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5.
REMARKS

Upon a late

DISCOURSE

OF

FREE-THINKING:

IN A

LETTER to N. N.

BY

PHILELEUTHERUS LIPSIENSIS.

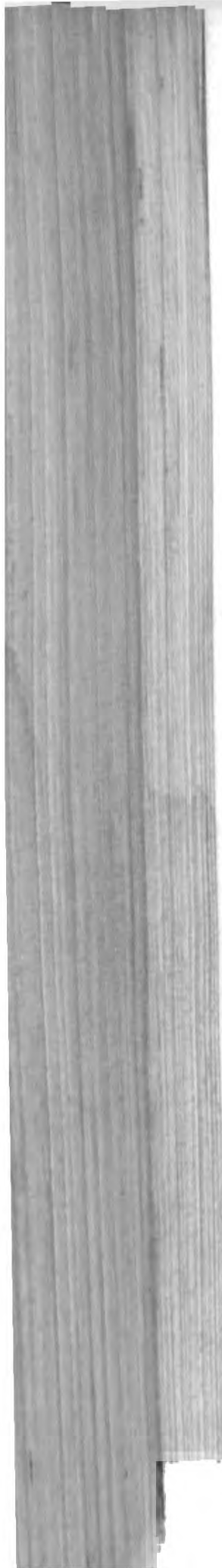
*Est genus hominum, qui esse primos se omnium rerum volunt,
Nec sunt. ———*

*————— An audes
Personam formare novam? Servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, Et sibi constet.*

The SEVENTH EDITION with large Additions.

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29

THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

To my very Learned and Honour'd

FRIEND N. N. D. D.

At LONDON,
GREAT-BRITAIN.

SIR,

*Y*OUR many and great Civilities to me since our first acquaintance in the Low-Countries, and the kind office you then did me in conveying my Annotations on MENANDER to the Press, but above all your Taciturnity and Secresy, that have kept the true Author of that Book undiscover'd hitherto, if not unguess'd; have encourag'd me to send you these present REMARKS, to be communicated to the Public, if you think they deserve it: in which I doubt not but you'll exhibit a new proof of your wonted Friendship and Fidelity.

B

What

LETTER.

What occasion'd you this trouble, was the fresh arrival of a Country-man of ours from Your Happy Island; who brought along with him a small Book, just publish'd before he left London; which (as he says) made very much Discourse there. He knowing me to be a great admirer of the Books of your Nation, and to have competently learn'd both to write and speak your Language during my long stay at Oxford, made me a then agreeable Present of that new Discourse of Free-thinking.

I, who (as you well know) have been train'd up and exercis'd in Free Thought from my Youth, and whose borrow'd Name PHILELEUTHERUS sufficiently denotes me a Lover of Freedom, was pleas'd not a little at so promising a Title and (to confess to you my own Vanity) could not help some aspiring Thought from pressing and intruding on me, That this Rising and Growing Society might one Day perhaps admit into their Roll a humble Foreigner Brother, a Free thinker of Leipfic.

Bu

But when once the Curtain was drawn, and by a perusal of the Book the private Cabbala and mysterious Scheme within became visible and open, that Expectation and the Desire itself immediately vanish'd. For, under the specious shew of Free-thinking, a Set and System of Opinions are all along inculcated and dogmatically taught; Opinions the most slavish, the most abject and base, that Human Nature is capable of. And upon those terms, neither you, I fancy, nor I, shall ever make our Court for admittance into their Club.

This irksome disappointment that my fine Present should dwindle so far, as to be below the value of waste Paper, rais'd a hasty Resolution in me to write some Remarks on it. And I find I shall have much the same Employment, as I had before on Menander. For I am here too to deal in Fragments; the main of the Book being a Rhapsody of Passages out of Old and New Writers, rak'd and scrap'd together, by the joint labour of many hands, to abuse all Religion. O infelices laborum! Had I been at their Consultation, I could have furnish'd them

with many more : and I will now inform them, that if they will read all Galen, and the Greek Commentators on Aristotle, they may find two or three Passages much fitter for their purpose, than any they have brought.

As for the Gatherings out of your English Authors, most of which are modern, and many still alive ; I know you will not expect from me that I should examine those Citations. The Books are not to be found in Leipsic, having not yet pass'd the Seas to Us : the Writers are but private men, and even Your Church is not answerable for what they say or print : not to add that I, by Birth and Education a Lutheran, am not concern'd in any particular Doctrines of your Church, which affect not Christianity in common. However, if our Free-thinker has shewn no more Ability nor Sincerity, where he alleges the English Writers, than where Latin or Greek ; he will soon have a just Answer by some of your own Divines.

I should now enter upon my Remarks, but that I am first to excuse myself, why
I give

I give you not the Stile of Honour, customary in England, I mean, the Title of REVEREND. The Author indeed has made me sick of it, by his flat insipid Drollery in tacking it to every Name he mentions, six times together perhaps within as few lines. Can this now pass for Wit among you? Is this reckon'd Good Breeding or Urbanity? What's become of the old English Taste and Finesse? Who may not be witty at this cheap rate, if he dares but be impudently dull? Give a loose to such vulgar sordid Raillery, and the very best of Quality, even Royalty itself, even ipsa sua sacra Caesarca Majestas may be abus'd by its own Title with an affected and sneering rehearsal of it. Yet this may be borne with however, and is therefore pardonable, because its contemptible: but when Buffoonery grows up to Impiety, and dully profanes the most adorable Names, Holy Apostles, Blessed Saviour, Ever blessed Trinity, by a fulsom Repetition or a blasphemous Irony; I must own to you I want English Words to express my just Sentiment. May the Man grow wittier and wiser, by finding this Stuff will not take nor please: and since, by a little smatter-

ing in Learning and great conceitedness of himself, he has lost his Religion; may he find it again by harder study, and a humbler mind. For the misery of it is, He that goes a Fool into Atheism, (as all are that now go) must come out of it like a Fool too (if ever he comes) unless he acquires Ten times the Knowledge that's necessary for a common Christian.

R E.

REMARKS.

I.

QUOD dedit principium adveniens? was said of *Thraso* in the Comedy. And our Author, to give us as good a taste of his Sufficiency, sets out with this Sentence in his very Dedication. * *As none, says he, but artificial designing Men, or crackbrain'd Enthusiasts, presume to be Guides to others in matters of Speculation; so none, who think they ought to be guided in those matters, make choice of any but such for their Guides.* Now, besides the falseness of the Propositions, here is a small figure in Rhetoric, call'd Nonsense, in the very turn of this Sentence. For if *None* but designing and crackbrain'd Men presume to be Guides to others; those *others*, that make use of Guides, must needs have Them and no other. Where then is the *Choice*? Or what power is there of *chusing*, when there's

* Pag. 4.

no room for comparifon, or preference. As *none*, fays he, but Priests presume to be Guides, fo none make *choice* of any other Guides but Priests. As no member of the body presumes to fee but the *Eye*, fo no Man makes *choice* of any other Member to fee with, but the *Eye*. Is not here now an admirable Period with exact propriety of word and thought?

But to pardon the false connexion of his *As* and his *So*; pray, what are we to understand here by *Matters of Speculation*? Why, all Speculation without exception, every branch of *Mathematics*, and all *Science* whatever: for there is not one word preceding, that restrains the sense to *Speculations in Theology*. So that by this Man's reasoning we are to fay thus: No Man must take *Euclid* or *Archimedes*, Our *Leibnitz*, or Your *Newton*, or any one else dead or living for his Guide in Speculation. They were *designing Men* or else *crackbrain'd Enthusiasts*, when they presum'd to write *Mathematics*, and become Guides to others. As for our Author, though he owns * *all Arts and Sciences* must

* Pag. 9, 10, 11,

known, to know any *One* thoroughly ; that not *one* of them can be omitted, if you pretend to be a Judge in *one single* Book, *the Bible*, 'tis so very *miscellaneous* ; yet, if you will believe him, he renounces all Guides, and is his own Master, self-taught. He's a great Astronomer without *Tycho* or *Kepler* ; and an Architect without *Vitruvius*. He walk'd alone in his Infancy, and was never led in hanging-sleeves. And yet this mighty Pretender has not broach'd one Doctrine in all his Book, which he has not borrow'd from Others, and which has not been dictated by blind Guides many Ages ago.

But we'l indulge the Man a little more, and suppose he did not mean *Speculations* at large, but only in matters of Religion. And then the Sentence will run thus ; *That none else presume to be Guides to others in speculative Points of Religion, but either artificial designing Men, or crackbrain'd Enthusiasts.* Now the Man is in his true colours ; and, though he blunder'd in the Expression, this was the Thought he endeavour'd at. And by this we must infer, That *Erasmus, Grotius, Bochart,* and
other

other great Men, that have wrote Commentaries on the Bible, and *presume to be Guides to others*, were either *crude brain'd Fools*, or *designing Knaves*. Nay this Author's beloved, *Monsieur Clerc*, must come in too for the choice of one of these Epithets. Yet, what is strange, these very Men, with more of your own Nation, *Chillingworths*, the *Spencers*, the *Crowtherworths*, the *Tillotsons*, are honour'd in other parts of his Book, and recommended as *Free-thinkers*. What Inconsistence is this? What Contradiction? No matter for that: That's a necessary Ingredient in his Scheme and his Writing. *Huic aliter non fit, Avite, liber*. When he here prescribes to others, we must take for his own Method: He defies Guides and Interpreters; he disclaims assistance; he'll decide upon all points *freely* and *supinely* by himself; without Furniture, without proper Materials. And, to speak *freely*, one would guess by his crude Performance, that he's as good as his word.

II.

In the close of his Dedication he says thus : * *It is therefore without the least hopes of doing any good, but purely to comply with your request, that I send you this Apology for Free-thinking.* If I am not mistaken, as I may be about a foreign Language, That expression of *Doing any good* is capable of two senses : either of which I shall easily concede to the Author. If he means, *he had not the least hopes of doing any good*, that is, of doing any good Service, real Benefit, true Advantage to any one by his Book ; I am afraid, that sense was true in his *Intention*. Or, if he despair'd of *doing any good*, that is, of having any Effect and Success in making Converts by his Book ; I question not, but That too will be true in the *Event*.

But though here in the *Epistle* he quite despairs, *without the least hopes of doing good* ; yet in the *Epitogue* he's a little more sanguine. For there he speaks of an *Endeavour to do good*, which very Endeavour has no place without some

* Pag. 4.

degree

degree of Hope. He advises there his Patron, to conceal the Name of his *Esquireship*, if he commits the Book to the Prefs. * *For*, says he, *I think it Virtue enough to Endeavour to do good, only within the bounds of doing your self no harm.* Now this is a true *Atheistical Moral*: do good no further, than you are sure not to lose by it; keep your dear Person and Interest out of *harm's way*. But the Christian Institution supply'd him once with nobler Sentiments: in the practice of which the Holy *Apostles* and *Martyrs* voluntarily laid down their Lives; a very odd sort of *Priestcraft*. Nay the *Heathen Philosophy* would have taught him more elevated Thoughts; if he had not chosen for his *Guide* (however he rails at all *Guides*) the worst Sect of all.

III.

† *By Free-thinking*, says he, *I mean The use of the Understanding, in endeavouring to find out the meaning of any Proposition whatsoever, in considering the nature of the Evidence for or*

* *Pag.* 178.† *Pag.* 5.

against

against it, and in judging of it according to the seeming force or weakness of the Evidence. Now we'll allow him, what he desires, that his Definition is *extensive* enough; for it comprehends the whole herd of Human Race, even Fools, Madmen, and Children; for they use what Understanding they have; and judge as things seem; he has *extended* it so artfully and with Logical Justness, that in a Definition of FREE Thinking there is not a Syllable about *Freedom*. 'Tis really no more, than *Think and Judge as you find*; which every Inhabitant of *Bedlam* practises every day, as much as any of our illustrious Sect.

But, perhaps, I am mistaken; and the Notion of *Freedom* superadded to *Thinking* may be implied in those two Pronouns, *Any whatsoever*. And then indeed the soberer part of Mankind, who judge for themselves no further than their Education has fitted them, are wholly excluded; and the *Crackbrain'd* and *Bedlamites* are taken in. *Oliver's* Porter, as I have been told, would determine daily *de omni scibili*; and, if he had now been alive, might have had the first Chair in this Club. For a modern

Free-

Free-thinker is an Universalist in Speculation; *any* Proposition *whatsoever* he's ready to decide; *every day* * *de quotiente*, as our Author here *professes*; *S* Assurance supplies all want of Ability he'l interpret (as you'l see presently) *Prophets and Solomon* without *Hebrew* *Plutarch and Zosimus* without *Greek* and *Cicero and Lucan* without *Latin*.

The Characteristic of this Sect do not lie at all in the Definition of *Thinking*, but in stating the true meaning of their adjective FREE. Which in fact will be found to carry much the same Notion, as *Bold, Rash, Arrogant, Presumptuous*, together with a strong Propension to the *Paradox* and the *Reverse*. For *Free* with them has no relation at all to outward Impediment or Inhibition (which they neither do nor can complain of, not with you in *England* I am sure) but means an inward Promptness and Forwardness to decide about Matters beyond the reach of the *Studies*, in *opposition* to the rest of Mankind. There is nothing plain through his whole Book, than that he himself makes *Singularity, Whim, a*

* *Pag. 5.*

Contradiction to be the specific Difference, and an essential part in the Composition of a *Free-thinker*. If *Origen, Erasmus, Grotius, &c.* chance to have any *Nostrum* against the Current of common Doctrine, they are presently of his Party, and he dubb's them *Free-Thinkers*; in all the rest of their Writings, where they fall in with the common Opinions, they are discharg'd by him with Ignominy; even proscib'd as *Unthinkers, Half-thinkers, and Enemies to Free-thinking*. Why this unequal Usage, unless he thinks *Freedom of Thought* to be then only exercis'd, when it dissents and opposes? Has not the World for so many Ages thought and judg'd *freely* on *Euclid*, and yet has assented to all his Propositions? Is it not possible, to have us'd the like *freedom*, and yet close in with the Apostle's Creed, Our Confession, or Your Articles? Surely I think as *freely*, when I conclude my Soul is Immaterial; as the Author does, when he affirms His to be made of the same Materials, with that of a Swine.

Another Idea couch'd in their adjective **FREE**, is Jealousy, Mistrust, and Surmise. 'Tis a firm persuasion among them, That there

there are but two sorts in Mankind, Deceivers and Deceived, Cheats and Fools. Hence it is, that dreaming and waking they have one perpetual Theme, *Priestcraft*. This is just like the opinion of Nero, * *who believ'd for certain, that every Man was guilty of the same Impurities that He was; only some were craftier than others to dissemble and conceal it.* And the Surmise in both Cases must proceed from the same Cause; either a very corrupt Heart, or a crazy and crackbrain'd Head; or, as it often happens, Both.

