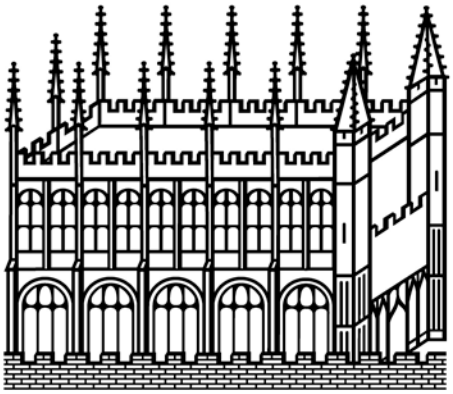

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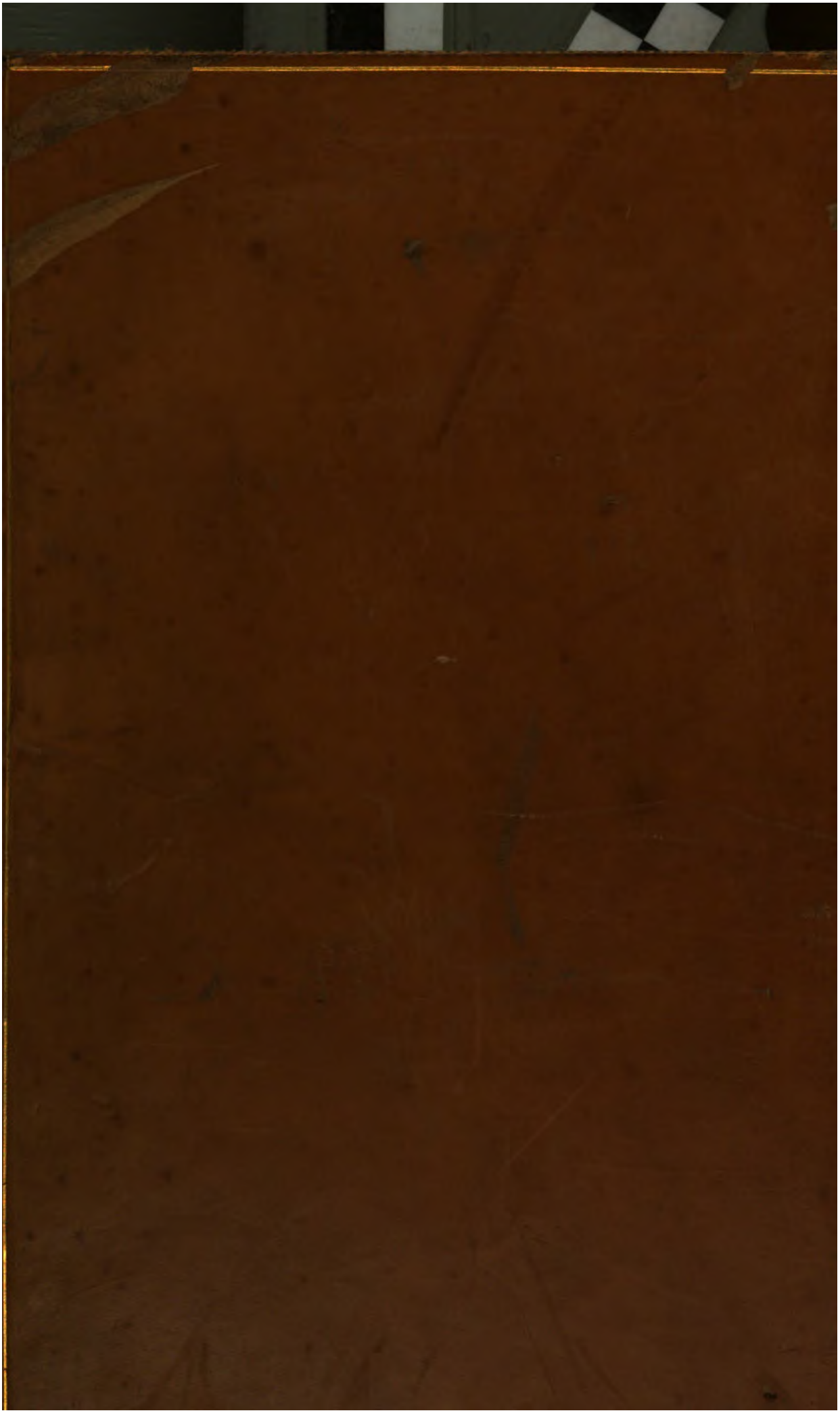

# THE

# WORKS

OF

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FORMERLY

MASTER OF MAGDALENE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

CANON OF WINDSOR,

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NOW FIRST COLLECTED AND ARRANGED.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

## A REVIEW

OF THE

## AUTHOR'S LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY

WILLIAM VAN MILDERT, D. D.

LORD BISHOP OF LLANDAFF.

VOL. VI.

OXFORD,
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS.
MDCCCXXIII.

Clar. Press
1. f. 33.

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# SIXTH VOLUME.

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# SCRIPTURE VINDICATED;

IN ANSWER TO A BOOK

ENTITLED,

*CHRISTIANITY AS OLD AS THE CREATION.*

PART I.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A GENERAL PREFACE.

A

# GENERAL PREFACE

TO

# SCRIPTURE VINDICATED.

I HAVE for some time thought, (though I was not at first aware of it,) that in a work of this nature it might be proper to say something, in a preliminary way, concerning the *various kinds* of interpretation of Scripture, and of the *several names* which they have or may go under. For it is obvious to observe, from what one frequently meets with, in conversing either with men or books, that great confusion arises from the want of proper distinctions between one kind of interpretation and another. Many are used to confound *literal* construction with *figurative*, or figurative with *mystical*, or one kind of *mystical* interpretation with another kind. Some are apt to confound *metaphor* with *allegory*; while others as much confound *allegory* with *fable*, or *parable*. I do not at present recollect whether any of our English writers have professedly handled this subject: among Latin authors, Glassius [a] is most considerable, and best known; though to scholars only, and not to all them. Him I intend for my pattern all the way, extracting from him what shall appear most useful, and improving upon it where I can,

[a] Glassius, Philolog. Sacr. part. i. lib. 2. tract. 1. p. 347, &c. edit. Lips. A. D. 1725.

rendering the whole as *clear* and *distinct* as the nature of the thing, or my present conceptions of it, will permit.

Interpretation of Scripture, as I conceive, is most conveniently distinguished into three kinds, *literal*, *figurative*, and *mystical*; though Glassius and others choose rather to make but two branches of the division, throwing *figurative* under *literal*, and comprehending all under *literal* and *mystical*. I shall hint something, as I go along, of their reason for doing it, showing withal why I cannot so well approve of it. In the mean while, I take leave to follow the threefold partition which I have mentioned, and shall now treat of the several parts in their order as I have named them.

## I.

The *literal* interpretation of any place of Scripture is such as the words *properly* and *grammatically* bear, or require, without any trope, metaphor, or figure, and abstracting from any *mystic* meaning: as for instance, "God "created the heaven and the earth." The words mean what they *literally* import, and are to be interpreted according to the *letter*. Such literal meaning, when it contains some part of *history*, or of matter of *fact*, may be called *historical*, and often is so: and at other times, when it contains only some matter of *doctrine*, it might be called *doctrinal*; though I know not whether such distinction has been commonly observed. However, it might not be amiss, for the sake of clear and distinct conception, to subdivide *literal* into its two main branches, as I have here done, into *historical* and *doctrinal*.

## II.

The *figurative* construction of any place of Scripture is the interpreting it, not by what the words would in themselves most strictly and properly import, but by what they really intend under a *figure*. For instance, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb[b]." A *literal* con-

[b] Isa. xi. 6.

struction of these words would be *absurd*, and therefore cannot be admitted as the real meaning of the Prophet: for which reason some would scruple to give it the name of a *literal construction*, being that it is *no construction* of Scripture in that case, no sense of the *text*. But though such literal sense is not the true meaning of the text, (since the *figurative* construction is the only true one,) yet it is not amiss to say, that the words in themselves, or in their literal import, do properly signify what they express; only they are here to be *figuratively* taken, and the *letter* must give place to the *intention*. But though it be owned, in such instances, that those words of Scripture, considered as *Scripture*, have no literal sense at all, nor any but *figurative*; yet it will not from thence follow, that such *figurative* meaning is the *literal* sense of Scripture, or that it ought so to be called. All that follows is, that some places of Scripture admit of no *literal* meaning at all, while others do. To give the name of *literal* to a *figurative* construction (only because the figurative here happens to be the *true* one) is confounding *literal* with *figurative*, and that very needlessly. For since the intent is only to avoid (what the Romanists plead for) two or more true constructions of the same words, this end is as well answered by saying, that the *literal* sense, in such case, is really *no sense* of the text; and so the text has but *one* true sense[c], which is the *figurative*. But if every *true* sense of any place were therefore to be called its *literal* sense, then even a *mystical* construction, when it happens to be the *true* one, might be called *literal*; and in this way, all *true* constructions of Scripture, of what kind soever they were, would of course be called *literal* ones, which would breed great confusion.

