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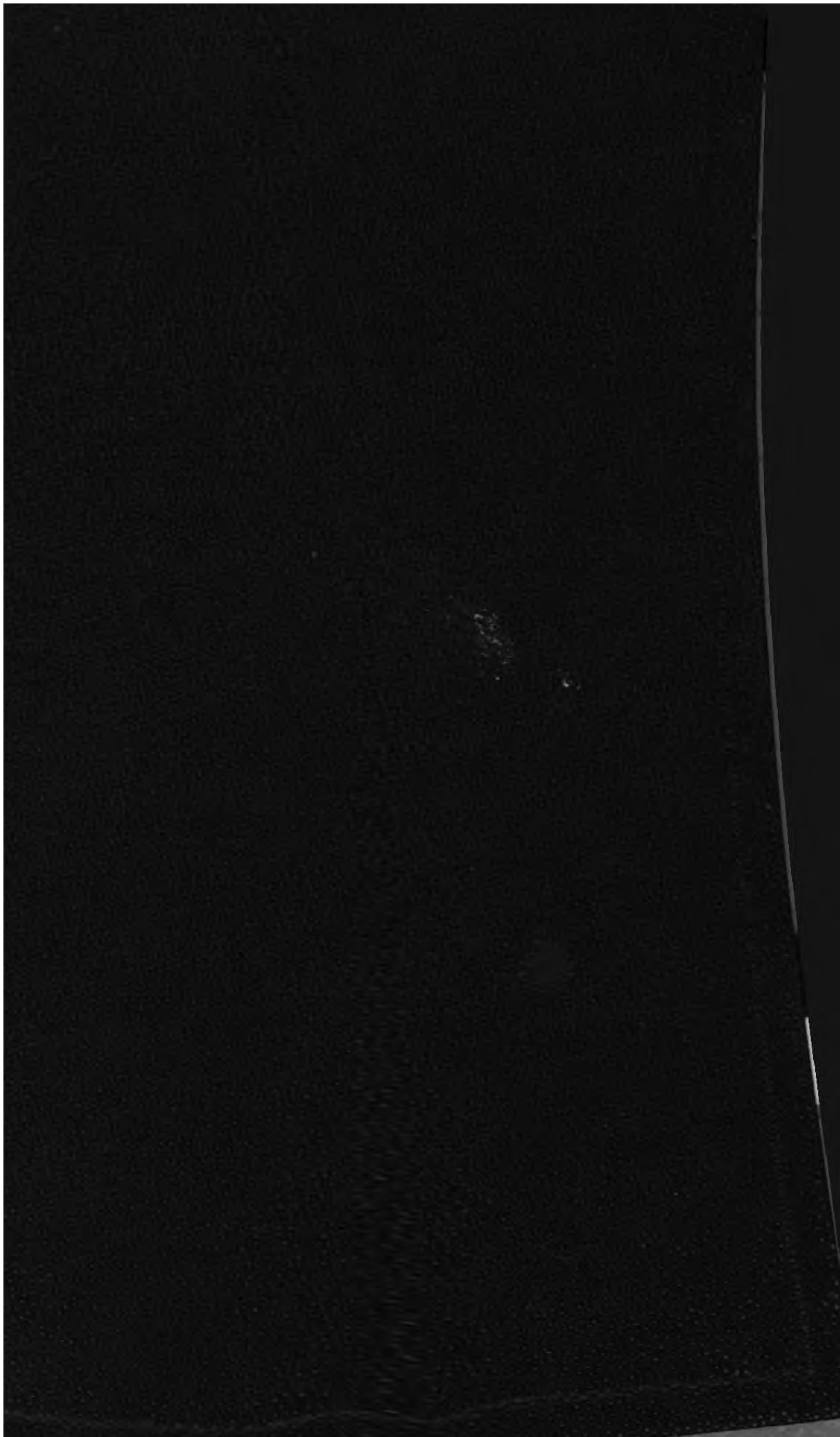
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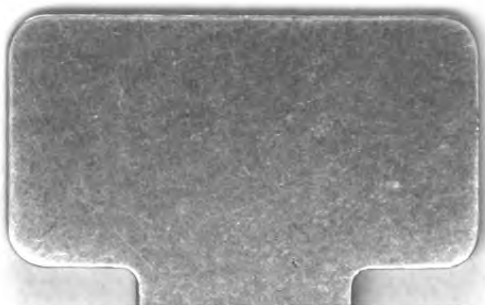


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DEISM REFUTED:

OR, THE

TRUTH

OF

CHRISTIANITY

DEMONSTRATED,

BY

Infalible PROOF from FOUR RULES

Which are incompatible to any Imposture that can
possibly be.

In a LETTER to a Friend.

By a LOVER of TRUTH.

Magna est Veritas, & Prevalebit.



LONDON:

Printed in the Year MDCCCLV.

124. f. 6.



S I R,

I. **I**N answer to yours of the third instant, I much condole with your unhappy Circumstances of being placed amongst such Company, where, as you say, you continually hear the Sacred *Scriptures*, and the Histories therein contained, particularly of *Moses* and of *Christ*, and all *revealed* Religion, turned into Ridicule, by Men who set up for *Sense* and *Reason*. And they say, That there is no greater Ground to believe in *Christ*, than in *Mahomet*: That all these Pretences to *Revelation* are *Cheats*, and ever have been, among *Pagans*, *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Christians*: That they are all alike Impositions of *cunning* and *designing* Men, upon the *Credulity*, at first, of *simple* and *unthinking* People; till, their Numbers increasing, their *Delusions* grew *popular*, came at last to be establish'd by *Laws*; and then the Force of *Education* and *Custom* gives a Bias to the Judgments of After-Ages, till such *Deceits* come really to be believ'd, being receiv'd upon *Trust* from the Ages foregoing, without examining into the *Original* and *Bottom* of them: Which these our modern Men of *Sense* (as they desire to be esteem'd) say, that they only do; that they only have their *Judgments* freed from the slavish Authority of *Precedents* and *Laws* in Matters of *Truth*, which, they say, ought only to be decided by *Reason*: Tho', by a prudent Compliance with *Popularity* and *Laws*, they preserve themselves from *Outrage* and legal *Penalties*; for none of their Complexion are addicted to *Sufferings* or *Martyrdom*.

Now, Sir, that which you desire from me, is some short Topic of *Reason*, if such can be found, whereby, without running to *Authorities*, and the intricate Mazes of *Learning*, which breed long Disputes, and which these Men of *Reason* deny by wholesale, tho' they can give no *Reason* for it, only suppose that *Authors* have

been trump'd upon us, *interpolated* and *corrupted*, so that no Strefs can be laid upon them, tho' it cannot be shewn wherein they are so *corrupted*; which, in Reason, ought to lie upon them to prove, who allege it; otherwise it is not only a *precarious*, but a *guilty Plea*: And the more, that they refrain not to quote Books on their Side, for whose Authority there are no better, or not so good Grounds. However, you say it makes your Disputes endless, and they go away with Noise and Clamour, and a Boast, That there is nothing, at least nothing *certain*, to be said on the *Christian* Side: Therefore you are desirous to find some *one Topic of Reason*, which should demonstrate the Truth of the *Christian* Religion, and, at the same time, distinguish it from the *Impostures* of *Mahomet*, and the old *Pagan* World; that our *Deists* may be brought to this *Test*, and be either oblig'd to renounce their *Reason*, and the common *Reason* of *Mankind*, or submit to the clear Proof, from *Reason*, of the *Christian* Religion; which must be such a *Proof* as no *Imposture* can pretend to; otherwise it cannot prove the *Christian* Religion not to be an *Imposture*. And whether such a Proof, one single Proof (to avoid Confusion) is not to be found out, you desire to know from me.

And you say, that you cannot imagine but there must be such a *Proof*, because every *Truth* is in itself *clear*, and *one*; and therefore that *one Reason* for it, if it be the true Reason, must be sufficient: And, if *sufficient*, it is better than *many*: For *Multiplicity* confounds, especially to weak Judgments.

Sir, you have impos'd an hard Task upon me; I wish I could perform it: For tho' every *Truth* is *one*, yet our *Sight* is so feeble, that we cannot (always) come to it *directly*, but by many *Inferences*, and laying of things together.

But I think that in the Case before us, there is such a *Proof* as you require; and I will set it down as *short* and *plain* as I can.

II. First then I suppose, that the *Truth of the Doctrine of CHRIST* will be sufficiently evinced, if the
Matters

Matters of Fact which are recorded of him in the *Gospels* be true; for his *Miracles*, if true, do vouch the *Truth* of what he delivered.

The same is to be said as to *Moses*; If he brought the Children of *Israel* through the *Red-Sea*, in that *miraculous* manner which is related in *Exodus*, and did such other wonderful things as are there told of him, it must necessarily follow, that he was sent from *GOD*; these being the strongest Proofs we can desire, and which every *Deist* will confess he would acquiesce in, if he saw them with his Eyes. Therefore the Stress of this Cause will depend upon the Proof of these *Matters of Fact*.

I. And the Method I will take, is, *First*, to lay down such *Rules*, as to the *Truth* of *Matters of Fact* in general, that where they all meet, such *Matters of Fact* cannot be *false*. And then, *Secondly*, to shew that all these *Rules* do meet in the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses*, and of *Christ*; and that they do not meet in the *Matters of Fact* of *Mahomet*, of the *Heathen Deities*, or can possibly meet in any *Imposture* whatsoever.

2. The *Rules* are these; 1st, *That the Matter of Fact be such as that Mens outward Senses, their Eyes and Ears, may be Judges of it.* 2. *That it be done Publickly in the Face of the World.* 3. *That not only publick Monuments be kept up in Memory of it, but some outward Actions be performed. That such Monuments and such Actions or Observances be instituted, and do commence, from the time that the Matter of Fact was done.*

3. The two first *Rules* make it impossible for any such *Matter of Fact* to be imposed upon Men, at the Time when such *Matter of Fact* was said to be done; because every Man's *Eyes* and *Senses* would contradict it. For Example: Suppose any Man should pretend that Yesterday he divided the *Thames*, in Presence of all the People of *London*, and carried the whole *City*, *Men*, *Women*, and *Children*, over to *Southwark*, on dry Land, the *Waters* standing like Walls on both Sides: I say it is morally impossible that he could persuade the People of *London* that this was true, when every *Man*,

Woman, and *Child*, could contradict him, and say, That this was a notorious Falsehood, for that they had not seen the *Thames* so divided, or had gone over on dry Land. Therefore I take it for granted, (and, I suppose with the Allowance of all the *Deists* in the World) that no such Imposition could be put upon Men at the *Time* when such *publick Matter of Fact* was said to be done.

4. Therefore it only remains that such *Matter of Fact* might be invented some time after, when the Men of that Generation wherein the thing was said to be done are all past and gone; and the Credulity of After-Ages might be impos'd upon to believe that things were done in former Ages, which were not.

And for this, the *two* last *Rules* secure us as much as the *two* first *Rules* in the former Case: For whenever such a *Matter of Fact* came to be invented, if not only *Monuments* were said to remain of it, but likewise that publick *Actions* and *Observances* were constantly used ever since the *Matter of Fact* was said to be done, the Deceit must be detected, by no such *Monuments* appearing, and by the Experience of every *Man*, *Woman*, and *Child*, who must know that no such *Actions* or *Observances* were ever us'd by them. For Example: Suppose I should now invent a Story of such a thing done a thousand Years ago, I might, perhaps, get some to believe it: But if I say, that not only such a thing was done, but that, from that Day to this, every Man, at the Age of *twelve* Years, had a *Joint* of his little *Finger* cut off, and that every Man in the Nation did want a *Joint* of such a *Finger*, and that this *Institution* was said to be Part of the *Matter of the Fact* done so many Years ago, and vouch'd as a *Proof* and *Confirmation* of it, and as having descended, without Interruption, and been constantly practis'd, in Memory of such *Matter of Fact*, all along from the time that such *Matter of Fact* was done; I say, it is impossible I should be believ'd in such a Case; because every one could contradict me, as to the *Mark* of cutting off a *Joint* of the *Finger*; and that

that being Part of my original *Matter of Fact*, must demonstrate the whole to be false.

III. Let us now come to the *Second Point*, to shew, that the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses* and of *Christ* have all these *Rules* or *Marks* before-mentioned; and that neither the *Matters of Fact* of *Mahomet*, or what is reported of the *Heathen Deities*, have the like; and that no *Imposture* can have them all.

1. As to *Moses*, I suppose it will be allowed me, that he could not have persuaded 600,000 Men that he had brought them out of *Egypt*, through the *Red-Sea*, fed them 40 Years without *Bread*, by miraculous *Manna*, and the other *Matters of Fact* recorded in his Books, if they had not been true; because every Man's *Senses*, that were then alive, must have contradicted it. And therefore he must have impos'd upon all their *Senses*, if he could have made them believe it when it was *false*, and no such things done. So that here are the *first* and *second* of the above-mentioned *four Marks*.

For the same Reason, it was equally impossible for him to have made them receive his *five Books* as *Truth*, and not to have rejected them, as a manifest *Imposture*, which told of all these things as done before their Eyes, if they had not been so done. See how positively he speaks to them. *Deut. xi. 2. to ver. 8. And know you this Day: For I speak not with your Children, which have not known, and which have not seen the Chastisement of the Lord your God, his Greatness, his mighty Hand, and his stretched out Arm, and his Miracles, and his Acts which he did in the midst of Egypt, unto Pharaoh the King of Egypt, and unto all his Land, and what he did unto the Army of Egypt, unto their Horses and to their Chariots, how he made the Water of the Red-Sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this Day: And what he did unto you in the Wilderness, until ye came into this Place: And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram the Sons of Eliab, the Son of Reuben, how the Earth opened her Mouth and swallowed them up, and their Households, and their Tents, and all the Substance that was in their Possession, in the midst of all*

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Israel.

Israel. *But your Eyes have seen all the great Acts of the Lord, which he did, &c.*

From hence we may suppose it impossible that these Books of *Moses* (if an Imposture) could have been invented and put upon the People, who were then alive when all these Things were said to be done.

The utmost therefore that even a *Suppose* can stretch to, is, that these Books were wrote in some Age after *Moses*, and put out in his Name.

And to this I say, that if it was so, it was impossible that those Books should have been receiv'd as the Books of *Moses*, in that Age wherein they may be suppos'd to have been first invented. Why? Because they speak of themselves as deliver'd by *Moses*, and kept in the Ark from his time. *And it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the Words of this Law in a Book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites who bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this Book of the Law, and put it in the Side of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a Witness against thee. Deut. xxxi. 24, 25, 26.* And there was a Copy of this Book to be left likewise with the King. *And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the Throne of his Kingdom, that he shall write him a Copy of this Law in a Book, out of that which is before the Priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the Days of his Life: That he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the Words of this Law and these Statutes to do them. Deut. xvii. 18, 19.*

Here you see that this Book of the Law speaks of itself not only as an *History* or *Relation* of what Things were then done, but as the *standing* and *municipal Law* and *Statutes* of the Nation of the *Jews*, binding the King as well as the People.

Now, in whatever Age after *Moses* you will suppose this Book to have been *forged*, it was impossible it could have been received as Truth; because it was not then to be found, either in the Ark, or with the King, or anywhere else; for, when first *invented*, every body must know that they had never heard of it before.

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And therefore they could less believe it to be the *Book* of their *Statutes*, and the standing Law of the Land, which they had all along received, and by which they had been governed.

Could any Man now at this Day invent a *Book* of *Statutes* or *Acts* of *Parliament* for *England*, and make it pass upon the Nation as the only *Book* of *Statutes* that ever they had known? As impossible was it for the *Books* of *Moses* (if they were invented in any Age after *Moses*) to have been receiv'd for what they declare themselves to be, *viz.* The *Statutes* and *municipal Law* of the Nation of the *Jews*: And to have persuaded the *Jews* that they had own'd and acknowleg'd these *Books*, all along from the Days of *Moses*, to that Day in which they were first invented; that is, that they had own'd them before they had ever so much as heard of them. Nay, more, the whole Nation must, in an instant, forget their former Laws and Government, if they could receive these *Books* as being their former Laws. And they could not otherwise receive them, because they vouch'd themselves so to be. Let me ask the *Deists* but this one short Question, Was there ever a *Book* of *sham Laws*, which were not the Laws of the Nation, palm'd upon any *People* since the World began? If not, with what Face can they say this of the *Book* of *Laws* of the *Jews*? Why will they say that of them, which they confess impossible in any Nation, or among any *People*?

But they must be yet more Unreasonable. For the *Books* of *Moses* have a further Demonstration of their Truth than even other *Law-Books* have: For they not only contain the *Laws*, but give an historical Account of their *Institution*, and the *Practice* of them from that Time: As of the *Passover*, in Memory of the Death of the *First-Born* in *Egypt*: And that, the same Day, all the *First-Born* of *Israel*, *Numb. viii.* both of Man and Beast, were, by a 17, 18. perpetual Law, dedicated to God; and the *Levites* taken for all the *First-Born* of the Children of *Israel*: That *Aaron's Rod*, which budded, was kept in the

the *Ark*, in Memory of the *Rebellion* and wonderful Destruction of *Korah, Dathan* and *Abiram*, and for the Confirmation of the Priesthood to the *Tribe of Levi*: As likewise the *Pot of Manna*, in Memory of their having been fed with it 40 Years in the Wilderness. That the *Brazen Serpent* was kept (which remained to the Days of *Hezekiah*. 2 *Kin.* xviii. 4.) in Memory of that wonderful Deliverance, by only looking upon it, from the biting of the *fiery Serpents*. *Numb.* xxi. 9. The Feast of *Pentecost*, in Memory of the dreadful Appearance of *God* upon *Mount Horeb*, &c.

And besides these Remembrances of particular Actions and Occurrences, there were other solemn *Institutions*, in Memory of their Deliverance out of *Egypt* in the general, which included all the *Particulars*: As of the *Sabbath*. *Deut.* v. 15. their *daily Sacrifices*, and *yearly Expiation*; their *New-Moons*, and several *Feasts* and *Fasts*. So that there were yearly, monthly, weekly, daily *Remembrances* and *Recognitions* of these Things.

And not only so, but the Books of the same *Moses* tell us, that a particular Tribe (of *Levi*) was appointed and consecrated by *God*, as his *Priests*; by whose Hands, and none other, the *Sacrifices* of the People were to be offered, and these solemn *Institutions* to be celebrated: That it was Death for any other to approach to the *Altar*: That their *High-Priest* wore a glorious *Mitre*, and magnificent Robes of *God's* own Contrivance, with the miraculous *Urim* and *Thummim* in his *Breast-plate*, whence the divine Responses were

given: That at his Word the *King* and all the People were to go out and to come in. That these *Levites* were likewise the *Chief-Judges*, even in all *Civil Causes*; and that it was *Death* to resist their Sentence: Now whenever it can be suppos'd that these Books of

Moses were forged in some Age after *Moses*, it is impossible they could have been received as true, unless the *Forgers* could have made the whole Nation

Nation

Nation believe, that they that had received these Books from their Fathers, had been instructed in them when they were Children, and had taught them to their Children: Moreover, that they had all been *circumcis'd*, and did *circumcise* their Children, in pursuance to what was commanded in these Books: That they had observed the yearly *Passover*, the weekly *Sabbath*, the *New-Moons*, and all the several *Feasts*, *Fasts*, and *Ceremonies* commanded in these Books: That they had never eaten any *Swines* Flesh, or other Meats prohibited in these Books: That they had a magnificent *Tabernacle*, with a visible Priesthood to *administer* in it, which was confined to the *Tribe of Levi*; over whom was placed a glorious *High Priest*, cloathed with great and mighty *Prerogatives*; whose Death only could deliver those that were fled to the *Cities of*

Refuge; and that these Priests were *Num. xxxv.*
their ordinary *Judges*, even in *Civil* 25. 28.

Matters: I say, was it possible to have persuaded a whole Nation of Men, that they had known and practis'd all these things, if they had not done it? or, *Secondly*, to have received a Book for Truth, which said they had practis'd them, and appeal'd to that Practice? So that here are the *third* and *fourth* of the *Marks* above-mentioned.

But now let us descend to the utmost Degree of *Supposition*, *viz.* That these Things were practis'd before these Books of *Moses* were forged; and that these Books did only impose upon the Nation, in making them believe, that they had kept these *Observances* in Memory of such and such Things as were insert'd in those Books.

Well then, let us proceed upon this Supposition (however groundless): And now, will not the same *Impossibilities* occur as in the former Case? For, First, this must suppose, that the *Jews* kept all these *Observances* in Memory of nothing, or without knowing any thing of their *Original*, or the Reason why they kept them: Whereas these very *Observances* did express the Ground and Reason of their being kept; as
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the *Passover*, in Memory of *God's* passing over the Children of the *Israelites* in that Night wherein he slew all the *First-born* of *Egypt*; and so of the rest.

But, *Secondly*, let us suppose, contrary both to Reason and Matter of Fact, that the *Jews* did not know any Reason at all why they kept these *Observances*; yet was it possible to put it upon them, that they had kept these *Observances* in Memory of what they had never heard of before that Day, whensoever you will suppose that these Books of *Moses* were first forged? For Example: Suppose I should *now* forge some *romantick* Story of strange Things done a 1000 Years ago; and, in Confirmation of this, should endeavour to persuade the *Christian* World, that they had all along, from that Day to this, kept the first Day of the *Week* in Memory of such an *Hero*, an *Apollonius*, a *Barcosbas*, or a *Mabomet*, and had all been baptized in his Name, and swore by his Name, and upon that very Book (which I had then forged, and which they never saw before), in their publick *Judicatures*: That this Book was their *Gospel* and Law, which they had, ever since that Time, these 1000 Years past, *universally* receiv'd and owned, and none other: I would ask any *Deist*, whether he thinks it *possible*, that such a *Cheat* could pass, or such a *Legend* be received, as the *Gospel* of *Christians*? And that they could be made believe, that they never had any other *Gospel*? The same Reason is as to the *Books* of *Moses*; and must be, as to every *Matter of Fact* which has all the four *Marks* before-mentioned. And these Marks secure any such *Matter of Fact* as much from being invented and imposed in *After-Ages*, as at the Time when such *Matters of Fact* were said to be done.

Let me give one very familiar Example more in this Case. There is the *Stonage* in *Salisbury Plain*; every body knows it; and yet none knows the Reason why those great Stones were set there, or by whom, or in Memory of what.

Now, suppose I should write a Book To-morrow, and tell there, that these Stones were set up by *Hercules*,
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Polyphemus, or *Garagantua*, in Memory of such and such of their Actions; and, for a further Confirmation of this, should say, in this Book, that it was wrote at the *Time* when such Actions were done, and by the very *Actors* themselves, or *Eye Witnesses*; and that this Book had been received as *Truth*, and quoted by *Authors* of the greatest Reputation in all Ages since. Moreover, that this Book was well known in *England*, and enjoined by *Act of Parliament* to be taught our Children, and that we did teach it our Children, and had been taught it ourselves when we were Children: I ask any *Deist*, Whether he thinks this could pass upon *England*? And whether if I, or any other, should insist upon it, we should not, instead of being believed, be sent to *Bedlam*?

Now let us compare this with the *Stonage*, as I may call it, or *twelve* great Stones set up at *Gilgal*, which is told in the fourth Chapter of *Joshua*. There it is said, *ver. 6.* that the Reason why they were set up, was, that when their Children in After-Ages should ask the Meaning of it, it should be told them.

And the Thing, in Memory of which they were set up, was such as could not possibly be imposed upon that Nation at that time when it was said to be done: It was as wonderful and miraculous as their Passage thro' the *Red-Sea*:

And withal free from a very poor Objection, which the *Deists* have advanced against that Miracle of the *Red-Sea*; thinking to solve it by a *Spring-Tide*, with the Concurrence of a strong Wind, happening at the same time; which left the Strand so dry, as that the *Israelites*, being all Foot, might pass thro' the *ouzey* places and *Holes* which it must be supposed the Sea left behind it: But that the *Egyptians*, being all *Horse* and *Chariots*, stuck in those Holes, and were entangled, so as that they could not march so fast as the *Israelites*: And that this was all the Meaning of its being said, that God took off their (the *Egyptians*) Chariot-Wheels, that they drove them heavily. So that they would
make

make nothing *extraordinary*, at least not *miraculous*, in all this Action.

This is advanc'd in *Le Clerk's Dissertations upon Genesis*, lately published in *Holland*; and that Part, with others of the like Tendency, endeavouring to resolve other Miracles, as that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, &c. into mere *natural* Causes, are put into *English* by the well known *T. Brown*, for the Edification of the *Deists* in *England*.

But these Gentlemen have forgot that the *Israelites* had great Herds of many thousand Cattle with them; which would be apter to stray, and fall into those Holes and *ouzey* Places in the Strand, than Horses with Riders, who might direct them.

But such precarious and silly Supposes are not worth the answering. If there had been no more in this Passage thro' the *Red-Sea* than that of a *Spring-Tide*, &c. it had been impossible for *Moses* to have made the *Israelites* believe that Relation given of it in *Exodus*, with so many Particulars, which themselves saw, to be true.

And all those *Scriptures* which magnify this Action, and appeal to it as a full Demonstration of the miraculous Power of God, must be reputed as *Romance* or *Legend*.

I say this for the Sake of some Christians, who think it no Prejudice to the Truth of the *Holy Bible*, but rather an Advantage, as rendering it more easy to be believed, if they can solve whatever seems miraculous in it by the Power of *second Causes*; and so to make all, as they speak, natural and easy: Wherein, if they could prevail, the natural and easy Result would be, not to believe one Word in all those sacred *Oracles*. For if Things be not as they are told in any Relation, that Relation must be *false*: And if *false* in Part, we cannot trust to it, either in *Whole* or in *Part*.

