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; 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 ingenious author of a *Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind*, [*Edin.* 1753.] has advanced to the contrary, well deserves farther consideration. *Comp. Modern Univ. Hist.* fol. Vol. III. p. 644. not. F. G. On the supposed populousness of those northern nations which over-ran the Roman empire, see *Geddes*, *Misc. Tracts*, Vol. III. No. 6.

\* 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.

pected, 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).

The

(z) See the 1st Part, p. 29. note (†); to which may be added *Jenkin*, Vol. I. p. 340, &c. *Wotton's* and *Baker's* Reflections, under the heads *physick* 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 of late by missionaries: as also how monstrously inaccurate both their chronological and astronomical tables were found to be. See *Costard's* Letter in *Phil. Transf.* 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 study 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 that one of the two hemispheres, 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. Univ. Hist.* fol. Vol. I. p. 175. Though others give a different account, *Bell*, Vol. II. p. 105. Their method of communicating any science, from their yet being without any *alphabet*; as is observed by the author of *Div. Leg.* Vol. II. Some specimens of their *morals* may be seen in Lord *Anson's* Voyage, p. 398. 4to. or Dr. *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 the 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 them-

The same may in a great measure be affirmed of the *Egyptian* learning ||. Though this country has been styled the Mother of Arts †, as well as Mistress of Religion ‡; and was, no doubt, as early polished as most: yet if we be allowed to judge of her improvement in other parts of science, from that most concerning one, and that which therefore in all reason should have been most cultivated,

themselves in all manner of extortions, fraud, and villainy.' ib. p. 581. 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. Monf. *Barbinais'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*] 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, with many of their customs and religious 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. The same observation was made long ago by *M. Martinus*, 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. Diff. iii. p. 284, &c. with the curious Extracts from their Historians. ib. p. 300, 308. \*

¶ '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 <sup>a</sup>. 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'. *Stillingfleet*, Or. S. B. ii. c. 2. p. 75. add *Wotton*, Refl. c. 9. and Sir *T. P. Blount's* Ess. iii. p. 153, &c.

\* † *Macrob.* Sat. L. i. c. 15. Comp. note (x) supra, p. 206.

‡ Id. L. vii. c. 13. et *Ammian. Marc.* L. xxii. *Herod. Euterp.*

<sup>a</sup> *Conring*, de Herm. Med. c. 10, 11, 12.

tivated, I mean *medicine*; of which she also claims the first invention\* ; we shall not have much room to marvel at her high 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 ages after these times, they were, like the *Babylonians*, entirely destitute of persons skillful 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, they took care to have as many persons see and speak to him as possibly could; that if any one who saw the sick person, had had the like distemper, he might say what was proper to be done in that condition †.’ From which

\* *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 faciebant 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.’ Univ. Hist. Vol. I. p. 219. Ἀἰγυπτίους λέγουσι ὅτι ἀρα τὴ ἀσθρῶσιν τὸ σῶμα ἐξ καὶ τριακοντὰ διειληφότες δαιμόνες, ἢ θεοὶ τινὲς αἰθεριοὶ, εἰς τοσαῦτα μέρη νενεμημένον — ἄλλος ἄλλο τὴ αὐτὴ νεμεῖν ἐπιτεταχταί — καὶ δὴ ἐπικαλῶντες ἑαυτοὺς ἰώνται τῶν μέρων τὰ παθήματα. Cels. ap. Orig. L. viii. p. 416. Ed. Cant. Nor 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.*



which single instance of the state of this most necessary art, in those times and places; as well as its first rudiments, in like manner described by an able judge †; we may, I think, be pretty well satisf-

p. 362. *Chandler*, Vind. of O. T. Part ii. p. 442. *Goguet*, Vol. II. p. 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. Physf. Part i. B. i. c. 17, &c. What progress could be made in *anatomy* during the ancient superstition of the *Egyptians*, may be seen in *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. That 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. Diff. Vol. II. Add *Harle's* Eff. p. 80, &c. or *Barchusen* de Medicinæ Orig. et Progr. Dif. fert. i. et xviii. or *D. Le Clerc*, Hist. Physf. 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 incidere, 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*, Refl. c. 26. p. 341, &c. 2d. Ed. *Max. Tyr.* Diff. xl. 234. *Barchusen*, Diff. 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 ulcer-

fatisfied in what condition the rest then were, in other parts of the world; as also of their gradual improvement since in all respects\*.

Many

ed 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 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 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 *Nicholls's Conf.* Part i. p. 81, 82. 1st Ed. or *Goguet* de *L'Origine des Loix, des Arts, et des Sciences, &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 keeness. 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 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,

Many are indeed carried on much faster in some countries than in others; and some now and then are brought to so great perfection in one country, as to seem almost incapable of any increase, for several ages; which proves against an exact, equable improvement under each period, and in each particular; which never was contended for: but is no argument against improvement in general; much less, any evidence that these grow daily worse: and notwithstanding this, or other limitations, which might be admitted; yet from some of the great outlines of nature; from plain appearances, in many remarkable æras, and most considerable events; we seem to have still ground sufficient to conclude, that on the whole they are, and always have been, in the main, *progressive*.

Now this progress in *arts*, will necessarily bring with it a proportionable improvement of all the other natural advantages; as health, strength, plenty, and politeness: each of them tend, in some respect or other, to improve and adorn the face of nature; and lead us to apply its laws to our respective uses, much more effectually, than could be obtained without them. By them we are enabled to reap its several benefits, in ways more easy and compendious; with less time, labour,

and

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.*

and expence: the world is stocked more plentifully with inhabitants; and each of them supported in a way more elegant, and advantageous to itself, and all around it. In short, every thing in life becomes more comfortable, and commodious; and life itself may be said to attain a longer date, by means of both a better, and more early education\*. That this has been the case in later ages, seems too clear to be denied by any, who will be at the least trouble to compare them with the most extravagant account of former ones †.

'Tis

\* 'There is a sense in which these latter generations in general have the advantage of the ancients, and in which they may be said to out-live them — viz. in that they live more in less time. It is a common 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. 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.

† — 'When men began to unite into societies, to cloath themselves, and build cottages, and apply themselves to agriculture; the persons who fell upon the first hints of these rude contrivances, were 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 mystery of printing been invented in ancient times, *Guttenberg* of *Mentz* might have been a god of a higher esteem throughout *Germany*, than *Mercury*, or *Jupiter* himself.' [*Worth. Ess.* p. 169.] 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*.

'Tis no great compliment to the present times to say, we are improved in every manual art, as well as those of government ( $\alpha$ ), the social ones, and

( $\alpha$ ) 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 were. 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. 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 publick 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*, 'tis, because the principles of sound morality are more universally known; men are less savage and fierce, and their understanding is better cultivated; and perhaps all this is owing to men of learning, who have 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. and *Hume*, Pol. Disc. xi. who makes it appear, that human nature in 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 *Engl.* 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

and even our very amusements \* : the thing shews itself every where; and 'tis no less plain *a priori*, that it must be so. If, as the *Psalmist* says †, *One day telleth another, and one night certifieth another*; if, according to the Prophet ‡, *many run to and fro*, (travel by sea and land) and thereby *knowledge is increased*; if by repeated observation, and experience; 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 perfection on each sister art.

The

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\**. and *Goguet on the imperfection of ancient Governments, Vol. III. B. vi. fin.*

\* See *Worth. Ess. p. 210*. Whether we of this nation are arrived at the just standard of *elegance*, or have exceeded it; may be judged by 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 conveniencies 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 true refinements, heightens 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 con-*

The same effect will, in a good measure, follow, if the world be but supposed to continue in the same natural state in which it was created, and the genius of mankind keep where it was originally; nay, this must be the case, if both do not grow worse; and in a very great degree: much greater than has ever been pretended. But as this point can be no longer 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 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

continentur. *Cic. pro Arch. Poet. Id. de Orat. 1. 3.* Est illa *Platonis* vera — vox, omnem doctrinam harum ingenuarum et humanarum artium uno quodam societatis vinculo contineri. Ubi enim perfecta vis est rationis ejus, qua causæ rerum atque exitus cognoscuntur, mirus quidam omnium quasi consensus doctrinarum concentusque reperitur. *It would be mere impertinence to bring instances in proof of this.*

(§) 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*, *Sprat*, *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. 'The dispute between the ancients and moderns is at length decided, at least as to Philosophy. There is not one of the ancient philosophers whose works are now made use of for the instruction of youth, in any of the enlightened nations.' *Voltaire Hist. Vol. IX. c. 112.* '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

By religion in general, I mean the way of promoting our most perfect happiness upon the whole, in this life; as well as qualifying us for, and by particularly recommending ourselves to, the divine favour, entitling us to higher degrees of it in the next. Now the knowledge of this, whether natural or revealed, will appear to have held pace in general with all other knowledge, from the beginning; and these three branches of science seem to have been, in the main, similar and synchronous; as indeed they ought to be, or else perpetual disappointment, misery, and confusion would ensue; as was observed in part before\*.

The first race of men had as much knowledge imparted to them, most probably by God himself, as they could either then want, or well be capable of; as much as they had either means or leisure to employ; and higher notices, could they

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 observation of *Boyle*, 'That if they 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 they excel us chiefly in those arts which are concerned in polishing their language. *Philosophical Letters between Ray and his correspondents*, p. 241. Whether the ancients or moderns were in general the greater *Geniuses*, seems to be as difficult and unnecessary to determine, as it is foreign to our present enquiry. 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 point; yet there are others, in which they have no less disadvantage, 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.



they have been attended to, would, we conceive, rather have distracted, and rendered them uneasy in their then situation; and tended to disqualify them for their more immediate occupations, in that part of life. They were placed in a world capable of affording all gratifications suited to their mortal frame, and made for its support; and were designed to glorify their Maker's goodness in the enjoyment of them, for some time here; as well as to expect a reparation of its decays, with farther and more full manifestations of the same goodness, somewhere hereafter. Their first employ then, was, to learn the present use, and application of these natural benefits themselves, as well as to lay a foundation for communicating, and extending them to future generations; which were to inhabit the same place, for many ages. And accordingly, their notions of the world, and of its 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 redeemer or other; who was some time to arise among them †: which yet was very sufficient to keep up their hopes, and secure a trust and dependence on their Creator; especially when revived by so many

\* 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.

many earnest of present, temporal blessings: but when, or where, or upon what plan, that redemption was to be worked, they knew not; and perhaps it might be unnecessary to impart this fully to them, as it was probably above their comprehension. To preserve an intercourse with the Divine Being, it is likewise probable that they had positive directions about consecrating to him a part of their goods, together with the times, and places for presenting this before him; by way of acknowledgement of his present bounty, and application for the continuance of it; and also in deprecation of his displeasure, whenever they became sensible of having incurred it by abusing them; and lastly, as a settled, stated means of always having access to him, and finding acceptance with him. Hence was the origin of *sacrifices* \*, as they are 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 notions 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 each part of nature, was a new opening of the human mind; still more and more displaying the Divine Wisdom and goodness, in the original constitution of things, and construction of animals; as well as in the constant, regular preservation of each species of them; and pointing out their various ends and uses; thereby enabling  
man,

\* See Part ii. p. 49. note i. and p. 51, 52. notes k, and l. with *Winder* on the subject, p. 30.

man, to whom they were all subjected, to enter farther into this constitution himself; as well by receiving the benefits thereof more perfectly, as by resembling his Creator in distributing the same more copiously; and both ways, paying his most acceptable tribute of duty, and devotion to the common Parent.

When the lives of men began to shorten, we find arts increasing much faster in proportion; as it was fit they should; since otherwise, many discoveries would drop before they could be brought to any tolerable perfection, or applied to use; there being then no other repository for such, beside the memory of their inventors: till at length came the art of *writing*, which drew along with it all the rest; helping at once to spread, and to perpetuate them. And it is worth observing, as was just hinted before \*, that about the same time, more frequent, and more full revelations were communicated to the world; which thereby became better qualified to receive, keep, and convey them; as they were likewise 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 one another: as may be seen particularly in 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 institutions, and a succession of prophets:

not

\* Part ii. p. 144. add *Winder*, Hist of K. p. 221, 222.

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*; of which there scarcely is occasion to remark, that it 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; and might, I think, with just the same propriety, be termed a bare revival, or republication of the one, as of the other. Though perhaps there may be some room to doubt, whether even those ages, enlightened as they were above the former, were capable of receiving all the improvement which it was fitted and designed to give; whether the world was yet able to admit it, in its utmost purity and perfection. On the contrary, there seem to have been so many dregs of *Jewish* superstition, and *Gentile* philosophy, as required a long time to purge away: and from one of which it had no sooner got well clear, than it became immersed, and clouded in the other †. Even in its early days, we find it loaded with the refuse of each system; which was brought in to explain mysteries, or rather make them, in the gospel: till by degrees, itself is made a matter of high speculation, and refinement; and such nice disputes ‡ raised about

\* Ibid. p. 147.

† Part ii. p. 155.

‡ 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.

about the natures of its author, and the *modus* of their union; also concerning the abstract nature, and 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; for which alone it seemed at that time fitted\*; the other, to introduce the doctrine of *purgatory*, and with it a long train of *popish* errors; which ended in a western tyranny, no less severe, over both soul and body.

Both these have indeed a long while oppressed the *Christian* world; and if they be altogether so bad as we have been used to esteem them, are not at present easily accounted for: but we hope, they may be found really not such †; and that the same wise and good ends will appear to be accomplished by them, in due time, either before or at  
their

\* Part ii. p. 170. note N.

† ‘Popery itself (says Dr. *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; though there is reason to suspect that they still retain too much of the old leaven, durst they suffer it to work out. It is observed likewise, that there is not that ignorance and immorality to be objected against the *Papists* now, as formerly; learning being no less propagated among them, than *Protestants*: many good and pious books are published by their clergy; nor are they so scandalous in their lives, as in the ages preceding the Reformation; but they in general are exemplary in their behaviour, and afford us patterns in some things which we might profit by.’ The like has been observed of the *Mahometans* above.

their expiration, 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 knowledge, we have been maintaining; and these succeeding so fast one upon another, that they cannot escape the flightest observation †. Here the above-mentioned branches of it are again united, and affording mutual assistance, and support to one another. Science of all kinds, human and divine, revives; and with it come new methods of communication; (or rather it rises as much above the past, as these exceeded all others before them;) and since has been continuing to improve, and to draw with it all collateral advantages, down to the present times.

The more we still know of human nature, and become better versed in the art of living; (and who doubts but we do so daily?) the more enlarged and adequate notions must we have of natural religion; and thereby be better able to  
judge

\* Of which see more in Part ii. p. 170, and 177, notes.

† See some of the particulars in Part ii. p. 179. 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 industriâ ad istud fastigium deducta pleraque, simulque methodo tam concinnâ tamque perspicue propositâ, ut juvenibus hodie eo pervenire facile sit, quorum olim senibus vix adspirare licuit. *Buddeus* de bonarum literarum decremento nostra ætate non temere metuendo. A. D. 1714.

judge of, and apply revealed \* : the more acquainted we are with the faculties of our own *soul*, the better qualified must we be to regulate and improve them ; to direct the reasoning power, assist the memory, refine the imagination ; in each of which points very considerable discoveries have been made of late : the more we know of the *body*, the more able we are to prescribe a regimen, and remedy the several disorders of it : and (though it seems to be the intent of Providence, for reasons obvious enough †, that *physic* in particular, should not receive the same degrees of improvement with some other arts, yet) perhaps it would not be hard to prove, were this a place for it, that we are actually able to effect this, in a more perfect manner now than formerly ‡; that 'tis rather our observations on the disorders, and defects in each of these that multiply, than the disorders and defects themselves; excepting some such as probably arise, and propagate themselves, from some particular, reigning vices ||.

The

\* 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 last Discourse here annexed, p.

‡ ' 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.

|| If some new distempers have arisen of late, 'tis 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. Diff. v. sect. 6.

The more we know of the *world*, the more we view its order, beauty, symmetry; the uniform laws which it is governed by; the just arrangement, and mutual subserviency of all its parts; (and I need not observe how much this kind of learning has of late increased \*;) the more we see the glory, and perfection of its Architect; and are more fully satisfied that he designed its several inhabitants for happiness in general; and must approve of every regular, consistent method which they take to promote it.

Such observations on *this* world, enable us likewise to argue from it to *another*; and conclude that that will probably go on in the like way; as consisting of the like inhabitants, and con-

\* Of this, and the benefit the world receives from it, see *Worthington*, Eff. p. 94, &c. ‘And if *natural philosophy* in all its parts, by pursuing this method, shall at length be perfected, the bounds of *moral philosophy* will also be enlarged.’ *Newt.* Opt. B. iii. ‘Since things really differ in themselves, in our use of them, and in our conduct about them; the more we know them, the more we may improve both our virtue and our power of converting them 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 perfect 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 an uniform and established analogy between their natural constitution, which our senses perceive, and that moral constitution, which religion supposes.’ *Dr. Tunstall’s Academica*, Part i. p. 84, 85. And that *supernatural* light or knowledge will be increased in the same way, its hindrances being of the very same kind, see *Bp. Butler’s Analogy*, p. 262, &c. 2d Ed.



conducted by the same hand. As the present world has generally improved hitherto, we may expect that, for the same reasons, (be they what they will) it shall continue to do so; and that the next will likewise be still more and more improving: and by the same rule, perhaps each part and member of it, in its respective order, and proportion; every distinct *class*, as it rises above others, through all that *scale* of beings which exist together, may preserve the same uniformity in point of *succession* too; may follow upon each other, in no less regular progress, in a growing happiness, through all eternity: and thus the whole creation be, every way, for ever beautifying in its Maker's eye, and drawing nearer to him by degrees of resemblance; as is suggested by an elegant writer\*.

To these deductions of reason, revelation adds new light, and confirmation; (as it is in like manner itself illustrated and established by them:) it carries on and compleats the notices of natural religion; and improves the prospect, by express declarations of the unlimited goodness of our Creator towards *all* his works; by giving *us* in particular, a positive assurance that we shall be exactly disposed of in another state, according to our respective deserts, and qualifications: fixing and ascertaining our hopes of arriving at those blessed *mansions*; where we shall find room for the free exercise, and full enjoyment of each good moral habit, and intellectual accomplishment: furnishing ample motives for our perseverance in this course, and guarding against every deviation  
from

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

from it; especially against that very dangerous attendant on the noblest dispositions, pride, and self-sufficiency: keeping us in a strict dependence on that God, who is to be both our guide thither, and our great reward there; in whose hands we always are, and ought to wish ourselves; and to whose bounty alone we owe, and should be always very sensible that we do owe, *every good and every perfect gift* \*.

Lastly: The more we trace the ways of Providence in the *moral* world, as also the manner of conducting every *dispensation* of revealed religion; (and we have had much better means of tracing each of them;) we see more of the designs, and purposes of each, than those before us could; and from the manner in which this prospect has already 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 scheme, (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 from the beginning, and executed in a regular gradation; and from thence also can infer, that it will still be farther answering its several ends, and still appearing more to do so: that the *manner* how this is to receive its completion will unfold itself, as we proceed in the study of it; adding our own observations to those of times past, and *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*; as we do those of the *natural* world with one another; whereby we have discovered several of its general laws, unknown to former ages, and probably by them  
judged

\* James i. 17.

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*. Why a more proper application of them does not follow ; why a proportional improvement of these same advantages is not at all times made ; as this seems not to have a necessary connection with the former, it must be accounted for on other principles ( $\gamma$ ). Whether by all these means

( $\gamma$ ) 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. 15. 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, and 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 both for every general *corruption* of religion through most of the climes and ages of the world ; and the particular degeneracy thereof in several parts and periods of the same : — yet 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

means the world might, and ought to have more true *religion*, and sound *morals*, now than formerly;

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 mix with it in any degree; — where the free use of the understanding has been once 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 point which it seems capable of, and which the ablest of its advocates admit, or 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 scarce capable of relishing better: — if we make our inquiry into the state and progress of religion through the 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 men's capacity of 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 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 attention to, their interests; — a purity of morals, and integrity of heart; — or of restoring these in any country where they have begun to decline; — if we reflect upon the world's continual proneness and propensity to a decline in these respects, — together with the causes of all this; — we shall not, I believe, be much surprized at the same 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 connection with some of the things 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 authorize us to suppose that this course, like to that of theirs, will, notwithstanding such, still be in the main, and at

merly; will scarcely admit a doubt : but whether it actually has or not, becomes a very different

en-  
 the long-run appear to have been, really *progressive*. Thus, from the very nature and importance of the forementioned benefits, it seems, that when these once get footing any 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, and idle curiosity ;] 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. 34. 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. 366.*] 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, 'tis probable, that this would not appear, even now, to be so very repugnant to it on the whole : however, that some time or other possibly 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 ; *who seeth not* in this respect *as man seeth*. 'Tis 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 whole *Jewish* dispensation, and the frequent revelations that accompanied it ; [which were at first all put under a *carnal* cover, in order to engage the warmest of their affections, and induce them to take that care, which otherwise they would not have taken in the keeping of them ; (See *Lowth's Directions*, p. 161, &c.) and afterwards these were unfolded by degrees, and illustrated as the day-star began to arise in their hearts ;] and from what has been observed of the age wherein *Christianity* itself was published, [Considerations, p. 151,—6, 181.] 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, just at the time when it was first introduced into the world. It may perhaps be deemed sufficient if they, to whom any such was given, were so far qualified to *hear and profit by it*, [Considerations, p. 181,—2.] as to receive somewhat of it themselves, and hand it down to others

in

enquiry \*. Though perhaps something might be said

in a *competent degree of purity*; and give it such a *sure foundation* in the world, as may support it till all circumstances shall concur which must contribute to its *fullness*, and carry it on to a *state of maturity*. Many of these circumstances seem for some time to have been concurring in some 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 any religious enquiries, as well as others to which they may be applied; to which *application* likewise we 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 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, (though under some degree of struggle,) 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 as follows. 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 be tried, made white and purified, according to the brighter and more refined nature and principles of the dispensation. Consequently the wickedness, even greater wickedness of the wicked, doth not 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 will still be unjust and filthy, how numerous soever; 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.

\* ‘ It does appear to me very *probable*, to say the least, that *few*

said in favour of the present times, in both respects.

First: That 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 reason attributed to the superiority of the *Christian* dispensation; in comparison with which, former ages are justly termed *days*

*of Jews and Christians*, notwithstanding all their vices and corruptions, have, upon the whole, been always better than 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.*

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 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 *Benlon. Reasonableness of the Christian Rel. App. p. 303.*

*of darkness*: and that we of the Reformation, as much excel the dark times of *monkery*, in rational true piety, might perhaps be as easily granted; and with equal justice ascribed to the superior knowledge, that we have of our own dispensation. We have indeed less shew and ceremony, now than ever; less of the *form of godliness* in general; but 'tis hoped, not less of the real *power*. Unprofitable austerities are rather changed for that more *reasonable service*, and refined devotion, which renders the Deity amiable, and the imitation of him useful to mankind; which makes each worshipper more happy in himself, and helpful to his fellow creatures\*. There seems to be much less of *superstition*, and reliance on such things

\* 'They take very unprofitable pains, who endeavour to persuade men that they are obliged wholly to despise this world, 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 *stoick* 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 wise and honest and virtuously disposed men quit the field, and leave the world to the pillage, and the manners of it to the deformation, 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.*



things as can at best be but *means* to religion, and often hardly that; nay, rather tend to take men off the proper principle, and substitute another very different in its room; teaching them to *compound* for real goodness, the substance of all true religion, by that which has not so much as even its shadow; and leading them to contend about that, with such a temper, as could not possibly be exercised, or entertained, in any thing that bore a near relation to the other: It seems, I say, as if there were less of all this; and that there would be less yet, would all those who perceive its remains, unite in opposition to it, with that zeal and soberness, which true religion only can inspire.

As to that spirit of *infidelity*, which so remarkably prevails at present; they who are confident that they understand religion thoroughly, and profess it in its utmost purity; must condemn this humour of examining all parts of it, as absolutely bad, and of pernicious consequence: they who are not so sanguine, will conclude that there are very good ends to be served by it; whatever be the fate, or the intent, of such, (and such it must be owned there are) as most injuriously oppose religion: these believe, that there is the same necessity for suffering this *heretical turn* in general, as for any particular *heresies*; and that thereby already truths of great importance are *made manifest*. They see and lament the consequences of long neglecting to review establishments; and suffering the *publick wisdom* of past ages to serve here, and here only, for all following ones (ε). They think there has been so much

*wood,*

(ε) ‘ But there are few Christian princes who lay this to heart, and divines have quite other things in their thoughts: their great business

wood, hay, stubble, built on the foundation, as must take a considerable time to be removed ;  
 espe-

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 perhaps be determined by the reception which a fair, well-meant proposal for some farther reformation shall meet with. See *Free and Candid Disquisitions*, printed for *A. Millar*, 1749. with the *Appeals* and *Supplements* : 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 *Dr. Fortin*, passim. After all ; our superiors are the best judges of the season proper for attempting such things : 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 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, and appears to meet with no extraordinary encouragement :—that happy time seems to be at some distance from us. See *Dr. Kennicott's* excellent *Dissertations*. I shall conclude with the observation of an impartial writer often referred to, who has been as free as most authors in laying open the defects of ecclesiastical constitutions, and as zealous for their improvement.