Besides, while some comprehend figurative under lite-

[c] Ex sermonis fine atque scopo manifestum est, *unicum* solum ejus esse posse et debere *sensum*: licet enim subinde adhibeantur voces formulæque *duplicem* sensum admittentes, *proprium* et *figuratum*; necesse tamen est ut ex *intentione* loquentis *unicus* tantum locum inveniat. *Buddæus de Sermonis sensu vero*, p. 317.

ral, they are forced to distinguish *literal* construction into two kinds, *viz. simply* literal and *figuratively* literal[d], which sounds very harsh; or else into *proper* and *improper*[e], which is no better than the other: wherefore, for the avoiding perplexity in *terms*, and as great confusion in *ideas*, it appears highly requisite to make *literal* entirely distinct from *figurative*[f], as two branches in the division, and not to run both into one.

Of *figurative* construction, there may be as many kinds as there are *tropes* or *figures*, though they have not yet been, and indeed need not be, enumerated, nor have special names assigned them: only a *metaphorical* construction is what often occurs under that very name, and it is one species of *figurative*. When Herod is denominated a *fox*, as resembling that animal in some particular quality or qualities, the sense is figurative, and *metaphorical*. Sometimes a discourse runs in a *continued metaphor*, which rhetoricians are used to call an *allegory*. It is a kind of allegory in *words* or *expressions*, very different from the *theological* or *scriptural* allegory, which is an allegory in *things* or in *realities*[g]; as shall be more fully explained hereafter in the proper place.

The prophetic writings abound in *metaphors* and other *figures* of speech, but more in *symbols*, or *emblems*; which, though near akin to *metaphors*, are not the same thing with them, but are more properly referred to *mystical*, than to *figurative* construction; as will appear in the sequel.

[d] Vid. Glassius, ibid. p. 370.

[e] Vid. Pfeiffer. Hermeneut. Sacr. p. 633.

[f] As *figures* are of two kinds, *grammatical* and *rhetorical*, I would not be understood to exclude the *grammatical* from coming under the head of *literal*, but the *rhetorical* only. The grammatical figures are reducible to five; *ellipsis*, *pleonasm*, *enallage*, *hypallage*, *synchysis*: in all which cases the construction is strictly *literal*, though irregular, or anomalous, out of the common rules of grammar, or syntax.

[g] Allegoria ex usu vocis duplex statuitur, *verborum* et *rerum*: illam *rhetoricam*, hanc *theologicam* appellat Sandæus. *Glass.* p. 409. conf. 1950.

## III.

The third kind of interpretation is *mystical*, which is of large extent, and will require a more particular consideration. *Mystical* interpretation (otherwise call *spiritual*) is commonly supposed to take place, when the words of Scripture, over and above their *literal* and *immediate* meaning, have also a more *remote* signification, a sublime or spiritual sense. Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights [h]. The *literal* and *historical* meaning is what those words plainly and properly import, expressing the real fact, so far as concerns Jonah: but the *mystical* meaning, couched under the same words, is, that "the Son of man was" (or was to be) "three days "and three nights in the heart of the earth [i]." Some Protestant Divines would scruple the allowing any *mystical sense*, for fear of admitting *two senses* of the same words [k]: but they allow the thing all the while, only they choose to call it a *mystical reference, application, use, accommodation,* or *aspect*, rather than a *mystical sense*. The dispute amounts only to a strife about *words* or *names*, while both sides are agreed in the main point, and both admit the same *mystical interpretation* under different appellations; and both defend themselves, though in different ways, against the Popish errors on this head. The difference may be accommodated by the help of a single *distinction, viz.* between the meaning of *words* and the meaning of *things;* or by saying, that the *words* of Scripture in such cases express such a *thing*, and that *thing* represents or signifies *another thing*. The *words*, properly, bear but *one sense*, and that one sense is the *literal* one; but the *thing* expressed by the letter is further expressive of something sublime or spiritual. Thus, for example, the *words* relating to *Jonah* carry but one

[h] Jonah i. 17.

[i] Matt. xii. 40.

[k] See Pfeiffer. Hermeneut. Sacr. p. 635. and compare Glassius on the other side of the question, p. 305, &c.

meaning, the *literal* meaning, expressing such a *fact;* but then that *fact* expresses, prefigures, or typifies another *fact* of a higher and more important nature. The *words* mean only, that *Jonah was in the belly of the fish,* &c. but then his *being so* was significative of something more excellent; namely, of the *death* and *burial* of Christ. In this way of settling the forms of speaking (for that is all) the same *one sense* of Scripture texts is maintained against the Romanists; and the contending parties of Protestants may both of them obtain all that they really aim at. Those that plead most for a *mystical sense* (besides the *literal* one) do it for this reason chiefly, because the *Spirit of God* certainly intended such *mystic* meaning. Allowed: but if such mystic meaning be signified by the *thing* contained in the letter, it answers every purpose as well as if it were signified by the *letter* itself. But I pass on. *Mystical* interpretation (be it of *words* or of *things*) is properly distributed into four several kinds, which we may call *parabolical, symbolical, typical,* and *allegorical:* of which in their order, as here follows.

1. It is *parabolical* interpretation, when we understand any part of Scripture as containing a *parable,* or as written by way of *parable.* A parable is a kind of *similitude,* or *fictitious* parallel taken up at pleasure to represent some *real* case: it is a *case in fiction* aptly made choice of to signify some *case in fact,* be it supposed past, present, or future[l]. Such were Jotham's [m], and Nathan's [n], and Micaiah's [o] parables: and such also are the *parables* so frequently occurring in the Gospels. The *literal* sense in a parable is the *simile,* or *representation:* the *mystical* is the *truth,* or real fact. Truth veiled under apt resemblances formed in the way of narration, is what properly

[l] Parabola est similitudo seu comparatio, qua res aliqua ut gesta et confecta apposite fingitur et narratur, et cum alia re spirituali confertur, seu ad eam significandam accommodatur. *Glassius,* p. 479.

[m] Judg. ix. 8.

[n] 2 Sam. xii. 1.

[o] 1 Kings xxii. 19.

makes or constitutes a *parable* [p]. Sometimes a key or explication is superadded to the parable; as in Nathan's, and in many of our blessed Lord's: and then the *mystical* meaning is given, as well as the *literal* one. I say, the mystical meaning of the *parable;* for as to the *words* expressing such *explication*, they are *literally* interpreted, and that explication is their literal meaning. In strictness also, the words of the parable have but *one* meaning, a *literal* meaning, containing a *feigned narration:* but that feigned narration itself, or the *things* contained in it, represent another thing, and therefore are said to have a *mystical*, or *spiritual* signification [q].

Glassius distinguishes *parables* into three kinds, from their respective matter, or contents [r], as containing either, 1. Things *commonly done*, as the parable of the *leaven*. 2. Or things *possible* to be done. 3. Or things *impossible;* as the parable of Jotham's speaking trees. Others look upon *probability*, or at least *possibility*, as essential to the very nature and definition of a *parable:* and if any such narration carries in it no appearance of *probability*, they call it a *fable;* or if it be not so much as *possible*, they call it an *apologue* [s]: by which account, Jotham's

[p] Proprio ac nativo quodam sensu *parabola* notat artificiosam rei cujusdam fictæ, ad aliud significandum, narrationem. *Georg. Neumanni Dissertat.* x. p. 419.

*Parabolam* dicimus figmentum verisimile, protasi et apodosi constans, quo orientales potissimum doctores—doctrinam recondebant, ut sublimiora caperentur facilius, torpentesque et rudes animi quadam docendi voluptate permulcerentur. *Neumann. ibid.* p. 421.

[q] Nobis sensum *parabolæ* ponderantibus, sufficit significationem *rerum* et *verborum* probe distinguere. Sensus enim *verbis* immediate expressus, perinde ut cujusque rei forma, *unicus* est: interim *res illa* verbis indicata denotare *rem aliam* potest (sive mysticam, sive moralem illam) prout a scriptore intenditur. Sic *parabola* Salvatoris Luc. viii. 5. Intellectui nostro offert *semen;* ubi nemo dixerit *hoc verbo* diversa hæc exprimi, et *naturale* semen et *spirituale:* at vero *semine* significatur *verbum Dei*, quod certas quasdam rationes cum *semine* habet communes. *Neuman.* p. 432.