IV.

† *This Definition cannot, he conceives, be excepted against by the Enemies of Free-Thinking, as not including the Crime with which they charge Free-Thinkers in order to render them odious to Unthinking People.* His Definition,

* *Suet. Ner. c. 29. Ex nonnullis comperi, persuasissimum habuisse eum, neminem hominum pudicum, aut ulla corporis parte purum esse; verum plerosque dissimulare vitium, et calliditate obtegere.*

† *Pag. 5.*

as we have seen, includes nothing at all in it, besides *Thinking* and *Judging*; there's nothing in it to describe *Free*, which he left us to supply: and, as we find in the whole tenour of his book, That word does really *include* not one *Crime* only, but many. Take the general definition, exclusive of the *Crime*, and compare it with the title of his book, and the latter will be found either flat-nonsense in itself, or a contradiction to the whole. *This discourse*, says the title, *was occasioned by the Rise and Growth of a Sect call'd Free-Thinkers.* Why then it had the stalest occasion that ever poor discourse had: For the *Rise* of of that *Sect* (if the general definition constitutes it) is as early as the creation of *Adam*; or (in his Scheme, who hints his willingness to believe * *Men before Adam*) even much earlier than that. Nay, if we may guess at his Creed from his Poet *Manilius* †, the *Sect* must have *risen* without any *rise*, and have its *growth* from all *Eternity*. For, when ever the Species of Man existed, 'tis most certain there must have been *Free thinkers*, as far as this de-

* Pag. 160.

† Pag. 151.

inition goes. They began at once with the *Free-Breathers*, the *Free-Hearers*, and the *Free-Smellers*; and are every whit as numerous and populous as those are.

Again, pray consider the words a SECT of *Free-thinkers*: that is, a Rope of Sand; a Sum of Cyphers; a Commonwealth of Savages, where no body governs, nor no body obeys,

Νομάδες, ἀγέει δ' ἔδεν ἔδεις ἔδενός.

SECT, *Secta* or *Disciplina*, is a Company of Persons agreeing in the same System of Opinions and Doctrines; the words have their derivation *a sectando* & *discendo*, from following and learning; as the *Platonic Sect* follow'd the Doctrine of *Plato*; the *Peripatetic* of *Aristotle*. Now a modern *Free-thinker*, that professes he will neither follow nor learn; that renounces all *Guides* and *Teachers*, as either *Crack-brain'd* or *Cheats*; how can this unfociable Animal be ever of a *Sect*? 'tis a contradiction in terms, and a thorow piece of nonsense.

But surely the Author had some meaning when he gave that Title to his Book. No doubt of it: and the Book itself explains it. For under all this pretence to *Free-thinking*,

thinking, He and his Friends have a Set of Principles and *Dogmata*, to which He that will not *Assent* and *Consent* (I cannot say *Oath* and *Subscription* are requir'd) shall be excluded the Sect. That the Soul is Material and Mortal, Christianity an Imposture, the Scripture a Forgery, the Worship of God Superstition, Hell a Fable, and Heaven a Dream, our Life without Providence, and our Death without Hope like that of Asses and Dogs, are parts of the glorious Gospel of these truly **Idiot Evangelists*. If all your *Free-thinking* does not centre in these Opinions, you shall be none of their Family. Claim your right as long as you will upon the terms of the *Definition*; plead that you have *thought freely*, impartially, and carefully upon all those Propositions; and that in all of them *the force of Evidence* has drawn you to the contrary side; protest against this foul play, that while they clamour about *Free-thinking*, they themselves impose Creeds and Terms of Communion; that the Author, while he rails at all *Guides*, obtrudes himself as a *Guide* to others; all this shall avail you nothing:

you shall never be incorporated into
rising and growing Sect, till you
that That's the only *Free-thinking*
think just as They do.

V.

He now proceeds by Five Arguments
to prove every Man's Right to *F*
thinking, according to that *Definit*
a very needless and useless labour: for
Religion, nor Sect, not the very Pap
deny it. 'Tis as necessary to the Rati
Mind, as Respiration is to the Vital Bo
Without this all Religions that were,
or may be, are equally commenda
Christianity itself depended on it at
first propagation: the Reformation
grounded upon it, and is maintain'd
supported upon the same bottom.
shall leave therefore his Five Arguments
to prove what none deny; only m
some *Remarks* upon his Ignorance a
Unfairness in several Incidents, that he
slid into by the By.

* He runs a parallel between *F*
thinking and *Free-painting*; which lat
he laments is not more cultivated in *Gre*

Britain; and can never be brought to *Perfection* there, unless *suitable Encouragements* be given to *Free-painters*, so as *numbers of Men and many Hands* may be employ'd and encourag'd. Now here is a pretty broad and palpable insinuation, that by changing the terms of the Parallel is to hint to the Public, that a *suitable Encouragement should be given to Free-thinkers*; so that more Hands and Heads may be invited to so meritorious a Work. I could scarce have believ'd he would have shewn himself so soon. What, already offering at Stipends and Salaries and Benefices for his Sect? He more than once in his Book grudges the great charge the Public is at, in providing for so many *Priests*: and what gainer would the Public be, if it turn'd out the *Christian Priests*, and with an equal or greater charge maintain'd *Atheist Preachers*? For really that would be the case, and the Man has reason to put in for Salaries betimes. For whenever Atheism should be general and establish'd, then even *Christianity* would become *Free-thinking*. And, if provision was not settled for Parochial Lectures every week, the People would be apt to relapse again from the new Na-

tional Church. So that all that the Public would save by the bargain is, to change the Persons not the Expence; and, instead of the present Possessors of the Pulpit, to have an equal number of *Reverend*, and *Right Reverend*, and *Most Reverend* Preachers of Atheism.

VI.

He affirms, That * *Time, Labour and Numbers of Hands* are necessary to bring *Thinking* in any Science whatever to tolerable perfection: The first notions will be rude and imperfect; Time and Maturity are requir'd towards any degree of Justness. Now, since the Sect of *Free-thinkers* by his own account is but now *rising and growing*, and the *Æra* of it is plac'd no earlier than Your late *Revolution*; You may take his own argument and word for it, That the *Thoughts* in this Discourse of his for want of due Maturation are all crude and undigested. And really without his indication, *αὐτὸ δείξει*, the Thing itself will speak so before I've done with his Book. But however in the next Generation, when more Progress is

Pag. 7, 8.

made

made in *Thinking*, and more Numbers are come in; he seems to promise they will write better.

* *All Sciences and Arts*, says he, *have a mutual Relation, Harmony, Dependency and Connexion; and the just Knowledge of any One cannot be acquir'd without the Knowledge of all the Rest.* Weigh now this Man's Abilities in his own Scale. He declares he judges *every day De quolibet ente*; and yet to every single *Quodlibet* he acknowledges as necessary the whole Circle of Sciences. A very *Hudibras* in perfection; no Nut is too hard for his Teeth:

Nil intra est olea, nihil extra est in nuce duri.

And yet this *Great Promiser* with all the assistance of his Club perpetually betrays a profound ignorance in all Science, in all Antiquity, and in the very Languages it is convey'd in:

VII.

Homer's ILIAD he admires, † *as the Epitome of all Arts and Sciences.* And by This now one would guess he had read it in the Original. Be it so: and

* Pag. 8, 9.

† Pag. 9.

when he hears there's an *Odyssæis* of *Homer*, he will read and admire that too. Well, where are the footsteps of this vast Knowledge in *Homer*? Why, for instance, says he, *he could never have describ'd, in the manner he has done, a Chariot or a Chariot-wheel without the particular knowledge of a Coach-maker; such knowledge being absolutely necessary to that description.* Here's your justness of Thought. What, nothing less than a *Coach-Maker's* knowledge? Would not a *Coach-Man's* have serv'd the turn? At this rate our Friend *Homer* (as poor and blind as some have thought him) was the ablest *Jack of all Trades* that ever was in Nature. *Hippias the Elean*, who preach'd and blazon'd his Arts at the Olympic Games, That all his Habit from head to foot, and every Utensil for his house, was made with his own hands, was an *Idiot Evangelist* to him. For, by the same rule, when *Homer* describes a Ship under sail, he had the *particular knowledge* both of a *Ship-Carpenter* and a *Pilot*: when he describes the *well-booted Greeks* and several sorts of *Shields* and *Sandals*, he had the *particular knowledge* of *Tychius*, στυτοτόμων ὁχ' ἄριστος, the very Prince
of

of all Shoemakers. And yet I am apt to fancy, if our Author had no better an Artist than the old Poet for his shoes, he would be as sorry a *Free-walker*, as he is now a *Free-thinker*.

To prove *Homer's* universal knowledge *a priori*, our Author says, * *He design'd his Poem for Eternity, to please and instruct Mankind.* Admirable again: *Eternity* and *Mankind*: nothing less than all Ages and all Nations were in the Poet's foresight. Though our Author vouches that he *thinks every day De quolibet ente*, give me leave to except *Homer*; for he never seems to have thought of Him or his History. Take my word for it, poor *Homer* in those circumstances and early times had never such aspiring thoughts. He wrote a sequel of Songs and Rhapsodies, to be sung by himself for small earnings and good cheer, at Festivals and other days of Merriment; the *Ilias* he made for the Men, and the *Odyssëis* for the other Sex. These loose Songs were not collected together in the form of an Epic Poem till *Pisistratus's* time, above 500 years after. Nor is there one word in *Homer* that presages or promises Im-

* Pag. 9.

mortality

mortality to his work; as we find th
is in the later Poets, *Virgil, Horace, O*
Lucan and *Statius*. He no more thoug
at that time that his *Poems* would
immortal, than our *Free-thinkers* no
believe their *Souls* will; and the proof
each will be only *a parte post*; in
Event, but not in the Expectation.

VIII.

* *The BIBLE*, says he, *is the most m*
cellaneous Book in the World, and trea
of the greatest variety of things; Creatio
Deluge, Chronology, Civil Laws, Ecc
siastical Institutions, Nature, Miracl
Buildings, Husbandry, Sailing, Physic
Pharmacy, Mathematics, Metaphys
and Morals. Agreed; and what is
Inference from this? Why, *Free-thinki*
is therefore necessary: *for to understa*
the matter of this Book, and to be Mast
of the whole, a man must be able to thi
justly in every Science and Art. Ve
true! and all he has here said of his Scienc
is requisite, were Your *English Bible* su
pos'd to be the very Original. Add ther
fore to all the Requisites here enumerat

* Pag. 10, 11.

a sufficient Skill in the *Hebrew* and *Greek Languages*. Now pass your verdict on the Man from his own evidence and confession. *To understand the Bible*, says he, *requires all Sciences*; and two *Languages* besides, say I. But it's plain from his Book that he has already condemn'd the whole Bible for a Forgery and Imposture. Did he do it without *understanding the matter* of it? That's too scandalous for him to own. We must take it then, that he professes himself accomplish'd in all *Sciences and Arts*, according to his own rule.

Quid tulit hic tanto dignum promissor biatu?

Where has He or any of his Sect shewn any tolerable Skill in *Science*? What dark passages of *Scripture* have they clear'd, or of any Book whatever? Nay, to remit to him his *Sciences and Arts*, what have they done in the *Languages*, the shell and surface of *Scripture*? A great *Master of the whole Bible* indeed, that can scarce step three lines in the easiest *Classick Author* produc'd by Himself, without a notorious blunder.

IX.

IX.

* *Among the Absurdities that follow from not Thinking Freely*, he mentions that of the Pagans, who, he says, suppos'd God to be like an Ox or a Cat or a Plant. Our Author means the *Aegyptians*; and its plain here from the next clause, that he puts God under the present *Idea* and known Attributes of the Name, as Christians now conceive it. A rare Judge in Antiquity, and fit to decide about Scripture. The Matter is no more than this. The *Aegyptians*, who chiefly liv'd upon Husbandry, declar'd by Law that all those Animals which were useful to Agriculture, or destroyers of Vermin should be *holy, sacred and inviolable*; that it was death to kill any of them either designedly or by chance. That they consider'd as instruments of Divine Providence towards the support of human Life: † and without that view they consecrated none. So that it was only a Civil and Political worship in the Legis-

* Pag. 13.

† Herodotus in *Euterpe*.

‡ Cicero de *Nat. Deor.* I. *Aegypti Nullam bel'uam, nisi ob aliquam utilitatem quam ex ea caperent, consecraverunt*

tors; and had very little of Sacred even among the Vulgar. This is plain from what * *Diodorus* says, *That they paid the same honours to them when dead, as when alive.* But our Author's conception here is really so *absurd* and so monstrous, that the silliest Pagan in all *Egypt* would have been ashamed of him. For, according to his notion and the present meaning of the word GOD, they declar'd it death by Law to *kill an immortal and omnipotent Cat*: and decreed divine Honours to it after its *Immortality* and Deity was *dead*. When *Thinking* is by longer time come to some perfection in the Sect, they will learn perhaps, that the Objects of worship in *Paganism* and *Polytheism* had not all the Attributes, nay generally not *one* of them, that we now by advances in Science and Thought justly ascribe to God: and they may have the pleasure of insulting several of the Clergy, that have wrong stated the notion of Heathen Idolatry. In the mean time I'll recommend to him one Thought, when he's dispos'd to *think De quolibet ente*; What divine Attributes the *Aegyptians*

* *Diod. lib. I. Σέβονται ἕνια τῶν ζώων Αἰγύπτου, ἃ ζῶντα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τελευτήσαντα.*

thought

thought of, when they worship'd, good Authors assure us, *Crepitum v tris.*

X.

But the most antient Fathers of Church were as bad as his *Aegyptian* * for They, says he, *no less absurdly* pos'd God to be material. And you to suppose he's a Droll here when says, *no less absurdly*; for, if I who mistake not the Cabbala of his Sect, himself supposes God either to be material, or not to be at all. With a few the Fathers the matter stands thus: They believ'd the Attributes of God, his Infinite Power, Wisdom, Justice and Goodness, in the same extent as we do: his Essence, no more than we can nor they could not discover. The Scriptures they saw, call'd him *Spiritus*, *Spir* and the human Soul *Anima*, *Breat* Both which in their primitive sense mean *Aerial Matter*; and all the words that in *Hebrew*, *Greek* and *Latin* of Old, or a Tongue now or hereafter can supply, denote the Substance of *God* or *Soul*, may either be thus metaphorical, or else mere

* Pag. 13.

negative, as *Incorporeal*, or *Immaterial*. This, when he is in a mood for *Thinking*, he will find to be necessary *à priori*, for want of *Ideas*. What wonder then, if in those early times (for he knows, * 'tis by *gradual progress in Thinking that Men arrive at full knowledge*) some Fathers believ'd that the Divine Substance was *Matter*, or *Body*: Especially while the very notion of *Body* was undefined and unfixt, and was as extensive as *Thing*? Was this such a shame in a few Fathers; while the *Stoics*, not a *rising* and *growing*, but a *flourishing* Sect at that time, maintain'd *Qualities* and *Passions*, *Virtues* and *Vices*, *Arts* and *Sciences*, nay *Syllogisms* and *Soloecisms* to be *Bodies*? But the real shame is, that in these brighter days of knowledge, when *Matter* and *Motion* have been thorowly consider'd; and all the Powers of *Mechanism* discuss'd and stated; our Author and his Sect should still contend both in discourse and in print, *That their Souls are material*. This they do with such Zeal, as if they should be great gainers by the Victory. And, by my consent, let's close with them upon the debate. Let them but put a previous

* Pag. 8.