Equidem nemo negabit multa reformatione indigere nostras Ecclesias, et consultius utique fore si in simplicitate primitivæ Ecclesiæ subsisteremus, abjectis omnibus schematibus politicis, ecclesias magnopere depravantibus. Verum de eo nunc quidem videndum, an status presens nostrarum ecclesiarum talem refor-

especially when they see some got no farther yet, than to doubt whether there be occasion to have any thing at all removed ; or even to deny that there is reason, either for attempting, or so much as wishing, farther reformation. They observe light, and liberty, at the same time advancing with an equal pace, and affording their mutual help, as they do generally †, to separate these from the *gold, silver, precious stones*; many having taken the *fan* in hand, and resolved thoroughly to purge the floor ; though some be apt to throw away part of the good seed, together with the *chaff* ; which also generally has been the case, and is a very natural one.

Secondly : As to the present *morals*, it may perhaps be a question, whether they grow worse upon the whole ; when it is 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

mationem patitur, et an emendatio sperata inde expectari possit? non sufficit ægrotanti proposuisse statum integritatis valetudinis, et eidem regulas sano corpori convenientissimas commendasse, nisi etiam expertum et compertum habeas, ejusmodi vivendi rationem ad ægrotantis habitudinem satis aptam esse. In hoc certe peccant non pauci, quod ubi nævos in Ecclesiis deprehendunt, æque facile esse credant illos abolere, emendare et delere, quam indicare ; in quo tamen profitentur se naturæ humanæ, imo sui ipsius, cognitione destitui. *Boehmer, Jus Eccl. Protestant. Us. Modern. p. 22.*

† See *Winder's* Description of the benefits of *Liberty* civil and religious. *Hist. of Knowl. Vol. II. c. 21. sect. 3.*

\* History has kept no account of times of peace and tranquility ; it relates only ravages and disasters. *Voltaire Mod. Hist. Vol. IX. c. 211. Comp. Goguet, Part ii. B. i. p. 3.*

rival and eclipse our own; and raises envy, in the room of admiration: — that hence, one of them is often aggravated, the other extenuated most unduly (ζ). On which account, vices may not probably be greater now in general; but we more immediately concerned with them, and suffering under them; especially the reigning ones, (of which there always have been some;) † as those of faction and corruption, luxury and lewdness seem to be at present; and great ones indeed they are, especially in our own country; which yet perhaps are not worse, than the reigning ones of former times [η]: and it is to be remembered, that they come attended with the forementioned advantages of light and liberty, in such a degree,

as

(ζ) See Bp. *Fleetwood's* 2d charge, p. 6, &c. *Iibot's* Serm. on *Ecl.* 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 ingenious author's note on *Hor.* A. P. l. 408. p. 213. 2d Ed. This kind of reasoning is well supported in a *New Estimate of Manners and Principles*, 1760.

† 'There is a certain list of vices committed in all ages, and declaimed against by all authors, which will last as long as human nature; or digested into common places may serve for any theme, and never be out of date until dooms-day.' *Vulg. Err.* p. 22.

(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 veneration 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 forever; or those worthy persons with whom he hath, or might have lived, how depraved forever the greater number is; as it hath always been.' *Ld. Clarendon, Ess.* p. 227.

as we can never be too thankful for ; and which, we hope, will speedily correct them ; the one enabling men soon to see their evil consequences ; the other allowing them full scope to censure, and expose them ; and through both these, it may be, that each other vice becomes more open, and apparent now ; rather than of superior size, and strength. So that concerning the present times, we have some room to think, that they are not absolutely worse than all before them, as to *morals* (θ). Perhaps I may be allowed to advance a step farther, and suppose them better in some respects ; that we have certain virtues now in greater perfection ; particularly more of true *charity*, or *universal benevolence*, than ever, since the time of primitive *Christianity* (ι). — But if this be deemed

(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 refusing quarter, and slaying all the males ; their triumphs, torturing and killing slaves ; their proscriptions, poisonings, exposing and murdering children ; rapes, incest, &c. which need no aggravation. Not to mention that savage, desolating way of making war, which constitutes the body of their history ; that horrid treachery, and barefaced iniquity, which appear on many occasions ; that notorious breach of national faith, and open violation of decency prevailing in their councils, and avowed by express declarations, whenever the particular interest of their country seemed to be promoted by it. Examples of this occur frequently among the *Greeks*, as well as *Romans*, in the very purest and politest ages of their government. See *Hakerwill*, L. iv. passim, or *Jonston* de *Naturæ constantia*, Punct. iii—ix. Sir *T. P. Blount*, *Ess.* p. 145. *Hume*, *Polit. Dif.* x. *Spirit of Nations*, B. iii. c. 21.

(ι) I may add, that there seems to be a more perfect resignation to the will of God, and acquiescence in his providence, among all ranks of men ; a greater firmness in enduring pain ;

deemed a mistake, and too partial fondness for the present times; I trust, it will be also judged a pardonable one, amid so much most evident partiality against them; especially, as it is on the charitable side; and tends to make them really better than they would be, did worse opinions of them universally prevail.

Which brings me, in the last place, to the *consequences* that attend the other way of thinking.

These have been hinted at in the beginning of this Discourse; and might be shewn more parti-  
cu-

more chearfulness and courage in submitting to death, among the generality, even of lowest education: in short, that mankind may be said to grow more spiritual and *intellectual*, in these and many other respects, than they have been in former ages: 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 politicks and polite literature than the present subject, has been pleased to affirm) [*Letters on the Study of History*, p. 175.] that on the contrary, this, where-ever 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.

cularly to affect the honour of God, our own happiness, and that of others; in as much 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 his perfections, and thereby deadens our devotion toward him; — damps and discourages all study; and destroys the pleasure that would arise from a survey of both the *natural* and *moral* world, and from reflections on the station we hold in them; — renders us far less sensible of the happiness within our power; and by consequence, makes us receive less from them; — not only hinders men from growing better, but actually makes them worse; and suffers the world daily to decline, through a persuasion that it is designed to do so; — it having been observed, that those writings which *villainize* mankind, have a pernicious tendency towards propagating, and protecting villainy; and help the most of all to teach, and encourage it (\*); in the same

(\*) In proof of the foregoing observation, not to mention here such foreign authors as *Esprit*, *Rocheffoucauld*, and *Bayle*, who seem to have taken a deal of perverse pains to eradicate all 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 too apt to sway people; — by pointing at the means whereby a politician may sometimes *avail* himself of these, as well as serve some present interest of the publick in indulging them; — by a droll way of describing things, and a due mixture of some very ill-natured truths, that looks like more than ordinary sagacity, and a shrewd knowledge of the world; and serves to gratify a man's own vanity, or spleen, while it appears to be exposing that of others; — in fine, by dwelling altogether on the foibles and the follies of the worst and weakest of mankind: — draws such an horrid, and at the same time hu-

same manner as those which perpetually dwell on the dark side of things, and the difficulties that attend

mourous picture of the species, as has at once diverted, and debauched the principles of more persons of the best understandings amongst 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 men's behaviour, or their tempers, 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 and debilitate any attempt to subdue an exorbitant passion, or inveterate habit; they destroy all vigorous endeavours toward 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 when opposed 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 love, 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 the generality; give us unworthy, narrow notions of the Creator and Governor of this world, and cut off the least prospect of enlarging or improving them in any other. They must cause a decay of publick spirit, and a want of publick faith; a decline and a gradual dissolution of private honour, truth, and common 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 gratifying, serving, or supporting others. And though such a deep discovery of the springs of action may seem best to shew us, how men are 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 publickly social disposition, and all the *charities* of private life: in short, destroys all that is great and good, or amiable in them; or which can make any superior station eligible amongst them.

But farther, if there be a real system of things pre-established upon different principles,—then must such schemes of government prove full as useless, as uncomfortable; being wholly founded



attend our search after the ways of God, serve only to darken the view still more, and multiply

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 no: 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 as such, in all good policy; and our political system 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 most part of the beauty and chief benefit of his work: it gives so base an idea, both of 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 so near a relation to, and close connection with these; from whence he is like to receive so little either of true honour or advantage.

How much more beautiful and just a theory might, with less labour, be erected on sound morals, and a sense of religion! which would make all true, rational pleasure, coincide; 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 deal of pure good in possession, must fill and extend the soul with everlasting hope of infinitely greater. Where every virtue would, in every one, essentially promote and perfect those of others; and each, with infinite consistency, 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 share 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

ply those very difficulties. How much better, both the end and the effect of those, which  
place

prevent happiness, either mediately or immediately, in every system, [from whence indeed it has its name, and on account of which only it ought to be, and has ever been, 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 complex bodies; where more than ordinary skill is requisite, to compute the consequences of each particular act or habit; and assign each influence to its proper cause. But this grows more apparent in 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 even *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 of them fixed; and fairly 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 this 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 the thing in one strong case, which was unhappily this author's leading instance; *viz.* that of *luxury*, or excess, being of advantage to a beneficial *trade*. See *Temple's*  
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place human nature in its fairest light; and represent the *lovely form* as worthy of its Author; as

Observations on the *Netherlands*, p. 66. fol. [Comp. *Hutcheson's* Remarks, 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*, even 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 any entertainment to one, that is either desirous of concurring in any thing 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. I shall conclude with observing, that the celebrated author of the *Characteristicks*, 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 reconcilable 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 (which is ever of great use, and often necessary in matters of the last importance;) 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 *villainy*. This has been just proposed above [Part i. note a. p. 10, &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 par-

as well as of those that display the beauty and beneficence of the divine œconomy; and produce an assurance of that paternal care, and conduct of us here, which brings the truest enjoyment, and most grateful acknowledgment of present benefits; and likewise begets a joyful hope, and stedfast expectation of more substantial ones hereafter!

The *consequences* of the foregoing doctrine might be urged farther, in regard both to the *atheist* and *deist*; to convince the one, that all things have not gone at random; but that there are plain tokens of a plan, and government; and, from what has already past, reason to think, that more of it will ever appear, and in a still more perfect manner: to shew the other, that as the several dispensations of, what we call, revealed Religion, have hitherto been in the main conformable to those of Providence, in both the natural and moral world, this possibly may come from the same author; and receive yet farther increase, which these also do, as they are daily better understood.

But if this be not the case in any degree here, we seem to have nothing left whereon to ground an *analogical* argument (which yet is our best, if not our only natural argument) for an hereafter; no visible footsteps of wisdom and goodness, to conduct us in our search after a first cause; no settled foundation for our hopes of futurity, the basis of all natural religion: all is chaos and confusion thus far, and therefore may be so, for ought we know, eternally; either without any  
good,

particular examination of both the systems abovementioned, may be read with pleasure in Dr. *Brown's* Essays on the *Characteristicks*.

good, consistent scheme at all; or that, as soon as fixed, unfixed again, and disappointed: — in short, the divine government, if there be one, must on this scheme be inferior to most human administrations (λ.)

Thus

(λ) This Scheme, how extraordinary soever it may appear, has met with a late ingenious advocate, in a Sermon preached before the University of Cambridge, Jan. 30, 1758, the title of which is, *The influence of the improvements of life on the moral principle considered*; by B. Newton, M. A. and the design, to shew, that in proportion to the *increase* of the former, there is a *constant decrease* in the latter. He was obliged by his own hypothesis, to allow the main point that was once debated, 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 connection 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 connection with each other; and that there are some other connections, 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 have 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 Origin 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 shewn 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 connection between every part thereof, and our proper duty. Not that a distinct, actual view, either of this principle or end is always possible,

Thus then we see, how necessary it is to form right notions of the past state of the world, espe-

sible, or requisite even in the best regulated minds here, to render such a course of action, as is denominated virtuous, acceptable to, and rewardable 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, 'tis 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 get 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, instinct, 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 acute philosophers; and it would be hard to brand such 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 occurs daily 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 traffick 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 confident 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 do well to shew 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 difficul-  
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especially in regard to that important point, *religion*; in order to judge how it will be for the future;

ty to shew, 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*, 'tis 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 the great object of virtue, but 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. 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 such end; nothing 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 *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 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

future; and in what manner we are to conduct ourselves with relation to it. If it has hitherto been

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; otherwise it would not be reasonable in us, but romantick; 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*. But as this gentleman never told us, what he understands by his *principle*, (or as he sometimes phrases it, *the principles*, p. 7.) of virtue; he is at liberty to explain the thing in his own way; and when he does, 'tis hoped, will let us see how it becomes so highly affected by the *improvements of life*. At present, I doubt, he not only confounds this with the *end*, private happiness; but likewise confines that to temporal enjoyments only; leaving a *future state* quite out of the reckoning; and thus has either set aside, or extremely narrowed his foundation of happiness in the will of God; while he is *fancying* that these may come in for a proper substitute to the moral, or religious principle, and produce all the effect that was intended by it, or might be expected from it. But when he comes to *fact*, perhaps he will find these gratifications, much improved as they are, still very insufficient for that purpose; so long as men observe, that these very often fail them; and sometimes meet with much more of this kind of happiness in the opposite road:



been really progressive, we find good reason to expect the same still farther. We have strong motives

road : or if this were less frequently the case, and some of our modern improvements had been carried on so far, as to engage and enable men to *converse with each other upon better and safer terms than formerly*, p. 7. yet I beg leave to question, whether such artificial engraftments can be made on any of them, as will produce fruits equally permanent, and of the same *flavour*, and perfection, with those fair, native branches of morality, that grow from the good old genuine stock of truth, sincerity, and charity, or *love unfeigned*. If then, he persists in affirming, that it is merely for the sake of mutual safety and convenience, that the generality of men are willing now a-days to deal well by each other; which can be known only by seeing into their hearts: If this, I say, were the case, with more, than in all probability it is; yet, as the attempt to persuade men, that it is so universally, must tend to diminish that little good which is producible by these appearances; I do not see what great use there is in such shrewd observations on this spurious birth of artificial virtue; and submit it to the reader, whether, after all, one might not as well *suffer his judgement to be directed* by the benevolent and *more exalted affections*, p. 6. as be drawn in, by a semblance of profound sagacity, to such an uncomfortable system as this gentleman has set before us; though, I am satisfied, without any bad design.

But let us examine a little farther into our author's account of this perpetual degeneracy of virtue, and the occasion of it, viz. modern *improvements*; all which, he says, *have weakened and impaired the principles of it*, p. 7. inasmuch as they *directly tend* to introduce something very different in its room; ib. as they are constantly engendering *corruption*, and productive of *evil*, p. 12. How true this account is, can only be determined by an enumeration of facts, which he has hitherto been wise enough not to attempt; when he does, perhaps he will find it very far from being so, *constantly*; even in one of the most remarkable instances usually alledged to that purpose: *v. g.* an increase of *riches* is not always productive of idleness, luxury, extravagance; &c. witness a neighbouring state; whose ruin, whenever it commences, cannot surely be charged to any of these vices; but rather, in all probability, to the same spirit, which at first raised it, misapplied; *i. e.* to the excess of an habitual parsimony; which may as easily be carried on in societies, as individuals; which habit is more apt to continue growing, in all such especially as acquire an original fortune, and have learnt to improve and value it; than either to decay, or alter to the opposite qualities;

motives to go into this scheme ourselves; and clear directions how to proceed in it. Instead of looking

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 lities; though perhaps other persons, differently educated, and succeeding to such a fortune without any care of their own, may thereby be exposed to strong temptations of running into these and the like vices; for which they are so plentifully stocked with means and opportunities: which seems to be all the mystery of the matter. His observation therefore, as often as it is true, is only so by accident; in the same manner as the production of those evils which are supposed to arise from *learning*, p. 8. *liberty*, and *government*; p. 9. which last, according to our author, the better it is, the worse the people; and by the same rule, little merit must there be in those who labour to improve it. If men are, as he says, p. 11. *equally restless in the possession, as under the want of liberty*, what signifies attempting to procure, or to preserve it for them? But, I trust, the author speaks here for a few only, not the whole, even of our own nation: though were the latter case never so true at present, in its utmost extent, what is that to the *state of the world in general*; or to the *general progress* of improvement in it, as laid down in the book? Perhaps we of this land, may be just at some critical period; and the effervescence of certain humours, prove equally necessary to a perfect cure of our disorders in the body politic, as in the natural. There is no general consequence to be drawn then from such partial, *minute* considerations; nor is it a very *clear and complete* (p. 10.) way of judging, to determine of the universe, either from common fame, or from some few particular occurrences, in the present state of some one country. If there is really a *plan*, in what he calls the *general constitution of things*; p. 12. this is no more to be learnt, by what passes at any one time or place; than the *plot* of a regular drama, from a single scene; or the system of the heavenly bodies, from a few glances of a spectator, placed in a wrong point of view. To conclude; the fact so far as it is true, viz. that great evils often attend the best improvements; may be, and has been, sufficiently accounted for. This, while the great principle of human liberty makes part, and the most valuable part of our nature; must in a great measure, be unavoidable; as observed in a former note. But this is far from justifying the author's assertion, that they do so constantly, and universally; much less, that one of them in any proper sense *produces*, or *engendereth* the other: nor, if they did, would this amount to his other estimate, that the former of these *over-balances* the latter; p. 9. and consequently, that things are ever on the decline: provided that either by the dispensations of divine  
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ing back, and labouring to confine it to the model of past times; we learn rather, with the great *Apostle*, to *forget those things which are behind, reaching forward unto those things which are before, and pressing toward the mark* \*.

And,

Providence, or the effects of human industry, these same improvements, and the natural benefits arising from them as such, keep an equal pace with the other; which is not denied. See the *New Estimate of Manners and Principles*, Part iii.

\* *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, very 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 upon those *Ne plus ultra* that could not be exceeded. We retain, as I have said before, a just reverence for them, as great lights, which appeared in very dark times; and we read them rather to vindicate them from those impositions, which confident men frequently make them liable to, to serve their own corrupt ends; than that we cannot attain to as much clear knowledge by reading later writers, in less time than turning over their volumes will require: so that we may modestly enough (which more men think than say) believe that of the fathers, which one of *Tully’s* orators said of the *Latin* language, *Non tam praeclarum est scire, — quam turpe est nescire*; it is more shame to scholars not to have read the fathers, than profitable to them to have read them. 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 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 anti-

And, to use the same *Apostle's* advice, *Let us therefore, as many as desire to be perfect, be thus minded.*

quity for any other testimony, than for *matter of fact*; and there-  
to without restraining our own enquiry, or rational conjectures.  
The time is come, which the philosopher foretold in his discourse  
of comets, *Multa sunt quae esse concedimus, qualia sunt ignoramus;*  
*veniet tempus, quo posterì nostri tam aperta nos nesciisse mirentur.* We  
may indeed well wonder at their gross ignorance in all things  
belonging to astronomy; in which many of the fathers knew  
no more than they; and so could not understand many places  
in the Scriptures: and whosoever reads their commentaries up-  
on the several books of Scripture, cannot be blamed for want of  
modesty, if he differs with them very often: which learned  
men of all opinions always have, and always will do. 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: and if our practice of the duties  
of religion be not as great and as sincere as theirs, (which we  
have too much reason to suspect) our advantage and knowledge  
will turn to our reproach and damage.

Let us then, in God's name, appeal to and imitate the sim-  
plicity, humility, and charity of some primitive Christians; up-  
on whom neither ambition, nor riches, nor love of life, could  
prevail to decline the strict path of virtue, or to swerve in any  
degree from the profession of the truth; that truth, by which  
they were sure they might be saved. Let us learn of them to  
despise those temptations of the world, which perplex, and dis-  
tract, and obstruct our journey to Heaven. Let us imitate their  
courage and constancy in adhering to what is right, and to what  
is just, to which their examples should encourage us; and those  
primitive times did yield us many such examples worthy of our  
imitation: though I must still say, it was not the purity of the  
times, but the integrity of some persons: the times were at least  
as wicked, as any which have followed; and none have follow-  
ed so bad, in which there have not been some persons eminent  
for virtue and piety; who would mend the very times, if their  
examples had been imitated: nor have we reason to believe,  
that the very time in which we live, is destitute of such persons;  
but that it abounds as plentifully in such, as any age that hath  
been before it; though they are never so much as talked of  
whilst they are alive; and it may be, there is not so much care  
taken to preserve the memory of them when they are dead, as  
there hath been heretofore.

*minded.* As we have the best means of effecting this within our power; as we live under the mildest,

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 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 land-marks with us. It is a caution near as old as Christianity, *Nil magis præstandum est, quam ne, pecorum ritu, sequamur antecedentium gregem; pergentes non qua eundum 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 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 take the pains to examine the reason they governed themselves by. But there is hope, the present age will buoy itself up from this abyfs 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 in vain to strive against our fate: nay, some men think, that there is pre-

mildest, most indulgent of all 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

scription 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. without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, despisers of those who are good, &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 modester, 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 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 judgement 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 *Dr. Worthington*, *Ess. on Redemption.* c. 13, 14.

\* Remarkably ingenious is the testimony which a celebrated foreigner, the author of *L'Esprit des Loix*, bears to the excellency of

(suffer me once more to remind us of it) which includes every thing valuable in life; and above all things, tends most to accelerate the progress abovementioned: let us, instead of making it either a covering for *sedition* \* against such a government; or a cause of gratifying our *maliciousness* against each other; be diligent in using it to the good purposes for which it is so liberally indulged us; and render ours as much superior to those nations that are yet deprived of it, as most other countries are observed to have been, in the like circumstances.

Let us concur with this auspicious course of providence, and each contribute our endeavours towards carrying on this progress, by every serious, fair, and free enquiry: *free*, not only from all outward violence and clamour; but also from (what our most holy religion with the greatest reason equally condemns, as being the root from whence

of our *civil* constitution in this respect; which deserves to be reflected on by every intelligent *Englishman*, and will, 'tis hoped, in time produce the same amiable spirit in the *ecclesiastical*.

'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 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*.' Mr. *Taylor's* Essay on the Beauty of the Divine Oeconomy, p. 62. I have the pleasure of seeing both the general plan of these Discourses, and many sentiments in particular, confirmed by this truly honest and ingenious writer, and that without his having read the book.

\* Vid. *Benson* on 1 *Pet.* ii. 16.

whence these spring) all inward bitterness, wrath, hatred \* : learning to bear with one another's mistakes, in this, as well as in other matters ; nay, rather the more here ; since these are of the highest consequence ; and this the only proper method to remove them : thus labouring, as well to reform the errors of our brethren in love, as to promote and confirm their knowledge of the truth ; *not for that, in either case, we have dominion over their faith ; but as being helpers of their joy* †. And thus shall religion be at length 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 new points, or improving upon the original revelation itself ‡, in any thing essential to the general doctrine of salvation : but only a more perfect comprehension of what was formerly delivered ; a view of the extent and excellence of this great mystery concealed from former ages ; and which, though given almost all at once, yet was received perhaps 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 far more time to rectify ; especially, when so much rubbish has been since continually

\* ' 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 simplicity 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. 156, 157. § Ibid. 153.



tinually thrown upon the Scriptures, both by translators and expositors; as, if we set aside the care of a particular providence, which has in this respect (so far I mean as relates to the Text \*) been very remarkable ‡; might make us justly wonder they have not sunk under it. This has, in these parts of the world, been for some time a clearing off, by the help of a more sound philosophy; as well as by more sober rules of criticism; a much more close, consistent method of interpretation; which must produce as great a difference in them, as if they were quite different books †.

Though perhaps even here, it would not be a difficult task, were it not too invidious, to suggest means of yet farther improvement. Perhaps we ought to attend still more to the *Hebrew* idiom, and observe the vast disparity between the East-

\* 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* *Europae 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 so much amiss, and therefore would in all probability have taken place.

‡ 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 unvailers.' *Boyle's* *Excell. of Theol.* p. 47.

Eastern way of speaking, and our own; for want of which, 'tis to be feared, we oft retain the words without the sense, nay, with a very different one\*; and by adhering too much to the letter, are apt to overstrain most things; and carry them both beyond common reason, and the nature of the subject. Perhaps our very reverence for these sacred writings misapplied, our too unguarded zeal to do them honour, and support their divine authority, against that church which substitutes another in its room, may have contributed to cast a cloud over the whole; which makes us afraid to look into them, and examine these, 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 †: which, beside the bad effects it may be supposed

\* — Quo clarius appareat Orientalium Scriptorum stylum, audacioribus translationibus refertum, non ex more nostro loquendi hodierno debere exponi, *quae maxima pene est interpretum culpa*. Cum sensum *ἐνοίας* 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 observe, 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

posed to have at present; when once it appears (as soon perhaps it may) to have no good foundation in these holy books ( $\mu$ ); 'tis to be feared, will

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.

( $\mu$ ) As I would not give unnecessary offence in such a tender point as this, 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  $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\omega\pi\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma\omicron\iota$ , 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 and the rest of the world, as to religious matters, 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 at last to be allowed by *Abp. Potter*, in his elaborate Discourses on the Subject of *Direction*; which he compares to a skilful rider's guidance of his horse, *Praelect.* 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 of *Direction*, are included several instances of mere human infirmity, or ignorance, p. 202, and want of memory, 203, and even various *leſions*, 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, beside such as may be supposed to concur with the operations of mankind in the ordinary

will produce a worse, by tending to discredit that *partial* one, whether of *guidance*, and *superintendency*,

nary 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, seems much more conformable to the other works of God; and affords many circumstances of credibility, which, though some of them seem to come in by the bye, and are often contained in a mere parenthesis; yet more clearly evince, and will in all ages more incontestably confirm, the reality of a divine concurrence; by supporting the genuineness of that relation which is attended with it; and offering so many means to confute every pretended instance of this, were it groundless; than if such revelations had been all made and recorded at one time, by themselves, and by men altogether overruled in the delivery of them.