[r] Glassius, p. 482.

[s] Vid. Neuman. ibid. p. 424—427. Itaque *apologus* ut simulachrum veritatis; *parabola* vero ut historia et exemplum accipi debet ab auditore, p. 427.

ingenious fiction must not be called a *parable*, but an *apologue*. But those names are frequently confounded, and even the learned are not hitherto well agreed in the strict notion or definition of a *parable*.

A parable differs from a *continued metaphor* in several respects[t]; but more particularly in this, that a *continued metaphor* represents but one case or story, (be it real or feigned,) under borrowed and figurative expressions, while a *parable* represents two distinct stories or cases[u]; the case in *fiction*, and the case in *fact*. How a *parable* differs from an *allegory*, properly so called, will appear in the sequel, when I come to show what an *allegory* is, and how it differs from a *parable*. How a parable differs from a *romance*, *novel*, or *drama*, may be seen at large in a learned writer[x] before quoted.

2. After *parabolical* interpretation, I may mention *symbolical*, as being near akin to it; for there is a kind of *fictitious* similitude or parallel in both. Some certain *symbols* are chosen and made use of in the way of fiction to represent other things. An example will best show what a *symbol*, or a *symbolical* interpretation means. We read in Isaiah[y], that "all the host of heaven shall be dis-"solved." Now the *host of heaven* literally signifies sun, moon, and stars: but sun, moon, and stars *symbolically* signify the *princes* and *nobles* (civil and ecclesiastical) forming any state or polity[z]. So then, the *dissolving the host of heaven* symbolically means the dissolving the whole frame and constitution of such civil and ecclesiastical state. This kind of construction nearly resembles the

[t] Vid. Glassius, p. 477.

[u] Parabola nihil aliud est quam sermo similitudinis (ut ita dicam) constans προτάσει et ἀποδόσει· πρότασις est schema quoddam historicum, seu narratio quædam vel facta, vel ex instituto rhetorice ficta, et tanquam possibilis repræsentata: Ἀπόδοσις est ejusdem schematis explicatio, quæ vel expresse additur, vel cogitanda relinquitur. *Pfeiffer. Hermeneut. Sacr.* 635, 636.

[x] Neuman. Dissert. de Parabola, p. 438, 441.

[y] Isa. xxxiv. 4.

[z] Vid. Vitringa in loc. vol. ii. p. 275, 276. Conf. Vitringa in Apocalyps. vi. 12. p. 282, 283. Daubuz on the Revelat. c. vi. 12.

*parabolical* before mentioned, where the *literal meaning* is but the shell, or shadow, and the *mystical* is the thing intended: the one is but the *image*, as it were, while the other is the *truth* represented by it, or veiled under it. This *symbolical* language is particularly the language of *prophecy*, and a right understanding thereof is the surest, or the only key to the *prophetic* writings, as the learned well know. Sir Isaac Newton, in a posthumous work [a], (supposed to have been written about forty or fifty years ago [b],) has given us some useful hints for the better explaining such *symbolical* language. Other learned authors, and more especially Vitringa and Daubuz, have much improved the account; one in his Comments upon the Apocalypse and Isaiah, and the other in his Perpetual Commentary upon the Apocalypse alone. But the very ingenious Mr. Lancaster [c] has gone beyond them all, in giving us a *symbolical dictionary*, in an *alphabetical* order; by the help of which one may now readily have recourse to any *prophetic symbol*, and find its meaning well explained, and confirmed by proper evidences. But this I hint by the way only: to enlarge farther upon the use and value of that part of knowledge, or upon the improvements it might yet be capable of, would be foreign to my present design. I may here take notice, that the *symbolical* language is very like to *metaphorical;* for which reason I was somewhat doubtful whether to refer it to *figurative* construction or to *mystical;* yet upon considering that a *symbolical* representation is a kind of *simile*, and a *simile* is different from a *metaphor* [d], I thought it more properly reducible to the head of *mysti-*

[a] Newton's Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, chap. xi. p. 16.

[b] See Whiston's Letter to Dr. Sykes, p. 270.

[c] Lancaster's Abridgment of Daubuz, p. 21, &c.

[d] Quoad differentiam a similitudine et parabola, hæc inter *metaphoram* statuitur et *similitudinem*, (tum contractam, tum explicatam,) quod in hac rei unius ad alteram sit manifesta collatio, et sic argumentum logicum ea est: in *metaphora* vero unius pro altero simili est positio; quæ tamen in explicatione per apertam similitudinem evolvenda est. *Glassius, Rhetor.* p. 1526. conf. 477.

*cal* interpretation. In short, this differs from a *continued metaphor*, just as a *parable* differs from the same; for a parable also is a *simile*. It is therefore harder to show how *symbolical* construction differs from *parabolical*, being that they are the nearest of all to each other: and indeed, I scarce know any very material difference there is between them, except it be that a *parable* always runs in the form of an *historical narration*, while a *symbolical representation* is commonly in the *predictive*, or *indicative* form, or is declarative of what passed in *vision*.

3. A third species of *mystical* interpretation is the *typical*; when real things are represented by other things as real. A *type*, in its general nature, is some *real* person, action, gesture, thing, or circumstance of a thing, representing some other real person, gesture, &c. I distinguish a *type* from such a *symbol* as was before mentioned, in this respect, that a *type* is some *real* fact or thing, whereas a *symbol* is rather *fictitious* than real. Glassius divides types into two kinds, called *historical*[e] and *prophetical*[f]; and historical relates either to *actions*, or to *rites* and *ceremonies*. To the *historical* kind are referred the type of Jonah shadowing out Christ's burial; the type of the *brazen serpent* presignifying Christ upon the cross[g]; the *paschal lamb* pointing to Christ the anti-type; the *manna* typifying the flesh of Christ[h]; the *temple* as a figure of heaven[i]: as also the whole ceremonial law, typical of good things to come[k].

To the head of *prophetical* types we refer the *significant* actions or gestures of *Prophets:* such as Jeremiah's mak-

[e] Typus *historiæ* est sensus Scripturæ mysticus, quo res gestæ vel facta Vet. Testamenti præfigurant et adumbrant res in Novo Testamento gestas, &c. *Glassius*, p. 458. Conf. Buddæus, Miscellan. Sacr. tom. i. p. 213.

[f] Typus *prophetiæ*, seu propheticus, est quo prophetæ divinitus inspirati suis in concionibus (partim commonitoriis, partim vaticinatoriis) crebro utuntur, quando videlicet symbolis externis res occultas, sive præsentes sive futuras, per Spiritum Sanctum figurant et significant. *Glassius*, p. 451.

[g] Numb. xxi. 8, 9. compared with John iii. 14, 15.

[h] John vi. 32, 33. [i] Hebr. ix. 24.

[k] Hebr. x. 1.

ing yokes and bonds[l], and Agabus's binding his own hands with St. Paul's girdle[m]; to which might be added many more of like kind.

Glassius refers to the same head of *prophetical types* whatsoever the *Prophets* do or see in *dreams* or *visions*, as representative of things otherwise secret, be they present or future[n]: but, I suppose, most or all of that sort may more properly be referred to the head of *symbols*, considered in the preceding article; because such types are rather *ideal* than *real*, and so fall not under the stricter definition of a *type*, which I have before offered. However, if any one shall think the definition too strict, I shall not contend about a *name*; well knowing that the word *type* may admit of various significations, looser or straighter.

4. The fourth and last kind of *mystical* construction is the *allegorical*, when *real* history or facts are interpreted as representative of other things as *real*; but of a more sublime or spiritual nature[o]. An *allegory* differs from a *type*, as a *typical narrative* carries more in it than a mere *type* does, being a complication of types: besides, that the general notion of an *allegory* is of somewhat larger extent than even a *typical narration*, which is but one species of it.

An *allegory* differs from a *parable*, as being founded in *real* fact, not in *fictitious* resemblances, or *feigned* cases. Sarah and Hagar represented the two covenants in many resembling circumstances of *real* history: such representation St. Paul styles an *allegory*[p]. There is a law in Deuteronomy, which says, THOU SHALT NOT MUZZLE

[l] Jerem. xxvii. 2.

[m] Acts xxi. 11.

[n] Sensus typicus est, quando sub externis factis, seu *propheticis visionibus*, res occultæ, sive præsentes sive futuræ, figurantur. *Glass.* p. 406. conf. 453.

