A DEFENCE OF THE LETTER TO Dr. *WATERLAND.*

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A DEFENCE OF THE LETTER TO Dr. *WATERLAND*;

Against the falſe and frivolous Cavils of

The AUTHOR of the REPLY.

—Fragili quærens illidere dentem
Offendet ſolido— HOR.

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A DEFENCE OF THE LETTER TO Dr. *WATERLAND*, &c.

SIR,

THIS with no ſmall reluctance that I have prevail'd with myſelf at laſt to take notice of *your Reply* to *my Letter to Dr. Waterland*: Your Criticiſms upon it are either ſo trifling, or ſo falſe, that I was perfectly ſecure of their making any impreſſion to my diſadvantage on men of ſenſe or learning: and as it has been my care in what I have hitherto offered to the Publick, to conſult both the profit and pleaſure of my Reader, ſo I was loth to ſit down

to a Controverſy unlikely to afford either ; to diſpute only about words, and ſquabble about the grammatical conſtruction of ſeparate Scraps and Quotations.

However, ſince nothing elſe that deſerves the leaſt attention has appear'd on the occaſion but *this Reply* of yours, which by the ſolemn gravity of its ſtile, and the air of authority it breathes, may poſſibly paſs with ſome for a learned and judicious performance, I have thought proper to give it a particular examination ; eſpecially as it will afford me an opportunity of explaining myſelf more clearly in ſome points where, contrary to my intention, I may perhaps have given offence ; and of opening by the way ſome queſtions of great importance, towards ſettling Chriſtianity on its true and natural foundation.

The clamour you raiſe againſt me is for *attempting to weaken the authority of Moſes*, and your Title page like an Alarm bell gives warning thro' the Nation of an Enemy gone out to lay waſte and deſtroy Revelation, and propagate Infidelity ; and yet I defy you to ſhew any thing advanced in *my Letter*, for which I have not the authority of the beſt and moſt rational Apologiſts both ancient and modern, as well of the *Jewiſh* as *Chriſtian Religion*. 'Tis not my deſign to deſtroy or weaken any thing but thoſe ſenſeleſs ſyſtems and prejudices, which ſome ſtiff and cloudy Divines will needs faſten to the body of Religion

gion, as neceſſary and eſſential to the ſupport of it. For in this age of Scepticiſm, where Chriſtianity is ſo vigorouſly attacked and as it were cloſely beſieged, the true way of defending it, is not to enlarge the compaſs of its fortifications, and make more help neceſſary to its defence, than it can readily furniſh, but like ſkilful Engineers, to demoliſh its weak outworks, that ſerve only for ſhelter and lodgment to the enemy, whence to batter it the more effectually, and draw it within the compaſs of its firm and natural entrenchments, which will be found in the end impregnable.

You ſay, that *Dr. Waterland's character as a learned and rational advocate for Chriſtianity drew down the weight of my wit and reading upon him, and that he had done too much good, not to receive ill at the hands of the favourers of Infidelity* [1]. But is not this both raſh and uncharitable to aſſert ſo roundly what you cannot know to be true; that the ground of my quarrel to the Doctor is *the good he was doing Chriſtianity?* 'Tis poſſible, Sir, that my name may not always continue a ſecret, and whenever I ſhall have the honour of being known to you, if I be not thought incapable of quarrelling with any man for *the good he does*; and if my life be not found as exemplary and agreeable to the rules of the Goſpel, as that of

[1] Reply, p. 6.

the moſt zealous Champion of you all; then will I allow every thing you can ſay or ſuſpect of me to be juſt and reaſonable.

In the mean while I contemn your groundleſs charge of *Infidelity*; declare myſelf a *true friend to Chriſtianity*; which I am able, I think, to defend by principles much more rational and conſiſtent than thoſe you ſeem poſſeſſed of; as will appear very clearly in the ſequel of this controverſy. And I muſt withal declare, that I have no quarrel at all to Dr. *Waterland*, but on the contrary a great reſpect for his known learning and abilities; am perſuaded only that whatever good he deſigned, his way of defending Scripture is very ſure of doing miſchief to the common Religion we profeſs: this I have ſhewn in *my Letter* to him by ſeveral inſtances, and could have ſhewn it in as many more had it been neceſſary, with no other view, than to divert him from purſuing a method of defence ſo dangerous to the cauſe he was vindicating: but ſince my Remonſtrance has made no impreſſion on him; and he has now thought fit to ſecond the blow he had given, tho' I am ſtill the more confirmed by his laſt performance in the ſentiments I had declared of the firſt, yet I ſhall hardly give my ſelf or him any farther trouble, as it could ſerve only to illuſtrate and ſpread the ſcandal already given, by collecting and pointing it out to the Reader; which I have no inclination to do any farther than I may be obliged to it by the

the Doctor or Yourſelf in vindication of my own credit and judgment.

In all Controverſies about Religion the chief provocation to men of ſenſe is to ſee a ſet of raſh, dogmatical Divines, whoſe minds, prepoſſeſſed with ſyſtems and darkened with prejudices, could never ſee thro' the miſts their Nurſes and Mothers had ſpread about their eyes, ſetting themſelves up for the only guides and teachers of truth to the Nation; requiring the learning and reaſon of mankind to ſubmit to their arbitrary deciſions, and branding with the name of *Sceptick and Infidel*, all who cannot admit their manner of explaining and defining the terms of Chriſtian Faith. Such Divines as theſe are ſo far from acting up to the character they aſſume, of *Phyſicians of the ſoul*, by ſhewing any care to gild the pill they preſcribe, and temper their medicines to the ſtate and condition of the Patient, that they expect to treat rational creatures, as Farriers do their Horſes, tie them up by the noſe, and ſo make them ſwallow whatever they think fit to throw down: Theſe are the men I ſhall ever quarrel with, as the Tyrants and Oppreſſors of Reaſon and Conſcience, and conſequently enemies to the peace and happineſs of mankind.

But 'tis time to open the ſtate of our preſent Controverſy: *Your buſineſs*, you ſay [1], *with*

[1] Rep. p. 6.

me

me is not to enter into dispute about the Reasonings advanced in my Letter, but to set before me and expostulate with me about the many falsehoods it abounds with, both in quotations and historical facts. And here we see the first specimen of your art and insincerity; for tho' you pretend not to meddle at all with *my Reasonings*, yet a great part of your performance is wholly employed in examining them: nor do you ever omit the least opportunity of cavilling at them, as far as you dare venture, which is generally out of your depth, as we shall frequently see in the progress of this dispute: But 'twas prudent to secure a retreat beforehand, that whenever you came to be push'd, you might shelter yourself under this previous declaration, that it was not *my Reasonings*, but *my Quotations* you had undertaken to attack.

Again, as to the *many falshoods of my Quotations*, you betray at setting out a strange disingenuity, for you undertake to *convict me of having hardly made one original Quotation of an Author in his true sense, very often in a sense most opposite to the true one*[1]. A compleat victory indeed! not to leave *one Quotation* alive! not let a single one escape, but to treat these *Rebels to Religion*, like *Cataline's Rebels* to the State, mow them all down in the very ranks where they stand. But this is pursuing

[1] Reply. p. 7.

only

only the old rule Calumny; *to calumniate ſtrongly, without any regard to truth, that ſomething at laſt may ſtick*: for tho' you wou'd prepoſſeſs the Reader with the notion, that I have not repreſented ſo much as *one Quotation truly*; yet out of about *fourſcore*, which are referred to in my *ſhort Letter*, all you pretend to criticiſe are but *fifteen*; and of this number *two* are thrown in merely to enhance the reckoning, and do not at all relate to *my Quotations*, but contain only ſome cavils to *my Reaſonings*.

Laſtly, as to the *many falſhoods of my Hiſtorical Facts*, which you proclaim me guilty of in your *Title page*; the whole number you conteſt with me amounts only to *one*: and tho' to ſave your credit you would fain ſtretch it to *two*, yet your ſecond inſtance concerns no fact at all, but my ſolution only of a fact, about which we both join iſſue, *viz.* the *Moſaic account of the Confuſion of Babel.* Is this agreeable to the gravity and character you aſſume of an Advocate of Chriſtianity? or can it do any good to the Cauſe of Religion to defend it by ſuch artful methods of Calumny; and in the very act of expoſing, as you pretend, my want of veracity, to give the real ſcandal of ſo notorious and wilful an inſincerity?

But to proceed to the examination of your ſeveral Criticiſms; which I ſhall take notice of in the order as they offer themſelves, neither

ther evading nor palliating the force of any of them.

You begin your attack by charging me with four inſtances of falſification in as many examples of quotations made from *Cicero*; and accuſe me not only of prejudice and partiality, but of quoting him for *ſaying what he really does not ſay*; nay, what he *diſclaims and declares againſt*[1]; and conclude by lamenting that this *Great Maſter of Reaſon ſhould have ſo unworthy a Follower as Myſelf.* This you confirm as to the two firſt inſtances, by ſhewing that I have imputed to *Cicero*, what he ſpeaks only under the perſon of *Cotta* and under the fiction of a *Dialogue*, and what muſt not therefore be conſidered as his own opinion.

But you muſt needs be little acquainted with *Cicero*'s *Dialogues*, to imagine that under theſe feign'd characters he does not frequently repreſent his own real thoughts: *You will wonder*, ſays he, in his letter to *Varro*, prefix'd to his *Academick Queſtions, to find a Converſation deſcrib'd between you and me which we never held together, but you know the manner of Dialogues*[2]: and in the Preface of his *Book of Old Age*, he tells us, that he had aſſign'd the principal part to *Old Cato*, in order to give the *greater weight and authority to his*

[1] Reply to the Letter, p. 9, 10.
[2] Epiſt. Fam. l. 9. ad Varron. 8.

own ſentiments [1]. Now in this Book about the *Nature of the Gods*, whence my two Quotations are taken, *He* has inſtituted a *Dialogue* between three perſons, of the three different Sects of Philoſophy of moſt credit at that time in the world ; *Velleius the Epicurean*, *Balbus the Stoick*, and *Cotta the Academick* : which laſt from the Principles of that Philoſophy undertakes to confute the Notions of the *Stoicks*, about *Religion* and the *Gods*: and does not every one who knows any thing of *Cicero*, know that he was of the *ſame Sect* ; a conſtant Follower of the *Academy* in his real Judgment ? ſo that if there be any thing in that *whole Dialogue*, which can be called *Cicero's own* more peculiarly and properly than the reſt, 'tis the very part and character aſſigned to *Cotta*: for in his *ſecond Book of Divination*, where he diſputes in his own perſon, he takes the ſame ſide, and uſes the ſame arguments, which he had put here into the mouth of *Cotta*, to confute the opinion of the *Stoicks* about *Religion* and *Divination*. Where then does he diſclaim the paſſages I have quoted ? why no where; but on the contrary in other places confirms them; and declares only in general in the cloſe of this very Conference, that the *argument of Balbus*

[1] Sermonem tribuimus non Tithono ——— ſed M. Catoni ſeni quo majorem auctoritatem haberet Oratio.

or the Stoick ſeemed ſomewhat the more probable[1]: which may well be looked upon as a compliment to *Brutus*, to whom he addreſſes this very book; for as *Brutus* was a *Stoick*, it was but a proper civility in a *Dialogue* dedicated to him, to give a ſlight preference to the Principles he profeſſed; as we find him to have actually done on another occaſion, in allowing the Philoſophy that *Brutus* followed to be the beſt[2], tho' himſelf was of a different Sect.

But you carry the point ſtill further and tell us, that the ſentences here quoted are ſo far from being *Cicero*'s, that they are not even *Cotta*'s; who owns at laſt, that all he had been ſaying was not built *on any certain judgment, but propoſed only for argument's ſake, in which he was willing to be confuted.* And here whilſt you fancy yourſelf puſhing your adverſary, you betray only your own ignorance: for every one converſant in Antiquity cannot but know, that it was the peculiar character and diſtinction of the *Academy*, *Nullum judicium interponere*; to deliver *nothing dogmatically*, to declare *no judgment* of its own; to follow only the *probable*; and beat down every thing advanced as *certain or ſelf evident*[3]. *Cotta* therefore, tho' agreeably to

[1] De Nat. Deor. l. 3. ad fin. [2] Qui tum in Philoſophia, tum in optimo genere Philoſophiæt tantum proceſſeris. De Fin. l. 3. init. [3] De Divin. l. 2, 3. Hæc in Philoſophia ratio contra omnia diſſerendi, nullamque rem judicandi, &c. Nat. Deor. 1. init.

the

the Principles of his Sect, he might wish to be confuted, that is, to have some greater degree of probability offered to him, than what he had before acquiesced in; yet must be supposed in the mean while to have embraced and approved the Sentiments he had been asserting in this Dispute as the most probable.

Your Cavil to my next Quotation is still more ridiculous, for tho' 'tis truly taken from *Cicero*, yet 'tis found there, you say, *in the mouth of an Objector*. Where I must own my self puzzled to guess what you would be at: for you no sooner start the Cavil, than confute it yourself; telling us that *Cicero says the same thing in another place*, and in *answering the very objection acknowledges the truth of it*[1]: but is a fact then less true for being proposed as an *Objection?* nay is there not the greater presumption of its weight for being offered in that form? and if it be true, which is all I'm concern'd for, 'tis entirely the same thing, whether it be put as a *Question*, *Answer*, or *Objection*: 'tis put, it seems, in *Tully* as an *Objection*, and 'tis put just so in my *Letter*; where I shall leave it in its place, without losing more time about a Criticism so impertinent.

Your last instance of Falsification charged on me from *Tully*, is the mention of a *Dream of Alexander the Great*, about *a Serpent's speak-*

[1] Rep. p. 11.

ing to him, which *Tully*, I ſay, *makes merry with*. To this you give a double Anſwer: Firſt, That tho' *Cicero had laugh'd at ſuch a Dream, yet 'tis no more a conſequence than that my left hand is my right, that he would have laugh'd at the Story of a Serpent's really ſpeaking, when atteſted ſo credibly, as 'tis by Moſes.* Secondly, That in fact, *he did not laugh at the Dream at all, and that 'tis all a merry invention of my own*[1]. And ſo far I agree with you, that what he ridicules is not ſo much the extravagance of a Dream, a thing common with every body, as the pretended miraculous effect of it, and the fooliſh credulity of thoſe who look on ſuch Dreams as ſent from God. But I inſiſt upon it withal, that he laughs too at the fancy of a *Serpent's ſpeaking*, and that eſpecially when it had *its mouth full*; but as this was not the caſe of *Moſes's Serpent*, you think it clear, that had he *met with the Story ſo well atteſted by the graveſt and moſt ancient of all Hiſtorians he muſt needs have believed it.*

This indeed is a curious and ingenious Problem, worthy the meditation of ſo judicicious a perſon as yourſelf, whether *Cicero would have believed this Story or no*: and tho' I have neither leiſure nor inclination to diſcuſs it with you at preſent, yet cannot help offering a hint or two which may be of uſe in ſo important an enquiry.

[1] Rep. p. 12, 13.

Cicero

Cicero then asserts on all occasions, that our belief or opinion of things ought not to depend on *Testimony or Authority, but on the weight and moment of Reasons:* condemns the *Pythagoreans* for their *Ipse dixit*; or implicit faith in their *Master Pythagoras:* and declares it *unworthy of a Philosopher or Man of Sense* to appeal to *such Witnesses as may be suspected to have falsified or feigned the Facts they relate*; and to shew the Truth of things by *extraordinary Events* instead of Arguments [1]. These, Sir, were the Sentiments of *Cicero*, and I must leave it to your contemplation, whether a person possessed of such notions could easily take up with a Story so surprizing and prodigious on the single Testimony of an Author, who lived above *two thousand years* after the fact, tho' he *pretended*, as you say, *to be inspired.*

But since you have thought fit to call this Story again upon the stage, and vouch for *Cicero*, that he would have believed it on the *same good Authority that Jews and Christians do*; pray tell us, Sir, after all, what it is that we Christians are obliged to believe of it:

[1] Non enim tam auctores in disputando, quam rationis momenta quærenda sunt ——— nec probare soleo id, quod de Pythagoricis accepimus, quos ferunt, si quid affirmarent in disputando, cum ex iis quæreretur, quare ita esset, respondere solitos, Ipse dixit ——— De Nat. Deor. l. 2.

