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REMARKS

15.

ON

THE LATE COUNT VOLNEY'S

**New Researches**

INTO

**ANCIENT HISTORY;**

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

**General Remarks on Infidelity.**



BY THE REV. J. B. EMMETT.

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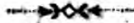
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TO THE

**Right Reverend George Henry Law, D. D.**

**LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.**



**MY LORD,**

During several years, works, the object of which is to promote disbelief of the Scriptures, and to encourage infidelity in every form, have much increased, and threaten to extend their mischievous effects through a wider range than at any previous time.

Within the memory of persons now living, infidelity was principally confined to the studies of a few philosophers, who, being well aware of the danger which would threaten every good moral principle, every bond of society, were their arguments to meet with general reception, were careful not to give them too great currency, particularly amongst the unlearned, who are influenced by prejudice and passion, rather than guided by reason. But now these arguments are collected together,



circulated with the most indefatigable industry and the utmost virulence: social order, civil discipline, obedience to governors, and the authority of the Bible, are alike trampled on, and represented by certain classes of men, as things by which free subjects ought not to be bound.

The work, which has called forth the following remarks, is not precisely of this description; it was written by a man well known in the literary world, and justly celebrated for his learning; his arguments profess to be founded upon the authority of the history of pagan nations, and the principles of philosophy; hence they are the more dangerous, since they wear an imposing aspect, to those who have not bestowed serious attention upon subjects of this nature, and because the authoritative manner in which judgment is pronounced upon the truth of the Sacred Writings, has caused them to be employed as unanswerable by infidel writers of inferior talent.

Having some time ago met with a copy of the English translation of the work, I was struck with the revival of many of the oldest objections against the books of Moses, which have often been most fully and most ably refuted, which the late Count Volney has endeavoured to support by hypotheses, which, as far as my knowledge extends, appear to be

new, as well as with his suppositions respecting the origin of the Pentateuch, which he attempts to prove to have been forged by Josiah, king of Judah, and Hilkiah, the high priest, eight hundred years after the time of Moses—with his endeavour to disprove the reality of the Deluge and the existence of Abraham—but most particularly with his denial of the Divine commission of Moses, and the bold impiety of the language used respecting the miracles of that legislator ; and, since no person has come forward for the specific purpose of meeting his arguments, I was induced to undertake an examination of the work, as it is presented to the English reader ; the translation being that which I have consulted, without reference to the original.

Your Lordship's well known anxiety to promote the interests of true religion, the terms of approbation in which you were pleased to express your opinion of the manuscript, and a wish publicly to express the sense I have of your kind attention to the progress of the work, induced me to solicit the honour of introducing the following pages to the public, under the sanction of your Lordship's name.

Respecting the work itself, I can only add, that I have been induced to give it publicity, from a desire to counteract, as far as my ability extends, the progress of infidelity, the great enemy to morality, good principle, and social order.

I have the honor to remain,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient

and obliged servant,

J. B. EMMETT.

*Great Ouseburn,*

*May 2nd, 1823.*

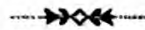
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**ERRATA.**

- Page 19 line 14 after remarkable, add, *as the author of the Chronicles.*
- 23 line 23 for *Abijah*, read *Ahaziah.*
- 82 line 33 for *direct read directed.*
- 83 line 20 for ; read ,

# Remarks, &c.

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## PART THE FIRST.

### Chap. I.

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#### ON THE ORIGIN OF THE PENTATEUCH.

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IN the commencement of the work, those books of the Old Testament which are ascribed to Moses are examined. Their genuineness Mr. Volney not only calls in question, but their truth also is disputed. The privilege of free discussion is a natural right, of which no man ought to be deprived; and, much as we may differ, particularly with respect to religious subjects, from others, we are bound in common justice to give them credit for sincerity of opinion, when we have no evidence to the contrary; on this principle I undertake an examination of those remarks, which the late Count Volney has made on those books of the Scriptures that are ascribed to Moses; and differing from him most materially upon most points, considerable delicacy is requisite. The author being dead, his work demands patient and unprejudiced examination; his arguments should be examined without any reference to himself personally; and the Translator is the person to whom the English reader must give credit for

the good effects which the work may produce, or consider responsible for the bad effects which may arise from its circulation in this country, since he has given it currency amongst us.

The commencement of the work being occupied with Chronological enquiries, I shall make no observations upon it, but commence with those parts which immediately respect the books of Moses.

Mr. Volney has shewn that those accounts of the early ages of the world, which have been transmitted to us, differ so widely from each other, that we remain in great uncertainty respecting remote periods of history, particularly with regard to Ancient Chronology: he does not allow that the Mosaic account should be made the standard by which we are to regulate the other historical documents of the early ages, because he sees, or thinks he sees, errors in the dates of certain events as recorded by Moses, from which circumstance he infers, that the Mosaic account of the first ages of the world is involved in doubt and obscurity. Upon this he establishes the argument with which I propose to commence. *Ch. v. p. 53.* "Of the times prior to Moses, and of the Books attributed to that Legislator." "If the Jews could preserve no exact notions of the time elapsed between the high-priest Eli and Moses, nor of their fathers' stay in Egypt, (for nothing is clear on that head,) how can they pretend to be better acquainted with earlier times, when their nation did not exist, and, what is more, when no nation existed, that is to say, the epoch of the world, at which no witnesses were present, an account of which is still, however, given us in their Genesis, as if the writer had seen with his own eyes the entire process of it? The Jews tell us it is a revelation made by God to their prophet: we answer, that many other nations have made use of the same language. The Egyptians, Phenicians, Chaldeans, and Persians have had, as well as the Jews, their histories of the creation equally revealed to their prophets, Hermes, Zoroaster, &c. In our days the Hindoos have shown our Missionaries the Vedas and Pourannas, with



pretensions to a much remoter antiquity than Genesis itself, and the other books attributed to Moses.”

Were this reasoning confined to the chronological order of the events, or to the periods of time when certain events took place, it might be allowed in part, since it is by no means improbable that such errors have been introduced; for if we consider that, from the beginning of time, down to the fifteenth century, printing was unknown, and of consequence every document existed only in manuscript, our earliest manuscripts of the books of Moses have descended through the hands of a great number of Copyists, and we all know the great difficulty of transcribing a large work with perfect accuracy; it is almost impossible to make a copy of so large a work, which shall be absolutely free from error.

This reasoning applies more particularly to numbers. The early methods of representing numbers must have been very crude and imperfect, and doubtless the numerals have experienced many changes, which circumstance will render the chronological parts of any ancient document liable to error, and this kind of error will be more likely to escape detection than any other, since, on reading over the written passage, there is not any thing in the general sense which will immediately lead to a detection of the errors that may have been introduced. Besides, the Hebrews represented numbers by the letters of their alphabet, and some of these letters, representing remotely different numbers, so closely resemble each other, that it would be a matter of surprise if copyists had not sometimes written one instead of another; it would be easy for a transcriber to mistake א for ב, 2 for 20, ג for ד, 3 for 50, ה for ו, 4 for 200. When therefore an ancient document falls into our hands, which has been transmitted through a long series of manuscript copies, it is not unreasonable to suppose that such errors may exist in it, since the most skilful copyist would find it almost impossible to avoid them.

But if we allow the existence of errors of this sort, we cannot draw the conclusion which our author has deduced; for if there be errors in the dates of the events, it does not



follow that the relation of the events is untrue. This sort of reasoning at once leads to absurd conclusions:—I say that I have read Mr. Volney's book; I state the principal subjects faithfully and circumstantially to a person who has not seen it; but I cannot tell him correctly on what page each subject is to be found: is he then to conclude that what I have told him of the work is untrue? Who does not see the absurdity of such reasoning? Surely, without being guilty of any extravagant hypothesis, we may suppose that the narration of events may be true, although it may contain errors respecting the precise times when they took place.

It is by no means difficult to see how the accounts of early events could be faithfully and circumstantially preserved and handed down to posterity, during the early ages of the world: there were then no great political events to occupy the minds of men: business was comparatively light, and would occupy less time and attention than it does at present: writing was known to few; the traditions of their ancestors, we may be sure, would therefore be highly valued, and would be preserved with great care; indeed the further back we search into the history of ancient times, the more tenacious we find men to have been of their traditions, the more carefully did they hand them down to posterity; even in the present day, amongst some Indian tribes we find the elders assemble together the youths at stated times, and recount to them their traditions, in order that they may be transmitted to posterity; and this custom seems to be of high antiquity. In this manner the accounts of all the early ages of the world might be transmitted to Moses; Methuselah was contemporary with Adam two hundred and forty three years, and with Noah six hundred; Shem, a son of Noah, was probably living in some part of Jacob's time, or of Isaac's at least; and Moses was great grandson to Levi, one of Jacob's sons. There is therefore no wonder that Moses and all the Jews who were contemporaries with him, should have been fully acquainted with the principal events of all the earliest ages.

Our author doubts the reality of revelation from God, because the Egyptians and others say that God has made

revelations to their prophets. This reasoning is very peculiar; and the conclusion does not follow from the premises: all may be true; all may be false; one may be true and the rest false, or partly true and partly false; all may be partly true and partly false; therefore each professed revelation must be judged by the weight of that evidence by which it is supported: one is not to be rejected because there are others which lay claim to a Divine original.

It is also hasty in our author to tell us, that the Egyptians, &c. "have had, as well as the Jews, their histories equally revealed to their prophets;" this is the point to be determined, not to be assumed.

*Ch. vi. p. 55.* "Passages of the Pentateuch, tending to indicate at what time, and by whom, this work was or was not composed." "In the last chapter of Deuteronomy we read a detailed and circumstantial account of the death of Moses, of his burial, and, besides, these extraordinary words, 'No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day,' and 'there arose not a prophet since in Israel, like unto Moses.' Is not this a striking indication that a considerable time had since elapsed?" Certainly these words have been added after the time of Moses. The Jews would naturally wish to transmit to posterity, an account of the death of their Legislator. What then? If these words were added by another, does it prove the rest to be untrue, or not to be the work of Moses? Because in the Iliad of Homer there are a few lines which have evidently been added since his time, are we to conclude that Homer did not write the remainder? Such a supposition is too extravagant to be entertained for a moment.

*Page 55* goes on: "How shall we explain all the other passages in the body of the work, which are equally incompatible with the received hypothesis? For instance: the first chapter of Deuteronomy begins with these words: 'These are the words which Moses spake unto all Israel, beyond the Jordan, in the wilderness.' It is well known that Moses did not cross that river, and that he died in the desert to the east of it; consequently the word beyond means, with respect to Moses, the western bank, the side on

which Jerusalem stands. Reciprocally, the eastern bank where Moses died, is beyond the Jordan, with respect to the country of Jerusalem. Therefore, this phrase, 'Moses died beyond,' was written on the Jerusalem side; therefore it was not Moses who wrote it: the expression occurs in three other places: *Deut.* iii. 8.; iv. 41; iv. 45, 6." Note, page 56. "Several Latin translations alter here and elsewhere the true signification of the words, and instead of saying *ultra*, they say, *in transitu*, or *in ripâ*; but it is allowed by all the Hebraists, that '*b'über*' means literally, *beyond, ultra*." On this I beg leave to remark, that in Deuteronomy it is no where said that "Moses died beyond," but *ch.* xxxiv. 5. "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab." With regard to the Hebrew word, all Hebraists are not agreed, for our author himself allows that there is a difference of opinion, some giving to it one interpretation and others another: the word is therefore doubtful, and as such, one meaning, arbitrarily fixed by any individual, cannot be decisive; I say arbitrarily fixed, because our author has advanced no proof that *ultra* is its true signification; and in a subject of this nature, we must be guided by evidence, and not led by opinion. But allowing that it means *ultra*, could not Moses have used the expression? Did Moses speak with reference to the place where he then stood, or to the land of Canaan? He had in view the land which the Jews were about to enter, and which they looked upon as their fixed habitation, which they would possess in the course of a few days; he might therefore with propriety use this land as his point of departure, rather than refer the situation of places to the temporary residence of his people. In common conversation, this mode of expression would not be considered as destitute of propriety, when we speak of a place to which we are travelling, although we have not arrived at it. However I beg that it may be proved, that the Hebrew '*b'über*' can mean only *ultra*.

The next objection of importance occurs in *p.* 57. "In Genesis, (*chap.* xii. 6.) where Abraham travels from Mesopotamia to Sichem, and the valley of Moreh, it is said,

and the Canaanites were then in the land ; therefore they no longer occupied it in the historian's time ; therefore this historian wrote after Joshua, who drove the Canaanites out of the country. Therefore this historian was not Moses." Most probably the Canaanites, like other people, have had a beginning, otherwise they are in a peculiar case ; the historian merely tells us that they were there in Abraham's time ; he does not say they were not in his own ; he fixes a time when they were there, namely Abraham's, and Joshua informs us of the period of their expulsion. Were I to write a history of this country from the commencement of its annals, down to my own time, and to say that in the reign of Edward the first, there were then Jews in the land ; if, a hundred years after my death, the Jews should be driven out of the country, would that person argue correctly, who five hundred years afterwards should read my history, were he to say, " Since the historian says, ' there were then Jews in the land,' therefore there were none in his time ; therefore the nominal author did not write it ?" Surely a child can see the absurdity of such reasoning.

Another objection is presented to us in page 58 : " The same book, Genesis, (*ch.* xxii. 14) speaking of the place where Abraham wished to sacrifice his Son, says : ' Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah-Jireh ; as it is said to this day, in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.' Remark the expression, ' to this day ;' and besides, how could Abraham call God by the name Jehovah, when it is said, *Exodus* vi. 3. ' that God had made himself known to nobody before Moses, under the name Jehovah ?' Is not the posthumous author detected at every instant ?" With regard to this remark we may observe, that it opens with a perfect misrepresentation of the subject. Where are we told that Abraham wished to sacrifice his son ? Whence does our author derive any source of information which we do not possess ? The only account which we have is *Gen.* xxii. 2. where God said to Abraham, " Take now thy Son, thine only Son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah ; and offer him there for a burnt offering :"



we are no where told that Abraham wished to do it; the chapter only informs us that he obeyed the command of God. In the expression, "to this day," there is nothing remarkable; this event happened B. C. 1872; Moses received his commission 1491, and died 1451; therefore as this was between 381 and 421 years before Moses wrote, if the place were yet noted, he might say, as we now should do, "to this day it shall be seen."

The remaining part of this quotation by no means proves that Moses could not write this part of Genesis. Abraham might make use of the sacred name Jehovah, although God had not in his time appropriated it to himself, by revealing himself under that name; this interpretation the words will bear, *ἐκ ἐδήλωσα, non indicavi*: does this imply that Abraham could not know the name? does it not rather mean that God had not Himself revealed that name by which he should hereafter be invoked? Surely when the Hebrew was the current language of the country, the true import of the words would be better understood than at present; if then the historian had affirmed in one place that the name Jehovah was known at a certain time, and in another, that until nearly four hundred years after, it was unknown, he must have forfeited his credit; we may therefore rest assured that the contemporaries saw no such contradiction, and if we think we perceive it, we may rest satisfied that we are in an error with regard to the meaning which in the historian's time was attached to these words. But if the contradiction were even real, how does it prove that Moses was not the author of Genesis? The premises have nothing to do with the conclusion: if there be an error in a book, it does not follow that the nominal author did not write it: if any error should be found in Newton's Principia, does it follow that the work was composed by a later hand? But we will not allow that these passages of Genesis and Exodus do contradict each other; they were received by the Jews, at the time when the language was perfectly understood, when it was the current tongue, therefore we may rest assured that no contradiction was then seen. We may bring forward a parallel case; there exists a religious sect

called Methodists ; the name was given to them by others, before they used it ; if any man write their history, and say that persons called them Methodists on a certain day, and then say that until ten years afterwards they did not make themselves known under the name of Methodist, we should see no contradiction, nor could we thence conclude that he did not write the book.

*Page 58.* "The same book of Genesis (*ch. xiv. 14.*) says, 'Abraham pursued his enemies unto Dan.' The book of Judges (*ch. xviii. 29.*) informs us, that until the time of the Judges, the Zidonian city surprised by six hundred men of the tribe of Dan, was called Laish, and it was only then, it received the name of Dan. Certainly Moses never wrote this: the author is later than the Judges." Now apply this reasoning: there is a Bradford in Yorkshire, therefore there is not one in Wiltshire ; there is a Halifax in England, therefore there is not one in America. This argument, which has been often refuted, requires no further remarks: yet let it be proved in the next edition that there was not a Dan in the days of Abraham ; we may be permitted to suppose that there was, for (*Gen. xiii. 11.*) Lot chose the plain of Jor-dan, and Abraham lived at no very great distance, for when that country was destroyed, he saw the smoke ascend as the smoke of a furnace. *Gen. xix. 28.*

The last of these objections which I shall notice is *p. 59.* "The author of Kings," Samuel, "*Book i. ch. ix. 9.* speaking of Saul, who went to consult the seer, says: 'Beforetime, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake—come, let us go to the seer ; for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called Seer.' Now since the custom still continued in David's time, who called Gad his seer, and not his prophet ; and since in all the Pentateuch, Moses is constantly called the prophet and not the seer ; it follows evidently that the compilation of the Pentateuch is posterior to the time of David." Perhaps this is not so evident as our author supposes: the words Prophet and Prophets occur *1 Sam. iii. 20 ; ix. 9 ; xxii. 5 ; 2 Sam. xxiv. 11 ; Seer, Seers, in 1 Chron. ix. 22 ; xxv. 5 ; xxix. 29 ; 2 Chron. ix. 29 ;* therefore, by this rule, the two books of Samuel

were written after those of Chronicles, which is contrary to Mr. Volney's own statement: we also find Seers occur *Isaiah* xxix. 10; xxx. 10. and Prophet *1 Sam.* iii. 20; therefore Isaiah wrote before the days of Samuel; now Samuel was in the days of Saul and David, according to Mr. Volney's calculation, B. C. 1078; Isaiah lived in the days of Hezekiah, B. C. 735; and in some of these verses, both words occur, therefore the parts of the same verses were written in very distant ages. If then the evidence derived from the words Seer and Prophet has so great weight, why does he allow his numbers to stand, since they are directly at variance with his own arguments? Is it by fair reasoning that he applies his argument to deprive the Pentateuch of its authority, and still allows his own computed dates to stand, to the order of which the argument applies with as great force as to the Pentateuch? This is to apply evidence partially and very unfairly. But our author has not favoured us with any investigation of the meaning of the passage; he has not proved that there were not both Prophets and Seers; and he has not proved that the word Prophet had been attached, after the captivity, to a class of people before called Seers in the time of Samuel. But if we should allow this verse to have been added subsequently, most probably after the return from the Babylonish captivity, by way of explaining words which otherwise might not have been perfectly understood, which related to customs in use in the time of Samuel, and which is generally admitted, does it then militate against the authority of Moses? Surely, it will not follow that, because a verse has been added to the first book of Samuel, by way of explanation, therefore Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch.

Had any of these passages tended to prove that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, it surpasses belief that that book should have been received by all the Jews as the work of Moses; had they involved such marked contradictions, as prove that Moses could not be its author, surely the Jews must have seen them; and nothing could so well have answered the purpose of the rebellious Jews, as undeniable arguments against the authority of Moses: yet the

book was received; they found no such objections to it; they saw no contradictions; we may therefore safely conclude that those objections which we see, have their origin in our ignorance of the language and customs which were in use, when these several parts of the Old Testament were written.

Our author next proceeds to enquire into the origin of the Pentateuch, and says, *p.* 60. "It is in vain to look for any indication whatever of the existence of the Pentateuch, either in the book of Joshua, one of the most ancient, or in the book, so called, of Judges, or in the two books entitled Samuel, or finally, in the history of the first Jewish Kings. This silence, especially in Solomon's time, is the more remarkable, when he informs us that the tables of the law of Moses were deposited in the temple built by that prince, does not say a word of the book of Moses; and yet, if the Pentateuch had been the work of Moses, the autographical manuscript should have been still extant, and it is inconceivable that so precious a book should have been left in total oblivion; particularly when, in the inauguration of the temple, a number of objects less important and less appropriated to the subject, are related and mentioned." We may allow that the name is not mentioned; for the writings ascribed to Moses were anciently written in one continued book; and the name, denoting its being divided into five books, is of comparatively modern origin. If we examine the books to which Mr. Volney refers us, we shall have reason to be persuaded that we find in them some indications of the existence of the Pentateuch, of which the following are examples:

*Joshua* i. 7. "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee. The book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein."

*Verse* 13-15. "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, the Lord your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.



Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them." This command of Moses to Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, is continued in *Numbers xxxii.*

*Joshua viii. 32—35.* "And he wrote there upon the stones, a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side of the Ark, and on that side, before the Priests, the Levites which bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, as well the stranger as him that was born amongst them; half of them over against Mount Gerizim, and half of them over against Mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel; and afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel."

These commandments of Moses, which Joshua obeyed, are found in *Exod. xii. 49; Levit. xxiv. 22; Numb. xv. 16; Deut. xi. 29; xxvii. 2, 3, 8, 11—13; xxix. 10, 11.* Therefore in the days of Joshua, these were known to have been written by Moses.

*Joshua viii. 30—33.* "Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal. As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses; an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron." This is commanded in *Exod. xx. 24—26; Deut. xxvii. 5.*

*Joshua xxii. 9.* "And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, returned and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go into the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses."

All this is arranged, *Numb. xxxii. 1, 26, 29, 39, 40; Deut. iii. 12—16.*

*Joshua* xxiii. 6, 7. "Be ye therefore very courageous, to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left, that ye come not among these nations that remain among you ; neither make mention of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them," &c. In *verse* 12 they are commanded not to make marriages with them.

Compare *Exod.* xxiii. 13 ; xxxiv. 12-16 ; *Deut.* vii. 3 ; xi. 22, 23.

*Judges* iii. 4. "And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken to the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses."

*2 Kings* xvii. 34-39. "Unto this day they do after the former manners ; they fear not the Lord, neither do they after his statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment, which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel ; with whom the Lord had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves unto them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them ; but the Lord, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore."

This short quotation contains the substance of *Gen.* xxxii. 28 ; *Exod.* vi. 6 ; xii. 30 ; xix. 5, 6 ; xx. 4, 5 ; xxiv. 6-8 ; xxxiv. 12-17. *Deut.* iv. 23-27 ; xiii. 5.

*2 Kings* xviii. 12. "Because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded."

Therefore in the reign of Hezekiah, what Moses wrote was known ; or at least the Jews had certain writings of Moses. *1 Chron.* xxii. 13, Statutes and judgments, which the Lord commanded Moses concerning Israel, are mentioned.

What Moses had commanded was therefore known in the reign of David.

2 *Chron.* viii. 13. "Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts; three times a year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles."

See *Exod.* xxiii. 14-17; xxix. 38-42; *Levit.* xxiii. all; *Numb.* xxviii. and xxix. all; *Deut.* xvi. 16. These were therefore received as the writings of Moses in the reign of Solomon.

2 *Chron.* xvii. 9. "And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people."

Therefore the law of the Lord was publicly taught in the reign of Jehoshaphat.

2 *Chron.* xxiii. 18. "Also Jehoida appointed the officers of the house of the Lord by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the Lord, to offer the burnt offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses." This we find in *Numb.* xxviii. 2, &c.

2 *Chron.* xxiv. 6. The king commanded to bring the collection according to the commandment of Moses.

This is prescribed *Exodus* xxx. 11-16; and received as the commandment of Moses in the reign of Joash.

2 *Chron.* xxx. 16. "And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites; for there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified; therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the Lord."

These are prescribed in *Exod.* xii. 3-6; *Lev.* i. 15-17; and were received as the commandments of Moses in the reign of Hezekiah.

2 *Chron.* xxxi. 3, are mentioned, morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the Lord.

These are ordered *Exod.* xxix. 38-42; *Levit.* xxiii. 2, &c.; *Numb.* xxviii. 3-31; xxix. 1, &c.; *Deut.* xvi. 1, &c. These were received as the law of the Lord, in the reign of Hezekiah.

*2 Chron.* xxxiii. 8. "According to the whole law, and the statutes, and the ordinances, by the hand of Moses."

These were therefore known in the reign of Manasseh.

We have now traced down from the death of Moses to the reign of Manasseh, a book called indifferently, the Law, the Law of the Lord, the Law of Moses, the Law of the Lord by the hand of Moses. I subjoin Count Volney's list of the kings, beginning with Saul, and mark with an asterisk those, during whose reign this law is mentioned.

	Reigned	B. C.		Reigned	B. C.
Saul	20	1078	*Joash	39	877
*David	40	1058	Amaziah	29	838
*Solomon	40	1018	Uzziah	(42)	809
Rehoboam	17	978	Jotham	16	767
Abijah	3	961	*Ahaz	16	751
Asa	41	958	*Hezekiah	29	735
*Jehoshaphat	25	918	*Manasseh	55	706
Joram	8	892	Amon	12	650
Abijah	1	884	Josiah	31	638
*Athaliah	6	883			

We may now refer to allusions to things which are contained in the Pentateuch, as things known to the Jews:—

*Joshua* i. 1. Joshua is called Moses' Minister. *Exod.* xxiv. 13.

*Joshua* iii. 3. The ark of the Covenant is mentioned, and the manner of removing it. Ordered in *Numb.* iv. 15; x. 33; *Deut.* xxxi. 26; *Joshua* iv. 23. Drying of the Red Sea mentioned as to eye witnesses; see *Exod.* xiv. 21, 22.