[o] Sensus *allegoricus* est, quando historia Scripturæ, vere gesta, ad mysterium quoddam, sive spiritualem doctrinam, ex intentione Spiritus Sancti refertur. *Glassius*, p. 406. conf. p. 409.

[p] Gal. iv. 24.

THE OX WHEN HE TREADETH OUT [thresheth] THE CORN [q]. The words have a literal meaning, and, as such, make part of the Jewish law: but that law was at the same time significative of something higher, as St. Paul has intimated; who interprets it of the provision due to the labourers in the vineyard, to the ministers of the Gospel. This was drawing out the *mystic* meaning of the Law, and showing that it was so far *allegorical.*

The reader may see other examples of Scripture *allegories,* of diverse kinds, in the texts referred to in the margin [r]. All of them are instances of *real* things representing higher *realities.* Neither indeed are there any real *allegories* which exclude the truth of the *letter,* or which do not suppose it. If any such *exclusive* allegories be pretended, the pretence is not just: for were it true that the *letter* is excluded, the instances alleged would not be *allegories,* properly so called, but *similitudes* rather, or *parables,* or *continued tropes,* or the like; and so are reducible to some other class, not to the head of *allegory,* which we are now upon.

*Allegorical* interpretation may be distinguished into three several kinds, under the names of *didactical, tropological,* and *anagogical;* or in somewhat plainer terms, *prophetical, moral, sublime.* The first means an allegory simply prophetical of things to be done under the Gospel state; as the allegory of Jonah is prophetic of Christ's death and burial. The second conveys some important lesson of *moral* instruction; as the allegory about *not muzzling the oxen.* The third prefigures things sublime and heavenly; as God's *resting from his works* prefigured the everlasting rest of the blessed above.

The self-same allegory may be supposed to have all the three several views here mentioned. The law about

[q] Deut. xxv. 4.

[r] Gen. xi. 2. compared with Hebr. iv. 3. Gen. ii. 24. compared with Eph. v. 31, 32. Gen. xxvi. 21. Gal. iv. 22. Gen. xix. iv. Rom. x. xviii. Exod. xii. 15, 17. 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. Exod. xxxiv. 29. 2 Cor. iii. 7, 13, 14. Deut. xxx. 12. Rom. x. 6. Psal. xix. iv. Rom. x. 18.

the *Sabbath*, for instance, may be supposed (over and above the *literal* meaning) *prophetically* to signify Christ's *rest* in the grave; *tropologically* to denote the *rest* of the soul, and its *cessation* from sin; and *anagogically* to prefigure the eternal *rest* of the saints. I do not say that any Scripture *allegory* was ever really intended to represent or signify so many several things: but such a case *may be supposed*, (right or wrong,) because it *has been supposed* by some learned interpreters; and I mention it only for the clearer apprehension of the *threefold* partition of *allegory*. But however we judge as to the same *things* having several *mystical* senses, we are still to remember, that the *same words*, whatever they be, have properly but *one sense*; and that one is the *literal* sense, otherwise called *historical*, pointing out some *real* fact upon which every *mystic* view is grounded.

From hence we may be able to pass the clearer judgment upon what has (of late days especially) been called the *allegorical* construction of the *fall:* such as Dr. Burnet[s] of the Charter-House, and after him Mr. Blount[t] and others have presumed to recommend. It is not properly *allegorical*, but *parabolical* or *fabulous*, because it excludes the *literal* and *historical* meaning, resolving the whole into ingenious device or *fiction*. It is true, there are *parables* and prophetic *schemes* in sacred Writ: but the account of the *fall* of *man* is certainly *true history*, and ought not to be resolved into any such prophetic *scheme*, or well-devised *parable*; much less into Egyptian fable or *hieroglyphic*, as others more profanely have insinuated. There are many and great reasons against turning the history of the *fall* into *fiction* or *parable*, which I shall content myself with briefly mentioning, referring the reader to learned writers[u] who have considered the

[s] Burnet's Archæolog. lib. ii. c. 7. Conf. Epist. i. p. 142.

[t] Blount's Oracles of Reason, p. 20, &c.

[u] Witty's Essay towards a Vindication of the Mosaical History. Moses Vindicatus, (Amstel. A. D. 1694.) c. vii. p. 148. Nicolls's Conf. with a

point at large. 1. If a history so *circumstantiated* as that is, shall be resolved into *fable* or *parable*, no history whatever can stand secure, but a wide door will be opened to all the rovings of sportive wit, or wanton fancy. The mischievous tendency of taking such liberties with sacred history is strongly represented in few words by the learned Bochart[x]. It is not long since a learned foreigner[y] undertook, in like manner, to turn the whole history of the Prophet Jonah into a sort of *prophetic scheme*, or *parable:* but he has been justly condemned for it by the judicious[z]. There is no end of such wanton play, such solemn trifling. 2. Such a method of interpreting would undermine the doctrine of our *redemption*, as laid down in the New Testament[a], and indeed would make the Old and New interfere: for the New Testament plainly enough interprets the history of the fall, as *true history*, or *real* fact[b]. See that point well proved now lately by a learned hand[c]. In short, the thus dealing with Scripture history can tend only to bring the sacred oracles into contempt; as the nature of the thing shows, and experience also sufficiently testifies. 3. That *parabolical* construction of the *fall*, going under the false name

Theist, part i. p. 236. alias 135. Keill's Examinat. of the Reflections on the Theory, p. 148. Jenkins's Reasonableness, &c. vol. ii. p. 256.

[x] Hæc sententia omnino singularis est, iisque duntaxat arridet qui *literali* vocum significatione prorsus missa, ad *allegorias* omnia transferunt—Quæ Scripturas explicandi ratio, ex variis eventibus qui inde sequuntur, certe *periculosissima*, et exemplum *exitiale*. Juxta eam enim, quicquid habet Scriptura sacra etiam expressissimum, facile poterit negari, ut in ejus locum *phantasmata* et imaginationis *figmenta* quæque subrogentur. Illi, non secus quam campanis, quidlibet potest affingi: hominumque cerebro tanquam alembico committitur, ut inde quodcunque libebit exprimat. Denique eodem modo ab istis doctoribus tractatur quo *chymistis* metalla; ex quibus aurum sibi et aliis misere pollicentur, at vero in fumos abeunt universa. *Bochart. de Serpent. Tentator.* p. 836.

[y] Herman. Vander Hardt, A. D. 1718.

[z] Vid. Carpzov. Introduct. ad Libr. Bibl. Vet. Test. part. iii. p. 349.

[a] See Witty's Mosaic History Vindicated, p. 13.

[b] John viii. 44. 2 Cor. xi. 3. 1 Tim. ii. 14. 1 John iii. 8. Comp. Ecclesiastes vii. 29.

[c] Reply to the Defence of the Letter to Dr. W. p. 58.

and cover of *allegorical*, would entirely defeat and frustrate the real and certain *allegory* which is in it: for that some parts, at least, of that history do admit of an *allegorical* meaning, together with the *letter*, and beyond the *letter*, is undoubtedly plain from the New Testament. For instance, Gen. ii. 24. carries both a *literal* and an *allegorical* meaning[d]: that is to say, the thing there expressed by the *letter* is expressive of an higher mystery relating to *Christ* and his *Church*. So again Gen. iii. 15. requires an *allegorical* improvement beyond the bare literal and historical meaning, being prophetic of our redemption by Christ Jesus. How much more of real *allegory* may be couched under that history, or how far we may prudently extend what we find, we cannot perhaps certainly say, nor is it necessary to determine: but if the whole were a *fable*, or *parable* only, all proper *allegory* (which means a mystic sense grafted upon *true history*) would be entirely frustrated and lost.

From what has been observed, the attentive readers may perceive how to distinguish the true and proper *allegorists* from the *fablemongers* or *mythics*, (I know not what else to call them,) such as Dr. Burnet, &c. before mentioned. They are a very different kind of men, as to their temper, manner, and principles; and their respective attempts commonly differ from each other, as much as sober and pious does from ludicrous and profane. The proper *allegorists* preserve the truth of sacred history inviolable, endeavouring farther to convert it to high and heavenly uses: and if they happen to fail in their design of enriching us with new treasures, they leave us however what we had before. But the *mythics*, who affect to turn *history* into *fable*, and *truth* into *fiction*, overthrow the *letter* of sacred Writ, converting it into a kind of *romance*; and in the room of that solid and substantial treasure which we before had, they give us nothing but words or wind.

[d] See Ephes. v. 31, 32.