Hoc ego Philosophi non arbitror testibus uti; qui aut casu veri, aut malitia falsi, fictique esse possunt. Argumentis & rationibus oportet quare quidque ita sit docere; non eventis &c. De Divin. l. 2.

Must

Muſt we believe it to be all an *Allegory*? No; 'tis the *Allegorical Interpretation* that has drawn this clamour upon me of *weakning the Authority of Moſes*, and *favouring Infidelity*. Muſt we believe it to be all *Literal*? No; we are not allowed to do that, ſince there's certainly much *Myſtery* in it. What then are we to do? why, we are to conſider it neither as *Fact* nor *Fable*; neither *Literal* nor *Allegorical*; but *both* together: to interpret one ſentence *literally*; the next *allegorically*, the third again *literally* and ſo on to the end of the Chapter; which like the very *Serpent* it treats of, is all over ſpotted and ſpeckled, here with *Letter*, there with *Myſtery* and ſometimes with a daſh of both.

For inſtance; *God made Man*, we accept *literally*; but *after his own image*, in a *figurative* or *metaphorical* ſenſe: that *God made Woman*, we believe *literally*; but out of the *Rib of Man*, moſt interpret *allegorically*: *God planted a Garden or Paradiſe*; here Commentators are endleſly divided between *Letter* and *Allegory*; ſome will have it to be in *heaven*, ſome on *earth*, others in a *middle region* between both. Again; *the Serpent was more ſubtle than any Beaſt of the field*; we underſtand *literally*; but this *ſubtle creature* no ſooner accoſts *Eve*, than he becomes an *allegorical Beaſt*; the *old Serpent*; the *old Deceiver*, *Satan*. Laſtly, as to the puniſhment denounced on the Offenders, *I will put enmity between thee and the*

Woman,

Woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed; it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel; 'tis all *Allegory*, all a great *Myſtery*.

Now is it not more rational to follow one uniform, conſiſtent way of Interpretation, than to jump at every ſtep ſo arbitrarily from *Letter* to *Allegory*: and if the *Letter* be found in fact contradictory to *Reaſon* and the notions we have of *God*, what is there left us but to recur to *Allegory*? for which we have the authority of moſt of the *Primitive Fathers*, and the beſt *Jewiſh Writers*: and the *allegorical way* of expounding was ſo far from giving ſcandal in former ages of the Church, that on the contrary, to ſlight it was looked upon as heretical and full of dangerous conſequences [1].

Philo, the moſt learned and orthodox defender of the *Jewiſh Religion*, treats this very Hiſtory of the *Creation and Fall of Man* as wholly *allegorical*. By *Paradiſe*, ſays he, *we may ſuppoſe ænigmatically ſignified the governing part of the Soul, full of various opinions, like ſo man Plants; by the Tree of Life, Piety*

[1] Propter has cauſas omnia quæ de Paradiſo dicta ſunt ſpiritualiter intelligentes Interpretes, quorum meminimus, dixerunt, quod diverſæ natæ ſint hæreſes a quibuſdam hominibus qui carnaliter audierunt, quæ de Deo & Paradiſo dicuntur, &c. Vid. Bibliothec. Patrum, per Marg. de la Bigue. Par. 1589. Tom. 1. p. 270.

Sunt inter Hæreticos qui contendunt minimè convenire, ut Vet. Teſtamenti ſcripta myſticè atque aliter quam de rebus ipſis interpretentur, &c. ibid. p. 409. c. 3.

towards God, the greateſt of Vertues, by which the Soul is made immortal: by the Tree of knowledge of Good and Evil, our common Underſtanding, by which we diſtinguiſh things contrary to each other in nature, &c. And when he comes to the ſtory of the *Serpent*; *Theſe things*, ſays he, *are not like the fabulous Fictions of Poets and Sophiſters, but figurative or typical Leſſons of Inſtruction, inviting us to ſearch for the Allegorical Senſe, by the diſcovery of its latent and hidden meaning: in which whoever follows the moſt probable conjecture, will find the Serpent, as 'tis aptly called, to be the Symbol of Pleaſure* [1]: *&c.* whence he goes on to give the ſame *Allegorical* Interpretation of the whole, which I have done in my *Letter*.

Clemens of Alexandria tells us, that *all Writers, whether Barbarians or Greeks, who have ever treated of Theology, have induſtriouſly obſcured the beginning and origin of things, by delivering the Truth in Ænigmas, Symbols, Allegories, Metaphors and ſuch like figures* [2]. And in another place, that the *whole Scripture is written in the Parabolical Stile* [3], for which he gives ſeveral reaſons.

Euſebius ſhews, that *Moſes's Hiſtory of the Creation*, of *Paradiſe and the Fall of Man*, was delivered by him in this *recondite and ſymbo-*

[1] Philo. de Opificio Mun. p. 35, 36, &c. [2] Strom. l. 5. Op. T. 2. p. 658. Edit. Potter. [3] Παραβολικὸς γὰρ ὁ χαρακτὴρ τῶν γραφῶν, ib. l. 6. p. 803.

lical

lical way of learning; and that *Plato*, (changing only the names, as of *Paradise* into the *Garden of Jupiter*, &c.) has copied the whole Story and *allegorised* it just as *Moses* had done before him [1], of which he gives likewise some other examples.

And that the *Primitive Writers* in general esteemed *the symbolical or figurative interpretation of Scripture*, to be on many occasions the only method of *vindicating it*, is very certain and undeniable: for instance, the *Mosaic Laws* about *Animals clean and unclean* were considered by them as wholly *allegorical*, full of a *hidden and mystical* meaning: *The Law*, says *Philo*, *accounts the Camel an unclean beast, because tho' he chews the cud, he does not divide the hoof; now if we consider this according to the outward Letter, 'tis hard to say, what sense there is in it, but if according to the inward meaning, there is a most clear and necessary one, &c.* which he goes on to explain [2].

When Moses told *the People*, says *Barnabas*, *that they were to abstain from such and such Animals; the Command of God does not import a real Prohibition to eat; but Moses spoke spiritually, and by prohibiting Swine's flesh, meant only to say, thou shalt not keep company, or join thy self to such Men, as in their manners are like to Swine*, &c [3].

[1] Præpar. Evang. p. 343. Edit. R. Steph. [2] De Agricult. p. 206. [3] S. Barnab. Epist. c. x. p. 30. Edit. Coteler.

Clemens of Alexandria, Eusebius, Lactantius, &c. follow *Barnabas*'s interpretation: *Tertullian* goes further, and says, that *nothing is so contemptible as the Mosaic Laws about the distinction and prohibition of animal food:* and *Origen* still more freely; *that if we take them literally, they are unworthy of God, and less rational than the Laws of Men, as of the Romans, Athenians, Lacedemonians; nay, that some of them are contrary to reason and impossible to be observed*[1].

Thus far then you must needs allow me to be orthodox; clear of any attempt either against the *Authority of Moses*, or in *favour of Infidelity*; unless you will involve in the same crime with me the most pious and learned *Fathers of the Church*, and the ablest Defenders of Christianity in all ages: Let us see how just your charge upon me is in the following Articles; particularly that of the *Jewish Circumcision*; where you next examine what I have advanced in relation to *its divine Origin.*

You affirm in the first place, that *I think with the Author of Christianity as old &c. that Circumcision was borrowed from Ægypt*[2]. But pray, Sir, where have I declared that I think so? All that I endeavoured or intended to shew, was the rashness and unreasonableness of those Divines, who assert its *divine Origin* in a stile so *dogmatical and overbearing* as cannot

[1] Vid. ibid. Cotelerii Not. 42.

[2] Reply. p. 13.

fail of giving diſguſt to Men of candour and learning; not allowing the leaſt *colour of reaſon* to the contrary opinion, but treating it as the meer effect of malice and ignorance; a way of defence ſo contrary to good ſenſe and good manners, that the cauſe of Religion muſt needs ſuffer by it.

However, Sir, had I really thought, what you impute to me, 'tis not at leaſt in your power to convince me of an error, as we ſhall ſoon ſee by the weak attempt you make towards it. For in conſidering a Quotation of mine from *Joſephus*, you ſay, *'Tis plain that Joſephus does not ſpeak there of any Ægyptians circumciſed, but Prieſts only; and that if I had tranſlated him right, my Argument would have been ſpoiled*; and that for your part, *you gather from what Joſephus ſays of Herodotus, that he underſtood Herodotus to mean that the Ægyptian Prieſts only were circumciſed:* whence you form immediately an Hypotheſis out of your own brain; *that theſe Prieſts of Ægypt taught the Prieſts of other Nations to be circumciſed, on pretence that it was neceſſary in ſuch only for the ſake, not of Cleanlineſs, as I render the word καθαριότητος, but of Purity, or internal Holineſs, juſt as it was among the Jews*[1].

But now, Sir, if the contrary to this be true in every particular; if *the Ægyptian People in general, and not the Prieſts only were cir-*

[1] Rep. p. 15. &c.

cumcised; if *Josephus understood Herodotus in that very sense*, and lastly, if *Circumcision* was used by them just as I have said, *for the sake of outward Cleanliness*, and not as your Criticism imports, *inward Purity*; what will you say for yourself; what excuse will you make for giving me so much trouble? Will not the Reader begin to suspect that with all this Gravity you are but a Pretender to Learning, without any sound share of it; that the Knowledge you are master of, is supplied from Scraps and marginal Citations, without any thorough acquaintance with Antiquity, or the Authors you refer to? and as oft therefore as you are engaged to treat a question to the bottom, like a Man fighting in the dark, instead of beating your Adversary, will oftner be found beating the Air and bruising your own Knuckles against Posts or Walls? of which we shall see many an instance before I've done with you.

For suppose that I had allowed the very thing that you contend for; that the *Priests only were circumcised in Ægypt*; how would my Argument have been spoiled by it? Was it impossible for *Moses*, who was bred up among those very *Priests*, and instructed in all *their Learning*, to have copied *Circumcision* from them, and yet extend it further afterwards by imposing it on the People too? but not to dwell on Hypothesis, let us enquire into the Fact.

The

The Authors I have quoted, the oldeſt, who give any account of *Circumciſion*, *Herodotus*, *Diodorus Siculus*, *Strabo*, mention it always as a cuſtom common to the whole Nation, without giving the leaſt hint or reaſon to believe that it was confin'd to *Prieſts* alone. *Agatharcides*, as quoted by *Photius*, ſays expreſly that *all the Ægyptians were circumciſed* [1]: and *Suidas* hints the ſame in the word ψῶλος. *Strabo* indeed adds, what is confirmed likewiſe by other Writers, that the *Women were alſo circumciſed* [2]: which fully confutes your Notion and ſhews the Practice to have been general.

A Queſtion indeed may ariſe about the obligation to it; whether it was of abſolute neceſſity or not to all; and there may poſſibly have been ſome diſtinction between *Prieſts* and *People* on this account: but that it was commonly and generally practiſed by all, can admit of no doubt from the concurrent Teſtimony of all Authors: and 'tis certain that as the *Jews* would receive none to the *Paſſover*, but the *circumciſed*; ſo the *Ægyptians* admitted none elſe to their *religious Myſteries* [3]; ſo that *Pythagoras* was forced to be *circumciſed*, to procure admittance to their recondite and *ſymbolical Learning*: whence 'tis probable, that it was conſidered

[1] Photii Biblioth. p. 1358. ex Agatharcide. c. 30.
[2] L. 17. [3] Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 1. p. 354. c. 15. Edit. Potter. vid. it. Cotelerii Not. in Barnab. Epiſt. c. 9.

as

as a kind of *religious Test*, which the Priests and all who expected any benefit from Religion or Office in the State were obliged more peculiarly to comply with.

The next point is, whether *Josephus* understood *Herodotus* to mean that *Circumcision was peculiar to the Priests*. And if it be true in fact, as is shewn above, that it was not *confined to Priests*, and that *Herodotus* has given no ground for such a distinction; your notion must fall of it self. *Josephus* indeed, in the place referred to, may be understood of a peculiar obligation or absolute necessity which the *Priests* were under to be *circumcised* above all other Men; but on another occasion where he appeals to *Herodotus*, for affirming the *Ægyptians to be the Authors of Circumcision to all other People, and even to the Jews*, he makes no other reflection upon it, than that of *such things every one may say what he thinks fit* [1]. A modern Author, of more zeal than judgment, says on the occasion; *Josephus has taken notice of the words of Herodotus, but I could have wished, that he had called him to account for them, and not passed them over so coldly —— This did not become Josephus, on other occasions so stout an Advocate of the Honour of his Nation* [2].

Again, You say, that the *Ægyptians* did not use *Circumcision*, for the sake of *Cleanliness*,

[1] Περὶ μὲν τούτων ἕκαστοι λεγέτωσαν ὅτι ἂν αὐτοῖς δοκῇ. Antiq. l. 8. c. x. § 3. [2] De Repub. Hebræor. l. 2. c. 4. p. 70.

as

as I render the word καθαριότητος, but of *Purity*: an Obſervation wholly groundleſs; it being certain, that the main intent of the cuſtom was not to make them more *holy or pure*, but more *ſweet and clean*; in order to prevent ſome bodily diſtemper or inconvenience frequent in thoſe warm Climates; which is alledged by Writers as the cauſe and natural reaſon of the ſame practice in all the neighbouring Countries [1]. But beſides; the Paſſage itſelf, as it ſtands in *Herodotus*, can ſuggeſt no other notion, and all others who have ever quoted it, have taken it in the ſame ſenſe that I do; for 'tis ranked in company with ſuch Cuſtoms as relate ſolely to *external Neatneſs* or *Cleanlineſs* [2]; viz. the *waſhing themſelves twice each day, and as oft each night in cold water; the conſtant waſhing their Cups; their Veſtments; and the ſhaving their Bodies to keep them clear of Lice and other Vermin*, &c.

But you ſtill blunder on and tells us, that the notion of the *Ægyptians* was juſt the ſame with that of the *Jews*, amongſt whom it was conſidered as an *Emblem of Purity* [3]: in which you ſhew as little acquaintance with *Scrip-*

[1] Ægyptii, Æthiopes, aliique ex oriente populi rationes regioni vel religioni ſuæ proprias habuerunt, quibus diu ante tempora Abrahami ad virilium pelliculas præcidendas inducti cenſeantur. Nam Philo & alii circumciſionem inter gentes aliquas conſilio civili primùm introductam putant, ad præcavendam ſcilicet lepram aut carbunculum, e ſordibus ſub præputio latentibus oriri ſolitum, &c. Spencer de Leg. Heb. l. 1. c. 5. §. 4. p. 58. [2] Vid. Herod. l. 2. 37. [3] Reply, p. 16.

tural

tural or Jewiſh Hiſtory, as you do with the *Ægyptian*: For 'tis clear from Scripture that Circumciſion was not given for the ſake of *Purity*, but as a *Sign and Seal of a Covenant* between God and his People; as an *outward Mark* to diſtinguiſh thoſe who were under that Covenant, from all other Nations whatſoever. This is the account we have of its Inſtitution as well from *Scripture* as the *Primitive Fathers*. *You ſhall circumciſe*, ſays *God to Abraham, the fleſh of your foreskin, and it ſhall be a token of the Covenant between me and you*[1].