*Joshua* v. 6. The Children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness. *Numb.* xiv. 33.

*Joshua* v. 12. The Manna ceased. See *Exod.* xvi. 35.

—— ix. 24. relates to *Exodus* xxiii. 32.

—— xxiv. 2, &c. respects the abode of their Ancestors. *Gen.* xi. 26, &c.

*Joshua* xxiv. 3. Abraham in particular. *Gen.* xii. 1 and all to xx. 2, 3.

*Joshua* xxiv. 4. Respects Isaac, Esau, and Jacob. *Gen.* xxv. 24; xxxvi. 8; xlv. 1-17.

*Joshua* xxiv. 5. The Plagues of Egypt. *Exod.* vii. to xv.

————— 6. See *Exod.* xiv.

————— 8. *Numb.* xxi. 21-35.

————— *Numb.* xxii. xxiii. xxiv.

In this latter list I have selected only from *Joshua*, because our author allows (*p.* 60) that it is one of the most ancient. If we examine the above list, we find the following passages of the Pentateuch to be either quoted directly as from the Law of the Lord, or the Law of Moses, or we find them fully received and established, in those very books in which our author tells us we find no indications of the existence of the Pentateuch; *viz.*

*Genesis.*

Ch. xi. 26, &c.  
xii. 1, and all to ch. xx. 2.  
xxv. 24.  
xxxii. 28.  
xxxvi. 8.  
xlv. 1-17.

*Exodus.*

Ch. vi. 6.  
vii. to xv.  
xii. 3-6.  
xii. 30.  
xii. 49.  
xiv.  
xvi. 35.  
xvii. 1-12.  
xix. 5, 6.  
xx. 4, 5.  
xx. 24-26.  
xxiii. 13-17.  
xxiii. 32.  
xxiv. 6-8, 13.  
xxix. 38-42.  
xxx. 11-16.  
xxxiv. 12-17.

*Leviticus.*

Ch. i. 15, 17.  
xxiii. all.  
xxiv. 22.

*Numbers.*

Ch. iv. 15.  
x. 33.  
xiv. 33.  
xv. 16.  
xxi. 21-35.  
xxii. xxiii. xxiv.  
xxviii. and xxix. all.  
xxxii. 1. 2. 6. 20-33.

*Deuteronomy.*

Ch. iii. 11-16.  
v. 28, 29.  
iv. 23-27.  
vii. 3.  
xi. 22, 23, 29.  
xiii. 5.  
xvi. 1, 16.  
xvii. 5.  
xxvii. 2, 3, 8, 11, 12, 13.  
xxix. 10, 11.  
xxx. 26.



This list might have been very much enlarged; these quotations however are sufficient, and to have extended them further would have been but tedious to the reader. What, then, does our author mean by saying, that “in the book of Joshua, one of the most ancient—in the book, so called, of Judges—in the books entitled Samuel—or in the history of the early Jewish kings, we find no indications whatever of the existence of the Pentateuch?” No indications of its existence!—We have traced the Law of Moses, of God by Moses, from the time of Joshua down to that of Manasseh. No indications of its existence!—Laws are prescribed, ordinances appointed, which we find, some in Genesis, some in Exodus, in Leviticus, in Numbers, and in Deuteronomy, and they are quoted as the Law of Moses. No indications of its existence!—The quotations from the Law of Moses exactly agree with our present Pentateuch. Besides, historical facts are confirmed by those books, which are no where detailed, but in the Pentateuch.

I presume not to say with what care our author has examined the subject, or from what motives he has made this statement; I only say that it is absolutely and entirely false; it either arises from ignorance, or was made with the design to deceive those who have not sufficient knowledge to detect its falsity, and those who will not take the trouble to examine it for themselves:—if the former, it is the extreme of arrogance in any man to attempt to undermine the authority of a book from its own contents, when he is ignorant himself of the contents; if the latter, the conduct requires no remarks. If what I have quoted are not indications of the existence of the Pentateuch, what indications, I ask, will satisfy us?

We now arrive at *ch. vii. p. 62*, entitled “Epoch of the apparition of the Pentateuch.” “After the death of king Amon, his son Josiah became king when eight years of age; it may be imagined that a king of eight years had a Tutor Regent, whose name is not mentioned, but who, naturally, and by the indication of facts, was the high priest Hilkiah.” All the information we have upon this subject is derived from the second books of Kings and Chronicles, where not

one word is said which can even lead us to suppose that Josiah had a tutor regent ; nor is it intimated, directly or indirectly, that Hilkiab had any connexion with the young king, during his minority. We may fairly suppose that he had a tutor regent ; but we have no right to assume that this regent was the high priest, since we have no evidences that such was the case ; indeed it is highly improbable that this regent was Hilkiab : for he worshiped the God of Israel ; Josiah's father and grandfather were both Idolaters, and they instituted Idol worship in the temple itself ; it is therefore by no means likely that the high priest would be selected as the tutor regent, during the minority of the young king : at all events this position must stand for the present as an idea only of an individual, and unsupported by any evidence ; it therefore cannot be assumed as the basis of argument.

We now come to an argument, very formidable in our Author's opinion ; *p.* 62. " In the eighteenth year of his reign, Josiah sends, without any apparent motive, Shaphan, scribe or secretary of the temple, to the high priest, to tell him to collect all the silver given by the people to the doorkeepers of the temple, and to deliver it to the overseers and doers of the work, without making any reckoning with them, and confiding in their good faith. In answer, the high priest Hilkiab says to the secretary, I have found a book, (or the book,) of the law, in the house of the Lord ; and he gives this book to the secretary, who reads it." The conference with the king respecting this book, is afterwards recorded, then that with the prophetess Huldah. We here remark a little misrepresentation : the message was not without a motive ; the temple had been profaned ; idols had been set up in it ; it stood in need of repairs ; the king's object was to have it repaired, to have it cleared of every pollution, in order that the true worship might be established : this was a sufficient motive.

The argument goes on, *p.* 64. " Let us weigh the words and circumstances of this narrative ; and first remark, that Josiah, a child crowned at the age of eight, was educated

by the high priest Hilkiah, who during eight or ten years was the real Regent of the state and prince ; consequently Josiah, now twenty five or twenty six years old, is still 'under the moral influence of the pontiff, and of the sacerdotal education received from him.' If we refer to p. 62 we read : " It may be *imagined* that a king of eight years had a tutor regent, whose name is not mentioned, but who, naturally, and by the indication of facts, was the high priest Hilkiah." There it was a probable supposition ; now it is assumed as a fact. How is this ? No proof is given : no evidence is advanced ; the facts which indicate it are wholly omitted ; the books of Kings and Chronicles, our only sources of information, are wholly silent on the subject : our author has not even attempted to advance a proof, yet he argues as if it were established ; as if he really thinks it established. Is this right reasoning ? Surely if we are at liberty to assume what data we please, without regard to truth, we may on all subjects draw such conclusions as we like. On what evidence is the assertion proved ? On Mr. Volney's word. No author can expect his readers to be bound by his word, in a matter which must rest solely upon historical testimony ; on such points, historical proof we must have ; and in this, our author's word is directly opposed to the evidence of the only authentic sources of information which we possess ; therefore we must refuse to give assent to it.

The argument, p. 64, proceeds, " At that age, and in the eighteenth year of his reign, he sends a solemn message to the high priest ; the object of which message is to deliver unto the overseers of the temple, sums of money, without making any reckoning with them. Why this favour, not only of a singular nature, but unjust and imprudent ? It must certainly have a motive, an object in view ; this object is to conciliate those men and their families, and consequently their friends, and the people, of whom they make a part." Mr. Volney must be aware that there is a difference amongst Hebraists, whether the command was that there should be no reckoning made with the overseers,



or whether the fact is simply stated, that on account of their faithful dealing, no reckoning was made with them ; I shall not insist upon this point ; I only advance it to show, that, since there is this difference of opinion, arguments founded upon either interpretation should be advanced with moderation and modesty. We are assured, however, that the motive of this "unjust and imprudent" measure was to conciliate those men and their families, and consequently their friends, and the people of whom they made a part : but for all this, where is our author's authority ? He has not proved it ; he has given us no historical testimony ; he tells us it was so ; he assures us that this was the case : a satisfactory proof would be very gratifying to an enquiring mind, but it is omitted, perhaps for the sake of brevity. But how happens our author at this very remote period of time, to enter into the secrets of Josiah's court, nay, to know the motives of his conduct, which have never been divulged to any one besides himself ? The only authentic historical documents which we have, are wholly silent on this subject. Either, then, our author's information is supernatural, or conjectural ; which latter we may assume it, without danger of error : and then he is guilty of boldly stating as a matter of fact, that which is only his own opinion ; and an opinion, be it remembered, may be right or wrong. We are told that this measure was intended to conciliate the people, through the medium of these men ; and, a few lines before, we were told that the measure was unjust and imprudent : a new piece of state policy !—a king, to conciliate the people, is to expend the public money in a manner which is unjust and imprudent ; and the people are to admire their king, because he wastes their money in an unjust and imprudent manner.

It is a matter of regret that all unpopular kings are not acquainted with this secret, for the remedy is easy : when a king is unpopular, he has only to waste the revenue in bestowing it in an unjust and imprudent manner upon a few individuals in his country, and he will conciliate the people. As far as I have examined these matters, it appears to me that kings have not often gained popularity in this manner.

But our author makes no remarks upon 2 *Kings* xii. 15; which, speaking of the repairs of the temple in the reign of Jehoash, 887 B. C. says: "Moreover, they reckoned not with the men into whose hands they delivered the money, to be bestowed on workmen; for they dealt faithfully." Respecting this, he either was ignorant or professed ignorance. However it proves that Josiah was not the only king who acted in this manner respecting the repairs of the Temple; it proves that this plan of proceeding was not new: when, therefore, the example had been set by a former king, and our historical documents do not inform us that the measure was either "unjust or imprudent," we have no right to attribute the following of it to a bad motive, without very good evidence, and evidence derived solely from history.

The argument continues, *p.* 65: "In answer, the high priest presents a book, which he says is the book of the law, and pretends he found it in the temple. What proof is there that he found this book? Has he any witnesses? They are not mentioned; but it is evident that, if he required support, all the workmen in the temple, whose benefactor he was, would be at his devotion. Admitting that he found this book, and did not compose it himself; at least he had it in his hands, alone and as long as he pleased; did he make no alteration in it? It is an only manuscript; nobody controlled it; nobody establishes its authority."

Never did any man enter so easily into all the secrets of the courts of kings, which for ages have been concealed from the whole world, as Mr. Volney; and never did any one more carefully withhold his reasons. Who told our Author or his translator that the high priest pretended to find the book? Who told him that there were no witnesses? Who told him that he had the manuscript alone and as long as he pleased? Who told him that nobody controlled it; that nobody establishes its authority? True, our author tells us that this was the case; but, what! are we to believe him, when his word is opposed to every authentic record of antiquity? This would be strangely to depart from all rules of right reasoning. History, which here must be our only guide, gives us no warrant whatever to suspect either

Josiah or Hilkiah to have been guilty of the base crime of bribing the workmen in the temple of God, to swear to the truth of an imposture. Of this crime they are accused; it is therefore incumbent upon the translator, publicly to prove the truth of the charge, or publicly to retract it.

Mr. Volney asks, Who establishes its authority? I answer, The whole Jewish nation, for the whole nation received it: and in return I ask, What history supports that of the accusation which he advances? The books of Kings and Chronicles afford no trace of suspicion; nor does the shadow of any appear in any of the other books; the characters of the king and the high priest do not lay them open to such an imputation. The translator must therefore pardon me if I say, that except, upon the direct evidence of history, he clearly prove the truth of the charge, he must stand accused of ascribing to men who were revered in their own days, and whose memories have ever been revered, the basest of crimes; and the crime of false accusation, unsupported by evidence, is even worse than that with which he accuses them. We are asked, what proof there is, that he found the manuscript: on referring to Mr. Volney's own list of the Jewish kings, we trace the existence of a book, called the Law, the Law of God, the Law of God by Moses, the Law of Moses, from the time of Joshua until the reign of Manasseh; that is, until within, at most, seventy years of the time in question. Now, it is very strange, nay impossible, that the whole nation should be totally ignorant of its contents; we have seen that it had been publicly taught; some traces must therefore remain, by which the people might know whether Hilkiah's book was true or false; the nation must have had people who would enquire into the evidences of the authority of the book, otherwise it was unlike every other nation; the king must have had enemies, otherwise he was unlike every other king; the high priest must have had enemies, otherwise he was unlike every other high priest: and it is absurd to suppose that they would receive and be bound by this book, without examining in what manner its authority was established: it is extravagant to suppose that a whole nation would receive a book ascribed to Moses, which condemned their conduct,

which required an entire change, without knowing by what evidence its authority was established. We have not the particulars of these enquiries, but analogy drawn from all other parallel cases, ancient and modern, teaches us that if Hilkiah could not give sufficient evidence, the whole nation would not have received it; and I say the whole nation received it, because it did effect a national change, and we have no account whatever that either Josiah or Hilkiah was even suspected of fraud; and I apprehend that their contemporaries were more likely to institute sufficient inquiry into their character and proceedings, than we are in the present day. Besides this, is it likely that the king or the high priest would risk his credit, his office, his life, upon so hazardous an undertaking? Can we suppose it without having very good evidence? And what evidence have we that they did so? Conjecture will not do; we must have proof, substantial proof, that Hilkiah did write or alter this manuscript, otherwise the insinuation will be rejected with disdain by every lover of truth. But I maintain, from our author's own statement, that he would do neither the one nor the other, that is, he could neither compose it himself, nor make any important alteration in it: for he allows, *p.* 55, that from the time of Saul, 1078 B. C. the Jews had regular annals; Saul preceded the period now in question, about four hundred and twenty two years; if therefore Hilkiah's contemporaries had never before heard of the law of Moses, or if this manuscript introduced laws and customs which were new to them, the first consideration naturally would be, What law had our fathers, what writings of Moses had they? And their civil and religious polity were too intimately interwoven, to allow us to suppose that their annals would leave them in ignorance in this respect: from these annals they could learn whether it was either wholly or in part a forgery. When they are allowed to have had annals; when they had a civil and religious polity, which they supposed had been established by Moses; it is preposterous to suppose that a before unheard of law of Moses could be received, and that the people could be persuaded that this law had governed them for eight hundred years,



if it were in any respect opposed to the evidence of their annals.

And if Hilkiah invented the writing, he must have had an object in view ; and we can see no probable motive ; it could not be to sanction by the authority of Moses their then existing laws or customs, or religious creed, for the people believed that they had all been established by their Legislator, and that they had descended pure and uncorrupted to them ; if the forged writing had differed from what they ascribed to Moses, not only their annals, but their very rites and ceremonies, their religious creed, their civil code, would detect the imposture. Therefore Hilkiah could not invent the writing. Nor could he make any material alteration in the book which he found in the temple. For the old nations, as I have before remarked, were very tenacious respecting their traditions ; and the further we search into the records of early times, the more pertinaciously do we find these traditions adhered to ; this was not occasional, but universal ; and when we remember that the Jews were always remarkable for an obstinate adherence to old customs and early notions, we cannot imagine that they could be so totally ignorant of their own history and that of their ancestors, as to be imposed upon by a forgery, without any being able to detect it. Besides this, we have seen that many of the principal events which are recorded in the Pentateuch, were received as established points of the history of the Jews, in the days of Joshua, who was contemporary with Moses, and became his successor ; and we find nothing there recorded of a historical nature, which at all militates against the authority of the book ascribed to Moses. More passages might have been selected from Joshua and other early writers of the books of the Old Testament, in confirmation of the Jewish history which is recorded in the Pentateuch. Therefore it is impossible that Hilkiah could alter any material point in the history.

Neither could the high priest make in the manuscript any alteration which would affect their political constitution : for they were then governed by a law which they

were persuaded had been given by Moses, and, although at the period now in question the country was in manifest disorder, yet their annals, which our author admits to have been regularly kept from the reign of Saul, must show them how they had been governed in the reigns of the former kings. The manuscript which was found by Hilkiab was received by the whole nation; if then Hilkiab had made any alteration affecting the political constitution of the country, he must have been able to persuade the people that the before unheard of law was the law by which the nation had been governed for eight hundred years, and that their annals recorded a fictitious plan of government which had never been in force. To suppose this would be too far to insult the understanding of the Jews.

Nor could he make any alterations which could affect their religious creed, or their form of worship, or their rites and ceremonies. They had rites and ceremonies, a form of worship, and a religious creed, which were universally believed to have been settled by Moses; these had doubtless been very much neglected for some years preceding the time in question; but their religion was too minutely interwoven with their political constitution, to allow us to suppose their annals of no use here; from their public records they would learn how their fathers worshiped God; from them they would learn what sacrifices they offered, what rites and ceremonies they observed; and, having in their possession such authentic documents, Hilkiab, if he had altered this part of the Law of Moses, would find it rather difficult to persuade the whole nation, that the new religion was the old, when they were witnesses of the change. It would therefore be impossible for the high priest to make any alteration of importance in the writings of Moses.

But this was not the only security; in the reign of Rehoboam, one hundred and ten years before the time in question, the nation was divided into two kingdoms, that of Judah and that of Israel; the former worshiped at Jerusalem; the others at Dan and Bethel; they were hostile to each other; each condemned the worship of the other; each had the same books of Moses, which are now extant

and which do not differ in any material point from each other. Now, if the high priest had altered the Jewish books of Moses, can we imagine that the hostile kingdom would receive his book? Upon no hypothesis can it be made to appear in any way probable: we find no trace of so extraordinary an event in any historical records, and the supposition cannot be considered likely or even possible, except it be supported by very good historical testimony; and we have no evidence whatever that one kingdom altered and corrupted the Sacred writings, common to both, and that the hostile and rival kingdom received them; however, we cannot imagine this to have been done, without very good proof.

P. 65 continues, "This manuscript must have been a roll of papyrus or vellum; whose was the hand writing? was it Moses's? Hilkiash does not tell us; he only says, the book of the law; this is remarkable. If it had come from Moses, would Hilkiash have suppressed a circumstance so well calculated to inspire respect?" Certainly in *2 Kings* Ch. 22, the name of Moses is not mentioned along with that of the manuscript; but in *2 Chron.* xxxiv. 14 we find it said, "Hilkiash the priest found a book of the Law of the Lord, given by Moses." Why has our author rejected the authority of the Chronicles? he makes use of it, when he can make it answer the purpose he has in view; for in p. 61, where he tells us that no trace of the Pentateuch can be found in the histories of the early Jewish Kings, he adds: "This silence, especially in Solomon's time, is the more remarkable, as the author of the Chronicles, when he informs us that the tables of the law of Moses were deposited in the temple built by that prince, (*2 Chron.* v.) does not say a word about the book of Moses." Why has our author suppressed the evidence of the Chronicles, where we are expressly told it was a book of the law of Moses? Why does he quote only from Kings, where the name of Moses is not mentioned. He says that Hilkiash does not tell us it was from Moses; upon the authority of Chronicles I affirm that his statement is wholly false; it is either a palpable falsehood, a misrepresentation of facts, a suppression of

evidence, or our author was ignorant of the contents of the book which he examines, and whose authority he endeavours to destroy, by the contents themselves. Whichever is the case, the statement is entirely destitute of truth.

P. 65 continues, "Besides, if it came from Moses, this manuscript must have been more than 800 years old, and after so long a time, forgotten in some chest, it must have been consumed by worms and dust, in so corrosive a climate as Judea. There must have been blanks, the writing itself must have been different, and many of the words obsolete: for there is no example of a language and a form of writing, having remained unaltered during 800 years. However, the secretary Shaphan reads it currently and at first sight." Short as this extract is, it contains abundance of bold assumptions, which have only one defect: they want proof. It is assumed that the manuscript had been forgotten in some chest for 800 years; that it must have been consumed by worms and dust; that there were blanks; that the writing was different; that many of the words were obsolete; and that the secretary read it currently and at first sight. We here want six distinct and separate proofs, and not one is attempted in the whole book. Now I ask, on what authority Mr. Volney says the manuscript must have been forgotten for 800 years? The statement is untrue; we have already seen that the law of Moses had been publicly taught by order of many of the kings; that it is appealed to; extracts are made from it, and that 70 years must be the utmost limit in which it can have been forgotten. But it need not of necessity be consumed by worms and dust, even in 800 years, for we have now manuscripts of a greater age, which are not so consumed; and it is incredible that it should become so in 70 years. That there were blanks is supported by no evidence whatever. In addition, how does our author know that the language and the writing must have been altered during this period? He has given us no evidence; he has referred to no history; what private intelligence has he had? Even allowing what he says to be true, the Jews must have been very illiterate, if not a man could be found in the whole kingdom, who



could read the language which had been in use 800 years previously ; but we have no example of an ancient language having altered in so remarkable a degree. Compare the language of Herodotus with that of the latest classical Greek author; and no one acquainted with the greek language currently spoken during the time of the later writer could be unable to read the language of Herodotus: but come to the Hebrew itself; suppose the Pentateuch to have been entirely written by Hilkiab, then the book of Joshua becomes the oldest document contained in the Old Testament; there is not so wide a difference between the language in which this book is written, and that of Malachi, the latest, that a person who is able to read and speak the language of one, would be unable to read that of the other. But for the sake of giving our author every advantage, I will for a moment suppose Hilkiab or Shaphan to have written the book: he had to counterfeit the worm eaten parchment, the blanks, the old characters, the obsolete words, and in all respects to make the document appear to be 800 years old. But our author expresses great surprise at the secretary because he could read the manuscript; now, if he could not read it, he certainly could not write it. We all know it is easy to read our own language as it was currently spoken several hundred years ago, but we should find it very difficult to forge a document, so that its appearance, its style and character, and its obsolete language, should deceive the world, and so faithfully that it should pass for a writing of the age to which it might lay claim. This I am sure could never be done by a man to whom our author denies the power of reading his own writing. If with Mr. Volney we suppose Shaphan to have been unable to read the old language; how extravagant, how absurd, is it to suppose that he could write it! But we have no evidence whatever that, between the time of Moses and Josiah, the Hebrew Language had undergone so great a change: the present simplicity of the language, the little progress the older Jews made in the several departments of literature, their insulation from free commerce with other nations, their abhorrence of all their manners, the supposed sanctity of their own language, their almost

obstinate adherence to whatever they received from their ancestors, prohibit such a supposition; it cannot be allowed without the evidence of very good historical testimony, and we have none at all; and I am sure that no history informs us that Shaphan could write a language which he could not read.

The argument continues, p. 66, "He (i. e. Shaphan) carries the book to the king, and the king, hearing its contents, is surprised, and affrighted so as to tear his garments! What! King Josiah, educated by the high priest, did not know the law of Moses! that law, of which every prince, at his accession, received a copy, transcribed for his use by the priests, according to an express order of *Deut.* xvii. All was therefore forgotten; or else all was dissimulation." This is p. 66, to which we shall again have occasion to refer. Here we find the conjecture, p. 62, that Josiah was probably educated by the high priest, has grown into a fact, and argument is built upon it; how has it been proved? This has not been even attempted; for some pages, it has not been once mentioned; and now, without any evidence, or even any mention, it is assumed to be a fact: this is to impose a perfect falsity upon the unguarded reader. The author being dead, I ask the translator how this point has been proved; how do you know it? The books of Kings and Chronicles tell us no such thing; they do not even hint at it. What private information have you had? What history has been handed down to you, of which the world is ignorant, from the authority of which you tell us without hesitation, that Josiah was educated by the high priest? Proof is what we require, and on a subject of this nature the word of no man will be taken without it: to make this affirmation, when the statement is diametrically opposed to the plain testimony of the only authentic sources of information which we possess, is, by boldness, to impose upon the ignorant, and is a direct insult upon the understanding of your readers; it is to confound reason by the bold effrontery of falsehood. You have not drawn us to this conclusion by reasoning; you have not established it upon any testimony; nay, history is opposed to it, and yet you modestly require the reader to believe you, and a

very modest request in any author it is, that his word is to be regarded as more certain than historical testimony, regarding events which happened nearly 3000 years ago. Until, Sir, you have proved the point, it must be placed amongst your very improbable conjectures, and not amongst those things which have been proved.

We now arrive at a very singular remark p. 67 "Consequently he (i. e. Jeremiah) was himself, like Huldah, one of the confederates in this concerted drama; that, in one word, there was on this occasion, a secret covenant, a combined plan, between the high priest, the king, the secretary Shaphan, the priest Achbor, the prophet Jeremiah, and the prophetess Huldah." What was this concerted plan? We have been told that it was to bribe the workmen of the temple to perjure themselves by swearing to the truth of an imposture: and can any one with moderation hear characters boldly accused of such enormous crimes, who were held sacred in their own days, who have been equally venerated in all ages—can any one, I say, bear to hear them accused of such enormous crimes, such base villainies, when no trace of evidence whatever is advanced? Let the translator prove the truth of his accusations; let him substantiate his charges, or for ever hold his peace. These men were regarded as the prophets of the Most High God in their own days, and amongst their own people, and they were quite as likely to know their characters, as either Mr. Volney or his translator: and, until he proves the truth of the charges, he stands accused of falsehood, false accusation, crimes as bad as those which he ascribes to Josiah and his friends; the very Pentateuch would have taught better things: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," is one of its precepts; and witness is false, if it be unsupported by evidence. Expose, Mr. translator, the concerted drama; detect the combined plan; support your arguments by historical evidence, or never dare to treat with contempt, upon such evidence, a book which in all ages has been esteemed as a revelation from God. With abuse, with false testimony, with misrepresentation, with enmity,

you may assail this sacred edifice; but it has withstood the utmost violence of more powerful artillery than any which you can bring against it; it will but laugh at your feeble attempts; your arguments, as they are unfolded, only expose their native insignificance and their absurdity, and prove that their author is utterly ignorant of the subject of which he is treating, nay, of the method of connecting the data with their conclusion. I avow myself to be a sincere friend to free discussion, to deep and impartial enquiry into every subject; and surely it is not to oppose to it any obstacle, if I say that that man merits unbounded censure, who imposes upon his readers, statements which are entirely false; who misrepresents his subject; perverts and suppresses evidence; and, instead of argument, substitutes low abuse, and will venture, in opposition to every historical testimony, to bring accusations of the most serious nature, and without any evidence, against men who have always been revered, as the brightest examples of every moral virtue.