Here are to be excepted *Mistranslations*, and Errors, either in *Copy* or in *Press*. But where there is no room for supposing of these, as where all Copies do agree, there we must either receive All, or reject All: I mean
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in any Book that pretends to be written from the Mouth of God. For in other common Histories we may believe Part, and reject Part, as we see Cause.

But to return. The Passage of the *Israelites* over *Jordan*, in Memory of which those Stones at *Gilgal* were set up, is free from all those little *Carpings* before-mentioned that are made as to the Passage thro' the *Red-Sea*. For Notice was given to the *Israelites* the Day before, of this great Miracle to be done. *Josb. iii. 5.* It was done at Noon-day, before the whole Nation: And when the Waters of *Jordan* were divided, it was not at low Ebb, but at the Time when the River overflowed all his Banks, *ver. 15.* And it was done, not by Winds, or in length of Time, which Winds must take to do it; but all on a sudden, as soon as the Feet of the Priests that bare the Ark were dipped in the Brim of the Water. Then, the Waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an Heap, very far, from the City *Adam*, that is beside *Zaretan*: And those that came down towards the Sea of the Plain, even the salt Sea, failed, and were cut off: And the People passed over, right against *Jericho*. The Priests stood in the midst of *Jordan*, till all the Armies of *Israel* had passed over. And it came to pass, when the Priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, were come up out of the midst of *Jordan*, and the Soles of the Priests Feet were lifted up upon the dry Land, that the Waters of *Jordan* returned unto their Place, and flowed over all his Banks as they did before. And the People came up out of *Jordan* on the tenth Day of the first Month, and encamped in *Gilgal*, on the east Border of *Jericho*. And those twelve Stones which they took out of *Jordan*, did *Joshua* pitch at *Gilgal*. And he spake unto the Children of *Israel*, saying, When your Children shall ask their Fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these Stones? Then shall ye let your Children know, saying, *Israel* came over this *Jordan* on dry Land. For the Lord your God dried up the Waters of *Jordan* from before you, until we were gone over. That all the People of the Earth might know the Hand of the Lord, that it is mighty:

mighty: That ye might fear the Lord your God for ever.
Chap. iv. from *ver.* 18.

If the Passage over the *Red-Sea* had been only taking Advantage of a Spring-Tide, or the like, how would this teach *all the People of the Earth, that the Hand of the Lord was mighty?* How would a Thing no more remarkable have been taken Notice of thro' all the World? How would it have taught *Israel* to *fear the Lord*, when they must know, that notwithstanding all these *big Words*, there was so *little* in it? How could they have believed, or received a Book as *Truth*, which they knew told the Matter so far otherwise from what it was?

But, as I said, this Passage over *Jordan*, which is here compared to that of the *Red-Sea*, is free from all those *Cavils* that are made as to that of the *Red-Sea*; and is a further Attestation to it, being said to be done in the same Manner as was that of the *Red-Sea*.

Now, to form our Argument, let us suppose that there never was any such thing as that Passage over *Jordan*: That these Stones at *Gilgal* were set up upon some other Occasion, in some After-Age: And then, that some designing Man invented this Book of *Joshua*, and said, that it was wrote by *Joshua* at that time, and gave this Stonage at *Gilgal* for a Testimony of the Truth of it: Would not every body say to him, We know the Stonage at *Gilgal*; but we never heard before of this Reason for it, nor of this Book of *Joshua*? Where has it been all this while? And *where* and *how* came you, after so many Ages, to find it? Besides, this Book tells us, that this Passage over *Jordan* was ordained to be taught our *Children*, from Age to Age; and therefore, that they were always to be instructed in the Meaning of that Stonage at *Gilgal*, as a *Memorial* of it: But we were never taught it when we were *Children*; nor did ever teach our *Children* any such thing: And it is not likely that could have been forgotten, while so remarkable a Stonage did continue, which was set up for that and no other End!

And

And if, for the Reasons before given, no such *Imposition* could be put upon us, as to the *Stonage* in *Salisbury-Plain*, how much less could it be as to the *Stonage* in *Gilgal*?

And if, where we know not the Reason of a bare naked Monument, such a *sham Reason* cannot be imposed, how much more is it impossible to impose upon us in *Actions* and *Observances* which we celebrate in Memory of particular *Passages*? How impossible to make us forget those *Passages* which we daily commemorate; and to persuade us, that we had always kept such Institutions in Memory of what we never heard of before; that is, that we knew it before we knew it?

And if we find it thus impossible for an *Imposition* to be put upon us, even in some Things which have not all the *four Marks* before-mentioned, how much more impossible is it that any *Deceit* should be in that Thing where all the *four Marks* do meet!

This has been shewed in the first Place, as to the Matters of Fact of *Moses*.

2. Therefore I come now (secondly) to shew, that, as in the Matters of Fact of *Moses*, so likewise all these four *Marks* do meet in the Matters of Fact, which are recorded in the *Gospel*, of our blessed *Saviour*. And my Work herein will be the shorter, because all that is said before of *Moses* and his Books, is every way as applicable to *Christ* and his *Gospel*. His *Works* and *Miracles* are there said to be done publicly, in the Face of the World, as he argued to his Accusers, *I spake openly to the World, and in secret have I said nothing*. John xviii. 20. It is told, *Acts* ii. 41. that three thousand at one time, and *Acts* iv. 4. that about five thousand at another time, were converted, upon Conviction of what themselves had seen, what had been done publicly before their Eyes, wherein it was impossible to have imposed upon them. Therefore here were the two first of the *Rules* before-mentioned.

Then for the two second; *Baptism* and the *Lord's-Supper* were instituted as perpetual *Memorials* of these Things: And they were not instituted in After-Ages.

but at the very time when these Things were said to be done; and have been observed without Interruption, in all Ages, through the whole Christian World, down all the Way from that Time to this; and *Christ* himself did ordain *Apostles*, and other *Ministers* of his *Gospel*, to *preach*, and *administer* these *Sacraments*: And

to govern his *Church*: And that *always*,
Matth. xxvii. unto the *End of the World*. And accord-
 20. ingly they have continued, by regular

Succession, to this Day; and, no doubt, ever shall while the Earth shall last. So that the Christian *Clergy* are as notorious a *Matter of Faët* as the *Tribe of Levi* among the *Jews*: And the *Gospel* is as much a *Law* to the *Christians*, as the *Books of Moses* to the *Jews*: And it being Part of the *Matters of Faët* related in the *Gospel*, that such an *Order of Men* were appointed by *Christ*, and to *continue* to the *End of the World*, consequently, if the *Gospel* was a *Fiction*, and invented (as it must be) in some Ages after *Christ*, then, at that time when it was first invented, there could be no such *Order of Clergy* as derived themselves from the Institution of *Christ*; which must give the *Lie* to the *Gospel*, and demonstrate the *Whole* to be *false*. And the *Matters of Faët* of *Christ* being pressed to be true, no otherwise than as there was, at that time (when ever the *Deists* will suppose the *Gospel* to be forged) not only publick *Sacraments* of *Christ's* Institution, but an *Order of Clergy* likewise of his Appointment, to administer them; and it being impossible there could be any such Things before they were invented, it is as impossible that they should be *received* when invented. And therefore, by what is said above, it was as impossible to have imposed upon Mankind in this Matter, by inventing of it in After-Ages, as at the Time when those Things were said to be done.

3. The *Matters of Faët* of *Mahomet*, or what is fabled of the *heathen Deities*, do all want some of the aforesaid *four Rules*, whereby the *Certainty of Matters of Faët* is demonstrated. First, for *Mahomet*, he pretended to no *Miracles*, as he tells us in his *Alcoran*, c. 6, &c.

&c. and those which are commonly told of him pass among the *Mahometans* themselves but as *legendary Fables*; and as such are rejected by the *wise* and *learned* amongst them; as the *Legends* of their *Saints* are in the *Church of Rome*. See *Dr. Prideaux* his *Life of Mahomet*, pag. 34.

But, in the next place, those which are told of him do all want the two first *Rules* before-mentioned. For his pretended *Converse* with the *Moon*, his *Mesra*, or *Night-Journey* from *Mecca* to *Jerusalem*, and thence to *Heaven*, &c. were not performed before any-body: We have only his own *Word* for them: And they are as groundless as the *Delusions* of *Fox* or *Muggleton* amongst ourselves. The same is to be said (in the second place) of the *Fables* of the *Heathen Gods*, of *Mercury's* stealing *Sheep*, *Jupiter's* turning himself into a *Bull*, and the like; besides the *Folly* and *Unworthiness* of such *senseless* pretended *Miracles*. And moreover, the *Wise* among the *Heathen* did reckon no otherwise of these but as *Fables*, which had a *Mythology* or *mystical* Meaning in them, of which several of them have given us the *Rationale*, or *Explication*. And it is plain enough that *Ovid* meant no other by all his *Metamorphoses*.

It is true the *Heathen Deities* had their *Priests*: They had likewise *Feasts*, *Games*, and other publick *Institutions*, in Memory of them; But all these want the fourth *Mark*, viz. That such *Priesthood* and *Institutions* should commence from the Time that such Things as they commemorate were said to be done; otherwise they cannot secure *After-Ages* from the *Imposture*, by detecting it at the Time when first invented, as hath been argued before. But the *Bacchanalia*, and other *Heathen Feasts*, were instituted many Ages after what was reported of these *Gods* was said to be done, and therefore can be no *Proof* of them. And the *Priests* of *Bacchus*, *Apollo*, &c. were not ordained by these supposed *Gods*, but were appointed by others, in *After-Ages*, only in Honour to them: And therefore these

Orders of Priests are no Evidence to the Truth of the *Matters of Fact* which are reported of their *Gods*.

IV. Now to apply what has been said, you may challenge all the *Deists* in the World to shew any Action that is fabulous, which has all the four *Rules* or *Marks* before-mentioned. No; it is impossible. And (to resume a little what is spoke to before) the Histories of *Exodus* and the *Gospel* could never have been received, if they had not been true; because the Institution of the Priesthood of *Levi*, and of *Christ*, of the *Sabbath*, the *Passover*, of *Circumcision*, of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, &c. are there related as descending all the Way down from those Times, without Interruption. And it is full as impossible to persuade Men that they had been *circumcised*, *baptized*, had *circumcised* or *baptized* their Children, celebrated *Passovers*, *Sabbaths*, *Sacraments*, &c. under the Government and Administration of a certain *Order of Priests*, if they had done none of these Things, as to make them believe they had gone thro' *Seas* upon dry Land, seen the *Dead* raised, &c. And without believing of these, it was impossible that either the *Law* or the *Gospel* could have been received.

And the Truth of the *Matters of Fact* of *Exodus* and the *Gospel* being no otherwise pressed upon Men, than as they have practised such publick Institutions, it is appealing to the Senses of Mankind for the Truth of them; and makes it impossible for any to have invented such Stories in After-Ages, without a palpable Detection of the Cheat when first invented; as impossible as to have imposed upon the Senses of Mankind at the Time when such publick *Matters of Fact* were said to be done.

V. I do not say, that every thing which wants these four Marks is false; but that nothing can be false which has them *all*.

I have no manner of Doubt that there was such a Man as *Julius Cæsar*; that he fought at *Pharsalia*; was killed in the *Senate-House*; and many other *Matters of Fact*

Fact of antient Times, tho' we keep no publick *Observances* in Memory of them.

But this shews that the Matters of Fact of *Moses* and of *Christ* have come down to us better guarded than any other Matters of Fact, how true soever.

And yet our *Deists*, who would laugh any Man out of the World, as an irrational Brute, that should offer to deny *Cæsar* or *Alexander*, *Homer* or *Virgil*, their publick Works or Actions, do, at the same time, value themselves as the only Men of Wit and Sense, of free, generous, and unbiassed Judgments, for ridiculing the Histories of *Moses* and *Christ*, that are infinitely better attested, and guarded with infallible Marks, which the others want.

VI. Besides that, the Importance of the Subject would oblige all Men to enquire more narrowly into the one than the other; For what Consequence is it to me, or to the World, whether there was such a Man as *Cæsar*; whether he beat, or was beaten, at *Pharsalia*; whether *Homer* or *Virgil* wrote such Books; and whether what is related in the *Iliads* or *Æneids* be true or false? It is not Two-pence up or down to any Man in the World; and therefore it is worth no Man's while to enquire into it, either to oppose or justify the Truth of these Relations.

But our very *Souls* and *Bodies*, both this Life and Eternity, are concerned in the *Truth* of what is related in the Holy *Scriptures*; and therefore Men would be more inquisitive to search into the Truth of these, than of any other Matters of Fact; examine and sift them narrowly, and find out the Deceit, if any such could be found: For it concerned them nearly, and was of the last Importance to them.

How unreasonable then is it to reject these Matters of Fact, so sifted, so examined, and so attested, as no other Matters of Fact in the World ever were; and yet to think it the most highly unreasonable, even to Madness, to deny other Matters of Fact, which have not the thousandth Part of their *Evidence*, and are of no *Consequence* at all to us, whether *true* or *false*!

VII. There are several other *Topicks*, from whence the Truth of the *Christian Religion* is evinced to all who will judge by *Reason*, and give themselves Leave to *consider*. As, the *Improbability* that ten or twelve *poor illiterate Fishermen* should form a Design of converting the whole World to believe their *Delusions*; and the *Impossibility* of their effecting it, without Force of *Arms, Learning, Oratory*, or any one visible thing that could recommend them! And to impose a *Doctrine* quite opposite to the *Lusts and Pleasures* of Men, and all *worldly Advantages, or Enjoyments*! And this in an Age of so great *Learning and Sagacity* as that wherein the *Gospel* was first preached! That these *Apostles* should not only undergo all the Scorn and Contempt, but the severest Persecutions and most cruel Deaths that could be inflicted, in Attestation to what themselves knew to be a mere *Deceit and Forgery* of their own contriving! Some have suffered for Errors, which they *thought* to be *Truth*; but never any for what themselves knew to be *Lies*. And the *Apostles* must know what they taught to be *Lies*, if it was so; because they spoke of those Things, which, they said, they had both

Act. iv. 20. seen and heard, had looked upon, and handled with their Hands, &c.
1. John i. 1.

Neither can it be said, that they, perhaps, might have proposed some temporal Advantages to themselves, but missed of them, and met with *Sufferings* instead of them: For if it had been so, it is more than probable, that, when they saw their Disappointment, they would have discovered their *Conspiracy*, especially when they might not only have saved their Lives, but got great *Rewards* for doing of it. That not one of them should ever have been brought to do this!

But this is not all: For they tell us, that their *Master* bid them expect nothing but *Sufferings* in this World. This is the Tenuor of all that *Gospel* which they taught; and they told the same to all whom they *converted*: So that here was no Disappointment.

For

For all that were *converted* by them, were *converted* upon the certain Expectation of *Sufferings*, and bidden to prepare for it. *Christ* commanded his *Disciples* to take up their *Cross* daily, and follow him: And told them, that in the World they should have *Tribulation*: That whoever did not forsake *Father, Mother, Wife, Children, Lands*, and their very Lives, could not be his *Disciples*: That he who *sought to save his Life* in this World should *lose* it in the next.

Now, that this despised *Doctrine* of the *Cross* should prevail so *universally* against the *Allurements* of *Flesh* and *Blood*, and all the *Blandishments* of this World, against the *Rage* and *Persecution* of all the *Kings* and *Powers* of the Earth, must shew its *Original* to be *Divine*, and its *Protector*, *Almighty*. What is it else could *conquer* without *Arms*, *persuade* without *Rhetorick*, overcome *Enemies*, disarm *Tyrants*, and subdue *Empires*, without *Opposition*.

VIII. We may add to all this, the Testimonies of the most bitter *Enemies* and *Persecutors* of *Christianity*, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to the *Truth* of the Matter of Fact of *Christ*; such as *Josephus* and *Tacitus*; of which the first flourished about *forty* Years after the Death of *Christ*, and the other about *seventy* Years after: So that they were capable of examining into the *Truth*, and wanted not *Prejudice* and *Malice* sufficient to have inclined them to deny the Matter of Fact itself of *Christ*: But their confessing to it, as likewise *Lucian*, *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, and *Julian* the *Apostate*, the *Mahometans* since, and all other *Enemies* of *Christianity* that have arisen in the World, is an undeniable Attestation to the *Truth* of the *Matter of Fact*.

IX. But there is another Argument, more strong and convincing than even this Matter of Fact; more than the Certainty of what I see with my *Eyes*; and which the Apostle *Peter* called a *more sure Word*, that is, *Proof*, than what he saw and heard upon the *holy Mount*, when our blessed *Saviour* was *transfigur'd* before him, and two other of the *Apostles*: For having repeated that Passage, as a *Proof* of that whereof they were *Eye-witnesses*, and

heard the *Voice* from *Heaven* giving Attestation to our Lord *Christ*, 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, 18. he says, v. 19. *We have also a more sure Word of a Prophecy*, for the Proof of this *Jesus* being the *Messiah*; that is, the *Prophecies* which had gone before of *Him*, from the Beginning of the World, and all exactly fulfilled in *Him*.

Men may dispute an Imposition or Delusion upon our outward Senses; but how that can be false which has been so long, even from the Beginning of the World, and so often, by all the *Prophets*, in several Ages, foretold? how can this be an *Imposition* or a *Forgery*?

This is particularly insisted on in the Case of the *Jews*. And even the *Deists* must confess, that that Book we call the *Old Testament* was in Being, in the Hands of the *Jews*, long before our *Saviour* came into the World. And if they will be at the Pains to compare the Prophecies that are there of the *Messiah*, with the fulfilling of them, as to *Time*, *Place*, and all other *Circumstances*, in the *Person*, *Birth*, *Life*, *Death*, *Resurrection*, and *Ascension* of our blessed *Saviour*, will find this Proof what our *Apostle* here calls it, *a Light shining in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-star arise in your Hearts*. Which God grant. Here is no Possibility of *Deceit* or *Imposture*.

Old Prophecies (and all so agreeing) could not have been contrived to countenance a new *Cheat*; and nothing could be a *Cheat* that could fulfil all these.

For this therefore I refer the *Deists* to the Case of the *Jews*.

I desire them likewise to look there, *Seet. XI.* and consider the Prophecies given so long ago, of which they see the fulfilling at this Day with their own Eyes, of the State of the *Jews* for many Ages past, and at present; without a *King*, or *Priest*, or *Temple*, or *Sacrifice*; scattered to the four *Winds*; sifted as with a Sieve among all *Nations*; yet preserved, and always so to be, a distinct People from all others of the whole Earth. Whereas those mighty Monarchies which oppressed the *Jews*, and which commanded the World in their
Turns,

Turns, and had the greatest human Prospect of Perpetuity, were to be extinguished, as they have been, even that their Names should be blotted out from under Heaven.

As likewise, that as remarkable of our blessed *Saviour*, concerning the *Preservation* and *Progress* of the *Christian Church*, when in her *Swadling-Cloaths*, consisting only of a few poor *Fisher-men*: Not by the Sword, as that of *Mahomet*, but under all the Persecution of Men and Hell, which yet should not prevail against her.

But tho' I offer these as not to be slighted by the *Deists*, to which they can shew nothing equal in all profane History, and in which it is impossible any Cheat can lie; yet I put them not upon the same Foot as the Prophecies before-mentioned, of the Marks and Coming of the *Messiah*, which have been since the World began.

And that general Expectation of the whole Earth, at the time of his Coming, insisted upon in the *Case of the Jews*, *Seet. V.* is greatly to be noticed.

But I say, the foregoing Prophecies of our *Saviour* are so strong a Proof, as even Miracles would not be sufficient to break their Authority.

I mean, if it were possible that a true Miracle could be wrought in Contradiction to them: For that would be for *God* to contradict himself.

But no Sign or Wonder, that could possibly be solved, should shake this Evidence.

It is this that keeps the Jews in their Obstinacy; tho' they cannot deny the Matters of Fact done by our blessed *Saviour* to be truly Miracles, if so done as said: Nor can they deny that they were so done, because they have all the *four Marks* before-mentioned; yet they cannot yield. Why? Because they think that the Gospel is in Contradiction to the *Law*; which if it were, the Consequence would be unavoidable, that *both* could not be true. To solve this, is the Business of the *Case of the Jews*: But the Contradiction which they suppose is in their *Comments* that they put upon the *Law*;

especially they expect a literal Fulfilling of those Promises of the Restauration of *Jerusalem*, and outward *Glories* of the *Church*, of which there is such frequent mention in the Books of *Moses*, the *Psalms*, and all the Prophets. And many *Christians* do expect the same; and take those *Texts* as literally as the *Jews* do. We do believe and pray for the *Conversion* of the *Jews*. For this End they have been so miraculously preserved, according to the Prophecies so long before of it. And when that Time shall come, as they are the most honourable and ancient of all the Nations on the Earth, so will their *Church* return to be the *Mother Christian Church*, as she was at first; and *Rome* must surrender to *Jerusalem*. Then all Nations will flow thither: And even *Ezekiel's Temple* may be literally built there, in the Metropolis of the whole Earth; which *Jerusalem* must be, when the Fulness of the *Gentiles* shall meet with the Conversion of the *Jews*. For no Nation will then contend with the *Jews*; nor Church with *Jerusalem* for Supremacy. All Nations will be ambitious to draw their *Original* from the *Jews*, whose are the *Fathers*, and from whom, as concerning the *Flesh*, *Christ* came.

Then will be fulfilled that outward *Grandeur* and *Restauration* of the *Jews*, and of *Jerusalem*, which they expect, pursuant to the Prophecies.

They pretend not that this is limited to any particular Time of the Reign of the *Messiah*: They are sure it will not be at the Beginning; for they expect to go through great *Conflicts* and *Trials* with their *Messiah* (as the *Christian Church* has done), before his final *Conquest*, and that they come to *reign* with him. So that this is no Obstruction to their embracing *Christianity*. They see the same Things fulfilled in us, which they expect to themselves; and we do expect the same Things they do.

I tell this to the *Deists*, lest they may think that the *Jews* have some stronger Arguments than they know of; that they are not persuaded by the Miracles of our blessed *Saviour*, and by the fulfilling of all the Prophecies in him, that were made concerning the *Messiah*.

As

As I said before, I would not plead even Miracles against these.

And if this is sufficient to persuade a *Jew*, it is much more so to a *Deist*, who labours not under these *Objections*.

Besides, I would not seem to clash with that (in a sound Sense) reasonable *Caution* used by *Christian Writers*, not to put the Issue of the Truth wholly upon Miracles, without this Addition, when not done in Contradiction to the *Revelations* already given in the *holy Scriptures*.

And they do it upon this Consideration, That tho' it is impossible to suppose that *God* would work a real *Miracle* in Contradiction to what he has already *revealed*, yet Men may be imposed upon by *false* and *seeming Miracles*, and *pretended Revelations* (as there are many Examples, especially in the *Church of Rome*); and so may be shaken in the *Faith*, if they keep not the *Holy Scriptures* as their *Rule*.

We are told, *2 Theff. ii. 9.* of him whose Coming is after the working of *Satan*, with all *Power*, and *Signs*, and *lying Wonders*. And *Rev. xiii. 14. xvi. 14. and xix. 20.* of the *Devil* and *false Prophets* working *Miracles*. But the Word in all these Places is only *Σημεια* *Signs*, that is as it is render'd, *Matth. xxiv. 24.*; which tho' sometimes it may be used to signify *real Miracles*, yet not always; not in these Places: For tho' every *Miracle* be a *Sign* and a *Wonder*, yet every *Sign* or *Wonder* is not a *Miracle*.

X. Here it may be proper to consider a common *Topic* of the *Deists*, who, when they are not able to stand out against the Evidence of *Fact*, that such and such *Miracles* have been done, then turn about and deny such things to be *Miracles*; at least, that we can never be sure whether any wonderful Thing that is shewn to us be a *true* or a *false Miracle*.

And the great Argument they go upon is this, That a *Miracle* being that which exceeds the *Power of Nature*, we cannot know what exceeds it, unless we knew the utmost *Extent* of the *Power of Nature*; and no Man pre-

tends to know that: Therefore that no Man can *certainly* know whether any *Event* be *miraculous*; and consequently he may be *cheated* in his Judgment betwixt *true* and *false Miracles*.

To which I answer, That Men may be so *cheated*; and there are many Examples of it.

But that tho' we may not always *know* when we are *cheated*, yet we can certainly tell, in many Cases, when we are not *cheated*.

For tho' we do not know the utmost *Extent* of the *Power* of *Nature*, perhaps, in any *one* Thing, yet it does not follow, that we know not the *Nature* of any thing, in some *Measure*, and that *certainly* too. For Example: Tho' I do not know the utmost *Extent* of the *Power* of *Fire*, yet I certainly know, that it is the *Nature* of *Fire* to *burn*; and then, when proper *Fuel* is administered to it, it is *contrary* to the *Nature* of *Fire* not to *consume* it. Therefore if I see *three* Men taken off the Street, in their common wearing Apparel, and, without any Preparation, cast into the midst of a *burning fiery Furnace*, and that the *Flame* was so *fierce* that it *burnt* up those Men that threw them in, and yet that these who were thrown in should walk up and down in the Bottom of the *Furnace*; and I should see a *Fourth* Person with them, of *glorious* Appearance, like the Son of *God*; and that these Men should come up again out of the *Furnace* without any Harm, or so much as the *smell* of *Fire* upon themselves or their *Cloaths*; I could not be *deceived* in thinking that there was a Stop put to the *Nature* of *Fire*, as to these Men; and that it had its *Effect* upon the Men whom it *burned* at the same time.