It must be owned however to be a nice affair, to *allegorize* well and wisely, and to avoid all extremes. Many have been too forward and enterprising in that way, which is an error in *excess*; and many also have been too cautious and unattempting, which is an error in *defect*. It has been pleasantly observed of two very learned and excellent men, that one of them had *no where* found Christ in the Old Testament, and the other had found him *every where*[e]; intimating that both of them had run into extremes, but in a contrary way. I know not whether there be any surer or safer rule to go by, in this matter, than to *allegorize* so far (and no farther) as Scripture itself has directly done it, or indirectly pointed out the way by *allegorizing* some part, and leaving it to as many as understand *connection* and *analogy*, to supply the rest.

A very learned and judicious writer has presumed to think, that the *art* of *allegorizing* may be improved to a good degree of *certainty* by the help of rules proper[f]. And he afterwards gives us two samples of it[g]; one in the history of the Patriarch Joseph, and another in the history of Sampson allegorized all the way, retaining the *letter*, but superadding a *mystical* interpretation. After all, though there may be a good degree of *certainty* in the art, to as many as are complete masters of it, and one might be glad to see it carried up to the utmost perfection, (as it would be of inestimable use,) yet, to speak

[e] Passim celebratur illud quorundam judicium: Grotium nusquam in sacris literis invenire Christum, Cocceium ubique. *Buddæi Isagog*. p. 1736.

[f] Postremo loco, moneo, nullas esse instituendas expositiones *allegoricas* nisi in bonis, (sive certis sive probabilibus,) fundatas hypothesibus, ad quas expositionis soliditas et veritas examinanda est. Quæ hypotheses si non fallant (possent autem tales in multis casibus præstari) *non minus certa erit* expositio *allegorica* quam quævis *literalis* et *propria*, utique quod ad ipsum corpus interpretationis. Sunt enim hujus studii, æque ac aliarum theologiæ partium, *certa principia et fundamenta*; sunt *certi canones*, secundum quos qui interpretationem suam composuerit, non facile impinget. *Vitringa, Observ. Sacr*. lib. vi. c. 20. p. 465. alias 532.

[g] Vitringa, ibid. c. 21.

freely my opinion, it appears to be work of such a kind as scarce one in a thousand will be fit to be trusted with. It is like the *art etymological*, or that of making *conjectural emendations* upon authors, or of commenting upon Ezekiel, Daniel, or the Apocalypse: a man must have very strong parts, together with great coolness of temper, and correctness of judgment, besides a very large compass of literature, to succeed tolerably in it. It will be exceeding difficult to draw out *mystical* meanings with sufficient certainty, beyond what our infallible guides in the New Testament have already drawn out for us, or have plainly pointed out to us. And it will be no less difficult to fix any bounds to a flowing invention, or a teeming imagination, once set on work in that way: which I mention not to disparage or to discourage so useful an art, but to prevent too great expectations from it. It is certain, that some very bright wits, both ancient and modern, have had the misfortune to lose themselves in it.

Nevertheless, as I before hinted, the proper *allegorists* have often deserved well of religion and learning, even where they have missed of their first and principal aim: and my intent in taking this notice of them, was chiefly to preserve to them their due honour and esteem, that they may not be confounded with the *mythics*, who have been frequently comprehended under the same common name of *allegorizers*. *Allegorizing* of Scripture, for the improving and enriching of the *letter*, is one thing; and resolving *true history* into *fable* or *parable*, is another. The one expresses a profound and awful respect for the *Divine revelation*, and is generally useful, or at least innocent: the other too often betrays a want of due reverence for Scripture, and a wrong turn of mind; or be it ever so well meant, it is of very ill tendency, and apt to produce infinite mischief. St. Austin, with several more among the ancients, and Vitringa, with many others among the moderns, were proper *allegorists*: their designs were noble and great, as their labours, in the main, are very instructive and edifying. On the other hand, Origen

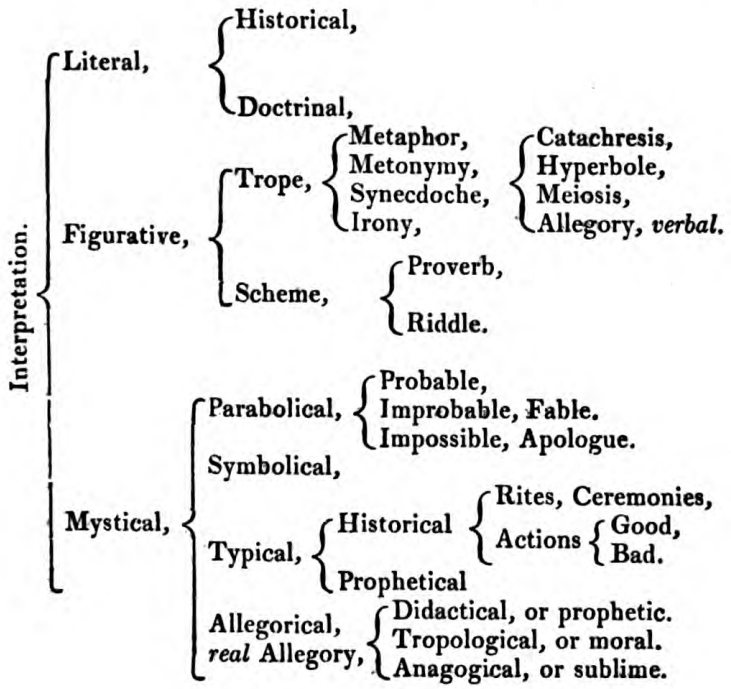
among the ancients, and Burnet, with some few more of the moderns, have taken great liberties in the *mythical* way, resolving many important points of sacred history into *fable* or *apologue;* which was very injudicious, and of mischievous consequence, both in the Church and out of the Church, as the very reason of the thing shows it must be[h].

To conclude, as there are various ways of interpreting various parts of Scripture, viz. *literal, figurative, symbolical, typical, parabolical, allegorical,* so it is of great moment to distinguish carefully those several kinds: and no one thing requires more thought or judgment, than to be able to discern in particular passages which of these kinds of interpretation ought to take place. I refer to Glassius principally for *rules* and *canons*[i] to direct in such cases, being the best I know of; though not so full or perfect as they might be, but capable of several improvements. The narrow limits of a preface will not permit me to enlarge farther: but if what I have briefly offered may be of any use by way of *caution* to common readers, for the preventing confusion and mistakes, or by way of *incitement* to abler hands, for the farther illustrating and filling up the subject, I have my end.

In conclusion, I shall subjoin a sketch of the several divisions and subdivisions of Scripture interpretation.

[h] Semel pessumdato aut falsitatis insimulato *literali* sensu iis in locis ubi omnes qui requiri possunt *characteres historici* coalescunt, corruat necesse est *scripturarum auctoritas* apud Gentiles, apud Hæreticos, apud Christianos. Apud *Gentiles*, qui potius inde occasionem sument rejiciendæ Scripturæ, tanquam Spiritu Sancto indignæ, quam illius *allegorice* [*mythice*] interpretandæ necessitatem colligent: apud *hæreticos* qui hoc principio abutentur, ut se ex iis expediant locis quæ contra suos ipsorum errores pugnant: denique apud *Christianos*, quos in fidei suæ detrimentum et in perpetuas animi anxietates ita adducet, ut legendis Scripturis prorsus renunciare maluerint. *Carolus Delarue*, in præfat. ad tom. ii. Opp. Origenis, p. 16, 17.

[i] Canons for the Literal and Figurative Sense, p. 371, &c. Canons for the Typical, p. 465, &c. Canons for the Parabolical, p. 483, &c. Conf. Carpzov. Introduct. ad Libr. Bibl. part. iii. p. 352. Buddæus, Observat. in Elementa Philosophiæ, &c. p. 319, &c.


Interpretation.
Literal,
Historical,
Doctrinal,
Figurative,
Trope,
Metaphor,
Metonymy,
Synecdoche,
Irony,
Catachresis,
Hyperbole,
Meiosis,
Allegory, verbal.
Scheme,
Proverb,
Riddle.
Mystical,
Parabolical,
Probable,
Improbable, Fable.
Impossible, Apologue.
Symbolical,
Typical,
Historical
Rites, Ceremonies,
Actions
Good,
Bad.
Prophetical
Allegorical,
real Allegory,
Didactical, or prophetic.
Tropological, or moral.
Anagogical, or sublime.