This likewise seems in a good measure to have been the case with the *N. T.* writers; who, notwithstanding the things they were to deliver are mostly of greater consequence, and more closely united in point of time, place, and other circumstances; notwithstanding the extraordinary assistance of the *Spirit*, which was to abide with them, and lead them into all necessary truth; and for the most part either the thing itself shews, or they give us sufficient intimation, when they are obliged to have recourse to that assistance: yet from the very form in which they usually deliver them, it must appear, that this influence is no less frequently suspended in the delivery of even these fundamental truths; it being perhaps peculiar to the *Son of God* himself, to have the *Spirit* at all times *without measure*, or limitation: [see *Doddridge*, on *Joh. iii. 34.* *Fam. Ex. Vol. I. p. 162.*] And beside these, how oft do the same persons condescend to treat of other inferior, controversial matters; useful indeed, some to the then present, some to all future times; but surely of a very different nature from the former; and in which that influence and assistance does not seem so requisite! How justly do they place the evidence of facts, on their own senses only! declaring *what they have seen and heard*; which at all times may, and which alone can, be produced as proper proof. In reasonings, how beautifully do they add their private sentiments; and in affairs of smaller moment, even their conjectures; to what they had received from the *Lord* himself! where circumstances shew us the expediency of such additions; and where common sense was, and will be always, equally sufficient to distinguish one from the other; as it is to interpret the whole Scriptures, (so far

dency, (if that can properly be called such) or of *suggestion*, which upon some occasions they do claim ;

far as they become necessary to be interpreted by us), without any other more 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 judgement from what they really find within that sacred book. Not content with a *moral evidence* of its *truth*, which is clear, strong, and every way sufficient for the conviction of all fair enquirers ; (vid. *Jacquelot de la Verité, et de l'Inspiration, &c.* c. 6. p. 45.) they must needs introduce another, where there is no room for it ; and insist on such *universal, absolute infallibility*, as never can be made out, to those who are not already 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 usefess ; 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 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 affects that, 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 interrupt 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

claim ; which is absolutely requisite to secure a due authority to them ; and which, when prudently distinguished from the other, has, and we trust ever will appear to have, sufficient ground to support itself.

To this high, I had almost said, 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, real one ; for which we cannot surely have too much concern ; but one which sometimes widely varies from it, and yet is very apt to slip into its place ; the commonly received, *traditional* one. This doctrine we learn from those very adversaries, which in the former we were striving to oppose : and  
though

an uncorrected mistake.' *Doddridge*, Lectures, Part vi. Prop. cxvi. p. 330.

I am very sensible that what is here hinted, is too general and superficial, to give tolerable satisfaction on so nice a point ; nor have I any thoughts of going deeper into it ; and may with great truth assure the reader, that the intention of this is not to degrade, or, in the least, disparage the holy Scriptures ; but rather to free them from an unnecessary load of objections, and render them more useful to the chief purposes for which, I humbly apprehend, they were designed ; hoping thus much may serve to occasion some more accurate enquiry 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 requires : and whether this be a proper time to canvas it thoroughly ; whether the generality be qualified to form more just and clear conceptions of it now, than formerly ; is with all possible deference submitted to better judges. See the authors on this subject in note (\*). p. 153, with *Middleton's* Miscell. Tracts, N. 1, 2. Bp. *Warburton's* Sermon. 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.*

though indeed it have a shew of deference to public wisdom, and *humility*; yet in time, probably, may be attended with no better consequences: if men cannot distinguish pure, primitive *Christianity*, from that which oft may happen not to be such, and through which the other always suffers; and if in this, which of all things is most deserving of their care and caution, they will content themselves with the sense of the multitude; and take that for a sure, sufficient rule, which they know to be far from even excusing those who have means of judging for themselves; and which they would be extremely unwilling to abide by in almost any other case\*.

But I should be sorry to be found so far contradicting my main design, as to make things in any respect,

\* ‘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. 263. 2d Ed.

respect, worse at present than they really are. On this subject, I could hardly avoid hinting at some few of those impediments, that seem to lie most in our way to perfection; and hope at this time of day, a hint of that kind may be hazarded without offence: yet notwithstanding these, or any others which could be produced; I must beg leave to conclude, that we have encouragement enough left to proceed with cheerfulness and vigour in it; till every thing which lets, in God's good time, be taken away; and true religion, righteousness, and virtue, shine in perfect beauty: *till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*



REFLECTIONS  
ON THE  
LIFE and CHARACTER  
OF  
*CHRIST.*



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# REFLECTIONS

ON THE

## Life and Character of *CHRIST*.

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JOHN XX. 30, 31.

*And many other signs truly did JESUS, in the presence of his disciples; which are not written in this book.*

*But these are written, that ye might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his Name.*

THESE two verses, if they did not originally conclude the gospel of St. *John*, as some learned men have thought\*; are, however, so far parallel to those words which now stand at the end of this, and probably refer to it jointly with the three other gospels; that they serve equally to inform us, what the true intention of their writers was, *viz.* not to give a complete account of all the things that *Jesus* did ( $\xi$ ), much less  
of

\* Vid. *Grot.* et *Cleric.* in loc. cum *Bibl. Choif.* Tom. xiv. p. 387. *Voss.* Harm. L. iii. c. 4. Add *Critical Notes*, p. 79. Dr. *W. Worthington*, Sermon. p. 28. and on the other side, *Mill.* Prolegom.

( $\xi$ ) How far this was from being so, may be seen in *Le Clerc*, Harm. Diff. p. 587. from *John* ii. 3. — Add 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

of all the reasons, and occasions of them ; but only to record so many naked *facts* †, of each kind,  
as

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. III. p. 88. where a remarkable instance is produced to this purpose.

† 'To make evident who that master was, whose disciples they professed themselves, their business was to tell, how they knew him, what miracles he had wrought, and all those other particulars which we read in their gospels; in which they made use of no disquisitions; but in a plain and faithful narrative declared their knowledge of those 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. Diff. p. 611. Comp. *Faquelot de la Ver. et de l'Inspir. des livres du V. et N. T.* Part ii. c. 6. p. 301, 305, &c. or *Duchal*, Sermon. i. 'It doth not appear, that ever it came into the minds 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 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 have been, 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 are not commended, his enemies are not reproached, nor even blamed; but every thing is told naked and unadorned, just as it happened; and all who read, are left to judge,  
and

as would be abundantly sufficient to lay a sure foundation for our faith in his divine mission, and by that faith lead us to eternal happiness.

And indeed, the account which we find there delivered, plain as it is and simple, is yet in itself of so very extraordinary a nature; and exhibits such an important and amazing scene of wisdom, power, and goodness; as must, when duly attended to, convince us, that it could have no less than a divine original.

What I propose at present is, to consider these *signs* of Jesus in their utmost latitude; as comprehending the several circumstances of his life, whereby he proved himself to be the very *Christ*; gave evidence of his authority to undertake; and really accomplished the work of our redemption. I shall endeavour to lay before you such a general view of this transaction, as may help to discover the fitness and propriety of our Saviour's conduct in the whole.

Let us begin where the beloved Disciple dates his gospel, (who had much higher manifestations, and a more perfect knowledge of his Master, than any other of the evangelists;) and with him reflect a little on Christ's *original state*, and *subsequent humiliation*\*. That a Being of infinite glory and

and make reflections for themselves: a manner of writing, which the historians never would have fallen into, had not their minds 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. The more immediate occasion and design of each Gospel, may be seen in *Dr. Owen's Observations*, 1764.

\* 'To a Being who existed, *before* his birth, in some *happier* state, the *whole* of the embodied state may be regarded as *one continued act of humiliation*; and in a sense, as one uninterrupted

and perfection, the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, and the Lord of heaven and earth; should condescend to degrade himself from all this power and dignity; *divest himself* † of every glorious attribute; and appear not only in the *form*, but *real nature* of man, and in its most imperfect and forlorn estate; — under all the wants, and weaknesses, and pains of

rupted scene of *suffering*.' *J. N. Scott*, Serm. Vol. II. p. 164. That our blessed Saviour had such an existence, is fully demonstrated by the author of *the Glory of Christ as God-man displayed*: but that this pre-existence was in a *human soul*, will not perhaps be so readily admitted.

† *Phil.* ii. 7. *ἐαυτον ἐκενωσε*, emptied, exinanivit, *Greg. Nyss.* in *1 Cor.* xv. Evacuavit, *Hieron.* in *Gal.* iii. 13. Some understand this in the most literal sense. See *Watts's Glory of Christ as God-man*, p. 222, 236, &c. Comp. *John* xvii. 5.

(o) This circumstance of our Saviour's submitting to be reduced to so low a state as that of a *common infant*, on his entrance into this world, instead of raising all that grateful admiration which so wonderful a thing requires; has of late been turned to shock the faith of believers, and become the great scoff and stumbling-block of infidels. But though we cannot presume to account for the whole of that extraordinary transaction, [the knowledge whereof is probably in a great measure reserved for the next life;] yet may we, I think, easily assign some obvious reasons, why he should appear in this manner rather than another. 1. 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, and give a lasting proof that he was really come; the several qualifications of his person, and chief circumstances of his advent, were at large described long before. It was promised in particular, that he should be of the seed of *Abraham*, tribe of *Judah*, family of *David*, &c. But if he had appeared at first in an adult state, he would have had no more relation to one tribe, or family, than another: if what some of the *Jews* advanced from their *traditions*, [*John* vii. 27. Vid. *Whitby*; comp. *Bp. Chandler*, Def. p. 250. and *Vind.* p. 429.] that when *Christ* cometh, *no man knoweth whence he is*, were true; it would have been impossible for any such prophecies as these to have been accomplished; and extremely difficult for the people to whom he was primarily sent,

of infancy (*o*)! That he should be content to recover his former qualities one by one, in slow degrees,

sent, much more for others, ever to have come to a sufficient certainty about him. 2. It appears from all God's dispensations to mankind, that though there be evidence sufficient to convince impartial judgements; yet there is none of such a nature, as would utterly confound their understandings, and compel their assent. Now had Christ come from heaven, in the full brightness of his Father's glory, attended with a numerous host of angels; in some such manner as the *Jesuit* missionary was pleased to represent to his *Chinese* auditory; [see his very remarkable Sermon in *Miller*, Prop. Christ. Vol. II. p. 291, &c.] or had he entered this world in a way wholly new and marvellous; had he made his very first appearance among the chief *Jews*, in a state of maturity; publicly declaring who he was, and wherefore he was sent; and instantly demanding their submission, by a suitable train of most stupendous miracles; so that none of them should have been able either to mistake, or resist him: this method, beside its giving too much countenance to the wrong notions they had already entertained of the Messiah's kingdom, — its encouraging them to come into it upon principles entirely opposite to its true constitution; and contradicting the most noble and essential parts of his design, [*viz.* his *purifying* (*Mal.* iii. 2, 3. Vid. *Pocock*) some of them, and suffering others to persist (*Luke* ii. 34. vid. *Clarke*) in their wilful *ignorance* (*Acts* iii. 17. *1 Cor.* ii. 8.) and hardened unbelief; in order thereby to bring about the greatest benefit to mankind in general. Vid. note *g.* below, and *Considerations*, p. 140.] this method would have been too violent and overbearing to have left any room for real merit; any exercise of the chief moral virtues, in those who adhered to him upon such an immediate view; and the relation of it would have been of too selfish and suspicious a sort, ever to engage the belief of distant ages, and nations: it would have been far every way from affording any competent trial of that fair, humble, upright, and ingenuous temper, which is the chief glory and happiness of each sincere worshipper of God; the discovery whereof was to be one great end of the Messiah's office; (*Luke* ii. 34, 35. vid. *Cleric.*) and to encourage and reward which, is the true aim of all religious dispensations.

Many unanswerable reasons have been given, why it should seem fitting that the Son of God, were he to visit and converse with us, should condescend to conform himself in *several* respects to Beings of our frame, and for a time become like one of them; though that must needs imply great degradation and

degrees\*, and mixed with all the infirmities of childhood! That after he had received such wisdom and knowledge, as was far above the situation he then appeared in; he should nevertheless continue under a silent subjection to his parents, in a servile, low, laborious employment, for the best part of thirty years †! That when he entered on his ministry ‡, and was endowed with full powers for the due discharge of it, and able to

abatement in him: why then may not we suppose this to have been the case in *all* respects, (sin only excepted;) without any just imputation, either on his purity, or perfect wisdom? Since any kind of communication between such a divine person, and creatures of so low a class, will infer some very considerable humiliation in him; should not all arguments against it, merely drawn from the *degree* of that humiliation, be esteemed of little weight?

\* *Luke* ii. 52. vid. *Whitby*.

† Thus some render *Luke* iii. 23. *And Jesus himself had then lived in subjection*, i. e. to his supposed parents, or had been governed by them, *about thirty years*: ἀρχομενος there signifying the same as ὑποτασσομενος, c. ii. 51. *Heylin*, Lectures, p. 273. and Select Disc. p. 76. from Crit. Exam. of the Gospels, p. 27, &c. 'Harsh as it may seem, that the great Reformer of the human race should devote most of his days to a servile occupation; it furnishes us with one of the strongest evidences of the divine original of Christianity. Had Jesus studied every branch of science under the best masters of those days, we might have ascribed his superior accomplishments to human causes: but, when destitute of all the means of improvement, he bursts out of obscurity with a lustre that surpassed all the Orators and Philosophers of antiquity, we cannot suspend our belief of his divinity a moment.' Library, No. ix. p. 452.

‡ His deferring it to that age was, as *Lightfoot* observes, according to the law. *Num.* iv. 3, 23, 35, 43, 47. We shall find a like conformity to the same, preserved in all the chief parts of it. That at the commencement of this office he was very properly prepared for the execution of it, both by a due exercise of devotion, and a lively prefiguration of the principal difficulties that attended it, is well shewn in an *Enquiry into the Nature and Design of Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness*, by *H. Farmer*.



to destroy his several adversaries with a single word; he should still undergo the various assaults of each of these; — the subtle stratagems, and spiteful opposition of devils; — the contradiction and contempt of sinful men: — who eagerly pursued him for no cause, but one that merited a very different return; *viz.* his attempting 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 departed; raising them from that abject state of degeneracy and corruption, into which they were fallen; reducing them to a right sense and sincere practice of their duty, and thereby reinstating them in the divine favour; and rendering them meet to be partakers of a happy immortality. When in the prosecution of this design, he meets with a most unkind reception from the governors of that nation to which he immediately directs himself; instead of publickly displaying all the powers with which he was invested, and admitting all that homage, which the high character of such a messenger from heaven, must have commanded from the multitude; but which ill comported with the ends for which he came, and with the doctrine he had to deliver\*: — Instead, I say, of accept-  
ing

\* ‘ The Divine powers with which *Christ* was invested, were designed as the seal of his mission; and accordingly, they were never applied to a different purpose. This strict appropriation of his miracles to their proper intention, served to point it out more clearly, and to keep it in constant view; to manifest the wisdom and necessity of the works themselves, and to preserve their dignity and authority, which would have been impaired, if not destroyed, by a more general application of them. As *Christ* never applied them to any purpose foreign to their grand

ing that due tribute of esteem and veneration, which must naturally attend the opening his divine commission with the more plain undefining people; but which would have no other effect upon the invincible prejudices of their rulers, than to increase their opposition, give them occasion to misrepresent him still the more, and grow more violent in persecuting all his followers: — He mercifully chuses to avoid every thing of this kind, that might raise their envy \*, and exasperate their malice; concealing his pre-eminence under the mean garb of poverty; and confining his wonders for the most part to private places, and obscure villages; till he had done enough to ascertain the evidence, and establish the belief of his

intention; so it was in a very peculiar manner necessary, that they should never be employed to protect himself from the calamities and distresses, to which human nature is incident. Had he, when made in the likeness of men, saved himself by miracles from the evils of humanity; 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 to all who were to follow him.' *Farmer's Enquiry into Christ's Temptation*, p. 71, 72. *Comp. Benson's Life of Christ*, p. 34.

\* 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 like reasons;] and likewise in ordering him to present himself to the examination of the *priest*, who was to judge of, and bear testimony to his being cured by a divine power; and who might otherwise have taken occasion to complain of him as a violator 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. Add note ( ) below, p. . and *Benson's Life of Christ*, c. 9.

his divine authority amongst them; till he was ready to finish all that remained for him to do in a more publick manner, by witnessing his last *good confession*, both to the *Jewish* and the *Roman* magistrates; by declaring the true end of his coming into the world; and bearing testimony to his most unblameable life in it, before these as iniquitous judges; and (which was the necessary consequence of that, without either violently overruling them, or miraculously escaping from them) sealing the same confession with his blood ( $\pi$ ).

Con-

( $\pi$ ) Though only one end of our Saviour's *Death* is here expressly mentioned, viz. the confirmation of that important truth of his being the *Messiah*; which he at length declared publicly, and which declaration more immediately occasioned it; yet I would not have this understood exclusively of any others, which may appear to be contained in that great event; particularly the respect it may have to an *atoning sacrifice*, [at least so far as that is *conciliatory*, and even, in one sense of the word, *vicarious*; inasmuch as many extraordinary benefits and deliverances redounded to us through his sufferings] which has been in part intimated above; [Considerations, p. 49, 50.] and which is still perhaps defensible, if taken in the way proposed, [ib. not. i.] viz. as a *scheme of Government*, or moral constitution of the Deity, most apt to let us into the depth of divine wisdom and goodness; and lead us to some suitable imitation of them: and which accordingly, the Scripture represents as flowing originally from the unbounded love of God the Father; as an effect of his own free grace, and unmerited bounty; [Benson, Life of Christ, p. 443.] not as being in itself absolutely necessary to render him placable and merciful, who was always infinitely such; or the means of reconciling *him* to us; but rather of reconciling, or reducing *us* to him; [Rom. v. 10. 1 Cor. v. 18, 20. See Script. Doctr. of Red. c. 3. No. 218.] nor, lastly, as implying that infinite satisfaction to vindictive justice; that complete payment of the debt, which leaves no room for grace or bounty. 'Not as an *equivalent*, without which God could not, and with which he could not but pardon sin; but as an *atonement*, which the wisdom and goodness of God was pleased freely to appoint, and freely to accept, as supreme governor of the universe.' Clarke, Sermon. lii. Neither, in truth,

are we said to be *redeemed from the hands* of God; but from those  
of

Consistently with the same plan, the persons he chose for partners and companions in this work, were

of our enemies; *Luke* i. 68, 71. and to be purchased or redeemed to God. *Rev.* v. 9. *Comp.* *1 Cor.* vi. 20. Nor is the great work of man's redemption put entirely upon this single act of our B. Saviour; but rather on the whole of his ministry; his complete character, or universal *righteousness*; which is placed in full opposition to the *sin* of Adam: as by the offence of one, judgement came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life, &c. *Rom.* v. 18, 19. Vid. *Taylor* in loc. and *Script. Doctr. of Atonement*, c. 9. Nevertheless, as in that case *Adam's* first act of *Disobedience* had its particular punishment annexed, viz. *Death*; [denounced by way of positive penalty, though naturally fit upon foresight of the case, and in some other views expedient for a state of discipline, Vid. *Disc. on Death*] and greater stress laid on it than any subsequent ones; probably because it was the first, and made way for all others: so to the death of *Christ*, that last and highest instance of his suffering and *obedience*, [*Phil.* ii. 8.] more efficacy seems to be attributed; this being the *completion* [*Joh.* xix. 30.] of his undertaking to remove the effects of that original, as well as of all subsequent transgressions; by exhibiting a perfect character in our nature, and thereupon obtaining terms of more advantage for it; by leading us through death to a better life, and giving at once the clearest evidence, and exemplification of it\*: more, I say, seems to be placed in that, than any of the rest; though they are all necessary and essential parts of his office, and therefore always to be taken together with it. Some persons indeed understand no more by *Christ's* dying for us, than the voluntary laying down of his life as a *testimony* to the truth of all his doctrine, and in that sense suffering for our benefit; which was, no doubt, greatly so, and as such of great merit with the Father: but that, I apprehend, does not reach the whole idea, nor render this act so proper and peculiar to *Christ* (in contradistinction to all other *martyrs*; who though they had no absolute right to life, yet by the common course of nature were entitled to a longer continuance in being here; and therefore, their voluntary resignation of it, in the same cause, may

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\* This he did, both by his own rising from the grave, and visibly ascending into Heaven; and by raising many others at the same time, who probably ascended with him, though not in the same visible manner. See *Bensons*'s *Dissert.* on *Matt.* xxvii. 52, 53. in his *Life of Christ*, p. 692.

were of the lowest class, as well in station, as abilities; and who could only follow him at first upon

may so far be supposed to have merit also with God;) this sense, I say, of Christ's dying *for us*, is not so peculiar to him, as the Scripture seems to represent it; and as it appears when viewed in the other light, in which it is more usually placed: Nor does the former seem sufficient to account for all those strong terms made use of in describing it, by way of ransom, and the price of our redemption from death, or destruction; as the purchase of a resurrection to everlasting life; as reaching beyond the curse entailed on us by the first *Adam*; and not only reversing it, but raising us to a condition above that from which he fell. *Rom.* v. 15, 20, &c. which therefore implies greater benefit, and *more abundant grace*; not only tending to qualify us for such privileges, but actually procuring, and conveying them to us. 'Tis true, such terms as *ransom*, or *redemption*, *buying*, *purchase*, &c. are sometimes used in a more lax signification, and without any proper *price*: *Exod.* vi. 6. xv. 13. *Deut.* vii. 8. xv. 15. *2 Sam.* vii. 23. *Pf.* lxxvii. 15, &c. [Vid. *Taylor* in *Rom.* p. 7.] where what is termed a redemption, was effected by power, and not price: but where the *consideration* is expressly assigned and insisted on, as in the present case, [*Matt.* xx. 28. *1 Cor.* vi. 20. vii. 23. *Heb.* ix. 28.] this seems to confine the words more closely to their original import. Vid. *Guffet*, Com. L. Ebr. in voce חַוִּי p. 158. It must likewise be confessed, that *Christ's* mediatorial office is compared to many other things under the *Jewish* dispensation; v. g. to the priesthood, and its several branches, and appendages. He is stiled our high-priest, and propitiatory, or mercy-seat, *ἱλαστήριον*; as well as propitiation, *ἱλασμός*: the paschal-lamb, sin-offering, &c. His body termed the temple; his flesh the veil of the sanctum sanctorum, and he himself described as leading the way into it, &c. By a variety of such things are his person and character denoted, as fully answering to, and far exceeding all such, in the good, salutary effects of his undertaking; though that cannot properly be confined, or appropriated to any one of them: Nor should we therefore urge an entire conformity between it and any of these particulars; or think this sufficiently proved, when we produce a number of passages concurring to represent the thing in that view; nor need we attempt to explain any such away; but may allow them their full force; since there are many others likewise, which represent the same thing under very different images; and these in some respects incompatible with each other: which seems to shew, that all such representations are but partial ones, and highly figurative.

See

upon the lowest views; and would at every turn, be urging and impatient to have these accomplished;

See *Bourn's* 6th Sermon. Vol. II. *Benson* on 1 *Job*. i. 7. or his *Life of Christ*, c. 11. sect. 1. Script. Doctr. of Remission, A. D. 1761. *Fleming's* Doctr. of the Eucharist, 1763, or *Balguy's* Essay on Redemption. Thus much may be allowed; but then it ought to be acknowledged also, that to this notion of atonement, reference is had more frequently in setting forth the end of Christ's death; to which therefore it may be supposed to bear a nearer, and a more exact relation; God having been pleased to 'order, that it should be represented and regarded as such, nay, described in the strongest sacrificial phrases, since it answered completely all the rational purposes that such could ever serve.' *Foster*, Usefulness, &c. p. 332. And notwithstanding that the chief end of Christ's suffering was unknown to the several instruments employed therein; which was rather permitted to follow, as it were on course, from the perverse malice of the Jews; without any such intention in them, or the *Romans*, as accompanied the formal offering up a sacrifice; yet was it pointed out by Christ himself, [Vid. *Outram* L. ii. c. 3. or *Whitby* on *Job*. xvii. 19. and on *Heb*. ii. 11.] who by the loud voice with which he uttered his last words, [*Pool* on *Matt*. xvii. 50. *Lightf.* Vol. II. p. 1354. *Doddr.* on *Luke* xxiii. 46.] and other circumstances, [*Matt*. xxvi. 53. *Job*. xviii. 6.] shewed, that his life was not violently taken from him; nor a period put to it in the common course of things, [*Hallet*, Disc. Vol. II. p. 285. *Moshem.* de Reb. *Christ.* ante *Const.* sæc. 1. s. 10. \*. *Benson*, p. 513.] but voluntarily resigned into his Father's hand, as he had before signified; *Job*. x. 18. and his death thereby, according to his own request, accepted in like manner as sacrifices used to be, on the most solemn occasions; made the great seal of a general covenant; turned to an universal benefit to the whole human race; and rendered of more value in the sight of God, than any, or all the performances of this kind put together. It is not then in allusion only to the legal sacrifices, that the death of Christ is thus permitted or determined; but rather these themselves probably were appointed to allude to, and in some respects adumbrate it. See *Bp. Butler*, Anal. Part ii. c. 5. sect. 6. The *Jews* had indeed been long used to the sacrificial language, and were well acquainted with the several circumstances of that way of worship; 'tis also certain, as *ABp. Tillotson* observes [Vol. I. Sermon. xvi. fol.] that 'an apprehension and persuasion had very early and universally obtained among mankind, concerning the expiation of sin, and appeasing the offended Deity, by sacrifices:' but it is not equal-  
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ed; nor were they to be let into his real aim, but by slow steps, and after a long series of gentle dif-

ly clear, that this great dispensation (instead of being in its own nature every way fit, and independently a most wise and good measure) was framed in such a manner purely in *condescension* to, and *compliance* with that pre-established notion; since the same author allows these to have been 'only types and shadows of the true expiatory sacrifice.' [Vol. II. p. 129.] And there seems to be no less difficulty in accounting for this same usage among the *Jews*, and God Almighty's either possessing mankind with this principle, or permitting them to be so persuaded; [ib. Vol. I. p. 480.] if it was not in order to a *better Covenant*, an higher and more noble institution, fixed in the divine decrees before the other took place in the world. Vid. *Considerations*, note †. p. 187.