It would be tiresome both to the reader and to myself, were I to follow our author through all the windings of that intricate labyrinth of absurd hypothesis in which he has lost his way: having shewn that his hypothesis respecting the book of the law found by Hilkiah is absurd, I shall confine myself solely to his leading arguments; and here again we remark, in *p. 75*, that "The young king was educated by the high priest," yet no proof whatever is advanced. Our author must suppose his readers to be very deficient in understanding or in memory, for he first advanced it as a supposition; as an hypothesis, it becomes a fair subject of inquiry, and examination; but Mr. Volney proceeds upon a new plan: he does not examine the subject; he passes it over in total silence, discusses quite other subjects, then very modestly takes it for granted that Josiah was educated by the high priest; nay, he assures us that he was so educated.

In *p. 75* it is said: "But it will be objected, if the book found by Hilkiah was the Pentateuch, and if, for all the foregoing reasons, Moses could not be its author, does it



follow that Hilkiah composed the whole of it, and must this book be considered as entirely spurious? We do not draw so exaggerated a conclusion; we only suppose that the high priest, intending to revive the law of Moses, generally forgotten by the Jews, collected carefully all the writings and monuments extant relating to his object; that he might really have found writings of which Moses was the author, but rather second-hand copies than originals—that he revised and new modelled his materials, in which he preserved many of the ancient fragments, but into which he also introduced several connecting passages and explanations of his own. It is better to avow candidly that Hilkiah is its real author, inasmuch as he compiled and arranged the materials; but it must also be allowed, that, if so, we are entirely at his mercy, and that he was free to suppress, reform, and insert, whole passages, unknown, or at least foreign to the books of Moses, as we think we can prove in the book of Genesis.”

With this compare *p.* 66. “All was therefore forgotten, or else all was dissimulation;” and *p.* 67. “Huldah, one of the confederates in this concerted drama;” “There was a secret covenant, a combined plan, between the high priest, the king, &c. :” compare this pretended candour with the accusations of fraud, bribery, and imposture, which have been brought against these men: and what is the effect which the entire chain of the reasoning is calculated to have upon the mind of the reader? The leading feature of the argument is this: Moses is pronounced not to be the author of the Pentateuch; Josiah, Hilkiah, &c. are accused of imposing a book upon the Jews which they ascribe to Moses, and in aiding this design, without even a shadow of evidence, they are accused of the basest of crimes; their character is therefore placed in the most unfavourable point of view; we are then told that they did collect writings of Moses, which they wished to revive; and we are informed that we are entirely at their mercy—at the mercy of men, whose characters our author describes as eminently bad; we are told that the Pentateuch which we have is such as they were pleased to give. This is to tell us that it is of no



authority ; the translator may perhaps say, that this idea was not intended to be conveyed ; but this will neither remove the impression, nor prevent the bad effects which may arise from it ; how can we depend upon the authority of any work, if we are persuaded that the person through whose hands it passed, and who alone possessed it as long as he pleased, was guilty of the extreme of knavery, in the very act of bringing it forward ? But we will not allow that Hilkiab was its real author, for every evidence testifies that he could not be any such thing ; and our author has not even rendered it probable ; I trust that it has been shown to the satisfaction of the reader, that the arguments which have been advanced to prove that he was the author, tend rather to prove that he could not even alter any material part of those writings of Moses, which he found in the Temple. Tell us what alterations were made by Hilkiab ; prove that he made any ; otherwise we must still say, that Moses was the real author of the Pentateuch.

If what has been said be deemed insufficient, there are other arguments by which it may be proved, that Hilkiab could not do those things of which he is accused. We have the Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs, and the Chaldee Paraphrases, which agree in all material points ; the differences which are found in them are unimportant and principally verbal : many of the Jews were in captivity at this very time, who afterwards returned to their own land. Now, since the writings of Moses were more or less known amongst these people in the time of Josiah, if he had altered the writings of Moses, which they had in common with each other, it is quite impossible that the rest, who could trace the origin of their Sacred writings at least before the time of Hilkiab, and most probably to Moses, would alter their Scriptures, on which they depended for every blessing in this life, and on which they reposed their hopes for futurity, to please Josiah, when they had in their hands, the very means of detecting the fraud ;—quite impossible, because we find no parallel example whatever, and no authentic historical document which we have, can be made to favour the idea.

## Chap. III.



### OF GENESIS IN GENERAL, AND OF THE DELUGE.



“EXAMINATION of Genesis in particular.”—*P.* 111. “The book of Genesis is here in a particular case; for, although an historical work, it cannot be considered as belonging to the Jews, or as a national book, since the subject includes a space of time, when that people did not exist, had no archives, and could preserve nothing. Now, if after Moses, during all the period of the Judges, the Jews, forming a nation, did not possess, or could not preserve annals; if before Moses, the time of their residence in Egypt, in a state of servitude, which excludes every other care, has remained in an impenetrable obscurity for want of monuments, how could they possibly have preserved preceding annals, especially annals so circumstantial as the anecdotes of the life of Joseph, of his father Jacob, and of Abraham, their common parent? And, granting this point, supposing Abraham, as they admit, to have been born a Chaldean, is not all that precedes that man, whether true or false, a Chaldean account, solely founded on the traditions and monuments of the Chaldeans? *P.* 112. The high priest Hilkiab, having conceived the project of reviving the fervour of the Jews, of renovating their national spirit, by re-establishing the law of Moses, might imagine that this plan could not be effected, if he only published the code of rites and ordinances of the four books. It was then the fashion to have cosmogonies, and to explain the origin of

all things, of nations, and of the world ; each nation had its sacred book, commencing with cosmogony. *P.* 113. Hil- kiah wishing to give the Jews a book, which would serve them as a standard and rallying point, found it necessary to insert a cosmogony. If he had himself invented it, he would have compromised the whole work : his nation, of Chaldean origin, had preserved many of their material traditions ; Hil- kiah, who, like Jeremiah, his agent, was politically favourable to Chaldea in preference to Egypt, adopted, with some modifications, the Babylonian Cos- mogony."

Although we have not correct annals of the times in question, I beg it may be proved that the Jews had none ; we find books mentioned in which particular events are recorded, but which are now lost ; this is something like preserving annals : but even if the Jews had not preserved annals in those times, does it follow that Moses could not have a knowledge of the history of Abraham, of Jacob, and Joseph ? Because I cannot record the leading events of the French Revolution in precise chronological order, am I thence to be considered as knowing nothing of the pre- ceding history of France ? Surely no man will so far de- part from the evidence of universal experience, as to make such a supposition : only allow to Moses the same faculty of recording events, which you will grant to any historian, and any errors, real or imaginary, in the Chronology, will not affect his veracity as an historian. We are, however, told, that Hil- kiah wrote it, copying the Chaldean Cosmo- gony ; but upon what evidence does this rest ? It has no- where been proved ; our author refers us to no history ; this then is only his opinion ; and are we to be governed by opinions ? Our author says this was the case ; another may deny it ; we may have therefore two opposite opinions, and which are we to follow ? How are we to decide between them ? By the testimony of antiquity. To this our author does not refer us ; he attempts no proof ; therefore it would argue great weakness in any reader to receive his word, when it is directly opposed to every evidence of antiquity. And if the original documents in the early ages passed

through Chaldea, it does not follow that they are either untrue, or destitute of authority : that Genesis was copied from Chaldean monuments, is the thing to be proved ; but our author has found it more suitable to his purpose to take it for granted.

*Chap. xii. "Of the Deluge,"* next claims some notice : *p. 115.* Our author informs us from Josephus, that the Chaldean accounts of this event, which were collected by Berossus, contain the particulars of a Deluge, from which Noux was saved by an ark ; he cites the passage, and adds : "Thus the history of Noah, of the Deluge, of the ark, is a history entirely Chaldean, that is to say, the Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, (*Genesis*) are taken from the sacred legends of the priests of that nation, at an epoch infinitely remote. It is much to be regretted that the book of Berossus has not been handed down to us ; but it appears that the piety of the first Christians having considered it dangerous, they suppressed it at an early period." Justice to the first Christians requires this accusation to be proved. As our author makes frequent use of Berossus, Alexander Polyhistor, and other very early writers, and is always entirely satisfied with their word, we will hear his own testimony concerning their authority : *note in p. 116* : "This author (Syncellus) sometimes mentions Berossus ; but all the passages he cites having been afterwards attributed to Polyhistor, Abydenus, and other copiers of Berossus, it seems to us that already the original of Berossus no longer existed ;" and in *p. 196.* "It is to be regretted that this author's (Berossus) account is transmitted to us after having been first copied by Alexander Polyhistor, who might have altered it, and afterwards revised by Syncellus, who curtailed it and criticised it according to his own ideas ; so that there are several veils between us and the original and primitive text of the Chaldean traditions, translated into Greek and commented upon by Berossus." Mr. Volney here states his conviction of the obscurity in which all these documents are involved ; and are fragments so dubious to be considered authority against Genesis ? Again, in *p. 118-122*, our author compares the accounts which are given in Genesis, and in the "Chaldean



Monuments copied by Alexander Polyhister in his second book ;” of the latter he says, *note p. 118.* “ Syncellus *p. 30,* seems at first sight to have taken this passage from Berosus ; but at the end he says, ‘ This is what Alexander Polyhister wrote : ’ ” so much may we depend upon the authority of these historians.

Our author has before told us that Genesis was copied from these monuments ; but, from his own confession, they are veiled in the greatest obscurity, and are avowedly in all respects uncertain ; we must therefore be very careful lest we be misled, for he uses these documents as of authority, without hesitation fixes to them a date earlier than that of Genesis, and regards their decision as final : this is a system that cannot be tolerated. But let him not too soon arrive at his conclusion :—Genesis is copied from these monuments because they agree in some points : therefore if an account of the life of Buonaparte be written by a Frenchman, and another by an Englishman, because they agree in many respects, one of necessity has copied from the other ;—very sound reasoning ! If two writers compose books of Astronomy, because their accounts of the Solar System agree, one must have copied from the other ;—a very satisfactory conclusion !

These accounts are compared, and we are told, *p. 123,* “ Both accounts are a tissue of physical and moral impossibilities : but here plain good sense will not do ; one must be initiated in the astrological doctrine of the ancients, to guess at this kind of enigma, and to know that in general all the deluges mentioned by the Jews, Chaldeans, Greeks, and Indians, as having destroyed the world under Ogyges, Inachus, Deucalion, and Xisuthrus, are one and the same physico-astronomical event, which is still repeated every year, and all the marvellous of which consists in the metaphorical language employed to express it. In this language *the great circle of the heavens is called Mundus,* the analogous word to which, *Mondala,* still signifies *circle* in Sanscrit ; the *Orbis* of the Latin is synonymous with it. The revolution of this circle by the Sun, composing the year of 12 months, was called *orbis,* the *world,* the *celestial*



*circle.* Consequently, every twelve months, the world ended and the world began again;—the world was destroyed and the world was renewed.”

Stop a little; it has no where been proved that all the deluges mentioned by Jews, Chaldeans, &c. are one and the same physico-astronomical event, which is still repeated every year: the proof of all this is wanting. But this is not all; skeletons of fishes are found at great elevations above the level of the sea, and at great distances from it: do fish then become land animals when the sun finishes his circle? Do they then retreat by land, and take refuge upon the tops of mountains? This deserves investigation. Have they grown there? Has their element ever been stiff clay, or hard limestone? If either of these be the case, their presence is easily accounted for. Or do bivalve shells acquire the power of climbing hills when the sun's circle is completed? This is curious. You may say that what is now land was once the bed of the sea; but here you get into a greater difficulty, in avoiding a less, for you have to prove it: however we will suppose it for the sake of argument; and we find it rest upon no evidence; it would effect no more than a deluge: the change must have been gradual or sudden; if the former, we must expect to find manifest traces of corresponding changes, progressively going forward, noticed in some of our early histories: but we find none: if it has been sudden, it has been a deluge, and such a deluge as the Sun's ingress into the winter semicircle cannot produce.

*Page 124.* “The epoch of this remarkable event varied according to the people, and their custom of beginning the year at one of the solstices or equinoxes; in Egypt it was at the Sumner solstice. At this epoch, the Nile gave the first symptoms of its overflowing: and in forty days, the waters covered all the land of Egypt to the height of fifteen cubits; it was, as it still is, an ocean, a deluge.” Thus is the deluge accounted for, and the forty days explained, and the depth of fifteen cubits;—only these cubits are above the surface, not above the highest hills; this however seems of little importance, for mountains do not impede the pro-

gress of our author ; but let us remember that the Nile is in *Egypt*, and then turn back to *p.* 113. "Hilkiah, who like Jeremiah, his agent, was politically favourable to Chaldea in preference to Egypt, adopted, with some modifications, the Babylonian Cosmogony : " and *p.* 114. " We shall still find wherewith to persuade any unprejudiced mind, of the identity of the Jewish and Chaldean Cosmogonies." But it is not so easy to persuade any unprejudiced mind, either that the Nile is a Chaldean river, or that the Chaldean Cosmogony was borrowed from Egyptian phenomena, interesting only to the Egyptians. What proof have we that the fabulous Cosmogony of Chaldea was taken from and represented phenomena which are confined to Egypt? Or why is the fable of the Chaldean winter converted into the overflowing of the Nile in the summer? But the deluge began in the second month and on the seventh day of the month, (*Gen.* vii. 11.) which is two months, seventeen days, after the symptoms of the overflowing of the Nile, *i. e.* after the beginning of the Egyptian year, (*p.* 124) which is no inconsiderable part of the whole. The fable, as it is called, of the deluge, a short time ago was in winter; now it is transferred to midsummer; how is this? For what reason? Where is the proof? This is omitted. However let us go on: *p.* 124. "It was important to know and see it," (the overflowing of the Nile,) "the stars were remarked, which at the time appeared at morn and even in the horizon. A group of those which coincided with it, was called the ship or bark, signifying that one should be in readiness to embark; another was called a dog that warns; a third was the crow; a fourth the dove; a fifth the labourer, the vine-dresser (*Arcturus, Bootes*); not far from him was the woman (the *Celestial Virgin*): all those persons that figure in the deluge of Noh or Xisuthrus, are still in the *Celestial Sphere*; it was a real picture of the calendar, of which the foregoing texts are only a more or less faithful description." All this we are told with great confidence, but we want a proof; and on searching, we find that none whatever is even attempted. Now observe the reasoning; the fable bears some analogy to the history; therefore they relate to the

same thing : some of the personages of the one bear the same names as some in the other ; therefore the fable is the original type, from which the histories have been feigned : the only defect in this reasoning is, that the premises have nothing to do with the conclusion. Let it be proved that the histories and the fables have not originated in one and the same real event. Except we suppose the event to have happened, it is impossible to imagine in what manner remote and unconnected nations can all have feigned accounts of deluges ; that all should agree as to the preservation of some persons in an ark, who were not polluted by the universal wickedness of the world ; respecting the Dove, &c. : deny the event, and we can make no probable supposition of the origin of these fables : we must suppose that various countries, differing in their mythology, have still agreed, without any communication, to have a fabled deluge, which agrees amongst the whole ; a thing rather difficult of belief.

But if we suppose this ; if we suppose the Chaldean Deluge to be the termination of the Solar circle ; if we suppose the Egyptian to be no more than the overflowing of the Nile ; neither of these can so disturb the element of the fishes in England, Russia, America, &c. as to make them take refuge upon the tops of mountains. Let us, however, consult these celebrated stars, which have so often witnessed this deluge, and see if they assist us ; and in the latitude of Egypt, we find them rise in the following order : the Dove and Dog nearly together, part of the ship, the Virgin, the Crow, and Bootes : at setting the order is ; the Dove, the Ship, the Dog, the Crow, the Virgin, and Bootes. If we take them at their rising, the fable will not hold good ; the Dove which goes out to see if the waters be abating, upon the picture comes to see if they be approaching—not a very faithful representation ; the Virgin lands before the crow leaves the ark—not much like the order of the history : take them at setting ; the Dove goes first ; the ship lands ; the Dog barks when the ship is safely moored ; then the crow comes to view the dry land. Since the translator of course is conversant with astronomy, of which great use is here made, he will oblige the astronomical world by teaching us when

and by whom these constellations were formed; also the particular reason why the several names were given to them; and I beg him also to prove that the deluge, real or mythological, was not known, before these constellations received their names.

I will also propose another question for his consideration. We are told that Hilkihah copied the Chaldean Cosmogony, and not the Egyptian; we are told that the accounts of the deluge are fable, and signify only the overflowing of the Nile, which we are assured answers as to time and depth of water: the question I propose is this: What has Chaldean mythology to do with phenomena, which are confined to Egypt? Is the Chaldean Cosmogony borrowed from Egypt? Is the Chaldean Sphere made to represent Egyptian phenomena?

I say—make that appear,  
And I will credit whatsoe'er  
You tell me after, on your word,  
Howe'er unlikely or absurd.

The argument, *p.* 125, continues: "Chaldea had also its deluges, from the overflowing of the Tygris and Euphrates, at the moment when the sun dissolves the snows of the Armenian Mountains. But this deluge was of a noxious nature, on account of the rapidity and uncertainty of its arrival." Where are we now? where is the ship, the dog, the crow, the dove, the labourer, the virgin? All out of the way when wanted, for, *p.* 126, "The deluges of the Nile and Euphrates used not to happen at the same Epochs:" the faithless dog is off his duty—the ship is not ready, or sails before the water comes—the crow and dove find dry land when they should be on the water. What contradictions? gravity itself cannot keep grave: the account is Chaldean, the fable Egyptian; the thing is applied to a Chaldean phenomenon, which does not happen at the Epoch. The Chaldean fable represents the inundations of the Nile; though, by the bye, if I mistake not, the people do not wait till the water comes, and retreat by ships; they commonly adopt a safer and less expensive plan, and retire by dry land; the stars do not follow the order, yet they are the substance of the fable; the whole account is



Chaldean, therefore the grand events of the Chaldean Mythology are borrowed from phenomena in which they are in no way interested; their celestial sphere is made to answer for the deluges of Egypt:—is not this a “tissue of moral and physical impossibilities?”

The argument is now made more general, *p.* 126, “At last, natural philophers having extended their geographical knowledge, and observed that the northern hemisphere was, as it were, drowned in rains during the wintry interval of the two equinoxes, it came to pass that the idea and name of the deluge were applied to the winter half year, whilst the word conflagration was given to the summer one, as we learn from Aristotle.” Does this prove that there never was a deluge? Does it tell us how the skeletons of fish have arrived at the tops of mountains? Are they rained down in the winter? If so, it is very curious. Because, then, the winter half year was called a deluge, there never was a real deluge; therefore there could not be one in Holland, occasioned by the rupture of the Dykes in 1446; and the accounts of the event are fabulous. This is a peculiar sort of reasoning, and not very consistent with the plain narration, that every creature was destroyed wherein was the breath of life. A short time ago, the deluge was only the overflowing of the Nile, which took place at the Summer Solstice;—then it strayed from Egypt to Chaldea, representing an uncertain and irregular deluge;—now it extends over the whole of the Northern hemisphere, and is the winter!

This transfer may be very easy, but it wants proof; it remains to be proved, that, because there were fabled deluges, there never was a real one; it remains to be proved, that the traditions relating to one universal deluge are fable; it remains to be proved, that the event was not real; and no proof do we find in the whole book. We find a similarity between the accounts given by Moses, and by other early historians; we find the names of some constellations upon the celestial sphere, analogous to those named as concerned in the event of the deluge: thence it is concluded, that there never was a deluge, that the stars were so named, as to be



emblematical of the termination of the sun's course at the summer solstice, of the deluges occasioned by the Nile, the inundations of the Euphrates, uncertain as to time, and of his passage through the winter semicircle; things as inconsistent amongst themselves as can be imagined. In this the only difficulty is, to see what relation the premises have to the conclusion.

I shall notice but two more passages which respect this event. In *p.* 127. we are told, that the account in Genesis is mixed with repetitions and contradictions, "for instance, the rain lasted forty days, and the waters swelled one hundred and fifty." To this I only say, that it is absolutely false; Genesis says no such thing; in *Gen.* vii. 24, we are told that the waters ἐψάθη, prevailed, kept elevated, retained their height; our author therefore attributes to the author of Genesis, that which he does not say. "The first day of the tenth month, were seen the tops of the mountains; forty days after, the dove finds nowhere to rest her foot." Where is the contradiction? We are nowhere told that the ark *rested* during the forty days; and it is the property of floating bodies to move, when acted upon by winds and currents; therefore at the beginning of the forty days, the ark might rest upon a mountain, and at the end of the time, it might not be near one: or if it did rest during the whole time, the mountain would be under water at the first; and we are merely informed that the tops of the mountains were seen, it is not said that they were bare, and transparency is a property of water, so that things really below its surface may be seen. But, allowing that the tops of some mountains were bare, where is the contradiction? If a man purpose to commence any trade or profession in any particular place, if there be already more people in that trade or profession than the place requires, the expression, "there is no room for him," will not be deemed improper; it does not mean that he cannot find room to stand in the place, but that he cannot have employment in that line, to enable him to make a livelihood; so the dove might be said, and with great propriety, to find no rest for her foot, if the top of a mountain were just bare, allowing her to stand, yet afford-

ing no means of subsistence: but I beg the translator to prove that there was even this space.

Whoever carefully reads the accounts of the modern geological discoveries, even if he had never had any account of a deluge, must be convinced that such an event really took place, at some remote period. To enquire into the manner in which it could be produced, would be vain; we are not to deny the reality of an event, because we cannot discover its cause: we know that we can see, but we cannot discover the cause of vision: are we therefore to say that the eye possesses no power of vision? In like manner, when we see evident marks of the effects of a deluge, marks which prove it to a demonstration, marks which could be produced only by a deluge, are we to deny its reality, because we cannot say how it was produced? This would be strangely to depart from every rule of sound philosophy.

## Chap. III.



OF THE TOWER OF BABEL ; AND OF ABRAHAM.



WE now come to *ch.* xiii. "Of the tower of Babel, or Pyramid of Bell at Babylon." *P.* 130. "Afterwards come on, in the eleventh chapter," (Genesis) "the separation of families, the undertaking of the Tower at Babylon, and the confusion of languages. An account equivalent to this is given in a fragment of Polyhister. 'When men spoke (still) the same language, they built a very lofty tower, as if to climb up to heaven ; but the gods (Elahim) sent tempests to destroy it, and they gave to each (man) a language ; hence the name of Babylon given to that city.' Here, says Syncellus, Polyhister forgets that, according to his authors, that city of Babylon, mentioned for the first time at this period, had already existed for thousands of years."

Mr. Volney allows that the writings of the authors he here quotes are involved in great obscurity ; yet he takes their word as decisive ; according then to his own confession, their word is not undeniable proof of the high antiquity of Babylon ; if there be several veils between the original accounts they gave, and those which are now attributed to them, which he says is the case—if they have passed through the hands of writers who may have altered them, which he allows—surely it is not reasonable to expect the reader to rely implicitly upon their testimony, and from it alone to ascribe to Babylon so high an antiquity. If, according to his own confession, Syncellus may have

altered it according to his own views, why may we not suspect it here when opposed to more direct testimony? The authority of these fragments must be established, before they can be used as weapons against the books of Moses. I will for a moment suppose the Pentateuch to have been entirely composed by Hilkiah, and show that Mr. Volney's argument is fatal to itself; even on this supposition Genesis was written nearly a thousand years prior to the time of Syncellus, who preserves these fragments, and so much nearer to the time when this event is said to have taken place; it has been shown that we possess this book as left by Hilkiah; of the others, Polyhistor copied them, and Mr. Volney allows that he might alter them; then they were curtailed and criticised by Syncellus, according to his own ideas. I ask, which will common sense consider as entitled to credit? Which will the rules of criticism receive with the greatest confidence? Surely not the uncertain one.