Question,

Question, Whether there are in Mankind different Species of Souls? Let this one pass in the Affirmative; and Their Souls shall be allow'd as Corporeal and Brutal as their Opinions, Writings and Lives seem to represent them.

XI.

His next Effort is a retail of some Popish Doctrines and Rites, * *Infalibility, Image-Worship, and Relicks*, which our Church and Yours have long ago rejecte. What's this then to the purpose, or what plea to the present *Free-thinkers* in *England*? Nay, he owns we are now rid of these Absurdities, and by whose labour and cost. They obtain'd, says he, almost universally, † *till the Thinking of a few some whereof sacrificed their Lives by doing, gave a new Turn to the Christian World.* This is manifestly meant of the first Reformers, and particularly those of *England*, who for freedom of Thinking laid down their Lives;

Atque animas pulchra pro libertate dederunt.

'Twas by the price and purchase of Their blood, that this Author and his Sect ha

* Pag. 13. † Pag. 14.

at this day, not only the liberty, but the power, means, and method of Thinking; for together with Religion, all Arts and Sciences then rais'd up their heads; and both were brought about by the same persons. And yet this very honest and grateful Sect involves those very *Priests*, to whom they are indebted for all things, in the common crime with those that murder'd them; nay with *Talapoins, Bonzes, Pawawers*, and who not;

For Priests of all Religions are the same.

But some of the *Fathers* again displease him; for they were too severe and rigorous for men of his Genius; they disallow'd * *Self-defense, Second marriages, and Usury.* An Error sure on the right hand; which shews they had not the † *Priestcraft* of Pope *Pius* the fifth. And yet here, with his usual accuracy, he lays those things wide and in common, which were press'd upon the Clergy only, but in the *Laiety* conniv'd at. It is a crime too in the *Fathers* that

* *Pag.* 14.

† *Pag.* 117.

D

* *Anti-*

* *Antipodes* were not sooner demonstrated; nor the *Earth's motion about the Sun*. Very well: but pray who were the Persons that gave new light into these matters? All hearty professors and practisers of Religion, and among them several *Priests*. All these things were discover'd and perfected before this new Club had its *Rise*: nor is there the least branch of science, that any of the members either invented or improved.

XII.

† But now we have him for to page together with Image and Allegory, *Free-seeing* is substituted for *Free-thinking*, and a *Confession of Eye-sight Faith* for a *Christian Creed*; and then in tedious parallel the several juggles *Hocus Pocus* make the Emblem *Priestcraft*. Argument in all this you are to expect none, there's no occasion for that: for Illustration, Similitude, Comparison, especially when turn'd into Ridicule and distorted into Farce, do the business much better; and, as I ha

* Pag. 14.

† Pag. 15 to 25.

been told, work wonders for the *growing Sect*, and make Converts to admiration.

Suppose, says he, a set of men should fancy it was absolutely necessary to the peace of Society, or to some other great purpose, to hinder and prevent *Free-seeing*; and to impose a Creed and Confession and Standard of *Eye-sight Faith*. These Men, says he, must either be Madmen or designing Knaves; and what methods would they take? They would draw articles in flat contradiction to plain *Sight*; require subscription, and forbid opposition to them; explain, paraphrase, and comment upon them; settle pensions and salaries for those that preach and propagate them; traduce, punish, and persecute to the utmost all that disagree to them.

Now under this image you are to understand *Christianity*, and all *Religion* whatever: for our Author is playing *Hocus Pocus* in the very similitude he takes from that Juggler, and would slip upon you, as He phrases it, a *Counter* for a *Groat*. The true meaning of it is this: SUPPOSE that *Religion* was first contriv'd, either by the *Priesthood*

for lucre, or by the Magistrate for an easy government. Why truly, if we suppose it to be a sham, we do suppose it a sham. A wonderful argument and a mighty advance. Does he detain us in so many nauseating pages, and along beg the question? A most formidable Man this for thought and demonstration.

XIII.

Well but he'll shew instances of religious juggles, in the * *Oracular Temples or Churches of the Pagans*. Pray mind the emphatic words *or Churches*, and admire the Author's penetration and discretion. For, without that prudent explication, *Temples* perhaps in Your language might have been misunderstood and mistaken for *Inns of Court*. The *Temples*, he says, were contriv'd with many caverns and holes to produce fearful noises; and furnish'd with machines for the Priests to act their part in. And pray, who taught him all this is it not chiefly, and almost solely to

* Pag. 19.

learnt from the *Christian Fathers*? Does not he own, * that the *Christians* as well as *Epicureans* were chas'd away by those Priests, before they would pronounce any Oracles? And yet thorow this whole Book, by a worse trick than *Hocus Pocus*, the *Christians* are charg'd with the very frauds, that They either only or chiefly have discover'd.

But now for a specimen of his Learning again, which he sprinkles by the way. † *It was universally believ'd*, says he, *among ordinary people, That the Gods themselves came down from Heaven, and eat of the repasts which the Priests prepar'd for them at the peoples expence*: And again in the next page, *That the Gods came down to eat upon Earth*. Now did not I guess right that, for all his fine Panegyric upon the ‡ *Ilias* of *Homer*, he was little or not at all acquainted with that Poem? For, if he were, he would have learnt from thence, that in the Heathen notion the *Gods* could not eat upon *Earth*, nor devour human repasts :

* Pag. 20. He had it out of Lucian's *Alexander*. * Εξω Ἐπιπέσει, ἔξω Χειρῶν.

† Pag. 19.

‡ Pag. 9.

* Οὐ γὰρ σῖτον ἔδεσ', ἔ πίνεσ' αἶθοπα οἶνον,
 Τάνεκ' ἀναίμονές εἰσι, καὶ ἀθάνατοι καλέονται.

Whence therefore had our learned Author this bold assertion of *universal Belief*? Even from *Bel and the Dragon* and what *his Mother* once taught him there, he ascribes to Paganism in common. The real matter is no more than this: when a Heathen Priest slew a victim, he had no more of it for his share than Law and Custom allow'd scarce worth the labour of butchering the entrals and most usefess parts were burnt on the Altar; and the best of the victim was carried home to the Sacrificer's house, to be feasted on by his family and friends: and, if the Priest was invited too as a guest, it was a work of supererogation. Nor did the most credulous believe, that Gods could down and devour'd *Flesh*; nor was a such *Repast* set apart for Them. If a victuals was so set, either in Temples or the open Streets; it was well known that the Sweepers of the fanes got the first, and the Poor of the town the latter. All they believ'd in re

tion to the Gods, besides the piety and the prayers, was only, that the steam of the burnt Sacrifice ascended up to Heaven and delighted, or, if you will, fed the Gods. This *Homer* would have told him too, That *Libation* and *Steam* was the only share the Gods had in any offering :

* Λιβῆς τε κνισσῆς τε, τὸ γὰρ λάχρον γέρας ἡμεῖς.

Whence *Aristophanes* in his Play call'd *The Birds*, makes a City to be built in the Air, on purpose to stop all intercourse between Heaven and Earth, That no *Smoke from Sacrifices should ascend to the Gods*: and presently *Prometheus* is introduc'd bringing the news, That the Gods were almost starv'd, having not had one particle of *Steam*, since *Nephelococcygia* was built. 'Tis true indeed, there was another Notion, † that the Gods often came down from Heaven in human shape, to enquire into the actions of Men: and so like strangers and pilgrims were unawares entertain'd, and (seemingly) eat and drank with their

* *Iliad*, ῥ v. 49.

† *Odyss.* ε v. 485.

Hoſts. But this is nothing to the *Prieſts*, nor to the aſſertion of the Author: who no doubt will anon be found a moſt ſubtle Interpreter of *Solo- mon* and the *Prophets*; after he has been ſo miſerably impos'd on by that ſilly and ſpurious Book, *Bel and the Dragon*.

XIV.

After a few threadbare narratives about the *Armenian, Greek, and Popiſh Prieſts*; the *miraculous Flame at Jeruſalem*, and the melting *Blood at Naples*; he has his ſling at Us *Lutherans*. * *The Lutheran Prieſts*, ſays he, *contrary to the testimony of mens ſenſes, make their Followers believe, That the Body and Blood of Chriſt are ſuper-added to the Bread and Wine*: which he parallels with an old ſtory as lewd as it's vulgar. Now though I am more concern'd in This *Remark* than many Others, for the particular honour of Our Church, I deſign not to launch out in a vindication of our Doctrine,

* Pag. 25.

which

which this Scribler understands no more than he did that of the *Aegyptians*. You know something of the University of *Leipsic*; we are reputed the greatest *Latitudinarians* and *Free-thinkers* of our Sect; not near so stiff and rigid as those of *Wittenberg* or *Jene*: and yet I'll tell this Author, if he had publish'd his wretched Libel with us, without any instigation from the Priests, the Magistrate would soon have taken care of him, either in a prison or a dark room. What his reception will be in *England*, I pretend not to guess. You have a glorious liberty there, the Parent of many noble books, which under a less freedom of thought would never have been wrote. And it's that novelty of notions that makes the product of the *English* Press so enquir'd after here. But I fear the outrageous licence of this Author and others of his stamp will in time have an unexpected effect; and oblige your government to abridge All of that good freedom which These have so much abus'd. And then we foreigners of curiosity, when we shall see nothing come from *Britain* but stanch and staple Postils, must curse the
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the impious memory of this Writer and his whole Tribe.

XV.

Tantamne rem tam negligenter? The question he proposes to consider is not less than this, * *Whether the Christian Religion is founded on divine Revelation*. This he resolves to examine and determine *by himself*. And we may easily foresee what the sentence will be under so ignorant and corrupt a Judge. Nay his book sufficiently shews he has given his verdict already; and resolv'd that Darknes is brighter and more desirable than Light. Let us bestow a few reflections on his conduct; for, for all his noise about speculation *in general*, the question is the whole affair and business of the whole compass and sphere of modern *Free-thinking*.

What in common life would denote a man Rash, Fool-hardy, Hair-brain'd Opiniatre, Craz'd, is recommended in this scheme as the true method in speculation. Are you dangerously sick

* Pag. 26.

you will call an able Phyfician. Is your Estate threaten'd and attack'd? you'll confult the beft Lawyer. But have you an affair upon your hands wherein your very Soul and Being and all Eternity lye at ftake? (*—Neque enim ludicrapetuntur Præmia*) Why there you are to feek no help, but confide in your own abilities. That is, if you have a very deep and broad river to pafs, fcorn to ask for cork or bladders; flounce in and hazard all, though you have never learnt to fwim.

This rational Author (*p. 107.*) puts the fame objection to himfelf: and he notably answers it thus: *A Man, fays he, of no Profession may have as much Law, Phyfick, and Divinity, as any Serjeant or Doctör of them all:* and then with a Quaker's ftory out of his Friend Mr. *Le Clerc*, he declares That to be a *happy Country, a very Paradife,* where none of thofe three *Professions* is admitted. And who doubts but in this Reply there's as much fenfe as good manners?

But for all this Author's great skill in *Phyfic* and *Law*, he'll hardly make himfelf fick on purpofe: or bring on a trial
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against his own Estate, to shew his gr abilities. Why then will he needle and voluntarily run a risque for his Soul and Salvation? and fool-hardily put his head under a weight that may crush him to death? The strange difference in his conduct, when examin'd to the bottom will open the whole Mystery of *Free-thinking* and *Atheism*.

'Tis plain, a Man that is born in a Christian country, if he is a just and good Man, has no Interest to wish That Religion false. The moral precepts fall in with his own opinion and choice; the restraints are laid upon him but without out of paternal affection he would forbid his own Son. No foreign Religion much less the Atheistic Scheme, threaten him with any danger should he be he in an error. He's as safe as those that differ from him, were he really in the wrong. But then if it be true, what glorious promises and rewards! not superior only to other schemes, but beyond all human wishes. The speculative Doctrines in it, which affect the man's chance, are very few and easy. If his Education has enabled him for't, he will examine them and the whole grounds

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Faith; and find them true to his satisfaction and comfort. If he's engag'd in active and busy life, he will acquiesce in the judgments of those, who have better means and leisure to know them.

Thus it is, will be, and must be, while Men lead such virtuous Lives as entitle them to the *Promises* of Religion. And were there not equal *Threats* in it on the other hand; were it all Heaven without any Hell, there would not be one Atheist, unless *crack-brain'd*, in Christendom. I positively affirm, that no Man in his senses, educated in our holy Religion, ever did or could fall from it to Atheism; till by considering his own actions and designs, he despair'd of the promises of Christianity, and look'd upon it with fear and terror.

In that case indeed, and in that alone, out of uneasiness of mind they wish all Religion was false; and that's the Original of modern *Free-thinking*. Then they ransack all impious books for objections against it: they are byass'd in their favour; a single Ounce in that scale buoys up a hundred in the other. *Pagans, Mahometans, Pawawers, and Talapoins* are

are all good vouchers against Christianity. All that's said by *Christians* (who else must speak for them) is suspected for craft and design. And the ignorance of these *Free-thinkers* do them more service than knowledge. Who can deal with an *Ignoramus*, that warpt by his inclination, fixt there by his conceitedness, jealous of all contrary instruction, and incapable of seeing the force of it?

That This is the very case of our Author and those of his Club, is pretty notorious. Inquire closely into their lives and there you will find the true reason why they clamor against Religion. For when they have settled themselves in Atheism, they are then elevated with *Joy* and *Mirth*; as if they had obtained a great conquest. Now this is wholly unnatural; unless Religion is view'd by them as the greatest of terrors. What can we rejoice that we have lost Immortality and must dye like the beasts? Utterly impossible! all the springs of human passions resist and refute it. Misery at the rate may excite laughter, and Prosperity tears: Indignation may raise love, and Complacency revenge. But if one
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Heaven is desponded of, and Hell opens its horrible mouth; then indeed *Mountains are desir'd to cover us*; and the thoughts of destruction or annihilation may really produce *Joy*.

This, I say again, is the true Origin of *Free-thinking*, and not the force of any objections against the truth of Christianity: and, as a proof, I appeal to This very Book. For no doubt the Writer has couch'd in it the strongest objections he was master of. And yet Those are so old and stale, that if They could have any operation, Christianity would have been extinct above a thousand years ago. Well! but they had influence upon Him, and would have so upon others, if fear and force were remov'd, and men left at free liberty. So far from that; so far is our Author from seeing deeper into those objections than others before him; that, as I'll presently prove, he understands not the mere grammatical sense, much less the application and import of any old passage he cites.