Abraham, ſays *Juſtin Martyr, received Circumciſion as a Mark or Sign, and not as of any efficacy towards Righteouſneſs or Holineſs as both Scripture and Fact itſelf oblige us to allow*[2]. And *Irenæus, That God gave it not as of any ſervice to Juſtice or Righteouſneſs, but for a Mark to diſtinguiſh Abraham's Poſterity* 3. The Reader will make a proper Reflection on a Criticiſm grounded in meer miſtake both of *Jewiſh* and *Ægyptian Antiquity*.

But the Sting is, that *I think with the Author of Chriſtianity as old* &c. which is ſo far from being a Reproach whenever he thinks right, as he certainly does in ſome things;

[1] Gen. xvii. 11. [2] Dialog. cum Tryph. par. 1. p. 184. Edit. Thurlb. [3] Quoniam autem circumciſionem non quaſi conſummatricem juſtitiæ, ſed in ſigno eam dedit Deus, ut cognoſcibile perſeveret genus Abrahæ &c. Adv. Hær. l. 4. c. 30.

that

that it would be much more for your credit to do ſo too, than to ſpend your time and pains in maintaining *vulgar Errors and pious Prejudices* againſt plain Fact and Hiſtory: but if you would do me right, you ſhould repreſent me as thinking with *Herodotus*, *Diodorus Siculus*, *Strabo*, *Philo*, *Joſephus*, *Photius*, *Sir Jo. Marſham*, *Dr. Spencer*, and even *Calmet* too, whom you recommend to my peruſal; who, tho' he labours like yourſelf to ſupport the common Hypotheſis againſt Fact and Teſtimony, yet is ſo fair at the ſame time as to allow a *great colour of Reaſon*, a *great ground of Probability* to thoſe who aſſert the contrary opinion, which is all that I have ever declared for.

We are now arrived at what you call my *Maſterpiece of Quotation*, viz. a paſſage of *Joſephus* referred to in *my Letter*, in which *I make him give up*, as you ſay, *the Divine Miſſion of his own Legiſlator Moſes*[1]. Here indeed you ſeem greatly moved, and employ all your Rhetorick to move me too; calling upon me in the moſt ſolemn manner *for the ſake of ſincerity to retract my raſh aſſertion and to conſider the whole Quotation over again*, in which *there's nothing*, you ſay, *that even ſeems to deny the Divine Origin of the Law and the Divine Inſpiration of its Founder, but what ariſes from my Miſrepreſentation; that ſuch a*

[1] Rep. p. 16.

 thought

thought was as far from Josephus, as attention or sincerity was from me[1].

I am come therefore, Sir, in obedience to your call, to review the whole Passage, and to consider very seriously and attentively not *the Translation*, as you absurdly call it, but *the short Abstract* I had given of the sense of the place in a manner agreeable to the form of *a Letter*, in which an exact or verbal Translation must needs have appeared stiff and aukward: and upon a most careful Examination both of the Original and my Account of it, I am so far from being sensible that I have misrepresented my Author, that I am the more clearly and perfectly convinced that I had before given his true Sentiments; and that *Josephus* in the place referred to does not insist on any *supernatural or divine Authority* of *Moses*, but ascribes all the great things done by him to his own *personal skill and management*, putting him on the same foot with *Minos and the other old Lawgivers of Greece*; and giving him the preference only on the comparison for *the superior Excellency of his Laws.* This, Sir, I will maintain against you or any Man else to be the Sense of the Passage in question; and if I fail to make it good, desire at least, that it may not be imputed to any insincerity, but incapacity and mere ignorance of the *Greek Tongue*;

[1] Reply, p. 21, 22.

since

ſince with all the Skill I am maſter of, I can draw out of it no other meaning but what I am going to explain: and I don't queſtion but to convince every ſenſible Reader, that 'tis not I, who would warp and force the Words of *Joſephus* to any meaning different from their own, but you; who being firſt warp'd yourſelf with prejudice, and prepoſſeſſed with Syſtems, which you hold ſacred and inviolable, cannot reliſh any Truth, but what you can bend and accommodate to thoſe previous Notions: But in order to ſet this Queſtion in a clear light, it will be neceſſary to inſert the entire Paragraph; where I hope the Reader will excuſe the tedioufneſs of a Tranſlation, which I am forced by your Cavils to preſent him with, deſiring only, as 'tis a matter of ſome Importance, that he will give it a candid and impartial Attention. The whole Paſſage then runs thus.

Let us conſider then in the firſt place the Greatneſs of Moſes's Actions. He having gathered together our Anceſtors, after they had reſolved to leave Ægypt and return to their native Country, into a mighty Body, brought them with ſafety thro' many and almoſt inſuperable difficulties. For it was neceſſary for them to march thro' a Country without Water, and wide tracts of Sand; and all the while to fight their way thro' their Enemies, with their Children, Wives and Baggage to take care of. In all which Circumſtances he approved himſelf a moſt

excellent General, a most wise Counsellor, a most true and careful Guardian of them all. He brought the whole Multitude to depend wholly on himself; and tho' he had them entirely obedient in every thing to his Command, he turn'd all this to no particular profit or advantage of his own; and in that very opportunity, which other Governors chiefly make use of, to establish themselves in Power and Tyranny, and with that view indulge the People in a loose disorderly way of Life: He on the contrary, in this height of Authority, thought himself bound to live religiously and piously and shew great Benevolence to the People; thinking by that means the most effectually to demonstrate his own Vertue, and provide in the best manner for the security of those, who had chosen him their Leader. His Intentions then being so laudable and his Actions so great, he justly believed that he had the Deity for his Guide and Counsellor: and having first persuaded himself, that all he was doing or contriving was agreeable to the Will of God, he thought it necessary above all things to instill the same notion into the People: since those, who are persuaded, that God overlooks their Life and Conduct, will not venture on any thing illegal or sinful: Such an one was our Legislator, not a Sorcerer or Impostor, as some unjustly asperse him, but such an one, as they boast Minos to have been among the Greeks, and the other Lawgivers after him: for some of them imputed their Laws to —— but Minos ascrib'd his

to

to Apollo and his Delphic Oracle, either really believing ſo themſelves, or fancying by that means to make the People ſubmit to them the more eaſily. But which of them (Moſes or the others) has drawn up the beſt Body of Laws, and which had beſt pretence to be perſuaded of God's Aſſiſtance (or otherwiſe, which of them has hit upon the beſt and juſteſt Notions of a God) may be decided by comparing the Laws themſelves; of which 'tis now time to give ſome Account: There are then throughout the World infinite differences of particular Cuſtoms and Laws, which yet we may reduce to theſe general Heads. Some have thrown the form of their publick Affairs into a Monarchy; others into the Power of a few or an Oligarchy; others into the Multitude or a Democracy: but our Lawgiver had no regard to any of theſe; but, if a Man may uſe an expreſſion ſo forc'd, made the form of Government he inſtituted, a Theocracy[1].

This, Sir, is a faithful Tranſlation of the whole Paſſage in the cleareſt manner I am able to render it; and to ſhew the inſignificancy of your Cavils, I have in all thoſe places where you find fault with me, given the very turn and force to the expreſſion which you require; and yet there is not in the whole Paragraph one word in favour of the *divine Miſſion*, or *Inſpiration of Moſes*, in that ſenſe of it, in which 'tis vulgarly received; but on

[1] Cont. Ap. l. 2. c. 16.

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the contrary, all the Glory of his great Actions, as well as of his Laws are ascribed to *his own Vertue, Skill and Address.* In the first Part, which contains a short Abstract or general Character of his Actions, we find not the least hint of any *Miracle* or the *immediate Interposition* of God; we are not told, how the People must have been cut in pieces, when overtaken by *Pharoah at the Red Sea*; had not God miraculously opened a Passage for them thro' the midst of it: how they must have perished for want of Water; had not God for their Refreshment made it *to flow out of a Rock*: how they must have starved for want of Food in the Desert; had not God in a wonderful manner *sent it down to them from Heaven:* but the saving of them thro' all these Difficulties, thro' *want of Water, want of Food,* is here solely imputed to the Care and Conduct of *Moses,* and wholly turned to his particular Praise; till we come to the place you chiefly insist on; viz. that *Moses with such laudable Designs and such great Actions reasonably believed that he had God for his Guide and Counsellor.* And what is there in this to support the Notion of such *a particular Inspiration,* as is commonly ascribed to *Moses?* What is there in this Persuasion of his, but what every good Man in the same Situation, must needs be persuaded of too? A Magistrate convinced of the being of a God and a Providence, and conscious, that

that every purpoſe of his Heart intends the Honour of that God, and the Good of the People he governs, cannot help believing himſelf to be under the ſpecial care of the Deity. This flows from the very reaſon and nature of things, and can never be otherwiſe: God, as ſurely as he exiſts, muſt neceſſarily favour ſuch a Man, and every ſuch Man muſt as neceſſarily be convinced that God does ſo favour him. And this is all that *Joſephus* can mean; ſince he grounds the Perſuaſion *Moſes* had of being under the *particular Guidance of God*, not on any facts of *ſpecial Revelation* or *divine Inſpiration*, but *on the conſciouſneſs of his own upright Intentions*, backed by the great ſucceſs of his Actions. And ſuch a Perſuaſion will always have more or leſs influence on the Mind, as it falls in with a Conſtitution more or leſs inclined to *Superſtition* or *Enthuſiaſm*, (the peculiar Character of the *Jewiſh Nation*) which is apt to impute every laudable Thought, and every ſucceſsful Action to the ſpecial Suggeſtion and Aſſiſtance of Heaven. And we ſee from what follows, that *Joſephus* thought it poſſible for Lawgivers to be poſſeſſed of ſuch a belief, without any good ground for it; ſince he makes it a queſtion, whether the *Grecian Legiſlators were really perſuaded, like Moſes*, or only pretended to be ſo, of *the immediate Aſſiſtance of Heaven*; but whether they were

were or were not, 'tis certain however at leaſt, that they could have no *real Inſpiration.*

But the Senſe I contend for is yet more clearly demonſtrated by what follows: *That Moſes having firſt perſuaded himſelf that every thing he was doing was agreeable to the Will of God, thought it neceſſary above all things to inſtill the ſame Notion into the People*; becauſe ſuch a Notion inſtilled would naturally engage them to be better Men and better Subjects. Now if all is to be taken literally, juſt as 'tis repreſented in the Sacred Scriptures, what occaſion could there be for any ſuch care or thought of *Moſes* about *propagating this Notion among the People?* The thing muſt have been done to his hands without any contrivance of his at all: the Miracles he daily wrought muſt neceſſarily convince the People of it; who could not ſee *the Glory of God deſcending and talking with him* ſo oft in the midſt of them, without knowing that *every thing he did was agreeable to the Divine Will.* As *Joſephus* therefore in this place imputes the *inſtilling this Notion* into the People to the *Skill and Addreſs of Moſes*, he could not intend to perſuade us that this was done by the help of *real Miracles*, for they leave no room for any ſuch Management or Addreſs, but do the buſineſs of themſelves without it; but by *pretending to Miracles* where there really were none, and *deceiving the People* by a ſhew of ſomething like them into an opinion that they

were actually done. This is the Method, that all other *Lawgivers* in the World have ever taken, as oft as they have wanted or *thought it necessary to instil the same Notion into the People*; and 'tis indeed the only Method it can be done by, since if any one had the *actual power of Miracles*, he could have no occasion to project or think at all about it; the thing must necessarily follow of course; and by a constant series of miraculous Events the Notion obtain of itself among the People.

But to obviate all offence, which I have no intention to give, I must beg the Reader to remember always and take along with him, that I am not declaring here any Sentiments of my own, or examining what was the true Fact and real Case of *Moses*; but what *Josephus*, from the Passage we are now considering, must necessarily either think himself, or desire that others should think of it; which will be more clearly explained still by what follows.

Such an one, says he, *was our Legislator, not a Sorcerer*; that is, not one, who did the Miracles he pretended to by any magical Art or infernal Power: *nor an Impostor*; who used the pretence of Miracles to cheat and deceive for his own Gain or Advantage; but *just such an one as the Greeks boast their Minos and other Lawgivers to have been, who ascribed the invention of their own Laws to the*

 Gods:

Gods : And here you lay, I find, a great Stress on the Word *boast*, αὐχῶσι, as it it gave a contrary turn to the Sense, from what I have represented, and carried in it the Notion of Falshood and Lying; and that *Josephus* intended to signify, *that Moses really was, what they boasted only*, or *falsely pretended their Lawgivers to be* [1]: A Distinction childish and ridiculous! since 'tis certain both from the use of Language and common Sense that the word *boast* or *brag of*, as 'tis applied here to Men famous and excellent in their Generations, can have no other Signification than to *be proud of*, or *celebrate with Praise*; and the full Import of the Sentence is, that *Moses was such an one as Minos, and the other Legislators, whom the Greeks are so proud*, or *make such a boasting of*.

And, pray Sir, after all, what is it that the *Greeks boast so much of* in these very Men? Is it that they were *really inspired* by the Gods in the Contrivance of their Laws? No, there was hardly a *Greek* of Sense, who ever believed it; or had their Laws been dictated by the *Delphic Oracle*, would have believed it the more for that; as I could easily shew from Antiquity: All that they boasted and admired so much in them, was, that after they had contrived an excellent Body of Laws, they had the Address to persuade the People, that *those Laws were dictated by the Gods*; that un-

[1] Reply, p. 21.

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der the Influence of ſuch a Perſuaſion they might ſubmit to them the more willingly. Do not the *Roman Writers* boaſt highly of their *Numa*, as of an excellent Prince, and wiſe Lawgiver; and for proof of his Wiſdom do not they tell us the Contrivances he uſed to inſtil the Notion into the People, that his *religious Inſtitutions were ſuggeſted by the Gods?* But they were not ſo ſilly as to believe the Fact itſelf to be true; that he *really was inſpired by a Goddeſs*, or received the *Ancile or holy Shield from Heaven:* Theſe things they celebrate as the Inſtances of his Skill and Policy, in order to procure the greater Reverence to his Laws: And ſuch an one *Joſephus* in this Place deſcribes *Moſes* to have been: Juſt as *Diodorus Siculus* had done before him; whoſe Words, as they are very much to our preſent Purpoſe, I cannot forbear inſerting: *The ſame kind of Fiction*, ſays he, *is ſaid to have been uſed in many other Nations, and to have been the occaſion of much good to thoſe who believed it. Among the Arimaſpi, Zathrauſtis pretended to have received his Laws from a good Spirit or Genius; among the Getæ, Zamolxis from the Goddeſs Veſta; among the Jews, Moſes from the God called, Iao: Whether imagining that every Invention or Thought beneficial to Mankind was really wonderful and divine, or that the Multitude out of regard to the Excellence and Power of the ſuppoſed Authors of*

their Laws would be the more readily induced to obey them[1].

But in the next Words, *Josephus*, you say, *puts a wide difference between the Jewish and all other Lawgivers*: And so I own he does, by affirming *Moses's Laws to be much better than theirs*; which he proceeds to demonstrate by a Comparison of the Particulars: and from this superior Excellency of his Laws he infers a superior Right to propagate *the Notion of their coming from God*: so that his Argument runs thus: *Moses was no Magician or Impostor; but a wise and excellent Man, just such an one as Minos and the other Lawgivers of Greece; these imputed their Laws to the Gods, as Moses had done before them; but Moses had a much better right to do so than they, because his Laws are much better than theirs.* Every one will see the force of this Reasoning; for whoever is conscious to himself, that he has formed the best Body of Laws, has certainly the best pretence either himself to imagine, that he had the *Assistance of God in them*; or to deceive the People with the Notion of his being so assisted: for as the sole end of such Deceit is the *Good of the People*, he must needs have the best Title to make use of it, who had the *greatest Good* to propose.

But the last Article of *this Master-piece of Quotation* is still the strongest towards clinch-

[1] Biblioth. Hist. l. 1. p. 84. Edit. Laur. Rhodom.