# THE INTRODUCTION.

THE book, entitled Christianity as Old as the Creation, is a declamatory libel against *revealed* religion, under colour and pretence of setting up *natural* religion in its place. The author, probably, has no more regard for natural religion than he has for revealed: for if he had been really a friend to one, it is not conceivable how he could become such an adversary to the other. Natural religion, justly so called, is bound up in revealed, is supported, cherished, and kept alive by it; and cannot so much as subsist in any vigour without it. To take away revealed religion from it, is to strip it of its firmest aids and strongest securities, leaving it in a very low and languishing state, without lights sufficient to explain it, or guards to fence it, or sanctions to bind it. This is what the author himself must be aware of, if he be a person of any reflection: and therefore there is great reason to suspect, that his real design is as much against both as either, (since they stand or fall together,) and that his pretended favour for one, in opposition to the other, is only a decent cover for what could not handsomely be owned; lest the reader should be shocked at once, and the execrable attempt meet with all the odium and ignominy it deserves.

Natural religion does not want, does not desire to be so complimented, or so defended, at the expence of *revealed*; neither is it indeed defending it, but meanly betraying it. No thanks to such persons for commending what all the world admires, and what envy itself must praise. It is a tribute which the public voice demands,

and which always must and will be paid to virtue. The very name of *virtue* has so awful a sound, and carries such majesty along with it, that even its bitterest adversaries are forced to pay a kind of awkward reverence and veneration to it.

But to return to the book I mentioned: there are two principal ends or aims which, though oddly blended and jumbled together, visibly run through the whole performance: one is to *vilify the holy Scriptures*, which the author does very frankly, and without disguise, speaking from his heart; the other is to *magnify the law of nature*, which, as I have hinted, is the artificial part, and can pass for nothing else but hypocrisy and flam. My design is only upon the *scriptural* part, to rescue the word of God from misrepresentation and censure, from the reproaches and blasphemies of foolish man. It is matter of melancholy consideration, that after the unparalleled love of God shown to mankind in our Saviour CHRIST, there should be men found so abandoned and profligate, as wilfully to shut their eyes against light and knowledge, (which is wholly unnatural,) nay and even to take a pride and pleasure in throwing him back his favours, and affronting him to his face. But let not any well-meaning Christians be shocked or scandalized at such things. It is foretold in the New Testament, that "there shall come in the last days scoffers[a]." And as God permits Satan to walk "about, seeking whom he "may devour[b]," so he permits his agents and emissaries to do the same thing, for the trial, exercise, and improvement of honest and faithful men, "that they which are "approved may be made manifest[c]." There have been always men of corrupt minds, and there always will be: there was a Judas amongst the Apostles themselves: there was a Simon Magus that withstood St. Peter, and "bewitched the people[d]:" there was Elymas, a *sorcerer*,

[a] 2 Pet. iii. 3. [b] 1 Pet. v. 8. [c] 1 Cor. xi. 19.
[d] Acts viii. 9, 11.

who withstood St. Paul and St. Barnabas, and made it his business "to turn away the Deputy from the faith[e];" there was Hymeneus and Philetus, that gave great disturbance to the Church of Christ, "and overthrew the faith of "some[f]:" and Alexander, joining with both the other[g], "did much evil[h]" to the good Apostle Paul, obstructing the progress of the Gospel: and Diotrephes also, "loving "to have the preeminence," was not afraid to set up against St. John himself, the only then surviving Apostle, but "prated against him with malicious words[i]," and opposed his good and great designs.

These instances I take notice of, for the sake of common Christians; that they may not think it strange or new, that presumptuous men should take upon them to fly in the face of Heaven, and bid defiance to the undoubted truths of God. There is the less reason for being surprised at it, because it is certainly known with what views, and upon what motives, they generally do it: it is not for want of sufficient evidence of the truth of the Gospel, but it is because they do not relish it, it is too pure and perfect for them: they "love darkness rather "than light," because their affections are corrupt, "be-"cause their deeds are evil[k]." The best account which they themselves can give of it, whenever they speak their real sentiments (as they do in private letters to each other) is, that they intend "to save a soul from the dismal "apprehensions of eternal damnation," or to relieve a person "from labouring under that uneasiness of mind which "he often is under, when pleasure and Christianity come "in competition[l]." This is the whole secret of infidelity[m], the *noble* and *generous* aim which the writer I am

[e] Acts xiii. 8. [f] 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. [g] 1 Tim. i. 20.
[h] 2 Tim. iv. 14. [i] 3 John 9, 10. [k] John iii. 19.
[l] See Two Letters from a Deist to his Friend, p. 17, 19.
[m] "I take it for granted, that there is *not one* unbeliever in whom several "of these defects [viz. *immorality, pride, prejudice, stupidity, laziness,*] "are not remarkable; and I take their own consciences to witness." *Le Clerc, Causes of Incredulity*, p. 108, 110.

now concerned with boasts of in his preface: it is to ease every libertine, if possible, of his just and well-grounded fears, and to steel his heart against a judgment to come. It is not to secure him against the danger of hell, (that is impracticable,) but it is to tell him how to fence, with subtilties or sophistries, against the *dismal apprehensions of it:* not to preserve him from it, but to lead him blindfold into it. This is the contrivance of our new teachers, their real and only aim, whatever masks they put on, or whatever shows and pretences they are pleased to make. It is to bring down the laws of God to the lusts and passions of corrupt man, and to find some pretext or other for taking off religious restraints, that they may be at liberty to follow their pleasures, and to do only what is right in their own eyes, instead of attending to the voice of God.

The author whose work I have now in hand, though he studiously disguises himself, and takes great pains to put fair glosses upon what he is doing, yet sometimes unawares discovers the very secrets of his heart. He gives broad hints in one place[n], that he looks upon "incontinence in single persons" as one of the "rights and "liberties which God has allowed by the law of nature:" and in another place[o] he declares flatly and plainly against our Lord's doctrine of "loving those that hate us," upon some weak and slender surmises of his own, which shall be considered in due time and place. I mention it now only to show what the author is aiming at, namely, abatements and relaxations of the laws of Christ, to make them suit the better with corrupt nature. *Lust* and *malice* are very strong and impetuous passions, and where they take any deep root, will of course incline men to principles of *infidelity*. How far they have influenced our author, he best knows: but by his indecent slandering and reviling persons of the greatest worth, it is easy

[n] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 119. Compare also p. 345, where the author speaks very mysteriously on the same subject.

[o] Ibid. p. 342.

to perceive how much the black passions have got the ascendant over him. His reviling the *clergy* now signifies little; he has himself answered it. He has made it very plain, that it is their *profession*, and the *religion* they teach, which he has taken offence at: for, as occasion offers, he rails as much against the primitive *martyrs* and *fathers* of the Church; against *Apostles*, *Prophets*, and holy *Patriarchs:* but his keenest sarcasms and invectives, like Rabshakeh's and Julian's, are directly pointed at the *God of Israel.* This is so far frank and open; and though most false as to other particulars, yet gives us a true and just idea of the spirit and principles of the writer. His spleen and malice against the Bible appears to be very great, though his attacks are feeble, and his artillery contemptible. He discovers no genius nor taste of literature; no acquaintance with the original languages, nor so much as with common critics or commentators. Several of his objections are pure English objections, such as affect only our translation: and the rest are generally of the lowest and most trifling sort; either because he had a mind to suit them to the *vulgar* taste, or because he could rise no higher. But such as they are, they must be taken notice of, and answered, lest they should have an ill effect upon the unlearned and unstable, and tend to lessen the reverence due to Scripture among common Christians. I proceed therefore to vindicate such Scripture texts as this author has abused or misrepresented, taking them in order, not as they lie in his book, but in Scripture itself, beginning with Genesis, and so on.

# GENESIS.

GEN. II. 19.

WHATSOEVER ADAM CALLED EVERY LIVING CREATURE, THAT WAS THE NAME THEREOF.

The Objector hereupon says, "One would be almost "apt to imagine that the author of the Book of Genesis "thought that words had ideas naturally fixed to them, "and not by consent; otherwise, say they, how can we "account for his supposing that God brought all animals "before Adam, as soon as he was created, to give them "names, and that the serpent and Eve, almost as soon "as created, entertained one another in the same lan-"guage[a]?"