XVI.

* It's the great benefit, says he, of *Free-thinking*, that the suppos'd power of the Devil in *Possessions* and *Witchcraft* has visibly declin'd in *England* since a liberty to think freely has been given and taken there. A quaint conceit indeed, and very far fetch'd. So that You in *Great Britain* owe it to this *rising Sect*, that you have not so many prosecutions of *Witches* as formerly. This is *Thraso* again exactly :

*Labore alieno magno partam gloriam
Verbis in sese transmovet, qui habet salem.*

I do not think any *English* Priest will or need affirm in general, That there are now no real instances of Sorcery or Witchcraft; especially while you have a public Law, which They neither enacted nor procur'd, declaring those practices to be Felony. But I must needs say, that while I sojourn'd among you I observ'd fewer of the Clergy give in to particular

* Pag. 29.

stories

stories of that kind, than of the Commonalty or Gentry. In the dark times before the Reformation (not because they were popish, but because unlearn'd) any extraordinary disease attended with odd symptoms, strange ravings or convulsions, absurd eating or egestion, was out of ignorance of *Natural* powers ascrib'd to *Diabolical*. This superstition was universal, from the Cottages to the very Courts: nor was it ingrafted by priestcraft, but is implanted in human nature: no nation is exempted from it; not our author's *Paradise of New Jersey*, where no *Priests* have yet footing: if the next ages become unlearn'd, That superstition will, I will not say return, but spring up anew. What then has less'n'd in *England* your stories of force-ries? Not the *growing Sect*, but the growth of philosophy and medicine. No thanks to Atheists, but to the Royal Society and College of Physicians; to the *Boyles* and *Newtons*, the *Sydenhams* and *Ratcliffs*. When the people saw the diseases they had imputed to witchcraft quite cured by a course of physic, they too were cured of their former error: they learn'd truth by the *event*,

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not by a false position *a priori*, That there was neither Witch, Devil, nor God. And then as to the frauds and imposture in this way, they have most of them been detected by the *Clergy*; whom our Writer here wickedly libels as complices and parties in them. The two strongest books I have read on this subject were both written by *Priests*: the one by Dr. *Becker* in *Holland*; and the other by a Doctor of your own, whose name I have forgot, that was afterwards Archbishop of *York*.

XVII.

We are now come to his II. Section where he brings several arguments to prove the duty and necessity of *Free-thinking upon religious questions*. Now take *Free-thinking* in that open sense that Himself takes it in when he ascribes to *Chillingworth*, *Taylor* and *Tillotson* and you may grant all his arguments, and yet quite disappoint him. But if you take it in that interior meaning that the members of his club do, as a modish and decent word for *Atheism*, then all his arguments are mere trumpery; and he

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consequences from them are as short as his occasional learning in them is shallow.

One of his capital arguments is from the *evil of* * SUPERSTITION; which *terrible evil* and *great vice* can never be avoided but by turning *Free-thinker*; that is (in plainer *English*) abandoning all religion. Strange! that *Superstition* and *Religion*, which have been distinguished and divided this two thousand years, should yet stick so fast together that our Author cannot separate them: so that to ease himself of the one, he must abdicate both. His dismal *description* of it is in the words of *Cicero*; which chiefly relate to little bigotries in civil life, not to fabulous conceptions about the Supreme Being. And his inference from thence is exactly as if I should now say to you, *Sir*, you must renounce your baptism and faith or else you can never be rid of those *terrible superstitions* about the *Death-watch*, *Thirteen at one Table*, *Spilling of salt*, and *Childermass-day*.

Page 33.

XVIII.

But you'll know the Man better, as also his great reading and penetration, when you see how he manages and translates that passage of *Cicero*: I'll give you it here both in the original and our Author's version.

* *Instat enim (Superstitio) & urget, & quo te cumque verteris, persequitur: five tu vatem, five tu omen audieris; five immolaris, five avem aspexeris; si Chaldaeum, si Haruspicem videris; si fulserit, si tonuerit; si tactum aliquid erit de caelo; si ostenti simile natum factumve quippiam: quorum necesse est plerumque aliquid eveniat; ut numquam liceat quieta mente consistere. Perfugium videtur omnium laborum & sollicitudinum esse somnus: at ex eo ipso plurimae curae metusque nascuntur. Cic. de Div. II. 72.*

If you give way to superstition, it will ever haunt and plague you. If you go to a Prophet, or regard Omens; if you sacrifice, or observe the flight of birds; if you consult an Astrologer or Haruspex;

if it thunders or lightens, or any place is consum'd with lightening, or such like prodigy happens (as it is necessary some such often should) all the tranquillity of the mind is destroy'd. And sleep itself, which seems to be an asylum and refuge from all trouble and uneasiness, does by the aid of superstition increase your troubles and fears.

Now if it shall appear that our Author has misconstrued almost every part and *comma* of this passage; that he has made the first parts contradict the last, and so has put his own nonsense upon the great original; that he has weaken'd his own design, and made the place speak with less strength against superstition than it really does; what apprehensions are we to have of so formidable a Writer?

The whole tour of the passage is this: A man given to superstition can have no security, day or night, waking or sleeping: for occasions of it will *force* themselves upon him, *against his will*; do what he can to prevent them: and so all the particulars here specify'd are *involuntary* and *unsought*.

Sive tu vatem, sive tu omen audieris if you go to a Prophet, says our Translator, or REGARD Omens. Pray, where the latin to answer go and regard? where is common sense, thus plainly beg the question? For if one goes up superstitious errands, no doubt he's troubled with superstition. The true sense is this: *If you hear a Lunatic or Frank in the streets foretelling some mischief, if a word is spoken accidentally in your hearing, which may be interpreted ominous.* The *Vates* or *Divini* were Mad fellows bawling in the streets and roads, and their predictions might be contemned, but must necessarily be heard, if you came that way.

Sive immolaris, sive avem aspexeris A man was obliged often to sacrifice, even by his office: and birds must not be seen, if one slept but out of Rome. These occurrences therefore were unavoidable; and so Cicero meant the *Si Chaldaicum, si Haruspicum videris* If you SEE them; and That could not be prevented, all public places being haunted with them. But what does our Translator make of these? *If you sacrifice, or he, or OBSERVE the flight of birds; if*

CONSULT *an Astrologer or Haruspex*. Pure nonsense again ; and point blank against *Cicero's* meaning : one makes that done by *design*, which the other makes by *accident*. If by *accident*, then it's true that superstition *instat* & *urget*, *haunts and plagues* one ; and there's no escaping it : but, if by *design*, 'tis labouring in a *Fairy circle* ; 'tis begging and supposing the thing in debate.

To pass in silence his false version of *De caelo tactum, consum'd with lightning*, instead of *blasted* ; the next instance of his dulness surpasses all belief. *Si ostenti simile natum factumve quippiam* ; that is, *If any monster is born, or something like a prodigy happens* ; as raining of blood or wheat or the like. You see *Cicero* says *ostenti simile*, LIKE a *prodigy* ; for his part in that discourse was to deny there were *true* prodigies. A monster with two heads was no prodigy, but was occasioned by natural causes : the blood or wheat was either a mistake, or was carried up by a whirlwind. But behold now how our Translator has managed it : *if any SUCH-LIKE prodigy happens*. This version, I am sure, is a greater prodigy than any of them all.

What, *Ostenti simile*, a *such-like prodigy* 'Tis manifest by his constructions join'd them in the same case, as Adject and Substantive. Stupidity incredible I'll leave every man to his own astonishment, and say no more of the matter. I'll only ask him, not where his *Grammar*, but where his *Brains* were; who by owning and confessing *such-like prodigies*, he frustrated both *Cicero's* and his own argument?

To go on once more; *quorum necesse est plerumque aliquid eveniat*; that *Of which things* (all that were enumerated before) *some or other MUST frequently happen*. Observe that *MUST, necesse est*, must happen of *necessity*. And now you see, what I said before, that our Translator has made the first parts of the passage contradict the last. If he had had the least grain of sagacity; the last *comma* might have guided him to the true meaning of the former; that all instances must all be *accidental*, and *voluntary* and with design. Take several instances reckon'd up, and it's hardly possible to pass one day in common life but some objects of superstition will *necessarily* present themselves: b

is it *necessary* to go to Prophets, to regard Omens, to *observe* Birds, to *consult* Astrologers? Surely these four verbs have the signification of *choice*, not of *necessity*. And now, Gentlemen of the *English* Clergy, what think you of your *Free-thinker*? Did I not promise for him that he would manage his old passages with great ability and dexterity?

Dixin' ego in hoc esse vobis Atticam elegantiam?

XIX.

He's so pleas'd with this subject of *superstition* that he holds us in it still with two most common citations: for what can there be that is not so in *Horace* and *Virgil*? *Horace*, it seems, despises *Dreams*, *Witches*, *Speñtres*, and *Prodigies*; and *Virgil* goes something further. And what then? Both these were bred young in the *Epicurean* school, and so speak here the language of their sect. They prove nothing, they only affirm. And so the argument is no more than this; miracles, religion, the pains of Hell are false, because *Epicurus's* doctrine was

was against them. A notable proof indeed were the passages never so well handled; but, as ill luck and worse ignorance would have it, he has maim'd and murder'd them both. Take that of *Horace* with the Author's version:

*Somnia, terrores Magicos, miracula, sagas,
Nocturnos Lemures, portentaque Theffala rides?*

Are you so much above Superstition, as to laugh at all dreams, panic fears, miracles, witches, ghosts, and prodigies?

Magicos terrores, panic fears in the translation; so very unhappily, that both the words are wrong. For *terrores* are not fears here, the internal passion of the mind; but external terrors, the tricks and artifices of *Wizards* to fright, scare, and terrify. And then by substituting *Panic* for *Magic*, he has just serv'd *Horace* as he did *Cicero*; and made him talk compleat nonsense. A general fright falling upon an army or city as if the enemy was at the camp or the gates, when the alarm was found to be false and groundless, the *Greeks* call'd a *Panic*; as if the God *Pan* was the author of it. Now it's plain that these
frights

frights (when there's probability in the alarm, and the enemy lies within due distance) can never be known to be *panic* and vain till the business is over. In the mean time wise and foolish are both under the *panic*: Φεύγοντι και παῖδες θεῶν, says *Pindar*; in such cases *the very heroes and sons of the Gods run away*. What sense therefore can he make of this *english* he has bestow'd on *Horace*? Are you so much above *superstition* as to laugh at *panic fears*? What, laugh in the beginning or height of them? Here's a sudden alarm comes at midnight that all *Rome* is on Fire: is not *Horace* to stir out of his bed, but to fall a laughing and lye still? A sagacious interpreter! not to reflect that *panic fear* is no object of *superstition*; and consequently could not come in with the rest of that list in *Horace*. Unless his *Worship* will say that the precept here is, *to laugh at panic fears after they are known to be so*. A merry precept indeed! which Those that were most scared, will be the readiest to follow; when once their fears are vanish'd, and the alarm is over.

XX.

And now for the passage of *Virgil*
his accurate translation:

*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas
Atque metus omnes, & inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis*

* *Happy is the man who has discovered the causes of things, and is thereby free of all kind of fears, even of death and all the noise and din of Hell.*

Happy, says the Poet, in the first is the *Philosopher*; in the second a *Countryman*: Now under the notice of a *Philosopher* he describes an *Egyptian*; having been bred under his master *Sciron*, a teacher in that Sect: and in three lines he has admirably couch'd up the principal opinions they were known or valued themselves upon, *That there is no Divine Providence, no destiny, no divination, and no immortality of the Soul.*

* Pag. 37.

R E M A R K S. 61

Rerum cognoscere causas, discover the causes of things. Of what *things*, and with what *design*? Of all the meteors in the heavens, thunder, lightning, &c. and of things on earth that are seemingly portentous and miraculous; in order to rid men's minds of all religion and its fears. For in the *Epicurean* scheme, *The ignorance of causes* was the sole cause of religious fears; as *Lucretius* avers, with whose comfortable lines our Author may here entertain himself:

*Cetera, quae fieri in terris caeloque tuentur
Mortales, pavidis cum pendent mentibus saepe,
Efficiunt animos humiles formidine Divum,
Depressosque premunt ad terram; propterea quod
IGNORANTIA CAUSARUM conferre Deorum
Cogit ad imperium res, & concedere regnum:
Quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre
Possunt, ac fieri divino numine rentur.*

'Tis plain therefore what *Virgil* means by *causes*: and then *Atque metus omnes subjecit pedibus, who has lain all fears under the feet*, is as if he had said, Has trampled and triumph'd over all Religion: for That the Poet understands here by *fears*.

fears. METUS, *religio*, says *Marcellus*; for which he cites verses of the *Aeneis*,

*Laurus erat tecti medio in penetralibus a
Sacra comam, multosque metu servata per*

Where *Servius* too agrees with METU, says he, *religione, quae nam per timorem*. And so *Lucretius* dreadfully paints *Religion*:

*Quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat,
Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instan*

Whence by the way you may observe that the old Masters in Atheism, as well as the Disciples of the new Club, have sought shelter in their System out of pure ignorance and fear.

The next *comma* of the passage is *exorabile fatum, Inexorable Fate*, which the Poet means, That the *Epicurean* doctrine had trampled down the whole notion of *Destiny* and *Divine Providence*. That the followers of that Sect did not understand *Εἰμαρμένην καὶ Μαντικήν, Fate and Providence*, is too vulgarly known to be worth proving or insisting on. And so will

come to the last clause, *Strepitumque Acherontis avari*; where every one sees the *Epicurean* assertion, *That the Soul dies with the Body.*

To return now to our learned Writer. How dextrously has he manag'd his game to bring a passage, that bears full against all *religion* whatever, as levell'd against some small bigotries and *superstitious fears*? And what a proper inference has he added? *Well has Virgil spoke thus; FOR by Free-thinking alone we know that God made and governs the world.* What from this passage of *Virgil* that's directly against *Creation* and *Providence*? Never sure was poor *FOR* put so hard to't before, or imploy'd in such bungling work. He understood not one line of the place, as will appear by his version. *And is thereby cured, says he, of all kind of fears, even of death itself.* What does the man talk of *cured*? Is *cured* the same with *subjecit pedibus*? Is the *cure* of one man's private *fears* (any more than of his *corns*) the same with *trampling under foot the fears of all mankind*, and the whole notion of *Religion*? For That, as I have said, is the thought

thought of the Poet, and is born from these lines of *Lucretius*.