Our author now gives another account by Abydenus, on which he remarks, *p* 131, "By offering us several versions, these fragments prove that there existed several sources, of which the Jewish account was only an emanation, and not a primitive type." We do not say that the Jewish account was that from which the others were copied; we only say that it is a true account of a real event, and that the others are traditional accounts of the same, more or less corrupted by fable, which is the case with all old Chaldean and Egyptian histories. Neither does it follow that the Jewish account has been copied from the others, for we can trace it back to a period more distant than the other; I mean the other is lost in uncertainty several years after Christ, therefore, long after the time even of Hilkiah. Our author's aim is to show that the Pentateuch was composed by Hilkiah, in order to convince the reader that it is copied from Berosus and others, who lived between his time and that of Moses; yet we have no proof either that Hilkiah did copy these cosmogonies, or that he composed the Pentateuch, but proof to the contrary. We have also seen from his own statement, that we are altogether in doubt respecting the date and the

author of the fragments which are attributed to these historians; and he allows that the author of Genesis lived before the historian who transmits to us these fragments. Can we then in fairness give up the authority of Genesis to that of a work which we cannot trace back even to the time of Christ? The account given in Genesis was written nearer to the event, and has come to us pure and uncorrupted, and therefore is entitled to credit, rather than the other. And if the recorded events did take place, they were common to the whole world, and therefore all nations must have preserved traditional accounts of them, more or less true: these histories would be derived from the event, and might be independent of each other. Before our author arrived at his conclusion, he ought to have proved that Moses was not the author of Genesis, which he has not rendered even probable; that the Chaldean, &c. fables had not their origin in real events, which he has not attempted; that the accounts of Polyhistor, &c. which we have are true, and are those of the authors to whom they are ascribed, which he has not done; and that the author of Genesis did copy from them. None of these he has done; he has compared the events, and commented upon them; he has assured us that Genesis is but a copy of Chaldean monuments, but he has advanced no proof; and on a subject of this nature, can any author expect the reader to rely so implicitly upon his declaration, as to receive his testimony without evidence? Another author might advance the contrary: what is the reader to conclude? Both cannot be right; the reader cannot agree with both; it is therefore by evidence alone that either can be credited; and evidence Mr. Volney has withheld; therefore this thirteenth Chapter is only his opinion, unsupported by any testimony.

*Chap. 14.* "Of the Personage called Abraham." Much pains is taken to prove that Abraham was not a real man, but the planet Saturn; no proof whatever is given, none is attempted; we have a similarity traced between their histories, by comparing the account given of Abraham in Genesis, of Saturn as given by Sanchoniathon, (whose date is uncertain, and of whose works we have only fragments which have passed through several hands,) then, because



there is this similarity, our Author concludes, that the Author of Genesis invented the history of Abraham from that of the Phenician Saturn; without adducing any proof, without tracing the origin of either of them. This similarity in the recorded events of unconnected annals, naturally leads us to infer that they are founded upon real events. In *p.* 143 we read, "In the first place, every genius of a star is king; he governs a portion of the heavens and earth subject to his influence; his images or idols, always bear a crown, the emblem of supreme power: Abraham, as we are told, reigns at Damascus; and his name was preserved there." Let us follow up this argument to its legitimate conclusion: because the genius of a star is called king, and rules over a portion of the earth, and Abraham reigned at Damascus, he was the genius of a star; other kings are said to have reigned in various places, therefore they were the genii of stars. Is it not more consistent with common sense to suppose, that the imaginary genii of stars have been dignified with the name of kings, than that they were first called so, and that kings should be fabulous?

The argument continues, *p.* 144: "That a foreigner should instruct the Egyptians in Astrology, sixteen or seventeen centuries before our era, when the Egyptians had been for ages the masters and inventors of that science, is inadmissible and evidently fabulous; here Abraham has all the characters of Thaut or Hermes, who invented Astrology, and the letters of the Alphabet; who surpassed all men in the knowledge of celestial and natural matters; who was a philosopher and king, but who in his original type, is but the genius of the star Sothis or Sirius, which announced the overflowing of the Nile." Abraham or Hermes is now made the genius of the star Sirius; he invented the letters of the alphabet: now the letters of the alphabet have been invented, and the genius of a star could not invent them: is it then not more probable that the man who invented them, was subsequently deified, and, for any thing I know, called Hermes, or the genius of the star Sirius? There is now a star called Cor Caroli, to preserve the memory, and in honour of Charles the first of England;

but it does not thence follow that we have had no such King—that his history is fable, of which this star is the substance. In like manner, there may have been a desire to preserve the memory of that man who invented the letters of the alphabet; but it neither follows that they had no inventor, nor that there was no such man as Abraham.

*P. 145.* “Saturn, whom the Phenicians call Israel, had by a nymph of the country, a male child, whom he named Jeoud, that is, *one and only*. On the breaking out of a war, which brought the country into imminent danger, Saturn erected an altar, brought to it his son, clothed in royal garments, and sacrificed him. Will it be said that Sanchoniathon, who consulted an Hebrew priest named Jerombal, disfigured the account of Genesis? We maintain on the contrary, that this author’s accounts tend to prove its non-existence, from their being absolutely different.” Different in what? Both represent the sacrifice of a young man, the son of some eminent person, by his Father. But compare this with another passage with which it is connected, *p. 145*: “The truth is, the Phenicians, a people much more ancient than the Hebrews, had their own particular Mythology, to which this fact appertains, instead of being borrowed from the Jews whom they detested; why then this resemblance?” Now five lines above, on the same page, Sanchoniathon proved the non-existence of Genesis, because the accounts were absolutely different; now Genesis is copied from the Phenician Mythology, because they are similar: therefore two things are similar and absolutely different at the same time; this requires no remark. What does our author make Abraham at last? He was the genius of Sirius; then Saturn; then his secretary Hermes; all without proof, without evidence.

*P. 145.* “The analogy, or rather, the identity of Abraham, is not confined to this fact. ‘The most learned Persian authors,’ says Dr. Hyde, ‘assert, that in the old Chaldean books, Abraham is named Zerouan or Zerban, which means rich in gold; keeper of gold.’ It is remarkable that Genesis calls Abraham, very rich in gold and in silver; and also a mighty prince, which occurs in the Ancient books,

where he is called king." Since something of Abraham occurs in old Chaldean documents, corresponding to what is found in Genesis, is the conclusion that such a man never lived? It is as much as to say, that if two historians agree, both are of necessity false. The testimony of the early Chaldean monuments, since they agree in the general outline of Abraham's history, rather tends to prove that Abraham was an illustrious man, whose celebrity caused his name to be preserved. But our author wholly perverts the words of Genesis; "rich in gold" is nowhere an epithet applied to Abraham; he is described as having prospered exceedingly; and the words, *Gen. xiii. 2*, are, "Abraham was very rich, in Cattle, in Silver, and in Gold." Genesis merely tells us in what his riches consisted, and our author would have called him rich in cattle with as much propriety as rich in gold. Therefore his argument proves just nothing at all.

## Chap. XV.



### OF THE MIRACLES OF MOSES.



WE may next notice *p.* 150: "What Exodus says of their servitude under the king of Heliapolis, and of the oppression of their hosts, the Egyptians, is extremely probable; and it is here their history begins; all that precedes, that is, the entire book of Genesis, is nothing but mythology and cosmogony." Let us look into Genesis: we there find, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth:" is this mythology and cosmogony? Is it not rather confirmed by universal experience? Again: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed:" is this mythology and cosmogony? Of Ishmael it is said, "He shall be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him." Is this mythology and cosmogony? Does it not describe faithfully the character of his descendants even in the present time? Again: Joseph said to his brethren, "I die; and God shall visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." They did carry up his bones, and buried them in the land of Canaan: is this mythology and cosmogony?

The argument continues: "Chance would have it that an individual of this race was brought up by the Egyptian priests, was instructed in their sciences, at that time so secret, and that this person should be endowed with qualities of a



superiour nature. Moses, or rather Moushah, according to the true pronounciation, formed a plan of becoming king and legislator, by freeing his countrymen; and he executed it by means appropriated to the circumstances, and with a most extraordinary force of mind. His countrymen, ignorant and superstitious, as the wandering Arabs are, and always have been, believed in magic, with which, to this day, all the East is infatuated. Moses performed prodigies, that is, he produced natural phenomena, the means of executing which had been discovered after long study, and by fortunate accidents, by the priests, who were at the same time astronomers and natural philosophers. When we read how fires darted from the tabernacle, stuck to the rioters, who wished to stone him on the return of the spies, and how those fires consumed them, we cannot but recognize the *gregorian* fire, composed of Naptha and Petrol, which from time to time reappeared in the east." Here we begin to discover a profaneness which has not before made its appearance. Moses is boldly accused of the utmost stretch of wickedness: by tricks of deception, he is accused of personating the God of heaven, of committing deliberate and cruel murder, in the name of God, to support his own interest. Where is the proof? In vain may the reader search the book, for no shadow of proof is even attempted to be given. Is it then fair, is it just, to endeavour to lessen the authority of the Bible by false accusation—by bold assertion *without evidence*? Proof, undeniable proof, we must have; and without it, such assertions must be considered as the ravings of a disordered imagination. But I ask, did Moses so advance his interest? Did he set one of his own family over the people at his death, as he might have done, as an ambitious ruler would have done? No: by the command of God, he appointed Joshua to be his successor.

And now, Mr. Translator, I beg you will prove that that Glory of the Lord, which proclaimed, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"—that proclaimed the sacred name of Jehovah, was a natural fire kindled by the hand of Moses. You tell us that it was so, but prove it; tell us not that you think it was, for who cares

what your opinion is? Nay, after the misrepresentations of facts—after the glaring falsehoods which are advanced with the utmost confidence—after the false accusations which we have seen brought forward in your book, contrary to probability, contrary to every record of antiquity, who will receive your assertion without proof? Nay, who will be blindly led by the opinion of any writer without proof? Prove that such was the case;—prove that Moses did blasphemously personate the God of Heaven;—prove that he was guilty of cruel and barbarous murder, to support his own interest:—prove this by the testimony of history, or be content to bear the disgrace of having, without evidence, accused a man of the basest of crimes, who in his own days, and in all succeeding ages, has been considered a prophet of the Most High God. He stands, sir, before the world, accused by you of the basest of crimes; you attempt to persuade us that the founder of the Jewish religion, the perfection of which is the Christian, was one of the most vile impostors—blasphemers—murderers, that ever disgraced the annals of history; and how have you proved it? By argument? No; By the testimony of history? No; By analogy drawn from the character of Moses? No: you give us your individual authority; and is this reason?—will this have weight?

I pretend not to say from what motive, or under the influence of what evidence, the author wrote or you gave currency to this passage, this bold accusation against Moses; but I must say that, standing accused as he does, unsupported by any evidence, contrary to every historical testimony which we possess, you are grossly imposing upon such of your readers as have not the ability or the means of examining for themselves; you may shake the faith of many who have been happy in the religion of the Bible, cloud their prospect of eternal blessedness; you throw an insidious air of suspicion upon it; you confirm the prejudices of those whose minds have unhappily imbibed the fatal poison of infidelity, and destroy the very basis of all good moral principle. Think not that I am an enemy to full and deep enquiry into, and examination of the truth of the Bible; no, I maintain that we all ought to investigate these evidences to the utmost of our ability; we ought to be able to give a reason of the

hope that is in us: but I am a decided enemy to that system, which, departing from all fair argument, uses sly insinuation; which, when argument fails, will bring false accusation. These may produce a lasting effect, for they affect not the reason; they take root in prejudice, are nourished by passion, and lead reason captive: this is to take an unfair advantage of the weakness and imperfections of the human intellect; it is to poison reason, not to convince it; and this, Sir, you have done by your accusations of Moses and other sacred persons; and proof you carefully keep back. However I venture to assure your readers, that, had you brought forward every historical testimony on this head, it would have been fatal to your own argument; it would have proved that your accusation of Moses is perfectly and absolutely false; it would have confirmed that religion which you aim to destroy. Deny this if you can.

However, as you here desert historical testimony, and try to convince us that the miracles of Moses were merely natural phenomena, by means of which he imposed upon the whole nation, I deny that he could do those things as you say; and the assertion I will prove distinctly, under each of your several heads. It is not sufficient to tell us, that Moses *might* do these things, and then to conclude that he *did* so; if, Sir, the thing be so very easy, take your infallible Naptha and Petrol, that is, Tar and Spirit of Turpentine,\* deceive the people of England, and become Moses the Second.

Now Moses, I say, could not in this manner deceive the whole nation: read the account of the journeying of the Hebrews; the cloud rested upon the tabernacle by day, by night the pillar of fire; it rested when they were to rest, it moved when they were to proceed on their journey; and this, during a space of forty years. Could Moses perform so prodigious a work without accomplices? Could he



\* Naptha is a light bituminous fluid which springs out of many parts of the ground in various places in the East, and differs very little in its Chemical qualities from the Spirit of Turpentine; Petrol is found in similar situations, and closely resembles Tar in its inflammability.

keep up this large perpetual fire without immense store of combustibles? Would not an ordinary fire always leave manifest traces behind it? Was not all public—open to the view of the whole congregation? All was public—conducted on a stupendous scale. Moses had enemies, Corah and his company, as well as other rebels at various times: they would doubtless watch the actions of Moses with vigilance; they, however, could discover no fraud—no traces of an ordinary fire—no secret combustibles—no accomplices: and can we suppose a work of such magnitude to have been carried on for forty years by fraud, and that no trace of suspicion should have fallen upon Moses? Such an event would find no parallel in history.

But let us see into what a dilemma our author has brought himself, by making this absurd supposition. He supposes these fires, the true symbol of the Divine presence, to have been kindled by the hand of Moses, and managed by his pyrotechnic skill; he allows the Jews to have preserved regular annals, from the time of Saul, their first king. At the dedication of the temple built by Solomon, the third king, it is recorded in the annals, *1 Kings* viii. 10, 11, “When the priests were come out of the holy place, the cloud fil’ed the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister, because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord:” and in *2 Chron.* vii. 1, “When Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house.” In *1 Kings* xviii. when Elijah made trial of Baal and his prophets, fire fell down from heaven, in the sight of all the people, and consumed the sacrifice; and in order that the reality of the miracle might not be called in question, he had caused the wood upon the altar, and the sacrifice, to be drenched with water. Also, *2 Kings* i. 10–12, Elijah called down fire from heaven, and consumed two captains, with their companies of fifty each. These miracles must be in the same predicament with the works of Moses, and the whole be imposture, or we must suppose them to have been real miracles, performed by the power of God: if the latter, the argu-



ment is at an end : but if we imagine the former, we have to suppose that amongst the Jews, for a space of eight hundred years, there rose up men who could perform those stupendous works, which with all the aids of science no man in the present day can even imitate ; yet they could perform them publicly and permanently, with no visible preparation, and surrounded by immense numbers of people ; yet all these insulated individuals, in very different ages, in very different situations and circumstances of life, in every case performed their work with such amazing precision, that they constantly imposed upon the whole nation, so perfectly that no trace of suspicion ever fell upon any one of them. Is this credible?—is it upon any supposition possible ? With every aid of Science and of Art, we cannot now even in an imperfect manner imitate these works ; yet upon this hypothesis we have to believe that many insulated individuals arose amongst the Jews, at different periods, all of whom knew this art, which, our author says, Moses learned in Egypt, and with which all but themselves were unacquainted : however I beg leave to say, that the Egyptians were never in possession of such an art. The position is too absurd to be maintained.

Our author proceeds to tell us, *p.* 151, that “ All the miracles with which Moses contrived to magnify appearances, might easily be reduced to a natural state ; but it would be necessary to retrench from their accounts, the exaggerated and false circumstances in which he or posthumous writers enveloped real facts ; thus we should see the Hebrews effecting the passage of the Red Sea, by fording it at low water, as is still done at this day ; whereas the Egyptians, attempting to pass during the tide, were surprised by it, as they would be still, for they hardly know what it means.” What, I demand, are the exaggerated and false circumstances which require retrenchment ? How has it been proved that there are any ? We are told that such exist, but no proof is advanced. Do not Mr. Volney's assertions call for retrenchment ? What ! the learned Egyptians not know the tide of the Red Sea ! Pharaoh and his army ignorant of the fluctuation of that water, when the

Hebrews were acquainted with it! Were the Jews, termed ignorant, better acquainted with the circumstances of Egypt, than the learned Egyptians? This assertion does indeed require retrenchment. By bold statements, by sly insinuation, by direct accusation, the books of Moses may be attacked; the ignorant may be imposed upon; those whose minds have unfortunately acquired a wrong bias, may here furnish themselves with arguments; but those who are disposed fairly and deeply to investigate the subject, will find that Mr. Volney frequently makes statements which he cannot prove—brings forward accusations which are supported by no evidence—and without hesitation misrepresents a subject when it suits his purpose; and if we rely upon his word when we have no proof, we are likely to be deceived. He has not shown what circumstances are exaggerated, or what are false; but indirectly by insinuation endeavours to represent the books of Moses as unworthy of credit, and in vain do we look for any proof, on which the accusation rests; it ought to be rejected with disdain, by every person who has any regard for truth.

Our author proceeds to tell us, *p.* 151, “We should see the passage of the Jordan, planned by Moses and executed by Joshua, by turning aside that small stream, as Krœsus turned aside the Halys.” How does this agree with the account of the transaction? *Joshua* iii. 15, 16. “And as they that bare the ark came unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed and were cut off.” This effect was totally different from any which would have resulted by barely turning aside the stream; and what other account besides this, had our author? It should have been proved that Joshua did turn aside this stream, and not have been taken for granted without any testimony. But, waving this, I say that Joshua could not do so. The people looked upon it as a real miracle; and to preserve a perpetual memorial of it, Joshua selected a man from every tribe, each of whom

was to bring a stone out of the midst of Jordan, which stones were to be formed into a heap, in that place where the river was divided, as a standing monument, not of the skill of Joshua in diverting the stream, but of the miraculous division of the waters before the ark of the covenant. (*Josh. iv.*) Now Joshua could not secretly divert the course of the water; he must have employed a number of men; their work must have been done publicly; it would remain as a monument of the work of art: how then could the people suppose that to be a miracle, which they must have seen progressively going forward, under the management and direction of Joshua? The idea is preposterous: the thing not only improbable, but impossible; the supposition is warranted by no testimony of history. The turning aside of a river, be it remembered, is not the work of one man or of a moment, but of many men and of a considerable length of time, and the work itself must be visible in its progress, and must remain; the work then the Jews could not ascribe to the direct interposition of God, which they had seen during its progress, and which many of them must have promoted, and have assisted to effect.

We are further told in *p. 151*, that we should see "the walls of Jericho overturned by digging a mine, and setting fire to the props that supported them; we should see Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, swallowed up in a covered pit, where hidden combustibles took fire by their fall; and, finally, we should see that the voice which spake in the Propitiatory, and which was believed to be the voice of God conversing with the prophet, was nothing but the voice of young Joshua, the Son of Nun, who remained in the tabernacle, where he served Moses, and who was his successor, more able and fortunate than Ali, the Joshua of Mahomet." Where is it proved that we should see all this? Not in Mr. Volney's book, nor has his Translator supplied the deficiency. This is the greatest mixture of absurdity and impossibility that has hitherto come under notice. Moses could not dig this pit, Joshua could not undermine the walls of Jericho, a large city, without accomplices: the events were regarded as real miracles by all the Jews; they

therefore saw no appearance of fraud: how then were so great operations concealed—how was the quantity of earth dug out, conveyed out of sight?—did Moses eat that which was dug out of the pit?—did Joshua carry home in his pockets, that which was excavated in undermining the walls of Jericho, and conceal it in his tent? How did the workmen conceal their operations? or rather, how *could* they conceal them? It is absolutely impossible: Jericho being on the side of Jordan, which is opposite to the wilderness, the work itself must have been done in the enemy's country; how then happens it, that they found not that the Jews were in their country, and planning their destruction? Could, or rather, *did* Joshua render the workmen, their operations, and the earth dug out from the foundations of their city, invisible? If he did this, it must have been the most extraordinary part of the whole work.

If the thing be so very easy, let the Translator convince us of it; let him secretly divert the water of the Thames, and when his foot reaches the brim, give the word and cause the water to turn aside; let him secretly undermine St. Paul's Cathedral, speak the word, and let it sink; let him dig his pit, openly, yet secretly—publicly, but unknown to all people except himself, lay the hidden combustibles, collect people together, speak the fatal word, and let the pit swallow them up; let his fire follow those who escape and consume them. He should put his theory into practice, and convince us that all this is possible, or never dare to accuse Moses and Joshua of having impiously feigned miracles, and blasphemously personated the God of Heaven. I say that the whole hypothesis is absurd, the thing absolutely impossible; and I leave it to the good sense of those who know the resources of Chemical science with all the modern improvements, who know what engineering is, who know the labour attendant upon the construction of large works, and the making of extensive excavations, to determine, whether what our author states is physically possible, whether it is within the reach of human power.

But our author is not yet satisfied: he says, in a note p. 152, "It is also said," Exodus *ch.* xxxii. 17. "that when



Moses came down from Mount Sinai, Joshua accompanied him ;—a proof that he was with him there during the forty days Moses remained there ; that he was the interlocutor and transcriber of the law attributed to God ; and it may be presumed he prepared there all the pyrotechnical apparatus, whose effects are seen in Exodus, at the same time that he carried thither the provisions which supported him and Moses, during the pretended fast of forty days, both related and credited without proof and without testimony.”

As a matter of curiosity, let us attend to the progress of this reasoning : because Joshua returned with Moses, therefore he was with him during the forty days : therefore if I go to London, remain there for forty days, and say that Mr. Volney returned with me, he must have been with me during the whole time :—a false conclusion which has no relation to its premises. Again ; because he was there, he must have been the interlocutor and transcriber of the law attributed to God ; therefore God cannot speak if two people be present ;—a miserable conclusion from an enormous assumption ! Whatever may be our author's *opinion*, I beg leave to observe, that we are nowhere told that Joshua went with Moses into the cloud : and why does he accuse both Moses and Joshua of such blasphemous impiety—where is his authority ? Were any man to bring so severe accusations against living characters, accusations of fraud, deception, blasphemy, wanton and cruel murder, he would be required publicly to acknowledge his error, or publicly to substantiate the charge to the entire conviction of every impartial judge ; and are Moses and Joshua to be deprived of this common justice ? They have been long dead ; but, although dead, they yet speak ; their writings have always been received as a revelation from God ; as such, they are revered, and upon them rest some of the most powerful evidences of the Christian religion. When these books form a part of the very bond of society, when this, the foundation of the Bible, forms a great part of our hopes for eternity, it is, I say, a duty which the translator owes to society, as the representative of the author, to withdraw his charge or fully to substantiate it. Our author tells us that Joshua

prepared the pyrotechnical apparatus, but I should like to know how he has proved it. Without hesitation I deny the possibility: Joshua and Moses could not by art produce those appearances which were seen on Mount Sinai. There is however one part, of which our author has thought fit to take no notice; when Moses had come down from the mountain, his face shone, so that he was obliged to put a vail over it, when he conversed with the people; was this a part of Joshua's pyrotechnical apparatus? Before concluding this part of the subject, I beg leave to propose one query to the Translator: what is the form and construction of a pyrotechnical apparatus which would produce the effects recorded in Exodus? I propose this with the greater hopes that he will favour the world with a full description of so wonderful an apparatus, since he speaks of the use of it with great confidence, and appears to entertain no doubt that the apparatus was really used.

I will also propose another question: Who told him that the fast of forty days was pretended? Where does he obtain this piece of intelligence? I presume he means that such is his opinion; but in this he strangely forgets that, in circumstances which are recorded as historically true, opinions have no place; they must be confirmed or disproved by historical proof, and in no other manner; otherwise they deserve no notice. Our author complains that they are both related and accredited without proof and without testimony: this statement demands but one remark,—it is absolutely false; we have the testimony of the whole Jewish nation; we have the testimony of contemporaries—of eye witnesses, and they were perhaps just as likely to know the real state of the case as Mr. Volney or his Translator.

But, whilst our author rejects the testimony of Moses, because he says it wants both proof and testimony, he expects the reader to receive his own word, and never brings forward either proof or testimony, nay, even when it is directly opposed to every record of antiquity; this request is particularly modest! The points to which I principally allude are these: our author tells us that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, and gives no proof;—he assures us that

Hilkiah and his friends composed it, and bribed the workmen employed in the temple to stand up for its truth: here no proof is given;—he tells us that there are no indications of its existence in the books of Joshua, Judges, or in the histories of the early Jewish kings, but we found many;—he tells us that the pretended miracles of Moses were effected by the aid of arts which he had learned in Egypt, of which his countrymen were ignorant, but gives no proof: yet he complains of the want of proof for the truth of the things related by Moses.

And why is Ali called the Joshua of Mahomet? Can men of the most abandoned, dissolute, and vicious lives, be compared with Moses and Joshua? I shall make no remarks upon such an insinuation; it is a groundless accusation, which is used because fair argument fails.

## Chap. V.



### OF THE CREATION.



*Ch. xvi.* "Mythology of Adam and Eve." This chapter begins, and a strange beginning it is, *p.* 167, "In fact, take a celestial sphere, painted after the manner of the ancients; divide it by the circle of the horizon into two halves; the upper one, the heaven of summer, heaven of light, of heat, of abundance, the kingdom of Osiris, god of all good; the other half shall be the inferior heaven, (*infernus*,) the heaven of winter, the seat of darkness, of privations, of sufferings, the kingdom of Typhon, god of all evil. To the west, and towards the Autumnal Equinox, the scene offers a constellation represented by a man holding a sickle; a labourer who every evening descends lower and lower in the inferior heaven, and seems to be expelled from the heaven of light; after him comes a woman holding a bunch of fruit pleasant to the eyes and good for food; she also descends every evening, and seems to push on the man and cause his fall; under them is the great serpent, a constellation characteristic of the mud of winter, the Python of the Greeks, the Ahriman of the Persians, whose epithet in Hebrew is *Aroum*. Not far from them is the ship, attributed at one time to Isis, at another to Jason, to Noah, &c. and at one side is Perseus, a winged genius, holding a flaming sword, as if to threaten: here are all the characters in the drama of Adam and Eve." Are Mr. Volney's readers so stupid as he seems to suppose? Resuming our old argument, we want proof that the Mosaic, Chaldean, and Persian accounts, have been copied from figures placed upon the celestial



sphere ; we want proof that these figures were not so placed as standing memorials of past events, which are preserved with more or less truth in the several records of early times.