Again; tho' I cannot tell how *wonderful* and *sudden* an *Increase* of *Corn* might be produced by the Concurrency of many *Causes*, as a *warm Climate*, the *Fertility* of the *Soil*, &c. yet this I can *certainly* know, that there is not that *natural* Force in the *Breath* of two or three *Words* spoken, to *multiply* one small *Loaf* of *Bread* so *fast*, in the *breaking* of it, as *truly* and *really*, not only in *Appearance* and *Show* to the *Eye*, but to fill the *Bellies* of
of

of several *Thousand* hungry *Persons*; and that the *Fragments* should be much more than the *Bread* was at first.

So neither in a *Word* spoken, to raise the *Dead*, cure *Diseases*, &c.

Therefore, tho' we know not the utmost *Extent* of the *Power* of *Nature*, yet we can *certainly* know what is *contrary* to the *Nature* of several such *Things* as we do know.

And therefore, tho' we may be *cheated* and imposed upon in many *seeming Miracles* and *Wonders*, yet there are some *Things* wherein we may be *certain*.

But further: The *Deists* acknowledge a *God*, of an *Almighty Power*, who *made* all *Things*; yet they would put it out of his *Power* to make any *Revelation* of his *Will* to *Mankind*. For if we cannot be *certain* of any *Miracle*, how should we know when *God* sent any thing *extraordinary* to us? Nay how should we know the *ordinary Power* of *Nature*, if we knew not what *exceeded* it? If we know not what is *natural*, how do we know there is such a *Thing* as *Nature*? That all is not *Supernatural*? All *Miracles*? And so *disputable*, till we come to downright *Scepticism*, and doubt the *Certainty* of our *outward Senses*; desiring only this, that they would allow the *Senses* of other *Men* to be as *certain* as their own: Which they cannot refuse, since, without this, they can have no *Certainty* of their own.

XI. Therefore, from what has been said, the *Cause* is summed up shortly in this; That tho' we cannot *see* what was done before our *Time*, yet, by the *Marks* which I have laid down concerning the *Certainty* of *Matters of Fact* done before our *Time*, we may be as much assured of the *Truth* of them, as if we saw them with our *Eyes*: Because whatever *Matter of Fact* has all the four *Marks* before-mentioned, could never have been *invented* or *received*, but upon the *Conviction* of the *outward Senses* of all those who did *receive* it, as before is demonstrated. And therefore this *Topick* which I have chosen, does stand upon the *Conviction* even of *Mens outward Senses*. And since you have confined me to *one Topick*,

I have not insisted upon the others, which I have only named.

XII. And now it lies upon the *Deists*, if they would appear as Men of *Reason*, to shew some Matter of Fact of former Ages, which they allow to be *true*, that has greater Evidences of its *Truth* than the Matters of Fact of *Moses* and of *Christ*: Otherwise they cannot, with any Shew of *Reason*, reject the one, and yet admit of the other.

But I have given them greater Latitude than this; for I have shewn such Marks of the Truth of the Matters of Fact of *Moses* and of *Christ*, as no other Matters of Fact of those Times, however true, have, but these only: And I put it upon them to shew any *Forgery* that has all these Marks.

This is a short *Issue*. Keep them close to this. This determines the Cause all at once.

Let them take Aid from all the *Legends* in the Church of *Rome*, those *pious Cheats*, the worst Disgraces of *Christianity*, and which have bid the fairest of any one Contrivance to overturn the Certainty of the Miracles of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and whole *Truth* of the *Gospel*, by putting them all upon the same Foot; at least they are so understood by the Generality of their *Devotees*, tho' disowned and laughed at by the Learned and Men of Sense among them.

Let them pick and chuse the most probable of all the Fables of the *Heathen Leities*, and see if they can find in any of these the four *Marks* before-mentioned.

Otherwise let them submit to the irrefragable Certainty of the Christian Religion.

XIII. But if, notwithstanding of all that is said, the *Deists* will still contend, that all this is but *Priest-craft*, the Invention of *Priests* for their own Profit, &c. then they will give us an *Idea* of *Priests* far different from what they intend: For then we must look upon these *Priests* not only as the *cunningest* and *wisest* of *Mankind*, but we shall be tempted to adore them as *Deities*, who have such Power as to impose, at their Pleasure, upon the Senses of *Mankind*; to make them believe that

that they had practised such publick Institutions, enacted them by *Laws*, taught them to their Children, &c. when they had never done any of these Things, or ever so much as heard of them before: And then, upon the Credit of their believing that they had done such Things as they never did, to make them further believe, upon the same Foundation, whatever they pleased to impose upon them as to former Ages: I say, such a Power as this must exceed all that is *human*; and consequently make us rank these *Priests* far above the Condition of Mortals.

2. Nay, this were to make them outdo all that has ever been related of the *infernal Powers*; for tho' their *Legerdemain* has extended to deceive some unwary Beholders, and their Power of working some seeming Miracles has been great, yet it never reached, nor ever was supposed to reach, so far as to deceive the Senses of all Mankind, in Matters of such publick and notorious Nature as those of which we now speak; to make them believe, that they had enacted *Laws* for such publick Observances, continually practised them, taught them to their Children, and had been instructed in them themselves from their Childhood, if they had never enacted, practised, taught, or been taught, such Things.

3. And as this exceeds all the Power of *Hell* and *Devils*, so it is more than ever *God Almighty* has done since the Foundation of the World. None of the Miracles that he has shewn, or *Belief* which he has required to any-thing that he has revealed, has ever contradicted the outward Senses of any one Man in the World, much less of all Mankind together. For Miracles, being Appeals to our outward Senses, must destroy with it all their own Certainty, as to us; since we have no other Way to judge of a Miracle exhibited to our *Senses*, than upon the Supposition of the *Certainty* of our *Senses*, upon which we give Credit to a Miracle that is shewn to our *Senses*.

4. This, by the way, is a yet unanswered Argument against the *Miracle of Transubstantiation*; and shews the Weakness of the Defence which the Church

of Rome offers for it (from whom the Socinians have licked it up, and, of late, have gloried much in it amongst us), that the Doctrines of the *Trinity*, or *Incar-tion*, do contradict all of these. Therefore the Com-parison is exceedingly short, and out of Purpose. But to return.

If the Christian Re'igion be a *Cheat*, and nothing else but the Invention of *Priests*, and carried on by their *Craft*, it makes their *Power* and *Wisdom* greater than that of *Men*, *Angels*, or *Devils*, (and more than *God* himself ever yet shewed or expressed) to *deceive* and *impose* upon the *Senses* of *Mankind*, in such *publick* and *notorious* Matters of Fact.

XIV. And this Miracle, which the *Deists* must run into, to avoid these recorded of *Moses* and *Christ*, is much greater, and more astonishing, than all the *Scriptures* tell of *them*.

So that these Men, who laugh at all Miracles, are now obliged to account for the greatest of all, how the Senses of Mankind can be imposed upon in such publick Matters of Fact.

And how then can they make the *Priests* the most contemptible of all Mankind; since they make them the sole Authors of this the greatest of Miracles?

XV. And since the *Deists* (these Men of Sense and Reason!) have so vile and mean an Idea of the *Priests* of all *Religions*, why do they not recover the World out of the Possession and Government of such *Blockheads*? Why do they suffer *Kings* and *States* to be led by them? To establish their Deceits by Laws, and inflict Penalties upon the *Opposers* of them? Let the *Deists* try their Hands: They have been trying, and are now very busy about it, and free Liberty they have; yet have they not prevailed, nor ever yet did prevail, in any civilized or generous Nation. And tho' they have some Inroads among the *Hottentots*, and some other the most brutal Part of Mankind, yet are they still exploded; and *Priests* have and do prevail against them, among not only the greatest, but best Part of the World, and the most glorious for *Arts*, *Learning* and *War*.

XVI.

XVI. For as the *Devil* does ape *God*, in his Institutions of Religion, his Feasts, Sacrifices, &c. so likewise in his Priests; without whom no *Religion*, whether true or false, can stand. False Religion is but a Corruption of the true: The true was before it, though it be followed close upon the Heels.

The *Revelation* made to *Moses* is elder than any *History* extant in the Heathen World. The *Heathens*, in Imitation of him, pretended likewise to their *Revelations*; but I have given those *Marks* which distinguish them from the *true*: None of them have these *four Marks* before-mentioned.

Now the *Deists* think all *Revelations* to be equally pretended, and a *Cheat*; and the *Priests* of all *Religions* to be the same *Contrivers* and *Jugglers*; and therefore they proclaim War equally against all, and are equally engaged to bear the Brunt of all.

And if the Contest be only betwixt the *Deists*, and the *Priests*, which of them are the Men of the greatest *Parts* and *Sense*, let the *Effects* determine it; and let the *Deists* yield the *Victory* to their *Conquerors*, who, by their own Confession, carry all the World before them.

XVII. If the *Deists* say, that this is, because all the World are *Blockheads*, as well as these *Priests* who govern them; that all are *Blockheads* except the *Deists*, who vote themselves only to be Men of *Sense*; this (besides the *Modesty* of it!) will spoil their great and beloved *Topick*, in Behalf of what they call *Natural Religion* against the *Revealed*, viz. Appealing to the *common Reason of Mankind*: This they set up against *Revelation*; think this to be sufficient for all the Uses of Men, here or hereafter (if there be any After-State); and therefore that there is no Use of *Revelation*. This *common Reason* they advance as *infallible*, at least as the *surest Guide*; yet now cry out upon it, when it turns against them: When this *common Sense* runs after *Revelation* (as it always has done), then *common Reason* is a *Beast*; and we must look for *Reason*, not from the *com-*

mon Sentiments of Mankind, but only among the *Beaux* the *Deists*.

XVIII. Therefore, if the *Deists* would avoid the *Mortification* (which will be very uneasy to them) to yield, and submit to be subdued and bowed down before the *Priests*, whom of all Mankind they hate and despise; if they would avoid this, let them confess, as the Truth is, that Religion is no Invention of *Priests*, but of *Divine* Original; that *Priests* were instituted by the same *Author* of Religion; and that their *Order* is a perpetual and living Monument of the *Matters of Fact* of their Religion, instituted from the *Time* that such *Matters of Fact* were said to be done; as the *Levites* from *Moses*; the *Apostles*, and succeeding *Clergy*, from *Christ*, to this Day; that no *Heathen Priests* can say the same: They were not appointed by the *Gods* whom they served, but by others in *After-Ages*: They cannot stand the *Test* of the *four Rules* before-mentioned, which the *Christian Priests* can do, and they only. Now the *Christian Priesthood*, as instituted by *Christ* himself, and continued by *Succession* to this Day, being as *impregnable* and *flagrant* a *Testimony* to the Truth of the *Matters of Fact* of *Christ*, as the *Sacraments*, or any other publick *Institutions*; besides that, if the *Priesthood* were taken away, the *Sacraments*, and other publick *Institutions*, which are administered by their Hands, must fall with them; therefore the *Devil* has been most busy, and bent his greatest Force, in all Ages, against the *Priesthood*, knowing that if *that* go down, all goes with it.

XIX. With the *Deists*, in this Cause, are join'd the *Quakers*, and other of our *Dissenters*, who throw off the *Succession* of our *Priesthood* (by which only it can be demonstrated), together with the *Sacraments* and publick *Festivals*. And if the *Devil* could have prevailed to have these dropt, the *Christian Religion* would lose the most undeniable and demonstrative Proof for the Truth of the *Matters of Fact* of our *Saviour*, upon which the Truth of his *Doctrine* does depend. Therefore we may see the *Artifice* and *Malice* of the *Devil* in all these Attempts:

tempts : And let those wretched *Instruments*, whom he *ignorantly* (and some by a misguided *Zeal*) has deluded, thus to undermine *Christianity*, now at last look back, and see the *Snare* in which they have been taken ! For if they had prevailed, or ever should, *Christianity* dies with them ; at least, it will be rendered *precarious*, as a Thing of which no *certain* Proof can be given. Therefore let those of them, who have any *Zeal* for the Truth, bless God that they have not prevailed ; and quickly leave them ; and let all others be aware of them.

And let us consider and honour the *Priesthood*, *Sacraments*, and other *publick Institutions* of *Christ*, not only as Means of *Grace*, and *Helps* to *Devotion*, but as the great *Evidences* of the *Christian Religion*.

Such *Evidences* as no *pretended Revelation* ever had, or can have : Such as do plainly distinguish it from all foolish *Legends* and *Impostures* whatsoever.

XX. And now, last of all, if one Word of Advice would not be lost upon Men who think so unmeasurably of themselves as the *Deists*, you may represent to them, what a Condition they are in, who spend that *Life* and *Sense* which God hath given them, in ridiculing the greatest of his *Blessings*, his *Revelations* of *Christ*, and by *Christ*, to redeem those from *eternal Misery*, who shall *believe* in him, and *obey* his *Laws* : And that God, in his wonderful *Mercy* and *Wisdom*, has so guarded his *Revelations*, as that it is past the Power of *Men* or *Devils* to counterfeit ; and that there is no denying of them, unless we will be so absurd as to deny not only the Reason, but the Certainty of the outward Senses, not only of *one*, or *two*, or *three*, but of *Mankind* in general : That this Case is so very plain, that nothing but want of Thought can hinder any to discover it : That they must yield it to be so plain, unless they can shew some *Forgery* which has all the *four Marks* before set down. But if they cannot do this, they must quit their Cause, and yield a happy Victory over themselves : Or else sit down under all that *Ignominy* with which they have loaded the *Priests*, of being
not

not only the most *pernicious*, but (what will *gall* them more) the most *inconsiderate*, and *inconsiderable*, of *Man-kind*.

Therefore let them not think it an undervaluing of their *Worthiness*, that their whole Cause is comprised within so narrow a Compass, and no more Time bestowed upon it than it is worth. But let them rather reflect, how far they have been all this time from *Christianity*, whose *Rudiments* they are yet to learn; how far from the Way of *Salvation*; how far the Race of their Lives is run, before they have set one Step in the Road to Heaven. And therefore, how much Diligence they ought to use to redeem all that Time they have lost, lest they lose themselves for ever; and be convinced, by a dreadful Experience, when it is too late, that the *Gospel* is a Truth, and of the last Consequence.



T H E

T H E
T R U T H of *Christianity*
D E M O N S T R A T E D,
I N A
D I A L O G U E
B E T W I X T A
C H R I S T I A N and a D E I S T.

Wherein the Case of the *Jews* is likewise
considered.

(1) CHRISTIAN. **I**T is strange you should stand it out so against your own Happiness, and employ your whole Wit and Skill to work in yourself a *Disbelief* of any future *Rewards* or *Punishments*, only that you may live *easy* (as you think) in this World, and enjoy your *Pleasures*. Which yet you cannot enjoy free and undisturbed from the *Fear* of those Things that are to come; the Event of which you pretend not to be *sure* of; and therefore are *sure* of a *Life* that admits not of any *Consolation*, and of a *miserable* and *wretched Death*, according to the utmost that you yourself propose!

DEIST.

DEIST. How can you say that? When I propose to live without any *Fear* of those Things. I fear not *Hell*; and I have discarded the Expectation of *Heaven*, because I believe neither.

CHR. Are you *sure* there are no such Things?

DE. That is a *Negative*, and I pretend not to *prove* it.

CHR. Then you must remain in a *Doubt* of it. And what a Condition is it to *die* in this *Doubt*, when the Issue is eternal *Misery*! And this is the utmost, by your own Confession, that you can propose to yourself. Therefore I called yours a *Disbelief*, rather than a *Belief* of any-thing. It is we *Christians* who *believe*; you *Deists* only *disbelieve*.

And if the *Event* should prove as you would have it, and that we should all be *annihilated* at our *Death*, we should be in as good a Condition as you. But, on the other Side, if the *Event* should prove as we expect it, then you are eternally *miserable*, and we eternally *happy*. Therefore one would think it the *wisest* Part to take our Side of the Question.

Especially considering, that those poor *Pleasures*, for the sake of which you determine yourselves against us, are but mere *Amusements*, and no real *Enjoyments*. Nay, we had better be without them than have them, even as to this Life itself. Is not *Temperance*, and a *healthful* Constitution, more *pleasant* than those *Pains* and *Aches*, sick *Head* and *Stomach*, that are the inseparable Companions of *Debauchery* and *Excess*; besides the clouding our *Reason*, and turning *sottish* in our *Understanding*?

DE. We take *Pleasure* in them for the Time; and mind not the *Consequences*.—— But however, a Man cannot *believe* as he pleases: And therefore, notwithstanding all the *glorious* and all the *terrible* Things you speak of, it makes nothing to me, unless you can evidently *prove* them to be so. And you must still leave me to *judge* for myself, after you have done all you can.

CHR.

CHR. What I have said, is only to dispose you to hear me *impartially*, and not to be *prejudiced* against your own *Happiness*, both *here* and *hereafter*.

(2.) DE. Well, without more *prefacing*, the Case is this; I *believe* a *God* as well as you; but for *Revelation*, and what you call the *Holy Scriptures*, I may think they were wrote by *pious* and *good* Men, who might take this Method of Speaking as from *God*, and in his *Name*, as supposing that those good *Thoughts* came from him, and that it would have a greater *Effect* upon the *People*; and might couch their *Morals* under *Histories* of Things supposed to be done; as several of the wise *Heathens* have taken this Course, in what they told of *Jupiter* and *Juno*, and the rest of their *Gods* and *Godnesses*: But, as to the *Facts* themselves, I believe the one no more than the other; or that all the *Facts* in *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, or in *Æsop's Fables*, were *true*.

CHR. You seem willing by this to preserve a respectful Esteem and Value for the *Holy Scriptures*, as being wrote by *pious* and *good* Men, and with a good *Design* to reform the *Manners* of Men; but your Argument proves directly against the Purpose for which you brought it; and makes the *Penmen* of the *Scriptures* to be far from *good* Men, to be not only *Cheats* and *Impostors*, but *Blasphemers*, and an *Abomination* before *God*: For such these same *Scriptures* frequently call those who presume to speak as from *God*, and in his *Name*, when he had not sent them, and given them *Authority* so to do: And the *Law* in the *Scriptures* condemns such to be *stoned to Death*, as *Blasphemers*.

It was not so with the *Heathen*; their *Moralists* did not use the *Style* of, *Thus saith the Lord*; and their *Philosophers* opposed and wrote against one another without any *Offence*: For all the Matter was, which of them could *reason* best; they pretended to no more.

And for the *Facts* of the *Fables* of their *Gods*, themselves did not believe them, and have wrote the *Mythology* or *Moral* that was intended by them.

DE.

DE. But many of the common People did believe the *Facts* themselves; as it is with the common People now in the *Church of Rome*, who believe the most senseless and ridiculous *Stories* in their Books of *Legends* to be as true as the *Gospel*; though the more wise among them call them only *pious Frauds* to increase the Devotion of the People. And so we think of your *Gospel* itself, and all the other *Books* you say were wrote by Men *divinely inspired*: We will let you keep them to *cajole* the *Mob*; but when you would impose them upon Men of Sense, we must come to the *Test* with you.

CHR. That is what I desire; and to see whether there are no more *Evidences* to be given for the Truth of *Christianity*, that is, of the *Holy Scriptures*, than are given for the *Legends*, and all the fabulous *Stories* of the *Heathen Gods*: And if so, I will give up my Argument, and confess that it is not in my Power to convince you.

DE. I cannot refuse to join *Issue* with you upon this. To begin then: I desire to know your *Evidences* for the Truth of your *Scriptures*, and the *Facts* therein related.

(3). CHR. If the Truth of the *Book*, and the *Facts* therein related, be proved, I suppose you will not deny the *Doctrines* to be true.

DE. No: For if I saw such *Miracles* with my Eyes, as are said to have been done by *Moses* and *Christ*, I could not think of any greater Proof to be given, that such an one was sent of *God*. Therefore if your *Bible* be true as to the *Facts*, I must believe it in the *Doctrine* too. But there are other *Books* which pretend to give us *Revelations* from *God*, and we must know which of these is true.

CHR. To distinguish this *Book* from all others which pretend to give *Revelations* from *God*, these *four Marks* or *Rules* were set down.

I. That the *Facts* related be such of which Mens outward *Senses*, their *Eyes* and *Ears*, may judge.

[This cuts off *enthusiastical Pretences* to *Revelation*, and *Opinions* which may be propagated in the Dark,
and

and, like the *Tares*, not known till they are grown up, and the first Beginning of them not discovered.]

II. That these *Facts* be done openly in the Face of the World.

III. That not only publick *Monuments*, but outward *Institutions* and *Actions*, should be appointed, and perpetually kept up, in Memory of them.

IV. That these *Institutions* to be observed should commence from the Time that the *Facts* were done; and, consequently, that the *Book* wherein these *Facts* and *Institutions* are recorded, should be written at the Time, and by those who did the *Facts*, or by *Eye* and *Ear-Witnesses*. For that is included in this *Mark*, and is the main *Part* of it, to prevent *false* Stories being coined in After-Ages, of Things done many hundred Years before, which none alive can disprove. Thus *Moses* wrote his *five Books* containing his *Actions* and *Institutions*: And those of *Christ* were wrote by his *Disciples*, who were *Eye* and *Ear-Witnesses* of what they related: And particular Care was taken of this, as you may see, *Acts* i. 21, 22. upon choosing one to supply the Place of *Judas*; *Wherefore of these Men which have companied with us, all the Time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the Baptism of John, until that same Day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be Witness with us of his Resurrection.* And *St. John* begins his first *Epistle* thus, *That which was from the Beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our Eyes, which we have looked upon, and our Hands have handled—That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.*

I have explained this *fourth Mark*, because the *Author* of the *Detection*, either wilfully, or ignorantly, seems not to understand it. And this alone overthrows all the *Stories* he has told, which he would make a *Parallel* to the *Facts* of *Moses*, and of *Christ*; and therefore alleges that they have all these *four Marks*. But he must begin again, and own that these *four Marks* still stand an irrefragable *Proof* of the *Truth* of any *Fact* which has them all; till he can produce a *Book*

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which was wrote by the *Actors* or *Eye-Witnesses* of the *Facts* it relates, and shew, that such *Facts*, having the other *three Marks*, have been detected to be *false*. Which when he can do, I will give him up these *four Marks* as an insufficient *Proof*, and own I was mistaken in them. But hitherto they have stood the Test; for he himself will not say, he has produced any such *Book* in all his *Detection*.

If he says, that *Facts* may be *true*, tho' no such *Book* can be produced for them, and tho' they have not all the aforesaid *Marks*; I will easily grant it. But all I contend for is, that whatever *Fact* has all these *four Marks* cannot be *false*: For example: Could *Moses* have persuaded Six hundred thousand Men that he had led them through the *Sea*, in the Manner related in *Exodus*, if it had not been true? If he could, it would have been a greater *Miracle* than the other. The like of their being fed forty Years in the Wilderness, without *Bread*, by *Manna* rained down to them from Heaven. The like of *Christ's* feeding Five thousand at a Time with five Loaves. And so of all the rest. The *two first Marks* secure from any *Cheat* or *Imposture* at the Time the *Facts* were done: And the *two last Marks* secure equally from any *Imposition* in After-Ages; because this *Book*, which relates these *Facts*, speaks of itself as written at that *Time*, by the *Actors* or *Eye-Witnesses*; and as commanded by *God* to be carefully kept and preserved to all Generations, and read *publicly* to all the *People* at stated *Times*, as is commanded, *Deut.* xxxi. 10, 11, 12. And was practised, *Josb.* viii. 34, 35. *Neb.* viii. &c. And the *Institutions*, appointed in this *Book*, were to be perpetually observed from the Day of the *Institution* for ever among these *People*, in Memory of the *Facts*; as the *Passover*, *Exod.* xii.; and so of the rest. Now suppose this *Book* to have been *forged* a thousand Years after *Moses*, would not every one say, when it first appeared, We never heard of this *Book* before, we know of no such *Institutions*, as of a *Passover*, or *Circumcision*, or *Sabbaths*, and the many *Feasts* and *Fasts* therein appointed, of a *Tribe of Levi*, and a *Tabernacle*

bernacle, wherein they were to serve in such an Order of *Priesthood*, &c. Therefore this *Book* must be an errant *Forgery*; for it wants all those *Marks* it gives of itself, as to its own Continuance, and of those *Institutions* it relates? No *Instance* can be shewn, since the World began, of any *Book*, so circumstantiated, that was a *Forgery* upon any People: I think it impossible; and therefore that the *four Marks* are still an invincible *Proof* of the *Truth* of that *Book*, and those *Facts* wherein all these *Marks* do meet.

But, since I am come upon this Subject again, I will endeavour to improve it, and give *four* other *Marks*; some of which no *Fact*, however *true*, ever had, or can have, but the *Fact* of *Christ* a'one. Thus while I support the *Fact* of *Moses*, I set that of *Christ* above him, as the *Lord* is above the *Servant*. And the *Jews* being herein principally concerned, I will consider their Case likewise as we go along: Therefore I add this fifth *Mark*, as peculiar to our *Bible*, and to distinguish it from all other *Histories* which relate *Facts* formerly done.