*Quare RELIGIO PEDIBUS SUBJECTA vi
Obteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo.*

And then, *Fatum in exorabile*, our Interpreter translates it *Death*; which very epithet would have hinder'd; he the least taste of good writing: though he'd known nothing of *Fatis a voluntas*, the liberty of will, and contingency of all events, which *Epicurus* maintain'd against the *Stoics*. And *The DIVINE Virgil*, says our judicious Author. He is very easily satisfied with what little He comprehends of him; and appears to have *divinity* in it. For the Poet be never so *divine* in the original, it's plain he's lower than he is in this Writer's version and understanding.

XXI.

Between the two passages of *Lucretius* and *Virgil*, our author scatters a short reflection, that shews his mis-

learning. * *The evil, says he, of superstition is now much increas'd; and men are under greater terrors and uneasiness of mind than Pagans of old possibly could be, when they thought they hazarded less.* This manifestly shews that he thinks *eternal torments* were never imagin'd in the *Pagan* scheme, but were first introduc'd by Christianity. Just contrary. The vulgar in Paganism universally believ'd them, as his friend *Lucretius* would have told him in exprefs terms:

— *Nam si certam finem esse viderent
Aerumnarum homines, aliqua ratione valerent
Relligionibus atque minis obistere Vatum:
Nunc ratio nulla est restandi, nulla facultas;
AETERNAS quoniam POENAS in morte timen-*
[*dum.*

Nay, this is the very thing that our Writer quoted out of *Virgil*, *Strepitus Acherontis avari*, the terrible noise and rumor of *Acheron*: to have trampled upon which would have been a foolish boast of the *Epicureans*, if the generality of mankind had not believ'd it. And what, pray,

* Pag. 36.

IIXX

F

was

was the pretended privilege of the famous *Elusian* rites at *Athens*, in which *Augustus* himself was initiated? Was it not, that the partakers of them were convey'd into some happy station after death; while all the rest of men were for ever to be rowl'd, ἐν βορβόρῳ, *in dirt and mire* and other scenes of misery. And yet how low even that *Happy state* was commonly thought, appears from the sentiment of *Achilles's* Ghost in *Homer*: who, when he is complemented by *Ulysses* as the happiest of men both alive and dead, makes answer, That he had rather alive be a poor Day-labourer to the meanest Peasant than be *Emperor of all the Dead*.

* Ἡ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀσάσσειν.

'Tis so false then what our Author lays down here, That the Pagan religion gave less uneasiness in life because they thought they *hazarded less* after death than We Christians think we do, that it's certain they thought bad men *hazarded as much*, and good men *obtain'd* infinitely *less*.

* *Odyss.* Δ. v. 490.

XXII.

He comes now to a IVth argument for the absolute necessity of *Free-thinking on religious questions*, and that is * *from the infinite number of pretenders to Revelation*; which he afterwards dully repeats under another head in the † *Bramins, Persees, Bonzes, Talapoins, and Dervizes*, to which he might have added several more. Now here is his perpetual juggle about his term of art, *Free-thinking*. Take it in the common sense, and we agree with him. Think *freely* on all the various pretenses to revelation: compare the counterfeit *Scriptures* with the true; and see the divine lustre of the one, to which all the others serve as a foil. It was upon this very account that Christians took the pains to translate and publish them; not to confound Religion, but to confirm it. And yet the occult meaning of our Author is, from the variety of *Scriptures* to insinuate none is true. An argument as weak as it is stale; and baffl'd over and over. Could

* Pag. 40.

† Pag. 52.

this reasoning have any effect, Christianity had never begun. For besides the true *living Oracles* of the Jews, was not the whole world then full of false ones written and divulg'd? and *Oraculæ Temples* (or *Churches* if he will) then being to deliver out more? even *supposing* Christianity to be true; yet those impostures must necessarily be, while human nature is what it is: and our *Scriptures* have foretold it. Is That then a good argument *backwards* against the truth of any thing, which *a priori* plain must happen so; tho' that thing be *allow'd* to be true?

But a very extraordinary line has slipped from our Author here; *If a man, say he, be under any obligation to listen to any revelation at all.* This thought seems was a little *too free*, and so a *D* corrects it in the list of *Errata*. 'Tis very easy to sift and toss this fine thought which would afford good diversion: besides its own silliness, it contradicts the rest, and spoils the whole grimace of the book. But we'll spare it, since the Author himself has chastis'd it; at the hint (I suppose) of a graver member of the club, who was not for discover

the whole farce at once, and shewing the Actors to be mere *Puppets*.

XXIII.

We have heard here of the much applauded foundation of your *Society for propagating the Gospel in foreign parts*; which this despicable Scribler, though he owns it is supported and encourag'd by * *Her most Excellent Majesty* and the Chief Persons of the Kingdom, dares openly ridicule. This is much such a sawcy and slovenly *Freedom* as the rest of the *Greeks* laugh'd at in the Islanders of *Corfu*;

Ἐλευθέρα Κέρκυρα, χέζ' ὅπως θέλεις.

Corcyra certe libera est; ubi vis, caca.

For our cleanly Author here assumes the like or worse licence, to lay his filth and ordure even upon the throne and the altar.

We envy not your due *Liberty*, the most valuable blessing of good government: but if such insults even upon Ma-

* *Pag. 41.*

jefty itself and all that's accounted sacred
are allow'd among you with impunity
it gives no great presage of your lasting
prosperity ;

—*nimia illaec licentia*

Profecto evadet in aliquod magnum malum.

But to leave unpleasing thoughts; and
for once *to answer a fool according to his
folly.* Are the *Talapoins of Siam* the
to be put here upon a level with the
whole *Clergy of England*; the light and
glory (if they are not chang'd all on a
sudden) of present christianity? and this
done by a sorry Retailer of atheistic
scraps, which he understands not three
lines of; but at the first offer of a translation
betrays his stupidity? Is He to *draw out*
your Divines, whose names we know
not here because he has mangl'd them
but conclude them to be men of worth
and distinction, from the very credit of
his abusing them? If he is once for *draw-
ing out*, and reviving the old trade of
Ἀνδραποδοικηλία *selling and exporting*
men; it may perhaps be found more ser-
viceable to your government, to oblig
your *East India Company* to take care
board

board the whole *Growing Sect*, and lodge them at *Madagascar* among their confes'd and claim'd kindred (since they make Themselves but a higher species of Brutes) the *Monkeys* and the *Drills*: or to order your new *South Sea Company* to deliver them to the *Spaniards* as part of the *Affiento*, to be *Free-diggers* in the mines there; and after a decent time in that *Purgatory* to convey them to their *Happy Country*, their * *Paradise of New Jersey*; where neither *Priest*, nor *Physician*, nor *Lawyer* can molest them.

XXIV.

Well, but Vithly † *the Gospel itself*, and our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* by their own example, recommend *Free-thinking*. Grant the Scribler this argument; if *Free-thinking* is taken in its legitimate sense, as *Chillingworth*, *Hooker*, and *Wilkins* made use of that freedom. But if he juggles as usually in the term of *Art*; what greater nonsense, Than that *Christ* and his *Disciples* should recom-

* Pag. 108.

† Pag. 44.

mend Atheism? But our Author's learning is here again admirably display'd. St. Paul, says he, *when he went into the Synagogues of the Jews, and reason'd with them, took a very extraordinary step, as now it would be look'd on*; and so he compares it to PENN the Quaker's going into St. Paul's, or Mr. WHISTON's into the *House of Convocation*, to reason there against the *Establish'd Church*. Penn's name has been long known among us in *Germany*; and the latter we have lately heard of in the *Journals* and *Bibliotheques*. But how ignorant and stupid is this Writer with his foolish comparison? The fact he speaks of and quotes, *Acts* xvii, 2, 3. was done at *Thessalonica*, a Pagan city in *Macedonia*: and was the *Jewish Synagogue* the *Establish'd Church* there? or rather allow'd upon *Toleration*? But to pardon him this, and suppose the thing done in *Judea* itself, where our Saviour often did the same: was it any thing like to *interrupting Divine Service*, or *disturbing the proceedings of a Synod*? Our Author knows not one tittle of the manner and custom of a Synagogue. After reading a few sections out of the Law
 and

and the Prophets, the ablest men of the Assembly us'd to stand up and expound the passages read : and if any stranger or person of note chanc'd to be there, he was ask'd by them, if he had any discourse to impart to the Congregation. This is expressly affirm'd by *Philo* the Jew and others ; and appears clearly from *Acts* XIII. 15. where at *Antioch* in *Pisidia* the Rulers of the Synagogue seeing *Paul* and *Barnabas* strangers there, sent unto them, saying, *Ye Men and Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.* So that if even *Penn* and *Whiston* should do no more, but speak when desir'd by authority, it would be no extraordinary step at all. The only step here that appears very extraordinary is our Author's bold leaping into the dark ; and blundering about matters, where he's quite blind and ignorant.

XXV.

But he proceeds in his argument from our Saviour's Gospel and Example ; and declares it impossible, * *That Christ should*

* *Pag.* 46.

should give so partial a command, as contain a reserve in behalf of any of Priests, in prejudice of the general rules of Free-thinking. Our Author is very often orthodox, when he opposes what no body affirms; or affirms what no body opposes. And yet the very Orthodoxy is all artifice and craft to insinuate as if the Clergy did really maintain the one, or deny the other. Pray, who is it that challenges such a reserve? He has named a *Reverend Doctor* here of his side: name another if he can, that's against him. The thing he seems to contend for is true and allow'd him: but he has given such an awkward reason for it, as would spoil his own inference; if better hands than His did not support it. † *All the Priests upon earth, says he, being (in our Saviour's life-time) enemies to Him and his Gospel; and He giving the privilege of infallibility to no body besides the Apostles; He could not be secure that any Priests could ever be otherwise.* the stupidity of this greater, or the impiety? Was not He secure of This

† Pag. 46.

who declar'd, *He would be with his Church to the end of the World*; and that *the gates of Hell should never prevail against it*? But to let this pass (for if I mistake not our Author's principles, he had rather be prov'd an impious or knavish Writer ten times, than a silly one once) I affirm further, that this assertion of his is absolute nonsense; though *Jesus Christ* were suppos'd to be an Impostor. For his argument lies thus: Because the *Jewish* and *Pagan* Priests were once enemies to *Christ* and his Gospel, He could not be *secure* that *any* of his OWN Priests would ever be otherwise. A most powerful Syllogism! At this rate no Sect of Philosophy, no Heresy, nor false Religion would ever have been set up or thought of. Because all other Sects oppos'd *Zeno* when he first founded *Stoicism*, he could not be *secure*, that the *Stoics* his own followers would ever do otherwise. Because *Socinus* found all people at first against Him and his notions, he could not be *secure* but that the very *Socinians* would always be as much against them. Because all Priests abhor'd *Mahomet's Alcoran* when first it was broach'd, He could not be *secure*, that

that his own *Mufties and Derviz* would not always abhor it. This, you fay, is very ftrange : but I'll concede our Author one thing, which looks a little parallel to it ; That tho' He's the Chief of the *rifing and growing Sect*, and he publish'd their *New Gospel* ; he cannot be *secure*, that his own Fraternity and members of the Club may not foon difaffham'd both of Him and It.

XXVI.

And now we come to a new argument *from the conduct of the Priests*, which by a tedious induction is branch'd out into ten instances, and takes up half a hundred pages. And what will be the grand result ?

Nae iste hercule magno jam conatu magnas nugas dixerit.

The fum of it is no more than this, *The Priests cannot agree among themselves about feveral points of doctrine ; the attributes of God, the canon of Scripture, &c. and therefore I'll be of no religion at all.* This threadbare obfolete ftuff, the more obvious fufmife that any wavering Forcatch

catches at when he first warps towards Atheism, is dress'd up here as if it was some new and formidable business.

What great feats can our Author now promise himself from this; which, after it has been tried age after age, never had influence on mankind either in religious concerns or common life: *Till all agree, I'll stand neuter.* Very well; and till all the world speaks one language, pray be you mute and say nothing. It were much the wiser way; than to talk as you have done. By this rule, the *Roman* Gentry were to learn no Philosophy at all, till the *Greeks* could unite into one Sect; nor make use of any Physician, till the *Empirics* and *Methodists* concur'd in their way of practice. How came Christianity to begin; since the objection now brought to pull it down was as visible and potent then as now? or how has it subsisted so long, since all the present discord in opinions does not near amount to the sum of what *Epiphanius* alone collected above a thousand years ago? Nay how came our Author's new Sect to be *rising* and *growing*; since the Atheists are as much at variance among themselves, and
can

can settle and centre in nothing? Or, if they should resolve to conspire in on certain System; they would be *Atheists* indeed still, but they would lose the title of *Free-thinkers*.

This is the total of his long induction; but let us see his conduct in the parts of it. Some *Fathers* thought *God to be material*; this he has said and I have answer'd before in *Remark the Xth*.
 * *Several antient Christian Priests of Egypt were so gross, as to conceive God to be in the shape of a man.* If they did so, they were no more gross than his Master *Epicurus*, who was of the very same opinion. But it's fatal to our Author ever to blunder when he talks of *Egypt*. These *Priests of Egypt* were all illiterate *Laymen*: the Monks or Hermits of those days, that retir'd into the desert, the fittest place for their stupidity. † *But several of your English Divines tax each other with Atheism, either positively, or consequently.* Wonderful! and so because three or four Divines in your Island are too fierce in their disputes, all We o

* Pag. 47.

† Pag. 48.

the great Continent must abandon Religion. Yes, but the * *Bramins*, the *Mahometans*, &c. pretend to *Scriptures as well as We*. This too has come once already, and is considered in *Remark* the XXII: but being so great a piece of news, deserv'd to be told twice. And who, without his telling, would have known, that the † *Romish* Church received the *Apocrypha* as canonical? Be that as it will; I am sure it is unheard of news, that Your Church receives them as || *Half-Canonical*. I find no such word in your Articles; nor ever saw a *such-like prodigy* before. *Half-Canonical*? what idea, what sense has it? 'tis exactly the same, as *Half-Divine*, *Half-Infinite*, *Half-Omnipotent*. But away with his *Apocrypha*; He'll like it the worse while he lives, for the sake of *Bel and the Dragon*.

XXVII.

But now to make room for his learning again: For ‡ *the Rabbi's*, says he, among the *Samaritans*, who now live at

* Pag. 52. † Pag. 53. || Pag. 53. ‡ Pag. 53.