But if we compare the fable and the history, they do not agree: Genesis says, that Eve fell first, and drew Adam after her ; in the fable she pushes him on, and he falls first. This constellation was first Noah, now Adam. Was Noah pushed on by a woman until he fell ? And what has Perseus to do with us ? Perseus was the Son of Jupiter and Danae, who went against the Gorgons, attacked Medusa when the snakes were asleep, and cut off her head ; delivered Andromeda from the Sea Monster, and married her. Where, I should like to know, is the resemblance between Perseus and the Cherubim described in Genesis ? The Cherubim attacked no Gorgons ; Perseus expelled no transgressors from Paradise : the Cherubim delivered no Andromeda ; Perseus defended no tree of Life. There is no point of distinct resemblance : and the ship certainly is improperly introduced, for the history never mentions Adam in connexion with any ship ; and the ship was before made to belong to Noah : this is in a very ready manner to connect very remotely distant periods, unconnected in themselves, into one. Except it be distinctly proved to the contrary, we must yet firmly maintain that the events were real, and that fable, as well as fabulous representations, have been originally founded upon truth, obscured indeed by time.

*Ch. xvii.* "Of the mythology of the Creation." Our author recites the account given in Genesis, with a few verbal variations, and adds respecting it, *p.* 178: "If such narrations came from the Brahmins or Lamas, it would be curious to hear our doctors rectifying its anomalies. 'See,' would they say, 'what an extraordinary system of natural philosophy ! To suppose light existed before the Sun, before the stars, and independently of them ; and, what is still more absurd, to say that there is an evening and morning, when evening and morning are only the apparition or disappearance of the star that gives us day ! And that void produced in the midst of the waters, which supposes that

above the visible heaven, there exists a heap of waters; this system also speaks of *the cataracts of heaven* opened at the deluge; and one of its interpreters ventures to assert, that the vault of heaven is of crystal. And this land is without rain, without clouds, and consequently without evaporation, having only one source to water its surface! And this man created alone, is nevertheless male and female! Really these Hindoos, with their *Shastras* and *Pouranas*, only amuse us with Arabian tales.'” Why, I ask, cannot light have existed without the Sun or Stars? What is light in itself? What is the mode of its action in producing vision? How is it connected with matter? What is the Sun? How is the light connected with him? Is matter essential to the existence of light? These questions must be fully and clearly answered, before we can presume to say, that light could not exist before the Sun. We know nothing of the nature of light; it baffles the researches of the philosopher: and when we are wholly ignorant of its nature, of the mode of its operation, it is presumptuous in the highest degree to pretend to limit it to one mode of action: if any say that we ordinarily see light connected with and emanate from matter, they state a fact, but do not prove that it cannot exist in any other manner. Take a parallel case; we rarely see iron which does not possess some magnetic virtue; a hasty philosopher might from this conclude that iron possesses it of necessity; but more particular enquiry would convince him that there are pieces of this metal which seem to be entirely destitute of it. What we conclude respecting light, is the result of observations upon a something, of the nature of which we are entirely ignorant; if ignorant of it, as every philosopher will admit, it is the extreme of arrogance to presume to say, that we ordinarily see it under the only form in which it can exist. It is vain and idle to pretend to explain how light existed before the sun; we may heap one hypothesis upon another, we may eagerly dispute concerning them, and the result will only convince us of our own ignorance, of our inability to penetrate into the secrets of nature; and this consciousness of our ignorance ought to teach us to pronounce our judgment with caution and with

moderation. Philosophy will not enable us to explain or account for the existence of light before the Sun, but it teaches us that it is by no means impossible; and I beg those who object to this part of Genesis, to consider a few experiments, known almost to every child. The Electric light in passing through an exhausted receiver, forms a luminous track, from every part of which, light is emitted: is there any matter from which it emanates? The star which is produced between two points of charcoal or platina by galvanic electricity, is exceedingly brilliant *in vacuo*; cannot light then exist except it reside in matter? Perhaps some may say that the electric fluid itself is matter; if so, I request them to prove it.

The Bible, which our author is endeavouring to undermine, gives good advice to those who presumptuously endeavour to carry their reasoning too far into these subjects; it asks, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" Let those who urge this old argument against the Mosaic account of the Creation, teach us fully and entirely what light is, and how it operates in all cases; let them prove from known principles of science, that of necessity it must be connected with matter. Until they can do this, let them not presume to say that the Mosaic account is untrue; until they can do this, their objections on this head are founded on ignorance, and carried forward by arrogance. Let us now consider the void between the waters. Is there not a space filled neither by land nor water, but by air? Are there not immense quantities of water suspended in the higher regions of the atmosphere? If not, whence come torrents of rain? That immense quantities of water are supported in the higher regions, no one will venture to deny; that this water is separated from that which is in the Sea, is also certain: is then the account given in Genesis untrue? Does not Genesis describe a fact which we observe? Where then is the objection? Genesis does not tell us how or in what state this water is supported, neither can philosophers explain it to us; Genesis describes

the fact, and we experience it ; there is therefore in it nothing which is contrary to the principles of sound philosophy.

As to the expression that the Cataracts of heaven were opened, there is no inconsistency ; when rain pours in torrents, this mode of expression would not be objected to in the present day ; Genesis gives us to understand that the rain fell with extreme violence, but does not describe the nature of the operation itself. And if an interpreter did assert that the vault of heaven is of crystal, we have only to conclude that he was mistaken, that he was ignorant of the true principles of natural philosophy ; and such an idea might be found at that time even amongst philosophers ; and it does not affect Genesis itself. Were I to give an absurd interpretation to any thing which Mr. Volney has said, no man in his senses would lay this to his charge, or make my error an argument against the credibility of his writings, but every one would attribute it to my ignorance ; so let it be between Genesis and the interpreter of Genesis.

It is nowhere said in Genesis that the man who was created was male and female ; in *Gen. i. 27.* we read : “ So God created man in his own image ; in the image of God created He him ; male and female created He them. ” The second chapter informs us of the formation of Eve in particular : and *Gen. v. 1, 2.* “ This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him ; male and female created He them. ” If this describe not the two different persons, language cannot do it ; when Adam is named, the singular, *him*, is used ; when male and female, the plural, *them*. When a false representation is so very glaring, it merits no remarks ; a statement so entirely false is an insult upon the understanding and sense of any man who possesses the book of Genesis. The only part of Genesis which our author can have so distorted, is *ch. v. 2.* “ Male and female created he them ; and blessed them, and called their name Adam ; ” here the two are named, and one general name, *Adam*, to signify the species, just as we often say *man*, to denote the whole human race.

I will notice only one passage more, *p. 181* : “ As to the word *creation*, taken in the sense of *producing* out of nothing, or *drawing* out of nought, solid and tangible sub-



stances, it is doubtful whether this abstract idea, produced by the exaltation of the fasting brains of warm climates, was ever known to, or admitted by, the ancient Jews." No direct conclusion is drawn from this most extraordinary and most incomprehensible sentence. Is it an insinuation that the world had no beginning—no Creator? Is it an attempt to tear the Almighty from his throne, and to seat there blind chance or the laws of nature? I presume not to say for what purpose it has been introduced, or what is its object. The least that can be said of it is, that by obscure insinuation it is an attempt to lessen the authority of the Bible, and in a manner which does not meet the reason, but which works upon the prejudice; such proceeding is unfair, and is never used in an impartial enquiry; it is the last miserable refuge of those who have no solid argument to advance.

The perusal of a work like Mr. Volney's, leaves a painful impression on the mind. If the Bible be not true, what hope have we? We are placed in the world for a short term of years, subject to innumerable diseases, cares, and disquietudes; even at the best estate, much misery falls to the lot of every individual. Where can we look for comfort, where for one cheering ray of consolation, but to a blessed hope of eternal life? what can make us persevere in a course of moral rectitude, what support and console us under adversity, but a consciousness that we are under the All-seeing eye of Him who knows neither beginning of days nor end of years, who, unseen, is ever about our path, who guides and directs all the affairs of life? Take away this; suppose no hereafter, no region of endless glory; suppose the good and virtuous rewarded with an eternal sleep, the wicked punished with everlasting unconsciousness; and what remains in prospect for man, but a miserable existence, the dominion of unruly and tormenting passions, enjoyments mixed with much sorrow and held by an uncertain tenure? And are we created for this? Did He who created the worlds, who is worshipped in glory everlasting by his angels, call us into existence, merely that we might partake of sorrow for a few years, and that He should bar against us for ever the gates which lead to those glories which are at his right hand? Shall Death retain us for ever within his

gloomy mansions? To believe this would be to withstand the force of every evidence; to cast away every solid prospect of happiness; to take off every restraint from the passions of men: it would make our condition worse than that of the beasts.

Suppose any feel convinced that the Scriptures are not a revelation from God—or if they please—that there is no God: can they prove it? They suppose there are things therein contained which cannot be from God—they cannot reconcile, it may be, the prevalence of evil with the superintending Providence of an Omnipotent, All-wise, and Infinitely good Being—perhaps they cannot see how the world could be created as we are informed—they cannot find the source of the waters for a deluge; what then? Does it follow that the Bible is untrue? By no means. Can we comprehend all earthly things—nay rather, can we fully comprehend any one natural phenomenon?—is our mind always correct—are our conclusions always true, even respecting natural things? Surely not! How then shall we presume to say what He ought to be, and how He ought to act, whose goings are from everlasting? And after giving full scope to all such infidel considerations, we cannot prove that we are right; however confident we may be in our opinion, we must allow that there may be a heaven of glory, and a hell of misery. If we could even prove that the clear revelations of their existence which the Bible contains, had not come from God Himself, we must admit the *possibility* of their being a *heaven* and a *hell*: and if these do exist, what then must be the portion of the unbeliever! He will find that he has sacrificed the truth of the Everlasting God upon the altar of human learning—that he has rejected that record which the Almighty has given of Himself—he has withstood those evidences which the Omnipotent has given to the truth of his word—and if we enter the mansions of the dead in such a state, what prospect have we but of gloom, darkness, and eternal misery!

The infidel may make light of these things, and pretend to treat the concerns of futurity as mere fables; but remember, He who gave us our being at the first, can recall

our slumbering dust ; He may command the grave to give up her prey ; He may torment the wicked with eternal misery ; He may bestow upon the good, glory everlasting ? And can the infidel dare to deny that this power belongs to God ?—can he prove that there is no worm that dieth not, no fire that cannot be quenched ?—can he prove that there is no glory everlasting in heaven ? No : the substance of all his arguments is uncertain conjecture : who, then, dare risk the concerns of an eternity to conjecture—to conjecture formed from what little we see, and see very imperfectly, in this short life ?

The young, and those who have not paid much attention to the evidences of the truth of the Scriptures, are in danger of having their confidence in them shaken, their happiness impaired, their hopes for eternity clouded—and too often, their moral principles ruined, through the influence of infidel writers ; let them be careful not to incur this risk of imbibing so fatal a poison, which produces dreadful effects in this life, but others infinitely worse after death, and which can know no end. If those who may unhappily lean towards infidelity were to examine fairly, deeply, and impartially, the evidences of our holy religion ; the more deep the examination, the more firm would be their persuasion of its truth. For want of this examination, an objection frequently may appear unanswerable, which a little inquiry would prove to be wholly destitute of force, and not seldom, to be founded upon misrepresentation or misconception of the subject. Infidelity can produce nothing certain, it can afford no happiness, no good in this life, and involves the future in obscurity, gloom, and fearful apprehension. May we all be preserved from its effects ; may the Providence of God so overrule all the affairs of the world, that infidelity may never take off the restraints from the evil passions of men, to deluge the world with crime and misery ; but may He whose mercy is over all his works, subdue the spirit of unbelief, and, by the influence of the religion of the Bible, spread increasing happiness through the world, and bring every individual in reality, to the knowledge and practice of the Truth.

## PART THE SECOND.

### Chap. I.



#### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON INFIDELITY.



EVER since the Christian religion extended its dominion, there have been those who have raised objections against the New Testament. Although the unbelievers of all ages have advanced nearly the same arguments, which have often been refuted, still they are repeated, just as if their futility had never been exposed, with such additions and variations as suit the particular circumstances of the times. The most learned infidels, who made many converts during the last two centuries, were unwilling to give their sentiments too great currency amongst common people, because they saw that if they became infidels, every established authority would be threatened with utter subversion, and that one universal state of confusion, crime, and anarchy, must follow. However, since their time, others have appeared, who, having less talent, had less prudence, and these have sowed the seeds of infidelity amongst the most ignorant; and we are threatened with an abundant harvest, of immorality, crime, sedition, and blasphemy; we now find those who can barely read—who have no Bible—who know not its contents, oppose it—object to its contents—deny the existence of any Supreme Being—laugh at the idea of a future and eternal state of existence. These principles have extended in an alarming manner, and



may still increase ; and as they extend, so does every bad principle spread. Witness the state of Europe about thirty years ago, and then say whether infidelity is a blessing or a curse in this life. Look to France, when religion was proscribed, when temples were opened to reason, and this goddess was represented by prostitutes, to whom impious worship was offered ; bring to the temple doors its offerings, those unhappy victims who were the prey of the assassin ; recount the numbers who fell a sacrifice to the fury of those, who, denying the God who made them, erected altars to reason ; and say, Does infidelity bring peace even in this life ?

In cautioning persons not to attend to works which have this tendency, we are liable to be censured ; an idea is raised that we wish to establish the reign of bigotry and ignorance. However, this impression must be banished from the mind of every person who considers the evils which infidelity has produced ; and it must appear a prudent caution, even if this life only be regarded, and acquit those who give it of any charge of bigotry, except it can be proved, that that which spreads misery abroad, tends to the happiness of the community. Modern infidelity has assumed so varied forms, and arises from so many sources, that to follow all its varieties would extend the following work much beyond all reasonable limits. Some are infidels, because they wish to follow a course of crime, without remorse of conscience, and therefore their passions lead them to persuade themselves of the truth of their system ; others object to many parts of the Scriptures, because they contain things which the human mind cannot comprehend ; others cannot credit the recorded miracles ; whilst many are led away by specious arguments, which they cannot combat ; but perhaps the principal cause of unbelief arises from the want of fair examination of the evidences of Christianity ; for when men have little regard for religion, and are disposed to discredit parts of the Scriptures, they are soon led away by arguments on the other side, which would cease to have weight, did they know the evidences on which the truth of Christianity rests ; and in this way the uneducated are particularly liable to become unbelievers, because they

have not the requisite knowledge to detect their fallacy, and for want of this, they are often guided almost entirely by passion ; therefore whatever favours human inclinations, is the more liable to be followed. To counteract this effect, as far as may be within my limited power, is the object of the following pages ; and on this account I have endeavoured to render the argument as intelligible to every reader as possible, by avoiding learned and critical enquiry ; I have designed to prove that the Gospels are true, and that the objections which are urged against them, are only apparent ; and if the Gospels be true, Christianity is true likewise.

In all ages of the world, there have been those, who would not allow the existence of a God, or of any Creator of the universe : but if we look into the various operations of nature, we shall find that every thing, whether animate or inanimate, bears such evident marks of the most exquisite design and contrivance, that in the most ordinary of them we perceive an adjustment of the most complex, yet indispensable means, to that end for which they are designed : and this too, in a manner far surpassing the powers of our intellect ; powers, forces, and modes of operation are concerned, into which we cannot advance a single step. Who can contemplate the common process of vegetation, or examine the structure of the meanest insect, or view the light of day, or lift up his eyes to the sky, and survey those glorious spheres which perpetually revolve in uninterrupted harmony, and not be convinced that there is a God, who formed them by his Power, who governs them by his Spirit ? Although the contemplation of this exquisite design and contrivance, displayed in adjusting all the complex operations of the whole universe, so that they may work together in harmony, is a powerful argument, yet we have others of even greater weight. If we minutely examine the several departments of Natural Philosophy, we observe many of the greatest effects, which we must suppose to arise from no cause whatever, except we admit that the present order has been instituted by an intelligent Being : and some of the phenomena of Astronomy first

claim the attention. In the solar system we perceive a large mass of matter, the Sun, round which the planetary bodies involve, in elliptical orbits. Now one leading property of matter is, that it is of itself inactive, and indifferent to motion or rest; that is, a mass of matter cannot, of itself, or without cause, put itself into motion; and when we see it in motion, we conclude, from universal experience, and without any exception, that it is because motion has been communicated to it, by some other body. In like manner, when a moving mass of matter is seen to stop, or attain a state of rest, universal experience teaches us, that the motion has been counteracted by some equivalent resistance. We next observe, that all matter is endowed with, or possesses, an attracting force; that is, when two masses of matter are left at perfect liberty, they move in a right line towards each other, and meeting in a certain point in this line, remain for ever at rest, except they be disturbed by some foreign power or active operating cause: thus any heavy body, if at liberty, falls in a right line, which is directed to the earth's centre, nearly; and, resting upon the surface, it will remain there for ever, unless moved by some foreign power.

The planetary bodies move round the Sun, in curvilinial orbits, or more properly round that point, which is the centre of gravity of the entire system; it has been so fully and undeniably demonstrated by Sir I. Newton, that this is effected, and only can be produced, by the force of attraction, and a projectile force acting obliquely to the direction of the force of attraction, that it may be presumed that none will venture to deny it. The two forces act in this manner; there is impressed upon the planetary bodies, a force, which tends to make them move in a right line, which is not direct towards the Sun's centre; the Sun, being situated not in this line, continually tends to draw them to his centre, causing them continually to be deflected from this right line, and to describe a curve. And by the balance between these two opposite forces, these bodies describe regular curvilinial orbits, which return into themselves; as is well known to every person who is acquainted

with the first principles of dynamics. When we know that all matter possesses an attracting or centripetal force, we at once see why the planets endeavour to fall to the Sun ; but whence comes the other force ? It is not from an inherent property of matter ; or at least, we cannot suppose it to be such, for we cannot bring forward one single instance, since the foundation of the world, in which matter has ever spontaneously put itself into motion : and in philosophical reasoning, we may not assume that possible, which we cannot prove to be so, from its first principles, or which we do not know to be so, from experience. It cannot result from the attraction of the Sun ; for this acts only on the direction of a right line, joining the centre of each planet with that of the Sun ; and the direction of the projectile force is not coincident with this line, but oblique to it. Of this, we have a familiar example ; a stone let fall, describes a right line, which, if produced, would pass near to the earth's centre ; it is never seen to describe a curve ; when therefore we see a body describe a curve, we conclude ; from experience, that it is because it has been first projected in some other direction. So must it be in the Solar System ; were it not for some extraneous force, the planets must fall in right lines to the Sun ; and equally foreign to the natural force inherent in the bodies constituting the system, is this force, with that projection which must be given to a heavy body, to cause it to describe a curve, upon the earth.

Neither can it have been impressed by the oblique attractions of the other planets ; for then, some of these either must have been previously in motion, and have had their motion retarded by communicating it to these planets, when they must have first been in the same situation with those we are now considering ; or some of the largest must have a retrograde motion, which is not the case ; besides, they are all too small to produce the effect. True, some comets move in a retrograde direction ; but when they descend into our system, they produce no sensible disturbing force whatever, upon the planetary motions ; therefore they cannot have originally put these bodies into



motion. In this phenomenon, then, we observe a most extraordinary effect, which must have had some cause ; it is a force impressed upon matter, for which there is no assignable cause whatever ; none in the bodies themselves, nor in their combination. This motion they have, for we may see it daily ; and from what is known of it, we can compute its quantity minutely, to the most distant period ; whence then is it ? No philosopher can suppose it to be by chance ; since we have on record no parallel example whatever, which can be proved to be the result of chance, or to have had no cause. Surely we cannot for a moment deny, that these bodies at the first have been put into motion, by the powerful hand of the Supreme Being ; and when once impressed upon them, since they move in regions void of resistance, the motions will continue without any interruption or limitation ; except we suppose here, what we should refuse to admit in the most ordinary occurrences of life, that effects, even the most powerful, may arise without an adequate cause.

We have another proof that these bodies must have been placed in their present order, by something foreign to themselves. Had matter existed from eternity, or had it spontaneously come into existence, since it is known inherently to possess a force of attraction, which can produce no other motion, than that which in right lines joins the centres of the different attracting masses, and ultimately brings them into contact, when all motion ceases, the whole matter, which composes the Universe, must have existed as one mass, or as different masses, in mutual contact with each other. But we see it in detached masses, placed at immense distances from each other, and revolving round one common centre. Now to remove these immense masses from mutual contact, and place them at these distances, requires an actual force, which almost exceeds the bounds of our imagination. Yet at some remote period, they must actually have been separated from one mass, from a system of contiguous masses, or have been formed at their present or some other distances from each other ; and surely no one can suppose, that any of

these can have been effected, without the operation of an intelligent, and inconceivably powerful agent. Here is a most extraordinary effect, and if we suppose not an Omnipotent, Invisible Cause, where is there any cause whatever? There certainly is none in those things which we see; hence, since we witness the effect, we must allow that there must have been an efficient cause. Is this the effect of chance? Have the known powers, inherent in matter, effected it? Every Astronomer must answer most positively in the negative.

In ordinary affairs, when we see a work completed, we naturally conclude that an Artist has performed it; if we meet with a book, we never doubt that it is the work of the printer, since a printed book never created itself, or came into existence without cause; are we then to suppose the effect without a cause, in works which in excellence and depth infinitely surpass the intellectual endowments of all philosophers, and which for their efficient cause, have required a power, infinitely surpassing all the physical force of all the living beings in the universe? Surely no one will so totally depart from every established rule of philosophy! If a trifling and comparatively mean effect must result from an efficient cause, much more must these, the greatest in the Universe. From this, the undeniable conclusion is, either that these, the greatest of all natural phenomena, are without any cause, the spontaneous effects of inert matter, or that these motions were given by the hand of God.

The force of gravity is similarly circumstanced. It is inherent in all matter; and of all the infinitely varied forces which may be supposed, the only one which could give permanency to the system, is that which matter possesses. In this, surely the hand of an exquisite artist is conspicuous. You may say that this power is essential to matter, since we find none which does not possess it; but this is merely stating an observed fact, not proving it to be necessary. It must be shown what matter is in essence; what gravity is; how it acts; how it is connected with matter; and why matter cannot exist without it, before any can presume to affirm, that it is a property,

inevitably consequent to the existence of all matter: besides this, before they can deny that it is the work of God, who adapted the means to the intended end, they must indisputably demonstrate, that this very force, and no other, is absolutely essential to the existence of matter: why not a force of repulsion, instead of one of attraction? Except these things can be fully proved, can we refuse assent to the statement, that a powerful, wise, and intelligent Being, has endowed inert matter with this property, to make it subservient to proposed ends?

We likewise observe the Sun, a mass of inert matter, continually evolving light and heat. Now we never find light or heat evolved, but in consequence of some change taking place, in the body thus emitting it: when therefore we observe any body to evolve heat or light, philosophical reasoning, founded on universal experience, demands, that we regard this as the consequence of, or the phenomenon accompanying and indicating some change. Universal experience likewise teaches that no such change is of infinite duration in a finite quantity of matter, but constantly approaches to a state of equilibrium with that of the surrounding medium. Without therefore at all enquiring into the cause of the Solar light and heat, we fairly infer that they arise from some change which is taking place unceasingly in the Sun, and which must be, though evidently imperceptibly, diminishing: and consequently (the Sun being, for any thing we know, ordinary matter, and its properties those of ordinary matter) he cannot have been in his present state from eternity, but the present state of the Sun must have had a beginning; and inert matter cannot be proved capable of instituting any change. Now if we suppose the contrary, we are obliged to believe that inert matter is capable of exertion, and of instituting an order of things infinitely complex, so much so, that the united labours of all the philosophers from the beginning to the present time, have been able to penetrate a very little way into them, and yet working together in harmony, inseparable from permanency of operation.

We may now consider some phenomena, with which we are more familiar, and which come more immediately under our observation. We are ourselves a part of a race of beings who have lived for a time, who soon die; of all these, each individual has derived being from another; this from another; and in tracing back this series of living creatures, either it must go back into an infinity of past duration, which no one can conceive, (which we have no right to suppose, since we have no evidence whatever of it,) or must have had a beginning. Now the bodies of all living creatures are composed merely of different forms of ordinary matter, into which they are easily again resolved, after death; yet they are endowed with a faculty of thinking, of being sensible to any external effects impressed upon them, of moving at their will, some of expressing their thoughts to others, they all have an instinctive or intuitive knowledge of certain wants, as the necessity of food for the support of life. These are decidedly not the properties of matter: never do we see matter assume them spontaneously; they are properties which we cannot give to it. These properties then cannot possibly result from the known properties of that matter, of which a living body is composed.