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ing the whole, to the Sense I have been establishing: for 'tis said, we see, that *Moses in projecting a frame of Government for his People, had no regard to any other kind then subsisting in the World, whether Monarchy, Oligarchy, or Democracy, but made his Government a Theocracy*: Now this is a short Explication of all that went before: for how is it in the power of any Mortal to make a *Theocracy*? Is it possible for a Prince or State, by calling upon or devoting themselves to God, to engage him to take upon himself the *absolute, immediate* and as it were *personal Direction* of their particular Affairs? Yet this, we see, is ascribed to *Moses*, that he *made a Theocracy*, which, as far as it was his pure Act and Deed, as 'tis here described, can bear no other Sense, than that he managed matters so, as to persuade the People that every thing ordered or effected by publick Authority, was done by the *immediate Appointment and Direction of God*. This must needs have been *Josephus's Notion of the Jewish Theocracy*, as far as we can collect it from his Words; let's apply it then to a particular Instance.

Moses was to build a *Tabernacle* or House of publick Worship for the People: what was then to be done? Why, if as in other Countries he had been a *Monarch*, he would have called for his Workmen, pitched upon a Plan and ordered the Work to be executed: or had he been the Presiding Magistrate

ſtrate in a Commonwealth, would have done the ſame thing with the Conſent and Authority of the People: But he had made his Government a *Theocracy*; and 'twas *God* therefore who muſt name the Workmen: and *God*, we read, accordingly pitched upon *Two*, the moſt famed, we may imagine, for their Skill in Building and all kinds of Workmanſhip [1]: For as *Joſephus* ſays of this very Fact; *God choſe the very ſame Perſons, which the People would have done, had the Choice been left to them* [2]. What then do the Workmen do? Why in any other State, under the Inſpection of the Migiſtrate, they would have formed a Model of their Work, and contrived the Patterns of all its Veſſels and Furniture; but as this was a *Theocracy*, they durſt project nothing of themſelves, durſt not venture on making even a *Table* or *Candleſtick*, but by the *immediate Order of God*, and a *Pattern given from Heaven.*

This was the *Theocracy*, that *Moſes* contrived; where you, Sir, may believe if you pleaſe, that with all his Wiſdom he was not able to direct the building a Chapel; nor the beſt Workmen in his Camp to make a *Candleſtick and Snuffers* but by *divine Inſpiration*, and after a *Model given by God*: But you muſt not expect to perſuade us, that *Joſephus* believed ſo

[1] Exod. xxxi. 2, 6. it. xxxvi. 1.

[2] Ὃυς καὶ τὸ πλῆθος ἂν ἐπιλέξατο, τὴν ἐξουσίας ἐπ' αὐτῷ γενομένης. Antiq. l. 3. c. 6.

too:

too: ſince the contrary is very evident; and that he had a mind at leaſt to leave a liberty and latitude in explaining the manner of this *Theocracy*.

Upon the whole; had you known how to expound a Paragraph rationally, by conſidering the general Senſe of the whole, and then connecting one part with the other; you might have ſaved me much Trouble and yourſelf the Shame of expoſing your want of Judgment by ſuch ſenſeleſs Cavils: and inſtead of this Outcry againſt me, muſt have praiſed rather the Temper and Modeſty of the Inference I draw, in recommending only *more moderate and qualified Sentiments of the divine Inſpiration of Moſes*, than what are vulgarly received: for according even to your own Interpretation, does not *Joſephus*, in the Paſſage juſt recited, uſe much more Reſerve and Caution in aſſerting the *marvellous and ſupernatural* part of *Moſes's Character*, than what his *literal Hiſtory* does? And if ſo; the Inference is certainly juſt, that it might be a hint to us, to uſe the ſame *Reſerve and Moderation* too in thinking and ſpeaking on the ſame Subject.

But you ſay, *that Joſephus in this place was as far from the thought of any ſuch Inference as I make, as Attention or Sincerity was from me when I read it; and if ever I had read his Jewiſh Antiquities, I muſt know that he never repreſents the Law but as given to the Jews by God*

God himself, thro' the hand of Moses[1]. I have read his *Jewish Antiquities*; and from that very reading have collected the contrary; that his real Sentiments of the *divine Inspiration of Moses* were very little different from what is represented above. For tho' he undertakes in that Work to deduce and connect a *perpetual History of the Jews* from the beginning of the World, as 'tis found in *the sacred Records of the Old Testament*; yet he takes such liberty with many of the Facts there recorded, by *suppressing* some, *altering and accommodating* others to the ordinary Taste and common Sense of Mankind, as he neither could or durst have done, had he believed them to have been *really and strictly effected by God* in the very manner as the *literal Text* imports: to give one Instance out of many.

After his account *of the Passage of the Israelites thro' the Red Sea*, he subjoins this Reflection: *I have given every particular of this Story just as I found it in the Sacred Books: but let no Man be surprized at the strangeness of it, that such an ancient and innocent People should find a way opened for their escape thro' the Sea, either by the special Will and Interposition of God, or the accidental Concurrence of Natural Causes. Since in a like case as it were of yesterday, the Pamphylian Sea retired before Alexander of Macedon, and opened him a Passage, where there*

[1] Reply, p. 22.

was

was no other way for him, when God had a mind to put an end to the Persian Empire. And this is affirmed by all who have written of his Actions. But for these things, let every Man take them in what Sense he best likes[1].

Now 'tis impossible, that he could have left it in doubt, whether this Fact had any thing *miraculous* in it or not, had he entertained any firm and certain belief of the *absolute and universal Inspiration of the sacred Writings*, which represent it, as one of the most *signal and illustrious Miracles*, that *God* ever wrought by the hand of *Moses*.

To the Authority of *Josephus* I shall just add that of *Philo*; whose Words, as quoted by *Eusebius*, may be render'd thus: *As for the Man, whoever he was, who gave them their Laws, they had him in so great Admiration, that whatsoever he approved, they approved too. Whatever therefore he dictated to them, whether he had contrived and invented it himself, or had received it from the Deity, they imputed it all to God*[2].

I shall make no Reflection on this Passage, but leave it to the Reader to consider, whether it is not more reasonable, with *these pri-*

[1] ——Ἔιτε κατὰ βούλησιν θεῦ, εἴτε κατ' αὐτόματον, &c. —— περὶ μὲν τούτων ὡς ἑκάστῳ δοκεῖ ἀφελαμβανέτω. Antiq. lib. 2. c. 16. Ed. Hudson.

[2] Ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν ἄνδρα ἐκεῖνον, ὅς τίς ποτε ἦν ὁ τοὺς νόμους αὐτοῖς θεὶς, ἅτω σφόδρα ἐθαύμασαν, ὡς ὅτι δήποτε ἔδοξεν ἐκείνῳ καὶ αὐτοῖς· εἴτε οὖν λελογισμένος αὐτὸς, εἴτε ἀκούων παρὰ δαίμονος ἔφρασε, τοῦτο ἅπαν εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἀνάγειν. Euseb. Præpar. Evang. l. 8. ex Philone de exitu ab Ægypto.

mitive and judicious Apologiſts of the Jewiſh Religion, to allow ſome liberty of thinking, as to the *Divinity of their ſacred Books*, than with our modern Zealots to calumniate and perſecute for ever all who differ from them in Opinion about Queſtions of ſuch Difficulty and Uncertainty; yet no ſooner does a Man enquire with Freedom into the true State of any *Scriptural Fact*, but the *Alarm Bell* is ſounded, and the Clergy admoniſhed of a dangerous Attempt againſt the *Authority of Moſes*. But conſider, Sir, that the effectual way of ruining a Fabrick, is to charge it with a greater Load than it was made to bear; and the ſureſt Method of weakening any thing is not by reſtraining it within its due Bounds, but by forcing and ſtretching it beyond what Nature and Reaſon deſigned it for. Now becauſe this is a Queſtion of great Nicety and Importance, which you ſeem not much acquainted with, it may be worth while to open it a little further, and add a Word or two more before I diſmiſs it.

'Tis the common Notion of all the *Greek Fathers*, that the divine *Plato* had greatly ſtudied the *Books of Moſes*, and made much uſe of them in his own: So that *Clemens of Alexandria* and others call him the *Attick Moſes* [1]: and both *Clemens* and *Euſebius* take much pains

[1] Νουμήνιος δὲ ὁ Πυθαγόρειος, ἀττικηρὸς γράφει, τί ἐστὶ Πλάτων, ἢ Μωσῆς ἀττικίζων. Strom. l. 1. c. 22. Edit. Potter.

in

in pointing out the particular Notions and Sentiments which he had borrowed from *Moses*[1]. As we have seen then already from some Passages above what is delivered of the Character and Abilities of the first *Moses*; so let us see likewise what this *Attick Moses* says of the proper Qualifications and Perfections of *such a Lawgiver*. Why he says, *that he ought to consider and contrive nothing else so much, as to instil such Notions into the People as are likely to do them the greatest good*[2]. And this is exactly agreeable to the Character of *Moses*, as 'tis given almost in the very Words of *Plato* by the *Jewish Writers* as well as *Primitive Fathers*. But in order to execute his good Intentions towards the People, *the Magistrate or Legislator will often find it necessary*, according to *Plato*, *for the good of his Subjects, to invent certain Fables, Fictions, or political Lies, to be propagated among them, as Medicine or Physick to obviate and cure ill Principles, as well as to infuse good ones*: and above all, *to influence the Minds of the younger Sort so, as to make them submit willingly and chearfully to the Laws prescribed*. And to shew how readily the Multitude may be drawn into the Belief of any thing proposed by an artful Governor, he instances in the *Fable of the Dragon's Teeth sown*

[1] Vid. Clem. Alex. ibid. c. xxv. &c. It. Euseb. Præpar. Evan. l. 12. &c.

[2] Ὥστε ἰδὲν ἄλλο αὐτὸν δεῖ σκοπῶντα ἀνευρίσκειν, ἢ τὶ πίστας μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν ἐργάσαιτο ἂν πόλιν. De Leg. 2. p. 664.

in the Ground, from each of which an armed Man immediately sprang up; which, as absurd as it is, was yet once, he says, *swallowed for true by the People*[1].

Now the chief End proposed by *Plato* for the Invention of these *Fables* or *Lies*, is to keep the People the more religiously attached to an exact Observance of their Laws, and Obedience to their Governors. And this is what *Josephus* every where insists on, as the *peculiar Praise and Character of Moses* above all other Lawgivers in the World; that he had his People from their very Childhood trained to *the most inviolable Devotion to his Laws, and the most profound Reverence for his Person*[2]. Now should I take the liberty to say, that *Plato*'s Notion of the use and necessity of *Publick Fables* or *Lies*, was borrowed from the *Mosaic Writings*, and suggested by what he had observed in the *Practice and Example of Moses*, what an Outcry would the shallow Bigots make of *weakening his Authority*, and *favouring Infidelity*? Yet *Clemens of Alexandria* and *Eusebius*, I find, say much the same thing, and make this Reasoning and these very Sentiments of *Plato* a clear Proof his Acquaintance with the *Mosaic History*.

Clemens speaking of the *Art of Governing*, tells us among other things, that the *ends of*

[1] Vid. Plat. de Repub. l. 3. p. 414. & alibi. it. de legib. l. 2. p. 663. [2] Vid. Antiq. l. 3. c. 15. §. 3. It. con. Ap. l. 2.

Government

Government are to be ſerved by perſuading, or forcing, or injuring——or doing what is juſt, or lying, or telling Truth, as different Circumſtances require; Examples of all which, ſays he, *and how to uſe each of them properly, the Greeks to their great Advantage have borrowed from Moſes* [1],

Euſebius after having explained *Plato*'s Opinion about the Neceſſity of contriving *proper Fables and Fictions* for the Good of the People; declares, the Caſe to have been juſt the ſame with the *Jews*, and that in *the Books of Moſes there are infinite Examples of this kind of Fictions contrived for the Benefit of the Multitude.* [2].

But is the Notion then, you'll ſay, of the *Divine Origin of the Law and Inſpiration of Moſes* to be reſolved into *Fiction* and *Fable* or *Political Lying?* No; far be it from me to think or ſay that: But this perhaps one may venture to ſay; that the Suppoſition of ſome degree of *ſuch Fiction*, may poſſibly be found neceſſary to the ſolving the Difficulties of the *Moſaic Writings*, without any hurt to their Authority, or advantage to Infidelity; ſince the beſt and moſt zealous Apologiſts of the *Jewiſh Religion* have not ſcrupled, we ſee, to allow it on ſome occaſions; eſpecially when it was their buſineſs to explain and propoſe it

[1] Strom. 1. p. 417. Edit. Potter. [2] Præp. Evangel. p. 356. Edit. R. Steph.

to

to Strangers; not with any design to *weaken*, but to *strengthen* it the more effectually in the good Opinion of the World; by shewing its *Founder Moses*, to have been the same kind of Man with those *other Lawgivers and Founders of States*, for whom the politest Nations have always had the utmost Honour and Veneration. For *there's nothing dishonourable*, says *Plutarch, in the common Story of Lycurgus, Numa and other such Lawgivers; that having great Innovations to make in the State, and a perverse and obstinate People to deal with, they invented the Fiction of a divine Mission or Revelation, salutary and beneficial to those for whose sake they contrived it*[1].

But to return into the way, from whence we have digressed. You go on to expose *my manner of misquoting*, as you call it[2], in some Passages I had produced from *Herodotus*; and affirm, that I have *partially quoted him on purpose to deceive my Reader no less than five times in about twice the number of lines*[3]. Let us examine the Truth of this solemn and heavy Accusation.

First then, I quote *Herodotus* for saying, that *the Ægyptians were governed by Laws and Customs peculiar to themselves and different from those of other Nations.* This, you own, is *Truth, but not the whole Truth*; for *Herodotus*

[1] Plut. Numa. p. 62. E. Edit. Paris.
[2] Reply, p. 22.
[3] Ib. p. 27, 28.

says,

ſays, that their Laws were different from thoſe of all other Nations. But I judged it neceſſary, it ſeems, *to drop the word all, leſt the Reader ſhould perceive the Abſurdity of attempting to ſhew from this Place, that the Jews agreed with them in their Cuſtoms* [1]. Surely no Cavil was ever ſo trifling: For is not the Word *all* of neceſſity implied and underſtood in the very Senſe I have given? If the *Ægyptian Laws* were, as I ſay, *peculiar* to themſelves, does not that *Peculiarity* infer a Difference from *all* other Nations? But ſuppoſe the Word *all* not implied only, but actually inſerted; how does it ſhew any Abſurdity in my Reaſoning, or at all affect it? My Argument previouſly ſuppoſes ſome Reſemblance of Cuſtoms between the *Jews* and *Ægyptians*, grounded on the long Reſidence of the *Jews* in *Ægypt*; where for above two hundred Years they are ſuppoſed to have *complied with the Cuſtoms*, and *conformed even to the Religion of the Country* [2]: As the Turn then and Genius of the *Ægyptians* diſpoſed them to affect *a Peculiarity in their Laws*, and *a difference of Manners* from *all* other Nations; ſo the *Jews* alſo, among whom we find *the ſame Diſpoſition and Affectation of Peculiarity*, may well be ſuppoſed to have derived this Humour from *Ægypt*. So that your Criticiſm is grounded

[1] Reply, p. 23. [2] Vid. Spencer de Legib. Heb. l. 1. c. 1.

meerly

meerly in your own Miſtake of the very Argument you pretend to criticiſe.