Sichem

Sichem in Palestine, receive the five Books of Moses for their Scripture; the copy whereof is very different from Ours. What shall I admire most, his ignorance, or his impudence? Why do the RABBI'S at *Sichem*, exclusive and by way of distinction? Does not the whole *Samaritan Nation* receive the Pentateuch, as well as their *Rabbi's*? 'Tis just as if he had said; *Among the English, the Reverend Divines receive the Bible.* But is not their Copy of the Five Books of *Moses* VERY DIFFERENT from Ours? No question, he has often affirm'd This with great sufficiency to his Club; though he does not know one letter of the language. The *Samaritan Pentateuch* has now been printed about half a Century; and the various readings, wherein it differs from the *Jewish*, have been twice collected and published even to the minutest letter; first by *Morinus* at *Paris*, and afterwards and more fully by *Your Walton* at *London*; both by them *Priests*. I have perus'd those various lections; and do affirm here to my own knowledge, that those two Copies differ no more from each other, than the same book, *Terence, Tully, Ovid*

or the like, differs from itself in the several Manuscripts that I myself have examin'd. So that it's a plain demonstration that the copies were originally the same: nor can better evidence be desir'd that the *Jewish* Bibles have not been corrupted or interpolated, than this very Book of the *Samaritans*; which, after above 2000 years discord between the two nations, varies as little from the other, as any *Classic* Author in less tract of time has disagreed from itself, by the unavoidable slips and mistakes of so many Transcribers. And now does not our Author come off victoriously with his *Rabbies of Sichem*?

Well, but the * *Samaritans have a Chronicon, or History of themselves from Moses's time, which is lodg'd in the publick Library at Leyden, and has never been printed; and this is quite different from that contain'd in the Historical Books of the Old Testament.* Here's now a fly insinuation of some great discoveries to be made out of this Book: and yet the mighty matter is no more than this; *Joseph Scaliger*

* Pag. 53.

above a hundred years ago procur'd the Book from *Sichem*, and left It among others by his Will to the Library at *Leyden*. There it's name has long appear'd in the printed catalogue ; it has been transcrib'd more than once ; and one Copy, formerly Professor *Golinus* has fallen into the hands of my learned friend Mr. *Reland* at *Utrecht* : where take his own account. 'Tis call'd the *Book of Joshua*, but its Author is not named : 'tis written in *Arabic* ; first at *Mahomet's* time most certainly, but how much since is not known : it pretends to be a translation from the *Hebrew* ; but it's only its own Voucher ; there being no fame now remaining of any such original. It consists of about 100 chapters ; xxxix of which make the sole story of *Joshua* ; six chapters more reach as low as *Nebuchadnezzar* ; the very next comes to *Alexander the Great* and his travels thorow the *Air* ; the next makes a long stride to the Emperor *Hadrian* ; and two more to the time of *Alexander Severus*. This is the no less *Chronicle* that our judicious *French* thinker would place above the Bible when the very *Sichemites* do not place

it so high as his own jargon *half-Canonical*. 'Tis pity a Man of so fine a taste, and the *Maecenas* of the new Club, (since he hints with such concern, that *it is not yet publish'd*) should not be oblig'd at his own charge to get it translated and printed.

XXVIII.

The very view of the following pages fills me with disdain, to see such common stuff brought in with an air of importance. * *Hebrew and Septuagint; Gospels according to the Hebrews and Ægyptians; The Traditions of Matthias, and the Secrets of Peter: Apostolic Constitutions, and Gospel of James; and the different notions of Priests concerning Inspiration.* And what of all these, or half a hundred more, that my learned and *Lutheran* Friend *Dr. Fabricius* has amass'd together? Has our Author a mind to read and *think* of them? Think *freely* and welcome: For I suppose that was the design my Friend had in the publication. Or is he rather

* Pag. 54.

at his old play, that he'll regard no Scripture at all, till all Christians among themselves, and *Talapoins* with them can agree? *Jubeas stultum esse libenter* let him have license to play the Fool since he answers his own argument in the very words where he puts it. * *Fo*
All, says he, *who build their Religion on Books, must from the nature of things vary about the Books themselves, their Copies, and their Inspiration.* Here now both the poison and the antidote in one. For if it's necessary *from the nature of things* that Men shall so differ in their opinions; that difference no argument *backwards* to prove the falseness of all those Books. Unless the Man will prove *a priori*, that Revelation ought not, cannot be communicated and convey'd to us in *Books*. Which when he performs; or finds out a better Method; it shall be allow'd to be the first Instance of *Science* or *Art* that the *Growing Sect* has invented.

* Pag. 56.

XXIX.

But notwithstanding he has fore-answered *from the nature of things* all that he can say about *different interpretations*, yet he proceeds in xx tedious pages to enumerate those differences, which he ranges under xii heads; and before them puts a long preamble out of your learned Bishop *Taylor*. That Prelate, it seems, has with great acuteness and eloquence display'd the difficulties in acquiring a full and perfect knowledge of all the abstruse places of Scripture; affirming at the same time, That all the necessaries to Salvation and moral Duties are deliver'd there most clearly and openly. Well, and what does our wise Author gain from the Bishop's confession? Has not He himself gone a great deal further, and made * *all the Sciences and Arts*, every imaginable part of knowledge, to be requisite towards having a just notion of that miscellaneous Book, the Bible? If it be so; what wonder is it (nay

* Pag. 11.

what miracle were it otherwise) that, in an allow'd freedom of *Thinking* and *Printing*, your *English* Divines should have different opinions? nay that the self-same man by advances in age, and by progress in study should differ from Himself? I have run over the citations here out of *Taylor*; and find scarce one of those difficulties so peculiar to Scripture, as not to be common to other Authors to know which: with exactness, as becomes every Writer (especially a declar'd Adversary to a whole Order professing learning) is no easy and perfunctory matter; as our Author to his shame and sorrow may hereafter find and feel.

His XII heads of difference he has dispos'd in this order: *The nature and essence of the Divine Trinity, The importance of that article of Faith, The specific body at the Resurrection, Predestination, Eternal Torments, Sabbath or Lord's-Day, Episcopacy, Original Sin, Our Saviour's Human Soul, Lay-Baptism, Usury, and the power of the Civil Magistrate in matters Ecclesiastical.* About all these points and several others He could name, some of Your *English* Divines,

Divines, it seems, for want of *good conduct* have had contests and disputes : A most surprizing piece of news ! to You, as if none had heard of those books till this discovery ; and to Us, as if We were intirely free from the like disputations.

Now what would our Author have here ? Is he angry that All cannot agree ? Or will he make himself the Arbitrator ? If he'll be *Umpire* in all these questions, he has full liberty of *thinking* ; the path is beaten before him ; he may chuse what side he inclines to, or coin new notions of his own. As Your Church has not yet anathematiz'd nor censur'd any of these Divines, so He needs not turn Atheist on these accounts ; to purchase the right of *Free-thinking*.

But if he's *angry* that All agree not, and thinks it a disgrace to Religion ; or resolves to meddle with none of them till All are unanimous ; he must be put in mind of what he lately mention'd, *The nature of things*. For if he *forbids* thinking on *abstruse* questions, he contradicts his whole Book ; which asserts Men's right and title *to think de quolibet ente* : but if he *allows* them to think on them, diversity of opinions will neces-

farly follow from the nature of things. For how can men keep the same tract, where all walk in the dark? How can they agree in one story, when all tell their own dreams? If men need will be prying into the hidden mysteries of Heaven; they'll certainly court a cloud instead of a Goddess: yet find discoverers and projectors there ever will be; and in Divinity, as well as Geometry, we have squarers of the circle.

XXX.

A second instance of Your English Clergy's bad conduct, is their owning
 * the doctrines of the Church to be contradictory to one another and to Reason;
 a III^d their owning † abuses, defects, and false doctrines in the Church;
 IVth their professing || That they will not tell the Truth; a Vth their ‡ charging the most judicious men of their order with Atheism, Deism, or Socinianism. Now as these accusations reach no further than some particulars among You; Our Church here is not in

* Pag. 76. † Pag. 79. || Pag. 82. ‡ Pag. 85.

least, and Yours (I think) is not much concern'd in them. If the Author really has not wrong'd them (as his usual unfairness gives cause for suspicion) it will be prudence in them to learn even from an enemy ; and to speak hereafter with more caution and discretion. All that a Stranger can do here, is to leave the persons to their own proper defence ; and the suppos'd *abuses and false doctrines* in your Church, to your own either refuting the charge, or remedying the defect. For what would our *Lutherans* here say of Me, if I should pretend to maintain, that Your Church has no blemish at all ? Though we justly esteem and honour it next to our Own.

XXXI.

But a VIth instance of their ill conduct, is their * *rendring the canon of the Scripture uncertain*. This is a heavy charge indeed ; and if they do not clear and vindicate themselves ; We, as well as this author, must call them to account. But what's the ground of the Indict-

* Pag. 86.

ment ?

ment? *Why, Dr. Grabe, Dr. Mil*
with some others affirm, that no Canon
was made till above LX years after the
death of Christ. If this be all, he ha
verify'd the sentence in the comedy ;

Homine imperito numquam quicquam injustiu'st.

For pray, what's the notion of the word
Canon? An entire collection of the Sa
 cred Writings, to be a *rule, standard*
and system to Christianity. Now accord
 ing to those Doctors, and the plain mat
 ter of fact, all the books of the New
 Testament were not *written* till the year
 of Christ xcvi; and that is *above LX*
years after the death of Christ. What
 sense is there in this complaint then
 that the books were not collected before
 they were made? All the books we now
 receive for canonical were written occa
 sionally between the Years lxi and
 xcvi. And during that interval of xlv
 years; every book, in the places whi
 ther it was sent, or where it was known,
 was immediately as sacred and canonical,
 as ever it was after. Nor did the church
 loiter and delay in making a canon or
 collection of them; for within two years
 after

after the writing of St. *John's* Gospel the *evangelical Canon* was fix'd. And within X after that, an *Epistolical Canon* was made: quick enough, if it be consider'd, that they were to be gather'd (whither they had been directed) from so many and so distant parts of the world. So that it's plain to me this Collector of scraps did not know what a *Canon* or collection meant. I'll borrow his argument for one minute, and try it upon some classic authors. It's very plain that *Martial* publish'd every single book of Epigrams by itself: one generally every year; only sometimes he delay'd two or three. And so *Horace* (as Your *Bentleius* has lately shewn) set out his several books occasionally, from the xxvi to the LI year of his life. Now in the reasoning of our acute writer, I'll prove several books of those two authors to be *uncertain* and of dubious authority. For what do you tell me of the first book of the one's *Epigrams*, and of the other's *Satirs*? How do I know that those are genuine; when the *canon* of *Martial* and *Horace* was not fix'd and settled, till above xx years after Those are pretended to be written? Is
not

not this argument most strong, cogent and irrefragable? So very valuable and precious; that, bear witness, I now return it safe and sound to its possessor and author.

XXXII.

Yes! but poor Dr. MILL has still more to answer for: and meets with a forer recompense for his long labour of xx years. For if we are to believe not only this wise Author, but a wiser Doctor of your own, he was * *labouring* all the while, *to prove the Text of the Scripture precarious*; having scrap'd together such an immense collection of *various readings*, as amount in the whole, by late Author's computation, to above thirty thousand. Now this is a matter of some consequence, and will well deserve a few reflections.

I am forc'd to confess with grief, That several well-meaning Priests, of greater zeal than knowledge, have often by their own false alarms and *Panic* bolts frightened others of their own side, and

* Pag. 88.

given advantage to their enemies. What an uproar once was there, as if All were ruin'd and undone, when *Capellus* wrote one book against the antiquity of the *Hebrew Points*, and another for *Various Lectiōns* in the Hebrew Text itself? And yet time and experience has cur'd them of those imaginary fears: and the great Author in his grave has now that honour universally, which the few only of his own age paid him, when alive.

The case is and will be the same with your learned Country-man Dr. MILL; whose Friendship (while I staid at *Oxford*) and memory will be ever dear to me. For what is it, that your WHITBYUS so inveighs and exclaims at? The Doctor's labours, says he, make the whole Text precarious; and expose both the Reformation to the *Papists*, and Religion itself to the *Atheists*. God forbid! we'll still hope better things. For surely those *Various Readings* existed before in the several exemplars; Dr. *Mill* did not make and coin them, he only exhibited them to our view. If Religion therefore was true before, though such *Various Readings* were in being; it will be as true and consequently as safe still, though

though every body sees them. Depend on't; no truth, no matter of fact fairly laid open, can ever subvert True Religion.

The 30000 Various Lectons are allow'd then and confess'd: and, if more copies yet are collated, the Sum will still mount higher. And what's the inference from this? why, one *Gregory* here quoted, infers * *That no profane Author whatever has suffer'd so much by the hand of time, as the New Testament has done.* Now if this shall be found utterly false; and if the *Scripture Text* has no more variations than what must necessarily have happen'd from the nature of things, and what are common and in equal proportion in all Classics whatever; I hope this *Panic* will be remov'd, and the Text be thought as firm as before.

If there had been but one manuscript of the *Greek Testament* at the restoration of learning about two centuries ago then we had had no *Various Readings* at all. And would the Text be in better condition then, than now we have

* Pag. 88.

30000? So far from That, that in the best single Copy extant we should have had hundreds of faults, and some omifions irreparable. Besides that the suspicions of fraud and foul play would have been encreas'd immensely.

It is good therefore, you'll allow, to have more anchors than one; and another *MS.* to join with the first would give more authority, as well as security. Now chuse that Second where you will there shall be a thousand variations from the First; and yet half or more of the faults shall still remain in them Both.

A Third therefore, and so a Fourth, and still on, are desirable; that by a joint and mutual help All the faults may be mended: some Copy preserving the True Reading in one place, and some in another. And yet the more Copies you call to assistance, the more do the Various Readings multiply upon you: every Copy having its peculiar slips, though in a principal passage or two it do singular service. And this is fact, not only in the New Testament, but in all antient books whatever.

'Tis a good providence and a great blessing, that so many Manuscripts of
the

the New Testament are still amongst us, some procur'd from *Egypt*, others from *Asia*, others found in the *Western* Churches. For the very distances of places as well as numbers of books demonstrate, that there could be no collusion, no altering nor interpolating One Copy by another, nor All by any of them.

In profane Authors (as they are call'd) whereof One Manuscript only had the luck to be preserv'd, as *Velleius Paterculus* among the *Latins*, and *Hesychius* among the *Greeks*; the faults of the Scribes are found so numerous, and the defects so beyond all redress; that notwithstanding the pains of the learned'st and acute'st Critics for Two whole Centuries, those books still are and are like to continue a mere heap of errors. On the contrary, where the Copies of any Author are numerous, though the *Various Readings* always increase in proportion, there the Text, by an accurate collation of them made by skilful and judicious hands, is ever the more correct, and comes nearer to the true words of the Author.

W

Were the very Originals of antient books still in being, thote alone would supersede the use of all other Copies: but since That was impossible *from the nature of things*, since time and casualties must consume and devour all; the subsidiary help is from the various transcripts convey'd down to us, when examin'd and compar'd together.

Terence is now in one of the best conditions of any of the Classick Writers; the oldest and best Copy of him is now in the Vatican Library, which comes nearest to the Poet's own hand: but even That has hundreds of errors, most of which may be mended out of other Exemplars, that are otherwise more recent and of inferior value. I myself have collated several; and do affirm that I have seen 20000 various lections in that little Author, not near so big as the whole *New Testament*: and am morally sure, that if half the number of Manuscripts were collated for *Terence* with that niceness and minuteness which has been used in twice as many for the *New Testament*, the number of the *variations* would amount to above 50000.