The difficulty which the author here raises is very slight: for the case is plain; God himself first gave names to some things[b], and he taught Adam to call those things by the same names: thus language began. Afterwards God permitted or ordered Adam to give names to animals; and accordingly Adam did so[c]: which was no more than making use of that faculty of reason and of speech, which God had endowed him with. Adam had ideas of the animals brought to him before he named them: and so this author may please to observe, that ideas were not naturally fixed to words, because words were not naturally fixed to ideas. Ideas were antecedent to words; but words by appointment and consent became the signs or outward expressions of ideas. After Adam

[a] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 254.
[b] Gen. i. 5, 8, 10.
[c] Gen. ii. 19, 20.

had thus got words, partly from God, and partly from his own ingenuity, Eve came next, and learned the same language from her husband: and no doubt but he and she together invented more words, and enriched the language. How long this affair was transacting is no where declared. Let it be a month, a week, or a day, the longer it was a doing, the more natural was the effect; or if it took less time, then it was the more miraculous: but either way the pretended difficulty is sufficiently obviated. There remains only the serpent's talking to be accounted for. That serpent, as we have abundant reason to assert, was the *Devil* possessing and actuating a real serpent: a wicked spirit was the inward agent, and a serpent the outward organ. Upon this supposition, there appears no just objection against the serpent's entertaining Eve in her own language. If the Objector will undertake to prove, either that the Devil had not himself time enough to learn the language, or that he had not power sufficient to form articulate sounds, making use of a serpent as the instrument of conveying them, he will then do something to the purpose. But we shall have more of what concerns *Eve* and the *serpent* in what is to follow.

## GEN. III. 1.

NOW THE SERPENT WAS MORE SUBTIL THAN ANY BEAST OF THE FIELD WHICH THE LORD GOD HAD MADE: AND HE SAID UNTO THE WOMAN, &c.

The Objector asks[d], "How can we conceive a serpent "could talk to Eve, and delude the mother of mankind, "when in the high state of perfection; even though the "Apostle says, THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS "SUBTILTY[e]:" so it seems, that neither Moses nor St. Paul have any credit with this writer; but upon some very weak and slender suspicions, he points his satire against both. But why might not a serpent, being directed, managed, and actuated by the Devil, talk with Eve, and

[d] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 253. [e] 2 Cor. xi. 3.

delude her? There is nothing absurd, or so much as improbable, in the supposition. Moses related the fact as it appeared in the outward instrument: he had no occasion to say any thing of the inward agent. As to St. Paul, why might he not say, that THE SERPENT (meaning the *old serpent*, namely, THE DEVIL AND SATAN[f]) DECEIVED EVE BY HIS SUBTILTY? the Devil, acting in and by a serpent, did it; and therefore it is, that St. Paul gives him the name of *serpent*, as St. John does also.

The Objector is further "at a loss to conceive, how "Eve could entertain a conference with a serpent," (incapable of human voice,) "even before consent had given "any meaning to sounds[g]." These objections are stale and trivial, and have been answered a hundred times over; though it is easy for men that know little of Scripture or theology to be "at a loss to conceive" common things. But to the point. As to a serpent's being incapable of human voice, which was the mean objection of the apostate[h] Julian, it has been already obviated. The serpent was not capable of it by himself; but the Devil was capable of speaking by or through him. The other part of the Objection has been also obviated before: and as the Objector knows nothing of the chronology of that affair, so neither can he give any reason to persuade us, that Eve had not had time enough to learn as much language as she had need of.

The Objector[i] adds, that the "Christians are now "ashamed of the literal interpretation of this story." If he means, that they reject the notion of a mere serpent's doing all that is there told; his report may be true: but if he means, that Christians do not admit that any serpent at all was concerned in it, I suppose it may pass for a calumny. There was a *real* serpent actuated; and there was also Satan actuating. Christian interpreters

[f] Rev. xii. 9. xx. 2. Compare John viii. 44. Wisd. ii. 24.
[g] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 385.
[h] Cyrill. contra Julian. p. 86. edit. Spanh.
[i] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 386.

with good reason assert both [k]; and do thereby obviate all pretended difficulties. What the author therefore urges in page 387, against such as do not admit a real serpent in the case, as well as the Devil, is only so much impertinence. He asks, [l] "Whether it was the Devil "that is said to be more subtil than any beast of the "field?" No; it was the serpent. And because the serpent was more remarkably *subtil* [m], he was the fittest emblem of Satan's subtilty: and he was also the properest instrument for the tempter to make choice of to deceive by; since the apprehension Eve had of his *subtilty*, might make her the less surprised at the hearing him reason and discourse with her. The tempter therefore chose the serpent as his instrument to work by, as his cover to conceal his fraud; because he might more easily impose upon her under that disguise than in any other.

What kind of serpent it was, or how beautiful a creature, I take not upon me to say: neither do I much incline to the opinion of some very worthy and learned persons, who have thought that the serpent was so like a *seraph*, that Eve mistook it for a good angel. For while that hypothesis tends to show how easy it was, by such an angelic form, to deceive Eve, it seems to me to make it too easy, and to push the point too far towards the other extreme, so as almost to render the deception inevitable. Besides, had that been the case, she could not, one would think, have failed to have pleaded it in her excuse afterwards: whereas she had nothing to plead, but that "the "serpent had beguiled her [n]." She very well knew, then at least, that it was a serpent, and gives not the least hint that she had ever suspected any other. It is natural enough to suppose, that, for want of longer time and experience, she might not know whether the brute creatures

[k] Pfeiffer. Dub. Vexat. p. 22.

[l] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 387.

[m] Of the *subtilty* of serpents, see Bochart, Oper. tom. i. 838, 846, &c. tom. ii. 28, &c.

[n] Gen. iii. 13.

were any of them capable of reason and speech [o], or being taken at a disadvantage, and under a sudden surprise, might not stay to consider of it. It is an article of aggravation against her, that she so easily submitted to the persuasion of a creature much inferior to herself, and which, however plausibly he talked, might be presumed to know less of the important question in debate than she did. Let the fatal example be a warning to others, how they listen to sophistry in opposition to Divine truths: for though the tempter, since that time, has no more made use of serpents in such a way, as he has had no such occasion, yet he has other instruments proper to work with, and often does the same thing by the tongues or pens of serpentine men. But to return.

The Objector "thinks the matter not a jot mended, by "substituting a devil" (so he crudely or crossly expresses it) "instead of a serpent; since he cannot see, "how an infinitely good God could permit a most mali- "cious cunning spirit to work on the weakness of a wo- "man, just placed in a new world, without interposing "in this unequal conflict, or giving notice of any such "wicked spirit: angels, neither good nor bad, being men- "tioned in the history of the creation [p]." Now as to what the author *cannot see*, if he wants spectacles to look into the depths of the Divine counsels and government, we can help him to no such: but by that light of *reason* which God has given him, and which he often boasts of, he may see enough to learn *modesty* in such high things. God, who endowed the first pair with a liberty of choice, and strength also sufficient to withstand temptations, he knew how far it was both wise and proper to suffer them to be tempted. There was no occasion for telling them of *angels*, good or bad: they had received a plain command from God himself, and it was their duty to obey. If they did not know *who* it was that tempted them, yet

[o] See Cyrill. contra Julian. p. 86. Bochart, vol. i. p. 843. Natal. Alexand. Hist. Eccl. vol. i. p. 70. Conf. Pfeiffer, p. 23.

[p] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 388.

they very well knew *what* he tempted them to; and that if an angel from heaven, speaking in his own name, and without authority from God, had endeavoured to persuade them, in that case they ought to have resisted; because nothing but the same Divine authority which gave the law, could either repeal it or dispense with it. However, God was pleased to lay no such stumbling-block before them: he considered their weakness, and their want of experience, and their being so lately brought into a new world: and therefore he tried them only by a "beast of the field," and by such sophistry as the tempter could convey through that channel; that the quality of the speaker should by no means serve to recommend his rhetoric. To such persuasion, that is, to false pretences and false views, with all their reason and understanding about them, they yielded; against the express command of God, lately received, and yet fresh and strong upon their minds. Who does not see how kind and indulgent God was in the whole proceeding, and how much to blame they? Nevertheless, I must insist upon it, that it is not necessary for us to account *a priori* in such cases for the Divine conduct, which we are not competent judges of[q]. It is sufficient, that he who made man, best knew what was in man, and how far it was reasonable he should be tried. Virtue is proved and perfected by trials: so far we know. And we know also, that the brightest human virtue may be shocked or overcome by some kind of trials; especially if often repeated, or of long continuance. But the security we have to rest on is this, that God will not suffer honest men to be tempted above what they are *able;* and he knows their *abilities.* Whenever men yield too far, so as to offend God, he is offended only because they were able to have held out longer, and did not; or because they might have done better, and would not. These are true and certain principles to stand upon, and these are sufficient. But to inquire farther into every

[q] See Tertullian on this head, contr. Marc. lib. ii. c. 5.

particular of the Divine conduct, and to demand a reason *a priori*, why he permits wicked spirits *to range about, deceiving mankind;* why he does not interpose to drive them away, chain them up, *deprive them of being*, or the like; this is presuming too far, forgetting our distance, and making too familiar with an all-wise Governor of the world. At the best, it is vain curiosity and impertinent cavilling.