Secondly, I ſay on the Authority of *Herodotus, that the Ægyptians were more addicted to Prodigies and Miracles than any other People:* And here you tell me, that *I once more deceive my Reader, even at the expence of a falſe Quotation, ſince in the place referred to, Herodotus ſpeaks not a word of Miracles, but of Prodigies only*[1]. As if a *Superſtitious Regard to Prodigies* did not imply an *equal Regard to Miracles*; and thoſe who are ſo fond of the one, were not of neceſſity as much addicted to the other; as it might eaſily be proved of the *Ægyptians* in particular by many other Authorities, if this before us was not ſufficient. But τέρατα the word uſed here ſignifies, you ſay, *Prodigies*, and does it not ſignify *Miracles* too? If you think not, I would adviſe you to conſult your Dictionary, before you ſet up for a Critick: Nay, the very Reaſon you give why *Prodigies* muſt needs be meant in this Place and not *Miracles*, proves juſt the contrary: For they were *ſuch things*, you ſay, *as could be found out, which Miracles could not be*: Now 'tis certain, that *Miracles may be contrived, invented, or found out, as* τέρατα ἀνεύρηται, may properly be rendered; but the ſame cannot be ſaid of *monſtrous Births, unnatural Copulations*, &c. which you give as the Inſtances of *Prodigy*: And what, I pray, are the τεραθόρροι mentioned by

[1] Reply, p. 24.

Authors;

Authors ; *the Makers of monſtrous Births or the Forgers of Miracles?* The following Words indeed are applicable properly to *Prodigies* ; but if the Sentence I have quoted be compleat in itſelf, as it ſeems to be conſidered in all our Editions, where 'tis diſtinguiſhed by a full point ; then it leads more naturally to the Notion of *Miracles* than of *Prodigies:* However the ſame Word carries certainly in it the Notion of both, and a ſuperſtitious Attention to the one neceſſarily infers the ſame Regard to the other : So that your Obſervation has neither the uſe of Language nor Senſe to ſupport it.

Thirdly, I add, that *the Ægyptians had an High Prieſt, with an Hereditary Prieſthood deſcending from Father to Son.* To this you reply, *that 'tis unlucky for me that according to Herodotus they had not an High Prieſt over the whole Nation, as the Jews had, but one over each County or Province, of which there were thirty ſix ; a Conſtitution ſo different from that of the Jews, that if I had repreſented it right, I could never lead my Reader to agree with me, that Moſes borrowed it from Ægypt of all Countries under Heaven* [1]. Moſt acute and ingenious Reaſoning ! as if inſtead of a Similitude of Cuſtom, which is all I endeavour to ſhew, I had undertaken to prove an Identity or abſolute Uniformity in all Points and Circumſtances : Should a Foreign Prince take a

[1] Reply, p. 25.

fancy to copy the *Hierarchy of England*, and in proportion to the Extent of his Dominions, eſtabliſh either *one Archbiſhop* with ſubordinate *Biſhops*; or *one Biſhop* with ſubordinate *Prieſts*; which laſt Caſe was upon the Matter executed by the late *King of Pruſſia*: You without doubt would argue that the Hint could not poſſibly be taken from *England*; becauſe We had *two Archbiſhops* and He but *one*, or We *Archbiſhops* and *Biſhops*, and He only *a Biſhop*. Your Reaſoning is full as ridiculous in the Caſe before us; as if *Moſes* could not take the Government of the *Diſtrict* or *Province* he lived in, as a Pattern for his own petty State, which was hardly much more conſiderable than a *ſingle County of Ægypt*.

But *'tis unlucky for me*, you ſay, *that Herodotus is not ſpeaking here of any ſuch High Prieſt as the Jews had, one over the whole Nation, but one over each Province*. Yet all the ill luck, I doubt, will be found at laſt on your ſide; who taking your Notions from ſeparate Paſſages of Authors, which you interpret preſently according to your own Prejudices, have happened in this Place, as in many others, to gueſs quite wrong. For tho' *Herodotus* tells us here[1], that there were *many Prieſts to each God*, and conſequently a great Number of them in the whole; yet he muſt be underſtood to mean, that there was *one High Prieſt* over thoſe many

[1] Herod. l. 2. c. 37.

or

or the whole Number. This is very clear from other Passages of his History, where he plainly intimates that there was but *one High Priest over the whole Nation*, just as there was but *one King* : That the *Number of their High Priests and their Kings, in a Succession of* 341 *Generations, happened to be exactly equal:* That each *High Priest provided a Statue of himself to perpetuate his Memory to Posterity :* And that he himself *was introduced by the Priests into a large Room or Temple, where these Statues were deposited, and saw* 341 *of Colossean Size, the Images of so many High Priests in lineal Descent from Father to Son*[1]. Which cannot, I think, be applicable to any other *High Priest*, but just *such an one as the Jews had, one over the whole Nation.*

Fourthly, *The Ægyptians*, I say, *abhorred Swine's Flesh as impure and abominable.* And here indeed you own, that I deliver *the true Sense of Herodotus* ; to which I had added an Authority of *Josephus* to the very same Purpose. As the Fact then is certain and agreed, that the *Ægyptians generally abhorred Swine's Flesh, and abstained from it superstitiously* ; how can this be made an Instance of *my falsifying or misquoting Herodotus ?* Why, *because there are three Circumstances*, as you observe with your usual Acuteness, *in which the Behaviour of the Jews and Ægyptians with regard to*

[1] Herod. l. 2. c. 143.

Swine were not alike[1]. But if there had been *threescore* instead of *three*, it had been nothing at all to the purpose, since the Fact I contend for is allowed: All that I pretend to intimate, is, from the near Resemblance of many Customs, that *the Jews* might probably have borrowed them from *Ægypt*: You cry out on the other hand, that the Inference is *unjust, partial, and contrived to deceive*, because I do not shew in all points an *Identity of Custom*. All which Clamour proves just nothing but your own want of Judgment, in not reflecting, that a Custom may be borrowed, and yet altered, enlarged or restrained as the Borrower shall afterwards find convenient.

But there is one Observation of yours, which I can't help taking notice of here; that since the Customs which the *Jews* had in common with the *Ægyptians*, were in use likewise in several other Countries; why, say you, *must they needs have been borrowed from Ægypt rather than from any other Country*[2]? This you repeat, and insist on again in another place[3]; nay you go so far in one Instance as to declare, *that of all Countries under Heaven Ægypt was the most unlikely to derive the Custom from*[4]. Now I cannot for my life conceive, how 'tis possible for one, who knows any thing of the *Jewish History*, and has the least grain of

[1] Reply, p. 27. [2] Ib. p. 25. [3] Ibid. p. 42. [4] Ibid. p. 25.

Judgment,

Judgment, to put ſo ſilly a Queſtion. The *Jewiſh Nation* was nurſed up in *Ægypt* from its very Infancy, and during a Reſidence there of above 200 Years grew up from one ſingle Family into a mighty People: In all which Time, as is above mentioned, they were trained in *all the Cuſtoms*, and complied even with the *Religion and Idolatry of the Country*: and even after they had quitted it, they retained ſtill, we find, the old fondneſs for the *Cuſtoms*, *Ceremonies* and *Worſhip* they had been uſed to; and this not only on their Journey, when the Impreſſion and Memory of thoſe Cuſtoms were ſtrong on their Minds, but when they were ſettled in quiet Poſſeſſion of the promiſed Land, and formed into a regular State; where they continued remarkable for nothing ſo much as their Averſion to Strangers, and their Care to preſerve themſelves ſeparate and clear of any Mixture with all other Nations. If this be true, as it certainly is, what ground can there poſſibly be for what you ſo oft inculcate; *that they might have borrowed their Cuſtoms from any other Country as probably as from Ægypt?* Every Man of Senſe muſt needs laugh at you for entertaining the leaſt thought of its Probability; which you might however have entertained as long as you pleaſe, had you but excuſed me from thinking it probable too, and not made this very inſtance, in which I follow *Reaſon*, *Fact* and *Hiſtory*, a Proof of my *Partiality and Prejudice againſt Moſes.*

Fifthly

Fifthly, I have paſſed over one of your Obſervations in my way, about the Treatment of *Leprous Perſons*, on purpoſe to give it a particular Anſwer; as it is the only one in your Book, where your Charge upon me of *miſquoting* is ſupported with any Truth or Reaſon. The Paſſage however is found in *Herodotus*, in the very Senſe I had given to it, tho' not, it ſeems, among the *Cuſtoms of Ægypt*, where I had ranged it, but of *Perſia*[1]. But tho' it would not perhaps be difficult to ſhew, that the ſame treatment of *Leproſy* was practiſed alſo in *Ægypt*; yet, as the Quotation ſtands, I cannot but own it to be the effect of Negligence and want of Attention in me: I took it from my Papers, whither I had tranſcribed it, and not having the Original near me, or being in haſte to finiſh what was before me, I truſted to Memory and the Perſuaſion I was under, that the Fact was related of *Ægypt*: Which I allow to be a Fault that deſerves Animadverſion, as I ſhould as frankly have done in any other Article you charge me with, had there appeared any juſt Ground or Reaſon for ſuch Charge. But ſince you have taken from me *one Ægyptian Cuſtom*, I think myſelf obliged to replace it with another, viz. the Laws *about Animals clean and unclean*; which the learned *Cotelerius* allows to have been taken probably *from the*

[1] Reply, p. 26.

Practice

Practice of Ægypt; *to which the Hebrew Nation*, he ſays, *were too much addicted* [1]; and gives us a Quotation of *Porphyry*, from *Chæremon the Ægyptian Hiſtorian*, importing, that the *Prieſts of Ægypt abſtained from Fiſh, and all four footed Beaſts, whoſe Hoofs either were not cloven at all, or cloven into many Diviſions, or ſuch as had not Horns* (or, what comes to the ſame, did not *chew the Cud)* and *all carnivorous Birds* [3].

It would be endleſs to run thro' all the *Jewiſh Cuſtoms*, which Men of the greateſt Learning and Experience in theſe Studies have deduced from the Practice of *Ægypt*. There's ſuch *an Affinity*, ſays *Kircher*, *between the Jewiſh and Ægyptian Rites, Sacrifices, Ceremonies*; *that either the Ægyptians muſt have Hebraiſed, or the Hebrews Ægyptiſed* [3]: but which of them followed the other in theſe Rites, is ſo clearly decided by the learned *Spencer*, that *no Man, unleſs ſupinely credulous*, as he ſays, can *believe it to have been the Ægyptians* [4]. And indeed both he and *Marſham* derive in a manner the *whole ritual Law* from this very Source of *Ægypt*: *The moveable Tabernacle, Ark of the Covenant, Cherubims, Altar, Sacrifices, Prieſtly Veſtments, the Sabbath, Feſtivals, Waſhings,*

[1] Vid. Barnabæ Epiſt. ex Editione Cotelerii c. x. Not. 42. p. 30. [2] Ibid. p. 36. Not. 78. [3] Propyl. Agoniſt. c. 2. apud Oedip. Ægypt. T. 1. [4] Nemo vero niſi ſupinè credulus, opinari poteſt Ægyptios, &c. de Leg. Hebræor. l. 3. c. 2. Sec. 2. p. 650.

Purifi-

Purifications, Oracles, Prophecy, Divination, &c[1].

You go on to obſerve, that I *ſhew my Skill or great Negligence of quoting, in falſly rendring into Engliſh the Latin Tranſlation of Maimonides's Words*[2]. Hard indeed, not to allow me capable of tranſlating even *Latin*: but whatever you pleaſe to allow, I pretend to a Skill which you are not yet Maſter of, of rendring the true Meaning of a Paſſage agreeably to the general Notion conveyed by it, without trifling and dwelling on the leſs ſignificant words, ſo as to hurt the main and obvious Senſe of the whole. Let us try your Criticiſm by this Rule. *Spencer* ſpeaking of *Circumciſion* in the Words of *Maimonides*,[3] calls it *res duriſſima & difficillima*; here we have its Character and Deſcription; and the main Notion of the Paſſage is, that it was a *moſt harſh* and *moſt hazardous* thing: Now is it poſſible that a thing in its Nature the *moſt dangerous*, could ever be performed without *ſome Danger*? But *I change*, you ſay, *the reſtraining Word, ſometimes with Hazard, into ſome Hazard*: Where every body but yourſelf will ſee the Propriety of it, in order to make the Sentence conſiſtent with itſelf: for as ſoon as I diſcover the true Sentiment of an Author, 'tis enough for me to catch hold of that, and

[1] Ibid. Lib. 3. c. 3. p. 663, &c.—It. Marſh. Can. Chron.
[2] Reply, p. 29. [3] Res duriſſima & difficillima, nec ſine vitæ diſcrimine quandoque ſubeunda.

not

not like your ſolemn Pedants think myſelf obliged to follow the very Inaccuracies and Perplexities of the Original.

But you urge me ſtill and ſay, that *I ſhew my uſual Dexterity* in the uſe of a Paſſage taken from *Lightfoot*[1], on whoſe Authority I aſſert that *the frequent Mortality occaſioned by Circumciſion produced a ſtanding Law, that when any Perſon had loſt three Children ſucceſſively by it, he was to be excuſed from circumciſing the reſt, in conſequence of which there were actually many uncircumciſed among them*, &c. Where *Lightfoot*, you obſerve, *ſpeaks not a word either of a ſtanding Law*, or *the frequent Mortality of Circumciſion.* But does not the Caſe itſelf ſpeak neceſſarily of both? And can any Man be ſo ſilly as to think, that by a *ſtanding Law* I could mean a *Law of Moſes?* No, the frequent Mortality occaſioned by Circumciſion produced a *Judgment* or *Deciſion*, as you own, of the *Rabbins* or *Jewiſh Doctors*, who were both Interpreters of the Law and Guides of Conſcience, that *when a Man had loſt three Children ſucceſſively by Circumciſion, he ſhoula be excuſed from circumciſing the reſt.* This I call a *ſtanding Law* or *Practice*, or *Cuſtom*; grounded on a Decree of the proper Judges in the Caſe. But *Lightfoot*, you ſay, *does not ſpeak a Word of the frequent Mortality of it.* But does not the Fact he mentions as ſome-

[1] Reply, p. 30.

times happening *of three Children dying of it ſucceſſively*, neceſſarily imply and infer it? Allow the Caſe to have happened, tho' but ſeldom, and the other will follow of courſe: And here you ſhew, what you do indeed in every other Place, that your Cavils are founded only in your own Miſtake of the very thing you cavil at: For you charge me as producing this Paſſage to prove, that the *Caſe of three Children's dying ſucceſſively by Circumciſion was frequent with them*[1]: Whereas all I endeavour to ſhew, is, that *the Mortality of Circumciſion muſt needs be frequent*, becauſe *that Caſe did ſometimes* happen: no body can imagine the Caſe itſelf to be very common, tho' you allow *five or ſix Inſtances* of it on Record; and if no more had ever happened, they are more than ſufficient to ſhew, that Circumciſion was *ordinarily dangerous* and *often mortal*: You will hardly deny the *Small Pox* to be *frequently mortal*, yet few or none perhaps know five or ſix Caſes of *three Children dying ſucceſſively of it* in the ſame Family: which yet happened ſo often, according to *Lightfoot*, thro' *the danger of Circumciſion*, that there were *many uncircumciſed* on that account both of the *Prieſts and People*. And thus the Words of *Maimonides* and Paſſage of *Lightfoot*, in ſpite of your Cavils, demonſtra-

[1] Reply, p. 31.

bly

bly prove all I contend for, *the frequent Mortality of Circumcision.*

I have now gone thro' your *Criticisms on my Quotations*, and have shewn them to be both false and trifling, void both of Learning and Judgment: But this, Sir, ought not to reflect so much Shame on you, as the want of Candour and Truth, and the love of Calumny you betray in the Management of them. At setting out you would persuade your Reader, that there's *scarce one Quotation*, which I have not abused and misrepresented; yet out of *fourscore* you attempt only some slight Objections to *fifteen*, as you reckon, but as every body else will count, *thirteen* only; the two last, as we shall presently see, being not Exceptions to my *Quotations*, (as to enhance the Number, you absurdly call them) but to my Reasonings: and of these *thirteen*, there's but a *poor single one* left you, in which you have shewn indeed some want of attention or too much haste in me, but no possible suspicion of any wilful Misrepresentation. Is this then the part of a Man of Honour or Integrity to calumniate so strongly on a Foundation so weak? Is this suitable to the Gravity of the Person you assume, and your conjuring me so solemnly *in God's Name and for the sake of Sincerity, to weigh things better and report Facts more fairly* [1]? Will not the Reader be

[1] Reply, p. 40, 41.

apt to entertain the ſame Suſpicion of your Religion, as he muſt before have done of your Learning, that with all this Outcry about it, you have no real Eſteem or Concern for it; for which Reflection he will find ſtill but too much Reaſon in what follows?