V. That the *Book*, which relates the *Facts*, contains likewise the *Law* of that *People* to whom it belongs, and be their *Statute-Book* by which their *Causes* are determined. This will make it impossible for any to *coin* or *forge* such a *Book*, so as to make it pass upon any *People*: For example: If I should *forge* a *Statute-Book* for *England*, and publish it next *Term*, could I make all the *Judges*, *Lawyers*, and *People*, believe, that this was their true and only *Statute-Book*, by which their *Causes* had been determined these many hundred Years past? They must forget their old *Statute-Book*, and believe that this *new Book*, which they never saw or heard of before, was the same *old Book* which has been pleaded in *Westminster-Hall* for so many Ages, which has been so often *printed*, and the *Originals* of which are now kept in the *Tower*, to be consulted as there is Occasion.

DE. I grant that to be impossible. But how do you apply it?

CHR. It is evident as to the *Books of Moses*, which are not only a *History* of the *Jews*, but their very *Statute-Book*, wherein their *municipal Law*, as well *civil* as *ecclesiastical*, was contained.

DE. This is so indeed as to the *Books of Moses*, to which they always appealed; to the *Law*, and to the *Testimony*; and they had no other *Statute-Book*. But this will not agree to your *Gospel*, which is no *municipal Law*, nor any *civil Law* at all, and no *civil Causes* were tried by it.

CHR. The *Law* was given to the *Jews* as a distinct and separate *People* from all other *Nations* upon the *Earth*; and therefore was a *municipal Law* particularly for that *Nation* only of the *Jews*. But *Christianity* was to extend to all the *Nations* of the *Earth*; and *Christians* were to be gathered out of all *Nations*; and therefore the *Gospel* could not be a *municipal Law* as to *civil Rights* to all *Nations*, who had each their own *municipal Laws*: This could not be without destroying all the *municipal Laws* in the *World*, of every *Nation* whatsoever; and then none could be a *Christian*, without at the same time becoming a *Rebel* to the *Government* where he lived. This would have been for *Christ* to have immediately set up for *universal* and *temporal KING* of all the *World*; as the *Jews* expected of their *Messiah*, and therefore would have made *Christ* a *King*: But he instructed them in the *spiritual Nature* of his *Kingdom*, that it was not of *this World*, nor did respect their *temporal* or *civil Matters*; which therefore he left in the same *State* he found them, and commanded their *Obedience* to their *civil Governors*, tho' *Heathen*, not only for *Wrath*, but also for *Conscience-sake*: And as to the *Law of Moses*, he left the *Jews* still under it, as to their *civil Concerns*, so far as the *Romans*, under whose *Subjection* they then were, would permit them: As *Pilate* said to them, *Ye have a Law*; and *judge ye him according to your Law*.

But the *Gospel* was given as the *spiritual* and *ecclesiastical Law* to the *Church*, whithersoever dispersed through all *Nations*; for that did not interfere with their
their

their *temporal* Laws, as to *civil* Government; and in this, the *fifth* Mark is made stronger to the *Gospel* than even to the *Law*: For it is easier to suppose that any *Forgery* might creep into the *municipal* Law of a particular *Nation*, than that all the *Nations*, whither *Christianity* is spread, should conspire in the Corruption of the *Gospel*, which to all *Christians* is of infinitely greater Concern than their *temporal* Laws: And, without such a *Concert* of all *Christian* Nations and People supposed, no such *Forgery* could pass undiscovered in the *Gospel*, which is spread as far as *Christianity*, and read *daily* in their *publick* Offices.

DE. But I say it is discovered, as appears by the Multitude of your *various* *Lections*.

CHR. That cannot be called a *Forgery*; it is nothing but such *Mistakes* as may very easily happen, and are almost unavoidable, in so many *Copies* as have been made of the *Gospel*, before *Printing* was known: And, considering the many *Translations* of it into several *Languages*, where the *Idioms* are different, and *Phrases* may be mistaken, together with the natural *Slips* of *Amanuenses*, it is much more wonderful that there are no more *various* *Lections*, than that there are so many.

But in this appears the great *Providence* of *God*, in the Care the *Christians* took of this, that they have marked every the least *various* *Lection*, even *syllabical*: And that among all these there is not found *one* which makes any Alteration either in the *Facts*, or in the *Doctrines*: So that, instead of an *Objection*, this becomes a strong *Confirmation* of the *Truth* and *Certainty* of the *Gospel*; which stands thus perfectly clear of so much as any *Doubt* concerning the *Facts*, or the *Doctrines* therein related.

But I will now proceed to a stronger *Evidence* than even this, and all that has been said before, which I have made the *sixth* *Mark*; and that is the *Topick* of *Prophecy*.

VI. The great *Fact* of *Christ's* Coming into the World was *prophefied* of in the *Old Testament* from the Beginning

Beginning to the End, as is said, *Luke i. 70.* By all the holy Prophets which have been since the World began.

This Evidence no other Fact ever had: For there was no Prophecy of Moses, but Moses himself did prophecy of Christ, *Deut. xviii. 15.* (applied *Acts iii. 22, 23, 24*); and sets the several Promises given of him. The first was to Adam, immediately after the Fall, *Gen. iii. 15.* where he is called the Seed of the Woman, but not of the Man; because he was to have no Man for his Father, though he had a Woman to his Mother: And of none other can this be said; nor that he should bruise the Serpent's Head; that is, overcome the Devil, and all his Power.

He was again promised to Abraham, as you may see, *Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18.* See this applied, *Gal. iii. 16.*

Jacob did expressly prophecy of him, with a Mark of the Time when he should come; and calls him *Shiloh*, or he that was to be sent, *Gen. xlix. 10.*

Balaam prophesied of him by the Name of the Star of Jacob, and Sceptre of Israel, *Numb. xxiv. 17.*

Daniel calls him the Messiah the Prince; and tells the Time of his Coming, and of his Death, *Dan. ix. 25. 26.*

It was foretold that he should be born of a Virgin, *Isai. vii. 14.* in the City of *Bethlehem*, *Micah. v. 2.* of the Seed of *Jesse*, *Isai. xi. 1. 10.* His low Estate and Sufferings are particularly described, *Psal. xxii.* and *Isai. liii.* And his Resurrection, *Psal. xvi. 10.* That he should sit upon the Throne of *David* for ever, and be called, *Wonderful*, the mighty God, the Prince of Peace, *Isai. ix. 6, 7.* The Lord our Righteousness, *Jer. xxxiii. 16.* *Jehovah Tsidkenu* (an incommunicable Name given to none but the Great God alone), and *Immanuel*; that is, God with us, *Isai. vii. 14.* And *David*, whose Son he was according to the Flesh, called him his Lord, *Psal. cx. 1.*

The Cause of his Sufferings is said to be for the Sins of the People, and not for himself, *Isai. liii. 4, 5, 6.* *Dan. ix. 26.*

And

And as to the *Time* of his *Coming*, it is expressly said (to the Confusion of the *Jews* now) that it was to be before the *Scripture* should depart from *Judah*, Gen. xlix. 10. In the *second Temple*, Hag. ii. 7, 9. within seventy *Weeks* of the *building* of it, Dan. ix. 24. that is (according to the *prophetical* known *Stile* of a *Day* for a *Year*), within *Four hundred and ninety Years* after.

(1). From these, and many more *Prophecies* of the *Messiah* or *Christ*, his *Coming* was the general *Expectation* of the *Jews* from the *Beginning*; but more especially about the *Time* in which it was foretold he should come, when several false *Messiahs* did appear among them: And this *Expectation* still remains with them; tho' they confess, that the *Time* foretold by all the *Prophets* for his *Coming* is past.

But what I have next to offer will be more strange to you. You may say, it was natural for the *Jews* to expect their *Messiah*, who was *prophefied* of in their *Book* of the *Law*, and was to be a *Jew*, and *King* of all the *Earth*: But what had the *Gentiles* to do with this? There were no *Prophecies* to them.

Therefore what I have to shew you is, that these *Prophecies* of the *Messiah* were likewise to the *Gentiles*: For it is said, that he should be the *Expectation* of the *Gentiles* as well as of the *Jews*. And, Gen. xlix. 10. That the *Gathering* of the *People* (or *Nations*) should be to him: In the *Vulgar* it is rendered *Expectatio Gentium*, the *Expectation* of the *Gentiles*. He is called *the Desire of all Nations*, Hag. ii. 7. And I will shew you the general *Expectation* the *Gentiles* had of his *Coming* about the *Time* that he did come.

They knew him by the Name of the *East*. Their *Tradition* was, that the *East* should prevail; *Ut valesceret ORIENS*; as I will shew you presently: But first let me tell you, that the *Holy Scripture* often alludes to him under this Denomination. The *Blood* of the great *Expiatory Sacrifice* was to be sprinkled towards the *East*, Lev. xvi. 14. to shew whence the true *Expiatory Sacrifice* should come. And he is thus frequently stiled in the *Prophets*; Zech. iii. 8. it is said,
according

according to the *Vulgar*, I will bring forth my *Servant* the EAST; and Chap. vi. 12. Behold the *Man* whose *Name* is the EAST. Our *English* renders it in both Places the *Branch*; for the *Hebrew* Word bears both Senses; but the *Greek* renders it *Ἀνατολή*, which we translate the *Day-Spring*, Luke i. 78. and put on the Margin *Sun-rising* or *Branch*. The *Vulgar* has it *Oriens ex Alto*, the *East*, or *Sun-rising from on High*. He is called the *Sun of Righteousness*, Mal. iv. 2. And it is said, *Isai. lx. 3. The Gentiles shall come to thy Light, and Kings to the Brightness of thy Rising.*

(2.) Now, SIR, how literally was this fulfilled in the *Magi* (generally supposed to be *Kings*) coming from the *East*, led by a *Star* which appeared to them in the *East*, to worship *Christ* when he was born, and to bring *Presents* unto him as unto a *King*? as it is told in the *Second* of *St. Matthew*.

DE. Why do you quote *St. Matthew* to me? You know we make no more of him than of one of your *Legend Writers*; and believe this *Story* no more than that these three *Kings* are now buried at *Cologne*.

(3.) CHR. You make great Use of the *Legends*, and answer every thing by them: And I confess they are the greatest *Affront* to *Christianity*; and (if possible) a *Disproof* of it, as it must be to those who will place them upon the same Foot with the *Holy Bible*, as too many do in the *Church of Rome*, and cry, we have the *Authority* of the *Church* for both; and they are taught to receive the *Holy Scriptures* upon the *Authority* of the *Church* only: But my *Business* is not with them now. I shall only say, that when they can bring such *Evidences* for the *Truth* of their *Legends*, or for any particular *Fact* in them, as I do for the *Truth* of the *Holy Scriptures*, and in particular for the *Fact* of *Christ*, then I will believe them.

DE. Will you believe nothing that has not all these *Evidences* you produce?

(4.) CHR. Far from it: For then I must believe nothing but this single *Fact* of *Christ*; because no other *Fact* in the *World*, no not of all those recorded in

Holy

Holy Scriptures, has all these *Evidences* which the *Fact* of *Christ* has : And so *God* has thought fitting, that this great *Fact*, above all other *Facts*, of the greatest *Glory to God*, and *Importance to Mankind*, should appear with greater and more undeniable *Evidence* than any other *Fact* that ever was in the *World*.

DE. We are now upon the particular *Fact* of the *Magi* or *wise Men* coming to *Christ*. Have you any more to say as to that ?

(5.) CHR. It has those same *Evidences* that the *Truth* of the *Bible* in general has ; which are more than can be produced for any other *Book* in the *World*. But now as to this *Fact* in particular ; *St. Matthew* was the first who wrote the *Gospel* ; and it was in the same *Age* when this *Fact* was said to be done. And can you think it possible that such a *Fact* as this could have passed without *Contradiction*, and a publick exposing of *Christianity*, then so desirable, and so much endeavoured by the unbelieving *Jews*, their *High Priests*, *Elders*, &c. as the only Means for their own *Preservation*, if the *Fact* had not been *notorious*, and fresh in the *Memory* of all the *People* then at *Jerusalem* ; viz. That these *wise Men* came thither, and that *Herod*, and the whole *City* were troubled at the *News* they brought of the *Birth* of the *King* of the *Jews* ; that *Herod* thereupon gathered all the *Chief Priests* and *Scribes* of the *People* together, that they might search out of the *Prophets*, and know the *Place* where *Christ* should be born ; and then the *Slaughter* of the *Infants*, in and about *Bethlehem*, and in all the *Coasts* thereof, which followed—I say, could such a *Fact* as this have passed at that very time, if it had not been true ? Could *St. Matthew* have hoped to have palmed this upon all the *People*, and upon those very same *Chief Priests* and *Scribes*, who, he said, were so far concerned in it ? Would none of them have contradicted it, if it had been a *Forgery* ? Especially when the detecting it would have strangled *Christianity* in its *Birth*. Would not they have done it who suborned *false Witnesses* against *Christ* ; and gave large *Money* to the *Soldiers* to conceal

(if possible) his *Rurrection*? Would not they have done it, who persecuted *Christianity* with all *Spite* and *Fury*, and invented all imaginable *false Stories* and *Calumnies* against it? Whereas here was one at hand, this of the *Magi*, which, if false, could have been so easily detected, by appealing to every *Man, Woman* and *Child*, I may say, in *Jerusalem, Bethlehem*, and even in all *Judea*, who, no doubt, had heard of the terrible *Massacre* of so many *Infants*, and the Cause of it.

DE. I can give no Account why the *Writers* against *Christianity* did not offer to contradict this Fact of the *Star* and the *Magi*, which is put in the very Front of this *Gospel* of *St. Matthew*: And there it is called his (*Christ's*) *Star*; *We have seen his Star in the East*—As if *God* had created a new and extraordinary *Star* on Purpose, as the *Signal* of *Christ* hung out in the *Heavens*, to give the *World* Notice of his *Birth*. But did none of the *heathen Philosophers* take Notice of this *Star*, or of this Relation given of it by your *St. Matthew*?

(6). CHR. Yes. For *Chalchidius*, in his Comment upon *Plato's Timæus*, speaking of the Prefages of *Stars* mentioned by *Plato*, adds, as a further Proof, *Est quoque alia venerabilior & sanctior Historia*—*There is likewise another more venerable and holy History*.—By which I doubt not he means this of *St. Matthew*; for what he tells seems to be taken out of it. *That, by the Rising of a certain unusual Star, not Plagues and Diseases, but the Descent of the venerable God, for the Salvation and Benefit of Mortals, was observed by the Chaldeans, who worshiped this God newly born, by offering Gifts unto him.*

DE. This makes those *Magi* or *wise Men* to have been *Chaldeans*, who, I know, were the most noted then in the *World* for the most curious Learning, particularly in *Astronomy*: And they were likewise *East* of *Jerusalem*; so that it might be well said they came from the *East*, and had seen his *Star* in the *East*. But I cannot imagine how they should read the Birth of a *God* in the Face of a new *Star*; and how that *Star* should send them particularly to *Jerusalem*, though I may suppose it pointed them *Westward*.

(7.) CHR. This will be easier to you, when you know, that all over the *East* there was a *Tradition*, or fix'd *Opinion*, that about that Time a *King* of the *Jews* would be born, who should rule the whole Earth. And the Appearance of this extraordinary *Star* in the *East*, was taken by them as a *Sign* that he was then born. And whither should they go to look for the *King* of the *Jews*, but to *Jerusalem*? And when they came thither, they enquired, saying, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his Star in the East, and are come to worship him.* This made *Herod* gather the *Priests* and *Scribes* together: And they, by searching the *Prophets*, found that *Bethlehem* was the Place: Whereupon the *wise Men* went to *Bethlehem*. And, to convince them that they were right, the *Star*, which they had seen in the *East*, appeared to them again, and went before them, till it came and stood over where the young *Child* was: This made them rejoice with such an exceeding great Joy.

DE. This would go down in some measure with me, if you could make good your first *Postulatum*, of such a current *Tradition* or *Opinion* in the *East*: But for this you have given no sort of *Proof*: And all the rest, which you have inferred from thence, must come to the Ground with it, if it be not supported. I confess it would seem as strange to me, as the *Star* to the *wise Men*, if *God* had (we know not how, it is unaccountable to us) sent such a *Notion* into the Minds of Men, and at that time only, of such a *King* to be born; and that he should be a *Jew* (the then most contemptible *People* in the World, subdued and conquered by the *Romans*) and that he was to be *King* of the *Jews*, and thence to become *King* of all the Earth, and conquer his *Conquerors*. The *Romans* would have looked with *Disdain* upon such a *Notion* or *Prophecy* as this; it would have made some *Stir* among them, if they had heard of it, or given any *Credit* to it.

(8.) CHR. You argue right. And I will shew you what *Stir* it made among them; and I hope you will take their Word, as well for this *Eastern Tradition*, as

for the Effects it had among themselves: Nay they wanted not the same *Tradition* among themselves, and express *Prophecies* of it in their *Sibyls*, and otherwise. So that the same *Expectation* of the *Messiah* was then current over all the Earth, with the *Gentiles* as well as with the *Jews*.

Tacitus, in his *History*, l. v. c. 13. speaking of the great *Prodigies* that preceded the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, says, that many understood these as the Fore-runners of that extraordinary *Person*, whom the *antient Books* of the *Priests* did foretel should come, about that *Time*, from *Judea*, and obtain the universal Dominion; his Words are, *Pluribus Persuasio inerat, antiquis Sacerdotum Literis contineri, eo ipso Tempore fore, ut valesceret ORIENS, profectique JUDÆA Rerum potirentur, i. e. Many were persuaded that it was contained in the old Writings of the Priests, that at that very Time the EAST should prevail, and the JEWS should have the Dominion.* And *Suetonius*, in the *Life of Vespasian*, c. 1. n. 4. says, *Percrebuerat ORIENTE toto vetus & constans Opinio, esse in Fatis, ut eo Tempore, JUDÆA profecti Rerum potirentur; i. e. That it was an antient and constant Opinion (or Tradition) throughout the whole EAST, that at that Time those who came from JUDEA should obtain the Dominion; that is, That some Jew shou'd be universal King.* Therefore *Cicero*, who was a *Commonwealths-Man*, in his *second Book of Divination*, speaking of the *Books* of the *Sibyls*, who likewise foretold this great *King* to come, says, *Cum Antistibus agamus, & quidvis potius ex illis Libris, quam Regem proferant: quem Romæ post hæc nec Dii, nec Homines, esse patientur: i. e. Let us deal with these Priests, and let them bring any thing out of these Books rather than a King; whom neither the Gods nor Men will suffer, after this, at Rome.*

But he was mistaken, and had his *Head* cut off for writing against *Kingly Government*. And others, more considerable than he, laid greater *Stress* upon these *Prophecies*, even the whole *Senate* of *Rome*, as I come to shew you.

• Whether these *Sibyls* gathered their *Prophecies* out of the

the *Old Testament*, is needless here to examine. I am now only upon that general *Expectation*, which was then in the World, of this great and universal King to come about that Time.

(9.) The same Year that *Pompey* took *Jerusalem*, one of these *Oracles* of the *Sibyls* made a great Noise, which was, *That Nature was about to bring forth a King to the Romans.* Which, as *Suetonius* relates, in the Life of *Augustus*, c. 94. did so terrify the *Senate*, that they made a *Decree* to expose, that is, *destroy*, all the *Children* born that Year; *Senatum exterritum censuisse, ne quis illo Anno genitus educaretur*: That none born that Year should be brought up, but *exposed*; that is, left in some *Wood* or *desert Place* to *perish*. But he tells how this dreadful Sentence was prevented; *Eos qui gravidas Uxores haberent, quod ad se quisque Spem traheret, curasse ne Senatus consultum ad Ærarium deferretur*: That those *Senators*, whose *Wives* were with *Child*, because each was in hopes of having this great *King*, took care that the *Decree* of the *Senate* should not be put into the *Ærarium*, or *Treasury*; without which, by their Constitution, the *Decree* could not be put in Execution. And *Appian*, *Plutarch*, *Salust*, and *Cicero*, do all say, That it was this *Prophecy* of the *Sibyls* which raised the *Ambition* of *Corn. Lentulus* at that time, hoping he should be this *King* of the *Romans*. *Virgil*, a few Years before the Birth of *Christ*, in his 4th *Eclogue* quotes a *Prophecy* of one of these *Sibyls*, speaking of an extraordinary *Person*, to be born about that Time, who should introduce a *golden Age* into the World, and restore all Things, and should blot out our *Sins*—*Si qua manent Sceleris Vestigia Nostri*—And calls him, *Chara Deum Soboles, Magnum Jovis incrementum.* Dear *Offspring of the Gods*, and great *Son of Jove*. He describes a *new State* of Things, like the *new Heavens* and *new Earth*, *Isai. lxxv. 17. Magnus ab integro Seclorum Nascitur Ordo.* A great *Order of Ages* does begin, wholly *New*. And as *Isaiab* describes the happy State in the *new Earth*; that the *Lion* and the *Lamb* should feed together, the *Serpent* eat *Dust*, and that they should

should not hurt or destroy in all the holy Mountains. *Isai. lxxv. 25.* Virgil does almost repeat his Words.—
*Nec magnos metuent Armenta Leones. Occidet & Serpens,
 & fallax Herba Veneni occidet.* And as God introduces the *Messiah*, with saying, *I will shake the Heavens, and the Earth, and the Sea,* Hag. ii. 7. Virgil does in a manner translate it in this *Eclogue*, introducing the *Great Person* then to be born, and the Joy that should be in the whole Creation.

*Aspice convexo nutantem Pondere Mundum,
 Terrasque, Tractusque Maris, Cælumque profundum:
 Aspice, venturo lætentur ut omnia Sæclo.*

Lo! teeming Nature, bending with its Load,
 The Earth, the Ocean, and the Heavens high:
 Behold, how all rejoice, to greet the coming Age.

Here the Poet describes *Nature* as in Labour to bring forth this great *King*, as the other *Prophecy* of the *Sibyls*, before mentioned, speaks: And he says, *Aderit jam Tempus: That the Time was then at hand. Jam nova Progenies Cælo dimittitur alto: Now a new Progeny from Heaven descends.*

And he applies it to *Saloninus*, the Son of *Pollio* the *Consul*, then newly born, as if it was to be fulfilled in him. But as there was nothing like it in the Event, so these Words are too great to be applied to any *Mortal*, or the *Reign* of any *King* that ever was in the World; or to any other but to the *Messiah*, the Lord of *Heaven* and *Earth*.

(10.) DE. But you know the Authority of these *Sibyls* is disputed: Some say, the *Christians* did interpolate them, and added to them, in about a hundred Years after *Christ*.

CHR. It is true, the *Christians* did often quote them against the *Heathen*; as *St. Paul* quoted the *Heathen Poets* to the *Athenians*, *Acts xvii. 28.* And *Clem. Alexandrinus*, in his *Strom.* l. vi. says that *St. Paul* quoted the *Sibyls* likewise, in his *Disputations* with the *Gentiles*; and the *Christians* were called *Sibylianists*, from their
 quoting

quoting the *Sibyls* so often. But *Origen*, in his Answer to *Celsus*, l. 7. challenges him to shew any *Interpolation* made by the *Christians*; and appeals to the *Heathen Copies*, which were in their own Possession, and kept with great Care.

But what I have quoted to you out of *Virgil*, was before *Christ* was born, and therefore clear of these Objections.

DE. Then the *Jews* must have had some hand in them; as likewise in that *Eastern Tradition* you have spoke of.

CHR. If so, you must suppose that the *Jews* had it from their own *Prophets*. And this will be a strong Confirmation, that the *Time* of the *Messiah's* Coming was plainly told in the *Prophets*.

(11.) DE. What say the *Jews* to this? For I cannot imagine how they can get off of it.

CHR. Some of them say, That the *Messiah* put off his Coming at the appointed *Time*, because of their *Sins*: Others say, He did come at the *Time*, but has concealed himself ever since.

DE. These are mere *Excuses*: Do they pretend any *Prophecy* for this? But to what Purpose? For these *Excuses* shew, that *Prophecies* are no *Proofs*; because, if they may be thus put off, they can never be known; and they may be *put off*, and *put off*, to the End of the World.

(12.) CHR. But now, SIR, as to your Point. If this general *Expectation*, both *East* and *West*, of the great *King* of the *Jews* to be born about that very *Time* that he did come, was occasioned by the *Jewish* Tradition of it, it strengthens the Truth of the *Holy Scriptures*, whence the *Jews* had it. But otherwise, if God, we know not how, did send such a *Notion* into the Minds of Men all over the World, at that particular *Time*, and never the like, either *before* or *since*, then the *Miracle* will be greater, and the *Attestation* to the Coming of *Christ* stronger; and, as you said, it will be more wonderful, and more convincing to you, than the *Star* was to the *wise Men* in the *East*.

DE. I must take time to answer this. I made nothing at all of this of the *Magi* and the *Star*, and of *Herod's* slaying the *Infants* upon it; I thought it a ridiculous *Story*, and to have no Foundation in the World. But when I see *Suetonius* telling us of the *Decree* of the *Senate* of *Rome* to destroy all the *Children* born that Year, and for the same Reason, for fear of this great *King*, that was then to be born; I must think there was a strange chiming in of Things here, one to answer the other; I know not how it happened; By chance, or how!

(13.) CHR. You cannot imagine there could be any *Concert* in this Matter: That the *Chaldeans*, and *Romans*, and *Jews*, should all agree upon the Point, and hit it so exactly, without any one of them discovering the *Contrivance*! Especially when it was so terrible to both the *Romans* and the *Jews*, that they took such desperate Methods to prevent it, as to destroy their own *Children*!

DE. It is ridiculous to talk of a *Concert*: I will not put my Cause upon that; would they concert what they thought their own *Destruction*? Besides, the *Jews* and *Romans* were then *Enemies*; and the *Chaldeans* were far off, and had little Correspondence with either of them: And such an universal *Notion* could not be concerted. Whole *Nations* could not be trusted with a *Secret*; and if they all kept it, and against their own Interest too, it would be as great a *Miracle* as any in your *Bible*.