There must, indeed, be some ideas common to them both, or else the one could be no kind of introduction to the other; but to identify these two, or go backward in accommodating the latter to the former, the more perfect institution to the less, seems not a very natural supposition; granting the first to be any divine institution at all, of which before; *Considerations*, p. 49, 50. note *i*. And to attempt a solution by admitting both schemes, viz. that this institution of sacrifice may have been originally divine; (as the same author does, p. 478.) looking forward to the great atonement, and leading mankind to an apprehension of it; at the same time allowing that atonement itself to have a retrospect to such apprehension, and to be really grounded thereon; seems to be arguing in a circle, and leaving the whole without any proper ground at all. Nor, lastly, is the sacrifice of the death of Christ, to be resolved into a mere *popular* phrase; as when one person is vulgarly said to be *sacrificed* to another's interest, and the like. Nor can those numerous texts which are commonly produced on this occasion, and seem to denote something *vicarious*, be easily explained in any other sense; though much indeed has been done this way by very honest, and able writers. And on second thoughts, I am led to imagine, that much more may yet be done; that when we come to a more perfect understanding of the scripture-language, we may be able to account for all passages upon this subject, which point at the particular circumstance of pouring out the blood in sacrifice, as intended only to illustrate so much of that exalted act of Christ, whereby he offered himself to certain death, in the discharge of his ministry; a ministry, undertaken out of the most intense love to mankind; and executed with the greatest patience, constancy,

discipline. Such persons were in many respects most difficult to be dealt with; but no unfit instruments

cy, and resolution; for their recovery from the dominion of their evil habits, and of those evil Beings which seduced them; in order to convince them, how much he had that recovery at heart; and of what infinite consequence it was to them; who had all, *like lost sheep, gone astray*, and exposed themselves to such imminent danger of perdition, that nothing could have saved them from it, less than the persevering care of that *good Shepherd*, who *will not leave his flock, when the wolf cometh*; but faithfully persists in guarding and defending them, even at the expense of his own life. This is the very image, under which he himself hath set forth that transaction to us: [Vid. *infra* p. .] which though it were no proper sacrifice, in the gross sense of the word; yet considering the circumstances under which, and the intent with which, this offering was made; it answered all the ends, and attained the benefits of every kind of sacrifice; viz. the preserving, or restoring a perfect union between man and his Maker: [see *Sykes on Heb. vii. 27. Benson, Life of Christ, p. 445.*] and thence became a more signal instance of that progress and improvement, carried on among the divine dispensations, which we are maintaining, than if it had been wholly of the same kind with the former institutions; and nothing more, than a peculiar victim; supposing any such to have ever been admitted for gross violations of a moral law. See *Sykes Script. Doctr. of Red. p. 328, &c.* I would then have *all* that Christ did and suffered, taken into the general plan of our redemption; and all parts of it understood in such a manner, as to have the same tendency, toward the reformation and melioration of mankind; to be a plan of moral discipline, and rational government; in its own nature exquisitely calculated to help and enable, to excite and encourage us to *work out our salvation*; not as mechanically working it out for us; or arbitrarily transferring the acts and attainments of one person to another; without any real ground of resemblance, or conformity between them; or reconciling such as have been at enmity against each other, without ever reaching, or removing the true cause of all that enmity: though these and the like foreign, unscriptural notions, are often most unhappily mixed with the present subject.

I shall dismiss this point with observing, how nearly the mediatorial office, in respect of vicariousness, seems to resemble some other parts of the divine oecconomy. That as God Almighty, in the general government of the world, is pleased to make use of many subordinate agents, whose private happiness and



struments for that, which they were then designed for, namely, to testify what they had so often seen and heard; and on all accounts, most proper to afford the best, most unexceptionable evidence to futurity: such as could by no means be supposed capable either to conceive a scheme so great as that of reforming *a world*; of altering all its customs and opinions; or entertain the least hope of accomplishing it, whenever suggested to them: such as wanted both courage and conduct to attempt this vast, and truly original design, with any prospect of success: such lastly, as he must suffer often to doubt, and dispute with him; 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

and perfection may be greatly advanced by such agency; and who may be supposed to carry on the ends of this government, in ways most natural and agreeable to the whole constitution; so in his treatment of a particular people, he is said to enter into covenants with them, and convey some extraordinary benefits and privileges to them, by the means, on account, and for the sake of some eminently good persons amongst them, or their progenitors: In like manner, he may be conceived to transact the greatest and most important affair of our salvation, to fix the conditions of a future state, or settle the conveyance of *eternal Life*, to mankind, [the grand aim and completion of his several dispensations;] through the mediation of that great, good, and glorious Being, who, by his own appointment, came down from heaven on purpose, as well to procure a place there for us, as to prepare us for it, and conduct us to it: to each part of whose commission a due regard ought to be had by us; but more especially, to that of his death; which is represented as the great condition performed by him, in order to give us a proper title to this lost inheritance; and which in no other view appears to have a distinct end, or use, commensurate to the descriptions given of it in holy Scripture. — But see what Dr. Sykes has wrote at large upon the subject. *Scrip. Doctr. of Red. &c.* and Dr. *Benson, Life of Christ.* c. II. sect. I.

ed it on afterwards among themselves; or effected what they did of it, by any method merely human\*.

With such as these did *Christ* hold conversation, during the whole course of his ministry; affectionately complying with their weakness, patiently enduring their perverseness, in order to cure them both; to strengthen and increase their faith by degrees, and free them from all superstitious fears; to open their eyes, and enlarge 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 true heroism, *viz.* 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 the utmost zeal and constancy, does he endeavour to dissuade, and drive men from their ruin; and in the most endearing manner, strive to draw, and win them over to their true interest and happiness; and raise their minds above the little interests of this world. *Little children, yet a little while I am with you, — but let*

\* Mirum est, quam parum acuti essent apostolorum nonnulli: sed datâ operâ 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 Job. xiv. 7. Comp. Id. Eccl. 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!

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 the comforts and enjoyments of this world, in the same cause for which he left the glories of the other, and at length laid down his life in executing that scheme for which he first assumed it; he does not even here quit the same merciful design, but raises himself to revive the hopes of his desponding followers; to comfort and confirm them in the faith, and give them full assurance, that he now 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 things beside; greater yet to reform and rectify their notions of, and expectations from him; which were still fixed on present prospects of advancement, notwithstanding whatsoever he had taught them to the con-

\* For a specimen of that inimitable *tendernefs* and intense *devotion*, which made so distinguishing a part of our blessed Saviour's *character*, and which contributed so greatly to the comfort and support of his disciples under all their trials; I refer to these admirable chapters of St. *John's* gospel, part of the 13th and the 4 following; and appeal to the experience of even the coldest and most careless reader, whether he can help being, in some measure, still affected by them; particularly the last.

That these bear the plainest marks of being *genuine*, and therefore furnish a strong presumptive argument for the truth of our religion, see *Duchal's* excellent Discourses, Sermon 4. That they contain a beautiful allusion to the high-priest's act of atoning for himself, his brethren, and all the people, on the great day of *expiation*, as prescribed in *Lev. xvi. 6—17*, may be seen in *Benjon's* Life of Christ, c. 1. sect. 2. p. 16. and c. 11. sect. 7. p. 489.

contrary †: nor could they help concluding, that he would at this time certainly make use of all his power, in the entire destruction of his and their enemies; and the erecting of the so long-looked-for kingdom, to which every other kingdom of the earth should bow. But he soon shews them, how far this was from being any part of his office, as described by the prophets; how utterly inconsistent with his whole behaviour in discharging it: that on his very first entrance on it, he had rejected and despised the offer of these kingdoms, and their glory; and that for the future, they must think of renouncing all their narrow national prejudices of a peculium fraught with all temporal privileges, and full of nothing but conquest, wealth, and power: that instead of coming a *Messiah* to bless his people in their sense, [which would have been a curse to every other people,] by distinguishing them from the rest of mankind in things, to which they had no better title, and of which they were not like to make any better use; by not only delivering them from their subjection to all other nations, but reducing every nation into an absolute subjection to them; — that he was to bring them blessings and deliverances, and raise them to a dominion of quite another kind; to bless them by turning every one

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† That the true scope of his whole Sermon on the mount was to correct the carnal notions they had 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*, in his excellent Paraphrase on the 5, 6, and 7 chapters of *St. Matt.* and throughout his discourses on that subject.—That it contains all things, that were then wanting and necessary to the salvation of those hearers, to whom our Saviour at that time addressed himself, *ib.* Vol. IV. S. 20. p. 301.

of them from their *iniquities*; to deliver them from their spiritual chains of darkness, death, and misery; and bring them to *the light of life*, and happiness in his heavenly kingdom: the way whereunto they were to be the means of opening to all the rest of the world, inviting mankind in general to enter with them into it; as their forefathers had been the great instruments of leading men to the knowledge of that one true God, who is the giver 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 [ρ], so far as

(ρ) I find some persons often complaining, that they want to know distinctly *what this undertaking* of our Saviour's was, what it was that *Christ really did and taught*; and what is his *religion*. The former has in part been touched upon above, note (π). To the latter, I think, an answer may be drawn from p.108, &c. of *Considerations*, to this purpose:

He came with full credentials from the *Father*, to transact our *peace* and union with him; to proclaim an entire *amnesty* for past offences, and procure an effectual *remedy* against the dominion of any future ones; to publish new *terms* of salvation, [a new doctrine, says *Grotius*, Ep. 33. requiring sincere *repentance*, and promising *remission* of sins, and everlasting *life*,] and put us into a *condition* of acting up to them; to restore a *communication* between God and us, [by *prayer* and the *sacraments*]; to lay down sufficient *rules* for our behaviour towards God, ourselves, and one another; to offer the clearest and most cogent *arguments* for our compliance with these, [in the several articles of our belief;] and thereby afford us the most ample *means* and *motives* to resemble the divine nature, grow in grace, and qualify ourselves for unlimited degrees of happiness and perfection. By his own *example* pointing out the way to this; and by his *doctrine*, in the first place, reforming the wrong judgements, and perverse dispositions of mankind in matters of religion, [of those more especially among whom he lived; vid. last n. †.] removing the false principles on which they grounded it; the foolish practices which they had incorporated with it; and in their stead substituting such important duties, and directing to the acquirement of such intrinsically good, virtuous habits, as would in their

as they were able to bear a part in it themselves ; 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. Having thus spent forty days in training and preparing his disciples for their future trials, in this great work of establishing a kingdom of so very different a sort, and to be established by ways so 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 benediction ; and having promised to give them yet farther proof of his care and love, by sending them another *Comforter* ; ascends visibly before them into heaven.

Having taken a short view of our Saviour's conduct, more particularly in *private life*, and run over some of the steps of his *humiliation* ; let us stop to reflect a little on the use and excellence of such a *character*, and observe some of the

own natures necessarily lead to that state of perfection ; and become each an essential part thereof : founding the whole upon its proper basis, the true LOVE of GOD ; and joining all together in that *bond of peace and of all virtues*, CHARITY to man. The substance therefore, or *material part* of *Christ's* religion, contains all that can possibly be comprehended under the notion of pure religion ; whatsoever is really excellent and useful in every station or relation of life ; with all such helps as tend to encourage and support us in pursuing this, and are in general necessary to the attainment of it : it admits and includes every thing, which either may conduce to the welfare of men in the present state ; or duly fit and dispose them for everlasting happiness in another : and in short, can be described no otherwise, than is done by the two apostles, *Phil.* iv. 8. *2 Pet.* i. 4, 5, &c. Vid. *Considerations*, p. 35. or Bp. of *Killmore's* Essay on the *Priesthood*, p. 68, &c. or *Jeffery's* Tracts ; who seems to have had as pure and perfect notions of the Christian institution, as any writer in his time. See also Dr. *Leland's* excellent summary of the Christian Doctrine with regard to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. Advantage and Necessity, &c. Vol. II. Part ii. c. 13.

the benefits which we receive from this part of his conduct.

Whenever we turn our thoughts upon the infinite perfections of the most high God, and try to form some suitable apprehensions 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 what views we have of them, are apt rather to excite astonishment and awe, than move the softer, more endearing passions: and therefore the ideas of *loving* and *delighting in* God were such, as the most elevated heathen writer could not reach.

But here the Deity lets himself down to our capacities, and is on a level with our tenderest affections; discovers himself under the near relations of a friend, a father; displays such an affecting scene of the most merciful, mild 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, and suits his several dispensations to the subjects of them. He sends a messenger in our own state and circumstances; who being encompassed with our infirmities, experiencing our difficulties and temptations, and having a fellow-feeling of our troubles; might shew how well qualified he was to bear with us, and help us to bear them; to have compassion on the ignorant, and those that were in error; pointing out to us the true way, 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. I have not called you servants, but friends and brethren. The Father himself loveth you; and if ye love him, as he loveth me, and I love him; we will manifest ourselves to you; we will come unto you, and make our abode with you.*

Thus he, who was to his own people formerly the *Lord of Hosts*, a mighty God and terrible, jealous, avenging; and whose whole worship was stiled *fear*, [a worship well accommodated to such 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, confirmed by a long train of condescending meekness, and illustrated in the most free, familiar manner; must above all things tend to strengthen and invigorate our faith, enliven our hope, and draw our whole soul after him that so loved us, and lived amongst us: especially that, which must seem to be the greatest possible instance of affection for us, his voluntary laying down his life, to reconcile us to him and our heavenly Father. This cannot but endear his *character* to all, who are capable

\* *Lactant. de Ver. Sap. L. iv. 24.*



capable of giving attention to it ; and will, in a much more near and tender manner, unite him to us, and make the memory and contemplation of him infinitely more affecting ; than that of any other Being, however great, good, and glorious, who has not undergone the like office, or appeared in such lights to us.

And though, in order to direct our reason and judgement to the principal object of religious worship, and guard against every misconception of our true relation thereto ; we are oft reminded, who it was that originally provided this redemption for us ; who *so first loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son*, for our salvation ; and are taught to refer all, ultimately, *to the glory of God the Father* : yet in that other, no less essential, [perhaps with the bulk of mankind, much superior] part of our nature, by which religion and every thing else takes the strongest hold of us, the *passions* ; we are necessarily touched, in a much more sensible manner, with what is so very adequate and obvious to our present comprehensions, and as it were analogous to what we feel among ourselves ; and may be satisfied, that the kind Author of our being will make due allowances for this, so far as it is necessary and unavoidable ; which is 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 so : which is an experimental proof of the propriety and beauty of the plan in this respect.

And as this dispensation was well suited to the frame of human nature, and an improvement on the foregoing one to the *Jews* ; so was it no less

fitly accommodated to the state of the *heathen* world; and no less necessary in the circumstances under which that then was, and must have continued.

The founders and supporters of religious institutes among the *Gentiles*, had nothing but some empty apparitions of their idle deities, or more uncertain tales, and blind reports to build upon; some of them ill devised by themselves, others in great part copied from true scripture-history, or primitive tradition; but all so strangely abused and blended with each kind of vice and folly, to comply with the general corruption of mankind, and suit them to the several tastes and tempers of particular countries; as at length rendered the whole little else than a compound of absurdity and immorality; and made their very worship and devotion impious. Their doctrines and subsequent rites, must, by this means, be very complicated; and vary according to the various degrees of superstition and impurity that reigned amongst them: but yet were so far of the same cast and complexion, that there could be no great room for a competition with each other, in point of either truth, or excellence; it would be hard to distinguish between the different sorts of evidence and authority producible in different places for the one; or of the reasons that might be alledged to explain, and vindicate the other; since custom was the common plea for both: since both were equally uncertain in their origin; and both alike *unprofitable as pertaining to the conscience*. So that when any species of idolatry was once established in a city or nation, it must with the generality, be either a point of necessity

cessity 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 introducing a system of religion suitable to such a Being, and which would lead them to the love and likeness of him.

Farther ; men had been so long used to the notion of appearances and messages from Heaven, and these been made the ground of every article of faith, and mode of worship ; that nothing but a *real one*, one of a superior kind, and better circumstanced ; could be conceived effectual to silence every wild pretence of that sort ; and reduce men to a right faith, and a suitable practice : nothing less would be able to lead such to a firm belief in one true, spiritual, invisible God ; and induce them to worship him *in spirit and in truth* ; and assure them of always finding access to him, through one only all-sufficient *Mediator*. Dry, abstract reasoning would go but a little way with the vulgar, who are most susceptible of impression ; but yet require something strong and visible to strike them ; nor would a few transient signs and wonders serve to make any such impression last. Of these they had too many reported among them ; and the more common such reports grew, the less were they minded ; not only on account of their suspicious evidence ; though  
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that was enough to discredit them; but chiefly for want of connection with some regular course of goodness, and a set of doctrines worthy of such interposition from Heaven; and of their being expressly produced as vouchers for these doctrines, and applied directly to confirm that interposition.

This did *Christ* fully and frequently; in the plainest and most public manner: and hereby did his institution outline, and extinguish 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 what we were about to consider, *viz.* some of the remarkable circumstances in our Saviour's more *public* life, and *manner of teaching*.

As to the former, we cannot but observe a surprising mixture of humility and greatness, dignity and self-abasement, in his general demeanour; both which were equally instructive in their turns. Sometimes we find him solemnly asserting his divinity; at other times the meekest and the lowest of the sons of men: sometimes reminding his followers, that he could command legions of angels, were it necessary; at others, apprising them, that he should be more destitute of common conveniencies, than even the beasts of the field, or birds of the air; now telling them, that a greater than *Solomon* is amongst them; now, washing his disciples' feet. Conscious of his own power and just prerogative, yet all submission to the powers in being; complying

ing with their laws and institutions, however hazardous, or inconvenient to him ; and paying their demands to the uttermost, though at the expence of a miracle. On some occasions, publishing the character and office which he bore ; on others, carefully 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 more industrious and zealous in the cause of God ; none more indifferent and resigned in his own : He patiently endures the affronts and outrage to his person, and the frequent insults on his reputation ; and intercedes for the forgiveness of his murderers : yet when his Father's honour is concerned, he vindicates it instantly, and with uncommon warmth ; he publicly chastises the prophaners of his temple ; and threatens the severest punishment to such as would continue 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 really desirous of instruction : while he rejects the formal, sanctimonious hypocrite ; and reprimands the self-sufficient *Pharisee*. He detects, and with authority rebukes, the flattery of the proud, designing querist ; but satisfies each scruple, and resolves each doubt, of the sincere and humble searcher after truth, even before they can be intimated to him. He cherishes the broken-hearted ; comforts the desponding ; strengthens and supports the weak, and wavering ; condescends to the infirmities of  
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the meanest and most despicable, that has the least spark of goodness in him ; but never gratifies the vanity, or gives way to the petulance of the greatest. Vice from him meets with due discouragement and just reproof in all men, even those of the highest station ; virtue with kind compassion, and a generous aid, in any of the lowest.

For, Secondly ; This mixture of so various, and seemingly opposite qualities, which constituted the foregoing contrast, did not proceed from any variation in his 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 : sympathizing with men 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, and admitting every well-meant instance of respect ; nay, making a voluntary offer of his company, whenever he knew it would be useful and acceptable : indulging the most secret wish of such as would receive an obligation from him ; and enhancing that by his obliging 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 condescended to  
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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 more effectually serve the ends of piety and goodness \*.

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 others; and were apt to procure them so much reverence, and 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 men's understandings, and engage their affections; as to remove their 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; which want perhaps could not have otherwise been conveniently supplied; and was most probably occasioned by the extraordinary concourse he himself drew thither ( $\sigma$ ): his last being no less than

\* *Lowth's Directions*, p. 197.

( $\sigma$ ) Notwithstanding all these evident marks of goodness in this miracle of our blessed Saviour, beside many others that might have been mentioned; (see Dr. *Fortin's* Remarks, Vol. II. p. 18.) yet it has met with no less bitter and unreasonable treatment, than any other circumstance attending either his divine character or mission; even from such as profess the highest veneration for the former, and seem willing to do justice to it upon some occasions. *Chubb* has been at the unnecessary pains to revive some of *Woolston's* 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

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than an instance of the highest and most undeserved  
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common case 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 needs 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 language; he 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; *Job. 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. 186.) 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 publick concern: and so the following words may be taken interrogatively, *ἄπω καὶ ἡώρα 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, or by divine foresight; (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; *Matt. xii. 46-50. Mar. iii. 31-35. Luk. 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 *Job. i. 31. Fam. Ex. Vol. I. p. 122. not. c.* Add *Fortin, Disc. v. p. 194. 2d. Ed.*] 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  
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compassion, in calmly healing the wound of one of

use of this word in the Gospel, (comp. *Job.* 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, *Luk.* 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. *Luk.* xxii. 53.) for which, to prevent all secular views, he thought good to prepare her at the very entrance on 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 were his own mother. So far was *Christ's* reply from any of that *fallacy* and *contradiction in every view*, 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 discourses.

Nor is there any more ground for that other suggestion of *excess*, from the *guests having drunk so very 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 great room to apprehend that any extraordinary plenty was 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; 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 †. 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 very same characters of wisdom and goodness with the rest. That 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

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† *Job.* ii. 3. *Et deficiente vino, dicit mater Jesu ad eum, Vinum non habent.* Non id mirum est, jam enim a tribus diebus potabatur; et adveniente Jesu cum pluribus discipulis, numerus convivarum ultra expectatum fuerat auctus: Ideo Maria Jesum, cujus comitatus alioquin onerasset novum sponsum, admonet potestatis suæ, quasi dicat, Deficit vinum; tu ergo illud procura, etenim potes: huic inopiæ succurre. *Lamy, Com. in Harm.* p. 109.

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 probable they were; See *Doddr.* on *Job.* 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, they were most of them 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 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 these persons who either rejected him at first, or afterwards forsook him, without ever being able to discover the least circumstance of such a design, affords a plain proof of the contrary; as might be made appear beyond all contradiction.

But thus much may serve at present, for a specimen of the judgement and sagacity of some of the greatest heroes in the cause of modern infidelity; who, upon selecting out of the Gospels two or three passages of this kind, and setting them off with a little banter, [vid. *Characteristicks*, Vol. III. p. 123.] grounded chiefly on their own ignorance or inadvertency; imagine they have discovered several blots and blemishes, where they ought to have been admiring so many beauties; plume themselves on their singular penetration; and immediately conclude, that they have overthrown the whole fabric of Christianity.

On this occasion, I shall take the liberty of offering a few general hints to the admirers of a late distinguished writer of this rank, the celebrated Mr. *Chubb*: who, notwithstanding a tolerably clear head, and strong natural parts; yet by ever aiming at things far beyond his reach; by attempting a variety of subjects, for which his narrow circumstances, and small compass of reading and knowledge had in a great measure disqualified him; from a fashionable, but fallacious kind of philosophy,

phy, (with which he set out, and by which one of his education might very easily be misled,) he fell by degrees to such confusion in divinity, to such low quibbling on some obscure passages in our translation of the Bible, and was reduced to such wretched cavils as to several historical facts and circumstances, wherein a small skill either in the languages, or sciences, might have set him right; or a small share of real modesty would have supplied the want of them, by putting him upon consulting those who could, and would have given him proper assistance;— that he seems to have fallen at last into an almost universal scepticism; and quitting that former serious and sedate sobriety, which gave him credit; contents himself with carrying on a mere farce for some time; acts the part of a solemn, grave buffoon; sneers at all things he does not understand; and after all his fair professions, and the *caveat* he has entered against such a charge, must unavoidably be set down in the *seat of the scorner*.