H

In

In the manuscripts of the *New Testament* the variations have been noted with a religious, not to say superstitious exactness. Every difference, in spelling in the smallest particle or article of speech in the very order or collocation of words without real change, has been studiously registred. Nor has the Text only been ransack'd, but all the Antient Versions, the *Latin Vulgate*, *Italian*, *Syriac*, *Aethiopic*, *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Armenian*, *Gothic*, and *Saxon*; nor these only, but all the dispers'd citations of the *Greek* and *Latin* Fathers in a course of 500 years. What wonder then, with all this scrupulous search in every hole and corner, the varieties rise to 30000? when in all Antient Books of the same bulk, whereof the MSS are numerous, the variations are as many or more; and yet no versions to swell the reckoning.

The Editors of profane Authors do not use to trouble their Readers, or risk their own reputation, by an useless list of every small slip committed by a lazy or ignorant Scribe. What is thought commendable in an edition of Scripture, and by the name of fairness and fidelity, would

in them be deem'd impertinence and trifling. Hence the reader not vers'd in ancient MSS is deceiv'd into an opinion, that there were no more variations in the copies, than what the editor has communicated. Whereas, if the like scrupulousness was observ'd in registering the smallest changes in profane authors, as is allow'd, nay requir'd in sacred; the now formidable number of 30000 would appear a very trifle.

'Tis manifest that books in verse are not near so obnoxious to variations as those in prose: the transcriber, if he is not wholly ignorant and stupid, being guided by the measures, and hinder'd from such alterations, as do not fall in with the laws of numbers. And yet even in Poets the variations are so very many as can hardly be conceiv'd without use and experience. In the late edition of *Tibullus* by the learned Mr. *Broukhuisè* you have a register of *various lections* in the close of that book; where you may see at the first view that they are as many as the lines. The same is visible in *Plautus* set out by *Pareus*. I myself during my travels have had the opportunity to examin several MSS of the poet

Manilius; and can assure you that the variations I have met with are twice as many as all the lines of the book. Our Discourser here has quoted nine verses out of it, p. 151: in which, though one of the easiest places, I can shew him six various lections. Add likewise that the MSS here used were few in comparison and then do You imagin, what the lections would amount to, if ten times as many (the case of Dr. *Mill*) were accurately examin'd. And yet in these and all other books, the text is not made more *precarious* on that account, but more certain and authentic. So that I may advise you, when you hear more of this scarecrow of 30000, be neither astonish'd at the Sum, nor in any part for the text.

'Tis plain to me that your learned *Whitbyus*, in his invective against his dead friend, was suddenly surpriz'd with a *Panic*; and under his deep concern for the *Text*, did not reflect at all what that word really means. The present text was first settled almost 200 years ago out of several MSS by *Robert Stephens* a printer and bookseller at *Paris* whose beautiful and (generally speaking) accurate

accurate edition has been ever since counted the standard, and follow'd by all the rest. Now this specific *Text* in your Doctor's notion seems taken for the sacred original in every word and syllable; and if the conceit is but spread and propagated, within a few years that *Printer's* infallibility will be as zealously maintain'd as an *Evangelist's* or *Apostle's*.

Dr. MILL, were he alive, would confess to your Doctor, that this *Text* fix'd by a Printer is sometimes by the various readings render'd *uncertain*, nay is prov'd certainly wrong. But then he would subjoin, that the real text of the sacred writers does not now (since the originals have been so long lost) lie in any single MS or edition, but is dispers'd in them all. 'Tis competently exact indeed, even in the worst MS now extant: nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost in them; chuse as awkwardly as you can, chuse the worst by design, out of the whole lump of readings. But the lesser matters of diction, and among several synonymous expressions the very words of the writer, must be found out by the same industry

and sagacity that is used in other books must not be risk'd upon the credit of any particular MS or edition, but be sought, acknowledg'd, and challeng'd, wherever they are met with.

Stephens follow'd what he found in the King of *France's* copies, A^Cs xxvii, 1. *Ανεμος Τυφωνικός, ὁ καλούμενος ΕΥΡΟΚΛΥΔΩΝ* and he is follow'd by your translator *there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called EΥΡΟΚΛΥΔΩΝ*. This reading perhaps your learned Doctor would not have now be made *precious*: but if that Printer had had the use of your *Alexandrian* MS, which exhibits here *ΕΥΡΑΚΤΩΝ*; its very like he would have given it the preference to his text: and then the Doctor upon his own principle must have stickled for the

The wind *Euroclydon* was never heard of but here: it's compounded of *εὖρος* and *κλύδων*, the *wind* and the *waves*; and seems plain *a priori* from the disparity of those two ideas, that they could not be join'd in one compound: nor is there any other example of the like composition.

But *Ευρακύλων*, or as the vulgar *Latin* here has it, *Euroaquilo* (approv'd by *Grocius* and others) is so apposite to the context

context, and to all the circumstances of the place ; that it may fairly challenge admittance, as the word of St. *Luke*. 'Tis true, according to *Vitruvius*, *Seneca*, and *Pliny*, who make *Eurus* to blow from the winter solstice, and *Aquilo* between the summer solstice and the north point ; there can be no such wind nor word as *Euroaquilo* : because the *Solanus* or *Apheliotes* from the cardinal point of east comes between them. But *Eurus* is here to be taken, as *Gellius* II, 22. and the *Latin* poets use it, for the middle aequinoctial east, the same as *Solanus* : and then in the table of the XII winds according to the Antients, between the two cardinal winds *Septentrio* and *Eurus*, there are two at stated distances *Aquilo* and *Kamias*. The *Latins* had no known name for *Kamias* : quem ab oriente solstitiali excitatum Græci Kamias vocant; apud nos sine nomine est, says *Seneca*, *Nat. Quaest.* V, 16. *Kamias* therefore blowing between *Aquilo* and *Eurus*, the *Roman* seamen (for want of a specific word) might express the same wind by the compound name *Euroaquilo* ; in the same analogy as the *Greeks* call *Εὐρόνοτος* the middle wind between *Eurus*

and *Notus*; and as you say now *South East* and *North East*. Since therefore we have now found, that *Euroaquilo* is the *Roman* mariners word for the Greek *Καιμία*: there will soon appear a justification why *St. Luke* calls it ἀνεμος τυφώνος, a tempestuous wind, vorticosus, a whirling wind; for that's the peculiar character of *Καιμία* in those climates; as appears from several authors and from the known proverbial verse,

* Ἐλκων ἐφ' αὐτὸν ὡς ὁ Καιμίας νέφη.

So that with submission I think our *Author's* and the *Danish* version have done more right than your *English* to the sacred text, by translating it *NORD-Ost* or *North East*: though according to the present compals divided into xxxii. *Euroaquilo* answers nearest to *Ost Nord-Ost*, *East North East*; which is the very wind that would directly drive a ship from *Crete* to the *African Syrte*, according to the pilot's fears, in the 13th verse.

The *Alexandrian* copy then, though it has vastly increas'd the number of readings, as you see in your *Polyglot*

and Dr. *Mill's* edition, has been of excellent use here; and so in many other places: retrieving to us the true original, where other copies fail'd. And what damage if all the other copies of near the same antiquity, which Mr. *Mont-faulcon* has discover'd and Dr. *Mill* never saw, were sometime collated as exactly, and all the varieties publish'd; let the thousands grow never so many?

When the Doctor is so alarm'd at the vast sum of 30000, he seems to take it for granted, that within that number the very original is every where found; and the only complaint is, that true are so blended with false, that they can hardly be discover'd. If that were the only difficulty, some abler heads than ours would soon find a remedy: in the mean time I can assure him, that if that be the case, the *New Testament* has suffer'd less injury by the hand of time than any profane author; there being not one antient book besides it in the world, that with all the help of various lections (be they 50000 if you will) does not stand in further want of emendation by true critic: nor is there one good edition of any that has not inserted into the text
(though

(though every reader knows it not) what no manuscript vouches.

'Tis plain indeed that if emendations are true they must have once been in some manuscripts; at least in the author's original: but it does not follow, that because no manuscript now exhibits them, none more ancient ever did. Slips and errors (while the art of printing was unknown) grew presently and apace; even while the author was alive. *Martial* tells us himself, how one of his admirers was so curious, that he sent a copy of his poems which he had bought, to be * *emended* by his own hand. And we certainly know from † *Gellius*, that even so early as *Hadrian's* time and before, the common copies of *Virgil* had several mistakes.

Not frightened therefore with the present 30000, I for my part, and (as I believe) many others would not lament, if out of the old manuscripts yet untouch'd 10000 more were faithfully collected: some of which without question would render the text more beautiful, just and exact; though of no consequence to the

* *Martial* VII. 10. † *Gellius* I, 21. IX, 14.

main of religion, nay perhaps wholly synonymous in the view of common readers, and quite insensible in any modern version.

If all those remaining manuscripts were diligently perus'd, perhaps one might find in some or one of them a new various lection in 1 Tim. VI, 3. Εἴ τις ἑτεροδοξοῦται, καὶ μὴ ΠΡΟΣΕΡΧΕΤΑΙ ὑγιαίνουσι λόγοις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. For though the sense of Προσέρχεται is so fix'd by the adjacent words that no version has mistaken it, *consents not to, acquiesces not in, the wholesome words of our Saviour*; yet the propriety does not appear in the original, no example of that phrase having yet been given. If some manuscript then should have it Προσέχεται or Προσίσχεται, *cleaves and adheres to the wholesome words*; who has reason to be angry at that variation? But I should sooner expect to find ΠΡΟΣΕΧΕΙ; because προσέχειν λόγοις, *to give heed, attend, observe, listen, obey*, is a known phrase as well in sacred as profane authors. So II Peter i, 19. Ἐξέτεινον λόγους καὶ ἐπροσεύχοντες. Proverb. i, 24. Εξέτεινον λόγους καὶ ἐπροσεύχοντες. Jerem. VI, 19. Τοῖς λόγοις μὲν ἐπροσεύχον. So in other places of the LXX, Προσέχειν ῥήσει, ῥήμασι, νόμῳ, ἐντολαῖς.

τολαίς So to the same effect, *Acts* viii, 6. προσέχειν τοῖς λεγομένοις. xvi, 14. τοῖς λαλομένοις *Heb.* i, 1. τοῖς ἀκροθεῖσι. *Tit.* i, 14. μύθοις.

And lastly it is join'd with the same word ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, *1 Tim.* i, 4. Μὴ ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, μηδὲ ΠΡΟΣΕΧΕΙΝ μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις.

If a search therefore was made in the manuscripts abroad, and this lection should chance to be found there, what detriment would it bring either to the authority or beauty of the Text?

In the epistle of *Jude*, v. 18. the general sense is clear and palpable; *mockers in the last time*, κατὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἐπιθυμίας πορευομένοι τῶν ἀσεβειῶν, *who walk after their own ungodly lusts*. But if one of those manuscripts instead of ἀσεβειῶν should exhibit ΑΣΕΛΓΕΙΩΝ, *lascivious, wanton, filthy lusts*: as those two words are join'd *1 Pet.* iv, 3. πεπορευμένοι ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίας *who walked in lasciviousness and lusts*; and *II Pet.* ii, 18. ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκός, ἀσελγείαις, *The lusts of the flesh and wantonness*: though the sense of both may perhaps be equivalent, yet it's not nothing, to add a justness and propriety of expression.

Once more; in a passage of *St. James* v. 6. where after he had denounc'd wrath and

and judgment against the *rich and proud*, he thus concludes, Κατεδινάσατε, ἐφονεύσατε τὸν δίκαιον οὐκ ἀντιτάσσεται ὑμῖν, *You have condemn'd and kill'd the just: he doth not resist you*: if instead of οἰκ some Manuscript by the change of one Letter should represent οἰκ̄, which in the ancient books is always so abbreviated for Ὁ Κύριος *the Lord*; some Persons would not be sorry, if what has hitherto appear'd to all Interpreters abrupt, incoherent, and forc'd, should with so slight a change be made pertinent and proper: *The LORD resists, opposes, sets himself against you.* For so St. James speaks before, IV, 6. and St. Peter I Epist. V, 5. out of Prov. III, 34. Ὁ ΘΕΟΣ ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, *GOD opposeth the proud.* And then the Connexion is apt and just in the following verse; Μακροθυμήσατε Οἰκ̄, *Be patient THEREFORE, brethren, unto the coming τῆς Κῆ of the LORD*: exactly as St. Peter's is in the place already cited: *For GOD resisteth the proud: Humble yourselves THEREFORE under the mighty hand of GOD.*

But to return to our Discourser, and to close up this long Remark; it is Fact undeniable,

deniable that the Sacred Books suffer'd *no more alterations than com- and classick authors* ; it has been common sense of men of letters, numbers of Manuscripts do not make text *precarious*, but are useful necessary to its establishment and certain. And as *Scaliger, Casaubon, Heinsius*, when they design'd to publish a correction of an Author, first labour'd to procure all the Manuscripts they could hear of, as the only means that promise laudable success: so *Stephanus, Junius, Curcellaens, Walton, Fell*, and I proceeded in the same method. All these except *Stephens* the Printer, were Christian *Priests*: and what, pray, were they doing with all this pains and labour? Why, according to our wise Author, they were confounding their scheme. Very magisterial and decisive. And yet the comfort is, that in his courteous distribution of all mankind into *knaves* and *fools*, he can neither accuse the *Clergy* here as playing their *Practical* craft; nor, without involving with them the most learned of the *Layety*, turn them over to his second row of *Crow-brain'd* and *Idiots*.

The result of the whole is, That either *a posteriori* all antient books, as well as the sacred, must now be laid aside as *uncertain and precarious*; or else to say *a priori*, That all the transcripts of sacred books should have been privileg'd against the common fate, and exempted from all slips and errors whatever. Which of these our Writer and his *new Sect* will close with, I cannot foresee: there's in each of them such a gust of the *paradox* and *perverse*, that they equally suit with a modern *Free-thinker's* palate: and therefore I shall here bestow a short reflection on both.

If all the old Authors are abandon'd by him, there is one compendious answer to this *discourse of Free-thinking*. For what becomes of his boasted passages out of *Cicero, Plutarch*, and his long List of antient *Free-thinkers*, if the *text* of each is *precarious*? those passages, as they came from the Author's hands, might be *for* superstition, which are now cited *against* it. Thus our Writer will be found *Felo de se*; unless the Coroner to save his effects favours him with his own titles of *Fool and Madman*.