(14.) CHR. How much more impossible is it to suppose, that there should be a *Concert* between different *Ages*, between all the *Ages*, from *Adam* downwards, in all those *Prophecies* of the Coming of the *Messiah*? How should they know it but by *Revelation*? And would they have all agreed so exactly, as to the *Time*, *Place*, *Manner*, and other *Circumstances*, if it had been a *Forgery*, contrived by different *Persons*, and in different *Ages*?

(15.) This is an Argument which *St. Peter* thought stronger than the Conviction even of our *outward Senses*; for, having set down what he, and the other two *Apostles*, had

had both *seen* and *heard* upon the *Holy Mount*, he adds, *We have yet a more sure Word* (that is, a stronger Proof) *of Prophecy, whereunto you do well to take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your Hearts, 2 Pet. i. 19.* And he inforces it thus, *For the Prophecy came not, in old Time, by the Will of Man, but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

DE. I will grant his Argument so far, that it is easier to suppose the *Senses* of three Men, or of all the Men in the World, to be imposed upon, than that *Adam, Abraham, and I, had concerted together* : But I will not give you my Answer yet. Have you any more to say upon this Head of *Prophecy* ?

CHR. I need say no more till your Answer comes ; for you have granted that this *Proof* is stronger than what we *see* with our *Eyes*.

(16.) But that your Answer may take in all together, I will give you something further : I have set down already some of the great *Prophecies* of the Coming of *Christ, his Sufferings, Death, and Resurrection.* But there are others which reach to several minute *Circumstances*, such as cannot be applied to any other *Fact* that ever yet happened, and which could not have been foreseen by any but *God* ; nor were known by the *Actors* who did them, else they had not done them. For they would not have fulfilled the *Prophecies* that went before of *Christ*, in applying them to him whom they crucified as a *false Christ*.

See then how literally several of these *Prophecies* were fulfilled : As *Psal. lxxix. 21. They gave me Gall to eat, and Vinegar to drink.* Then read, *Matth. xxvii. 34. They gave him Vinegar to drink, mingled with Gall.* It is said, *Psal. xxii. 16, 17, 18. They pierced my Hands, and my Feet—They stand staring and looking upon me. They part my Garments among them, and cast Lots upon my Vesture.* As if it had been wrote after *Job. xix. 23, 24.* It was merely accidental in the *Soldiers* ; they would not tear his *Coat*, because it was woven, and without *Seam* ; therefore they cast Lots for it : Thus fulfilling
this

this *Scripture*, without any Knowledge of theirs; for they were *Roman Soldiers*, and knew nothing of the *Scripture*: Again, it is said, *Psal. xxii. 7, 8. All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out their Lips, and shake their Heads, saying, He trusted in God, that he would deliver him; let him deliver him if he will have him.* Compare this with, *Matth. xxvii. 39. 41, 42, 43. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their Heads, and saying—Come down from the Cross. Likewise also the chief Priests mocking him, with the Scribes and Elders, said—He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God.* It is said again, *Zech. xii. 10. They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.* His very *Price* was foretold, and how the *Money* should be disposed of, *Zech. xi. 13. Fulfilled, Matth. xxvii, 6, 7.* And his riding into *Jerusalem* upon an *Ass*, *Zech. ix. 9.* which the learned *Rabbi Saadia* expounds of the *Messiah*. That he should suffer with *Malefactors*, *Isai. liii. 12.* That his *Body* should not lie so long in the *Grave* as to see *Corruption*, *Psal. xvi. 10.*

Many other *Circumstances* are told, which cannot be applied to any but to *Christ*. I have set down these few, that you may take them into *Consideration*, when you think fit to give your *Answer* as to this *Head of Prophecies*: And you are to take care to find some other *Fact*, guarded with *Prophecies*, like this, or else you must confess that there is no other *Fact* that has such *Evidence* as this.

17. But before I leave this *Head*, I must mention the *Prophecies* in our *Bible*, of Things yet to come to the *End of the World*; and of the new *Heavens* and new *Earth* that shall succeed.

DE. These can be no *Proofs* here, because we cannot see the *fulfilling* of them.

CHR. You may believe what is to come, by the *fulfilling* you have seen of what is past. But I bring this now to shew you, that there is no other *Law*, or *History*, in the *World*, that so much as pretends to this,
or

or to know what is to come: This is peculiar to the *Holy Bible*, as being written from the Mouth of God.

You have seen how the Current of the *Prophecies* of the *Old Testament* did point at, and centre in, that great Event, the Coming of the *Messiah*.

When he was come, then he told us more plainly of what was to come after him, even to the Consummation of all Things: And by what we have seen exactly fulfilled of all he told us, to this Time, we must believe what remains yet to come.

18. How particularly did he foretel the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the *Temple*, Matth. xxiv. And that that Age should not pass, till it should be fulfilled? And his very Expression was literally fulfilled, That there should not be left one *Stone* upon another in the *Temple*; for the very *Foundations* of it were ploughed up by *Tyrannus Rufus*. See *Scaliger's Canon. Isagog*, p. 304.

When *Jerusalem* was first besieged, it was full of *Christians*: But the *Siege* was raised unaccountably, and for no Reason that *History* gives. In which time the *Christians* seeing those *Signs* come to pass, which *Christ* had foretold would precede its Destruction, and particularly laying hold of that Caution he gave, *Then let them that are in Judea flee to the Mountains*, and that in such Haste, as that he that was in the *Field* was not to return (to *Jerusalem*) to fetch his *Garment*; or he on the *House-top* there, to stay to take his *Goods* with him; accordingly all the *Christians* left *Jerusalem*, and fled to *Pella*, a City in the Mountains: And as soon as they were all gone, the *Romans* returned and renewed the *Siege*. And so it came to pass, that when *Titus* sacked the *City*, there was not one *Christian* found there, and the Destruction fell only upon the *unbelieving Jews*; the others escaped, as *Lot* out of *Sodom*, by believing the *Prediction* of that Ruin.

19. Another very remarkable *Prediction* of our blessed *Lord*, in that same *Chapter*, was, of the many *false Christs* that should come after him; and he warned the *Jews* not to follow them, for that it would be to their Destruction. *Behold* (says he, ver. 25.) *I have told*

told you before : But they would not believe him : And accordingly it came to pass. *Josephus*, in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, l. xviii. c. 12. l. xx. c. 6. and *de Bell. Jud.* l. vii. c. 31. tells of abundance of these false *Messiahs*, who appeared before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and led the People into the *Wilderness*, where they were miserably destroyed ; the very Thing of which our *Saviour* cautioned them, *ver.* 26. If they say unto you, behold, *He* (that is, *Christ*) is in the *Desert*, go not forth. And, *de Bell. Jud.* l. vii. c. 12. *Josephus* says, that the chief Cause of their Obstinacy, in that *War* with the *Romans*, was, their Expectation of a *Messiah* to come and deliver them ; which brought on their *Ruin*, and made them deaf to the Offers of *Titus*, who courted them to Peace.

And since the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, there have been so many false *Messiahs*, that *Johannes a Lent* has wrote a *History* of them, printed *Herbonæ*, 1697. which brings them down as far as the Year 1682, ; and tells the lamentable Destruction of the *Jews* in following them.

20. But the next *Prophecy* of our blessed *Lord*, which I produce, is more remarkable than these ; and of which you see the fulfilling, in a great measure ; *viz.* That his *Gospel* should prevail over all the World, and that the *Gates of Hell* should not prevail against it : And this told when he was low and despised, and had but twelve poor *Fishermen* for his Followers : And that his *Religion* should conquer, not by the *Sword*, like *Mahomet's*, but by patient *Suffering*, as *Lambs* among *Wolves*. And in this State the *Church* endured most terrible *Persecutions*, when all the Rage of *Hell* was let loose against her, for the first three hundred Years, without any Help but from *Heaven* only ; till, at last, by the *Divine Providence*, the great *Emperor of Rome*, and other mighty *Kings* and *Princes*, without any *Force* or *Compulsion*, did voluntarily and freely submit their *Sceptres* to *Christ*.

No *Religion* that ever was in the World was so begun, so propagated, and did so prevail : And hence we assuredly

assuredly *trust*, that what remains will be fulfilled, of the Promise of *Christ* to his *Church* in the latter Days.

But I speak now only of this *Prophecy* so long beforehand, and when there was so little Appearance of its coming to pass, so far as we have seen already.

Let me here remember one particular Passage, foretold by *Christ*, concerning the *Woman* who anointed his *Body* to the Burying, That *where-soever this Gospel should be preached throughout the whole World, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of, for a Memorial of her*: And we see how it is spoken of to this Day.

Mark xiv.
8, 9.

DE. If this *Book* had been lost, we had not heard of this *Prophecy*.

CHR. So you may say of all the *Bible*, or of any other *Book*; but *Providence* has fulfilled this *Prophecy* by preserving the *Book*: And it is a *Prophecy* that this *Book*, at least this *Fact* of the *Woman*, should be preserved for ever; and it may be preserved, though that *Book* were lost.

12. DE. When *Prophecies* are fulfilled, and the *Events* come to pass, they are plain to every body; but why might they not have been as plain from the Beginning? And then there could have been no Dispute about them; as if it had been said, that such a one by *Name*, at such a *Time*, and in such a *Place*, should do such things, &c.

CHR. Because *God* having given Man *Free-Will*, he does not force Men to do any *wicked* thing. And it would be in the Power of *wicked* Men to defeat a *Prophecy* against themselves, as to the *Circumstance* of *Time*, *Place*, or the *Manner* of doing the Thing. For Example: If the *Jews* had known that *Christ* had told his *Apostles* he was to be *crucified*, they would not have done it; they would have *stoned* him, as they did *St. Stephen*; for that was the *Death* appointed by the *Law* for *Blasphemy*: And they several times attempted to have *stoned Christ* for this, because he said, I am the *Son of God*, *John* vii. 59. x. 31, 32, 33. But *Crucifixion* was a *Death* by the *Roman Law*. Therefore

fore the *Jews*, to fulfil this *Prophecy* (but not knowing it), delivered *Christ* to the *Romans* to be put to Death: Yet he told them so much of it, that after he was crucified they might know it; as he said to them, *Joh. viii. 28. When ye have lift up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he; and Chap. x. 32, 33, And I, if I be lifted up from the Earth, will draw all Men unto me: This he said, signifying what Death he should die.* But they understood it not till they had done it: Then they knew what the *lifting up* meant. And *Chap. xviii. 31, 32. When Pilate would have had them judge him according to their Law, which was Stoning, they were cautious at this Time only, and said, It is not lawful for us to put any Man to Death; because they were then under the Government of the Romans. But the next Words shew the Design of Providence in it, That the Saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what Death he should die. They had no such Caution upon them, when they stoned St. Stephen after this; nor the many times before, when they took up Stones to have stoned the same Jesus.*

Then again, the *piercing his Side with the Spear* was no Part of the *Roman Sentence of Execution*, but happened, seemingly, by mere Accident; for the *Sentence of the Law* was to hang upon the *Cross* till they were dead: But that being the *Day of Preparation for the Sabbath*, which began that Evening, soon after *Christ* and the *Thieves* were fastened to the *Cross*, before it could be supposed they were dead; therefore, *That the Bodies might not remain upon the Cross on the Sabbath Day*, the *Jews* besought *Pilate* that their *Legs* might be broken (which was no Part of the *Sentence* neither, but done), lest they should escape when taken down: Accordingly the *Legs* of the *Thieves* were broken, for they were yet alive; and the Reason why they broke not the *Legs* of *Christ* was, because they saw that he was dead already; but, to make sure, one of the *Soldiers* pierced his *Side* with a *Spear*, little knowing that they were then fulfilling *Prophecies*, as that a *Bone of him should not be broken: And again, They shall look on him whom they pierced.*

pierced. As little did the *Soldiers* think of it, when they were casting *Lots* upon his *Vesture*: And the *Chief Priests* (if they had known it, or reflected upon it) would not have *upbraided* him in the very *Words*, that were foretold in the *xxii. Psalm*, which I have before quoted: And they would have contrived the *Money* they gave to *Judas* to have been one *Piece* more, or less, than just *thirty*: They would not have come so punctually in the *Way* of that *Prophecy*, *Zech. xi. 12, 13. They weighed for my Price thirty Pieces of Silver*: And they would not have bought any other *Field* with it, but especially that of the *Potter*; which *Zechariah* there likewise mentions.

And as the *Enemies of Christ* did not know they were fulfilling these *Prophecies* of him, so neither did his *Disciples*, at that time when they were so doing; as it is said, *Job. xii. 16. These Things understood not his Disciples at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these Things were written of him, and that they had done these Things unto him*. This makes the fulfilling these *Prophecies* yet more remarkable.

Where *Providence* sees that *Prophecies* will not be minded, they are more *express* and *plain*; as likewise where the *Passions* and *Interests* of Men will hurry them on towards fulfilling them: Thus *Alexander the Great* is described as plainly almost as if he had been named, *Dan. viii. 20, 21, 22*. And it is said, That this *Prophecy*, which was shewed him by the *High Priest* at *Jerusalem*, did encourage him in his Expedition against the *Persians*. But it is not so when a Man is to do *foolish* and *wicked* Things, and Things *hurtful* to himself; for if these were told *plainly* and *literally*, it would be in his Power to do otherwise; unless *God* should force his *Will*, and then he would not be a *free Agent*.

(22.) DE. I must have recourse to the *Jews*, in Answer to these *Prophecies* of the *Messiah*, which you have brought: For they, owning these *Scriptures* as *Revelations* given them by *God*, must have some Solution or other for them; or else give themselves up as self-condemned.

CHR.

CHR. The Answers the *Jews* give will convince you the more, and render them indeed self-condemned.

Before the Coming of *Christ*, the *Jews* understood these *Texts*, as we do, to be certainly meant of the *Messiah*, and of none other ; but, since that time, they have forced themselves to put the most strained and contradictory Meanings upon them ; for they agree not in their Expositions ; and the one does manifestly destroy the other : Thus that Text I before quoted, *Gen. xlix. 10.* was understood, by the *Chaldee* and antient *Jewish* Interpreters, to be meant of the *Messiah*.

Yet of their modern *Rabbies*, some say, that it was meant of *Moses*. But others reject that ; *First*, Because it is plain that the *Gathering* of the *Nations* or *Gentiles* was not to *Moses*. *Secondly*, Because the *Sceptre* was not given to *Judah* till long after *Moses*. The first of it that appears was, *Judg. xx. 18.* when *Judah* was commanded by *God* to go up first, and lead the rest of the *Tribes* : And *David* was the first *King* of the Tribe of *Judah*. *Thirdly*, Because *Moses* did prophesy of a greater than himself to come, to whom the People should hearken, *Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19.*

For these Reasons, other *Rabbies* say, it could not be meant of *Moses* ; but they apply it to the *Tabernacle* at *Shiloh*. This was only for the sake of the Word *Shiloh* ; for otherwise it bears no Resemblance either to the *Gathering* of the *Gentiles*, or the *Sceptre* of *Judah*. And though the House of *God* was first set up at *Shiloh*, yet it was removed from thence, and established at *Jerusalem* ; which was the Place of which *Moses* spoke, that *God* would place his Name there, as I shall shew you presently.

This Interpretation therefore being rejected, other *Rabbies* say, That this *Prophecy* must be meant of the *Messiah* ; but that by the Word *Sceptre* is not to be understood a *Sceptre* of Rule and Government, but of Correction and Punishment, and that this should not depart from *Judah* till *Shiloh* came ; but the *Text* explaining *Sceptre* by the Word *Lawgiver*, that the *Sceptre* should not depart from *Judah*, nor a *Lawgiver* from between
his

his Feet until *Shiloh* came, overthrows this Interpretation, and shews the *Sceptre* here mentioned, to be meant of a *Sceptre of Rule and Government*. Again, *Josbua* gave them Rest from their Enemies round about: And the Land had Rest many Years under their *Judges*: And *David* delivered them out of the Hands of their Enemies: And under *Solomon* they were the *richest and happiest* People upon Earth: And frequently after they were in good Condition, and at Ease: So that the *Sceptre of Correction* did often depart from them before *Shiloh* came.

This is so evident, that others of them allow this *Sceptre* to be a *Sceptre of Government*; but they say the Meaning is, That the *Sceptre* shall not *finally* or *for ever* depart from *Judah*, because the *Messiah* will come and restore it to *Judah* again. But this is adding to the *Text*, and making a new *Text* of it, and quite different from the former; nay, directly opposite to it: For the *Text* speaks only of the *Departing* of the *Sceptre*, but nothing of the *restoring* it: And it cannot be *restored* till once it is *departed*: Therefore this Exposition, saying it *shall depart*, and the *Text*, saying it *shall not depart*, are directly contrary.

Lastly, There are others who throw aside all these *Excuses*, and say, That the *Sceptre* or *Dominion* is not yet *departed* from *Judah*; for that some *Jew* or other may have some Sort of *Rule* or *Government* in some Part or other of the World, tho' we know it not.

DE. As if the *Jews* (who hold the best Correspondence with one another of any People) could not tell this *Place*, if there were any such, where they were governed by their own *Laws*, and by *Governors* of their own *Nation*, though in Subjection to the *Government* of the *Country* where they lived!

These *Salvoes* of the *Jews* are contradictory to each other; they are poor *Excuses*, and shew their *Cause* to be perfectly *desitute*.

But I have an Objection against this *Prophecy*, which affects both *Jews* and *Christians*, That the *regal Sceptre* did depart from the *Tribe* of *Judah* long before your *Shiloh* came.

CHR. *First*, This *Prophecy* does not call the *Sceptre* a *regal Sceptre*; and, therefore, denotes only *Government* in the general.

Secondly, The whole *Land* and the *Nation* took their Name from *Judab*: It was called the *Land of Judab*, and the *Nation* took the Name of *Jews*, from *Judab*; as, before that, of *Hebrews*, from *Heber* their Progenitor, *Gen. x. 25*. And this *Prophecy* spoke of those Times when *Judab* should be the *Father* of his Country, and the whole *Nation* should be comprehended under the Name of *Judab*; and therefore *Judab* holds the *Sceptre* where-ever a *Jew* governs. Besides, the Words *Sceptre* and *Throne* are used in relation to inferior *Governors*, to tributary *Kings*, and *Kings* in Captivity. Thus it is said that *thirty-seven* Years after the Captivity of *Judab*, the King of *Babylon* set the *Throne* of *Jehoiachin*, King of *Judab*, above the *Thrones* of the *Kings* that were with him in *Babylon*, *2 Kin. xxv. 27, 28*. This was more than half the Time of the *Captivity*; and this was continued to *Jehoiachin* all the *Days of his Life* (*ver. 29, 30.*) which might last till the End, or near the End, of the *Captivity*. But, besides the *King*, the *Jews* had *Governors* of their own *Nation* allowed them, who were their *Archontes*, or *Rulers*; and they enjoyed their own *Laws*, though in Subjection to the *King* of *Babylon*. The *Elders* of *Judab* (which was a Name of *Government*) are mentioned in the *Captivity*, *Ezek. viii, 1*. And the *Chief* of the *Fathers* of *Judab*, and the *Priests* and the *Levites*, *Ezra i. 5.*: And after the *Captivity* they had a *Tirshatha* or *Governor* of their own *Nation*, *Ezra ii. 63. Neh. viii. 9.* And the *Throne* of the *Governor* is named, *Neh. iii. 7.* So that here was still the *Throne* and *Sceptre* of *Judab*.

And from the Time of the *Maccabees* to their Conquest by the *Romans*, the *supreme Authority* was in their *Higb Priests*; as it was afterwards, but in Subjection to the *Romans*; and they enjoyed their own *Laws*. *Pilate* said unto them, *Take ye him, and judge him according to your Law, Joh. xviii 31.*: And though they answered, *It is not lawful for us to put any Man to Death*, the Reason is given in the next Verse, *That the Saying of Jesus*

Jesus might be fulfilled which he spake, signifying what Death he should die: For Crucifixion was a Roman Death; but Stoning, by the Law of Moses, was the Death for Blasphemy, of which they accused him. And they afterwards stoned St. Stephen, for the same (alleged) Crime, according to their own Law. Their High Priests and Council had full Liberty to meet when they pleased, and to act according to their Law. And Christ himself owns, they sat in Moses's Seat, Matt. xxiii. 2. The High Priest sat to judge St. Paul, who applied to him that Text, Exod. xxii. 28. Thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor curse the Ruler of thy People, or speak Evil of him, as the Apostle renders it, Acts xxiii. 5.: So that here the Government was still in the Jews, though in Subjection to the Romans: And thus it continued till the Destruction of Jerusalem, and the Temple, by the Romans. But, since that time, they are dispersed in all Countries, and have no Governor or Ruler of their own in any. The Sceptre is intirely departed from them.

DE. It is impossible but the Jews must see the Difference of their State before the Destruction of Jerusalem, and since; and of their Condition as to Government in their several Captivities, and now in their Dispersion. In the former, they had still a Face of Government left among themselves; but now, none at all. And their Excuses, which you have mentioned, render them indeed *self-condemned*.

What do they say to that Text you have quoted, Jer. xxxiii. 17, &c. That David should never want a Son to sit upon his Throne, &c. You Christians apply it to Christ, who was called the Son of David: But to whom do the Jews apply it?

CHR. Some of them say, That David will be raised from the Dead, and made *immortal*, to fulfil this Prophecy. Others say, That after the *Messiah*, who is to be of the Seed of David, he shall thenceforward no more want a Son, &c.

DE. Both these Interpretations are in flat Contradiction to the Text. The Text says, shall *never want*. These say, shall want for a long Time; they must con-

feels now for near *eighteen hundred Years* together ; and how much longer they cannot tell. They have had none to sit in *Moses's Seat*, or on the *Throne of David*, tho' in Subjection to their *Enemies*, as they had in the worst of their *Captivities* ; but have not now in their *Dispersion*.

But is there any Difference betwixt what you call the *Cathedra* or *Seat of Moses*, and the *Throne of David* ?

CHR. None as to *Government* : For *Moses* was *King* in *Jeshurun*, Deut. xxxiii. 5. But *David* was the first *King* of the *Tribe of Judah* ; which was to be the Name of the whole *Nation*. And *Christ* was called the *King* of the *Jews* : It was the *Title* set upon his *Cross* : But after him none ever had that *Title* to this Day.

DE. This is not to be answered by the *Jews*. But pray what *Person* is it, do they say, was meant in the liii. of *Isaiab*, which you have quoted ?

CHR. They will not have it to be any *Person* at all. For they can find none, except our *Christ*, to whom these *Prophecies* can any way be applied. Therefore, they say, it must be meant of the *Nation* of the *Jews* ; whose *Sufferings*, &c. are there described in the Name of a *Person*, by which the *People* are to be understood.

DE. But the *People* and the *Person*, there described as *suffering*, &c. are plainly contradistinguished. It is said, ver. 8. *For the Transgression of my PEOPLE was HE stricken*. And ver. 3, 4, &c. *We* (the *People*) esteemed him not. *All We* (the *People*) like *Sheep* have gone astray — *And the Lord hath laid on HIM the Iniquity of Us all* ; that is, of the *People*, who are here called *Wicked* : But he is called, *My righteous Servant*, who did no *Violence*, neither was any *Deceit* in his *Mouth*. Therefore this *People* and the *Person* here spoke of could not be the same : They are opposed to each other : The one called *righteous*, the other *wicked* : The one to die for the other, and to justify the other. *By his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many*, &c.

CHR. The *Jews*, before *Christ* came, understood this *Prophecy* of the *Messiah* ; as indeed it can be applied to none other. But the *Jews* since *Christ*, to avoid the Force of this, and other *Prophecies* which speak of the *Sufferings*

Sufferings and Death of the Messiah, have invented two *Messiahs*; one *Ben-Joseph*, of the Tribe of *Ephraim*, who is to be the *suffering Messiah*; the other *Ben-David*, of the Tribe of *Judah*, who is to *triumph gloriously*; and shall raise from the Dead all the *Israelites*, and among them the first *Messiah*, *Ben-Joseph*.

DE. Does the *Scripture* speak of two *Messiahs*, and the one raising the other?

CHR. No, not a Word; but only of *the Messiah*; which shews it spoke only of *one*. But it mentions the *twofold State* of this *Messiah*; the first *suffering*, the second *triumphing*: Whence the modern *Jews* have framed to themselves these two *Messiahs*.

DE. This is shameful! and plainly to avoid the *Prophecies* against them.

CHR. This of *Isaiab* is fully explained, *Dan. ix. 24, &c.* where it is said, that the *Messiah the Prince* should be *cut off*, but *not for himself*, but for the *Transgressions of the People*, to *make an End of Sins*, and to *make Reconciliation for Iniquity*. And that this was to be within *four hundred and ninety Years* after the Building of the *second Temple*, which I have mentioned before.

DE. I cannot imagine how the *Jews* get clear of this.