Hard then must be the lot of all those, who think themselves obliged to vindicate the Gospel against such a writer! if they are not only to make out all things plain before his face, but must also find him eyes to see, and an heart to apply honestly what he does see:—who is ever crying out for conviction, yet never seems to know when he ought to be convinced:— is just able to start difficulties, and perplex himself;— but neither can judge of the answers to them, nor will believe such as are capable of judging:— If such people will dispute every day *de omni scibili*;— if they will instantly determine every point of ancient history, who neither are acquainted with the language, customs, circumstances, or situation of things, times, and persons,— nor will be taught by such as are:— who form objections against sacred writ, which hold equally against every other writing in the world,— and yet have not been able to assign any better method of conveyance than by writing;— who deny the same equitable allowance to these, that they do, and must, make to all other ancient writings;— will adhere closely to the *literal* sense, whenever it can be skrewed up to their purpose, though they know, no historical books in the world will bear it;— and when just answers, and the most probable solutions have been often given with candour, and may be seen in almost every comment, are above looking into any of them; but rather content themselves with repeating the same cavils over and over again,— making their number stand for weight,— and that very repetition serve for a proof that they had no reasonable reply:— what is this but a prejudice against revelation, greater and much more unfair, than that which they would fix upon the generality of its vindicators?

of those who came with eagerness \* to take away his life ; and thereby shewing, that with the same ease he could have delivered himself, or destroyed them.

The like might be observed in almost every other case, where he exerted an extraordinary power ; which he did, in a manner that more particularly suited his own character †.

But

who, instead of having recourse to violence in support of whatever *supports* them, (as the same author has so oft insinuated,) are always *ready to give an answer to every one, that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them* ; and who are at least equally concerned, with the infidels, to see that this hope be well grounded ; since, by their avowed principles *they* place it beyond this life, whatever *others* do ; and might support themselves here under any other institution, founded upon different principles, were that established ; toward which they might also exert their utmost endeavours with the same, and perhaps greater worldly advantage (were they determined by such motives,) than they now have to act upon the opposite scheme : As for their continual labours, therefore, to reduce this to the original standard, and adhere to that as nearly as possible ; wherein many of them are inclined to run the greatest temporal hazards ; — for their reforming it at first from popery, which offered, and still offers, the greatest baits of ease and opulence, of pomp and power ; and their constant endeavours to remove the same corruptions *still farther* from them, though attended with the same allurements : this, one would think, could be accounted for no otherwise, than from a strong conviction in these men of its internal excellence and truth, and their own indispensable duty to promote and propagate it, *as it is in itself* ; — for the common good : 'Tis strange, if none of them can be found equally zealous and sincere in this point, as their adversaries are in opposition to it.

A more particular account of *Chubb* and his works, may be seen in *Leland's View of Deistical Writers*, Lett. xii. and xiii.

\* ' *Malchus* had come out, with violence, to apprehend him ; and had perhaps treated him with some peculiar insolence, so as to provoke *Peter* to cut off his ear.' *Benson*, p. 439. .

† A proof of this, and a specimen of the moral or spiritual import of our Saviour's miracles, may be seen in *Dr. Fortin's* Remarks on Eccl. II. Vol. II. p. 16, &c.

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 greatest and most general benefit to mankind; and setting us a pattern of performing these, which was the most inviting to us, and most imitable by us; and the least capable of ever being mistaken, or perverted: a pattern, not only of perfect innocence, but 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; such prudent, moderate enjoyment of the good things of this world, as might convert them both to the present, and the future benefit of all who partook of them: of undergoing all the toils and difficulties, labours and distresses, to which we are subject; of bearing all the evils and afflictions, the crosses and calamities of life; with so much patience, constancy, and perseverance, as would prevent our sinking under them; and at 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 all good offices; of meekness and a most forgiving temper under any ill usage; of strict obedience to superiors, either in church or state, so far as is consistent with our duty to the supreme Being ( $\tau$ ); mildness  
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( $\tau$ ) In proof of this, beside the instance given in note ( $\pi$ ) 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,

and condescension to inferiors; in whatsoever respect, or whatsoever degree; of justice, fidelity, benevolence, and charity to all. In short, his whole life was a lecture of true practical philosophy,

cause, he carefully distinguishes between their authority or commission, and the exercise thereof; between their publick teaching, and their practice.

*The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' 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.* 'The Jewish doctors and Pharisees, though they be hypocrites, and covetous, and vain-glorious men, yet since they succeed *Moses* and the prophets, in being teachers and expounders of the law of God; ye ought to hearken and attend to their teaching. What therefore they teach you, *out of the law of God, and agreeable to it*, that hear ye and obey; but imitate not their examples; because their lives are disagreeable and contrary to their doctrine.' *Clarke's Paraphr.* 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. Brugenf.* 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. To these I would recommend the following testimony of one, who seems to have been at that time a more equitable unbeliever.

'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 preaching and 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 shewed at once what excellent creatures men would be, when under the influence and power of that Gospel he preached unto them.' *Chubb*, True Gosp. of *J. Christ*, sect. 8. p. 55, 56.

fophy, and each part of it pointed out some virtue proper for our imitation \*.

Which brings me, in the next place, to his *manner of teaching* †: and this was likewise the most easy, and natural that could be imagined. He generally draws his doctrine from the present occasion; the conversation that is passing; or the objects that surround 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. i.

† Concerning our Saviour's character, as a teacher of morality; or the substance of his doctrine, under the general heads of sincerity, integrity, and the love of God and man; see *Duchal*, Sermon. ii, iii.

(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 exponēbat, 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.] Sometime to the *lesson* read therein: *Luke iv. 17.* Vulgo sentiunt interpretes casu traditum Domino librum *Isaiae*; sive potius divina providentia procurante ut ille traderet, ubi clarissime de Christo prophetatum erat. Verum magis eluxit divina providentia si hoc Sabbato legeretur pars illa *Isaiae*, in qua invenit locum ubi scriptum erat, *Spiritus Domini super me*: Sic incipit cap. lxi. *Isaiae*, quod legebatur Sabbato 1mo aut 2do Mensis Tisri, ut videre est in lectionariis Judæorum. [Comp. *Lightf.* in loc.] Hoc autem anno vitæ ejus circa quem hæremus, æræ Christianæ 31mo, duo illa Sabbata, in quibus *Isaia*s 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

ities; from some extraordinary accidents, remarkable places, or transactions; and the like.

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 qualities for all those who would be true members of his church; and under the same figure, intimates  
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*Ecclesiastem xi. 2. Da portionem bonam seminis agro tuo in Tisri, et ne cohibearis a seminando etiam in Cistiu. Id. Harm. p. 258.* To which may be added *John x. 1, &c.* as below, note † p. 315. and *John vii. 37, 38.* note || p. 317. *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 subsequutum 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 versus 5tus cap. 6ti *Deut* quod caput legebatur ultimo Sabbato 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 observation, as by comparing them with *S. Matt.* who was an eye-witness of most things, and therefore went by a *local memory*. *Comp. Nerot. on Dan. p. 152, or Hartley, Observ. Vol. II. p. 103.*

*Lamy* has another remark, which seems to deserve consideration, as of some consequence to the settling a true harmony of the Gospels, *viz.* that *John the Baptist* suffered two imprisonments, one from the *Sanhedrim* [*Matt. iv. 12.—xvii. 12.*] before that other from *Herod*: vid. *Harm. p. 105, and 367.* and a particular treatise of his, *De duobus Vinculis Johannis.*

\* *John ix. 5, 39, 41.*



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 right and worthy notions of that providence which supports them, and therefore will support Beings of a rank so much 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 behaviour at a feast, he first gives general advice therein to both the master (φ) and his guests; and

† *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. 313.

‡ *Matt.* vi. 26, 28. *Luke* xii. 24, &c.

|| *Matt.* vii. 16. *Luke* vi. 43, &c.

(φ) 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 *general rule*, as we should probably do; or enjoining 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 very indecent drollery on *Luke* xiv. 12, 13. from *Chubb*; [*Posth. Works.* p. 24, &c.] as if, instead of directing our *beneficence* in general 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

and from thence brings them to the consideration of a better entertainment, to which they were

only: which would, as *Chubb* says in the same strain, p. 27. be *something extraordinary*. Dominus venit non tantum ut ederet; sed etiam ut aliquid boni doceret, occasione sumpta ex rebus quæ occurrebant. — Non prohibet simpliciter vocare divites ad cœnam, vel convivium; hoc enim et humanitas sæpe postulat, et res ipsa. — Sed agit hic de conviviis voluntariis, quæ non alia de causa instituuntur quam animo benefaciendi. Deinde, non prohibet id tanquam peccatum; sed tanquam rem inutilem, et nullius momenti coram Deo; incitans ad rem quæ utilis valde, et apud Deum eximia est. Nec præcipit Christus omnino ut convivia faciant; sed si velint facere, ostendit qualia debent facere, et quos invitare. Tantundem valet; etsi non instruas ex professo convivium, si mittas pauperi cibos in domum ejus; si des ei pecuniam, qua sibi emere possit necessaria. *Crell. Op. Tom. II. p. 55. Comp. Cleric. Whitby, Grot. in loc.*

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. i. 15.* — Hoc maxime officii est, ut quisque maxime opis indigeat, ita ei potissimum opitulari; quod contra fit a plerisque: a quo enim plurimum sperant, etiam si ille his non eget, tamen ei potissimum inserviunt. — *Plin. Epist. ix. 30.* Volo eum qui sit vere liberalis, tribuere patriæ, propinquis, affinis, 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 corrumpere. — *Ἀνελευθερῶς πράττειν τὰ περὶ τῆς ξενίας τῆς πενήτας, μόνως τῆς πλεθίας ὑποδεχέσθαι ξενίοις, καὶ δωροῖς, παρ' ὧν δηλοῦν ὅτι καὶ προσεδόκων τῶν ἰσῶν εντυχεῖν. Dion. Pruf. Or. vii.*

With regard to the last mentioned precept of *washing the feet*, which *Chubb* seems to understand as of perpetual obligation, and which some Christians may not have 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

were all invited ; but of which few among them would be persuaded to render 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 partaking of his kingdom †. 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

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.

\* *Luke* xiv. 7, 16, &c. 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 *Syrophœnician* woman, *Matt.* xv. 26. *Mark* vii. 27. *Sine prius saturari filios. Sine prius Judæos impleri beneficiis, ut nihil habeant quod querantur. Tum tempus veniet spargendi cœlestia beneficia in gentes alias, cum Judæos ceperit eorum beneficiorum fastidium. Forsan eadem hora Christum accumbere mensæ cibo reficiens vires, inde ex re allegoriam sumpsit. Ut prius cibi apponuntur filiis et domesticis, quam extraneis ; ita ubi beneficia Christus collaturus erat, decebat eum præferre Judæos gentibus. Non est enim bonum [pro, non est honestum, non decet,] sumere panem filiorum, et mittere canibus. Sic vocat gentes, non ex sensu suo, sed ex communi Judæorum loquela, qui Ethnicos assimilabant canibus. Lamy, Harm. p. 313. Comp. *Lightfoot* in loc.*

‡ *John* xiii. 8.

|| *Matt.* xxvi. 29. *Luke* xxii. 17, 18. Ex occasione vini conspici et proprie dicti, Christus docet discipulos se non amplius

From the *ſalt*, he takes occaſion to acquaint them with the nature of their office, which was to ſeaſon the minds of men, and keep them from the contagion of this world; as well as give them a true taſte and reliſh for the enjoyments of that kingdom; 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 incurable, and contemptible, among mankind\*. Theſe that were fiſhers, he teaches how to catch men †: and ſhews them how far this would reſemble their former employment, in taking of all kinds, 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 ſeveral talents

celebraturum cum iis ullam *liberationem*, niſi poſtremam illam quã 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 Scripturã 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 Chriſtus a rebus corporeis ad ſpirituales tranſiens eas iſdem vocibus exprimit. *Cleric.* in *Matt.* xxvi. 29.

\* *Mark* ix. 50. vid. *Cleric.* *Luke* xiv. 34. vid. *Whitby* in loc.

† *Luke* v. 10. *Mark* i. 17. Ne mireris captos a te tot piſces. Leve hoc eſt; jam homines capies; ſed hoc discrimine, ut qui piſces ad mortem capere ſolebas, homines capias ad vitam; *εσθ ζωγγωσ*, id eſt, vivos capies ut ſerves. — Hęc piſcatio vaticinium erat apoſtolos non ſuapte industria, ſed Chriſti imperio ac virtute, expanſis evangelii retibus tantam facturos capturam, ut opus habitari eſſent ſubſidiaria multorum evangelistarum opéra; atque ita impletum iri non unam navim, Judæorum ſcilicet; ſed et alteram, nempe gentium; quarum navium futura ſit ardua atque indivulſa ſocietas. *Lamy*, *Com* in *Harm.* p. 116.

‡ *Matt.* xiii. 47.

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 exactly answered that of a good shepherd, even so far as to the *giving*, or *laying down his life for the sheep* †, i. e. exposing himself to 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. This Sun arises to set again in a few hours, and may fail many of you, e're 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 as evident signs of his approaching kingdom §. At the season of fruits, he puts the *Jews* in mind, that the time was come when some would be expected from them, in return for all the labour that had been bestowed upon them; and intimates the judge-

\* *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. 10, 11. part of that 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*, often used in Scripture, was by the *Jews* applied peculiarly to the *Messiah*. vid. *Allix*, Judgement of Jew. Ch. p. 304. et *Cleric.* in *John* x. 25.

‡ *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. comp. *Wetsten* in *Joh.* i. 5. p. 838.

§ *Luke* xxi. 29. *Matt.* xxiv. 32.

judgement, that would shortly overtake all such among them as were found unprofitable\*. When the harvest comes on, he reminds them of the spiritual harvest, or the gathering of his church among men; admonishes them to labour diligently in that work, and add their prayers to Heaven for success †. From servants being made free on the sabbatical year, he takes occasion to proclaim a greater and more noble freedom from the slavery of sin, and bondage of corruption ‡. 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 fathers in the thirsty wilderness; he introduces an

\* *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.* See an allusion to the great day of atonement, p. 289. note\*. That remarkable expression in administering the sacrament of the last supper, *This is my body,* [*Matt. 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 Cæna Dom. ex Antiq. Paschal. illustrat. Thes. Ant. Sacr. Vol. XVII.*

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; and the plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive ||. Upon a report, 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 vices of pride and 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 judgements overtook them; which would shortly fall upon that People, and be the more distinguishable, as coming attended with the very same circumstances\*. From the conspicuous eminence of a city standing on a mountain, he turns his discourse to the no less remarkable situation of his own disciples.

|| *John* vii. 37, &c. Comp. *John* iv. 10. where the same image is made use of on the like occasion. Vid. *Cleric*. ib. et in *ψ*. 14. Et *Lamy*, Harm. p. 324. In *Job*. vii. 38. *Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*, some suppose an allusion to the *prominency* of that capacious golden vase from which the *water* was then poured out in a large stream. Vid. *Doddr*. in loc. The first of these 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. Isaiæ*; quod animadversioe dignum est. Sic enim incipit illud caput, *Omnes sitientes venite ad aquas*, &c. et in eo legimus; *quærite Dominum dum inveniri potest*; inde Dominus materiam differendi sumpsit; quod verisimile est sæpius fecisse, in templo et in synagogis, ubi per singula Sabbata legebantur sacri codices ex ordine. Id. ib. p. 325.

\* *Luke* xiii. 1-5. ὡσαύτως ἀπολειθεῖ, *thus*, in this manner, ye shall perish. Vid. *Grotius*, *Doddridge*, *Whitby* in loc. Comp. *Benson*, p. 381, 420.

ples †. From the Temple before him, he *points* ‡ to that of his body; which was most properly so called from the divinity residing in him ||. From *Herod's* unadvisedly leading 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 relief from none of his own country or persuasion; but met with it in one of those, from whom he had the least reason to expect any, as being so much used to despise and hate that people, and their way of worship ††. From whence he forces his opponent

† *Matt.* v. 14. vid. *Maunderell*, p. 115.

‡ In the like manner I conceive him laying his hand on *Peter*, when he spake these words, *Upon this rock, &c.* *Matt.* xvi. 18.

|| *John* ii. 19. Thus also when he says, *In my Father's House are many mansions*, some think he alludes to the various apartments in the Temple; and the vast number of persons lodged there.

§ *Joseph. Ant. Jud. Lib.* xix. c. 7.

\* *Luke* xiv. 31.

\*\* *Joseph. Ant. Jud. Lib.* xx. c. 6. Id. B. J. c. 5. et 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.

‡‡ That this notorious enmity between the *Jews* and *Samaritans* was then carried to the greatest height, at least by the former,



nent 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 particularly 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 full possession of his spiritual kingdom; he would come again in power and great glory, and not only punish that rebellious nation of the *Jews*, with exemplary judgements; but at length condemn all those who

former, *John* iv. 9. for which our Saviour taxes them very artfully on some occasions, (*Luke* xvii. 16.) appears wherever mention is made of the latter: vid. *John* viii. 48. *Luke* ix. 53. *Ecclesiasticus* l. 25, et *Arnald*, *ibid.* The consequence of such their enmity toward clearing and confirming those points wherein they agreed, is drawn by *Bossuet*, *Univ. Hist.* p. 406, 417, &c.

\* *Luke* x. 30, &c. Vid. *Cleric.* ib. xi. 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 impetisset 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.

who wilfully opposed his gospel; as well as those who continued to neglect and disregard 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 chiefly owing to the omission of some circumstances in the history; as is observed by a very eminent writer (χ). By this means

† *Luke* xix. 12. Vid. *Cleric.* et *Clarke* in loc.

(χ) 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. 416. 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.

But we are presented with the best collection of such instances, together with the proper *uses* to be made of them, by a very learned and ingenious writer; whom I shall take the liberty of citing in the margin\*; and proceed to observe from hence,

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\* 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 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 knowing men by their fruits; of wolves in sheep's cloathing; 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

means he improved every thing into an useful moral ; made every object and event serve for a constant

hence, how necessary a careful attention to the particular occasion, time, and place ; as well as situation, posture, gesture, &c. in which our Saviour spake, must be, in order fully to comprehend the pertinence, the force, and beauty of his discourses : which should remind us of the allowances that ought in justice to be made for the uncouthness of some things in them at this day, from our unavoidable ignorance of many such minute

to 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 : 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, 'tis not improbable that he had before his eyes, houses standing upon high ground, and houses in the valley, in a ruinous condition, which had been destroyed by inundations. Dr. *Jortin's Discourses*, 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 in 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, μεταλλάσσει, is passed from death unto life.* (*Grot.*) When he spake 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 *Jeruz.* as well as to their obstinacy, and to the punishment which would follow it. *Luke xiii.* Id. ib. in not. p. 216. 2d. Ed.?

constant monitor, and remembrancer of his instructions; which by these means must be more easily

nute circumstances; and make us sensible of the value of those authors, who throw so much light on several passages of scripture, by attempting to supply them. See *Macknight*, Harm. Prelim. Obs. 1, 2. and *Wetsten*, de Interpret. N. T. p. 878, &c.

It may be farther observed, that *Christ* is no less easy and intelligible to his auditors in his more *set discourses*, by alluding in as familiar a 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; to what had been before 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; (*Deut.* xxvii. 28. *Josh.* viii.) *Matt.* v. *Luke* vi. 24. the manner of which solemnity has been described at large by some of their writers. Vid. *Lightf.* on *Matt.* v. 3, 4. Op. T. ii. p. 20. — The same method he continues 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. *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 *Ps.* 21. ib. see Mr. *Pilkington's* Remarks, p. 129.

I shall give another instance, 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; *Ps.* 6. we find him *sloping down and writing on the ground*. Where it is observable, that he does nothing but in as exact conformity as the place would admit, to the trial of the adulterous wife prescribed by God in *Numb.* v. 11, &c. where the priest was to stoop down, and take some of the dust from the floor of the tabernacle, *Ps.* 17. and likewise write out the curses denounced upon that occasion, *Ps.* 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

easily retained, than they could be by a long train of abstract reasoning, or under any artificial arrangement

proved equally guilty : on which account, this way of trial was abolished by the Sanhedrim about that very time, since that sin, say the *Jews*, grew then so very common. See *Lightf.* on *y.* 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 judgement 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, *Joh.* viii. 7. according to the interpretation of some late writers : ] 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 very prudently laid hold of) ere he proceeded any farther. *Imitabatur Christus, ut quidam sentiunt, gestum sacerdotis, qui uxorem suspectam exploraturus sese inclinabat, pulveremque a pavimento sanctuarii colligebat, quem aquæ infusum præberet sceminæ huic quæ suspecta erat. — Quicquid sit, sic se inclinans, Dominus locum dedit Pharissæis se subducendi a conspectu ejus. — Judæi docent nos aquas Zelotypiæ non nocuisse uxori adulteræ, nisi ipse maritus insons esset. Adulter autem cum adultera pariter tumore ventris et putredine femoris corripiebantur. *Maimon. in Sotab.* c. 2. — Hæc inter aniles Rabinorum fabulas esse numeranda dicet quispiam. Attamen constat testimonio *Jesephi*, tum et sacri codicis, olim Deum manifestis pœnis occulta delicta puniisse. Dici ergo potest quod judicium Dei reveriti, quia a culpa forsitan non erant immunes, excesserint scribæ et Pharisei omnes. *Lamy, Harm.* p. 329. See the thing more at large in *Lightf.* on *Joh.* viii. 6, 9. and Vol. II. p. 1080, &c. — ‘ It is presumed with reason, 1<sup>st</sup>, That this woman’s accusers were themselves guilty of the crime which they laid to her charge, in the same manner almost as the accusers of the chaste *Susanna*. Now it is not just to receive the accusations of those persons, who are guilty of the evil which they find fault with in another. — 2. There is room to believe, that the woman here spoken of had suffered some violence, and that her crime was much lessened by the circumstances attending it. *Selden* and *Fagius* are of opinion, that her case was the same with that related by *Moses.* *Deut.* xxii. 29. *Culmet, Dict. Art. Adultery.* A vindication of the authenticity of this whole*

rangement of a number of particulars laid down together.

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 in reality were disposed for information, and not too violently disgusting those who were not\*. This way of teaching is of all others most apt to raise, and to keep up the attention, and set each faculty of the mind on work: it gains the easiest admission into both head and heart; it strikes the deepest; sticks the longest; gives 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 ages, and nations, from the beginning of the world; and was particularly celebrated in the east ( $\omega$ ). This, among many other

passage, with an explanation of its several ends and uses, may be seen in *Benson's Dissertation on the Subject. Life of Christ*, p. 637, &c.

\* 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 *Clagett* upon *Job. 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 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.

( $\omega$ ) *Jerom.* on *Matt. xiv.* *Whitby* on *Matt. xiii. 10.* *Nichols's Conf.* Vol. I. 'It was the custom of the wise men among the ancients,

other excellent uses to which Christ applied it, in a manner the most delicate and masterly, was peculiarly

ancients, to cloath their instructions in apt stories and suitable comparisons: such is the parable of *Jotham*, and that very apt one of *Nathan* to *David*: 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 deeper into the minds of his auditors. The same method was likewise very proper for another purpose, *viz.* to deliver the mysteries of the gospel with some degree of obscurity and reserve; which he did, both to excite men's industry in searching further into the deep things of God, and withal to punish the sloth and negligence of those, who grudge taking any pains to learn God's will, and their own duty. This reason, you may find, our Saviour himself assigns, why he spake to the multitude in parables, *Matt. xiii. 10, &c.*

These were the reasons, why our Saviour chose to convey his instructions in parables. And we may observe in general concerning them, first, that they have a pleasing *variety*, suited to men's different apprehensions and capacities; and in the next place, that there is an extraordinary *decency*; and, if I may so express it, a *genteelness*, which runs through them all. Our Saviour puts the case in all his parables on the charitable side; and makes the most favourable representation of things which the matter will bear. In the parable of the *ten virgins*, he supposes the number of the wise to be equal to that of the foolish. [See *Tillotson*, serm. 31.] In the parable of the *lost sheep*, he supposes but one of a hundred to go astray; and yet the *good shepherd* is content to leave all the rest, and go in quest of the single straggler. In the third place, there is an exact *decorum* observed in all Christ's parables, and every thing that is spoken is fitted to the character of the person who speaks it; a beauty, which the critics look upon as the greatest ornament of a poem; and which of itself is sufficient to make it heard or read with delight and admiration: and therefore, I hope, it may recommend our Saviour's parables to the nice and delicate taste of our modern wits; who are apt to think every thing in scripture so mean and flat, as not to be worth their reading. *Lowth*, Dir. p. 185, &c. Les paraboles que *Jesus Christ* emploie excellent sur toutes les autres en ce qu'elles sont si naturelles et si vraisemblables, qu'elles ont l'air de veritez plutôt que de fictions. On n'y voit point les animaux, ni les plantes, former des conversations ensemble. On n'y trouve rien d'impossible, ni de ridi-

peculiarly fitted to insinuate such points, as more immediately opposed the prejudices, or the inclinations, of all those to whom Christ preached; and which, though necessary for them to be apprised of, 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, direct manner: such as related chiefly to the external circumstances of his person and doctrine; and the effects thereof, 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 most accustomed, and in which they would be most likely to apprehend him (A):  
 And

cule, ni de monstreux, comme dans *Talmud*, ou dans *l'Alcoran*. Tout y est simple et tiré d'après nature, &c. *Jaquelot*, de la *Verité*, &c. p. 318. *Comp. Lamy*, *Harm.* p. 248, 253. & *Lightf.* in *Matt.* xiii. 3. or *Harm.* c. 31. sect. 37. or *Bourn*, on some *Parables*, *Introd.*

\* *Vid. Jaquelot*, p. 319, &c.