You proceed to call over again the *Story of Babel*, and declare my Account of *that Confuſion* to be *truly a confuſed one*[1]: where for the ſake of a ſtupid Jeſt, you put your Judgment to ſome riſk with the Reader; who may not perhaps be of Opinion, that my way of writing is ſo *confuſed* as you would intimate: but to come to the Point. I ſhall firſt conſider what you object to my Account of this Fact, and then examine the Merit of your own Expoſition of it.

I have ſaid in *my Letter, that the Sons of Noah were ſo far from any Reſolution of not diſperſing themſelves, that before the Confuſion of Babel they had already begun to diſperſe and actually ſent off a great Colony from the Eaſt to the Land of Shinaar*[2]. For this I produced the concurrent Teſtimony both of *Proteſtant and Papiſt*, both *Patrick* and *Calmet*; and thought myſelf very orthodox and ſafe under the Shelter of ſuch Authority; but all, it ſeems, in vain; ſince *the Queſtion*, you ſay[3], *is not what any Commentator has fancied, but what the*

[1] Reply, p. 31. [2] Letter to Dr. Waterland, p. 41.
[3] Reply, p. 32.

Scripture

Scripture has taught about the Matter. How hard is it to deal with ſuch thorough-paced Divines? *Commentators* are at ſome times every thing; at others nothing with them. Doctor *Waterland* contemns his Adverſary for having *no Acquaintance* with them [1]; and you contemn me for being *acquainted* with them: The Doctor ſays, *that there's not one Commentator of Note but would have ſet his Antagoniſt right* [2]; you pretend to ſhew, that *Two of the beſt Note* have ſet me *quite wrong* [3]. But there cannot be much difficulty in defending *Patrick* and *Calmet* againſt ſuch an Expoſitor as your ſelf: let's try what can be done.

You obſerve, that in the end of the *tenth Chapter of Geneſis* preceding the *Story of Babel*, 'tis ſaid of the *Sons of Noah, that by them were the Nations divided in the Earth after the Flood.* And then it follows, Chap. xi. *And the whole Earth was of one Language and one Speech. Where all Mankind*, you ſay, *is ſpoken of without the Excluſion of any Part.* But pray, Sir, what do theſe two Verſes import, but that the ſeveral Nations of the World were founded and peopled by the *Diſperſion of the Sons of Noah*, and that before *the Confuſion of Babel* the whole Earth had but *one Language?* Where the very Expreſſion of the *whole Earth* ſeems to intimate ſome kind of diſperſion and peopling of different Countries previous

[1] Script. Vind. Par. 1. p. 8. [2] Ibid. p. 24. [3] Rep. p. 32.

to

to *that Confusion.* But in the next Verse 'tis said, *And it came to pass as they journeyed from the East, that they found a Plain in the Land of Shinaar and dwelt there.* That is; of these *Sons of Noah*, by whom the *Nations were divided*, in the very Act of dividing and dispersing themselves, as one *great Part or Colony* travelled from the *East*, they found a convenient Plain and settled there. But here's not a *Word*, you say, *about their dispersing themselves, or sending of Colonies:* But is it not implied in this *journeying from the East*, or is it possible to disperse any otherwise than by journeying from one Place to another? But there's no Hint given, you observe, that this is to be understood of a *part of them* only, and not of the *whole.* But where the Text is silent, or obscure, must not we fill up the Sense of it from Reason and the Nature of things, which necessarily suggest such a Distinction? For what Sense can there be in supposing, as you do, that the whole of Mankind must needs travel thus from Place to Place in one Body? Why, *when they had consumed the Provision and Forage their first Settlement afforded, they were forced*, you say, *to remove to another.* But would not Reason and Necessity have taught them, that the only Remedy for this Evil must be their *separating* from each other and not *journeying together?* For the same Inconvenience would always attend them, whilst they all held in a Body; and there could have

been no end of their journeying, if they had hung together, till they had eat up every thing the Place afforded: All which Diſtreſs would have been prevented at once, if as ſoon as Victuals grew ſcarce for their *whole Number*, they had ſent off a *Part* or *Colony* to freſh Quarters; whilſt as many of them ſtaid behind and kept Poſſeſſion of the old ones, as they were capable of receiving.

Again, by ſuppoſing the *whole Body of Mankind* to be concerned and preſent at the *Confuſion of Babel*, you involve *Noah and his Sons*, who were then alive, in the Guilt and Partnerſhip of that Rebellion againſt God: But 'tis improbable or incredible rather, that ſuch a *Preacher of Righteouſneſs*, whoſe Faith and Virtues are ſo celebrated in Scripture, could either have conſented himſelf to ſo wicked a Project, or that ſo *venerable a Parent of human Race* ſhould not have Credit and Authority enough in his own Family to have reſtrained them from ſo daring an Impiety. So that 'tis on all accounts highly reaſonable to conclude with the *learned Commentators* above mentioned, that it was but *a Colony or Part of the whole*, that travelled from the *Eaſt*, and were concerned in building the *Tower of Babel*.

But I had obſerved in my Letter, that *all we can collect from this Story is, that the Multitude at Babel, knowing they muſt ſoon be diſperſed ſtill further, had a mind before ſuch Diſperſion to erect ſome publick Monument of their*

common

common Origin by building a City and a Tower that ſhould reach as high as Heaven; and that it was the Preſumption and Arrogance of this Deſign that induced God to baffle it by confounding their Language, &c. Now you on the contrary affirm, that *I collect from the Story a Deſign quite different from what the Story expreſly mentions*[1]: Where I muſt leave it to the Reader to judge whether I have juſtly repreſented the Senſe of Scripture or no: For does it not plainly intimate, that the Ground of their offending God, was in the Deſign they had projected of *building a Tower as high as Heaven*? Does it give any other Inſtance of their Arrogance and Preſumption? And does it not likewiſe expreſly ſay, that their Intent was to *raiſe themſelves a Name* by the Project they had formed? The Story I declared to be a *ſtrange one*, and durſt not for that Reaſon venture on any other Solution of it, than what the very Words ſuggeſted. But *I was miſled*, you ſay, *and endeavour to miſlead my Reader, by the Idle Tranſlation of the Old Greek and Latin Interpreters*; ſince the Original imports juſt what our *Engliſh Verſion* gives; *let us build a City and a Tower that may reach to Heaven, and let us make a Name, leſt we be ſcattered abroad*, &c. And allowing all this; does not even the Word *leſt* imply an Apprehenſion or Notion that they ſhould ſhortly be

[1] Reply, p. 35.

obliged

obliged to diſperſe further ; and an Intention conſequently to erect this *publick Monument and make themſelves a Name before ſuch Diſperſion?* But the Word *leſt* according to you gives a quite different Turn to the Senſe ; as if it had been ſaid, *let us build a City and a Tower, to prevent or hinder our further Diſperſion.* Strange Nonſenſe! As if a Tower could change the Nature of Things, and prevent their being ſcattered abroad or diſperſed to people the Earth : Unleſs you can ſuppoſe them reſolved to combat Heaven itſelf, and ſilly enough to imagine that by the help of ſuch Entrenchments they ſhould be able to baffle the Power of the Almighty.

The Text then, whether we render it according to the *Seventy Interpreters* and the old *Latin*, or according to our *vulgar Engliſh* comes, we ſee, in a manner to the ſame thing : I cannot however diſmiſs it without obſerving the Raſhneſs of your Cenſure on the *Old Greek Verſion*, which you call and *Idle Tranſlation*, tho' it was ſo frequently uſed, and *authenticated* as it were by our *Saviour*, *the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts*, and held for Sacred and Inſpired by all the *Primitive Fathers.*

I ſhall now juſt ſpend a Word or two in examining your own Account of *this Hiſtorical Fact* ; where tho' you ſeem cautious of uſing Dr. *Waterland*'s Words, yet you aſſert in effect the very ſame thing, which in every Dreſs of Language will always be equally ab-

ſurd. The *Doctor* ſays, *that the Sons of Noah had formed a Conſpiracy to hang together in a Cluſter, and neither to diſperſe nor cultivate the Ground, had not God miraculouſly interpoſed to confound their Projects*, &c [1]. You ſay, *that they were reſolved to hold cloſely together; to adhere ſtrictly to each other, and never to part, if God had not forced them to it, to prevent thoſe Quarrels and Wars which would inevitably ariſe among them from their living together*, &c [2]. Strange, that ſuch a loving, fond Society, that could not bear the thought of leaving each other; *determined*, as you ſay, *to live and die together* [3], ſhould ſo ſoon be engaged in *Quarrels and Wars!* But their Love, it ſeems, was ſo extravagant, that it was worſe than Death to them to part, and they would chuſe rather to kill one another, than live aſunder. 'Tis ſurprizing, I ſay, that Men of any Underſtanding can take up with ſuch Abſurdities, and after much Pains and Plodding ſhould have got no further in thinking than what their Nurſes had taught them.

Had Mankind in thoſe firſt Ages of the World been all confin'd within ſome *Iſland*, whence no Eſcape was practicable; the Account you give might have had ſome Reaſon in it, that as faſt as their Numbers increaſed and their Victuals diminiſhed, they muſt have been forced to deſtroy and prey

[1] Scripture Vindicated. Part 1. p. 42.
[2] Reply, p. 38, 39, &c. [3] Ib. p. 39.

upon

upon each other : but even in ſuch a Caſe, rather than periſh by Hunger, they would have ſtruggled hard and tried many an Invention of Floats and Veſſels in queſt of better Quarters by Sea : But to ſuppoſe ſuch a Multitude in the middle of the Continent and in fruitful Plains determined to hold together till they ſtarved, and like Men in the Extremity of a Siege, killing each other for want of Victuals, which yet might be had for fetching ; whilſt Plenty and all the World lay before them, if they would but diſperſe themſelves to the Enjoyment of it, is ſo ſenſeleſs and abſurd a Notion, that 'tis inconceivable how any Man can entertain it. There could not then be any want of a Miracle to bring about the *Diſperſion of Mankind* in its infant, growing State ; or occaſion for any other Command, than what was given to Man at his Creation and implanted in his Nature ; *encreaſe and multiply* ; the certain Conſequence of which is to *diſperſe and repleniſh the Earth* : His own natural Appetites would neceſſarily force him to it, as ſoon as it became convenient, in ſpite of any Will or Reſolution to the contrary, could any ſuch without Abſurdity be ſuppoſed.

You come at laſt to expoſe the *Falſhood of the Hiſtorical Facts*, which *I have raſhly advanced*, as you ſay[1], *in ſeveral Parts of my Letter* : Where one would imagine that you would

[1] Reply, p. 41.

have contested with me every *single Fact* I had touched upon, since you proclaim it in your *Title Page*, and undertake to shew the *general Falshood* of them all: Yet all the *Facts* you pretend to dispute with me are but *two*; and of these *two*, the second, as I've observed above, is *no Question of Fact* at all, but a Squabble only about my Opinion or Manner of solving a *certain Fact* which we both allow to be delivered in History, viz. the *Confusion of Babel.* This you call *one of the Historical Facts, that I have falsly advanced*; which shews the little Arts you are forced to use to raise an Outcry against me, and enhance the Sum total of my Malice and Impiety.

The *only Fact* then you contest with me, as *rashly advanced in my Letter*, is concerning the *Learning, Politeness, and flourishing Condition of Ægypt in Moses's Time.* I had asserted it to be more probable that the *Jews* should borrow from the *Ægyptians*, than the *Ægyptians* from the *Jews*, from the general Character of the two Nations, of the *Ægyptians*, as always *learned and polite*; of the *Jews*, always *rude and illiterate.* And tho' I had assigned no Period of Time to their Fame for Learning, yet since my Reasoning supposes them possessed of it before *Moses*'s time, I will here join Issue, and allow, as you say[1], that *the Question between us is, whether Ægypt was so great a Kingdom, so polite a Nation in*

[1] Reply, p. 42.

Moses's

Moſes's time as I have repreſented it. This then is the Fact, that I undertake to make good; I will not ſay againſt you, who ſeem to know but little of the Matter, but againſt what you abſurdly call the *Demonſtrations and Diſcoveries of Sir Iſaac Newton*[1].

You had heard much talk of *Sir Iſaac's Demonſtrations* in Mathematicks and his great *Diſcoveries* in Natural Knowledge; and imagined perhaps that thoſe Words ſignified nothing more than *Conjecture* or *Opinion.* For had you reflected what a *Demonſtration* meant, you could not have applied it to a *Syſtem of Chronology*, however probable, or preferable to all others, which from the Nature of Things can never reach Certainty or admit of *Demonſtration.* But pray, Sir, after all what is it that *Sir Iſaac* has diſcovered? has he brought to light any old Authors, which for Ages paſt had lain buried in Oblivion; or any Monuments of Antiquity unknown before to the Curious? Or has he done in the learned, what he did in the natural World; invented a *new Teleſcope*, to pry into remote and dark Antiquity with more Accuracy than had been practicable before? If he has done nothing of this, then *all his Diſcoveries* can amount only to *Conjecture*; which, like that of all other Men, will always be fallible and uncertain, as

[1] Reply, p. 44, 50.

we ſhall find more eſpecially in the very Inſtance before us.

In ſaying this, I am far from any thought of weakening the Authority or leſſening the Character of *Sir Iſaac*; I have as great an Honour for him as you have, and look upon him as one of the greateſt Philoſophers the World has ever produced: But if as in Mathematicks and Philoſophy, ſo in every other Part of Learning, his Authority muſt needs be advanced above that of all others; I muſt take the liberty to diſſent from you, and to declare, that for a thorough Knowledge of Antiquity, and the whole compaſs of *Greek and Ægyptian* Learning, there have been, in my Opinion, and now are, many Men as far ſuperior to him, as he within his proper Character is ſuperior to every body elſe. And I cannot but obſerve, that it is much the ſame Caſe here with the *Authority of Sir Iſaac*, as it was above with that of *Moſes*; 'tis not I, but you who weaken it, by forcing and ſtretching it to a Point whither it can't be extended, to a length it never can reach.

But to come to the Queſtion, of the *Politeneſs and Learning of the Ægyptians in Moſes's time*: I had touched it but ſlightly in my *Letter*, imagining that it muſt have been taken for granted, or could not at leaſt be called in queſtion by any *Chriſtian* on the ſingle Teſtimony of St. *Stephen*; who affirms, *Moſes to have been learned in all the Wiſdom of the*

the Ægyptians[1]. But I was much ſurprized to find you treat St. *Stephen*'s Authority ſo ſlightly; by telling us, *that theſe Words of St. Stephen were not a Proof of any thing but that he ſpake according to the then received Tradition of the Jews*[2]; which is telling us in effect, that they proved juſt nothing at all, but that himſelf was miſled by the vulgar Errors and popular Prejudices of that Age; that had he lived to ſee *Sir Iſaac Newton's Demonſtrations and Diſcoveries*, he muſt have been of another Mind. Strange! to find ſo zealous an Advocate of Chriſtianity, in order to get rid of a ſlight Difficulty, deſtroying the very Foundation of all Revealed Religion. For is it poſſible, Sir, that a Perſon *inſpired by God, full of the Holy Ghoſt*, and ſpeaking under the *actual Influence and Direction of the Divine Spirit*, as St. *Stephen* here did, could be miſled by popular Error or Prejudice to utter any thing falſe and erroneous? Such a Conceſſion muſts needs ſhake, I ſay, the very Foundation of *Chriſtianity* itſelf. For what Impreſſion could its Dictates make, if tho' inſpired, they could yet be ſuppoſed to be falſe? Thus whilſt your zeal for ſenſeleſs Syſtems tranſports you to treat me rudely, for moderating only the extravagant Notions of ſome of our popular Divines, and demoliſhing ſuch

[1] Act. vii. 22. [2] Reply, p. 49.