CHR. They cannot. But, in Spite to it, they seek now to *undervalue* the whole Book of *Daniel*: though they dare not totally *reject* it, because it was received by their *Forefathers* who preceded *Christ*. But, about a hundred Years after *Christ*, they made a new *Distribution* of the *Books of the Old Testament*, different from their *Fathers*, and took the *Book of Daniel* out of the Middle of the *Prophets*, where it was placed before, and put it last of all. But more than this; to lessen the Credit of this *Book*, they adventured to shake the Authority of their whole *Scriptures*: For they took upon them to make a *Distinction* of the *Books of the Scripture*, and made them not all *inspired or canonical*; but some of them they called *ἁγία γραφή*, that is, *holy or pious Books*, though in a lower Class than those called *inspired or canonical Scriptures*: And they put the *Book of Daniel* into the *inferior Class*. But in that

Book *Daniel* speaks of himself as having received these *Prophecies* immediately from an *Angel* of *God*. Wherein if he told us the *Truth*, it must be put in the highest *Class* of *canonical Scripture*: But, if he told us *false*, then this Book is quite through all a *Lie*, and *blasphemous* too, in fathering it all upon *God*! So that the *Distinction* of our modern *Jews* confounds themselves. And, since they allow this Book of *Daniel* a Place among the *Ἁγία γράφα*, or *holy Writings*, they cannot deny it to be truly *canonical*, as all their *Fathers* owned it before the *Coming* of *Christ*. And, if they throw off *Daniel*, they must discard *Ezekiel* too: For he gives the highest *Attestation* to *Daniel* that can be given to mortal *Man*; he makes him one of the *three* most *righteous* Men to be found in *Ezek. xiv. 14*, all *Ages*; and the very *Standard* of *Wisdom* to the *World*. 20. xxviii. 3.

DE. What do they say to *Hag. ii. 7, 9*. where it is said, that *Christ* was to come into the *second Temple*?

CHR. Some of them say, That this must be meant of a *Temple* yet to be built.

DE. This is denying the *Prophecy*: For it is said, ver. 7, *I will fill THIS HOUSE with Glory, &c.* And, ver. 9. *The Glory of THIS latter House—And in THIS PLACE will I give Peace, &c.* But I am not to defend the Cause of the *Jews*: It seems to me very desperate: I own you *Christians* have the *Advantage* of them in this.

CHR. And I hope it will have so much effect with you, as to make you consider seriously of the *Weight* of this *Argument* of *Prophecy* we have discoursed.

DE. Let us at present leave this *Head* of *Prophecy*. Have you any further *Evidence* to produce for your *Christ*?

(VII.) CHR. I have one more, which is yet more peculiar to him than even that of *Prophecy*. For whatever weak *Pretence* may be made of some *Prophecies* among the *Heathen*, as to some particular *Events*, of little *Consequence* to the *World*, yet they never offered at that *Sort* of *Evidence* I am next to produce: Which
is,

is, not only *Prophecies* of the *Fact*, and that from the Beginning of the World, but also *Types*, *Resemblances*, and *Exhibitions* of the *Fact*, in outward sensible *Institutions*, ordained as *Law* from the Beginning, and to continue till the *Fact* they *prefigured* should come to pass.

(1.) Such were the *Sacrifices* instituted by God immediately upon the *Fall* (and upon his *Promise* of the Life-giving *Seed*, *Gen. iii. 15.*), as *Types* of that great and only propitiatory *Sacrifice* for *Sin* which was to come, whose *Blood* they saw continually *shed* (in *Type*) in their daily *Sacrifices*.

These were continued in the *Heathen* Posterities of *Adam*, by immemorial Tradition from the Beginning. Though they had forgot the Beginning of them, as they had of the *World*, or of *Mankind*, yet they retained so much of the Reason of them, as that they had universally the Notion of a *vicarious* Atonement, and that our *Sins* were to be purged by the *Blood* of others suffering in our *Stead*: As likewise, That the *Blood* of *Bulls* and *Goats* could not take away *Sin*, but that a more *noble* *Blood* was necessary. Hence they came to *human* *Sacrifices*; and, at last, to *sacrifice* the *Greatest*, most *Noble*, and most *Virtuous*: And such offered themselves to be *sacrificed*, for the Safety of the *People*; as *Codrus*, King of the *Athenians*, who *sacrificed* himself on this Account: The like did *Curtius* for the *Romans*, as supposing himself the *bravest* and most *valuable* of them all. So the *Decii*, the *Fabii*, &c. *Agamemnon* sacrificed his Daughter *Iphigenia* for the *Greek* Army: And the King of *Moab* sacrificed his *eldest* *Son* that should have reigned in his *Stead*, *2 Kings iii. 27.* Thus the *sacrificing* (not their *Servants* or *Slaves*, but) their *Children* to *Moloch*, is frequently mentioned of the *Jews*; which they did in Imitation of the *Heathen*, as it is said, *Psal. cvi. 35, 36, 37, 38.* *They were mingled among the Heathen, and learned their Works; and they served their Idols—Yea, they sacrificed their Sons and their Daughters unto the Idols of Canaan, &c.* Pursuant to which *Notion*, the *Prophet* introduceth them arguing thus, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow*

bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt Offerings, with Calves of a Year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my First-born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul? Micha vi. 6, 7. They were plainly searching after a complete and adequate Satisfaction for Sin: And they thought it necessary.

DE. No doubt they thought so. But that did not make it necessary.

CHR. The Doctrine of Satisfaction is a Subject by itself, which I have treated elsewhere, in my Answer to the Examination of my last Dialogue against the Socinians. But I am not come so far with you yet: I am now only speaking of Sacrifices, as Types of the Sacrifice of Christ.

(2.) And besides Sacrifices in general, there were afterwards some particular Sacrifices appointed, more nearly expressive of our Redemption by Christ: As the Passover, which was instituted in Memory of the Redemption of the Children of Israel (that is, the Church) out of Ægypt (the House of Bondage of this World, where we are in Servitude to Sin and Misery) in the Night when God slew all the first-born of the Ægyptians: But the Destroyer was to pass over those Houses where he saw the Blood of the paschal Lamb upon the Door-posts; and it was to be eaten with unleavened Bread, expressing the Sincerity of the Heart, without any Mixture or Taint of Wickedness: And thus it is applied, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. Purge out therefore the old Leaven, that ye may be a new Lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old Leaven, neither with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness, but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth.

(3.) There was a double Exhibition of Christ on the great Day of Expiation, which was but once a Year: On which Day only the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies (which represented Heaven, Exod. xxv. 40. Wisd. ix. 8. Heb. ix. 24.) with the Blood
of

of the *Sacrifice*, whose *Body* was burnt without the *Camp*; to shew *God's* Detestation of *Sin*, and that it was to be removed far from us; and that we must go out of the *Camp*, that is out of this *World*, bearing our *Reproach* for *Sin*, before we can be quite freed from it. See how exactly this was fulfilled in *Christ*, Heb. xiii. 11, 12, 13, 14. *For the Bodies of those Beasts whose Blood is brought into the Sanctuary by the High Priest for Sin, are burnt without the Camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the People with his own Blood, suffered without the Gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the Camp, bearing his Reproach; for here we have no continuing City, but we seek one to come.*

The other lively Representation of *Christ's* bearing our *Sins*, and taking them away from us, which was made on the same *Day of Expiation*, was the *Scape-Goat*, Lev. xvi. 21, 22. *And Aaron shall lay both his Hands upon the Head of the live Goat, and confess over him all the Iniquities of the Children of Israel, and all their Transgressions in all their Sins, putting them upon the Head of the Goat, and shall send him away by the Hand of a fit Man into the Wilderness. And the Goat shall bear upon him all their Iniquities, into a Land not inhabited: And he shall let go the Goat in the Wilderness.* This is so plain that it needs no Application.

(4.) Another express Representation of *Christ* was the *brazen Serpent* in the *Wilderness*, by looking upon which the *People* were cured of the *Stings* of the *fery Serpents*. So in looking upon *Christ* by *Faith*, the *Sting* of the *old Serpent*, the *Devil*, is taken away. And the *lifting up the Serpent* did represent *Christ's* being *lifted up* upon the *Cross*. *Christ* himself makes the Allusion, *Joh. iii. 14. As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal Life.*

(5.) He was likewise represented by the *Manna*. For he was the true *Bread* that came down from *Heaven* to nourish us unto *eternal Life*, *Joh. vi. 31 to 36.*

(6.) As also by the *Rock*, whence the *Waters* flowed out to give them *Drink* in the *Wilderness*: And that *Rock* was *Christ*, 1 Cor. x. 4.

(7.) And he was not only their *Meat* and *Drink*, but he was also their constant *Guide*, and led them in a *Pillar of Fire* by *Night*, and of a *Cloud* by *Day*. And the *Cloud of Glory* in the *Temple*, in which *God* appeared, was by the *Jews* understood as a *Type* of the *Messiah*, who is the true *Shechina*, or *Habitation* of *God*.

(8.) The *Sabbath* is called a *Shadow* of *Christ*, Col. ii. 17. It was a *Figure* of that eternal *Rest* procured to us by *Christ*: Therefore it is called a *Sign* of the perpetual *Covenant*, Exod. xxxi. 16, 17. Ezek. xx. 12.

(9.) And such a *Sign* was the *Temple* at *Jerusalem*: At which *Place*, and none other, the *Sacrifices* of the *Jews* were to be offered, Deut. xii. 11, 13, 14. Because *Christ* was to be *sacrificed* there; and, as a *Token* of it, those *Sacrifices*, which were *Types* of *him*, were to be offered only *there*.

And so great *Stress* was laid upon this, that no *Sin* of the *Jews* is oftener remembered than their *Breach* of this *Command*. It was a *Blot* set upon their several *Reformations*, otherwise good and commendable in the *Sight* of *God*, that the *high Places* (where they used to *sacrifice*) were not taken away. This is marked as the great *Defect* in the *Reformation* of *Asa*, 1 Kin. xv. 14. of *Jehoshaphat*, 1 Kin. xxii. 43. of *Jehoash*, 2 Kin. xii. 3. of *Amaziah*, 2 Kin. xv. 4. of *Jotham*, ver. 35. But they were taken away by *Hezekiah*, 2 Kin. xviii. 4. and the *People* instructed to *sacrifice* and burn *Incense* at *Jerusalem* only, 2 Chr. xxxii. 12. Isa. xxxvi. 7.

There was likewise a further *Design* of *Providence* in limiting their *Sacrifices* to *Jerusalem*; which was, That after the great propitiatory *Sacrifice* of *Christ* had been once offered there, *God* was to remove the *Jews* from *Jerusalem*, that they might have no *Sacrifice* at all (as, for that *Reason*, they have not had, in any *Part* of the *World*, near these *eighteen hundred Years* past); to in-

struct them, That (as the *Apostle* speaks to them, *Heb.* x. 26.), *there remaineth no more* (or other) *Sacrifice for Sin*. And, since by the *Law* their *Sins* were to be purged by *Sacrifice*, they have now no way to purge their *Sins*: And, till they return to *that*, they must have no *Sacrifice* at all, but die in their *Sins*. As *Jesus* said unto them, *I go my Way, and ye shall die in your Sins*.——
For if you believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your Sins, *Joh.* viii. 21, 24.

And *Daniel* prophesied expressly, That, soon after the *Death* of the *Messiah*, the *City* of *Jerusalem*, and the *Sanctuary*, should be *destroyed*; and that the *Sacrifice* should *cease*, even until the *Consummation*, and that *determined*, shall be poured upon the *Desolate*, *Dan.* xi. 26, 27.

And this *Desolation* of theirs, and what was *determined* upon them, was told them likewise by *Hosea*, *Chap.* iii. 4. *For the Children of Israel shall abide many Days without a King, and without a Prince, and without a Sacrifice*. But he says, in the next *Verse*, That in the *latter Days* they shall return and seek the *Lord* their *God*, and *David* their *King*; that is, the *Son* of *David* their *Prince* and *Messiah*; as he is called *Messiah* the *Prince*, *Dan.* ix. 25.

Thus as *Salvation* was of the *Jews*, because *Christ* was to come of them, so this *Salvation* was only to be had at *Jerusalem*, where he was to *suffer*, and by which only *Salvation* was to be had.

(10.) DE. This Argument is to the *Jews*. And if I were a *Jew* it would move me; because they never were so long before without *King*, *Temple*, or *Sacrifice*.

CHR. But the *Prophecies* of it, and these fulfilled as you have seen, and *Christ* being so plainly pointed at, and the *Place* of his *Passion*, by limiting the *Sacrifices* to *Jerusalem* only, and by that causing the *legal Sacrifices* to cease throughout the *World*, to shew that they were fulfilled; all this is a strong *Evidence* to you of the *Truth* of these *Things*, and of our *Jesus* being the *Messiah*, or *Christ*, who was prophesied of.

DE. I cannot deny but there is something remarkable in this, which I will take Time to consider. But I do not see how the *Jews* can stand out against this: Because this *Mark*, given by *Daniel* of the *Messiah*, that soon after his *Death* the *Sacrifice* should cease, cannot agree to any *After-Messiah*, who should now come so many *Ages* after the *Sacrifice* has ceased.

CHR. Since we have fallen into the Subject of the *Jews*, I will give you another *Prophecy*, which cannot be fulfilled in any *After-Messiah* whom the *Jews* expect: And it will be also a Confirmation to you of the Truth of the *Prophecies* of the *Holy Scriptures*.

Thus God speaks, *Jer.* xxxiii. 20, 21, 22. Thus saith the Lord, if you can break my Covenant of the Day, and my Covenant of the Night, and that there should not be Day and Night in their Season: Then may also my Covenant be broken with David my Servant, that he should not have a Son to reign upon his Throne; and with the Levites, the Priests, my Ministers. As the Host of Heaven cannot be numbered, neither the Sand of the Sea measured: So will I multiply the Seed of David my Servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.

Now let the *Jews* tell in which Son of David this is fulfilled, except only in our Christ: And how this is made good to the Priests and Levites, otherwise than as *Isaiab* prophesied, Chap. lxvi. 21. And I will also take of them (the Gentiles) for Priests and for Levites, saith the Lord. And as it is thus applied, 1 *Pet.* ii. 5, 9. and *Rev.* i. 6. And this evangelical Priesthood is multiplied as the Stars of Heaven (which they are frequently called), not like the Tribe of Levi, which could not afford Priests to all the Earth.

And as I said before of *Jerusalem*, and the *Sacrifices* there, that they are ceased, to shew they are fulfilled; so here, after this Son of David was come, and his other Sons ceased; and the very Genealogy of their Tribes, and so of *Judah*, is lost, as also of the Tribe of Levi; so that the *Jews* can never tell, if any *After-Messiah* should appear, whether he were of the Tribe of *Judah*; far less, whether he were of the Lineage of *David*;

nor

nor can they shew the *Genealogy* of any they call *Levites* now among them.

This is occasioned by their being *dispersed* among all *Nations*, and yet *preserved* a distinct *People* from all the *Earth*; though without any *Country* of their own, or *King*, or *Priest*, or *Temple*, or *Sacrifice*. And they are thus *preserved* by the *Providence* of *God*, (so as never any *Nation* was since the *Foundation* of the *World*) to shew the *fulfilling* of the *Prophecies* concerning them, and the *Judgments* pronounced against them, for their *crucifying* their *Messiah*; and that their *Conversion* may be more apparent to the *World*, and their being gathered out of all *Nations*, and restored to *Jerusalem* (as is promised them) when they shall come to acknowledge their *Messiah*.

And *God* not permitting them to have any *King* or *Governor* upon *Earth*, ever since their last *Dispersion* by the *Romans* (lest they might say, That the *Sceptre* was not departed from *Judab*), is to convince them (when *God* shall take the *Veil* off their *Heart*) that no other *Messiah*, who can come hereafter, can answer this *Prophecy* of *Jeremiab*, or that of *Jacob*, that the *Sceptre* should not depart from *Judab* till *Shiloh* came.

(11.) And it is wonderful to consider how expressly their present *State* is *prophesied* of, that it could not be more *literal*, if it were to be worded now by us who see it. As, that they should be *scattered* into all *Countries*, *sifted* as with a *Sieve* among all *Nations*, yet preserved a *People*; and that *God* would make an utter *End* of those *Nations* who had oppressed them, and blot out their *Names* from under *Heaven* (as we have seen it fulfilled upon the great *Empires* of the *Assyrians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Romans*, who, one after the other, had miserably wasted the *Jews*); but that the *Name* of the *Jews* (the *fewest* and the *poorest* of all *Nations*) should remain for ever, and they a *People* distinct from all the *Nations* in the *World*, though *scattered* among them all. Read the *Prophecies* express upon this Point, *Jer.* xxx. 11. xxxi. 36, 37. xxxiii. 24, 25, 26. xlvi. 28. *Isai.* xxvii. 7. xxix. 7, 8. liv. 9, 10. lxxv. 8.

Ezek. vi. 8. xi. 16, 17. xii. 15, 16. *Amos* ix. 8, 9. *Zech.* x. 9. And it was foretold them long before, that thus it would be, *Lev.* xxvi. 44. and this in the latter Days, *Deut.* iv. 27. 30, 31. Thus *Moses* told them of it so long before; as the *After-Prophets* frequently. And you see all these *Prophecies* literally fulfilled and fulfilling. The like cannot be said of any other Nation that ever was upon the Earth! So destroyed, and so preserved! And for so long a Time! Having worn out all the great Empires of the World, and still surviving them, to fulfil what was further prophesied of them to the End of the World!

DE. I cannot say but there is something very surprising in this. I never thought of it before. It is a living Prophecy, which we see fulfilled, and still fulfilling at this Day, before our Eyes. For we are sure these Prophecies were not coined Yesterday: And they are as express and particular, as if they were to be wrote now, after the Events are so far come to pass.

(12.) CHR. As the Door was kept open to Christ before he came, by the many and flagrant Prophecies of him, and by the Types representing him, so was the Door for ever shut after him, by those Prophecies being all fulfilled and completed in him, and applicable to none who should come after him, and by all the Types ceasing, the Shadows vanishing, when the Substance was come. No Messiah can now come, before the Sceptre depart from Judah, and the Sacrifice from Jerusalem; before the Sons of David (all except Christ) shall cease to sit upon his Throne. None can come now, within four hundred and ninety Years of the Building of the second Temple; nor come into that very Temple, as I have before shewed was expressly prophesied by Daniel and Haggai.

DE. I know not what the Jews can say, who own these Prophecies.

CHR. They say, That the Coming of the Messiah, at the time spoken of in the Prophets, has been delay'd because of their Sins.

DE.

DE. Then it may be delay'd for ever, unless they can tell us when they will grow better. But however these *Prophecies* have failed, which spoke of the *Time* of the *Messiah's* Coming: And they can never be a Proof hereafter; because the *Time* is past. So that, according to this, they were made for no Purpose, unless to shew that they were *false*; that is, no *Prophecies* at all!

But were these *Prophecies* upon *Condition*? Or was it said, that the Coming of the *Messiah* should be delay'd, if the *Jews* were *sinful*?

CHR. No. So far from it, that it was expressly *prophefied*, that the Coming of the *Messiah* should be in the most *sinful* State of the *Jews*, and to *purge* their *Sins*, *Dan. ix. 24. Zech. xiii. 1.* And the antient Tradition of the *Jews* was pursuant to this, That, at the Coming of the *Messiah*, the *Temple* should be a *Den of Thieves*. Rabbi *Juda* in *Masoreta*. And a Time of great *Corruption*. *Talmud. tit. de Synedrio and de Penderibus, &c.*

But more than this, the very Case is put of their being most *sinful*; and it is expressly said, that this should not hinder the fulfilling of the *Prophecies* concerning the Coming of the *Messiah*, spoken of as the *Son of David*, *2 Sam. vii. 14, 15, 16. Psal. lxxxix. 30. 33, to 37.*

But it was *prophefied* that they should not know their *Messiah*, and should reject him when he came; that he should be a *Stone of Stumbling*, and a *Rock of Offence* to them, *Isai. viii. 14, 15.*; and that *their Eyes should be closed*, that they should not understand their own *Prophets*, chap. *xxix. 9, 10, 11.* That their *Builders* should *reject* the *Head Stone* of the *Corner*, *Psal. cxviii. 22.* And the like in several other Places of their own *Prophets*. And thus they mistook the *Prophecy* concerning the Coming of *Elias*, whom, it is said, they *knew not, but did to him what they listed*; and so the same of *Christ*, *Matth. xvii. 12.* And it is said, *1 Cor. ii. 8.* That, *had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.*

DE. This indeed solves the *Prophecies*, both those of the Coming of the *Messiah*, and of the *Jews* not *knowing* him, and therefore *rejecting* him: And likewise obviates this Excuse of theirs: for if they were very *sinful* at that *Time*, it was a greater *Punishment* of their *Sin* not to *know*, and to *reject* their *Messiah*, than his not Coming at that *Time* would have been.

CHR. The great *Sin* mentioned, for which they were punished by several *Captivities*, was their *Idolatry*; the last and longest of which *Captivities* was that of *seventy Years* in *Babylon*. Since which time they have forsaken their *Idolatry*, and have never been *Nationally* guilty of it since, but always had it in the utmost Abhorrence. But since their rejecting their *Messiah*, they have been now near *eighteen hundred Years*, not in a *Captivity* where they might be all together, and enjoying their own *Law*, *Government*, and *Worship*, in some *Manner*; but *dispersed* over all the *World*, without *Country* of their own, or *King*, or *Priest*, or *Temple*, or *Sacrifice*, or any *Prophet* to comfort them, or give them *Hopes* of a *Restoration*. And all this come upon them, not for their old *Sin* of *Idolatry*, but from that *Curse* they *imprecated* upon themselves, when they *crucified* their *Messiah*, saying, *His Blood be on us, and our Children*; Which cleaves unto them from that *Day* to this, and is visible to all the *World*, but to themselves! And what other *Sin* can they think greater than *Idolatry*, for which they have been *punished* so much more terribly than for all their *Idolatries*? What other *Sin* can this be, but their *crucifying* their *Messiah*? And here they may see their *sinful State*, which they allege as an Excuse for their *Messiah's* not coming at the *Time* foretold by the *Prophets*, rendered tenfold more *sinful*, by their *rejecting* him when he came.

DE. This is a full *Answer*, and *convincing*, as to the *Jews*. But have you any more to say to me?

(13.) CHR. I have one thing more to offer, which may come under this Head of *Types*, and that is, *Persons* who represented *Christ* in several *Particulars*, and so might be called *personal Types*.

And

And I will not apply these out of my own Head, but as they are applied in the *New Testament*; which having all the *Marks* of the *Old Testament*, and stronger *Evidence* than these, in those *Marks* we are now upon, their Authority is indisputable.

(1.) I begin with *Adam*, who gave us *Life*, and *Death* too: And *Christ* came, by his *Death*, to restore us to *Life* again, even *Life Eternal*. Hence *Christ* is called the *second Adam*, and *Adam* is called the *Figure of Christ*. The Parallel betwixt them is insisted on, *Rom. v. 12.* to the End, and *1 Cor. xv. 45, to 50.* *Eve* received her *Life* from *Adam*, as the *Church* from *Christ*. She was taken out of the *Side* of *Adam*, when he was in a *dead Sleep*; and after *Christ* was *dead*, the *Sacraments* of *Water* and *Blood* flowed out of his *Side*; that is, *Baptism*, whereby we are *born* into *Christ*; and the *Sacrament* of his *Blood*, whereby we are *nourished* into eternal *Life*.

(2.) *Enoch* was carried up *bodily* into *Heaven*; as *Elijah*: One under the *Patriarchal*, the other under the *legal* Dispensation. In both, the *Ascension* of *Christ* was *prefigured*.

(3.) *Noah*, a *Preacher* of *Righteousness* to the old *World*, and *Father* of the new; who saved the *Church* by *Water*. The like *Figure* whereunto, even *Baptism*, doth also now save us, *1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.*

(4.) *Melchisedeck*, that is, *King* of *Righteousness*, and *King* of *Peace*, and *Priest* of the most high *God*; who was made like unto the *Son* of *God*, a *Priest* continually, *Heb. vii. 1, 2, 3.*

(5.) *Abraham*, the *Friend* of *God*, and *Father* of the *Faithful*, the *Heir* of the *World*, *Rom. iv. 13.* In whom all the *Nations* of the *Earth* are *blessed*, *Gen. xviii. 18.*

(6.) *Isaac*, the *Heir* of this *Promise*, was born after his *Father* and *Mother* were both past the *Age* of *Generation* in the *Course* of *Nature*, *Gen. xvii. 17. xviii. 11. Rom. iv. 19. Heb. xi. 11, 12.* The nearest *Type* that could be to the *Generation* of *Christ* wholly without a *Man*. And his *Sacrifice* had a very near *Resemblance* to the *Sacrifice* and *Death* of *Christ*, who lay
three

three Days in the *Grave*; and *Isaac* was three Days a *dead Man* (as we say in Law) under the *Sentence of Death*, Gen. xxii. 4. whence *Abraham* received him in a *Figure*, Heb. xi. 19. that is, of the *Resurrection of Christ*. And *Abraham* was commanded to go three Days Journey, to *sacrifice Isaac* upon the same Mountain (according to the Antients) where *Christ* was *crucified*, and where *Adam* was buried. Again, the common Epithet of *Christ*, i. e. *The only begotten of the Father*, and his *beloved Son*, were both given to *Isaac*, Gen. xii. 2. Heb. xi. 17. For he was the *only Son* that was *begotten* in that *miraculous Manner*, after both his *Parents* were decayed by Nature. And he was the *only Son of the Promise*; which was not made to the *Seed of Abraham* in general, but *in Isaac shall thy Seed be called*, Gen. xxi. 12. *He saith not, and to Seeds, as of many, but as of one. And to thy Seed; which is Christ*, Gal. iii. 16.