(A) *Christus cum vulgo semper et ubique loquitur. Lightfoot*, *Op. Lat.* Vol. II. p. 326, 510. One of the best of our commentators supposes *Christ*, not only to adapt his discourses to the *common language* of the time; but also to accommodate himself to the *vulgar notions and opinions*, upon some occasions. *Vid. Cleric.* in *Luke* xvi 23, 24. 'What you say about critics and critical interpretations, particularly of the scriptures, is not only in my opinion true, but of great use to be observed in reading learned commentators; who not seldom make it their business to shew, in what sense a word has been used by other authors; whereas the proper business of a commentator is to shew, in what sense it was used by the author in that place; which in the scripture we have reason to conclude, was most commonly  
 in



And it is worth remarking, that wherever his words seem capable of different senses, we may with

in the *ordinary vulgar sense of the word or phrase known in that time*; because the books were written, as you rightly observe, and adapted to the *people*. If critics had observed this, we should have in their writings less ostentation, and more truth; and a great deal of darkness now spread on the scriptures had been avoided.' *Locke*, Lett. to *Bald*, 1699. *Museum*, N<sup>o</sup>. 20.—*Comp. Doddridge*, Fam. Exp. Vol. II. sect. 94. p. 27. n. 2. and *Weistien*, de Interpret. N. T. Vol. II. p. 876.—The not being willing to attend, or to make a due allowance for this, has occasioned *Chubb's* gross misrepresentation of some of our Saviour's precepts, in his piece styled *Remarks on Scripture*. [Posth. Works, Part i.] As an adhering strictly to the *literal sense* must be very absurd in the interpretation of a *popular phrase*, in all parts of the world, and the most common ground of misapprehension; so of all things it is the most unreasonable in one that pretends to give us the true sense of *Eastern* writings: which are so well known to abound in general, brief maxims; parabolic or proverbial expressions; and extremely popular forms of speech; [vid. *Affize Sermon*. at *Carlisle*, on *Matt. v. 40.*] where such a low, dry, minute, and seemingly accurate way of reasoning and discouraging; such a dull, tedious detail of circumstances and restraining clauses, as is in use with us; would have been little relished or regarded; and which, were it to the purpose, might be easily justified in point of certainty and perspicuity; since to one who is tolerably well acquainted with their style and 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 candor is admitted; since in such writings there is never any particular *stress* placed in *words*, to the prejudice or exclusion of it; as is perhaps too much the case in most of our modern *law-forms*; where a long train of circumlocutions is very apt to cloud and stifle, rather than clear and ascertain the sense; and which, by shewing that so great a weight is laid upon the terms, instead of avoiding, usually tend to make a multitude of difficulties.

An instance of *Chubb's* abuse of one such discourse of our Saviour's, may be seen above, p. 311. note (φ); the rest have been so often answered, that a mere English reader cannot be easily mistaken in them. A particular examination of them may be seen in *Leland's* View of Deistical writers, Lett. xiii.

with certainty conclude, that to be the true one, which lay most level to the comprehension of his auditors; allowing for those figurative expressions, 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 of a practical nature, always pertinent to the case in hand, and of an immediate and apparent tendency to the most beneficial purposes\*: and he is so far from seeking reputation by an artful and elaborate manner of explaining it; that he seems barely to propose each point, together with its proper sanction, and leaves it to shine forth by its own light. 'Tis neither versed in any nice, subtle 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 superstitious rites, and slavish ceremonies, 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 quickly enable his disciples to determine for themselves, and judge aright in each particular case: as in that of  
the

\* 'Nothing is more remarkable in the whole history of the gospel, than our Saviour's general method, that whenever men proposed to him any curious question, or related to him any particular fact or event, in expectation of hearing his observations upon it; he constantly turned the matter before him into an occasion of giving some *practical* instruction to the persons *themselves* with whom he was conversing.' *Clarke's Sermon, on Luke xiii. 2, 3.* where many instances of this are produced.

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 really of the same import, as including the same virtual appeal to God; and therefore must needs be of equal force, and should alike exclude all fraudulent, evasive artifices ||. In that of *vows*, which bind only to things otherwise innocent at least, and by which none ever could exempt themselves from duties of an antecedent, and perpetual obligation §: and by that universal rule, of *mercy* being preferable to *sacrifice*, whenever a *moral* and a *positive* precept interfere with one another\*.\*.

Such doctrine must appear, not only excellent in itself, and taken independently; but more especially so, in the circumstances under which it was delivered: as fully obviating the several false maxims, and fallacious glosses, advanced by the *Jewish* teachers of our Saviour's time: in which respect it must be doubly useful, as an instruction in truths of the last importance; and a guard against so many popular errors; and may be considered as another instance of his exquisite manner

\* *Mark* ii. 27. Vid. *Cleric.*

† *Col.* ii. 21.

‡ *Matt.* xv. 18. *Mark* vii. 15. See *Lightf. Harm.* p. 237.

|| *Matt.* xxiii. 16, &c.

§ *Matt.* xv. 6. *Mark* vii. 11.

\* *Matt.* ix. 13. xii. 7.

manner of accommodating things, both to the general benefit, and the particular exigences of his hearers.

Lastly, our Saviour's whole discourse and way of arguing, must carry something of a peculiar force and poignancy along with it, and be attended with extraordinary degrees both of conviction, and astonishment; as he knew thoroughly *what was in man*, and therefore could speak to his heart directly\*; and *needed not that any man should either ask him, or inform him of any thing*: as he saw into the most secret thoughts, and purposes, of all those whom he had to deal with; and often shewed them plainly that he did so, by removing the latent prejudices of his weaker friends, and obviating their several doubts and difficulties, as they arose in their own minds; before they durst give

\* *Matt.* ix. 4. xvii. 25. *Mark* II. 8. ix. 33, 34, 35. *Luke* v. 22. *John* vi. 61, 70. xvi. 6. See other instances in *Clagett* on *John* vii. 33, 34. *Lamy*, Harm. on *John* v. 14. p. 272. *Benson*, Life of Christ, c. 5. sect. ii, iii. And *Lightf.* on *John* i. 48. — Harm. p. 535. *When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.* 'This seemeth to refer, not only to his being under the fig-tree, but to some private and secret action that he did there, and for which he went thither: and as our Saviour convinceth the woman of *Samarita*, that he was the *Messias*, by telling her of her evil actions that she did in the dark and secret; so doth he *Nathanael*, by hinting some good things that he hid from the eyes of men under a fig-tree, before *Philip* light on him there; as praying, vowing, or some other action which none knew of but himself: and this appeareth rather to be the matter which *Christ* aimed at, and which worketh in *Nathanael* for his conviction; because it was possible that *Christ* might have been near the fig-tree himself, as well as *Philip*; and he might see *Nathanael*, and *Nathanael* not see him; and so might *Nathanael* have supposed: but when he telleth of some secret action that passed from him under the fig-tree, which his conscience told him, that no mortal eye could be conscious to but himself; then he cries out, *Thou art the Son of God, &c.*' Comp. *Macknight*, Vol. I. p. 47.

give any intimation of them † : by answering such objections as had been made only in private, or at least out of his hearing\* : by refuting every plausible pretence, and laying open the most artful stratagems of his most inveterate enemies ; detecting their hypocrisy, exposing their true aim ; and thereby cutting off all possibility of reply : on which account his word must needs be *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.*—In this respect too it might well be said, *never man spake like this man ‡.* Many instances whereof will occur upon a diligent perusal of the gospels.

Thus did *Christ* live, and teach : shewing himself as much superior to the rest of the world in each of these respects, as he did in his miracles.

There was a wondrous man among the *Greeks*, who has often been compared to *Christ*, and considered

† Comp. *John* xvi. 19, 30. et *Cleric.* in *John* xi. 22. This may perhaps be some ground for imagining that the evangelists applied the common phrase of *Jesus answered*, with a peculiar propriety, even when he is only beginning or continuing his discourse, and no sort of question appears to have been asked, *Matt.* xi. 25.—xxii. 1. *Luke* vii. 39, 40.—xiv. 3, 5, &c. See *Boyle*, on the Style of the Scripture, p 88.

\* 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. and note \* p. 330.

‡ ‘ So said the officers, who were sent by the *chief Priests* and *Pharisees*, to apprehend *Jesus*. *John* vii. 46. When they were come to the place where *Jesus* was teaching, probably he, knowing the errand upon which they were come, spoke to home to their consciences,, to their particular thoughts and present views ; that they had no heart to execute their commission : though what our Lord then said is not recorded.’ *Benson*, *Life of Christ*, c. 5. sect. iv. See several texts explained by the consideration of *Jesus* his knowing the hearts of all men, and that he could talk to their thoughts, as we do to each other’s words, or actions. *Ib.* sect. x, xi.

dered as a kind of *type* of him to the heathen \*; there being a great resemblance between them, in some remarkable particulars. *Socrates* 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 supposes himself *given*, or *sent* by God ‡; with the utmost firmness bearing all the injuries, and despising the affronts, to which he was continually exposed on that account. He constantly resorts to places of public concourse, and generally grounds his discourses

on

\* *Marcilius Ficinus* atque *Symphorianus Champcrius* in *Socrate* typum *Christi*, ejusque passionum, sibi invenisse visi sunt. Sed ut hi quidem plus quam decebat illi tribuunt, ita virum fuisse summam sapientiam præditum, qui providam haud dubie numinis curam excitatus fuit ut superstitionis crassissimæ tenebras dispelleret, veramque virtutis viam, quousque rationis lumen pertingit, *Græcis* monstraret, negari nequit. *Budd. Hist. Eccl. Tom. II. p. 859.*

† Ταυτα γαρ κελευει ο Θεος, ευ ισε. Και εγω οιμαι εδεν πω υμιν μειζον αγαθον γενεσθαι ευ τη πολει, η την εμην τω Θεω ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑΝ. *Plat. Apol. sect. 17. p. 91. Foster.*

Εμοι δε τουτο, ως εγω φημι, ΠΡΟΣΤΕΤΑΚΤΑΙ ΥΠΟ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ πραττειν, και εκ μαυτειων και εξ ευτυπιων, και παντι τροπω, υπερ τις ποτε και αλλη θεια μοιρα αυθροπω και οτιαν προσεταξε πραττειν. *Ib. sect. 22.*

‡ Νυν εν, ω ανδρες Αθηναιοι, πολλα δεω εγω υπερ εμαυτου απολογεισθαι — αλλα υπερ υμων, μη εξαμαρτητε περι την τε Θεω ΔΟΣΙΝ υμιν, εμου καταψηφισαμενοι.—Ειτα του λοιπου χρονου διατελοιτε αν καθευδοντες, ει μη τινα αλλον υμιν ο Θεος ΕΠΙΠΕΜΨΕΙΕ, κηδομενος υμων. Οτι δ' εγω τυγχανω ων τοιουτος, οιος υπο του Θεω τη πολει ΔΕΔΟΣΘΑΙ, ευθευδε αν κατανοησαιτε. Ου γαρ ανθρωπινω εοικε το εμε των μεν εμαυτε απαντων ημεληκεναι, και ανεχεσθαι των οικειω αμελημενω τοσαυτα ηδη ετη, το δε υμετερου πραττειν αιει, ιδιαι εκαστω προσιουτα, ωσπερ πατερα η αδελφου πρεσβυτερου, πειθοντα επιμελεισθαι αρετης. *Ibid. sect. 18.*

on what occurs there ; making use of every place, and season, and occasion, to exercise and inculcate his philosophy ||. He chooses a state of poverty, to clear himself from all suspicion of private interest, and make his character more unexceptionable, by shewing that he practised what he taught §: he avoids meddling with the affairs of the public ; declines posts of authority amongst them ; as these in such bad times, must have precipitated his fate, before he had done them any considerable service \*. He perseveres in sifting and examining them, in order to detect their ignorance and presumption †, and to mortify their pride, on all occasions ; and declares that he must persevere in the same course ‡, even when he clearly foresaw 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 *envy* he is delivered up to his enemies, and on a most malicious

|| Σωκρατης ουτε βαθρα θεις, ουτε εις θρονου καθιστας, ουτε ωραν διατριβης, η περιπατα τοις γνωριμοις τεταγμενην φυλατιων, αλλα και παιζων, οτι τυχοι, και συμπιων, και συστρατευομενος ενιοις, και συναγοραζων, τελος δε και συνδεδεμενος, και πιων το φαρμακον, εφίλοσοφει. Πρωτος αποδειξας του βιου απαντι χρονω, και μερει, και παθεσι, καιπραγμασι απλως απασι φιλοσοφίαν δεχομενου. *Plutarch.* Ει πρεσβυτερω πολιτευτεου.

§ *Vid. Plutarch. Advers. Colot. Op. Vol. II.*

\* Ου γαρ εστιν οστις ανθρωπων σωθησεται, ετε υμιν, ετε αλλω εδενι πληθει γνησιως ευαυτιμεινος, και δικηλωων πολλα αδικα και παρανομα ευ τη πολει γιγνεσθαι. αλλα αναγκαιου εστι τω ουτι μαχουμενου υπερ τε δικαιω, κ' ει μελλει ολιγον χρονου σωθησεται, ιδιωτευειν, αλλα μη δημοσιευειν. *Plat. Apol. Socrat. lect. 19. p. 96. Foster.*

† *Plat. Apol. lect. 9.*

† *Ibid.*

†† *Xenoph. Mem. Lib. iv. fin.*

licious prosecution brought to his trial; instead of having recourse to the usual way of supplication, and 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 appeals to their conscience; and proceeds only so far in his own defence, as would be just sufficient to assert his *innocence*, and shew them the great *sin* of persecuting and oppressing it. Instead of using or permitting any other means to avoid his death, he signifies that it was free and voluntary in him, because it was 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; which some of them delivered down to us; [though in a manner very different from that simplicity, and strict propriety, with which the gospels are recorded:] and, indeed, the effects which his instructions, and example, had upon them, were prodigious ||.

Some other circumstances might be pointed out, were we to draw a parallel between these two, considered merely as philosophers. But notwithstanding any such, and without derogating from the character of *Socrates*; we still may affirm, that he was far surpassed by CHRIST; as well in the importance of the doctrines taught, as in the candid, clear, convincing manner of delivering them;

† Κυλικά Φαρμακου παρατίεις; ἔχι καὶ Σωκράτει ταυτην προσπιεις; ὁ δὲ ἰλεως καὶ πρᾶως, οὐ τρεσας, οὐδὲ διαφθειρας οὐδὲ χρωματος ἔδεν, ἔδε σχηματος, μαλ' ευκολως ἐξεπιεν. *Plutarch*.  
Εἰ αὐταρκης ἢ κακια πρὸς κακοδαιμονικῶν. *Op. Vol. II*

|| Vid. *Charpentier*, Life of *Socr.*



them; and in that purity, and general perfection, which distinguish Christianity from every other system.

*Socrates* descends sometimes to trivial subjects; and often trifles in pursuing others; neither attempting to give his hearers information in them; nor so much as pretending to have received any himself: he wraps up his discourse in subtle intricacies, as best adapted to his principal design of shewing men that they knew nothing: disputes *pro* and *con*\*, puzzling and perplexing those with whom he argues; and seems more studious to confute what they maintain, than to establish any doctrine of his own: instead of clearing up their doubts, and opening his whole mind to them; he constantly makes use of captious interrogatories, to ensnare and draw them into difficulties; and is ever mixing ridicule and satire with his reasonings: which, though it suited but too well with the general turn and temper of that lively people; though it afforded great delight to several of his followers; and served to attach them the more strongly to him: yet it was surely gratifying a wrong taste in them, and giving much unnecessary offence to others (B.)—  
But

\* Vid. *Cic. de Or.* III. 18.

(B) Of this kind seem to be the sneers on *Axytus*, about maintaining himself by privately working at the trade of a leather-dresser, which he had not a mind to own; which made that same *Axytus* become one of *Socrates*'s most bitter enemies: and his persisting in reproaching *Axytus* on that head, after notice given him that the action should be withdrawn, if he would but forbear the mentioning it; was perhaps a chief cause of the prosecution being carried on with so much pique and violence against him. See *Stanley, Hist. Ph.* Part ii. p. 31, 33. 1st Ed. I cannot therefore quite approve of his *irony*, in this and many other instances, notwithstanding *Le Clerc*'s plausible defence of it. *Silv. Phil.* c. 3. sect. 2. p. 181, 192.

But that was *Socrates's* talent: and his employing it so much, has given great occasion for that charge of vanity, which some have brought against him\*.

His *method* of disputing, however admired by his contemporaries, and celebrated by most others since, yet must be owned to admit of many sophisms; to be calculated rather for confounding, than convincing an opponent.

His *dæmon*, whatsoever be understood by it, though upon some occasions it should be allowed to guard him and his followers, from evils of some consequence; on others, it seems to interest itself in very low affairs †, and which were hardly *Deo digna*; such, as its giving them warning not to go through a certain street, in which they were to meet some swine, and spoil their cloaths ‡: sometimes it seems to degenerate into downright fanaticism; and, after all, perhaps, was merely fancy, or fiction §.

### Socrates

\* Ὅτι δὲ δοξῆς κ̄ χρη̄ καταφρονεῖν τῆς παρὰ τῶν πολλῶν, Σωκράτης αὐτός, κ̄ν̄ μυρία φιλοσοφῆ̄ περὶ ταῦτα, δεικνύσι. πάντῃ γὰρ πρὸς δόξαν ὄρων̄ ἐποιεῖ κ̄ εἶγε τῶν ἐκείνῃ λόγων ἐμπειροῖ η̄τε, πολλὸν αὖ του ὑπὲρ τούτων ἐκίνησα λόγου, κ̄ εἰδείξα πολλὴν παρ̄ αὐτοῖς τὴν εἰρωνείαν (εἶγε οἷς ὁ μαθητῆς αὐτῆ λέγει πειθεσθαι χρῆν). κ̄ πῶς ἀπο κενοδοξίας πάντα αὐτῶ τα γραμμὰτα τὴν ὑπόθεσιν εἶχει. *Chrysof.* Hom. 36. in Act. cap. 17. Ed. *Eton.* Tom. IV. p. 813.

† Πάνυ πικρὴ αἰε̄ η̄ν, κ̄ πάνυ ἐπὶ σμικροῖς ἐναυτιουμένη. *Plat. Apol. Socr.* 31

‡ *Plut. de Gen. Socr.* See a like instance about *Crito's Eye*, in *Cic. de Div.* i. 54. In what sense could the late author of his life understand this *divine call*, when he supposes it to extend to *indifferent affairs*? p. 90.

§ *Ouzel*, Animadv. in *Min. Fel.* p. 154. Though so much deference is due to the authorities produced on the other side  
by

*Socrates* was very far from opposing either the superstitious principles, or practices of the *Athenians* with that freedom and simplicity, that openness and zeal, with which *Christ* taxed those of the *Jews*: on the contrary, he always conforms, and gives countenance to them. Nor does he declare against their most predominant, and not irreputable vices; but rather, it must be owned, often goes very grossly into the language of them; unless we admit the favourable apology made for him on this article, by throwing the whole blame on one of his disciples\*. He appears publicly to plead his own acknowledgment of their divinities, and approbation of their established worship†; both which were abominable; and often treated accordingly

by a learned friend, and to his own opinion more than all of them, that they must be referred to. See Dr. *Fertin's* Remarks on Eccl. Hist. Vol. I. p. 95.

\* *Vitia erant quæ usque adeo grassabantur inter Athenienses, ut omnes tandem eorum depudiasset. Ejusmodi erat nefanda illa πειρασμοι, quæ plena sunt non comicorum tantum, sed etiam philosophorum, et Platonis quidem, scripta. Ea re me valde offensus fateor; et quia non putabam Socratem ejusmodi flagitii reum esse potuisse, totam rem in Platonem conjiciebam; qui magistro verba mutua forte dedisset, qualibus nunquam usus erat. Commotus eram judicio non veterum tantum Christianorum, qui talia Platoni exprobraverant; sed etiam ipsorum philosophorum ethnicorum, eorumque Socrati et Platoni benevolentium. Maximus Tyrius Diff. viii. eam in Socratem adulationem profert, quam eluere omni arte conatur, cum in illa, tum in tribus sequentibus Dissertationibus; sed, ut mihi quidem videtur, non satis commode. Cleric. Silv. Phil. c. 3. p. 190. Epiphanius is express and warm in celebrating Socrates's uncommon virtue in this respect. Diff. L. ii. c. 18. §. 4.*

† Vid. *Plat. et Xen. Apol. comp. Rollin, A. Hist. Vol. IV. p. 260. Quis jam superstitiones Ægyptiorum audeat reprehendere, quas Socrates Athenis auctoritate confirmavit sua? Lactant. de Falsa Sap. Lib. iii. 19. comp. Xen. Mem. Secr. I.*

ingly upon the stage (Γ); and which therefore no such excuse, as that of avoiding to disturb the publick peace, or not offending the weak minds of the people\*, or obviating persecution; ever can justify. He performs his devotion to the same deities in private †; and in his last moments, (Δ) either betrays an apprehension of some criminal neglect towards one of them; or contents himself with continuing the same strain of ironical humour in respect to them, which he indulged in other subjects;

(Γ) Numberless instances of this occur in an eminently moral writer, and one of our philosopher's particular friends, *Euripides*; who has, with the utmost freedom, repeated the several vile stories of the gods and goddesses; accompanying them with as severe reflections; and these introduced frequently under none of the worst of his characters; and this, so far as appears, without offence. That he distinguishes the true God from that rabble of poetic deities, may be seen in many remarkable passages. v. g. *Herc. fur.* ver. 1341, &c.

Εγω δε τας θεας στε λεκτρ', α μη θεμις,  
 Στερσειν νομιζω, δεσμοατ' εξαπλειν χειροιν,  
 Ουτ' ηξιωσα πωποστ', στε πεισομαι,  
 Ουδ' αλλον αλλα δεσποδην πεφυκεναι.  
 Δειλαι γαρ ο θεος, ειπερ ες' οντως θεος,  
 Ουδενος. αοιδων οιδε δυσηνοι λογοι.

Comp. *Sophoclis* Fragm. ap. *Grot.* excerpt. vet. Com. et Trag. p. 148.

\* *Cooper's* Life of *Socrates*, p. 166.

† *Plat. Phæd.* in fin. *Themist.* Or. 14. *D. Laert.* Lib. ii. 42. So far was he from being a martyr to the unity of the divine nature, as is generally asserted. Concerning which see *Le Clerc's* *Silv. Philol.* to *Æsch. Socrat.* c. 3. p. 177. and *Cudworth*, *Int. Syst.* Lib. i. c. 4. § 23. N. 8. p. 482. *Moshem.*

(Δ) Some suppose his ordering the sacrifice of a cock to have been a ridicule on the stoical superstition, mentioned by *Cicero* pro *Muræna*, c. 29. Non minus delinquere eum qui gallum galinaceum cum opus non fuerit, quam eum qui patrem, suffocaverit. Others imagine him to be delirious, from the opiate drug he had taken. *Dr. Fortin* *Rem. Eccl. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 95. *Dr. Meibom's* MS. *Lectures on Poisons*, in which many vulgar errors

jects; or left the world uncertain what he meant. (E).

From these slight strictures on a character justly reputed one of the most complete among mere men; when it is placed in opposition to that of *Christ* our Lord, 'tis easy to distinguish which has the advantage; as is freely owned by some modern unbelievers\*. The same thing would appear more clearly, were the latter to be drawn out at large, and shewn together with any other of the most celebrated lawgivers, and teachers.

errors are judiciously exploded. The most favourable account is that of Dr. *Benson*. Life of Christ, p. 91. n. a. 'It might be at *Athens* a well-known custom to offer a cock to *Æsculapius*, the god of medicine, upon a person's recovery from some threatening indisposition. And consequently, to have offered a cock to *Æsculapius*, and to have been restored to health from a dangerous disease, were expressions of the same import, by putting the sign for the thing signified. *Plato*, in the person of *Phædo*, informs us, that when *Socrates* found the poison had invaded his bowels; that is to say, when he found himself upon the point of expiring, (and they were the last words) that he spake to *Crito*; 'I owe a cock to *Æsculapius*, which I desire you would pay. Do not neglect it. q. d. I am just upon the point of being cured of all the disorders and pains attending this mortal frame; and of entering upon a better life; a state of perfect health, and happiness. And I desire you would thus publickly signify my belief and persuasion, to the whole city of *Athens*, in that way which they are all acquainted with, and well understand.'

(E) Perhaps after all his sublime speculations on the nature of the deity, *Socrates* might be as much in earnest in his worship of the subaltern divinities, in order to be on the safe side; as his admirer *Cicero* seems to have been, when he gives his wife directions to make their acknowledgment to the very same god for his recovery. *Χελυν ακρατον noctu ejeci. Statim ita sum levatus, ut mihi deus aliquis medicinam fecisse videatur. Cui quidem tu deo, quemadmodum soles, pie et caste satiscacias; id est, Apollini et Æsculapio.* Ep. xiv. 7.

\* See the parallel in *Roussseau's* Treatise on Education.

ers. But such a comparative view seems to be little necessary to its illustration.