ſlight

ſlight Outworks as make the Defence of Religion more difficult ; you betray the very Citadel, and yield up the Fortreſs itſelf. This is a length and freedom of thinking which, I aſſure you, I cannot reach ; however you are pleaſed to calumniate me as a *Favourer of Infidelity :* For tho' I'm far from thinking every Tittle in the *Holy Scriptures to be inſpired*; or that Perſons *inſpired* on certain Occaſions, muſt of courſe be *infallible* on all; yet I cannot but think it a Point fundamental and neceſſary to be believed by all Chriſtians, that whilſt a Man is under the *actual Influence and Direction of the Holy Ghoſt*, he muſt at the ſame time be *infallible and ſuperior to all Error* ; or elſe Chriſtianity cannot be defended. In the preſent Caſe therefore, from the ſingle Teſtimony of St. *Stephen, full of the Holy Ghoſt*, we are as much obliged to believe, *that Learning flouriſhed in Ægypt before Moſes's time*, as that Chriſtianity itſelf is true ; for both muſt ſtand or fall together.

And here I have the pleaſure to find my Opinion confirmed by Dr. *Waterland* himſelf, on whoſe Learning and Judgment you ſet ſo high a Value ; who affirms the *Authority of St. Stephen ſpeaking by the Spirit of God*, with regard to any Action or Paſſage of Hiſtory, to be ſufficient to ſilence all Cavils to the thing itſelf, tho' otherwiſe ſeemingly wrong and contrary to the reaſon of things ; as in the Caſe of *Moſes's killing the Ægyptian :* how much

much more decisive then must the same Authority be, when it asserts only a plain matter of Fact, in itself harmless and indifferent? Why to use the *Doctor*'s own Words; the *Question admits of a short Decision, and is only this? Whether St. Stephen full of the Holy Ghost, or a Gentleman full of himself and his own Imaginations be most likely to pass a true Judgment on the Case*[1]?

To the Testimony of St. *Stephen* we may add another from the *Old Testament*; where in celebrating the great Wisdom of *Solomon* 'tis said, that it *exceeded that of the Ægyptians*[2]. Now this, whether we are to take it for *inspired*, or as a meer *historical Testimony*, must however convince all who have any regard for Scripture, that *Ægypt was famed for Wisdom before the Age of Solomon*; but Scripture is nothing with you to *Sir Isaac's Demonstrations*; *who has discovered*, it seems, that the *Ægyptians had not so much as the use of Letters* among them till *Solomon's Reign*[3].

With this Account of *Scripture* the whole Stream of *Profane History* entirely agrees; that the *Ægyptians* of all People in the World had the most ancient Monuments, and most authentick Proofs of their *Learning and Antiquity*.

Herodotus owns, that the *Greeks* borrowed almost every thing from them; that they were

[1] Script. Vindic. Part 2. p. 5.
[2] 1 Kings iv. 30.
[3] Reply p. 43.

the Inventors of most Arts and Sciences; *the Division of the Year*; *the Immortality of the Soul*; *the Names and Worship of the Gods, Altars, Statuary, Sculpture*, &c[1]. That they reckoned a Succession of Kings from *Hercules to Amasis, for the Space of seventeen thousand Years*; *which they pretended to demonstrate by an exact Register and Computation of Time regularly preserved in their sacred Books*[2].

Diodorus Siculus gives much the same Account of their *Antiquity* and *Invention of Arts and Sciences*; and says, that *besides their fabulous History, wherein they supposed their Country to have been governed by the Gods, they pretended to a Succession of four hundred and seventy Kings and five Queens Natives of Ægypt, exclusive of the Time they were under the Æthiopians, Persians and Macedonians*; *of all which Reigns they had clear and distinct Accounts in their sacred Records, describing particularly every Prince's Person, Character and Length of Reign*; *from which Books he himself had made his Extracts*[3]. He says also, what indeed all other Writers confirm, that it was *antiently the most populous of all the known Countries of the World*; *and had in it above eighteen thousand Cities and considerable Towns*. *Pomponius Mela* and *Pliny* affirm it to have had *twenty*

[1] Herod. l. 2. c. 4, 49. 50, 123, &c.

[2] Ibid c. 43. Ταῦτα Αἰγύπτιοι ἀστρικέως φασὶ ἐπίστασθαι ἀεί τε λογιζόμενοι καὶ ἀεὶ ἀπογραφόμενοι τὰ ἔτεα. Ibid. c. 145.

[3] Biblioth. Hist. l. 1. p. 41, 42. Edit. Rhodom. It. p. 27. B.

thousand

thousand in the Reign of Amasis, and that it continued to their own Time *well stocked with Cities tho' less noble ones*[1].

This Notion of the *Greatness, Antiquity and Learning of the Ægyptians superior to all other Nations*, is fully confirmed and asserted by all the *primitive Writers* both *Jews* and *Christians*.

Philo the learned *Jew*, who himself lived *in Ægypt*, tells us, that *Moses learnt of his Ægyptian Masters, who were sought out for him from all Parts, Arithmetick, Geometry, Musick, and their Philosophy expressed by Symbols, or Hieroglyphicks under the Figures of Animals; and Mathematicks, which the Ægyptians were especially fond of*, &c[2].

Clemens of Alexandria, who lived likewise in *Ægypt*, exactly follows *Philo*'s Account, and ascribes to the *Ægyptians* the Invention of the principal Arts and Sciences[3].

Eusebius after both affirms the same thing; ascribes to the *Ægyptians the Invention of Arts and Sciences*, declares, that they had the *clearest and most undoubted Monuments of their Antiquity*, and that *the Greeks borrowed all in a manner from them*[4].

Josephus is just in the same Story with the rest, and allows them in *Solomon*'s Time to

[1] De Situ Orbis. l. 1. c. 9. Hist. Nat. l. 5. c. 9.
[2] De Vita Mosis lib. 1. p. 605, 606. [3] Strom. l. 1. p. 413, 361. Edit. Potter. [4] Præparat. Evangel. p. 29, &c. It. 279, 280. &c. Edit. R. Steph.

 have

have *excelled all other Nations in the Fame of their Wisdom*[1].

Now if there had been any Prejudice in these *Jewish* and *Christian* Writers, who were all zealous and orthodox in their Religion, it must needs have been like yours on the other side of the Question; in thinking it a *Diminution to the Authority of Moses*, to imagine that he had borrowed any thing from *Ægypt*; but the Notoriety of the Fact and the Testimony of all History obliged them to allow and assert the Truth, which can never do Hurt to any Cause that is good.

But 'tis time to examine what Sir *Isaac Newton has demonstrated and discovered* in Opposition to all this Authority. Why, he has observed, that *Ægypt was so thinly peopled before the Birth of Moses, that Pharaoh said of the Israelites, behold the Children of Israel are more and mightier than we: From whence it may at least, you say, be inferred, that the Jews were then no less powerful and flourishing a People than the Ægyptians*[2]. Where you seem to think yourself very modest in not insisting on much more, viz. that the *Israelites were even more potent and numerous than their Masters the Ægyptians.* Strange Notion indeed! Not that I wonder at you, whose Notions seem generally to be taken on trust, but at

[1] Con. Ap. 1. 2, 6. Et. Antiq. Jud. l. 8. c. 2. § 5.
[2] Reply, p. 42, 43.

Sir

Sir *Isaac* for entertaining it; being grounded meerly on Mistake or want of Attention to the *lofty and hyperbolical Stile of Scripture:* For by the same Reason he might as well have proved, that the *Jews* were absolutely the most powerful Nation in the World, since none of the *great Monarchies* ever reached the height of those Descriptions we find given of them in the *Sacred Writings*; where they are oft described to be as numerous *as the Sands of the Sea and the Stars of Heaven* [1], *for Multitude.* And 'tis from the same Sublimity of Expression, that the *seven petty Nations* of the promised Land are said to *be more and mightier* than these very *Israelites*; and their *Cities impregnable and even fenced up to Heaven* [2]. But to review the Text itself, whence you draw this Inference: *The People of Israel*, says *Pharaoh, are more and mightier than we:* And what's the Consequence? Why, a Resolution *to afflict them the more heavily for it*, and to make their Slavery the more *rigorous* [3]. A wonderful Proof of *superiour Power and Might*, to suffer themselves to be treated the worse for it by the *fewer and weaker!*

But to examine a little the Possibility of this Notion from the very Account we have of it in *Scripture.* Whilst *Abraham* the *Father of the Jews* was yet childless, *Ægypt* is

[1] Gen. xxii. 17. 2 Sam. xvii 11. Heb. xi. 12.
[2] Deut. vii. 1. Exod. ix. 1. [3] Exod. i. 9, &c.

repre-

represented as a formed and eſtabliſhed Monarchy: For we read of *Pharaoh its King*, with *his Princes* or great Courtiers around him[1]. About two hundred Years after, at *Jacob*'s Deſcent into *Ægypt*, when the whole Poſterity of *Abraham* reached only the Number of *ſeventy Perſons*, we have a more particular Deſcription of the Wealth and flouriſhing Condition of that Kingdom[2]. And yet in about two hundred Years more, you ſuppoſe the *ſmall Family of Jacob* to be grown ſuperior in Power and Numbers to a Kingdom founded ſo many Ages before; which all this while had held them in Bondage and Slavery, and employed them in conſtant Drudgery and hard Labour.

Again, conſider the Circumſtances of their Flight from *Ægypt*. *Pharaoh* repenting of the Leave he had given them, purſues them with *ſix hundred choſen Chariots*[3]; and, as *Joſephus* adds, *with fifty thouſand Horſe, and two hundred thouſand Foot*[4]. Which yet could only be a ſmall Part of the military Force of *Ægypt*; as it muſt have been gathered in haſte and marched on ſo ſhort a warning. With this Force, according to the ſame *Hiſtorian*, he hemmed them in in ſuch a manner between the Mountains and the Water, that they muſt all have been infallibly cut off,

[1] Gen. xii. 15. [2] Gen. xlvi. &c. [3] Exod. xiv. 7
[4] Antiq. Jud. l. 2. c. 15. § 3. &c.

had

had not a Paſſage been opened to them of a ſudden, either miraculouſly or accidentally thro' the Red Sea. So that taking the Account from *Scripture* and the *Jews themſelves*, there cannot be any ground for a Compariſon of the *Power and flouriſhing Condition* of the two Nations.

This, Sir, is what Sir *Iſaac's Diſcoveries* amount to with regard to the *Strength and Greatneſs of the Ægyptian Nation:* Let us next ſee what he has *demonſtrated* againſt the Learning and Wiſdom, which I ſuppoſe them to have had in *Moſes's time.* Why he ſays, that the *Invention of Letters was aſcribed by the Ægyptians to Thoth, Secretary to King Oſiris; who was the ſame Perſon as Bacchus, as Seſoſtris, as Seſac or Shiſac who plundered the Temple of Jeruſalem in the Time of Rehoboam*[1]: And conſequently that they were ſo far from having any Learning, that they had not even the *uſe of Letters* till about *Solomon*'s Reign. But how does he prove all this? Why, by meer Conjecture: *Oſiris, Bacchus, Seſoſtris,* ſays he, *lived about the ſame time; were all Kings of Ægypt; potent by Land and Sea; all great Conquerors; carried their Conqueſts as far as India; all left Pillars with Inſcriptions, &c. and therefore all three muſt be the ſame King, and this King can be no other than Seſac*[2]. And he might as well have ſaid, that they muſt all

[1] Reply, p. 43. Newt. Chron. p. 210.
[2] Newt. ibid. p. 193.

be

be the ſame with *Alexander the Great*, ſince much the ſame Actions are attributed alſo to him.

I ſhall not trouble myſelf with examining this Conjecture any further, than as it concerns the *Fact* I am engaged to ſupport, that the *Ægyptians had Arts and Learning amongſt them before the time of Seſac or Rehoboam*. And how is it poſſible to imagine that ſo *great a Kingdom as Ægypt*, which, as we learn from Scripture, had flouriſhed for about a thouſand Years from the time of *Abraham* to *Shiſac*, ſhould thro' all that Period want not only the *uſe of Letters*, but almoſt all the other Arts and Inventions uſeful to Life; whilſt the *petty State of the Jews* bordering ſo cloſely upon them, had all this while the familiar uſe of them all? *Oſiris* according to the Ancients, and his Wife *Iſis*, invented the *Culture of the Vine*; *Phyſick*; *Sowing and Ploughing*, &c[1]. Now, if Sir *Iſaac*'s Conjecture be true, they muſt have lived without *Medicine*, *Corn* or *Wine* till the time of *Shiſac* or *Solomon*, whilſt yet we know certainly from *Scripture* that they had *Phyſicians and Plenty of Corn*, near ſeven hundred Years before in *Joſeph*'s time[2].

In the *Book of Job*, which is ſuppoſed by many to be older than *Moſes* himſelf, the *uſe of Letters and Writing* is repreſented as a

[1] Diod. Sic. l. 1. p. 14. It. p. 22. It. Euſeb. Præp. Ev. p. 29, &c. [2] Gen. l. 2. It. xlii. 1.

thing

thing of long and ancient ſtanding [1]. And the *Iſraelites* themſelves at their coming out of *Ægypt*, were not only acquainted with *Letters*, but all the *common Arts* and *Sciences* uſeful to Life; which are not yet ſpoken of as new or lately invented, but referred to as things vulgar and of old familiar to them. *Moſes*, we know, *wrote down the Words of the Lord* [2]; and *Joſhua wrote the Covenant he made with the People in the Book of the Law* [3]: But they had written to little purpoſe, had not *writing* been known before, and in common uſe with the People; who were in Poſſeſſion likewiſe of all the *other Arts*, as *Building*, *Statuary*, *Sculpture*, *cutting and ſetting of precious Stones*, *working in all ſorts of Metals*, *Embroidery*, *Needlework* [4]. Now, where can we imagine them to have learnt theſe Arts? In fighting their way thro' an Enemy's Country; or in the Wilderneſs? That's impoſſible: Or was *Moſes* the Inventor of them? That's as impoſſible as the other [5]: For in the Hurry and unſettled State they were in, they had neither Ability nor Leiſure to invent or learn any thing: Nor is it credible that the Scripture, which ſo carefully relates every other great Action of *Moſes*, could have been ſilent on ſuch an occaſion, and omitted to give him

[1] Job xix. 23. viii. 8. [2] Exod. xxiv. 4. [3] Joſh. xxiv. 26. [4] Exod. xxxvi. &c. [5] Moſem multi frivolis rationibus ducti ſcribendi auctorem faciunt. Kirch. Ob. Pam. l. 1. 2.

the Glory of Inventions so useful and necessary to the Life of Man. So that 'tis as evident and certain, as both Reason and History can make it, that *Moses* and the *Children of Israel* came furnished and provided out of *Ægypt* not only with *Letters* and the use of *Writing*, but all the other *Arts and Sciences*.

Besides, it was constantly objected to the *Jews* by their Enemies; that they *were of all Barbarians the most rude and illiterate, and the only People in the World who had never contributed any share to the common Benefit of Mankind, by the Invention of any thing new or useful* to Life.[1]: This was their Character in the World: And *Josephus* is so far from confuting it, that he owns the Charge; and excuses it from the Nature and Policy of their Government, which obliged them to such an *immutable* and *inviolable observance of their Laws*, that they were restrained and crampt from attempting and striking out any thing new[2]. But if *Josephus* had dreamt of what Sir *Isaac*, you say, *has now discovered*, how readily could he have answered, that the Charge was so far from being true, that he could demonstrate the *Jews* to be the very *Authors and Inventors* not only of *Letters and Writing*, but of all o-

[1] Ἀφυεστάτους εἶναι τῶν βαρβάρων; καὶ λέγω τοῦτο μηδὲν εἰς τὸν βίον εὕρημα συμβεβληκότας μόνους. Jos. con. Ap. l. 2. c. 14.