These properties then, must have been communicated to forms of ordinary matter at some period; from which, as a second cause, they pass on to others. When therefore we do see some material bodies endowed with properties which they could not have *per se*, the inference is that they must have had them given, by some being, whose powers were capable of effecting the work. In other words, the different orders of living creatures must have had a beginning; before which period there must have existed a cause, capable of breathing into them the breath of life, and from whom they have derived their life. This conclusion rests upon this undeniable proposition; that whenever we see matter endowed with properties which are not natural, and which do not properly belong to it, they have been communicated by another. In the familiar formation of a bird from an egg, we have a striking confirmation of this truth. Out of the same species of egg, will always proceed the



same sort of bird, having the same general conformation, adapted to the same mode of living. What is there in the egg, which produces this vital principle? Itself shows no signs of vitality, but appears only as inert, inactive matter: yet the bird proceeding from it, is a living creature, endowed with instinctive ideas of the use of its wings, of the sort of food which is adapted to its nature, and the pursuit of which is the primary object of its care. Is this an ordinary property of matter? Is it an ordinary and necessary property of matter, that the various parts are so finely adjusted to their particular, and in the same, always to the same ends? Why has the creature always those parts, which are essential to the continuance of life, as vessels for circulation, absorption, &c. ? why and how has it always that exquisite and incomprehensible laboratory, the stomach, with all its requisite appendages? Can any philosopher say, that these formations result only from the natural properties of matter? Should any answer in the affirmative, let him fully explain how matter produces that intellect and instinct, that principle of locomotion, and that at will, which all animals possess? In ordinary matter, we see no tendency whatever to any thing of the kind: when matter acts, so as to effect a decomposition in other forms of matter, itself is changed; but in animated nature, this is not the case; the stomach effects a decomposition of food, and absorption of nutritive parts; this process may go on for years, yet itself is preserved from change or decay, so long as the vital principle remains. This decidedly manifests a marked difference between the properties of the substance of animals, and the mere properties of matter. The instant that an animal dies, when no change verging to putrefaction has taken place, all its characteristic functions cease, although the parts remain entire; the blood will no longer circulate, no longer will the process of digestion go forward, the absorbents will not act; yet the matter is entire and perfect; but has lost all those properties, by which it was distinguished from ordinary matter. Now the chemist can best answer this question: Does ever ordinary matter lose, and particularly instantaneously, all its properties, which cha-

racterized it, without some notable change having been effected in its constitution? Of this, no single example can be advanced; it would overturn every settled principle in philosophy; yet in organized matter, such is the case, and the universal case: that therefore which has ceased is not an essential property of matter, nor of organized matter, and therefore cannot have been derived from its ordinary operations; hence it must have been communicated by an intelligent Being, to that matter on which it acts, and to which it communicates vitality.

Who, that deeply reflects upon those phenomena which have been advanced, can refuse to admit, that there is a God, infinite both in power and in wisdom? The things which have been brought forward, are phenomena, to the production of which, the ordinary powers of matter are wholly incompetent, and of consequence, matter cannot have constituted them, by virtue of those powers which it is known to possess: to attribute them to chance, is entirely to depart from every first principle of sound philosophy, since, in cases that admit not of direct proof, we must judge by reasoning upon facts; now we never see the least event result from chance, by which I mean, arise without having an adequate cause; when this is universally proved by common experience, to which there has never been one exception, we must assume the same, in the greater effects which we see. As we never see a heavy mass of matter spontaneously project itself into the air, we have a right to assume, that the planets cannot have projected themselves spontaneously, in the direction of a tangent to their orbits: and when we see a heavy body projected into the air, since we conclude that it has been projected by some adequate power, foreign to itself; so, since we see the planets thus projected, we have full right to say that they have been projected by some adequate power: and generally, when we see matter under any circumstances in which it cannot place itself, or possess properties which of necessity do not belong to it, and which it cannot derive from its unassisted powers, we conclude, that what we see arises from the operation of something foreign.

to itself. Of this sort only, are the phenomena which have been considered, and which afford, not a probability, but an undeniable proof, that there is a Being, to us invisible, whose hand has effected these things.

I will now examine, as impartially as possible, upon what arguments the disbelief of the existence of a Supreme Being rests. Of these, the first, and perhaps the only one of much importance, is, that if there be a God, who has created and who governs all things, He must have designed the happiness of his creatures, and it must be his delight to subdue all causes of misery: whereas we see evil and misery abound on all sides, and discover no interposition of Providence to subdue it; and we see other things, which we cannot reconcile to those attributes, which we suppose God to possess; which we cannot suppose a God, armed with omnipotence, and guided by mercy and goodness, would allow.

Such may be our supposition; and the argument at first sight appears weighty: but its justness depends entirely upon the correctness of our judgment, and the depth to which we can penetrate into the entire connexion which all the affairs observed in the world, have with each other; for example: if our judgment be not correct, we may form an erroneous standard of the attributes of the Supreme Being, giving to one a weight, which takes away perfection from another; if our penetration be not sufficiently deep; *i. e.* if we cannot see the connexion which every single event bears to all others, not merely the present, but the future, as well as those which are past; we may decide erroneously upon those arrangements which come under our observation.

Now, that our judgment is fallible, our penetration, and the powers of the mind, very limited, will be universally allowed. Therefore our judgment respecting the attributes of the Supreme Being, will be liable to error, if we have no more definite standard by which to determine them; consequently, what we consider to be inconsistencies, so great as to lead us to suppose that there is no Supreme Being, can never stand against positive evidences of his existence. True, we may see things in the world, from which we may

be induced to discredit his existence ; but how then are those positive existences to be accounted for, which we have just considered ? Thus then the case stands : of God's existence, there is positive testimony ; against it, presumptive evidence, resting solely upon the correctness of the human judgment, and the depth to which we can penetrate with infallible certainty into the whole connexion of all sublunary events. If the presumptive evidence be taken instead of the direct and positive, the greatest phenomena in the Universe, it has been shewn, have no cause ; therefore they cannot exist ; we must therefore sacrifice the evidence of the senses, to the rectitude and perfection of the judgment. If we receive the positive testimony, the conclusion is, that our judgment is fallible, our penetration, and the powers of the mind, circumscribed. We suppose that there is a Supreme Being, because we have positive evidence of his existence ; and since we see in the world, some things which we may not suppose consistent with those attributes which we imagine He would possess, we fairly infer that the standard of those attributes which our reason establishes is not correct, and that we cannot penetrate sufficiently into the order of things, to see the necessity of those arrangements which we observe. But if we deny His existence, we attribute to chance the most magnificent and stupendous of all things, although, in the most trivial events of life, we allow it no place ;—or we attribute to matter, powers which we know it does not possess. Whichever of these we take, the whole reasoning, thence deduced, must be utterly false, and we must make suppositions, far more difficult to be supported, than the idea of the existence of a Supreme Being.

Another principal argument is, that were there a Supreme Being, He would have given that evidence of his existence, which could not be called in question. But perhaps here too much is assumed. If we be reasonable creatures, left to exercise this reason ; free agents, at liberty to make use of and be guided by it, or not, as we please ; we are sure that in matters of the greatest moment, no restraint will be laid upon this our constitution ; but if we had this manifestation of his presence, it would not be evidence, but if attended to



it would be overwhelming proof to the bodily senses. Besides this, if such a Being exist, doubtless he has given us in his works, ample evidence, which may be made undeniable to every mind, by the diligent and impartial exercise of that reason which it possesses. Our judgment therefore may possibly err, if we suppose that God must of necessity have given us any evidence of his existence, beyond what his works furnish. As we are reasonable creatures, it appears most probable that what evidence we have of the existence of a Supreme Being, will be derived from the exercise of this reason; and if so, can any means be imagined, so likely to furnish the requisite evidence, as his works? In almost all ages of the world, amongst people at all civilized, these, the works and operations of nature, have convinced by far the majority, of the existence of some Deity; and certainly this universality is a convincing proof, that these evidences are of such a nature, as to lead every thinking mind to suppose that some Deity exists; which is not an impotent argument in leading us to conclude, that if such a Being exist, his existence will be the most easily proved by the evidence of his own works.

Should any say that the existence of an Invisible, Omnipotent Being, is impossible, they go too far. Had we no knowledge of any power of attraction, and were we to be told that there exists in some iron mines, a stone, which, if held some inches above a small piece of iron, would draw it up to itself, we should immediately say, That is impossible. If we knew nothing of Electricity, or any analogous power, and on seeing an electrical machine, were to be told that by turning the cylinder a few times round, a power could be accumulated in the battery, which would not only melt, but dissipate into vapour, a steel wire, we should look upon the narrator with contempt. Now these things, being familiar to us, excite little astonishment; but they prove how much remained concealed from view, but a few years ago, which would have been considered impossible, without direct evidence; and teach us to be cautious, how we pronounce even natural effects to be impossible; much more then should we be cautious, how we affirm that there can be

no God : especially since these are His works, if He exist ; and when his works are so far beyond the grasp of our limited powers, what must HE be ?

At the very best, and allowing every possible force to the arguments which have been advanced against the existence of a Supreme Being, still they can *prove* nothing. By arguments, some conclude that there is no God ; how do they prove it ? Arguments on the other side have not convinced them ; still how do they render their conclusions certain ? After they have brought them all forward, they must allow that possibly there may be a God : they have not traversed all the regions of infinite space, their eye has not surveyed whatever is beyond the grave ; therefore whatever they conclude, rests solely upon the conclusions drawn from their own reason ; and the ordinary events which arise daily are sufficient to prove that this may be erroneous. None can tell us how, when, and in what manner, all things which we see came into existence ; none can say what light is, when and how it was formed ; how a tree grows ; no one knows what his own life is, and whence derived, or how he moves a finger. In the examples of magnetism and electricity, we have seen there are things which were not expected, and which, *a priori*, would have been pronounced impossible ; and why may not such exist here ? No man can demonstrate these things not to be the works of a Supreme Being. Even giving every force to the arguments of objectors, they must allow that they may be wrong.

Can any one then wish to continue an atheist ? He may perhaps conclude that there is no God, nothing beyond the grave ; but if he be in an error, will his state be enviable ? If there be a God, doubtless He has given to us every evidence of his existence, which He has deemed requisite. If therefore there be any Deity, we shall not be found guiltless, if we have withstood that evidence which He has given. Atheism leaves us uncertain as to the future ; but certain, that if there be a God, a future state, we shall enter it under his displeasure, inasmuch as we have refused to receive the evidence and witness of Himself, which He has

given. The Atheist then must leave this world, hovering between the expectation of annihilation, of which he can have little hope, and the anger of an offended God: he may say there is nothing beyond; but "In that sleep of death, say what dreams may rise?" He can have no hope in his death.

## Chap. II.



THE existence of a Supreme Being is so generally admitted, that the foregoing reasoning may perhaps appear almost superfluous. It is a more common idea, that He has made no revelation of his will to his creatures. Before entering immediately upon the question, there are certain things respecting revelation generally, which must be considered. If there be a Supreme Being, who has formed the world, created us reasonable creatures, and instituted the observed order of things, since we find many of his works, in the ordinary operations of nature, (witness those already advanced, as Electricity and Magnetism,) are such, that had we not the evidence of our senses as a witness, we should, *a priori*, have pronounced them impossible, we must be convinced from His works, that our minds cannot comprehend His nature; nor fix bounds, beyond which His power cannot extend. We therefore cannot say, or at least establish the truth of the assertion, that He cannot reveal his will to his creatures, if their state require this knowledge. Surely the mind which is capable of forming and adjusting that incomprehensible and invisible, yet potent force, of Magnetism or of Gravitation, the cause of which, as well as the mode of operation, is wholly above the reach of our capacity, in things which more immediately relate to Himself, may do others which may seem to us beyond the limits of possibility; and for this evident reason:—We are ignorant of His nature; we can only guess in part from what we see; but of the rest, we know nothing. He daily operates by second causes, the nature of which we cannot know; how then can we



know the First Cause of all things? It would be attaching the credit of too great power and penetration, too near an approach to perfection and infallibility, to our own minds, were we to say, that God cannot reveal, or cannot have revealed his will, to his creatures.

Now we may fairly infer, that whatever we know of God, must be by revelation: for our minds are so constituted, and act so entirely through the medium of the bodily senses, that we cannot comprehend those things which come not under the denomination of matter. We can investigate the general external properties of various forms of matter, but when we consider those forces belonging to it, our minds are incompetent to the enquiry: for example; what do we know of that invisible power, which impels a heavy body to the earth? What is it? How does it act? What is Magnetism, Electricity, or Heat? Some of the properties of these powers we know; but of their nature we are wholly ignorant. These secret second causes elude our grasp; how then can we investigate that Mind who formed them, or say what his will may be? If our ideas were erroneous in pronouncing some of his works impossible, we may reasonably expect our minds much more fallible, when engaged in enquiries of a deeper nature, and less resembling any of those things with which we are conversant. Let us for a moment stop to inquire into the nature of our own minds: what do we know respecting the mind? What is it:—how does it act through the medium of the body, and upon it, producing the senses?—how does it cease its operations, and leave the body to become a corrupting mass of inert matter?—how does the animating principle preserve it from decay, during the continuance of life? Here we must confess absolute ignorance. Surely then we must be ignorant of that Mind which formed ours.

Neither can we fix the standard of his Attributes by our unassisted reason. If we look into all the passing events of life; the connexion which they all have with each other; how some flow from the past; others determine the future; we see a complexity, a variety, so amazingly great, that no mind whatever can comprehend more than a very minute

part of the whole, and that confessedly very imperfectly ; therefore no mind is able so to connect together all the single instances of the dispensations of an overruling Providence, (if such there be,) and generalize them into a part of one whole general plan of proceeding, as infallibly to draw from the light of nature, what his attributes are. For we see a part, detached, or connected with a minute part of its connecting and dependent circumstances ; at another time, a similar event, apparently opposed to this : now if the attributes of the Supreme Being be consistent and uniform, which must be the case, we must at once see, that there can be no real discrepancy, but the difference is to us apparent, because we cannot take in the whole of the connecting parts, in all their bearings. Besides this, we find that since the world began, no set of inquirers guided by the light of reason only, have ever been able to fix any standard of these attributes : those agreed upon by some, will not please others ; some will maintain one, which is denied by others. If then we have not an infallible standard, there can be no agreement on this point ; if there be no agreement, the inference is, that different minds do not apprehend the subject alike ; and all cannot be right ; therefore experience proves that the human reason cannot be capable of ascertaining *with certainty*, the attributes of God. As these are enquiries which have occupied the minds of eminent philosophers, from the earliest ages ; as the attributes of God must be uniform and unchangeable ; had the powers of the mind been sufficient to determine their standard, doubtless the conclusions must have agreed ; but they differ as remotely as possible.

Respecting a future state of existence after death, we can know nothing certain, except a special revelation be made ; and for this evident reason : none of the dead have returned, to inform us into what state they entered ; we cannot draw aside the curtain which conceals the Deity from our view, to learn what are his purposes ; nor can we unbar the doors of death, to take a survey of what is beyond. On this subject, therefore, we can never make our conclusions certain, except the matter be revealed to us :

since it is not a subject of enquiry, in which from certain *data*, we can determine the end ; but one of existence, in which, except the end be seen, we can never allow conclusions of the reasoning to be infallible. Whether therefore death be an eternal sleep, or it introduce us into a fresh state of existence, reason can never decide. The most eminent of the ancient Philosophers always spoke hesitatingly upon the subject : they thought it highly probable, but could not state it with that confidence which would enable them to enforce the belief of it, or deduce binding rules of conduct from it. It seems highly probable ; for we find ourselves possessed of an animating principle, which seems capable of unlimited improvement, and which, since it is not material, we cannot say must inevitably die with the body ; it is therefore not unreasonable to suppose, that it may survive, and have a wider range given to its faculties. We also find, sometimes, that the good and virtuous are oppressed, injured, and even killed, by the vicious ; which consideration led the ancients to imagine that there is a state of retribution in a future world, where all will be rewarded according to their good actions, or punished for their evil ones.

In our nature too, there is an instinctive horror of annihilation ; there is within us an insatiable desire of immortality. Likewise amongst the most ignorant of the heathens, there is to be found some idea of a future state, an expectation that death is not an eternal sleep, an annihilation of the vital principle. This is so universal, that it may be said to be almost intuitive ; and, as such, seems almost like a persuasion of a certain event, implanted in our nature by the Creator, to teach us that which reason cannot effect. This is almost the only thing which we find granted by universal consent. Still the point can never be proved by reason ; it cannot be established with that certainty, with which we should say, the Sun will rise to-morrow ; yet it appears probable in a very high degree. On the other hand, it cannot be proved that death is a cessation of existence ; no arguments of weight can be advanced in support of that idea : the arguments favour the supposition

of its reality, and establish it as highly probable, but cannot prove it; much less can the contrary be demonstrated. Therefore unassisted reason teaches us only that *there may be* a future state of existence.

We have seen that the Deity may make a revelation of his will, and that He may design for us a future state of existence; if therefore it be probable that there is a future state, and that a knowledge of the will of the Supreme Being towards us tends to our advantage, or is necessary for us, it is probable that He will make some revelation, concerning those things which we require, and which we *cannot* derive from the light of nature

We may next consider the different modes in which revelation may be made. Since we are acquainted only with things which are corporeal, and have no visible and sensible intercourse with the Deity, if revelation be given, it must be by means with which we are not conversant: if the Supreme Being should audibly give a law to the world, should write it in characters in the sky, which might be read by all people under heaven; if He should reveal it to some person or persons, commanding them to deliver it to the rest of mankind; in all these cases, agencies are made use of, which are hidden from us, and which are the immediate power of God himself. In proportion then as it is probable that He designs us to know his will, in the same proportion it is probable that He will interpose, in a manner which we call supernatural or miraculous: by which, nothing more is meant, than that an effect is produced which is not according to the ordinary course of nature, the power being that of the Deity, which is hidden from our view. Now we might suppose that He would signify his real existence, and declare his will, by some symbol in the sky, which would be the infallible guide of all people: but we see no such thing, and thence fairly conclude, that the Deity has not thought this the best mode of revealing Himself to his creatures; which alone proves that our ideas of the way in which Infinite Wisdom may best reveal Himself, are not correct.

Besides this, it would not be to deal with us as rational creatures. We possess reason; we have the power of making



use of it, or not, as we please ; also of being guided by it, or of resisting its influence. If then we have this ocular demonstration, it lays a great restraint upon our will ; for unless we obstinately resisted even this, it would enforce a certain line of conduct, and we should not have the power to regulate ourselves by that reason which Heaven has given us, but must pursue a prescribed course, except endowed with a degree of obstinacy, which would resist the evidence of the senses. Either then must we be machines, which can follow only a prescribed course, or possess a degree of stupid insensibility, invincible by any evidence.

If we enquire further into the subject, we shall find it by no means easy, to prescribe any way in which this can be effected. Suppose characters in the sky : we have no universal language ; all therefore cannot read them ; some may read, other nations must receive the interpretation at their hands. And after all, as all celestial bodies are inaccessible, why must all people receive this as the witness of God, rather than those heavenly bodies that do exist ? Why may they not be regarded as mere Astronomical Phenomena, which by chance accord with some words of one language, the very characters of which, some may reasonably say, have in very remote ages been drawn from those visible in the heavens ? The wisdom of the Deity has doubtless considered, that those his glorious works, which we see in the vault of heaven, together with the other works of Creation, are a sufficient witness of his existence and his power, which may be read by all nations, since He has given no other, and has thought proper, if He have revealed his will, to do it in some other way.

Such revelation then could answer primarily, only to people, the characters of whose language accord with the record ; and to them, only if they read them as written with the finger of God ; which some might, with a show of reason, call in question, when they see the variety of forms assumed by the celestial bodies : witness the ring of Saturn, the belts of Jupiter, the Solar spots, the tails of Comets, and the infinitely varied forms of the nebulae. In this, we cannot argue from experience, but by probability ; and the probability seems to be, that objectors might even then be found, who would endeavour to establish their objections by philoso-

phical reasoning. If, in addition, we calmly survey our state, the order of all things around us, we plainly see, that the Supreme Being has laid no restraint upon our reason, and therefore, consistently with this universal plan of proceeding, could not give us such a manifestation of Himself. The question now becomes, whether this evidence would have the supposed effect. We often find that the judgment is fully persuaded, but the persuasion produces no practical effect: for example; most men will allow that a life of intemperance and vice is sure to end with misery and ruined health; the miseries of premature old age, working with a ruined constitution, will assuredly follow, and often terminate in poverty and disgrace; often do those who lead such a life, see these things brought upon their companions; they see them a prey to every disease, every misery which can afflict the frame, and drag through the remainder of their days, in misery and suffering, their families brought to poverty, and in consequence of following their example, prove the tormentors of their declining years; nay, often do men feel these things rapidly coming upon themselves; yet such is the force of passion, that they will brave the danger. Here then we may have a daily proof, and ocular demonstration, that in practice we can resist even the very testimony of our senses, the conviction of our reason, and this, in things which are most dear to us—life, health, credit, and property. How then can we say, that the force of such evidence would be invincible? Surely the obstinacy, that resists the force of reason in this case, may do it in the other. Were we governed by the pure dictates of reason, this evidence would overpower it, and enforce a compliance with its dictates; but daily experience proves that, even in those things which respect our present happiness, we are rather impelled by passion, than drawn on by calm and deliberate reason: therefore we cannot say that that which would convince calm, impartial, and diligent reason, would certainly have its effect on a life, guided for the most part by passion, which often opposes and perverts its dictates.

We might suppose the Deity himself would be always visibly present: but this would restrain the use of our will and influence of reason more than the other. We should not only

know his will, but should be obliged to do it : for who, seeing his Maker always present with him, would dare to do any thing displeasing to Him? If this life be a state of trial for reasonable beings, such an order of things would be inadmissible, as it would be wholly subversive of every thing like volition on our part: and if this be a state of trial, the order of things must be so constituted, that we have no forcible restraint laid upon our will.

To suppose that the Supreme Being should be visibly present, then, would require a total and entire change in the whole economy of nature ; we should no longer be able to exercise our reason, but should be under a law, positive and inflexible, which we must obey ; not through choice, but of necessity. There would be no room to exercise any virtue; for that which is of necessity, can never be the result of our will: no longer would this life be a state of trial and preparation for a future life, if such there be ; the visible presence of the Deity would inspire every mind with such awe, as would enforce one certain line of conduct, and that only. Besides, it may be supposed possible that even this might lose part of its effect in time ; but even then there must be left a greater restraint than is consistent with the state of rational and accountable beings.

Now, being convinced that there is a Supreme Being, if we suppose that He might have revealed himself in one of these ways, or any other, when we find He has not done it, instead of finding fault with his dispensations, or advancing it as an argument against his existence, or denying the superintending care of his Providence, we should rather be convinced by it, that we know too imperfectly the whole of his designs, and of his dealings with mankind, to be able to pronounce decidedly upon such a subject. We must all know so well the imperfection of our minds, that we should rather suppose the apparent inconsistency arises from the imperfection and partiality of our views ; we are secretly influenced in all things by partiality and self love, and often when we do not know it: this will be freely granted as the result of universal experience. A feeling that we should perhaps be more satisfied with such evidence, may cause us to look upon it as the best way in which the Deity

could have revealed Himself; and when we are at all influenced by a feeling towards ourselves, we should suspect the correctness and impartiality of our views, and more especially in a subject of this nature, in which we are confessedly ignorant of the reasons for which the Supreme Being, out of the various modes of proceeding, has evidently not adopted those which perhaps we most approve: and when in his works, in the various departments of natural philosophy, we find how much our reason is limited, and how great our liability to err, which we attribute, not to any inconsistency or deficiency in the works of the Deity, but to the defectiveness of our minds, we should be cautious how we pronounce any thing against his moral proceedings, to the full comprehension of which, our minds are perfectly incompetent.

We might suppose that the Deity would make a special revelation to every individual, if he intended his will to be known. But for this there is no necessity, if He deal with us as reasonable beings, and by the exercise of this reason have otherwise given us the means of obtaining such a knowledge of Himself as our state requires. We may take a parallel case: every individual in this country has full means of obtaining such a knowledge of the laws of the country, as his state requires; now this being the case, there is no necessity for the King to cause every individual to be presented with the whole code; nor would the argument of a foreigner have a shadow of reason in it, were he to say, because the king does not present them with the whole law, that there is no king; since if there were one, this is a necessary part of his government, for the well being of his subjects; nor could he in justice say, that because this is not done, there is no law, which the king requires his subjects to know and obey. An ignorant foreigner, might suppose this a requisite and indispensable part of the administration; but let him see the whole plan of the government, he must confess his own ignorance, in considering *that* as the best, which is useless in itself, and impracticable unless the whole plan be changed.

If then it can be proved, that the Deity has made no revelation of his will, we may safely conclude, that we require a knowledge of only those general attributes, which diligent



enquiry, assisted by the light of nature, will furnish. If He have made a revelation in any other way, we may then be certain that this plan would not be so good as the one which has been adopted; and therefore it is not for us, who cannot comprehend his works, to find fault with that plan of government, which the Creator of all things has adopted, for the regulation of the whole; nor from this can we either question his existence, or doubt his Providence, since we have seen that in subjects of this nature, our judgment may err.

Revelation may be made directly from God, to some particular people, individually or collectively, to be by them communicated to the rest of mankind: then we receive or reject it, according to the degree of credit which we attach to them, if contemporaries; or to those who first received their testimony, and the evidence which we have of the truth of what they relate:—points hereafter to be considered.