And I content myself with only touching on some few of those remarkable circumstances in the life of JESUS, which were recorded by his first disciples, as the *signs* and evidences of his being the *Son of God*; which brought so many to believe on him at that time, and which one would think sufficient to produce the same belief in every age; as they have actually done, both with the generality, where-ever they have fairly been proposed to them; and with the best, and wisest men, who have given themselves leave duly to reflect upon them.

THE  
NATURE and END  
OF  
D E A T H  
UNDER THE  
CHRISTIAN COVENANT.





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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 are sanctified by him, were brethren; the same seed of Abraham\*, and alike children of the promise, wherein all nations of the earth were to be blessed. He had observed likewise, that in order to discharge this office, and procure the intended blessing; there ought to be an exact conformity between them, in their state and circumstances: 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, and suffer in it; that he might not only shew them, how death was to be overcome in this very nature;*

\* *v.* 16.

but actually procure an abolition of it; and thereby utterly disappoint him, who had prevailed so far as to involve each of them in it; and thought to have entailed it on them irrecoverably:—that by submitting to this for a while himself, he 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 highly worthy of infinite wisdom and goodness; or (as the apostle says) *became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory*, to make this wonderful humiliation of their head a necessary 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 misery; and finally exalt the 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 incident to our frame, he has taken off its force; and gained a final victory over it: this death is now disarmed of all its terrors; and man delivered from that most servile, abject state of anxiety and wretchedness, to which the ancient heathen were, and we must have been unavoidably reduced; as being constantly sensible of its continual approaches towards us; and

† *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.*

and having no 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 acceptance*. 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 enquiry:

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?

In order to determine this, it will be necessary to attend to the true meaning of the word *death*, as it is strictly and properly applied in Scripture: and this may be best seen, by looking back to the remarkable passage 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 translated, Thou shalt *surely*,—but might with more propriety have been rendered,  
Thou

† כּוֹת תְּמוֹת Comp. *Gen.* xxxvii. 33. *Ex.* xxi. 19. where the same construction signifies *entirely, totally*.

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 state to which this 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 possibly understand by this, but a resumption of that natural *life* or conscious *being*, which their Creator had been lately pleased to bestow upon them? the forfeiting which must necessarily include a total loss of all those benefits, that then did, or ever could proceed from him. This surely, and nothing less, must be implied in that most solemn sentence: nor can we well conceive the unhappy subjects of it, to have been at that time so very ingenious, as to explain it all away, by distinguishing upon the different parts of their constitution; and so concluding, that by death no more was intended, than only *living* in some different *manner*; or a continuation of their consciousness, and real existence, in some other *place*. No: that was the philosophy of after ages: concerning which, all I shall say at present is, that some of its most eminent patrons cannot help observing, that they *don't find it in the Scriptures* [Z.]

These,

† *Athanasius* thinks, that the doubling the expression denotes *Μη μονον αποθνησκειν, αλλα και εν τη τε θανατη 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 an happy resurrection. Vid. *Patrick* on *Gen.* ii. 17. With *Taylor's Scheme of Scripture Divinity* p. 104.

[Z] *Tillotson*, Vol. II. fol. ferm. 100.— This is very tenderly expressed; and the reason that great author gives for it, not unsuitable

These, in their obvious meaning, represent the whole man, individual, person, or being; as included in the sentence addressed to him; nor do they seem to take notice of any other circumstance in the case, beside that, so often mentioned, of his returning to the *dust, or ground, 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 communication 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:

Which will appear more clearly, from the *date* of that deliverance; and this is every where represented

able 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*; 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 must examine the Scripture-language more particularly; 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.

† 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 *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 Disc. p. 22.*

sented in the same Scripture, as commencing at the *resurrection*; nor can any thing else constitute the opposition above-mentioned: for if death be a return to *dust*; then nothing but a *reviving*, or a *refuscitation* 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 an inherent pro-

† 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 *Joh. iii. 15*. Fam. Expof. Vol. I. p. 154. and Jeffery’s 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 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 *destroyed by death*, and whose constituent parts are re-united at the *resurrection*; can, with any propriety, be denominated *man*; see in the

property of our original nature; but a *free gift* to us\*, promised and procured by Christ; and accordingly termed *the grace*, or *gift of God*, and *the gift by grace, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord*†: who on that account is pleased to stile himself *the resurrection and the life*‡; who is called *our life*||; and said to have *the keys of hades, and of death*: who opens 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 taught to believe, it was Christ only, who *abolished death*, and *brought immortality to light 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

the same eminent writer, *ib. p. 86.*—What insurmountable difficulties have arisen from considering these constituents separately, may be seen, *ib. p. 101, &c.*

'Tis 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. I 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. I Cor. xv. 22, 57. I Pet. iii. 7.*

‡ *John xi. 25. || Col. iii. 4. § John iii. 36.*

\*\* '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.*

and thereby become *the first-fruits of them that slept*; we are as sure of our own resurrection, as that he our head is risen for us. Hereby we become *heirs of the resurrection*; and have an infallible title to *immortal life*, through this *adoption*; that is, the *redemption of our body*\*. We know, that we shall not now *perish for ever*†, or be *lost*; but live in him; or (as he himself constantly explains it) be raised up again *at the last day*‡. We may *with boldness* now approach to God, *by a living way, which Christ hath consecrated to us, through the veil*; that is, *his flesh*: through him we have gained the *victory*; may join in St. Paul's triumph over *death and the grave*||; and have all infinite reason to express our gratitude for it, with the same 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 a while, in order to be thus resumed? How comes it to pass, that we don't rather *live on* still; than die, and rise again?—as some understand the former question in St. Paul's, from the distinct answer, which he gives; *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 necessary; and—that it would be as *foolish*, to expect the contrary in this case; as to expect that corn should grow up, without any of that alteration in  
its

\* Rom. viii. 23.

† John x. 28.

‡ John iii. 16.---vi. 39, 40, 44.

|| 1 Cor. xv. 55.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 35.



its texture, which is occasioned by the change of seasons\*.

Let us proceed then, to enquire 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, 'tis plain, that in what state soever mankind were originally made, they could not have subsisted always in the present world; at least, not been supported in such numbers, as now take their turn there, and supply each others places in succeeding generations†: the inhabitants of this globe then must have been confined to a few; or 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 attends the conclusion of their present life.— How far this might have been the case, had man continued, as he came out of the hand of his Maker, holy and innocent, we cannot easily 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 prove most agreeable to them; but rather were to be held in a more rigorous state of duty and dependence; in order to induce them to preserve themselves and others, their due time, in being here; as also put them on the most effectual means of

\* Comp. *John* xii. 24.

† Δὸς ἀλλοῖς τόπων· δεῖ γενέσθαι καὶ ἄλλως, καθάπερ καὶ σὺ ἐρε-  
νε, καὶ γενομένουσ ἐχειν χώραν, καὶ οἰκίσεις, καὶ τὰ ἐπιτελεῖς. Αἱ δ'  
οἱ πρῶτοι μὴ ὑπεξαγάγῃσι, τί ἰπολείπεται; Arrian, *Epictet*. Diff.  
p. 558. Ed. *Upton* 1741.

of attending to, and making some provision for a better state.

If after a long time spent idly 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 dispatch himself, or others thither! how rashly would they rush into their Maker's presence, however unqualified and unprepared to meet him! Or must the sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth be obliged to send his messengers (as he did to *Elijah*) for our conduct, whenever we may be disposed to change our station? How highly indecent and incongruous this! most unworthy the Divine Majesty; and ill suited to the nature of man: who, tho' he be endowed with large capacities, considering whence he sprang so lately; and placed in high rank in the order of creatures, so many classes of which are entirely subject to him; yet is he at his best estate, of but a very limited understanding; and by no means qualified to have the absolute disposal of himself; or to be fully let into the manner, how he is to be disposed of in a future state; which if he were at present able to comprehend, he would perhaps be like to make no proper use of that piece of knowledge: It may be necessary therefore to have such a vail drawn over the whole, as is done by death; while man is fixed here for a time, in a state of discipline and probation; under general laws, to be foreseen, and in some measure  
influ-

influenced by himself; and of which therefore he may avail himself so far, as to enjoy a good degree of happiness; as well as fit himself for some superior station, when he shall be called to it. Here he is first produced, and formed to act a part upon the present stage; a short one indeed, but such as may in general be sufficient to constitute a real character; and lay a just foundation for eternity: then the scene closes in so severe and solemn a manner, as must, if any thing can possibly, *alarm* him; and excite some more than ordinary vigorous endeavours to prepare for his appearance in the next; which is of infinite consequence, and opens with a public trial; when all persons shall be gathered from all quarters of the world, and *stand together before the judgement-seat of Christ*; at once to receive their doom for all things done in the body, at what distance of time soever; and to which their respective deaths consign them.

Farther; Such a dispensation as this of death, however disagreeable, is yet in our present circumstances of great service; and the apprehension of it absolutely necessary for mankind, considered either, as in a state of natural culture, and training up for any tolerable society with one another here; or, in order to prepare them for a higher state of moral happiness, and mutual fellowship of 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 one particular; and thereby cut off the extensive views, and curb the hardy attempts, of arbitrary and aspiring men:—to keep the balance even among the several orders, more especially the higher ones; and prevent that tyranny and

oppression, which would naturally attend the long projected schemes of overthrowing it;—to restrain the exorbitant degrees of vice and villany in those of lower stations, by the various terrors of it, and its visible infliction;—to correct the fallies of intemperance, and abandoned lust, by bringing their effects so frequently to view;—by being the most powerful means of breaking wrong associations, and reforming evil habits in general; 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 what an uncertain state we are in;—by preventing our being ever wholly immersed in the low cares, and sunk under the load of any crosses and afflictions of this transitory life;—helping us to raise our thoughts and expectations to a better; and 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].

These

\* 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 threecore and ten, or fourscore years. And if the corrupt morals 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 HASTEN-

ING

These are very obvious moral considerations; and seem to be of some weight towards justifying this branch 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 make it naturally fit, and necessary, for such disordered and corrupted bodies as we bear about us, to be totally dissolved; in order to eradicate those *traces*, which may have been formed by irregular and inveterate *associations*; and which could not otherwise have been reversed; even on the most sincere repentance, and resolution of returning to a better conduct: that so, *sin* might not be immortal in our bodies; but these being molded anew, and thoroughly refined and rectified; might become more commodious habitations, or more suitable companions, for the *spirits of just men made perfect*; might be changed from *natural* bodies to *spiritual*: And if such *change* be necessary,

ING of death, or shortness of life, entered into the world, and came upon all men, by the sin of that vicious generation; and by their *disobedience*, we are all again so far *made sinners*; not as a punishment for their sin; 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, appointed 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.

fary, as we are taught to believe by the best authority\*; it seems to be but of small consequence *when, or in what manner* it 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 therefore alike *momentary*: nor will this sleep be any more to us than *the twinkling of an eye*; neither shall *those who remain unto the coming of the Lord, prevent us who were fallen asleep*; nor 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 of this sort may be assigned for death; we are still to remember, that it must be a most imperfect sketch, a faint discovery, of some few of the various ends of Providence in this immense plan; whereof so very small a part at present lies before us; a more completed 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, 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 the apostle points out in the latter part of the text, the great dread of death, and that perpetual bondage consequent

\* 1 Cor. xv. 50.

† See Taylor on Rom. p. 354.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.

1 Thess. iv. 15, &c.

sequent upon it, arose from their surveying it as the last evil, which put a period to their whole existence; [which many of them contended that it did [⊙]; and none, as we have seen, had ground sufficient to convince them of the contrary;] we, who are taught to look upon it in quite 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 sentiments; whenever they were forced, (as they were frequently) to entertain the thought of it. This would unavoidably be mixing with their entertainments of all kinds; 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 pain and uneasiness; and as to any future prospects, through what a gloom must each considerate person view these, which were all to be cut off so very soon, and either close in absolute extinction; or, if he should be called to life again, that life commence a state of punishment and suf-

[⊙] *Æsch. Eumen. v. 655. Eurip. Troad. v. 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. 119. n. [B.] Plin. N. H. Lib. iii. c. 7. ib. vii. c. 55. Sen. Ep. 54, 71, 99. Id. Consol. ad Pcl. c. 27. et ad Marc. c. 19. Epictet. Arr. L. iii. c. 24. Plutarch. Op. p. 109. E. Comp. Cleric. in Eccl. iv. 2, 3. Whitby on 2 Tim. i. 10. Campbell, Necess. of Rev. § 4.*

† *Cic. Tusc. Q. I. 11, 13.—de Fin. I. 38.—Mors, quæ quæ-  
sæ faxum Tantalò, semper impendet.*

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 lifetime in a vain shadow*, and at last *lying down in sorrow and despair!*

But how entirely is this scene changed under the Christian dispensation! What a different apprehension must we have of death, when we know that it is so far from injuring any of our noblest pleasures, or destroying our best pursuits; that it rather puts us into a capacity of enjoying them more perfectly; and opens a way to our more free, full, uninterrupted prosecution of 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 it; from whence we may safely view those blissful seats of paradise, that are prepared to receive us; and to which it conducts us. The heathen had at best but feeble arguments for, or rather some faint guesses at, and wishes of, an Hereafter; and in the mean time, were tossed to and fro in uncertainty, among their several systems; fluctuating in perpetual doubts; and on each disappointment, ready to give all up, and fly even to the most miserable of all comforts, final *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

\* Vid. *Cic.* in *Considerat. n.* [B.] p. 119. *Portus enim præsto est, æternum nihil sentienti receptaculum. Id. Tusc. Disp. v. 40.*



in all difficulties! 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 most express promises, *in which it is impossible for him to lie*; but also many infallible proofs, and actual instances, of what the generality of them were 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 the whole frame of our nature instantly, 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 improper, so long as there were the seeds of moral corruption yet remaining in us: but he chose rather to improve it gradually, and procure a proportional enlargement of its privileges; as he did in the most effectual manner, by laying hold of the same nature himself; and lifting it up, first from sin, by his doctrine and example; and then purchasing for it a release from its present sorrow, pain, and dissolution, 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 worst and most dreadful part of the sentence on the first; that which denounced death absolutely, and indeterminately; and thereby left man in a state of unlimited subjection to it: or rather, is this death, which though in one sense it still preserves its power over the world; and will and ought (as we have seen) to pre-

\* *Cels. ap. Orig. v. p. 240. M. Anton. xii. 5. See Whitty on 1 Theff. iv. 13. and Hallet's Discourses, Vol. I. p. 298.*

preserve it, during the whole of this probationary state; and likewise on account of that sin whereof it is the great corrective, has still the appearance, and the name of an enemy, [*the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;*] yet is it, I say, to us 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 in the flesh. 'Tis now so far from the extinction of our Being; that it becomes the great improvement, and the exaltation of it: 'tis no more than a passage from a mixed, imperfect, to a pure, and perfect portion of felicity; the end of all our labours in one state; and the beginning of our recompence 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 an useless, or 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 seeds 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 that it certainly will do so, must be the strongest motive and incitement for us thus to labour chearfully in our Lord's vineyard; to be *stedfast and unmoveable*, always *abounding* in his work; *forasmuch as we know, that our labour shall not be in vain.* Our title to  
 this

this immortality is now so sure, that we are often addressed as if 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, true sense of the word‡; since we can have no apprehension that it will leave us under *the bondage of corruption*, and in the *blackness of darkness* for ever; but are assured, on the contrary, 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 raised§; and as the intermediate state of every Christian is described by his apostles\* \*: nay, in his proof of the 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 is the interval between

\* *Heb.* xii. 22. 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 considerabatur ut æternæ mortis ministra. Ac proin credens non dicitur *mori*, etiam quoad corpus; quia *nexus* qui inter hanc et æternam mortem erat, sublatu 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.

†† *Luke* xx. 38.      §§ *Rom.* viii. 38, 39.

tween that and the resurrection, 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,—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! 'Tis nothing, we see, in the scripture-account; nor are we ever bid to fear, or prepare for it, (as is observed by a pious writer†;) but to look, and watch for‡, and hasten unto, that coming of the day 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 [I].*

There

\* *Psal.* cxvi. 7. *Pf.* xvii. 15. xlix. 14.

† *Taylor on Rom.* p. 355.

‡ *Matt.* xxiv. 42, &c. xxv. 13. *Mark* xiii. 33, &c.

|| *2 Pet.* iii. 12.

§ *Rom.* xiii. 12. *Phil.* iv. 5. *1 Pet.* iv. 7.

[I] *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 judgement, at the destruction of *Jerusalem*; as some learned men suppose; [see *Dr. Fertin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 49, 50.] yet are they no less applicable to his second coming in the sense abovementioned; whereof the former has been generally considered as a type; and both are usually described in the same terms. *Matt.* xxiv. 29, &c. *Chr. Aug. Hecmannus* in *1 Cor.* i. 8. Η ἡμέρα τοῦ Κυρίου,

There is nothing in the former that can be terrible, to such as have learned to conceive it right; 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 be endured after it; if we have not already taken out its *sting*, by mortifying and subduing that, which first occasioned it; and which still arms it with its greatest, and most deadly terrors. If we have but taken care to be of the number of those, to whom these *great and precious promises* belong; if we have an interest in, an expectation of them; we shall be so far from dreading, and declining; that we cannot avoid often dwelling on, and ever delighting in, the prospect of that, which infallibly conveys 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

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 respiscendi 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 *ὑπερ τῶν νεκρῶν*, scripssisse 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. Fœd. vivebant, sententia fuit, quemadmodum *Heumannus* Programmate A. 1757. edito docuit. Imo eadem opinio M. CCCC. post C. N. annos in Ecclesia Christianâ regnavit. Sed hoc loco eam non impugnat Apostolus; verum potius, tanquam a lectoribus suis receptam, et ipse adsumere videtur.

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, and preparation for an infinitely nobler and 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 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*.

Now unto the same *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*; to him be all might, majesty, and dominion, both now and evermore.

A P P E N D I X:

Concerning the Use of the Words

*S O U L,* or *S P I R I T,*

I N

H O L Y S C R I P T U R E ;

A N D T H E

State of the *D E A D* there described.





# A P P E N D I X:

Concerning the use of the words *Soul*, or  
*Spirit*, in holy Scripture; and the state of  
the *Dead* there described.

**I**N the first place the words נֶפֶשׁ, נְשָׁמָה, and רוּחַ, 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. 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, he shall eat of it. 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.*

[a] נֶפֶשׁ

[b] Et non tollat Deus animam. Vid. *Clavic.*

*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, 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 [c] *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.

Third-

[c] נפש

[d] נשמה

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 sifter—and my *soul* shall live because of thee. xix. 20.—let me escape thither,—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. *Psal.* 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 § 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*. *Isa.* v. 14. (applied by a prosopopœia to the grave,) therefore hell hath enlarged *herself*.

Their *souls*, i. e. *themselves*. *Isa.* 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,

4. Fourthly, *souls*, i. e. *persons*, are said to eat.

A a

*Exod.*

[e] פָּשַׁא

<sup>f</sup> ἄφωρον τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν.

*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* lotheth an honey-comb.

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. *Jos.* x. 28.—*Joshua* took *Makedab*, 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*<sup>s</sup>.

Or *cut off*. *Pf.* lxxvi. 12. He shall cut off the *spirit*<sup>h</sup> of princes.

[See above, under *Persons*.]

To be *killed*. *Gen.* xxxvii. 21.—Let us not kill *him*. *Num.* xxxi. 19.—whosoever hath killed any *person*. xxxv. 30. whoso killeth any *person*.

*Jos.*

*Jof.* xx. 3.—the slayer that killeth any <sup>i</sup>person unawares. *Mark* iii. 4.—Is it lawful to save <sup>k</sup>life, or to kill. *Deut.* xix. 6.—lest the avenger of blood pursue the slayer,—and kill <sup>i</sup>him. Add *Rev.* vi. 9, 11.

*Slain.* *Deut.* xxii. 26.—as when a man riseth against his neighbour and slayeth <sup>i</sup>him. xxvii. 25. Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent <sup>i</sup>person. *Jer.* xl. 14.—Dost thou certainly know that *Baalis*—hath sent *Ishmael*—to slay <sup>i</sup>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 <sup>k</sup>life, or to destroy it? *Acts* iii. 23.—every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed.

*To die.* *Jof.* ii. 14.—our <sup>i</sup>life for yours. (*Heb.* our soul to die instead of you.) *Jud.* xvi. 30.—*Sampson* said, Let <sup>i</sup>me die with the *Philistines*. *Job* xxxvi. 14. <sup>i</sup>They die in youth. *Ezek.* xviii. 20. The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

*To fail.* *Isa.* lvii. 16.—the spirit should fail before me.

*To be lost.* *Matt.* x. 39. He that findeth his <sup>k</sup>life shall lose it, and he that loseth his <sup>k</sup>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 <sup>k</sup>life, shall lose it, &c.

*Or kept alive.* *Pf.* 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 <sup>i</sup>life. Add

A a 2

*Mark*

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*. *Jof.* ii. 13.---that ye will---deliver our *lives* from death. *Job* xxxiii. 18. He keepeth back his *soul* from the pit.---30.---to bring back his *soul* from the pit. Add *Pf.* 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. *Isa.* 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 *life*<sup>m</sup> from corruption.

## II. Sometimes these words include ALL LIVING CREATURES.

*Gen.* i. 20. Let the waters bring forth---the moving creature that hath *life*.---24. Let the earth bring forth the *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 *living creature*, that was the name thereof. vii. 22. All in whose nostrils was the *breath of life*<sup>n</sup>. ix. 12.---This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every *living creature*.---16.---that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God, and every *living creature*. *Deut.* xx. 16.---thou shalt save alive *nothing that breatheth*. 1 *Cor.* xv. 45.---The first man *Adam* was made a *living soul*; the last *Adam* was made a *quickening spirit*. *Rev.* viii. 9.---the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and

<sup>m</sup> נפש

<sup>n</sup> נשמה רוח

<sup>o</sup> נשמה

<sup>p</sup> Ψυχῶν ζώσων,

<sup>q</sup> Πνεύμα ζωοποιῶν.

and had <sup>r</sup>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. *Pf. 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 <sup>s</sup>*dead*. vi. 6.— He shall come at no <sup>s</sup>*dead body*. — 11. — He sinned by the *dead*. ix. 6. Defiled by the *dead body* of a man. x. 7. — If any of you — shall be unclean, by reason of a *dead body* (*Heb.* *dead soul*.) xix. 13. Whosoever toucheth 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 in to 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*. *Pf. xvi. 10.* — Thou wilt not leave my *soul* in hell: which is repeated *Acts ii. 27, 31.* Vid. *Beza & 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 <sup>t</sup>*breath of life* (*Heb.* breath

<sup>r</sup> Τα ἔχοντα ψυχας.

<sup>s</sup> נפש

<sup>t</sup> נשמה.

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 xx. 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 *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. *Pf.* xxxi. 5. Into thine hand I commit my *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 *spirit*, to retain the *spirit*. *Jer.* iv. 30. — They will seek thy *life*. x. 14. — There is no *breath* in them. xxii. 25. I will give thee into  
the



the hand of them that seek thy *life*. xlvi. 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 <sup>u</sup>*breath* to enter into you. --- 8. There was no <sup>u</sup>*breath* in them. *Amos* ii. 14, 15. --- Neither shall the mighty deliver *himself*. *Zech.* xii. 1. --- The Lord which --- formeth the <sup>u</sup>*spirit* of man within him. *Matt.* ii. 20. --- They are dead which sought the young child's <sup>x</sup>*life*. vi. 25. --- Take no thought for your <sup>x</sup>*life*, what ye shall eat. --- Is not the <sup>x</sup>*life* more than meat? x. 39. He that findeth his <sup>x</sup>*life* shall lose it; and he that loseth his <sup>x</sup>*life* for my sake shall find it. So xvi. 25, 26. xx. 28. --- The son of man came to give his <sup>x</sup>*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 <sup>y</sup>*spirit* came again. Add ix. 24, 56. xii. 22, 23. --- take no thought for your <sup>x</sup>*life*, what ye shall eat, --- the <sup>x</sup>*life* is more than meat. xiv. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not --- his own <sup>x</sup>*life* also, he cannot be my disciple. xvii. 33. Whosoever shall seek to save his <sup>x</sup>*life*, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his <sup>x</sup>*life*, shall preserve it. xxiii. 46. --- Father, into thy hands I commend my <sup>y</sup>*spirit*; and having said thus he gave up the ghost. *Job.* x. 11. --- the good shepherd giveth his <sup>x</sup>*life* for the sheep. So <sup>y</sup> 15, and 17. --- I lay down my <sup>x</sup>*life*, that I might take it again. xii. 25. He that loveth his <sup>x</sup>*life* shall lose it. xiii. 37. I will lay down my <sup>x</sup>*life* for thy sake. So <sup>y</sup> 38. xv. 13. Greater love hath

no

\* Ψυχη.

y Πνευμα.

no man than this, that a man lay down his <sup>z</sup>life for his friends. *Acts* xv. 26. Men that have hazarded their <sup>z</sup>lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. xx. 10. --- his <sup>z</sup>life is in him. 24. neither count I my <sup>z</sup>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 <sup>z</sup>lives. Add *1* 22. --- *Rom.* xi. 3. --- they seek my <sup>z</sup>life. xvi. 4. who have for my <sup>z</sup>life laid down their own necks. *Phil.* ii. 30. --- he was nigh unto death, not regarding his <sup>z</sup>life. *1**Theff.* ii. 8. We were willing to have imparted unto you our own *souls*. *1**Pét.* 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 <sup>z</sup>life for us: and we ought to lay down our <sup>z</sup>lives for the brethren. *Rev.* xii. 11. — they loved not their <sup>z</sup>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. *1* 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, [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 <sup>z</sup>breath of life. vi. 17. — I do bring a flood — to de-

destroy all flesh wherein is the <sup>b</sup> *breath* of life. And so vii. 15, and 22. 1 *Kings* xvii. 17. — his sickness was so fore, that there was no <sup>a</sup> *breath* left in him. *Job* xii. 10. In whose hand is the *soul* of every living thing, and the <sup>b</sup> *breath* of all mankind. xxvi. 4. — whose <sup>a</sup> *spirit* came from thee. Add xxvii. 3. xxxiv. 14. If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his <sup>b</sup> *spirit* and his <sup>a</sup> *breath*. *Pf.* cl. 6. Every thing that hath <sup>a</sup> *breath*. *Eccles.* iii. 19. — that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts — they have all one <sup>b</sup> *breath*. *Is.* ii. 22. Cease ye from man, whose <sup>a</sup> *breath* is in his nostrils. xlii. 5. That giveth *breath* unto the people. *Ezek.* xxxvii. 9, 10. — Prophecy unto the <sup>b</sup> *wind* — say to the <sup>b</sup> *wind* — come from the four <sup>b</sup> *winds*, O *breath*, and breathe upon these slain. — so I prophesied, — and the <sup>b</sup> *breath* came into them. *Dan.* v. 23. — the God in whose hand thy <sup>a</sup> *breath* is. x. 17. — there remained no strength in me, neither is there <sup>a</sup> *breath* left in me. *Ja.* ii. 26. the body without the <sup>c</sup> *spirit* is dead.