[2] Ὅθεν δὴ καὶ τὸ προφερόμενον ἡμῖν ὑπότινων ἔγκλημα, τὸ δὴ μηδὲ καινῶν εὑρετὰς, &c. Jos. ibid. c. 20.

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ther *Arts and Sciences* in the World; and to have had the actual Use and Possession of them for at least five hundred Years before they were known in *Ægypt:* Which tho' contrary to *Scripture* and the Testimony of all *History*, is yet the necessary Consequence of what you call Sir *Isaac's Demonstrations.*

Thus, instead of exposing the *Falshood of my Historical Facts*, as you had undertaken in your *Title Page*, you have exposed nothing at last but your own Ignorance both of *Sacred and Profane Antiquity*; for to those who have any Acquaintance with either 'tis impossible to place the *Origin of Letters and Arts in Ægypt* so low as *Solomon's time.*

But you insult me still further with Sir *Isaac's Discoveries*, and charge me with two Mistakes more, made in open Defiance of them: First, for affirming the *Golden Calf made by Aaron to be nothing else but the Ægyptian God Apis.* Whereas Sir *Isaac*, you say, *has* proved, that *Apis was no other Person than Sesostris or Shisac who reigned in the Days of Solomon*[1]. 'Tis strange, that I must not be thought *Orthodox* here, where I have the Concurrence of all the best Writers both *Ancient and Modern* to support my Opinion[2].

[1] Reply, p. 46. [2] Hanc opinionem adstruit Philo, Targum Hierosolymitanum, Lactantius, Hieronymus, Kircherus, Bochartus, & Auctores ab eo citati, quibus accedit Grotius, &c. Spencer de Leg. Heb. l. 1. p. 21.

Philo tells us, *that they turned the Absence of Moses to an Occasion of Impiety, and forgetful of the true God, set themselves to copy the silly Fictions of Ægypt, and having made a Golden Calf after the Pattern of an Animal esteemed the most sacred in that Country, they offered impious Sacrifices, accompanied with abominable dancing and singing* [1]. Which, as all Men of Learning observe, are the very Instances of the Worship paid to the *God Apis.* [2] *Monsieur Rollin*, in his short History of the *Ancient Ægyptians*, says, *that the Golden Calf set up by the Israelites was the effect of their Abode in Ægypt and an Imitation of their God Apis, as well as those which were afterwards set up by Jeroboam.* 3 And a Protestant Author quoted above, who never allows any thing that an orthodox Man can possibly deny, yet owns, that it was *in Imitation of the Ægyytian Apis, that the Golden Calf was made in the Wilderness* [4].

But *should we admit*, you say, that the *Ægyptian Apis was worshipped as early, as I represent it, yet there are no grounds from Scripture Story*

[1] Philo de Vita Mos. p. 677. [2] Probatione id non indiget ; cum & ritus in conflando vitulo adhibiti, tripudia, convivia chori, &c. id satis superque demonstrent — Kircher. Oedip. Ægyp. T. 1. p. 300. It. Spenc. ib. 3 See Antient Hist. of the Ægyp. done into Engl. p. 42. [4] Itaque credibile est jam antiquitùs tempore Israelitarum fuisse Idolum, cujus imitamine vitulum in deserto fecerunt — Leidek. de Rep. Hebr. p. 150.

 clude,

to conclude, that the Golden Calf in the Wilderness had any Reference to that Worship: Or that the *God or Gods which the Jews intended to worship under that Image, were any Ægyptian Gods*[1]. Now this shews the little Acquaintance you have with Scripture, as well as the little Attention you pay to Reason and the Sense of Things: The *Israelites* had no sooner got clear of the *Ægyptians*, than they fell to the making and worshipping of *Idols:* The Question is, what *sort of Idols* it was, that they were so fond of worshipping: And does not Sense and Reason and even Necessity teach us, that they could be no other, than what they had been so long acquainted with, and worshipping for about two hundred Years before? For the learned *Spencer* has shewn, that during their Abode in *Ægypt*, they complied with *all the Customs and Idolatry of the Country*[2]. But *there's no ground*, you say, *from Scripture Story to make this Conclusion:* This is still stranger, that one who undertakes to defend *Scripture* with such Gravity, should betray so great an Ignorance of *Scripture Story:* For nothing is more clear and certain or more frequently inculcated in *Scripture Story*, than that the *Idolatry*, by which they so oft provoked God to punish them, and their Leaders and Prophets to reproach them, was

[1] Reply, p. 47. [2] De Leg. Hebr. l. Sect. 1. p. 20.

such

ſuch as *their Fathers had learnt and practiſed in Ægypt*. To give an Inſtance or two out of many.

Joſhua a little before his Death very pathetically exhorts them, *to put away the Gods, which their Fathers ſerved on the other ſide of the Flood and in Ægypt*[1]. And when they were in Poſſeſſion of the promiſed Land, the ſame Inclination to the *Idols of Ægypt* ſtill continued, as we find by the Reproofs of all the *Prophets*, on this very Account. *Then ſaid I unto them, caſt ye away every Man the Abominations of his Eyes, and defile not your ſelves with the Idols of Ægypt. But they rebelled againſt me—neither did they forſake the Idols of Ægypt*[2]. All which is confirmed again by the Teſtimony of St. *Stephen*, if that have any weight with you, who mentions this very Caſe of the *Golden Calf*, as an Example and Proof of *their turning back again in their Hearts into Ægypt*[3].

The *ſecond Miſtake* you urge me with on this Head, is for aſſerting *Kircher to have ſhewn, that Hieroglyphicks or the ſacred Characters of Ægypt were invented and uſed before Moſes's Time*. But Sir *Iſaac*, you ſay, *has ſhewn the contrary; that Thoth the reputed Inventor of thoſe Hieroglyphicks was Contemporary with Se-*

[1] Joſh. xxiv. 14. [2] Ezek. xix. 7, 8. [3] Act. vii. 39.

ſoſtris

ſoſtris or Shiſac who plundered the Temple of Jeruſalem in the Reign of Rehoboam : And that Moſes therefore could not borrow, as I intimate, the Hieroglyphick of the Serpent from the Ægyptians[1]. And here the Reader will obſerve another remarkable Inſtance of what I have more than once mentioned, viz. your raſh and partial way of forming your Notions from *Scraps* and *ſeparate Quotations*, without conſidering with any Care the very Authors you moſt admire. For tho' Sir *Iſaac* aſſerts *Thoth*, who lived according to his Account in the time of *Solomon*, to have been *the Inventor of common Letters and Writing*[2], yet he is ſo far from aſcribing to him the Invention of *Hieroglyphicks*, that he declares in expreſs terms, that *the Hieroglyphical way of writing ſeems to have ſpread into lower Ægypt before the Days of Moſes, and that ſome Reference is made to it in the ſecond Commandment, which prohibits the worſhipping of God under the Shape of Birds, Beaſts and Fiſhes*[3].

I ſhall conclude this Article with a Paſſage from Dr. *Spencer*, who has examined this Queſtion with more Diligence, and treated it with more Learning and Judgment than any Man. *The myſtical way of Writing in uſe with the Ægyptians bears much Reſemblance*, ſays he, *to that of the Hebrews.* This

[1] Reply, p. 48. [2] Newt. Chron. p. 210. Ibid. p. 225.

he

he confirms by the Authority of *Franciſcus Valeſius*, and *Clemens of Alexandria*, and then ſubjoins the following Remark. *Whence comes it then, that this Ænigmatical Stile of the Ægyptians and the Hebrews is found ſo exactly alike; but that God had ſo contrived his Law and its ſacred Rites, that they might ſuit, as far as was poſſible, the Taſte and Uſage of that Age? For no Man who has any good Judgment can think, that the Ægyptians were in this Caſe the Diſciples and Followers of the Jews; ſince 'tis allowed on all hands, that the Hieroglyphical Literature was ancienter than Moſes, and that the Ægyptians long before his Time uſed to cover their ſacred Doctrines under the Veil of Symbols and Myſtical Figures*[1].

And thus, Sir, after all Sir *Iſaac's Demonſtrations*, and your Deſcant upon them, I ſhall once more venture to affirm *that Ægypt was in Moſes's Time a great and flouriſhing Kingdom, a learned and polite Nation.*

The laſt *Hiſtorical Fact*, you take notice of, *advanced*, as you ſay[2], *againſt the Truth*, is *the Confuſion of Languages at Babel.* But how is this a Fact of my advancing? I have indeed made an Obſervation or two on the common way of explaining it; and 'tis this you conteſt with me, contrary to your own Declaration;

[1] De Legib. Heb. L. 1. c. 15. p. 211, 212. [2] Rep. p. 51.

not

not the *Fact* itſelf, but *my Reaſoning* about it. Which ſhews, as I've already hinted, the low Shifts you are put to, to blow up the Envy and Clamour you would raiſe againſt me.

And here I muſt again put the Reader in mind, that I am far from forming, as you call it, any *peremptory Judgment againſt the Moſaic Story of Babel* [1]. All that I attempted in *my Letter* was to ſhew the Raſhneſs and Imprudence of Dr. *Waterland*'s way of defending it, in denying all *manner of probability* or *colour of Reaſon* to any Objections that could be made to it: And as I have proved againſt the *Doctor* and yourſelf, that the *diſperſion of Mankind* and *peopling of the World* muſt of courſe be the certain and neceſſary effect of an *encreaſing Multitude*, flowing from the Reaſon and Nature of Things, excluſive of any *Miracle or the extraordinary Interpoſition of God*; ſo what I pretend to ſhew now, is, that the *Variety of Languages* may with *ſome colour of Reaſon and Probability* be accounted for too in the ſame way, as the natural and neceſſary Conſequence of ſuch Diſperſion.

Let's conſider Mankind in its infant State, as yet but one Family, tho' daily growing and encreaſing ſo faſt, as to be forced in Proportion to that Encreaſe to break off and ſeparate from each other into ſeveral Parties or Colo-

[1] Rep. p. 52.

nies

nies in queſt of freſh Quarters and Proviſions. That this muſt needs be the caſe of ſuch a Multitude has already been ſhewn from the Nature of Things; and 'twas from the ſame Neceſſity of Nature, that the *Nations of the Earth were divided or peopled*, as the *Scripture* ſays, *by the Sons of Noah* [1].

Now as this Diſperſion muſt have happened, whilſt Mankind was yet rude and barbarous, unacquainted with Arts and Sciences; and even the common Inventions and Conveniencies of Life; ſo the Production of ſuch Arts, the Improvement of Knowledge and Science, and the new Demands of Life daily ariſing muſt neceſſarily produce a *new Language* in each ſingle Nation or ſeparate People, unknown in a great meaſure to the reſt of their Fellow Creatures. For as Names are generally but arbitrary Signs, not drawn from the Nature or Qualities of the Things themſelves, but formed by Fancy or Accident and confirmed by Uſe; ſo every thing new muſt neceſſarily create not only a new Name, but a different one too from what the ſame thing, when invented would obtain in a different People.

And thus a Difference of Languages being once eſtabliſhed, the Mixture and Compoſition of ſeveral of them together, which follows of courſe from Conqueſts and the familiar

[1] Gen. x. 32.

Inter-

Intercourſe of different Nations, is another inexhauſtible Source and Cauſe of multiplying that ſame Variety; juſt as the various changing and mixing the different Sounds of Bells produce an infinite Variation and Diſtinction of their Muſick.

This ſhort Hint of the *Origin of Languages* may ſuffice to ſhew the Folly of your aſſerting it to be *impoſſible, that there could have been ſuch a Variety of them in the World, unleſs from ſome ſuch Confuſion as happened at Babel*[1]. The reaſon you alledge for that *Impoſſibility* is trifling, without any Foundation in Fact or Truth: For you ſay, that if no ſuch Miracle had happened, the *things which are of moſt common uſe in Life, and which all Men are every Day ſpeaking of, could never have come in different Languages to be expreſſed by Words, which have not the leaſt Affinity with one another.* But do not we ſee the ſame thing to have actually happened in all the modern Languages of the World, that are as it were but of Yeſterday's riſe and ſtanding; that by mixing and blending the Sounds of concurring Nations *new Names* have been formed for the *moſt neceſſary Things of Life*, as well as the moſt obvious Parts of the Body?

One Part of *Italy* anciently called the *Mouth*, *Stoma*; the other Part, *Os*: now all call it *Bocca*; in French *Bouche*.

[1] Reply, p. 52.

One Part called the *Eye*, *Opthalmus*; the other *Oculus*: all now call it *Occhio*; in French *Oeil*.

One Part called the *Ear*, *Ouar*; the other *Auris*: all now *Orecchio*; in French *Oreille*, &c.

Now the grand Queſtion you ask is, what *could tempt Men to create new Words, where they had old ones before, eſpecially in things of common uſe, whoſe Names were every Day in every Man's Mouth?* The Anſwer is very eaſy: It was the natural and neceſſary Mutability of all human Things, that forced them by degrees to change their *old Words* for the more prevailing Sounds of ſuch People, as had then got the Superiority or principal Rule in the Country; an Effect that will always follow the ſame Cauſe: And ſhould *Italy* or *France* be again conquered by *Barbarians*, *Tartars*, *Turks*, &c. a *new Language* would neceſſarily ariſe from ſuch an Event; and *new Names* for the moſt common Things of Life, neither *Barbarian* nor *Italian*, but a Jumble and Mixture of both.

And thus, Sir, I have gone thro' all your Cavils to *my Letter*, without finding the leaſt Proof or Overt-act of the *Infidelity* you charge me with, beſides my daring to differ from *Dr. Waterland and yourſelf* about the Mode of explaining ſome Circumſtances of the *Moſaic*

Hiſtory.

History. One great Part of the *Letter* you make ſo free with is employed in Defence of the *Chriſtian Religion* againſt *Infidelity*; on ſuch a Plan as I then thought and ſtill think the moſt effectual to confute the Author I had to do with, and expoſe the Vanity of thoſe Principles by which he hopes to overturn Chriſtianity: And as *our Saviour himſelf*, when charged abſurdly with the *caſting out of Devils by the Power of the Devil*, ſhews the Folly of that Calumny by one plain Obſervation, that *a Houſe divided againſt it ſelf cannot ſtand*; ſo 'tis ſilly and abſurd to imagine, that I ſhould take ſuch pains to deſtroy the Credit of a Writer, who deſerves ſo well of *Infidels*, had I been of the Number myſelf, or inclined to liſt into that Service. But I am ſo far from favouring *Infidelity*, that I ſhould be heartily glad to ſee an Anſwer to *Chriſtianity as Old*, &c. on a better Plan and Foundation than what I have propoſed: But as I am very certain, that this has not yet been done by Dr. *Waterland*; ſo I am as ſure, by the Specimen you have given us, that it can never be done by yourſelf.

As I am a Stranger to your Name and Character, and have no other Light to form a Judgment of you by, but the Merit of the Piece I have been examining; ſo your injurious and inſolent manner of treating me in that Piece, as an *Infidel and Enemy to Chriſti-*

Christianity ; a *wilful Depraver of Facts and Quotations*, will fully justify any Freedom or Severity of Expression I may have used in this necessary Defence of myself ; in which however if I have done you any Injustice, I shall always be ready, upon better Information and Acquaintance with you, to make you all the Amends and Satisfaction, that can be required from one, who in this as well as every other Controversy, he may be engaged in, professes to have no other Motive, View or Intention whatsoever, than to search freely and impartially for the Truth.

F I N I S.

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