And as *Isaac*, which signifies *rejoicing, or laughing for Joy*, was thus the *only begotten* of his *Parents*, so *Abram* signifies the *glorious Father*; and *Abraham* (into which his Name was changed on the *Promise of Isaac*, Gen. xvii. 5. 16.) signifies the *Father of a Multitude*, to express the *Coming in of the Gentiles to Christ*, and the *Increase of the Gospel*; whence it is there said to *Abraham*, *a Father of many Nations have I made thee. And in thy Seed all the Nations of the Earth shall be blessed.*

Isaac, who was born by *Promise of a Free-Woman*, represented the *Christian Church*; in Opposition to *Ishmael*, who was born after the *Flesh*, of a *Bond-Maid*, and signified the *Jewish Church* under the *Law*. See this *Allegory* carried on, Gal. iv. 21. to the End.

(7.) *Jacob*, his *Vision of the Ladder* (Gen. xxviii. 12.) shews the *Intercourse* which was opened by *Christ* betwixt *Heaven* and *Earth*, by his making *Peace*. And to this he alludes, when he says, *Hereafter you shall see Heaven open, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*, John i. 51.

And

And *Jacob's Wrestling with the Angel* (Gen. xxxii. 24, &c. Hof. xii. 4.) and, as it were, *prevailing* over him by *Force* to *blefs* him, shews the strong and powerful *Intercession* of *Christ*: Whereby (as he words it, *Matth. xi. 12.*) *Heaven suffereth Violence, and the violent take it by Force.* Whence the Name of *Jacob* was then turned to *Israel*; that is, one who *prevails* upon *God*, or has *Power* over him; *God* representing himself here as *overcome* by us. And the Name of *Israel* was ever after given to the *Church*; but much more so when *Christ* came, as he said, *Matth. xi. 12.* *From the Days of Jobu the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, &c.*; that is, from the first *Pro-mulgation* of *Christ* being come, thenceforward the *Gentiles* began to press into the *Gospel*, and, as by *Force*, to take it from the *Jews*. This was signified in the Name *Jacob*, that is, a *Supplanter*; for the *Gentiles* here supplanted their *elder Brother* the *Jews*, and stole the *Blessing* and *Heirship* from them.

(8.) *Joseph* was sold by his *Brethren* out of *Envy*; but it proved the *Preservation* of them and all their *Families*. And *Christ* was sold by his *Brethren* out of *Envy*, *Mark xv. 10.* which proved the *Means* of their *Redemption*. And *Christ*, as *Joseph*, became *Lord* over his *Brethren*.

(9.) *Moses* calls *Christ* a *Prophet* like unto himself, *Deut. xviii. 18.* He represented *Christ*, the great *Law-giver*. And his delivering *Israel* out of *Egypt* was a *Type* of *Christ's* delivering his *Church* from the *Bondage* of *Sin* and *Hell*.

(10.) *Joshua*, called also *Jesus*, *Heb. iv. 8.* overcame all the *Enemies* of *Israel*, and gave them *Possession* of the *Holy Land*, which was a *Type* of *Heaven*. And *Christ* appeared to *Joshua*, as *Captain* of the *Host* of the *Lord*, *Jos. v. 14.* So that *Joshua* was his *Lieutenant* representing him.

(11.) *Sampson*, who, by his single *Valour* and his own *Strength*, overcame the *Philistines*, and slew more at his *Death* than in all his *Life*, was a *Representation* of *Christ*, who trod the *Wine-press* alone, and of the *People* there
there

there was none with him; but his own Arm brought him Salvation, *Isai. lxxiii. 3. 5.* But his Death completed his Victory; whereby he overcame all the Power of the Enemy, and having spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a Shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his Cross, *Col. ii. 15.*

(12.) David, whose Son CHRIST is called, speaks frequently of him in his own Person, and in Events which cannot be applied to David, as *Psal. xvi. 10.* Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, nor suffer thine Holy One to see Corruption. For David has seen Corruption. Christ is said to sit upon the Throne of David, *Isai. ix. 7.* And Christ is called by the Name of David, *Hof. iii. 5.* and frequently in the Prophets.

David from a Shepherd became a King and a Prophet; denoting the threefold Office of Christ, Pastoral, Regal, and Prophetical.

(13.) Solomon, the wisest of Men; his peaceable and magnificent Reign represented the triumphal State of Christ's Kingdom, which is described, *Psal. lxxii.* (inscribed for Solomon, there called the King's Son) but far exceeding the Glory of his Reign, or what can possibly be applied to him, as *ver. 5. 8. 11. 17.* But his Reign came the nearest of any to that universal and glorious Reign there described; particularly in his being chosen to build the Temple, because he was a Man of Peace, and had shed no Blood, like David his Father, who conquered the Enemies of Israel; but Solomon built the Church, in full Peace; and as it is particularly set down, *1 Kings vi. 7.* And no doubt he was ordered by God so to do, That the House, when it was in building, was built of Stone made ready before it was brought thither: So that there was neither Hammer nor Ax, nor any Tool of Iron heard in the House, while it was in building. Which did denote that the Church of Christ was to be built not only in Peace, but without Noise or Confusion; as *Isaiab* prophesied of him, *chap. xlii. 2.* He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his Voice to be heard in the Street: a bruised Reed shall he not break, &c. He was not to conquer with the Sword, as the Israelites subdued
Canaan;

Canaan; but to overcome by *Meekness*, and doing *Good* to his *Enemies*, and patiently suffering all *Injuries* from them. And so he taught his Followers, as *St. Paul* says, *2 Tim. ii. 24. The Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men—In Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, &c.*

And I cannot think but there was some Imitation of this peaceable *Temple of Solomon* in the *Temple of Janus* among the *Romans*; for that was never to be shut but in time of *Peace*, which happened rarely among them; but three Times in all their *History*. The last was in the Reign of *Augustus*, in which time *Christ* came into the World, when there was a profound and universal *Peace*. And so it became the *Prince of Peace*, whose *Birth* was thus proclaimed by the *Angels*, *Luke ii. 14. Glory to God on High, and on Earth Peace, Goodwill towards Men.* But to go on.

(14.) *Jonah's* being three *Days and Nights* in the *Belly of the Whale*, was a *Sign of Christ's* being so long in the *Heart of the Earth*. *Christ* himself makes the *Allusion*, *Matth. xii. 40.*

(15.) But as there were several *Persons*, at several times, representing and prefiguring several *Particulars* of the *Life and Death of Christ*; so there was one standing and continual *Representation* of him appointed in the *Person of the High Priest* under the *Law*; who entering into the *Holy of Holies* once in a *Year*, with the *Blood of the great Expiatory Sacrifice*, and he only, to make *Atonement for Sin*, did lively represent our great *High Priest*, entering into *Heaven*, once for all, with his own *Blood*, to expiate the *Sins of the whole World*. This is largely insisted upon in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, chap. vii. viii. ix. x.

And our *Deliverance* by the *Death of Christ* is represented, as in a *Picture*, in that *Ordinance of the Law*, That the *Man-slayer*, who fled to one of the *Cities of Refuge*, (which were all of the *Cities of the Levites*) should not come out thence till the *Death of the High Priest*; and no *Satisfaction* be taken till then; and then
he

he should be acquitted, and return into the Land of his Possession, Numb. xxxv. 6. 25, 26, 27, 28.

And I doubt not but the *Gentiles* had from hence their *Afyla*, or *Temples of Refuge for Criminals*.

(1.) DE. There is a *Resemblance* in these Things : But I would not have admitted them as a *Proof*, if you had not supported them, at least most of them, with the Authority of the *New Testament*. And it was not necessary that every one should be named in it ; for those that are named are only occasionally : And I must take time to consider of the *Evidences* you have brought for the Authority of the *New Testament* ; which you have made full as great, if not greater, than the *Evidences* for the *Old Testament*.

CHR. I may say greater, upon this Head of *Prophecies* and *Types* ; because these are no *Proofs* till they are fulfilled. Though then they prove the *Truth* of these *Prophecies* and *Types* ; and so the one confirms the other : But the whole *Evidence* of the *Law* is not made apparent, till we see it fulfilled in the *Gospel*. For which Reason I call the *Gospel* the strongest *Proof*, not only as to itself, but likewise as to the *Law*. And the *Jews*, as much as in them lies, have invalidated this stronger *Proof* for the *Old Testament*, which is the fulfilling of it in the *New*. Nay they have rendered these *Prophecies* false ; which, they say, were not fulfilled at the *Time* they spake of, and never now can be fulfilled. And as no *Fact*, but that of our *Christ* alone, ever had the *Evidence* of *Prophecies* and *Types* from the Beginning, so never can any other *Fact* have it now while the *World* lasts.

(2.) DE. Why do you say, *Never can have it* ? For may not *God* make what *Fact* he pleases, and give it what *Evidence* he pleases ?

CHR. But it cannot have the *Evidence* that the *Fact* of *Christ* has, unless at that Distance of *Time* hereafter, as from the Beginning of the *World* to this *Day*. Because *God* took care that the *Evidence* of *Christ* should commence from the very Beginning, in the *Promise*
of

of him made to *Adam*; and to be renewed by the *Prophets* in all the *After-Ages* till he should come. And the *Evidence* of him after his *Coming* (in which I have instanced, and which continues to this *Day*) before it can belong to any other, must have the same *Compass* of *Time* that has gone to confirm this *Evidence*; else it has not the same *Evidence*.

(3.) DE. By this *Argument* the *Evidence* grows stronger the longer it continues; since you say, that the *Prophecies* of the *Scriptures* reach to the *End* of the *World*, and so will be further and further *fulfilling* every *Day*.

This is contrary to what one of your *Doctors* has advanced, who pretends to calculate the *Age* of *Evidences*, that in such a *Time* they *decay*, and in such a *Time* must *die*; And that the *Evidence* of *Christianity*, having lasted so long, is upon the *Decay*, and must wear out soon, if not supplied by some fresh and new *Evidence*.

Craig. Theologiae Christianae Principia Mathematica, 1699.

CHR. This may be true as to *Fables*, which have no *Foundation*; but is that *Prophecy* I mentioned to you, of the *Dispersion*, and yet wonderful *Preservation*, of the *Jews*, less *evident* to you, because it was made so long ago?

DE. No. It is much more *evident* for that. If I had lived at the *Time* when those *Prophecies* were made, I fancy I should not have believed one *Word* of them; but wondered at the *Assurance* of those who ventured to foretel such *improbable* and almost *impossible* Things.

And I should have thought the same of what you have told me of your *Christ* foretelling the *Progress* of his *Gospel*, at the first so very slender *Appearance* of it, and by the *weak* and *improbable* *Means*, as only *suffering* and *dying* for it; which, to me, would have seemed perfect *Despair*, and giving up the *Cause*. I should have thought of them (as of others) who *prophecy* of Things after their *Time*, that they might not
be

be contradicted while they *lived*. But my seeing so much of these *Prophecies* concerning the *Jews*, and the *Progress* of the *Gospel*, come to pass so long Time after, is the only thing that makes me lay a *Stress* upon them, and which makes them seem *wonderful* to me.

CHR. When the *Prophecies* shall all be fully completed at the End of the World, they will then seem *strongest* of all. They will then be *undeniable*, when *Christ* shall visibly *descend* from *Heaven* (in the same Manner as he *ascended*), to execute both what he has *promised* and *threatened*. And, in the mean time, the *Prophecies* lose none of their Force, but their *Evidence* increases, as the *Light* shineth more and more unto the *perfect Day*.

(VIII.) DE. I observe you have made no Use of that common *Topic* of the *Truth* and *Sincerity* of the *Penmen* of the *Scriptures*, and what *Interest* they could have in setting up these Things, if they had been *false*. For this can amount at most but to a *Probability*. And you having produced those *Evidences* which you think *infallible*, it might seem a lessening of your *Proof* to insist upon bare *Probabilities*. So that, I suppose, you give that up.

(I.) CHR.) No, SIR, I give it not up, though I have not made it the chief *Foundation* of my *Argument*. And if it were but a *Probability*, it wants not its Force; for it is thought unreasonable to deny a *flagrant Probability*, where there is not as strong a *Probability* on the other Side; for then that makes a *Doubt*: But otherwise, Men generally are satisfied with *Probabilities*, for there is the greatest part of our Knowledge. If we believe nothing but what carries an *infallible Demonstration* along with it, we must be *Sceptics* in most Things in the World: And such were never thought the *wisest* Men.

But besides, a *Probability* may be sooner discerned by some, than the *Infallibility* of a *Demonstration*. Therefore we must not lay aside *Probabilities*. But, in this Case, I think there is an *infallible Assurance*, as

infallible as the *Senses* of all Mankind. And I suppose you will not ask a greater.

(2.) DE. How can you say that? When the suffering of *Afflictions*, and Death itself, is but a *Probability* of the Truth of what is told us. Because some have suffered *Death* for *Errors*.

CHR. But then they thought them *true*. And Men may be *deceived* in their *Judgments*: We seem any Examples of it. But if the *Facts* related be such, as that it is *impossible* for those who tell them to be *imposed* upon themselves, or for those to whom they are told to *believe* them, if not true, without supposing an universal *Deception* of the *Senses* of Mankind, then, I hope, I have brought the Case up to that *infallible Demonstration* I promised. And this is the Case of the *Facts* related in *Holy Scripture*. They were told by those who *saw* them, and *did* them; and they were told to those who *saw* them likewise themselves; and the *Relaters* appealed to this. So that here could be no *Deceit*.

DE. I grant there is a great Difference betwixt *Errors* in *Opinion*, and in *Fact*: And that such *Facts* as are told of *Moses* and of *Christ*, could not have passed upon the *People* then alive, and who were said to have seen them. And I find that both *Moses*, *Christ*, and the *Apostles*, did appeal to what the *People* they spoke to had *seen* themselves.

CHR. With this Consideration, their patient *Suffering* even unto *Death* for the *Truth* of what they taught, will be a full *Demonstration* of the *Truth* of it.

(3). Add to this, That their *Enemies* who *persecuted* them, the *Romans* as well as *Jews*, to whom they appealed as *Witnesses* of the *Facts*, did not offer to deny them: That none of the *Apostates* from *Christianity* did attempt to *deteet* any *Falshood* in the *Facts*; though they might have had great *Rewards* if they could have done it; the *Roman Emperors* being then *Persecutors* of *Christianity*, and for *three hundred Years* after *Christ*. And *Julian* the *Emperor* afterwards turned *Apostate*, who had been initiated in the *Sacra* of *Christianity*; yet could not he *deteet* any of the *Facts*.

(4.) And it was a particular *Providence* for the further *Evidence* of *Christianity*, That all the *civil Governments* in the World were against it for the first *three hundred Years*, lest it might be said (as it is ridiculously in your *Amintor*), That the *Awe* of the *civil Government* might hinder those who could make the *Detection*.

Now, SIR, to apply all that we have said, I desire you would compare these *Evidences* I have brought for *Christianity*, with those that are pleaded for any other *Religion*.

There are but *four* in the World, *viz. Christianity, Judaism, Heathenism, and Mahometism.*

(1.) *Christianity* was the *First*. For from the first *Promise* of *Christ* made to *Adam*, during the *Patriarchal* and *Legal* *Dispensations*, all was *Christianity* in *Type*, as I have shewed.

And as to *Moses* and the *Law*, the *Jews* can give no *Evidence* for that, which will not equally *establish* the *Truth* of *Christ* and the *Gospel*. Nor can they disprove the *Facts* of *Christ* by any *Topic*, which will not likewise disprove all those of *Moses* and the *Prophets*. So that they are hedged in on every Side. They must either renounce *Moses*, or acknowledge *Christ*.

Moses and the *Law* have the first *five* *Evidences*, but they have not the *sixth* and the *seventh*, which are the strongest.

This is as to *Judaism* before *Christ* came. But since, as it now stands in *Opposition* to *Christianity*, in favour of any future *Messiah*, it has none of the *Evidences* at all. On the contrary, their own *Prophecies* and *Types* make against them; for their *Prophecies* are *fulfilled*, and their *Types* are *ceased*, and cannot belong to any other *Messiah* who should come hereafter. They stand now more *naked* than the *Heathens* or the *Mahometans*.

(2.) Next for *Heathenism*; some of the *Facts* recorded of their *Gods* have the *first* and *second* *Evidences*, and some the *third*; but not one of them the *fourth*, or any of the other *Evidences*.

But, truly and properly speaking, and if we will take the *Opinion* of the *Heathens* themselves, they were

no *Facts* at all; but mythological *Fables*, invented to express some moral *Virtues* or *Vices*, or the History of *Nature*, and Power of the *Elements*, &c. As likewise to turn great Part of the *History* of the *Old Testament* into *Fable*, and make it their own, for they disdained to borrow from the *Jews*. They made *Gods* of Men, and the most *vicious* too: Insomuch that some of their *wise* Men thought it a Corruption of Youth, to read the *History* of their *Gods*, whom they represented as notorious *Liars*, *Thieves*, *Adulterers*, &c. though they had some *Mythology* hid under all that.

And as Men were their *Gods*, so they made the *first* Man to be *Father* of the *Gods*, and called him *Saturn*; not begot by any Man, but the Son of *Cælus* and *Vesta*, that is, of *Heaven* and *Earth*. And his maiming his *Father* with a steel *Scythe*, was to shew how *Heaven* itself is impaired by *Time*, whom they painted with *Wings*, and a *Scythe* mowing down all Things. And *Saturn* eating up his own *Children*, was only to express how *Time* devours all its own Productions. And his being deposed by *Jupiter* his Son, shews, That *Time*, which wears away all other Things, is worn away itself at last.

Several of the Heathen *Authors* have given us the *Mythology* of their *Gods*, with which I will not detain you.

They expressed every thing, and worshiped every thing, under the Name of a *God*; as the *God* of *Sleep*, of *Musick*, of *Eloquence*, of *Hunting*, *Drinking*, *Love*, *War*, &c. They had above *Thirty thousand* of them. And in what they told of them, and as they described them, they often traced the *sacred* Story.

Ovid begins his *Metamorphoses* with a perfect Poetical Version of the Beginning of *Genesis*, *Ante Mare & Terras*——Then goes on with the History of the *Creation*; the Formation of *Man* out of the Dust of the *Earth*, and his being made after the *Image* of *God*, and to have Dominion over the inferior Creatures. Then he tells of the general Corruption, and the *Giants* before the Flood, when the *Earth* was filled with Violence;

for which all *Mankind*, with the *Beasts* and the *Fowl*, were destroyed by the universal *Deluge*; except only *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha* his Wife, who were saved in a *Boat*, which landed them on the Top of Mount *Parnassus*; and that from these two the whole *Earth* was re-peopled. I think it will be needless to detain the Reader with an Application of this to the History of the *Creation* set down by *Moses*, of the *Flood*, and the *Ark* wherein *Noah* was saved, and the *Earth* re-peopled by him, &c.

And *Noah* was plainly intended likewise in their God *Janus*, with his two *Faces*; one *old*, looking backward to the *old World* that was destroyed; the other *young*, looking forward to the *new World* that was to spring from him.

So that even their turning the *Sacred History* into *Fable*, is a Confirmation of it. And there can be no Comparison betwixt the Truth of the *Facts*, so attested as I have shewed, and the *Fables* that were made from them.

(3.) Lastly, as to the *Mahometan Religion*, it wants all the *Evidences* we have mentioned: For there was no *Miracle* said to be done by *Mahomet* publicly, and in the *Face* of the *World*, but that only of conquering with the *Sword*. Who saw his *Mesra*, or Journey from *Mecca* to *Jerusalem*, and thence to *Heaven*, in one Night, and back in Bed with his Wife in the Morning? Who was present and heard the Conversation the *Moon* had with him in his *Cave*? It is not said there was any *Witness*. And the *Alcoran*, c. vi. excuses his not working any *Miracles* to prove his *Mission*. They say, that *Moses* and *Christ* came to shew the *Clemency* and *Goodness* of *God*, to which *Miracles* were necessary; but that *Mahomet* came to shew the *Power* of *God*, to which no *Miracle* was needful but that of the *Sword*.

(1.) And his *Alcoran* is a *Rhapsody* of Stuff without Head or Tail, one would think wrote by a *Madman*, with ridiculous *Titles*, as the *Chapter* of the *Cow*, of the *Spider*, &c.

And

And their *Legends* are much more senseless than those of the *Papists*; as of an *Angel*, the Distance betwixt whose two *Hands* is *seventy thousand Days Journey*. Of a *Cow's-Head* with *Horns* which have *forty thousand Knots*, and *forty Days Journey* betwixt each *Knot*. And others which have *seventy Mouths*, and every *Mouth* *seventy Tongues*, and each *Tongue* praises *God* *seventy Times a Day*, in *seventy different Idioms*. And of *Wax Candles* before the *Throne of God*, which are *fifty Years Journey* from one End to the other. The *Alcoran* says, the *Earth* was created in *two Days*, and is supported by an *Ox* which stands under it, upon a *white Stone*; with his *Head* to the *East*, and his *Tail* to the *West*, having *forty Horns*, and as great a Distance betwixt every *Horn* as a *Man* could walk in a *thousand Years Time*.

Then their Description of *Heaven*, in a full Enjoyment of *Wine*, *Women*, and other like gross *sensual Pleasures*.

(2.) When you compare this with our *Holy Scriptures*, you will need no Argument to make you see the Difference. The *Heathen Orators* have admired the *sublime* of the *Stile* of our *Scriptures*. No *Writing* in the *World* comes near it, even with all the *Disadvantage* of our *Translation*; which, being obliged to be *literal*, must lose much of the *Beauty* of it. The *Plainness* and *Succinctness* of the *historical Part*; the *Melody* of the *Psalms*, the *Instruction* of the *Proverbs*, the *Majesty* of the *Prophets*, and, above all, that easy *Sweetness* in the *New Testament*, where the *Glory of Heaven* is set forth in a *grave* and *moving Expression*, which yet reaches not the *Height* of the *Subject*; not like the *Flights* of *Rhetoric*, which set out *small Matters* in *great Words*. But the *Holy Scriptures* touch the *Heart*, raise *Expectation*, confirm our *Faith*, give *Peace of Conscience*, and *Joy* in the *Holy Ghost*, which is *inexpressible*. All which you will experience when you once come to *believe*: You will then bring forth these *Fruits of the Spirit*, when you receive the *Word* with *pure Affection*, as we pray in our *Litany*.

(3.) But, SIR, if there is Truth in the *Alcoran*, then the *Holy Scriptures* are the Word of God; for the *Alcoran* says so, and that it was sent to confirm them, even the *Scriptures* of both the *Old* and *New Testament*. And it expressly owns our *Jesus* to be the *Messiah*. At the End of the *fourth Chap.* it has these Words, *The Messiah, Jesus, the Son of Mary, is a Prophet, and an Angel of God, his Word, and his Spirit, which he sent to Mary.* But it gives him not the Name of *Son of God*, for this wise Reason, *Chap. vi. How shall God have a Son, who hath no Wives?* Yet it owns *Jesus* to be born of a pure *Virgin*, without a *Man*, by the Operation of the *Spirit of God*. And in the same Chapter, this *Mahomet* acknowledges his own *Ignorance*, and says, *I told you not that I had in my Power all the Treasures of God; neither that I had Knowledge of the future and past; nor do affirm that I am an Angel. I only act what hath been inspired into me. Is the Blind like him that seeth clearly? And after says, I am not your Tutor. Every thing hath its Time. You shall hereafter understand the Truth.*

This is putting off, and bidding them expect some other after *Mahomet*. But our *Jesus* said, he was our *Tutor* and *Teacher*, and that there was none to come after him. *Mahomet* said, he was no *Angel*, but that *Jesus* was an *Angel of God*: But when *God* bringeth *Jesus* into the *World*, he saith, *Let all the Angels of God worship him*, *Heb. i. 6.* And he made him *Lord* of all the *Angels*. *Mahomet* knew not what was past, or to come: But our *Jesus* knew all things, and what was in the *Heart* of every *Man* (*Job. ii. 24, 25.*) which none can do but *God* only, *1 Kin. viii. 39.* And foretold Things to come to the End of the *World*: *Mahomet* had not all the *Treasures of God*; but in *Jesus* are hid all the *Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*. For in him dwelleth all the *Fulness of the Godhead* bodily, *Col. ii. 3, 9.*

Again, *Mahomet* never called himself the *Messiah*, or the *Word*, or *Spirit of God*; yet all these Appellations he gives to our *Jesus*.

There

There were *Prophecies* of *Jesus*, which we have seen: Were there any of *Mahomet*? None, except of the *false Christs*, and *false Prophets*, which *Jesus* told should come after him; and bid us beware of them, for that they should *deceive* many,

(4.) DE. But if *Mahomet* gave thus the Preference to *Christ* in every thing, and said that his *Alcoran* was only a Confirmation of the *Gospel*, how came he to set it up against the *Gospel*, and to reckon the *Christians* among the *Unbelievers*?

CHR. No otherwise than as other *Heretics* did, who called themselves the only true *Christians*, and invented new *Interpretations* of the *Scriptures*. The *Socinians* now charge whole *Christianity* with *Apostacy*, *Idolatry*, and *Polytheism*: And the *Alcoran* is but a *System* of the old *Arianism* ill-digested, and worse put together, with a Mixture of some *Heathenism* and *Judaism*. For *Mahomet's* Father was an *Heathen*, his Mother a *Jewess*, and his Tutor was *Sergius* the *Monk*, a *Nestorian*; which *Sect* was a Branch of *Arianism*. These, crudely mixed, made up the *Farrago* of the *Alcoran*; but the prevailing Part was *Arianism*: And where that spread itself in the *East*, there *Mahometism* succeeded, and sprung out of it; to let all *Christians* see the Horror of that *Heresy*! And our *Socinians* now among us, who call themselves *Unitarians*, are much more *Mahometans* than *Christians*. For, except some *personal* Things as to *Mahomet*, they agree almost wholly in his *Doctrine*; and, as such, addressed themselves to the *Morocco* *Ambassador* here, in the Reign of King *Charles II.* Nor do they speak more honourably of *Christ*, and the *Holy Scriptures*, than the *Alcoran* does. And there is no *Error* concerning *Christ* in the *Alcoran*, but what was broached before by the *Heretics* of *Christianity*; as that *Christ* did not suffer really, but in *Appearance* only; or that some other was *crucified* in his *Stead*, but he taken up into *Heaven*, as the *Alcoran* speaks. So that, in *Strictness*, I should not have reckoned *Mahometism* as one of the *four Religions* in the *World*, but as one of the *Heresies* of *Christianity*.
But

But because of its great *Name*, and its having spread so far in the World, by the *Conquests* of *Mahomet*, and his Followers, and that it is vulgarly understood to be a distinct *Religion* by itself, therefore I have considered it as such.