Which *breath*, *spirit*, or *life*,

*Enters* into a man. *Gen.* ii. 7. God formed man, — and breathed into his nostrils the <sup>a</sup> *breath* of life. *Rev.* ii. 11. — the <sup>d</sup> *spirit* of *life* from God entered into them.

*Goes forth.* *Pf.* cxlvi. 4. His *breath* goeth forth, he returneth to his earth.

*Departeth.* *Gen.* xxxv. 18. — as her <sup>e</sup> *breath* was in departing.

*Comes again.* 1 *Sam.* xxx. 12. — when he had eaten, his <sup>b</sup> *spirit* came again to him. 1 *Kings* xvii. 21. — let this child's *soul* come into him again.

*Luke*

<sup>b</sup> רוּחַ

<sup>c</sup> Χωρίς πνευματος.

<sup>d</sup> Πνευμα ζωης.

<sup>e</sup> נְשָׁמָה

*Luke viii. 55.*—her <sup>f</sup>*spirit* came again, and she arose.

*Is taken away.* *Pf. civ. 29.* — thou takest away their <sup>g</sup>*breath*, they die.

*Received.* *Acts vii. 59.*—Lord Jesus receive my <sup>f</sup>*spirit*. (vid. *Objections.*)

*Given or yielded up.* *Jer. xv. 9.* She hath given up the <sup>h</sup>*ghost*. *Matt. xxvii. 50.* Jesus — yielded up the <sup>f</sup>*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 margin.) *Mark xv. 37.* Ο δε Ιησους εξεπνευσε. So *Y. 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 <sup>f</sup>*spirit* may be saved in the day of the Lord. *2 Cor. xii. 15.* And I will very gladly spend and be spent for <sup>i</sup>*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.

<sup>f</sup> Πνευμα.

<sup>g</sup> רוח

<sup>h</sup> נפש

<sup>i</sup> ὑπερ των ψυχων υμων.

VI. In some places they denote the LOWER APPETITES, affections, passions of the mind, or man; or the seat of such appetites, &c.

*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 <sup>h</sup>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, <sup>k</sup> at thine own pleasure. xxiv. 15. --- thou shalt give him his hire, --- for he is poor, and setteth his <sup>h</sup>heart upon it. *Jud.* viii. 3. then their <sup>s</sup>anger was abated towards him. *1 Sam.* i. 10. --- She was in bitterness of *soul*. --- ~~15~~. — I am a woman of a sorrowful <sup>s</sup>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 <sup>1</sup>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 *Abalom*. xvii. 8. — thou knowest thy father, and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be <sup>1</sup>chafed in their minds. *2 Chron.* xxi. 16. --- the Lord stirred up against *Jeboram* the <sup>s</sup>spirit of the *Philistines*. *Job* iii. 20. — Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in *soul*? xiv. 22. — his *soul* within him shall mourn. xxx. 16.

— my

<sup>k</sup> בּוֹפֶשֶׁת

כִּרְעִיבִים

--- my *soul* is poured out upon me, the days of affliction have taken hold upon me. *Pf.* 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, *Ab, so would we have it* (*ab, ab, our soul*, vid. margin.) lxxvii. 2. --- my *soul* refused to be comforted. lxxviii. 18. --- they tempted God --- by asking meat <sup>m</sup>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 <sup>n</sup>*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 <sup>o</sup>of heavy hearts. *Eccl.* vi. 7. The *appetite* is not filled. --- 9. Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the <sup>p</sup>desire. *Isa.* xxix. 8. It shall even be as when an 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 <sup>n</sup>*spirit*. lv. 2. Let your *soul* delight itself in fatness. lviii. 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 <sup>p</sup>pleasure. *Dan.* ii. 3. --- my *spirit* was troubled to know the dream. *Mic.* vii. 1. --- my *soul* desireth the first ripe fruit.

לנפשם <sup>m</sup>רוח <sup>n</sup>למרי נפש <sup>o</sup>נפש <sup>p</sup>

fruit. *Hab.* ii. 5. enlargeth his *desire*. *John* x. 24. ---  
 9 how long dost thou make us to *doubt*? *animam*  
*nostram tollis.* xii. 27. Now is my *soul* troubled.  
*Acts* xiv. 2. --- the unbelieving *Jews* stirred up the  
*Gentiles*, and made their *minds* evil affected to-  
 wards the brethren. xvii. 16. --- his *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.

Or opposed to the *body*, or *flesh*. *Mic.* 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

9 ἕως ὅτε τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν αἰρεῖς ;

† Πνεύμα :

I wish --- thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy *soul* prospereth.

First, His *thoughts*. *Pf.* 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, *judgement*. *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 wherewith she hath bound her *soul*. So *ψ.* 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. *Pf.* xxvii. 12. Deliver me not over to the <sup>s</sup>*will* of mine enemies. cv. 22. To bind his princes <sup>s</sup>*at his pleasure*. *Jer.* xxxiv. 16. at their <sup>s</sup>*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



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 *x. 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 *from the heart*. *Col.* iii. 23. --- Whatsoever ye do, do it *heartily*, as to the Lord.

Or *disposition*. *Gen.* xxiii. 8. --- If it be *your mind* that I should bury my dead. *Ex.* xxxv. 21. --- they came --- every one of whom his *spirit* made willing. *Ezek.* xiii. 3. --- wo 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*. *Pf.* 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*

<sup>i</sup> *Ex* ψυχης.

<sup>u</sup> כונפשהם

*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*; *Pf.* 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 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. *Error*; *Is.* xxix. 24. They also that *erred* in *spirit*. 1 *Job.* iv. 6. --- hereby know we the *spirit* --- of error. *Antichrist*; 1 *Job.* iv. 3. --- this is that *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. *Judgement*; *Is.* iv. 4. When the Lord --- shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the *spirit* of judgement. xxviii. 6. --- for a *spirit* of judgement to him that sitteth in judgement. *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

over-

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*. *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. *Peirce* in *Heb.* iv. 12.

In these several senses do the words above, and some others usually substituted for them, (such as לב Cor, טהית præcordia, כבך jecur, כליות renes, מעיני viscera, καρδια, θυμος, νος, φρην, σπλαγχνα, with their derivatives and compounds) occur in Holy Scripture: and in many places they are figuratively applied to the *Deity*. — The words רוח and πνευμα stand often also

IX. For the HOLY GHOST and his *gifts*.

See Mr. *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 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* *sleep* with his fathers. xi. 43. *Solomon*. xv. 24. *Asa*. xxii. 50. *Jehoshaphat*. *2 Kings* xv. 7. *Azariah*. \* 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 lain still and been quiet, I should have *sleep*; 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;

more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their *sleep*. [vid. *Cleric.*] *Pf.* xiii. 3. --- lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the *sleep* of death. *Pf.* 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. *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. iv. — 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*. xv. 8. *Abijam*. xvi. 6. *Baasha*. — 28. *Omri*. xxii. 40. *Abab*. 2 *Kin.* viii. 24. *Joram*. x. 35. *Jehu*. xiii. 9. *Jeboabaz*. 13. *Joash*. xiv. 16. *Jeboash*. — 29. *Jeroboam*. xv. 22. *Menahem*. xvi. 20. *Abaz*. xxi. 18. *Manasseh*. xxiv. 6. *Jeboiakim*. So 2 *Chron.* xii. 16.

xxvii. 9. xxxiii. 20. *Pf.* lxxvi. 5. The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their *sleep*. *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.] *Pf.* 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*. cxviii. 17. I shall not die, but live, and *declare* the works of the Lord. cxlvi. 4. His breath  
goeth

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. *If.* 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, a 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.*] *If.* lvii. 2. They shall *rest* in their beds; *namely*, every one that walketh in his uprightness. *Rev.* xiv. 13. That they may *rest* from their labours.

### IV. As a state of SILENCE.

1 *Sam.* ii. 9. He will keep the feet of his faints, and the wicked shall be *silent* in darkness. *Pf.* 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. *Psf.* vi. 5. lxxxviii. 12. as above, sect. ii.

#### VI. Of DARKNESS.

1 *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*. *Psf.* 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. *Psf.* lxxxviii. 12. as above, sect. ii.] cvii. 10. Such as sit in *darkness*, and in the shadow of death. Add 5. 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*



*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 *perish*-*ed* for ever. xxvi. 6. Hell is naked before him, and *destruction* hath no covering. xxviii. 22. *Destruction* and death say, we have heard the same thereof. *Pf.* 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, desit.) 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. And, *query*, How these and the texts in sect. x. agree with the notion of an intermediate state of life, being the great benefit procured by Christ; to which none are entitled but *believers*? *Sykes*, *Script. Doctr. of Redemption*, p. 210, &c.

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*. *Pf.* xvii. 15. — I shall be satisfied,

fied, 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. *Martba* saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last Day. *Jesus* said unto her, 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. *1Thess.* 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 *1Cor.* 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

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, unrebukeable, 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 recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience ; that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 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

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 his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death: if by any means I might attain unto the *resurrection of the dead*; or, that any way I may attain unto the resurrection, i. e. *of the just*. iv. 5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. *The Lord is at hand*. *1 Thess.* iii. 13. — to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness, before God, even our Father, *at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, with all his saints. v. 23. as above, sect. iii. See also in the same sect. *1 Tim.* vi. 14. *Tit.* ii. 12, 13. *Ja.* v. 7. *1 Pet.* i. 7, 13. *2 Pet.* iii. 11, 12.

V. The elect shall not be *gathered together* till the *resurrection*, &c.

*Matt.* xxiv. 31. *Mark* xiii. 26, 27. as above, sect. ii. *2Thess.* ii. 1. — we beseech you, brethren, by the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our *gathering together* unto him.

VI. The world shall not be *judged* before the *resurrection*, &c.

*Matt.* xvi. 27. — the Son of man shall come, in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and *then* he shall *reward* every man according to his works. *John* xii. 48. He that rejecteth me, — the word that I have spoken, the same shall *judge* him in the *last day*. *Acts* xvii. 31. — he hath appointed a *day*, in the which he will *judge* the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained. *Rom.* ii. 16. In the *day* when God shall *judge* the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. *1Cor.* iii. 13, 14, 15. Every man's work shall be made manifest. For the *day* shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall *try* every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built there-upon, he shall receive a *reward*. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer *loss*. iv. 5. — judge nothing before the time, *until the Lord come*, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and *then* shall every man have praise of God. *2Tim.* iv. 1. — the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall *judge* the quick and dead at his *appearing*. *Heb.* vi. 1, 2. the doctrine — of a resurrection of the dead, and of eternal *judgement*. *Rev.* xx. 12, 13, 14, 15. — I saw the dead, small and great, stand

stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were *judged* out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were *judged* every man according to his works.

VII. Sincere Christians shall not have *boldness*, or *confidence*, before Christ, *till the resurrection*, &c.

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 judgement*.

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

away into *everlasting punishment* : but the righteous into *life eternal*. *Luke* xiv. 14. --- thou shalt be recompensed at the *resurrection of the just*. *Jobn* 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* ; and they that have done evil, &c. 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 *cloathed 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

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; to them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them that destroy the earth.

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 suffer-



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 *Theff.* 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 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 *Theff.* i. 6, 7. It is a righteous thing with God to recompence 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

come to be glorified in his faints, 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 righteoufnefs; 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 fins 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. 392. 1 *Cor.* xv. 18. Then, (*i. e.* if Christ be not raised) they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are *perished.* [Comp. *Pf.* 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.*

*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 com-

mitted 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, thro' *faith*, unto salvation; ready to be revealed in *the last time*. See §. 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.— §. 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 *Gomorrha*, in *the day of judgement*, than for that city. Add xi. 22. xii. 36.  
— every

—every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof, *in the day of judgement.* 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. *Mar.* 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 thy self wrath against the *day of wrath*, and revelation of the righteous judgement 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 judgement* 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 judgement*, and perdition of ungodly men. *Jude* 14, 15.—Behold, the Lord *cometh* with ten thousands of his saints; to execute judgement 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 finners 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 *judgement*. *Heb. ix. 27.* —It is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this the judgement*. 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*. *Pbil. iv. 5.* —the Lord is *at hand*. *Ja. 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.

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 surprize 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 Theff.* 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 alledged to prove the contrary doctrine.

I. The dead are said to *speak* and *act*. *Isa.* v. 14.—Hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that re-

joyceth shall descend into it. 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.

*Ans.* This is a strong, but very natural and elegant *Prosopopæia*; of which more under *Prop.* xii. and xxvii.

## II. *Gen.* ii. 7. Man became a *living soul*.

*Ans.* 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, *earthly*.

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.

*Ans.* 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



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. *ad plures*. Vid. *Cleric. de Sheol. in Gen. xxxvii. 35. Whitby in Act. 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. 411.*

V. *1 Sam. xxviii. 11, &c. Saul and the Witch of Endor.*

*Answ.* That this was merely an imposition upon *Saul*, who acted in conformity to his own superstitious prejudices; is shewn by *Le Clerc* in loc. Though we must own with him, that such an absurd practice as that of *necromancy*, did indeed imply the vulgar opinion of a separate existence. Another solution may be seen in *Dr. S. Clarke*, *Serm. lxxxv. p. 571. fol. Dubl. ed.*

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*. (*Comp. 1 Sam. xxx. 12.*—when he had eaten, his *spirit* came to him again.) *Redeat in viscera ejus. Heb. Par. Chald. et Syr.*

VII. *Pfal.* xxxi. 5. Into thine hand I commend my spirit.

*Anfw.* *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?

I. *Who knows* the difference between them? *Anfw.* No body. For ver. 19. — that which befallerh the sons of men, befallerh beasts; even one thing befallerh 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. 420.) 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.

*Anfw.*

*Anfw.* 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 judgement*. Vid. *ver. ult.* God shall bring every work unto judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

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.

*Anfw.* 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 Theff.* 1. 9. Comp. *1 Cor.* v. 5. and *2 Pet.* ii. 9. and sect. V. p. 378.

XI. *Matt.* xvii. 3.—there appeared unto them *Moses* and *Elias* talking with him.

*Ans.* 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. & in *Jude* 9. & *Cleric.* in *Deut.* xxxiv. 6. or *Fleming's* *Christology*, p. 68. &c.

XII. *Luke* xvi. 19, &c. The parable of the rich man and *Lazarus*.

*Ans.* 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. Nay, rather 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. & comp. *Job* xv. 22. xxi, 32, 33. with Mr. *Chappelow's* commentary. They who can still conceive such representations as realities, may easily go one step farther, and give a literal sense likewise

wife to the verse immediately foregoing. *If.* 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.

XIII. *Luke* xx. 38.—He is not the *God* of the *dead*, but of the *living*.

*Ans.* 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 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*. N<sup>o</sup> 14.] being as sure of a future life, as if they were already in possession of it: in the same manner as Christ says to the penitent thief; —

XIV. *Luke* xxiii. 43.—*To-day* shalt thou be with me in paradise.—

*Ans.* *To-day* thou art certain of a place with me in Heaven; 'tis a thing already done and determined: the words *to-day* being constantly used of any matter then fixed, and settled; tho' 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*

day for a people unto him. *Psa.* ii. 7. — Thou art my son, *this day* have I begotten thee. Comp. *Acts* xiii. 33. and *Heb.* v. 5. The same may be observed of מחר, *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 ατοπον, *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 begun 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, [as 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 thy kingdom*, 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,

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.

*Ans. w.* Alluding to the vulgar notion of *apparitions*, as above, *ſ. 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 του τοπου του ιδιου.* —

*Ans. w.* 1. Some put *εξ ης παρεβη Ιουδας*, in a parenthesis: for which reading, see the authorities in *Bowyer's N. Test.*

2. If spoken of *Judas*, it may denote that state of punishment, to which his death consigned him; and which is to take place at the day of judgement. *2 Theff. i. 9.* *2 Pet. ii. 9.* — But what relation can a soul *uncloathed*, have to *place*?

XVII. *Acts vii. 59.* — they stoned *Stephen*, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, *receive my spirit.*

*Ans. w.* *i. e.* my life. *Col. iii. 3.* With whom our life is *bid* in God. If life, either *past* or *future*, can be said to be *bid* 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:

XVIII. 2 *Cor.* v. 6--8. Knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:—willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

*Ans.* This is strictly true, since time unperceived making no distance, or difference; the season of each person's recompence, really coincides with that of his death: and therefore to be absent from our *natural* body, is to be cloathed with a *spiritual* one: to *depart*, is to *be with Christ*. *ib.* *ſ.* 4. *we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.* The not being aware of this, was what embarrassed *Whitby* so much, *ib.* *ſ.* 9. —That *St. Paul* had 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 *cloathed upon* with our house which is from Heaven: if so be that being cloathed, we shall not be found *naked*, &c.] As also from *ſ.* 10. plainly referring all to the *general judgement*.

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 immediately 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 or precede them which are asleep. 1 *Thess.* iv. 15.

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.

*Ans.* This is a vision, [*ψ.* i. — 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 in the Wilderness*. not. u. p. 21, 22.

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 κατωτέρα τῆς γῆς.

*Ans.* *i. e.* at his incarnation. Vid. *John* iii. 13. — no man hath ascended up into 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. *1Pet. iii. 19.* By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασι.

*Ansᵱ.* Some copies have πνεύματι; the other reading refers 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. *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 πνεύματα may mean only persons, as in *1Tim iv. 1.* προσεχόντες πνεύμασι πλανοῖς, see No. I. above.

XXIII. *1Pet. iv. 6.* For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead.

*Ansᵱ. 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, *ϕ. 4.* and who, *ϕ. 6.* are said to walk according to men in the flesh. — So is the word used, *Matt. viii. 22.* *Luke ix. 60.* *1Tim. v. 6.* *Rev. iii. 1.* And ’tis 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.

*Ansᵱ.* Τελειωθῶσι, not receive their reward; *1Thess. iv. 15,* as above, No. IX. p. 398. which makes

makes for the other side: or their number not *completed*; as *πληρωθωσι*, *Rev.* vi. 11. — That they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren that should be killed, as they were, should be *fulfilled*; — which comes to the same thing: or, not attain to a *perfect knowledge* of the promises. vid. *Sykes* and *Limborch* in loc.

XXV. *Heb.* xii. 23. — *to the spirits of just men made perfect*; *πνευμασι δικαιων τετελειωμενων*.

*Ans.* Either ye shall have access to those who have finished their course, i. e. when they have access to God, after the judgement; 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. 383.

XXVI. *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

*Ans.* ‘*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. That 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 judgement 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!

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* An elegant *profopopæia*, 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 *profopopæia* may be seen in *Pf.* xvi. 9. My *flesh* shall rest in *hope*. Vid. *Whitby* in *Acts* ii. 27. and *Comp.* No. I. p. 401,—2.

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.

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* *Απαρτι*, 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, *αποθνησκοντες*: and so signify, from henceforth they may be deemed happy, who are removed from the evils coming on the earth, *z.* 19, 20.—the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth; and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city; and blood came out of the wine-press,—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 *2Chron.* 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 alledged 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 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 shall only observe farther, that all *philosophical* arguments, 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 person; are merely 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] (K); as well as against the *union* of

two

\* See Bishop *Sherlock*, Disc. ii. p. 86. Disc. iii. p. 114.

(K) See *Ellis's Nat. Hist. of Corallines*; and *Hughes's Animal Flower. Nat. Hist. of Barbadoes*, B. ix. p. 293. Or *Gaertner's Urtica*

two such heterogeneous principles, as those of our own soul and body are supposed to be.

Try any of these arguments [*v. 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 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

Marina. *Phil. Transf.* Vol. LII. P. i. No. xiii. and *Baſter, de Zoophytis, ib.* No. xxi. p. 108. or *Bonnet, Sur le Corps Organifés, paſſim.* That the ſame obſervation may be carried much farther than is uſually apprehended, See *Bononiens. Acad. Comment. Tom. II. Pt. i. p. 122, &c.* De Frumento. — *Duas partium ſpecies in triticea farina deprehendit, mire inter ſe diverſas; quas ſeparare, et utramque in medio ponere promptiſſimum eſſet: altera erat illarum rerum plane ſimilis, quæ a corporibus vegetabilibus ſolent extrahi; itaque in hac quidem nihil erat admiratione dignum: altera ſic erat, ut non niſi ab animalium corporibus trahi potuiſſe videretur; quod Beccario ſane admirationem attulit, neque tam mirabatur id ita eſſe, quam id potuiſſe ſcriptores fugere. —*

(A) One of the moſt candid and ingenious advocates for an intermediate ſtate, after he had judiciously exploded the *Schooltick notion of Substance* as wholly *needleſs,* (*Logick, 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; 'tis hard to ſay what is. I ſhall give the paſſage at length, not with any deſign of expoſing that very good man and worthy author; but merely to ſhew the

attends to the workings of nature, and sees how oft the several classes of beings run into each other; will not find very much weight in arguments grounded 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 shew, 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 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

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 an old scholastick 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 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.

seems to countenance these nice speculations, by treating *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 person, eminently well versed in the Scripture-language; I mean the Reverend *Dr. Taylor*, who was pleased to write as follows: ‘ 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 upon the *nature of the human soul, or spirit*; so far as revelation gives us any light; the other, concerning the *state to which death reduces us*. From the collection of Scriptures under the first of these points, 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 question 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, thinking, 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 sub-



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 connection 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 shew, 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, the body. All our present experience shews 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 decryed 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 threatned 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.'

## P O S T S C R I P T.

SINCE these few hints upon the present subject, have produced a controversy, which may probably be carried on a good deal farther; though from what has been advanced on the other side, I have found no reason to make any considerable 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 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 is indeed, by this means, most effectually overturned; or the self-sufficient deist, whose high claim to an inherent principle of immortality, set up for him, as we have seen, by  
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some mis-judging Christians to their own loss; is shewn 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 to entitle us to *everlasting life*. All proper and consistent notions of death, resurrection, and a future judgement, are confounded; in fine, all the great sanctions of the Gospel, rendered 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, in abstract; (of which it seems to be the consequence; but was itself devised merely to support this notion,) we make that much more pure and perfect, than it can be conceived in an embodied state, [though in truth it is all the while supposed to be in some sort of body, and of a certain shape;] and furnish it with a suitably refined, pellucid 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*, pit, 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 degree to non-existence; a middle state between something and nothing; and to all valuable purposes, so wholly insignificant; as to leave every  
 one

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, 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. If this, I say, be the case, (as may perhaps appear here, and in some other points not commonly attended to,) 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 (M); —if we have disguised the  
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(M) Thus, for instance, when we lost sight of the original, obvious meaning of the word *Death*, as implying a cessation of all natural life, or a real dissolution and destruction of the whole man; to make something of the first curse, answerable 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 most 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 the sin of being born.—But I forbear.

the face of it, or rather substituted something else in its room; and thereby 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 ground; without any of those rotten props and buttresses, which after-ages have been building up for its support? Whether we may not securely rest upon that solid rock of a *resurrection*, 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 ever since 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 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, thoughtful theist soon must,) to conduct him

him thro' this gloomy shade of death ; and sets 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*.

See also *Monthly Rev.* for May 1760. or a Discourse on 2 *Tim.* i. 10. by *J. Smyth*, 1759. or *S. Bourn's* Advertisement prefixed to his Discourses in 2 Vols. with Sermon. x, xi, &c. But, it is hoped, that an end will soon be put to this controversy, and the whole Subject exhausted, in an *Historical View*, which has been some time expected.

T H E E N D.





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