A teacher may be sent by the Supreme Being, to give us a knowledge of his will. Before we receive him as such, we must have evidence that his claim and pretensions are just. Now his own word can never be satisfactory; for people may say any thing which will suit their purpose. Neither will the purity of his precepts convince us, nor the goodness of his life; these may be assumed, to answer a concealed end: we shall not be convinced by the reasonableness of his doctrine; for on this, few will ever think alike, and a thing may be perfectly reasonable, which is not a Divine command. The Mahometans doubtless think their religion reasonable, and the founder declared that it came from God; whereas no one duly considering the matter, can think a religion so impure, leading to such dishonesty of life, can be from God: since then there is no common consent, if there be no universal standard of what is reasonable, a doctrine cannot recommend itself upon this ground. Neither can he carry conviction, by declaring to us the mysteries of the future state: for, since he can appeal to no witnesses who may infallibly confirm his declaration to the satisfaction of his hearers, his word may be disputed. Nor can we suppose any manner in which he can convince us of the Divinity of his commission, except the Deity

himself give testimony : and this we can suppose to be done in no way, so likely as being gifted with power to do those things, which surpass the ability of men, or which are supernatural : so that, if his hearers dispute his word, he can appeal to works which his own human power, or the visible means used, could not effect, as a proof that the cause of the work is the Supreme Being himself. This must carry conviction with it ; if the teacher, in the sight of the public, do those things to which human power is incompetent, or which are contrary to the ordinary course of nature, and appeal to these, as a proof that he derives his power from God ; use this evidence in establishing his claim to being a teacher sent from God, in order to enforce his doctrine ; those who are convinced that the works are real, fully persuaded that the Deity would not allow an impostor to possess power, which would bear testimony to his claim, and which could come from God only, will receive him as a teacher sent by Divine command, and as such believe his doctrine.

Being endowed with supernatural power, as far as we can judge, seems the most effectual manner, in which we can suppose the Deity to confirm the testimony of one who professes to be sent by Him ; it is also one which lays no restraint upon us ; we exercise our reason upon what we see and know, and if we receive the testimony, it is not because we are obliged to do it, from any thing compulsory upon our wills ; but because the judgment is convinced, by the exercise of reason, combining together those circumstances which we see and know : this method of convincing the world of the divinity of his mission, appears perfectly reasonable, and to carry with it a conviction which will be irresistible, if duly examined and attentively considered. And in whatever way revelation be made, it must be such that right reason, carefully investigating it, must be convinced ; for if it be from God, reason, carefully and impartially examining it, can never lead to a false conclusion. Now we have no reason to say that miracles cannot be performed : a miracle I define to be, a work performed, to which the apparent means are incompetent, the efficient

cause being the power of God. And if we look into the works of nature, and see what He has done, we cannot presume to limit his power : a teacher sent from Him, commands a disease to leave one who has been long afflicted ; the patient is cured : the word spoken has no efficacy ; the Deity heals the sick, at the word, to convince the bye standers, that the teacher has power from Him : now surely that Power who created all visible things, whose hand has formed those stupendous works which we see and admire, and which we can never comprehend, has power to do that which is less. We see his power daily exercised in removing diseases, more or less gradually ; why are we to limit his power, and say that He cannot instantly effect the same, when He sees it needful ? We see Him daily instilling the breath of life into multitudes of newly formed beings ; cannot He then restore that life to one whom He hath deprived of it ? One is no more impossible than the other.

Without the evidence of the senses, we should have pronounced the effects of the magnet impossible ; now we all believe them to be true, though we know not how it acts. Its operation, if we had never seen it before, would appear a true miracle, and is now a representation of a miracle ; a piece of steel, we know not how, draws a piece of iron to it ; the effect we see ; the cause, as far as we know of it, is inadequate to the effect : you take a steel bar, which does not attract iron, and rub it a few times with a magnet ; it will now attract iron from a very considerable distance : there is nothing in simply rubbing the bar, adequate to the effect, or from which, *a priori*, we should expect any effect ; yet the effect is powerful, but hidden from us. Now this is a faithful representation of a miracle ; a power is communicated, wholly concealed from us, of the nature of which we know nothing ; the friction is the means used, which in itself is as ineffective, as speaking the word for the cure of a disease : the only difference is, that in the case of the magnet, the phenomena always occur when the same means are used ; it is a natural effect of a hidden cause : in the case of a real miracle, the effective power arises from God himself. This is sufficient to show that our minds are too

imperfect, our knowledge too small, our judgment too fallible, to enable us to say that miracles cannot be performed. Before we venture to say this, we should fully comprehend the *whole* that the Supreme Being has done; and when we see that his power can communicate life, the power of voluntary motion to inert matter, or if we see a small seed grow, and become a large plant, we see as great a miracle as any that can be imagined; these are all real miracles, since they are not only not the effects of the natural laws and properties of matter, but directly contrary to them. Nothing can be more diametrically opposed to the natural properties of matter, than vitality, power of voluntary motion, senses, the power of communicating them, and the other characteristic properties of animals: and if contrary to the natural properties of matter, it is not a natural, but miraculous effect, inasmuch as the Deity only can give life: it becomes natural in a certain sense, from the frequency of its occurrence; but the power by which it is effected is as hidden, and as much that of God, as it can possibly be in any imaginable miracle.

In order that any teacher professing to be sent by God, or to have received revelation from Him, may be worthy of credit, he must be able fully to convince his hearers, that he is what he professes to be. And how can he substantiate his claim? As we have no visible intercourse with the Supreme Being; when any one professes to have had any sort of communication with, or to have received authority from Him, we must be perfectly incredulous, in a matter of such importance, unless he can bring an undeniable demonstration that his pretensions are just. Now what way can reason imagine, or ingenuity invent, but his being possessed of some supernatural power, which can come from God only? And if he have this, we conclude infallibly, that he is true, since God would never give supernatural power, by which an impostor should be enabled to deceive the world.

As we see that revelation has not been made in any of the former ways, we must look for it in this, unless there remain any other, besides those which have been named. We also find, by universal experience, that teachers sent



from God, do not often appear, nor have any been in the world, who ever laid claim to the title, for many centuries. If then the Supreme Being has revealed his will in this way, he must have designed that the revelation should be given to future ages, by means of writing ; since they never had the opportunity of hearing his messengers, and must either know his will by report and tradition, or by writing: the former could never be adopted ; for we find that in this way, the narration of even the simplest event can never pass through many hands without experiencing numerous alterations ; there remains then written testimony, as the only means of communication.

The testimony of the teacher himself can only convince those who see his works, and primarily can apply to eye witnesses only : those who have not had the opportunity of conversing with him, require a different sort of testimony. They must have it from original witnesses ; and their reception or rejection of the testimony depends upon the credit of these witnesses. They may have conspired with a leader, to impose upon the world ; they may have been induced, for some reason or other, to bear testimony to an imposture ; they may have been weak, credulous, superstitious people, who have believed without sufficient testimony ; they may believe themselves, but may not be able to bring proof satisfactory to others. It is therefore essential and indispensable, that the professing teacher himself shall be able to give a proof, undeniable, of the truth of his mission. If then he profess to have supernatural power, to which he appeals, as the confirmation of his testimony of himself, the manifestations of it must be public, before enemies as well as friends, and the things done must not be of an ambiguous nature ; if they be, then we may suppose that others have acted in concert with him, in order to gain credit to him : if ambiguous, then they are no testimony ; if done in secret, the report of their being performed, will have little weight ; if amongst friends only, there is abundant room for suspicion ; if amongst enemies as well as friends, we must believe them, if these enemies made sufficient enquiry and cannot deny the fact. Those then who

are not eye witnesses, having only the report of eye witnesses, will not receive the report of original witnesses, except they can give proof sufficient for conviction, and reference, by which inquiry may be fully made of other witnesses, particularly of those who are inimical to the professed Divine teacher ; and if upon due enquiry it be found, that these cannot deny that he has done works, manifestly beyond human power, to which he has appealed as his witnesses, and the evidence of the justice of his claim, we are bound to believe that he has done such things: then we examine the works for ourselves, in order to see how far they substantiate his claims. The inquiry then of one who, though a contemporary, is not an original witness, is not, whether the things are possible, for we have seen that in our judgment of possibilities, we may be mistaken, but whether they were really done ; here his conviction depends upon whether he has made sufficient enquiry ; then his final conviction depends upon the evidence of the works themselves, and whether he have examined them in a sufficiently candid manner. One who is a contemporary, but not an original witness, therefore, must have this evidence : that in the places where the witnesses report these things to have been done, they must have publicly declared them, amongst those people who lived at the time, and had the means of detecting fraud or false report, and of contradicting them, if they affirmed any thing false : and if no one ever prove fraud or falsity, provided their interest would lead them to examine the subject deeply, no impartial judge can refuse to give credit to them.

Written testimony cannot be received without scruple, except it can be proved that it has descended from the very time when it professes to have been written, without any important alteration ; that had there been any fraud committed, it must have been detected ; that it was written at the time when, and in the places where, the original witnesses lived, who might detect any falsity, and was never contradicted ; and that in those places, and at that time, it was a matter of public notoriety, and public enquiry. For, except it can be proved not to have received any altera-

tion, whatever evidence we may have of the truth of the original document, it cannot at all apply to that which we have, as it may be altered in all the important parts: we therefore require the means of detecting any alteration which may have been made at any subsequent time. If it were not written and publicly circulated, at the time and in the place when and where those lived who might have detected whatever statement was false, we may reasonably doubt its truth, since it is a statement of professed facts, which has not stood the scrutiny of those, who could confirm it if true, or disprove it if false: if it were not of public notoriety and a matter of public inquiry, we cannot know that it has been put to a sufficient test. The question now becomes, How are we to know that our copies of any very old document agree with the original, and by what means can we ascertain whether any alterations have been made, and what they are? The concurrent testimony of historians of undisputed veracity, is generally deemed sufficient, particularly if they have written, without having had any connexion with each other. But when we consider the liability of the most faithful writer to err, from his receiving any thing upon not sufficiently substantial evidence, or from partial or prejudiced views of the subject, which may unintentionally lead him to lay undue stress upon any particular argument or evidence, and particularly when the historian's own writing has been perhaps equally liable to alterations with the record to which he is giving testimony, this kind of evidence can never be wholly free from suspicion, because it does not furnish the proper means of detecting any changes which may have been made.

There is only one way in which a document can be received upon historical evidence, that cannot be disputed; which is this; that we have evidence from contemporary writers, that the subject was of such public notoriety as to ensure its being made the object of complete investigation, and this evidence should be derived from sources which are at variance with each other: if we find this to have been the case, and that no trace is to be found that its truth was ever doubted, we cannot but admit that those who had the means

of examining it at a time when the facts could be ascertained with certainty, could not question its veracity. If we learn from the same sources, that it was immediately received by people of different and remote countries, by people who could have little or no intercourse, by people highly inimical to each other; if we find that amongst them all it was received, and became a subject of public inquiry; if we are in possession of their various copies, find that we have no historical evidence that fraud has been committed, and that the whole agree; we must receive it. For if one country or party made an alteration, even if historians be silent respecting it, on comparing their copies with those of other countries or parties, the difference must be seen; and it would be infinitely extravagant to suppose that great varieties of people collectively, and countries remote from each other, should have all agreed to make the same alterations, and yet no trace of so remarkable an event remain, particularly if some were at variance with others respecting it; and more especially that in the age immediately succeeding, those who might ascertain something respecting it, should all agree. Now if we receive any ancient document, which has descended to us with these guards; if any object to its authority, it is surely incumbent upon them to show wherein it is wrong, by producing historical testimony, at least as good as that which supports it, that it was either false originally, or has since been corrupted. An objection has no force except it rests upon historical evidence of undoubted authority. Let us now see, upon what evidence the truth of the things recorded in the New Testament rests.

We find in many parts of the world people called Christians, who receive this book as their guide; and history teaches us that such have existed nearly eighteen hundred years, and that the name of their founder was Jesus Christ. From these books, and from other histories, as those of Tacitus, Pliny, &c, we learn that he was put to death in the time when Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea, in consequence of the doctrines which he propagated; that immediately after this period, those who had become his followers went into various countries, teaching the same things; and that



violent persecutions were raised against them, in which great numbers were put to death. This evidence we derive, not only from members of their own community, but also from writers, who profess themselves to have been decidedly hostile to them. This therefore decides one point; the subject was matter of public inquiry, and had enemies; this being the case, no one will presume to say, that at its origin it would want *due examination*.

We find from the same sources, that many believed what Jesus Christ and his followers said, to be true. For many who followed them suffered death, rather than refuse to receive their word, and persevere in their profession; this we learn as well from their friends as their enemies. And their enemies never intimate that their word was false, but persecuted them, either through mere enmity, or because they looked upon their principles as dangerous to the state of the country; and they persecuted them, evidently with the intention of exterminating the new religion. Now surely it will be allowed, that their enemies, who lived in the places where all is recorded to have happened, and at the very time when they could obtain every information which they desired, and were often kings, and people in high authority, would endeavour if possible to detect any fraud; for what could so well answer their purpose, as to expose their imposture? Truly if they could have convinced the world that the things which were told them were false, they would have destroyed at once the whole credit of these men, and of their reports of what they called facts.

Now no historian whatever at all intimates that fraud was either suspected or proved; no one records, even in the most remote and obscure manner, that the events which are recorded in the Gospels or the Acts of the Apostles, did not take place. Therefore we have a right to believe, that when they were first sent out into the world, their truth could not be denied; that is, none could deny that Jesus Christ *performed those works* which are recorded; that He was *crucified and buried*; that He *rose again* on the third day; and that He *ascended into heaven*; these being the leading points on which the whole rested. Let not any

turn away from this and pronounce it to be impossible; for however it may appear, they must allow that these things were *insisted* upon, and *could not be denied*; the disciples declared these things publicly, and their enemies could not disprove them; their profession of them could offer them no advantage, but only persecution and every sort of miserable and cruel death. The question now becomes, Are our present records faithful copies of the originals? We find from the records of these ages, written by enemies, that Christianity soon spread into many distant countries, was the object of persecution, and the cause of many contending parties: but, however the parties were at variance, they all appealed to the *same books* as authentic; copies of them were widely circulated, and we have a great number now remaining, in various languages, the whole of which agree together, except in a few verbal variations, which do not affect any one point of history or doctrine. We therefore derive the same information from various sources; we have it from many remote countries. Now, since these agree, is it possible that the original can have been totally lost in oblivion, and every nation in its stead can have received a writing, which all, at the time, must have known to be spurious, and this too, in an affair which they supposed to be of the greatest consequence, and yet no trace of such an event should remain?

If any say that this is the case, I demand their proof; they cannot expect their word to overturn such evidence as this. Such an event would be far more remarkable and incredible, than any thing to which they object, in the New Testament. There are now extant some records professing to be histories of Jesus Christ, which Mr. Hone pretends to tell us were originally of equal authority with ours, during two or three centuries. Now of this I should like to know his evidence; in the writings of the earliest Christians, we find many quotations made, which agree entirely with our present Gospels: *they* are quoted as of authority, and the earliest writers who mention those Gospels which were received amongst them, name those which we have, but no others; they say that other histories

did exist ; but they *never say* that their authority was at any time allowed. He should have *proved* to us that they were received, instead of assuring us that they were, in opposition to the testimony of all historians who mention the subject.

The following points, therefore, I assume as fully established:—*First*, That the Gospels, as we have them, are as they were first written: *Second*, That the contents of them were of public notoriety, and public examination, by those whose interest led them to oppose Christianity: *Third*, That none were able to deny the truth of those things, which are related by the Evangelists. If any call in question any of these points, they should give absolute proof from history, in support of what they say. If any deny the miracles recorded to have been wrought by Christ, or his resurrection from the dead and ascent into Heaven, I ask, Upon what evidence do they proceed? If they say these things are impossible, let them remember we have before seen that the same would have been said of many of the ordinary operations of nature, had we not been possessed of previous knowledge of the fact itself. Respecting impossibilities in things, the whole nature and operation of which we do not know, we can only say that a thing appears improbable, or cannot be explained, accounted for, or cannot be rendered probable, by that knowledge which we possess; and the fallacy or correctness of our judgment must be decided by the fact: for example; Suppose a man to know nothing of Magnetism, and never to have heard of any similar force; if you tell him that you will take a common needle, and, without altering its appearance, give it a power that will make it invariably point into a particular direction, when finely suspended, and in any part of the Globe, he may naturally be expected to doubt your word, and say the thing is impossible; and that merely because he has no knowledge of such a power, and cannot comprehend how it can be effected: bring him witnesses who say they have seen it, who appeal to the whole country where they live, in attestation of their word; show him that the attention of the country has been drawn to it, as an affair of

importance to the state; convince him that no one has been able to deny the reality of the statement; and does not common sense teach us that this testimony should convince him that his ideas were wrong? Just in this state are we, with respect to the miracles recorded in the Gospels, and particularly the resurrection of Christ and his ascension. We say perhaps, that the thing is impossible; now I affirm positively, (and challenge all objectors to come forward and disprove the assertion,) that the people of the very country where these things are recorded to have happened, had their attention drawn to them as being of national importance; that they tried to check the progress of the new religion, which was supported by the evidence of these miracles, and endeavoured to extirpate it; that they persecuted its professors and promulgators with extreme violence; but that they could never deny the reality of those things, which the disciples of Christ stated to have been done.

To this point, I closely call the attention of objectors; and before one objection can be heard, I demand from them a positive and unequivocal answer, drawn from history of undoubted authority, to this one question:—Are these things so? For upon this alone, the whole must rest. The argument is now resolved to this: These things were allowed to be true, by whole nations whose interest it was, if possible, to disprove them; and who had the means of determining the real state of the case: is our idea of the subject, to overpower this evidence? We may suppose they were deceived; let us therefore examine some of the miracles, reported to have been performed: and here we must notice, that most of the miracles said to have been performed, were done publicly, that is, in the open day, when an indiscriminate multitude was present, as well enemies as friends.

Surrounded by such, a man who was well known to have been blind for many years, being brought to Christ, was restored to sight by a word, or cured of an inveterate disease of long standing; the multitude saw these men brought and instantly cured; they saw Christ approach the grave of one who had been dead four days, and command him to come forth; the man revived, and lived amongst these people afterwards. Jesus himself, as the pagan historians inform us, was put to



death, under the government of Pontius Pilate, and was buried; one of his Apostles affirms that He arose again, and appeals to above two hundred and fifty witnesses who had afterwards seen him; and other of his followers, before the Council, as well as in other places, declare that He was raised from the dead, that they had seen Him, conversed with Him, eaten with Him, and handled Him. Now these things are of too palpable a nature to allow us to imagine that the whole nation could be deceived; we have seen that the persecutors of Christianity could not deny the statement; is then our persuasion of the impossibility of these things, to lead us to suppose that the whole of the people could be so grossly deceived, that no one was able to disprove the reality of the works, though it was their interest to do so, and when they were in possession of every means which could answer the end? Surely our own judgment upon a subject of this sort can never be allowed to oppose the statement of thousands, who had the evidence of their senses, which themselves could not withstand. We have the evidence of the Jews and of the Roman Government in Judea, that they believed these things to have been done; and we have seen that the whole matter became a subject of serious examination, and that it would have been to their interest to have detected fraud or fallacy; *yet they could not find either.*

Some may say that there was a combined plan between Christ and some of his followers, to impose upon the world with the appearance of false miracles. Now upon what grounds do they support this imputation? And how do they solve the following difficulties? He was tried before the Roman Governor; He was not accused of using deceit; no witness came forward to disprove his professed works; nothing could have operated against Him so powerfully, as to have proved such charges against Him; and I defy any to prove that such charges were brought forward. Also Judas, a follower who was one of the small company who had long been attached to Him, and with whom He had lived, who decidedly had been admitted into *familiar* and *confidential* intercourse with Him, for to him was committed the trust of the common purse, at length became a traitor: for

a small bribe he delivered Him into the power of his enemies, and by this means procured his death. Now surely had there been any deceit, fraud, or imposition, upon no supposition can we imagine that Judas could be so ignorant of the affairs of Christ and his companions, as to have no idea of it. This man, finding that his Master was condemned, came into the open court—declared that he had betrayed the *innocent blood*—returned the money—went home and *hanged* himself. Had he known his Master to have been an impostor, would he have thus openly pronounced Him innocent—would he not rather have exposed Him, than have destroyed himself, since then he would only have been delivering over an impostor to merited punishment?

But on the contrary we have the evidence of a man who must have known his private thoughts, who joined his enemies, confessing his own crime, and pronouncing the prisoner innocent. Let none then venture to impute fraud or deceit to Christ, when his enemies who were eye witnesses of his works, who lived in the place where they were done, and at the very time, although they put him to death and tried to crush his religion, could neither deny the reality of his miracles, nor impute fraud or false appearance. If any do this, I only demand their proof: it will not do to say, this imposition might be practised, or the other, but they must give us full, satisfactory evidence that such was really done, before their arguments can be opposed to the evidence and universal consent of the whole nation, who were violently inimical to Christ and his religion.

In these statements I have made no direct quotations, but have appealed to historical points which are well known to all who have attended to these subjects; I therefore only call upon objectors to disprove, by historical evidence of undoubted authority, the several statements, if they can; for the whole argument rests upon these two points:—Are the Gospels which we have, those which were written by the followers of Christ—Were the things true which are recorded? The question therefore is not one which can be decided by mere abstract reasoning, but by direct evidence; and no objection can stand, unless this

evidence of direct and undoubted history prove, either that our present Gospels are fictitious, or spurious, or altered writings ; or that they were not true, when they were written.

Except one or both of these be proved, I draw this conclusion from the arguments which have been advanced, that they are true histories of those things which they relate ; and then the argument assumes the following form : Jesus Christ professed himself to be a teacher sent from God, to reveal his will ; He performed many <sup>direct</sup> miracles, or works which are avowedly beyond the power of any human agency ; and appealed to these as the evidence of the truth of his Divine mission. With regard to the works themselves, there is no occasion to prove that no human means could effect them ; can any mortal cure a disease by a word—calm a raging storm—raise the dead—raise himself from death—or ascend into Heaven ? These things indicate a power, infinitely surpassing all human power.

Look to the doctrine which He taught ; it would lead us too far were we to enter into even a general outline of it ; it may be sufficient to say, that piety towards God, the overcoming of every bad passion, the practice of humility, kindness, mercy, honesty, temperance, charity, forgiveness, purity, obedience to parents, to the established authorities, &c. are inculcated ; and I ask, Can we find any precepts which are not good, and such as we may venture to suppose to be unworthy of God ? I dare challenge the whole army of objectors to find in it, any precept, which, if universally followed, would not tend to make men *happier* in their own minds, *better* subjects, *better* members of society, than they are. It teaches what all the researches of philosophy could never do ; it teaches that out of the heart of man, proceeds every vice, and that the evils lurking here must be removed, and then that goodness of life will follow. Seeing that his doctrine was such as tends to improve, in every point, the state of mankind, and altogether such as we must imagine to be consistent with the attributes of God ; seeing that He appealed for the confirmation of his professions respecting himself, to works, evidently beyond the means of human agents ; seeing that, according to his own pre-

dictions, He rose from the dead on the third day ; can we suppose that he was not such as he professed himself to be ? If we do, we have to believe that the Deity would permit a deceiver to possess a supernatural power, by which he actually has supported his pretensions ; and we have to believe that an impostor, a perfect knave, professing himself to be a teacher sent from God, and even the Son of God, deceived the world, was guilty of a fraud, the basest ever known, in order to deliver precepts for the regulation of our conduct, infinitely more pure, more perfect, more beneficial, more suited to our wants, than all the philosophers who have ever lived, whilst the Almighty was an indifferent spectator. Such a supposition is incredible and preposterous to the utmost degree. Except then, positive evidence can be advanced, which inevitably destroys that which we have, we must conclude that the Gospels which we possess are undoubtedly a Revelation from God, which we are bound to obey : for if they be a Revelation, they are established by the authority, and are a command of God himself.

Having seen some of the principal evidences upon which the authority of the New Testament rests, let us examine the evidences which there are in favour of infidelity : by infidelity I mean a rejection of Christianity. We have seen from the first part of the reasoning, that there is a God ;— we see likewise that if He have in any way revealed his will, it has not been done in some of those ways which may be supposed possible ; and that if He have revealed it, it has been done by people Divinely commissioned, whose record we must have in writing, if we have it at all. Now there is but *one* document which can be supposed to contain this revelation, viz. the Bible ; and this comes to us avowedly as a revelation, or more properly, since it consists of several books, as so many revelations, and we have seen that its claim is supported by powerful testimony. If we will reject it, we cannot find any historical testimony to support our position ; our arguments therefore must be derived from the work itself, or from our opinion of its subject matter. Suppose the former : many passages have been



objected to on account of supposed chronological errors, seeming contradictions, or things inconsistent with the attributes of God. As an examination of these particulars would be a too great deviation from the proposed plan of this work, and as they have been fully and ably examined by numerous eminent writers, I shall not enter upon them particularly, but confine myself to the nature of such objections generally.

We have already seen that many of the works of nature are such that we cannot fully comprehend them, and that if we had not had the evidence of our senses, we should have denied the possibility of their being as they are. Now, surely our minds are less able to comprehend the nature of God, the plan and design of his moral government, and to fix His attributes. Revelation, if given, must be given in order to furnish us with a standard, by which we may correct our judgment; for on these points, none who have reasoned only from the light of nature have agreed: what seems right and consistent to one, is objected to by another; therefore a revelation must communicate things which do not agree with those conclusions to which reason alone will lead us; therefore, if we see things in a professed revelation which do not coincide with our ideas, this is no decisive proof that its pretensions are unfounded: the error may be our own; since, when people's judgment leads them to different conclusions, no one can maintain that his is right, until he possesses some certain standard. If then our natural ideas of the nature and attributes of God be erroneous, the revelation will appear inconsistent, except, convinced that it is from God, we admit our own error. Besides this, if we see only detached parts of any plan, and are unacquainted with all the rest, those may appear at perfect variance, which might be seen to be perfectly consistent, and one even an inevitable consequence of the other, had we a perfect knowledge of the whole. So it must be in a revelation; our minds are so constituted that we can never comprehend entirely the attributes and plan of the moral government of God; in the one we see things which we should not expect, by viewing only the other: now it is certainly a fair inference, that we know too little to see these detached parts

in their proper connexion, and as harmonious parts of one whole. Even supposing the apparent inconsistencies to admit of no adequate solution, they could not be sufficient to warrant us to decide against the revelation in question, since we are of necessity obliged to allow, that the apparent error or inconsistency arises solely from an error in our judgment, and consequently cannot be opposed to such evidence as we have in support of the truth of the Bible.