And as to your Concern in the Matter, you see plainly, that the *Alcoran* comes in *Attestation* and *Confirmation* of the *Facts* of *Christ*, and of the *Holy Scriptures*.

DE. I am not come yet so far as to enter into the Disputes of the several *Seets* of *Christianity*. But as to the *Fact* of *Christ*, and of the *Scriptures* in general, *Mahometism* I see does rather *confirm* than oppose it.

CHR. What then do you think of *Judaism*, as it now stands in Opposition to *Christianity*?

DE. Not only as without any *Evidence*, the *Time* prophesied of for the *Coming* of the *Messiah* being long since past; but all their former *Evidences* turn directly against them, and against any *Messiah* whoever hereafter should come. As that the *Sceptre* should not depart from *Judah*; that he should come into the *second Temple*; that the *Sacrifices* should *cease* soon after his *Death*; that *David* should never want a *Son* to fit upon his *Throne*; that they should be many *Days* without a *King*, and without a *Prince*, and without a *Sacrifice*, &c. which they do not suppose ever will be the Case after their *Messiah* is come: So that they are *Witnesses* against themselves.

CHR. And what do you think of the *Stories* of the *Heathen Gods*?

DE. I believe them no more than all the *Stories* in *Ovid's Metamorphoses*. Nor did the wiser *Heathen* believe them; only such *filly* People as suck in all the *Papish Legends* without examining. And to tell you the Truth, I thought the same of all the *Stories* in your *Bible*. But I will take time to examine those *Proofs* you have given me. For we *Deists* do not dispute against *Christianity*, in behalf of any other *Religion*, of the *Jews*, or *Heathens*, or *Mahometans*, all which pretend to *Revelation*; but we are against all *Revelation*;

and go only upon bare *Nature*, and what our own *Reason* dictates to us.

(1.) CHR. What *Nature* dictates, it dictates to all; at least to the *most* and the *Generality* of *Mankind*. And if we measure by this, then it will appear a *natural* *Notion*, that there is *Necessity* of *Revelation* in *Religion*. And herein you have all the *World* against you from the very *Beginning*: And will you plead *Nature* against all these?

DE. The *Notion* came down from one to another, from the *Beginning*, we know not how.

CHR. Then it was either *Nature* from the *Beginning*; or else, it was from *Revelation* at the *Beginning*; whence the *Notion* has descended through all *Posterities* to this *Day*.

(2.) And there wants not *Reason* for this. For when *Man* had *fallen*, and his *Reason* was corrupted (as we *feel* it upon us to this *Day*, as sensibly as the *Diseases* and *Infirmities* of the *Body*), was it not highly *reasonable* that *God* should give us a *Law* and *Directions* how to *serve* and *worship* him? *Sacrifices* do not seem to be any *natural* *Invention*. For why should taking away the *Life* of my *Fellow-creature* be *acceptable* to *God*, or a *Worship* of him? It would rather seem an *Offence* against him: But as *Types* of the great and only *Propitiatory Sacrifice* of *Christ* to come; and to keep up our *Faith* in that, the *Institution* given with the *Revelation* of it appears most *rational*. And that it was *necessary*, the great *Defection* shews, not only of the *Heathens*, but of the *Jews* themselves; who, though they retained the *Institution*, yet in a great measure lost the true *Meaning* and *Signification* of it; and are now to be brought back to it, by reminding them of the *Institution*, and the *Reason* of it.

Plato, in his *Alcibiad. ii. de Precat.* has the same *Reasoning*; and concludes, that we cannot know of ourselves what *Petitions* will be pleasing to *God*, or what *Worship* to give him; but that it is necessary a *Law-giver* should be sent from *Heaven* to instruct us. And such an one he did expect. And *O how greatly do I desire*

to see that Man! says he. And *who is he?* The primitive Tradition of the expected *Messiah* had no doubt come to him, as to many others of the *Heathen*, from the *Jews*; and likely from the Perusal of their *Scriptures*.

For *Plato* goes further, and says (*de Leg. l. 4.*), That this *Laws-giver* must be more than *Man*. For he observes that every *Nature* is governed by another *Nature* that is *superior* to it; as *Birds* and *Beasts* by *Man*, who is of a *distinct* and *superior Nature*. So he infers, that this *Laws-giver*, who was to teach *Man* what *Man* could not know by his own *Nature*, must be of a *Nature* that is *superior* to *Man*, that is, of a *divine Nature*.

Nay, he gives as lively a Description of the *Person*, *Qualifications*, *Life*, and *Death* of this *Divine Man*, as if he had copied the liii. of *Isaiab*: For he says (*de Repub. l. 2.*), that this *just Person* must be *poor*, and void of all Recommendations but that of *Virtue* alone: That a *wicked World* would not bear his *Instructions* and *Reproof*; and therefore, within *three* or *four Years* after he began to *preach*, he should be *persecuted*, *imprisoned*, *scourged*, and at last put to *Death*. His Word is *Αναγινδυσλευθήσεται*, that is, *cut in pieces*, as they cut their *Sacrifices*.

DE. These are remarkable Passages, as you apply them. And *Plato* was *three hundred Years* before *Christ*. But I incline to think that these *Notions* came rather from such *Tradition* as you speak of, than from *Nature*. And I can see nothing of *Nature* in *Sacrifices*; they look more like *Institution*, come that how it will.

(3.) CHR. It is strange, that all the *Nations*, in the *World* should be carried away from what you call *Nature*. Unless you will take Refuge among the *Hottentots* at the *Cape of Good Hope*, hardly distinguishable from *Beasts*, to shew us what *Nature* left to itself would do! and leave us all the *wise* and *polite World* on the Side of *Revelation*, either *real* or *pretended*; and of Opinion that *Mankind* could not be without it. And my Business now with you has been to distinguish the *real* from the *pretended*.

(4.)

(4.) DE. By the Account you have given, there is but one *Religion* in the World, nor ever was. For the *Jewish* was but *Christianity* in *Type*, though in time greatly *corrupted*: And the *Heathen* was a greater *Corruption*, and founded the *Fables* of their Gods upon the *Facts* of *Scripture*: And the *Mahometan*, you say, is but a *Heresy* of *Christianity*. So that all is *Christianity* still.

CHR. It is true, *God* gave but one *Revelation* to the *World*, which was that of *Christ*: And as that was *corrupted*, new *Revelations* were *pretended*. But *God* has guarded his *Revelations* with such *Evidences*, as it was not in the Power of *Men* or *Devils* to *counterfeit*, or contrive any-thing like them. Some bear Resemblance in one or two *Features*, in the first *two* or *three* *Evidences* that I have produced; but as none reach the *fourth*, so they are all quite destitute of the least *Pretence* to the remaining *four*. So that when you look upon the *Face* of *divine Revelation*, and take it all together, it is impossible to mistake it for any of those *Delusions* which the *Devil* has set up in *Imitation* of it. And they are made to *confirm* it, because all the *Resemblance* they have to *Truth*, is that wherein they are any-ways *like* it; but, when compared with it, they shew as an ill-drawn *Picture*, half *Man*, half *Beast*, in Presence of the beautiful *Original*.

(5.) DE. It is strange, that, if the Case be thus plain as you have made it, the whole World is not immediately convinced.

CHR. If the *Seed* be never so good, yet if it be sown upon *Stones*, or among *Thorns*, it will bring forth nothing. There are *Hearts* of *Stone*; and others so filled with the Love of *Riches*, with the *Cares* and *Pleasures* of this *Life*, that they will not see: They have not a *Mind* to know any-thing which they think would disturb them in their *Enjoyments*, or lessen their *Opinion* of them; for that would be taking away so much of their *Pleasure*. Therefore it is no easy Matter to persuade *Men* to place their *Happiness* in future *Expectations*, which is the Import of the *Gospel*. And in press-

ing this, and bidding the *Worldly-minded* abandon their beloved *Vices*, and telling the fatal *Consequences* of them, we must expect to meet not only with their *Scorn* and *Contempt*, but their utmost *Rage* and *Impatience*, to get rid of us, as so many *Enemies* of their *Lusts* and *Pleasures*. This is the *Cross* which our *Saviour* prepared all his *Disciples* to bear; who were to fight against *Flesh* and *Blood*, and all the *Allurements* of the *World*. And it is a greater *Miracle* that they have had so many *Followers* in this, than that they have gained to themselves so many *Enemies*. The *World* is a *strong Man*; and till a *stronger* than he comes (that is, the full *Persuasion* of the *Future State*), he will keep *Possession*. And this is the *Victory* that overcometh the *World*, even our *Faith*. But we are told also, that this *Faith* is the *Gift* of *God*. For all the *Evidence* in the *World* will not reach the *Heart*, unless it be *prepared* (like the *good Ground*) to receive the *Doctrine* that is taught. Till then, *Prejudice* will create *Obstinacy*, which will *harden* the *Heart* like a *Rock*; and cry, *Non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris!* I will not be *persuaded*, tho' I should be *persuaded!*

You must consider under this Head too, the many that have not yet heard of the *Gospel*: And of those that have, the far greater Number who have not the *Capacity* or *Opportunity* to examine all the *Evidences* of *Christianity*, but take Things upon *Trust*, just as they are taught. And how many others are *careless*, and will not be at the *Pains*, though they want not *Capacity*, to inquire into the *Truth*? All these *Classes* will include the greatest Part of *Mankind*. The *ignorant*, the *careless*, the *vicious*, and so the *obstinate*, the *ambitious*, and the *covetous*, whose *Minds* the *God* of this *World* hath *blinded*.

But yet, in the midst of all this *Darkness*, *God* hath not left himself without *Witness*; which will be apparent to every diligent and sober *Enquirer*, that is *willing* and *prepared* to receive the *Truth*.

(6.) Good SIR, let me ask you, though you are of no *Religion*, as you say, but what you call *Natural*, yet

yet would you not think me very *brutal*, if I should deny that ever there was such a Man as *Alexander*, or *Cæsar*, or that they did such Things? If I should deny all *History*! or that *Homer*, or *Virgil*, *Demosthenes*, or *Cicero*, ever wrote such *Books*; would you not think me perfectly *obstinate*, seized with a Spirit of *Contradiction*, and not fit for *human Conversation*?

And yet these Things are of no *Consequence* to me. It is not a *Farthing* as to my *Interest*, whether they are *true* or *false*.

Will you then think yourself a *reasonable* Man, if, in Matters of the greatest *Importance*, even your *eternal State*, you will not believe those *Facts* which have a thousand times more certain and indisputable *Evidence*? Were there any *Prophecies* of *Cæsar* or *Pompey*? Were there any *Types* of them, or public *Institutions*, appointed by a *Law*, to *prefigure* the great Things that they should do? Any *Persons* who went before them, to bear a *Resemblance* of these Things, and bid us expect that great *Event*? Was there a general *Expectation* in the *World* of their *Coming*, before or at the *Time* when they *came*? And of what *Consequence* was their *Coming*, to the *World*, or to *After-Ages*? No more than a *Robbery* committed a thousand Years ago!

Were the *Greek* and *Roman Histories* written by the *Persons* who did the *Facts*, or by *Eye-Witnesses*? And, for the greater *Certainty*, were those *Histories* made the standing *Law* of the *Country*? Or were they any more than our *Holinshed* and *Stow*, &c.?

Must we believe these, on Pain of not being thought *reasonable* Men? And are we then *unreasonable* and *credulous*, if we believe the *Facts* of the *Holy Bible*? which was the standing *Law* of the *People* to whom it was given, and *wrote*, or *dictated*, by those who did the *Facts*, with publick *Institutions* appointed by them, as a perpetual *Law* to all their *Generations*; and which, if the *Facts* had been *false*, could never have passed at the *Time* when the *Facts* were said to be done; nor for the same Reason, if that *Book* had been wrote afterwards; because these *Institutions* (as *Circumcision*, the *Passover*,
Baptism,

Baptism, &c.) were as notorious *Facts* as any; and that *Book*, saying they *commenced* from the Time that the *Facts* were done, must be found to be *false*, whenever it was trumped up in *After-Ages*, by such *Institutions* being then known. Not like the *Feasts Games, &c.* in Memory of the *Heathen Gods*, which were appointed long after those *Facts* which were said to be done: And the like *Institutions* may be appointed To-morrow, in Memory of any *Falshood* said to be done a *thousand Years* ago; and so is no *Proof* at all. And though a *Legend* or *Book of Stories* of Things said to be done many Years past may be *palmed* upon People, yet a *Book of Statutes* cannot, by which their *Causes* are tried every Day.

Are there such *Prophecies* extant in any profane *History* so long before the *Facts* there recorded, as there are in the *Holy Scriptures* of the Coming of the *Messiah*?

Were there any *Types* or *Forerunners* of the *Heathen Gods*, or of *Mahomet*?

Is there the like *Evidence* of the *Truth* and *Sincerity* of the *Greek* and *Roman Historians*, as of the *Penmen* of the *Holy Scriptures*?

Would these *Historians* have given their *Lives* for the *Truth* of all they wrote?

Did they tell such *Facts* only, wherein it was impossible for themselves to be *imposed* upon, or that they should *impose* upon others? Nothing but what themselves had *seen* and *heard*, and they also to whom they spoke?

Did they expect nothing but *Persecution* and *Death* for what they related? And were they bidden to bear it *patiently* without *Resistance*? Was this the Case of the *Disciples* of *Mahomet*, who were required to *fight* and *conquer* with the *Sword*?

Did any *Religion* ever overcome by *Suffering*, but the *Christian* only?

And did any exhibit the *future State*, and preach the *Contempt* of *this World*, like the *Christian*?

DE. That's the Reason it has prevailed so little. And yet, considering this, it is strange it has prevailed so much.

(7.) But there is one thing yet behind, wherein I would be glad to have your Opinion, because I find your *Divines* differ about it: And that is, How we shall know to distinguish betwixt true and false *Miracles*.

And this is necessary to the Subject we are upon. For the Force of the *Facts* you allege ends all in this, That such *miraculous* Facts are a sufficient *Attestation* of such *Persons* being sent of *God*; and, consequently, that we are to believe the *Doctrine* which they taught.

You know we *Deists* deny any such Thing as *Miracles*, but reduce all to *Nature*: Yet, I confess, if I had seen such *Miracles* as are recorded of *Moses* and of *Christ*, it would have convinced me. And for the Truth of them, we must refer to the *Evidences* you have given. But, in the mean time, if there is no *Rule* whereby to distinguish betwixt true and false *Miracles*, there is an End of all the Pains you have taken. For if the *Devil* can work such Things as appear *Miracles* to me, I am as much persuaded as if they were true *Miracles*, and wrought by *God*. And so Men may be *deceived* in trusting to *Miracles*.

The common Notion of a *Miracle* is what exceeds the Power of *Nature*. To which we say, That we know not the utmost of the *Power* of *Nature*, and consequently cannot tell what *exceeds* it. Nor do you pretend to know the utmost of the *Power* of *Spirits*, whether *good* or *evil*; and how then can you tell what *exceeds* their *Power*?

I doubt not but you would have thought those to be true *Miracles* which the *Magicians* are said to have wrought in *Ægypt*; but that *Moses* is said to have wrought *Miracles* that were *superior* to them.

CHR. Therefore if two *Powers* contend for the *Superiority*, as here *God* and the *Devil* did, the best Issue can be is to see them *wrestle* together, and then we shall soon know which is *strongest*. This was the Case of *Moses* and the *Magicians*, of *Christ* and the *Devil*. There was a *Struggle*, and *Satan* was plainly *overcome*.

I con-

I confess I know not the *Power of Spirits*, nor how they work upon *Bodies*. And by the same Reason that a *Spirit* can lift a *Straw*, he may a *Mountain*, and the whole *Earth*, for aught I know; and may do many Things which would appear true *Miracles* to me, and so might *deceive* me: And all I have to trust to, in this Case, is, the restraining *Power of God*, that he will not *permit* the *Devil* so to do. And were it not for this, I doubt not but the *Devil* could take away my *Life* in an Instant, or inflict terrible *Diseases* upon me, as upon *Job*.

And I think this Consideration is the strongest Motive in the World to keep us in constant *Dependence* upon *God*, that we live in the midst of such powerful *Enemies* as we can by no means *resist* of ourselves; and are in their *Power* every Minute, when *God* shall withdraw his *Protection* from us.

And it is in their *Power* likewise to work *Signs* and *Wonders* to *deceive* us, if *God* permit. And herein the great *Power* and *Goodness* of *God* is manifest, that he never yet permitted the *Devil* to work *Miracles* in *Opposition* to whom he sent; except where the *Remedy* was at Hand, and to shew his *Power* the more, as in the Case of *Moses* and the *Magicians*, &c.

And this is further evident; because *God* has, at other times, and upon other Occasions, suffered the *Devil* to exert his *Power*, as to make *Fire* descend upon *Job's Cattle*, &c. But here was no Cause of *Religion* concerned, nor any *Truth* of *God* in Debate.

DE. But your *Christ* has foretold, *Matth.* xxiv. 24. That *false Christs*, and *false Prophets* shall arise, who shall shew great *Signs* and *Wonders*, to *deceive*, if possible, the very *Elect*. And it is said, *2 Tliess.* ii. 9. That there shall be a *wicked one*, whose Coming is after the Working of *Satan*, with all *Power*, and *Signs*, and *lying Wonders*. And it is supposed, *Deut.* xiii. 1, &c. That a *false Prophet* may give a *Sign* or a *Wonder*, to draw Men after *false Gods*. Here then is *Sign* against *Sign*, and *Wonder* against *Wonder*, and which of these shall we believe?

CHR.

CHR. The *first*, no doubt. For God cannot *contradict* himself, nor will shew *Signs* and *Wonders*, in Opposition to that *Law* which he has established by so many *Signs* and *Wonders*. Therefore in such a Case we must conclude, that God has permitted the *Devil* to exert his *Power*, as against *Moses* and *Christ*, for the Tryal of our *Faith*, and to shew the superior *Power* of God more eminently, in *overcoming* all the *Power* of the *Enemy*.

But, as I said before, we have a more sure *Word*, that is, *Proof*, than even these *Miracles* exhibited to our outward *Senses*, which is the *Word* of *Prophecy*. Let then any *false Christ*, who shall pretend to come hereafter, shew such a *Book* as our *Bible*, which has been so long in the World (the most antient Book now extant) *testifying* of him, foretelling the *Time*, and all other *Circumstances* of his *Coming*, with his *Sufferings* and *Death*, and all these *Prophecies* exactly fulfilled in him: And till he can do this, he cannot have that *Evidence* which our *Christ* has; and he must be a *false Christ* to me: And all the *Signs* that he can shew will be but *lying Wonders*, to any that is truly established in the *Christian Faith*.

But it may be a *Tryal* too strong for those *careless* ones, who will not be at the *Pains* to enquire into the *Grounds* of their *Religion*, but take it upon *Trust*, as they do the *Fashions*, and mind not to frame their *Lives* according to it, but are immersed in the *World*, and the *Pleasures* of it.

(8.) And it will be a just *Judgment* upon these, that they, who shut their *Eyes* against all the clear *Evidences* of the *Gospel*, should be given up to believe a *Lye*. And the Reason is given 2 *Thess.* ii. 12. Because they had *Pleasure* in *Unrighteousness*. They loved *Darkness* rather than *Light*, because their *Deeds* were *evil*.

So that I must repeat what I said before, That there is a *Preparation* of the *Heart* (as of the *Ground*) to receive the *Truth*: And where the *Doctrine* does not please, no *Evidence*, how clear soever, will be received. God cannot enter, till *Mammon* be dispossessed. We cannot serve these two *Masters*. He who has a clear *Sight* of *Heaven*, cannot value the dull *Pleasures*

of this *Life*. And it is impossible that he who is drowned in *Sense*, can relish *spiritual* Things. The *Love* of this *World* is *Enmity* against *God*. The first *Sin* was a *Temptation* of *Sense*: And the *Reparation* is, to open our *Eyes* to the *Enjoyment* of *God*. *Vice* clouds this *Eye*, and makes it *blind* to the only true and eternal *Pleasure*. It is *Foolishness* to such an one.

This, this, SIR, is the *Remora* that keeps Men from *Christianity*. It is not *Want* of *Evidence*, but it is *Want* of *Consideration*. I would not say this to you, till I had first gone through all the *Topics* of *Reason* with you, that you might not call it *Cant*. But this is the *Truth*. As *David* says, *To him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God*. And our *Saviour* says, *If any Man do the Will of God, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*. And no *Man* can come unto me, except the *Father* draw him.

This was the *Reason* why *St. John the Baptist* was sent as a *Forerunner* to prepare the *Way* for *Christ*, by *Preaching* of *Repentance*, to fit Men for receiving the *Gospel*. And they, who repented of their *Sins* upon his *Preaching*, did gladly embrace the *Doctrine* of *Christ*. But they, who would not forsake their *Sins*, remained *obdurate*, though otherwise Men of *Sense* and *Learning*. As our *Saviour* told the *Priests* and *Elders*, *Matth. xxi. 32. John came unto you in the Way of Righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the Publicans and the Harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him. And when Christ sought to prepare them for his Doctrine, by telling them, That they could not serve God and Mammon, it is said, Luke xvi. 14. That when the Pharisees, who were covetous, heard these Things, they derided him. But he instructed them in the next Verse (if they would have received it) That what is highly esteemed amongst Men, is Abomination in the Sight of God: And enforced this with the Example of the Rich Man and Lazarus: And said; Chap. xviii. 25. That it was easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the*
Kingdom

Kingdom of God. And, Chap. xiv. 33. That *whosoever* be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my *Disciple*. Now take this in the largest Sense, That he who is not ready and willing to forsake all, as if he hated them, as *Christ* said, ver. 26, *If any Man come to me, and hate not his Father and Mother, &c.* (that is, when they come in Competition with any Command of *Christ*) and take not up his *Cross*, and follow me, he cannot be my *Disciple*; how few *Disciples* would he have had in this Age! Would all his *Miracles* persuade some to this? The *World* is too hard for *Heaven* with most Men!

Here is the Cause of *Infidelity*. The Love of the *World*, the *Lust* of the *Flesh*, the *Lust* of the *Eyes*, and the *Pride* of *Life*, darken the *Heart*, and, like *Shutters*, keep out the *Light* of *Heaven*: Till they are removed, the *Light* cannot enter: The *Spirit* of *Purity* and *Holiness* will not descend into an *Heart* full of all *Uncleanness*. If we would invite this *Guest*, we must sweep the *House*, and make it *clean*.

But this too is of *God*: For he only can make a clean *Heart*, and renew a right *Spirit* within us. But he has promised this *Wisdom* to those who ask it, and lead a *godly* Life. Therefore *ask*, and you shall have; *seek*, and you shall find; *knock*, and it shall be opened unto you. But do it *ardently* and *incessantly*, as he that striveth for his *Soul*. For *God* is *gracious* and *merciful*, *long-suffering*, and of great *Goodness*; and those who come to him in *Sincerity* he will in no-wise cast out. Therefore *pray* in *Faith*, nothing *doubting*: And what you pray for (according to his Will) *believe* it, and you shall *receive* it.

To his *Grace* I commend you:

(9.) And with the Fulness of the *Gentiles*, O that it would please *God* to take the *Veil* of the *Heart* of the *Jews*, and let them see, That as they have been deceived by many false *Messiahs* since *Christ* came, so none whom they expect hereafter can answer the *Prophecies* of the *Messiah* (some of which I have named); and
therefore

therefore no such can be the *Messiah* who is prophesied of in their own *Scriptures*.

And let them see and consider, how that fatal *Curse* they imprecated upon themselves, *His Blood be on us, and on our Children*, has cleaved unto them, beyond all their former *Sins*, and even repeated *Idolatry*; from which (to shew that this is not the Cause of their present *Dispersion*) they have kept themselves free ever since; and for which their longest *Captivity* was but *seventy Years*; and then *Prophets* were sent to them, to comfort them, and assure them of a *Restoration*: But now they have been about *eighteen hundred Years* dispersed over all the *Earth*, without any *Prophet*, or *Prospect* of their *Deliverance*, that the whole *World* might take Notice of this before unparalleled *Judgment*, not known to any *Nation* that ever yet was upon the Face of the *Earth*! So punished, and so preserved for *Judgment*, and, I hope, at last, for a more wonderful *Mercy*! For if the Casting away of them be the *Reconciling* of the *World*, what shall the *Receiving* of them be, but *Life from the Dead*? For God hath concluded all in *Unbelief*, that he might have *Mercy* upon all. O the *Depth* of the *Riches* both of the *Wisdom* and *Knowledge* of *God*! How *unsearchable* are his *Judgments*, and his *Ways* past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him, are all *Things*. To whom be *Glory* for ever. Amen.

F I N I S.