But

But I have too much value for the Antients to play booty about their works and monuments, for the sake of a short answer to a fool according to his folly. All those passages, and all the rest of their remains are sufficiently pure and genuine, to make us sure of the Writer's design. If a corrupt line or dubious reading chances to intervene, it does not darken the whole context, nor make an Author's opinion or his purpose precarious. Terence, for instance, has as many variations as any book whatever, in proportion to its bulk; and yet with all its interpolations, omissions, additions, or glosses (chuse the worst of them on purpose) you cannot deface the contrivance and plot of one Play; nor not of one single Scene; but its sense, design, and subserviency to the last issue and conclusion, shall be visible and plain thorow all the mist of various lections. And so it is with the Sacred Text; make your 30000 as many more, if numbers of copies can ever reach that sum: all the better to a knowing and serious Reader, who is thereby more richly furnish'd to select what he sees genuine. But even put them into the hands of a Knave or a Fool;

Fool ; and yet with the most sinistrous and absurd choice he shall not extinguish the light of any one chapter ; nor so disguise Christianity but that every feature of it will still be the same.

And this has already prevented the last shift and objection ; That sacred books at least, books impos'd upon the world as Divine Laws and Revelations, should have been exempted from the injuries of time, and secur'd from the least change. For what need of that perpetual miracle, if with all the present changes the whole Scripture is perfect and sufficient to all the great ends and purposes of its first writing ? what a scheme would these men make ? what worthy rules would they prescribe to Providence ? That in millions of copies transcrib'd in so many ages and nations, all the Notaries and Writers, who made it their trade and livelihood, should be infallible and impeccable ? That their pens should spontaneously write true, or be supernaturally guided ; though the Scribes were nodding or dreaming ? would not this exceed all the miracles of both Old and New Testament ? And, pray, to what great use or design ? To give satisfaction to a
 I few

few obstinate and untractable wretches to those who are not convinc'd by *Moses and the Prophets*, but want *one from the dead* to come and convert them. Such men mistake the methods of Providence and the very fundamentals of Religion which draws its Votaries by the *conviction of a Man*, by rational, ingenuous, and moral motives; not by conviction mathematical; not by new evidence miraculous, to silence every doubt and what that impiety and folly can suggest. And yet all this would have no effect upon such spirits and dispositions: if they do not believe not *Christ and his Apostles*, neither would they believe if their own schemes were comply'd with.

XXXIII.

But Dr. MILL is not yet dismiss'd * for he has discover'd a passage very little known before; with which the Author hopes, not to do any good, but a great deal of mischief. But why, pray, discover'd? and why very little known? Has not the passage been twice printed in *Victor* above a hundred years and a third time above half a hundred

* Pag. 90.

and over and over in *Isidorus's* Chronicon? We'll allow it was *very little known* to this Author and his Sect before: but let not them measure all others by their own narrow and partial inquiries.

Nay, but even *Father Simon*, * *who has labour'd so much to prove the uncertainty of the Text of Scripture*, did not light on this passage. Our Writer has found out, you see, *Father Simon's* cover'd design; a true piece of *Popish Priestcraft*, to confound the reformation by labouring to prove the Sacred Text precarious: and this avow'd enemy to all Priests and Priestcraft concurs openly with that Papist in his pious intention. Now what shall we say or think of this conduct? You that live upon the spot, pray inquire into the men. Was not one of the Heads of them a *Papist*, in the time of Your late King *James*? Such a story goes here at *Leipsic*: and really a stranger would be tempted to think that *Popery* rather than *Atheism* is the secret Cabbala of this *new Sect*. For why such zeal for bare *Atheism*, if nothing more was behind the Scene? There is no principle, no spur in mere *Atheism*,

* *Pag.* 90.

to make any man act as they do. They confess that the modern * *Free-thinkers* are sure to be hated by 999 out of a 1000. Why then must this universal hatred be voluntarily incurr'd by an Atheist? Why must He expose himself by his talking and printing? To do *Himself* good? The very contrary: for if Your Priests were really such as this Writer has describ'd them, his very life would not be worth a month's purchase. Could he do *Others* good? Nothing less: for what harm in his scheme if men live and die *Christians*? He cannot tell that they'll be *damn'd* for it after death: He can only aim, if men *live* not wicked enough already, to invite and encourage them to live worse. A mighty friend to this to Himself, and to human Society.

But take now a mixture of *Popery* to the scheme of this *new Sect*, and their odd steps may be accounted for. 'Tis most certain in fact, That to propagate Atheism in Protestant countries has been a method prescrib'd and made use of by Popish Emiffaries. For they do

* Pag. 120.

evil by it in Their notion ; the men that would have been damn'd for *Heresy*, are no worse damn'd for *Atheism* : but the *good* of the thing lies open to full view ; when infidelity and an indifference to All Religion (and Some there must and ever will be) must needs pave a plain way for the return of Popery ; while zeal and flame are all on one side, and coldness and mere ice on the other. Let these Authors look to it then ; and let your government look to Them. They may take their option of One of their own Epithets : if *Popery* is the drift of their Sect, (as they really serve its interests) they may claim the favour to be plac'd among *the designing and artificial knaves* ; but if naked *Atheism* is all they aim at, they are certainly turn'd over without *benefit of Clergy* to the *Crazy, Crack-brain'd, and Idiots*.

And now for the passage in *Victor's Chronicon*, with our Author's faithful translation :

MESSALLA V.C.Coss. Constantinopoli, jubente Anastasio Imperatore, Sancta Evangelia, tamquam ab idiotis Evangelistis composita, reprehenduntur & emendantur.

In the Consulship of MESSALLA, the command of the Emperor ANASTASIU the Holy Gospels, as written by Idi Evangelists, are corrected and amended.

Our Writer introduces this passage with a triumphant remark ; That it was done *in the VI Century*, and recorded by one who *flourish'd in that very age*. Now this is to possess the unwary Reader that *Victor* reports this matter, within his own knowledge and memory. But *Messalla* was *Consul* in the Year *A. D. DVI* : and this little *Chronicon* a dozen pages, which might be written in as short a time as my Letter here, *en A. D. DLXVI*. So that this might be nothing but a hear-say about a business suppos'd to be done threescore years before.

Ab Idiotis Evangelistis, By Idi Evangelists, says our Author ; who, he's sincere in this version, proves himself a very *Idiot* in the greek and latin acceptance of that word. *Ἰδιώτης, Idiotus, illiteratus, indoctus, rudis*. See *Dresne* in his glossaries ; who takes notice, that *Idiota* for an *Idiot* or *natural Fool* is peculiar to your *English Law* for which he cites *Rastal*. Did *Victor* there

therefore mean *Idiot Evangelists* in your *English* sense? No: but *illiterate, unlearned*. What then must we think of our Author for his scandalous translation here? whether imputation will he chuse to lie under; that he knew the meaning of *Victor*, or that he knew it not?

As for the fact itself, * a general alteration of the *iv Gospels in the vi Century*; though I have no high opinion of our Author's penetration, I dare venture to say He himself does not believe it. Dr. MILL has taught him better; whose words he has honestly suppress'd here, He that makes it one article against your Clergy, their † *stifling of passages, and mangling of books*. || 'Tis as certain, says the Doctor, as certain can be; that no such alter'd Gospels were ever made publick. What tumults, what tragedies would they have rais'd? They would have cost that hated Emperor his crown and his life. The fact would have been spoken of and detested by all the Historians, and not be found only (as it is: for *Isidore* professes to take it from

* Pag. 90. † Pag. 95, 96. || *Millii. Proleg* p. 98.

Victor) in one blind passage of a puny Chronicle.

Add to these reasons of my dead friend ; that we have plain demonstration no such *alter'd Gospels* obtain'd in the world : as this Writer would insinuate. For we have the Fathers of IV whole Centuries before that time, both in the *Greek* and *Latin* Church ; among All whom there's scarce a verle in the New Testament uncited : the agreement of which with the *MSS* yet extant does fully evince, that the copies continu'd the same after *Anastasius's* time as before. Add the intire commentaries of *Austin*, *Jerom*, *Chrystom*, *Cyrill*, *Theodoret* and more, all dead before the VI Century commenc'd : and yet Their *Text* is the same as now ; and their explications so confirm and fix it, that That could not be alter'd in Their books (as is suppos'd in the naked Scripture) without making the commentaries anew. Add again the *Latin Italic* and *Jerom's* versions ; add others in the east, all before the date of this pretended *general alteration* ; and he must be a mere *Idiot* indeed that can believe that story ; when he sees all those

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antecedent Books so exactly agree with the subsequent.

That this *general alteration* is a mere dream and *chimera*, may be known even *a priori* by any man of common sense. For if the thing was really effected, and the very Bibles of *Victor* and *Isidore* (with all the rest) were so alter'd and corrupted beyond retrieve; what could those men mean to transmit that fact to posterity? Or what copyer would not have *stifled those passages* in them both? Suppose, in our *Free-thinker's* scheme, that all the world at that time were *knaves* and *fools* enough to comply with it: yet surely they would not have told it Us; they would not have branded Themselves to all Ages; not so have abus'd the *Evangelists*, whom they lookt upon as inspir'd; not rooted up and *destroy'd* that Religion, which this very pretended fact design'd to *recommend*.

Our modest Writer, who affirms of himself * *That he MUST be one of the most understanding and virtuous men alive*, has given no good instance of either in his management of this passage:

* Pag. 120.

for he has left out a principal word, both in his *Latin* and *English*, and which *MILL* as well as *Victor* lay'd before his eyes, that will clear up this whole affair. *CONSTANTINOPOLI*, at *CONSTANTINOPLE*, says *Victor*, the *Gospels* were amended. Was this a general abtention? Did this involve the whole Christian World? Would *Theodoric* then reigning in the west, have submitted to this order of *Anastasius*; a weak and unpopular Prince, that was scarce obey'd by his own guards? But the story itself pretends to no more, than the city of the Emperor's residence: and if our Author did not see this, where was his *understanding*? if he did, and *stifted* the word by design, where was his *virtue*?

You see the matter dwindles to nothing; even allowing the whole fact in *Victor's* meaning to be true. But I can never believe so wicked and senseless a thought, of that Emperor or any Christian whatever. He was hated indeed universally, for adhering to heretics, and for his ill conduct in Civil Government: and so any story was entertain'd with joy, that would make him still more odious, and blacken his character. But I fancy

I can give you a clear account of the occasion and rise of this scandal out of *Liberatus* the Deacon, of the same age and country with *Victor*, in the six chapter of his *Breviarium*.

Hoc tempore Macedonius Constantinopolitanus Episcopus ab Imperatore Anastasio dicitur expulsus, tamquam Evangelia falsasset, & maxime illud Apostoli dictum, *Qui apparuit in carne, justificatus est in Spiritu*. Hunc enim immutasse, ubi habet ΟΣ, id est qui, monosyllabum Graecum; litera mutata Θ in Θ vertisse, & fecisse ΘΣ, id est ut esset, D E U S apparuit per carnem. Tamquam Nestorianus ergo culpatus expellitur per Severum Monachum.

The editions of *Liberatus*, instead of Θ and ΘΣ, have Ω and ΩΣ: but it appears from *Baronius*, that the manuscript had no greek letters here at all; and that they were supply'd by the first Editor. I have not scrupl'd therefore to correct the place, as the *latin* clearly requires; for D E U S answers to ΘΕΟΣ, and the greek monosyllable ΟΣ is in opposition to that disyllable. And so *Hincmarus* in his *Opusculum* chap. xviii, where he recites the same story (without doubt
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out of *Liberatus*) has it plainly, as I have put it, Θ in Θ *vertit* Θ *fecit* $\Theta\Sigma$.

The account is this : *Macedonius Patriarch of Constantinople was charg'd by the Emperor Anastasius as a falsary, that had altered and interpolated several passages of the New Testament in the Copies us'd in that city; and particularly that in the I Tim. III, 16. he had order'd $\Theta\Sigma$ to be written instead of Θ : and for that crime of falsification he was depriv'd and banish'd.*

Macedonius might really do this ; and where any copies had it $\Theta\Sigma$, he might order to correct it Θ by a small stroke of the pen. That the copies did vary here of old is most certain : and there's one in the *Colbertin Library* that has it Θ at this day. But 'tis as certain that *Macedonius* was not the first introducer of that reading : many antient Fathers citing and explaining it Θ , before He was born.

Now any Reader, I presume, even our Author himself will grant me ; That if *Macedonius* was banish'd for falsifying those copies, *Anastasius* would give orders, to have the true readings (in his opinion) restor'd ; and that all the copies

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in *Constantinople* should be sought for and amended.

And here, if I mistake not, is the whole ground and rise of the story in *Victor*. For the true fact being no more than this, That *Anastasius* order'd the copies to be amended, Tamquam ab idiotis Librariis conscripta, as written by ignorant Scribes; the story grew in the telling, when it was got as far as *Afric*, on purpose to blacken him, That he order'd the *Originals* to be amended, Tamquam ab idiotis Evangelistis composita, as made by ignorant Evangelists.

It does not lessen the probability of this, That *Victor* speaks only of *Evangelia, the Gospels*: for that's the word both in *Liberatus* and *Hincmare*, EVANGELIA falsasset, even where they specify the Epistle to *Timothy*. So that *Gospels*, in the common acceptation of those times, were meant of the whole *New Testament*.

But I think the probability is much increas'd by this obvious reflection; that no one Author tells both these stories: *Victor*, who has transmitted
down

down the greater reproach, says no word of the less: and *Liberatus*, who has publish'd the fairer story, is silent about the blasphemous one. So that their first original, they were but one and the same.

T A N T U M.

Honoured Sir,

“ Y O U will see all along in my
“ letter, without my telling it
“ now, that I design’d to have dispatch’d
“ at once all my observations upon this
“ famous treatise. But finding myself
“ here in his xc page, the very middle
“ of the book; and my remarks having
“ so grown under my hands, that they
“ are already full heavy enough for the
“ post; I chuse to make up this pre-
“ sent packet, and leave the rest to
“ another occasion. I myself am of
“ opinion, that this half is as much
“ as the whole: the Author’s vir-
“ tues and abilities, his honesty and
“ his learning, are made already as ap-
“ parent, as even a second letter can
“ make them: for his whole *discourse*
“ is but one unform series of insincer-
“ ity and ignorance, of juggle and
“ blunder. However, if I understand
“ that this letter has come safe to
“ your hands, and that another would
“ be serviceable to religion, or accep-
“ table

128 **R E M A R K S.**

“ table to the *English Clergy*, for
“ whose honour, though a foreigner, I
“ have the greatest regard; you may
“ easily command

Your most obedient,

Leipfic Jan. 26.
New Stile.

humble Servant,

PHILELEUTHERUS LIPSIENSIS.

R E-

128 R E M A R K S.

“ table to the *English* Clergy,
“ whose honour, though a foreigner
“ have the greatest regard; you
“ easily command

Your most obedient,

Leipfic Jan. 26.
New Stile.

Humble Servant,

PHILELEUTHERUS LEPSIUS