Revelation will also contain many things which are manifestly above our comprehension; but these can never be made arguments against it. Who can comprehend what gravity is, what light is, what heat is? yet who will deny on this account their existence, or the truth of Newton's *Principia*, his *Optics*, or Black's *Chemistry*, which treat of their properties as real existences? Arguments founded upon things revealed being such that we cannot comprehend them, can never have any weight, until the person who uses them can first convince us that he can *fully* comprehend *every* natural work. But, setting aside all these considerations, let the difficulties attending the reception of the Bible be what they may, I defy any infidel to prove that it is not a Divine revelation—to prove that there is not a future state of reward and punishment—that Jesus Christ was not one with God, the Creator of all things—that the Gospels are not true accounts of a revelation from God. After going through all the infidel arguments, the sum of the whole is conjecture and uncertainty; and they must allow that their arguments can be, at the very best, and even if not one be controverted, only *possible*: but such arguments, founded merely upon the correctness of the human judgment, and terminating in uncertainty, can never be opposed to direct evidence, and that approaching as near to *absolute demonstration* as evidence can do.

Infidels commonly reject the Bible because it contains things which they suppose to be at variance with the attributes of the Deity, or which are unworthy of their belief; in opposition to this let us see things which they must believe, if they deny the existence of a God. They have to suppose that inert and inactive matter, formed itself into the

most beautiful and harmonious order, and spontaneously gave rise to all the infinite variety of animated beings; that is, the greatest events are the result of *no* cause, which supposition is too absurd to be made by any one who has reason to use, and who will make use of it: it is unphilosophical and absurd to the greatest degree, to allow the existence of any effect without an adequate cause. But if we allow that there does exist some God, then, if we refuse to admit that the Bible is a Revelation from Him, we involve ourselves in very great difficulties. Every writer whose works form a part of the Bible, professes to reveal the will of God; as a revelation their writings have been generally received. Now if they delivered not a real revelation, they were *impostors*. No one can deny that the subject was fairly and diligently examined, at times when the truth or falsity of the statements could be fully put to the test. We therefore have to believe, that the whole world has been regularly and systematically deceived by impostors, who lived in very distant ages;—who all conspired to impose the same scheme of deception upon the world, having no advantage in view; but acted in the very face of danger and death; counterfeited miracles; delivered feigned prophecies, which their followers, even two thousand years after, minutely fulfilled; yet with such perfect success, that no suspicion whatever has ever fallen upon one of the individuals concerned in the plot.

Now can such a scheme be made to appear probable? Moses must have counterfeited miracles of stupendous magnitude, openly before the multitude, for forty years, without detection; delivered many feigned prophecies of an express nature; various prophets must have arisen, who, ignorant of his personal views, yet followed up his scheme with equal success; Jesus Christ, at an interval of two thousand years, must have fulfilled all these prophecies, surrounded by the most violent enemies, who were intent upon his destruction—carried on false miracles—deceived the people—persuaded them that he rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. His adherents maintained the same things, carried on the same fraudulent plan, and though persecuted and tortured even to death, yet no trace of fraud

or deceit ever appeared. Although, according to this system, all this was a compact of fraud, yet these knaves delivered the *best*, the *most perfect* precepts, ever known or given to the world. Now upon what hypothesis can this be made to appear in any degree probable? Whatever they have revealed concerning the attributes of God, according to our ideas, is worthy of Him; whatever they have commanded to us as our duty, is perfect, and appeals at once to the conscience; yet this is ascribed to deceivers. Surely this does not bear the mark of fraud; the idea is a compound of absurdity and obstinacy—and more incredible than any thing contained in the Bible.

Besides this, we have to believe that God has invariably refused to give us any revelation, yet has given supernatural power to knaves to impose upon the world, by coming in his name. Now if any say that the Bible contains things unworthy of God, I would ask, Is this consistent with what we suppose his attributes to be? These people were permitted to appeal to a supernatural power which they had in support of a fraudulent scheme, and the Deity permitted it. Much rather should we confess our own ignorance, and receive this as a real revelation.

We may now consider some of the effects of infidelity. Had we no revelation, a survey of the works of nature would teach us that there is a God; and in all mankind there is a persuasion of a future state, and many circumstances lead us to suppose the same. This being the case, we may rationally suppose that the Deity would give a revelation to be our guide: this revelation the Bible professes to be; and it is supported by many undeniable evidences. All the arguments which we can advance against it, are the conclusions to which our own reason brings us, resting upon promises of an arbitrary nature, and avowedly uncertain. Infidelity therefore leaves its followers in a state of gloomy uncertainty; they cannot prove that there is no future state—no heaven—no hell—no future judgment—that the Bible is not true; they may suppose it; but if it be true, what is the consequence? If it be a divine revelation, and they cannot prove that it is not, God will have given with it such evidences as He sees



to be sufficient, and such as He expects we shall receive, and they will be found to have withstood these ; and dare any risk the finding of these things true, upon uncertain conjecture ? Their eye has not surveyed every portion of boundless space ; they have not entered into the secret councils of the Most High ; to them the gates of the grave have never been opened, that they might view the state of the dead : infidelity therefore leaves us uncertain whether death be an eternal sleep, whether we become mere unconscious earth, or whether the soul lives for ever ; but it gives us this certainty : If the Bible prove true, the infidel will have withstood that revelation which God has given ; and the plagues therein denounced must fall upon him. Can any then, upon any plea, chuse infidelity ? Guided by it, we approach the grave surrounded by gloomy apprehensions, that Christianity may be true ; and if so, we are miserable for eternity.

A real Christian, being guided by principles of mere prudence, is always safe ; if death be an eternal sleep, his life will have been the happier, by his being preserved from many snares and vices, and then he will moulder in the dust, no one being able to disturb his repose ; but if there be an eternal state—if the Bible be true, he is safe, and that for eternity ; whilst the infidel must be exposed to the anger of God. Let the infidel consider that hour when his eye will be taking a survey for the last time, of all worldly things, and will these gloomy apprehensions bring peace ? He then enters the regions of the dead without a ray of hope, knowing that he may be wrong, and that if he be, he is wholly without hope, and involved in all the horrors of despair. And in life, when he may little regard these things, he must know that the end will soon be at hand, and the awful consequences that may then await him he leaves to uncertain conjecture.

Look to the consequences of infidelity in this world ; take off all restraint from the consciences of men, and persuade them that there is no hereafter ; and experience will have taught the unbeliever, that he invites every bad passion, gives license to the exercise of every vice, and deluges the

world with crime and misery. It was infidelity which so excessively aggravated the horrors of the French Revolution ;—it is infidelity that now, in our own country, at once strives to overthrow the laws of both God and man.

Does then infidelity bear the mark of being according to the will, and consistent with the attributes, of the Deity? It rather seems to bring with it His curse; and if such be its consequences here, much more dreadful may they be expected to be in the future state.



## PART THE THIRD.

### ON THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

HAVING seen that the New Testament is a revelation from God, we next come to an inquiry of the utmost importance:—Who was Jesus Christ, the Founder of the Christian Religion? On this subject, the utmost difference of opinion is found amongst different denominations of Christians. Whilst some maintain that He is Divine; being both God and Man; others hold him to have been no more than a man, divinely inspired;—both cannot be right: if one be right, the others are chargeable with Idolatry; in ascribing to a Created Being, that worship which is due to God only; and there is no sin against which God has pronounced such dreadful denunciations, as that of Idolatry. If the others be right, those who maintain the opposite opinion are guilty of denying God; for if Christ were really God, He will have given such proofs of his Divinity as He sees to be sufficient for us, and such as He requires us to receive. The question must be determined by ascertaining the meaning intended to be conveyed by the words, Son of Man, Son of God, &c., which He applies to himself; i. e. whether He were the Son of God by being one with Him, and by having pre-existed from all eternity as God; or figuratively, by adoption and preternatural inspiration. In these inquiries we cannot but observe, that profound criticism of what the original words which are used may be made to bear, is of very little service: Christ himself declares, (*Matt. xi. 5.*) “The poor have the Gospel preached to them;” which naturally leads us to conclude that the leading doctrines, and those which are essential to salvation, are so clearly laid down, that profound learning is not required, in order that we may discover its meaning.



Besides this, Jesus always used such language as was adapted to the capacity of his hearers, who were for the most part poor, uneducated people: the evangelists were men destitute of extensive erudition; the Apostles were uneducated men, and, excepting St. Paul, possessed of a limited knowledge of the properties of Greek composition; and St. Paul never writes with classic accuracy. When therefore those who wrote the books of the New Testament were men who were principally acquainted with such language as was current amongst the more illiterate part of the people, and addressed themselves to such, (for such were most of the early converts,) it will be in vain for us to expect their words to require that criticism, which we find useful in entering upon the works of Sophocles or Euripides; they do not use lofty and long similitudes; but usually state in few words what they mean to teach. Their meaning therefore must be learned by a comparison of the various passages in which any particular doctrine occurs, the connexion in which it stands in every place, the way in which their words were understood by their hearers, and whether *it was such* as they intended. And since, "to the poor the Gospel is preached;" since in all places, the greater part of the people, whose eternal life depends upon their reception of the Bible, have neither the ability nor the means of information beyond what the Scriptures themselves afford; if we think that the New Testament is not sufficient, without any comment, without any criticism, but by its plain and obvious meaning, to decide this most important question, we virtually charge the wisdom of God with giving the word of *eternal* life, to those who have not the means of further inquiry, in such *ambiguous language*, that on the one hand it must lead them into *actual Idolatry*, or on the other, to a *denial* of the Divinity of Christ. I therefore assume that the words of the New Testament can be interpreted truly by the Testament itself; consequently, avoiding every species of critical inquiry, I will endeavour to determine what ideas respecting Jesus Christ, the Testament itself conveys. Jesus frequently tells us that He is the Son of God. In what sense did He mean us to understand these

words? In the antediluvian age, the godly were called the Sons of God. *Gen.* vi. 2. The same term is used *Hosea* i. 10. "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the Sons of the living God." St. John, speaking of Jesus, says, *John* i. 12, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (or right or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." *Rom.* viii. 14. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." *Philipp.* ii. 14, 15. "Do all things without murmurings, or disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God." *1 John* iii. 2. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." Hence every good man is a son of God, and is called in the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, a son of God: in this sense, the Apostles were the sons of God; but this is not the signification which the words have, when they are applied to Jesus Christ.

In *John* v. Jesus healed a man at the Pool of Bethesda who had lain there a long time; the man told the Jews that Jesus had healed him; *v.* 16. "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath-day; but Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making Himself equal with God." In this, the Jews understood his *claiming* a Divine nature, and did not take Him to mean that He was the Son of God, only in that sense in which *every* good man is a son of God: they understood that He made Himself *equal* with God.

*John* x. 30, and following, Jesus said, "I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Here the Jews under-

stood that Jesus laid claim to the Divine nature; in other words, that He made himself God: of this they accused Him; Jesus did not deny the charge at all. If He were a man only, he was a blasphemer; he could not be a good man and a prophet, if, being a mere man, he allowed the Jews to be able to say that he made himself God. Did Isaiah ever do this? Did Moses? When Cornelius fell down at the feet of Peter, did not the Apostle declare, "Stand up; I myself also am a man?" Did Paul and Barnabas permit worship to be offered to them?

These all considered themselves as *only* men, inspired with the Spirit of God: had they claimed the Divine nature, they would have been wicked, impious blasphemers. And if any one be a good man, if any thing he should say should cause the multitude to say: Thou makest thyself God, should we not say that he arrogated this title, except he immediately corrected the error? But not so with Jesus; his enemies tried to put Him to death, because He made Himself God; with this they accuse Him; therefore He knew the impression which his words had made upon their minds; this impression He allows to remain; therefore He allows that He is, without equivocation, God. But lest doubt should remain, lest it should be said there may be some error in the text, (although there is not,) let us look to his trial before Pilate, and ask why He was crucified. When Jesus had answered none of the false accusations which were brought against Him, *Luke*, xxii. 67, the priests asked Him, "saying, Art thou the Christ, tell us; and He said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And He said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth."

*Matt.* xxvi. 63 and following, "The High Priest answered and said unto Him: I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said;—nevertheless I say

unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the cloud of Heaven. Then the High Priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses! behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy."

*Mark xiv. 61, and following:* "Again the High Priest asked Him, and said unto Him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am;—and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven. Then the High Priest rent his clothes and saith, what need we any further witness! Ye have heard his blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death."

In all these several passages we observe that the words which Jesus used were such, that the Jews understood Him to mean that He possessed a Divine nature; for where is the blasphemy, if they understood by the Son of God only that sense in which every righteous man is a son of God? what blasphemy, if He falsely in their view called himself a prophet? On all these occasions, they understood him to mean, that He was God; of claiming the Godhead, they accused Him; therefore He could not be ignorant of the interpretation which they put upon his words. The case then stands thus; the Jews understood that Jesus made himself God;—Jesus knew this; if then he were not himself God, he was not a good man and a prophet; for such will never claim the Divine nature; if they do, they forfeit all claim to goodness; for they lead their hearers to absolute idolatry. Now Jesus did not say in any one instance that they misunderstood his meaning, or supposed Him to lay claim to that, to which a mere good man knows he has no claim; but He allowed the idea to remain: He did not tell them that He only meant to say, He was a good man or a prophet; but He allowed them to go away, fully impressed with the idea that He had said, He was really God, and had often told them to believe on the Son of God. These are plain facts; the Jews often accused Him of claiming the Divine nature, the utmost limit of impiety; and Jesus never denied the charge, nor in the most remote manner strove to remove it: He therefore allowed that the charge was true,



and that He did lay claim to the Divine nature: either then He must have been himself God, or an impostor; and to suppose Him an impostor, is a thing too preposterous to be imagined by any one who sees that God raised Him from the dead: for would He confirm the pretensions of an impostor, who said, I am God, by raising him from the dead? The idea is too impious to be entertained for a moment. Since then Jesus did truly claim the Divine nature, and profess Himself to be the Son of God, to be equal to the Father, as to his Godhead, and was no impostor, we are bound to believe that He was the Son of God.

We will now see what his Apostles believed on this head. The Gospel of St. John was written long after the ascension of Jesus Christ; and had the Apostle not been under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it would have expressed his own sentiments: but since he was guided by the Spirit of God, his words must be looked upon as decisive. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God: the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not—and the word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father) full of grace and truth." *John* ch. i.

The Apostles invariably call Jesus Christ, "The Son of God," without any qualifying epithet.

St. Paul begins his first Epistle to the Corinthians: "Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."

*2 Cor.* i. 2, 3. "Grace be unto you and peace, from God, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

*Gal.* ii. 20. "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

*Philipp.* ii. 10. "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

*Coloss.* i. 2. "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

*1 Thess.* iii. 11. "Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you."

*2 Thess.* ii. 16, 17. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

In *Ch.* iii. the Apostle twice exhorts the Thessalonians by the Lord Jesus Christ.

*1 Tim.* iii. 16. "God was manifest in the flesh."

*2 Tim.* iv. 22. "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy Spirit."

I shall now quote the Epistle to the Hebrews. Whether it is of authority, and the genuine work of St. Paul, has been doubted by some; this will not at all affect the use which I here make of it: my opinion is, that it is established by authority quite sufficient to confirm it as the genuine work of St. Paul, and to prove its inspiration; but in the present argument, I will look upon it in the light of a document, composed by an unknown individual, in the Apostolic Age. It was received by many of the earliest Churches, and introduced into their Canon of Scripture; it therefore expresses their sentiments.

*Ch.* i. 8. "Of the Son he saith: Thy throne, O God! is for ever and ever."

*Heb.* ii. 3. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at first began to be spoken by THE LORD."

*2 Peter* i. 1, 2. "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and Jesus our Lord."

1 *John* i. 3. "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

1 *John* ii. 22. "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ."

*Jude* 25. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever."

The question is, How is Christ the Son of God? Neither Himself nor his apostles say by adoption, or, as all the faithful may be called, the sons of God; but in such a manner that we find the multitude understanding by Christ's words, that He made Himself God, and equal with God; and He never intimated in the most remote manner, that his meaning had been misunderstood, or that He only meant to say that He was the Son of God, in that sense in which any good man may be called the Son of God, or that He was the Son of God by adoption. His Apostles also use the same expression, Son of God, and do not at all qualify it; they join the blessing of Jesus, and the grace of Jesus, with that of God—ascribe to Him the attributes of God—speak of his Pre-existence from all eternity, and of his Omnipotence. If then Christ be not really God, they have written in a manner which is calculated to lead their hearers to worship Christ, and pay Him divine adoration; I say calculated to do it, for such was the effect of their writings amongst the early Christians, and such is the effect to this day, as is evident when we reflect that the greater number, by far the greater number, of those who have believed in and do now believe in the New Testament, have believed and do now believe, that Jesus Christ is truly God; consequently, if we say that Jesus Christ is not equal to the Father, as to his Godhead, we must say that God has sent his revelation of Himself into the world, written in language which has a *direct tendency* to lead men to actual Idolatry, i. e. to the Sin which is, more than any other, condemned in the Scriptures: for surely when the Jews said, Thou, being a man, makest thyself God;—when they said, He hath spoken blasphemy, because He said I am the Christ, the Son of the Blessed; He allowed that He did lay claim

essentially and truly to the Divine nature ; in other words, He allowed that He was God and Man. When the Apostles say, At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow ;—that God was manifest in the flesh ;—of Him, Thy throne, O God ! is for ever and ever ;—to the only wise God our Saviour ;—they lead us to suppose, and the words certainly convey the idea, that He is God and Man ; and that this is the idea conveyed is evident from its prevalence above the opposite. If then by the words any thing else is intended, it can be discovered only by profound critical researches, and was not known in the Church till long after Christ's death : the poor have not the means of entering into these inquiries ; to them therefore the Gospel is not preached, inasmuch as if they attend to the real obvious import of the Scripture, they will be led to idolatry ; or God's word will lead the uneducated into the greatest of all sins, and reveal the truth only to the learned. Can this be supposed of the Spirit of the revelation of the will of God ? Were the Apostles—were the first converts to Christianity, men of profound erudition ? Doubtless they were not. Therefore they could not avail themselves of the resources of learning, but must receive the truths of Scripture according to their plain and obvious meaning ; this has led them to actual idolatry, or to the truth ; if the former, God is the cause of their idolatry ; an idea too impious to be entertained.

Much has been said of the different interpretations which the words of Christ and his Apostles will bear ; and much is required before we can determine what authority is due to these interpretations. What is to be the true interpreter of Scripture ? Are the words as used by Herodotus, Sophocles, or Homer—or is not the general tenor and Spirit of the New Testament, to be the true interpreter ? Did our Lord ever say, Search the criticisms of Sophocles or Homer ? No ; but “ Search the Scriptures.” Had the profane authors any interpretation for the Son of Man—Son of God—the Christ—the Holy One of Israel ? No ; but Christ used them ; and their meaning we derive from the sense in which they were taken by his hearers, as making



himself equal with God, and his not denying the charge. But if the meaning of the words as used by Classic Authors will give a different interpretation, it does not follow that it is right. Take which meaning you will, you come back to the original question, Does it agree with the general sense of Scripture? Supposing that the words Son of God may be interpreted, Son by adoption, or by virtue of office, or in any other way that excludes the idea of the real Godhead, does this prove that He was not God? No; for the Jews said, Thou, being a man, makest thyself God; and Christ *allowed this to be his meaning, by not denying it*, as a good mere man must have done. This would not warrant St. Paul to say, "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow;" nor St. John to say, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God—the word was made flesh and dwelt among us," if in that sense only he were the Son of God; for then Jesus arrogated to himself the Divine nature, and his Apostles worshipped the Creature, instead of the Creator. When therefore words of Scripture may appear to bear a signification, different from their obvious meaning; our ideas of its correctness are not the standard of its truth; but its correspondence with the other parts of the word of God, must decide which we are to adopt.

So far we have seen parts of the New Testament, which declare plainly that Christ is both God and man; and that this is the obvious meaning is shown by its being maintained, and having been maintained, by far the greater number of Christians, from the apostolic age down to the present time. We may now examine some of those passages which have been advanced against his Divinity. *Mark* xiii. 32. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." In this passage *οἶδεν* does not mean exclusively to know, but also to make known or declare; besides, here it cannot imply absolute ignorance of the time; for Christ has just circumstantially related all the events which should precede his coming, and declared that that

generation should not pass away before all should be accomplished; and therefore He himself could not be ignorant of the time; for nothing could be more inconsistent than to say that He did not actually know the time, when He was at the same moment circumstantially relating the things that should precede—limiting the time to the duration of the present generation—representing the whole as His own work—and telling His disciples at what period they might escape safely. The words did not convey to the apostles the idea that Christ was Himself ignorant of the time; for in the *Acts* i. 6, 7, just before His ascension, they asked Him: “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put into his own power.” This question would have been impertinent, if by the former declaration they understood Him literally to mean that He was himself ignorant of the time. And why are we to limit the meaning of the word to this sense, when at the same time it also means *to declare to another, to make him to know*, which meaning would be considered legitimate in the classic authors? which was the meaning we must collect from the connecting passages, *i. e.* here, the whole chapter; and how can we suppose that He who limited the time to a determinate period, and gave full warning of every thing that should precede it, and spake of the whole as His own work, was Himself ignorant of the time? We must have very good evidence that his hearers *so understood* Him, before we can make such a supposition; but the evidence is quite the contrary; they evidently seem to have understood that no man might declare; and not that He was himself ignorant of it.

The following are passages which have frequently been advanced, as evidence that Jesus was only a man Divinely inspired; we may therefore proceed to examine them.

*Matth.* xxvi. 39. “Jesus fell upon his face, and prayed saying: O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

*V.* 42. “Again He went away a second time, and prayed,

saying: O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done!"

*V. 44.* "And He went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words."

*Matth. xxvii. 46.* "Jesus cried out with a loud voice; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

*John xii. 27.* "Jesus said, Father, save Me from this hour."

*Ch. xiv. 16.* "Jesus said, I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter."

These, and other parts of the Gospels, showing that Christ prayed to God, and worshipped Him, and felt agony of mind in the prospect of his sufferings, have led many to suppose that, although Christ is the Son of God in a certain sense, He is not Himself really God.

But if we examine these facts in connexion with other declarations of the Scriptures, they will not be found to support this doctrine. If Christ be truly both God and man, can we expect to comprehend all His actions, *i. e.* to reconcile them to each other? It may however be useful to consider that Christ, as to the "*body prepared of the Father,*" (*Heb. x. 5.*) was as truly *man*, as He also was *God* as to his Divinity. Both these facts are unquestionably asserted in the New Testament. If his manhood were to be denied, how could "*He take on Him the seed of Abraham;*" (*Heb. ii. 16;*) and if He thus took our nature upon Him, can we wonder that He had the feelings of a man. That He had them to the greatest possible degree, is evinced by the wonderful bloody sweat before He suffered; by which His human nature was reduced to the utmost extremity, when permitted to feel as such; whilst the restoration of "*the Man Christ Jesus;*" (*1 Tim. ii. 5.*) as strongly marks the Divine power operating, when the human could no longer be supported without that holy aid.

Without attempting to define how the Divine nature was united with the human, we may say with the Apostle: (*1 Tim. iii. 16:*) "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, (or

manifested,) justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." We must then expect such difficulties; for where is the mystery, if we can comprehend the whole? But because we find these difficulties, our inability to reconcile them does not prove that they are inconsistent with his being both God and man: in ordinary matters, where we cannot comprehend the nature of any operating cause, if we see innumerable modes of action, we do not deny the cause.

It is not a matter of investigation, it is one of faith. If we refuse our assent to every thing which we cannot understand, we shall be obliged to deny the evidence of our senses: for example, we see by his works that there is a God; we cannot see the reason why He suffers evil to be in the world; we cannot by reason reconcile it with his attributes; are we then either to deny His existence, the care of a superintending Providence, or to refuse to allow that evil is in the world? The extravagance of such conduct is evident to the meanest capacity. In this situation is the question now before us: Jesus Christ and his apostles have declared that He is the Son of God; Jesus was worshipped by them; they set Him forth as the object of our adoration, without any qualifying explanation; one of his apostles, when dying, offered his prayers to Jesus;—the plain, obvious, and common sense interpretation of the New Testament is, that Jesus is the Son of God, or in other words, that He possesses essentially the Divine nature; either therefore such He is, or both He and His apostles have led all Christians into the sin of idolatry, which latter it is impious to suppose: but if the difficulties we meet in comprehending how the Son of God could be in an agony, pray to His Heavenly Father, or experience sorrow, cause us to look upon Christ as not essentially Divine, we virtually accuse the apostles and Jesus Himself with leading their followers into the sin of idolatry; we pervert the plain interpretation of Scripture by our fancied skill in criticism; we trust to the correctness of our reasoning powers, rather than to Christ



and his apostles; the poor, to whom the Gospel professes to be preached, are by it led into idolatry, if the words "Son of God," &c. require the refinements of criticism to interpret their meaning, and if this meaning be so totally opposite to that which appears on the face of the New Testament. Such is not the Gospel of Christ.

*Prints.*