The Objector has some other slighter cavils against the history of the fall, which may be dispatched in fewer words. He thinks it "would be unworthy of God to "talk to a serpent[r]." He does not consider, that it was in the hearing of man, and for the use of man[s]. Besides, that in the visible serpent was contained an invisible fiend, seen only by God: and God, in cursing one, laid a curse upon both. That is to say, the words of the curse have both a *literal* and a *mystical* intendment; as is well known to Divines, and has been often proved[t]. The Objector is offended, that God should "cause *mankind* to fall by the "folly of Adam, which infinite wisdom could not but "foresee[u]." This again is going out of his sphere, to pass a crude censure upon the unsearchable counsels, works, and ways of God. We have not *data* to go upon in such cases: we cannot look through the Divine dispensations from end to end; otherwise we should perceive marvellous wisdom in every part, and should discern the admirable beauty, harmony, and perfection of the whole. The governing of moral agents in a way suitable to their liberty, and to God's unspotted holiness, wisdom, and purity, is one of the finest and most mysterious parts of the Divine conduct; and will be the admiration both of men and angels to all eternity.

The Objector further asks[x], "What dignity, what

[r] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 253.
[s] Bochart. Oper. vol. i. p. 850.
[t] See Bochart, vol. i. p. 852. Nat. Alexand. vol. i. p. 71. Pfeiffer, p. 27.
[u] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 389.
[x] Ibid.

" perfection could Adam's nature have, that the nature of " his posterity has not?" To which I answer, that Adam had dignity and perfection, both natural and supernatural, which his posterity, as such, have not. He was *naturally* less prone to evil, less subject to sinful appetites, though capable of sinning: and he was *supernaturally* vested with great clearness of understanding as to Divine things, and rectitude of will, and immortality so far as to be under no sentence of death, no necessity of dying. The Objector next asks, whether Adam's descendants " are not as much framed after the image of their Ma- " ker?" No, not after the same perfection of that image as Adam was, in point of *rectitude* and *immortality*; though in other respects, or in a lower degree, all men are framed after the image of God. Some other more trifling questions of the author, in page 389, I pass over: and if the reader is disposed to look deeper into the *state of man before the fall*, I refer him to an excellent discourse, professedly upon that subject, written by the incomparably learned and judicious Bishop Bull[y].

The two principal doctrines which Bishop Bull there maintains are as follows:

1. " That Paradise was to Adam a type of heaven; and " that the never-ending life of happiness promised to our " first parents, if they had continued obedient, and grown " up to perfection under that economy wherein they were " placed, should not have been continued in the earthly " Paradise, but only have commenced there, and been " perpetuated in a higher state: that is to say, after such " trial of their obedience, as should seem sufficient to the " Divine wisdom, they should have been translated from " earth to heaven."

2. " That our first parents, besides the seeds of *natural* " *virtue* and religion, sown in their minds in the very " creation; and besides the *natural innocence* and recti- " tude wherein also they were created; were endowed

[y] Bull's Opera Posth. vol. iv. disc. 5. p. 1065, &c.

" with certain gifts and *powers supernatural*, infused by " the Spirit of God; and that in these gifts their *perfection* " consisted."

## GEN. III. 6.

THE WOMAN SAW THAT THE TREE WAS GOOD FOR FOOD, &c.

Here the Objector " desires to be informed, how Eve, " before her eyes were opened, saw," &c. To which the obvious answer is, that her eyes were opened from the first to see the forbidden fruit, but they were not open to see or to perceive her shame and misery, till afterwards. No one that knows the latitude of the phrase of *opening the eyes*, and how variously it is used in Scripture[z], would ever have offered this poor objection. The Objector's eyes were open to write this pernicious libel against religion; but his eyes are not yet opened to see the folly of doing it, nor perhaps ever will be, as long as he lives.

## GEN. III. 7.

AND THE EYES OF THEM BOTH WERE OPENED, AND THEY KNEW THAT THEY WERE NAKED, &c. The Objector asks, " Why, though custom has made it " shameful to go without clothes, in those places where " clothes are worn, the first pair should nevertheless, " though they knew not what clothes were, be ashamed " to be seen unclothed by one another, and by God him- " self?" But is he sure that there is nothing but chance or custom in this matter? How came that shame to be so universal, if it were not natural? There is no account to be given of it from the nature of the thing itself: for why should a man be ashamed of any thing but vice? Yet so strong is that passion in mankind, that none but the most impudent wretches, with much striving, have been able to break through it. The text does not say, as this author pretends, that Adam and Eve were ashamed to be seen

[z] See Le Clerc in loc. Nicholls's Confer. p. 129.

unclothed by one another; neither is there any necessity of supposing it. It is observed by Moses, that they "hid "themselves," not from one another, but "from the pre- "sence of the Lord God[a]:" and the reason is intimated, because they were *naked*[b]. It seems, that they were struck with the consciousness of their nakedness, and the impression of shame following it, immediately upon their transgression: but the shame they had upon them was more upon account of the presence of God, than of each other's. And though the author may think it strange, that any one should be ashamed of *nakedness* in the presence of God only, yet he does not consider the difference between a *visible* and an *invisible* presence; nor how one is apt to strike any person more than the other. The presence of God in that *visible* manner, wherein he was then pleased to appear, had the same effect upon them, as any strange or awful company has been apt to have upon mankind in such cases ever since. God impressed it upon them then as part of their punishment, and has left the like shame upon their posterity ever since, for a perpetual memorial of it.

But the Objector makes himself diversion about their *sewing* fig-leaves together for aprons: "having, it seems, (says he with a sneer,) "all things necessary for sew- "ing[c]." I apprehend what he means: they wanted *needle* and *thread*, and perhaps *thimble* too. It is a stale objection, borrowed from Burnet or Blount[d], and taken notice of at large by Dr. Nicholls[e], though hardly deserving to have such honour done it. However, there is no necessity of saying that they *sewed* fig-leaves together; another rendering would quite disable the objection. It might as well have been said, *tacked* together: but then he would ask, no doubt, how they came by *tacks*, before *smiths* were in being? Well, to cut off all cavils at once, we will

[a] Gen. iii. 8. [b] Gen. iii. 10.
[c] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 385.
[d] Burnet's Archæolog. p. 293. Blount's Oracles of Reason, p. 44.
[e] Nicholls's Conference with a Theist, p. 130.

say *fastened* or *joined* together, (for that the original word will very well bear,) and then the sarcasm is lost, and the jester disappointed.

## GEN. III. 8.

THEY HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD GOD WALKING IN THE GARDEN IN THE COOL OF THE DAY. The Objector thinks this a "strange representation "of God[f]." Yes; if it be taken literally of God's walking as a man walks: but he must be next to an idiot that can so understand it. God can choose what symbol of his presence he pleases; and a *human* form, as well as any other. But if the author's delicacy is offended at that, he may understand the words not of *God's* walking, but of the *voice* walking; that is, going forth, approaching, or the like[g].

## GEN. III. 21.

The Objector, upon this text, has a fling at what is said of God's making them coats. "Coats," says he, "of the "skins of beasts newly created in pairs[h]:" as if the thing could not have been done without destroying a whole species. But how does he know that no more than a pair of every sort was at first created? Or supposing it so, how knows he that the beasts had not multiplied before the time when God taught Adam and Eve to make coats of skins? I forbear to say more, because the objection is stale and trite, taken up from Burnet and Blount[i], and it has been answered at large by Dr. Nicholls[k], to whom I have nothing to add.

[f] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 385.

[g] See Bishop Patrick and Le Clerc in loc. The same verb, in *hithpael*, is used of *arrows*, Psal. lxxvii. 17. and is there rendered, *went abroad*; and seems to be meant of the *thunder*. However, certain it is from that place alone, that the verb, in this conjugation, is not always applied to a *person*.

[h] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 386.

[i] Burnet's Archæol. p. 293. Blount, p. 44.

[k] Nicholls's Confer. p. 131.

## GEN. VI. 6.

AND IT REPENTED THE LORD, THAT HE HAD MADE MAN UPON THE EARTH, AND IT GRIEVED HIM AT HIS HEART. Offence is here taken at the expression, by our over nice gentleman, who thus descants upon it[l], "In what a number of places is God said to try people; "and yet notwithstanding this caution, how often is he "said to repent? Does he not even repent of the first ac- "tion he did in relation to man? Nay, does not the Scrip- "ture suppose, he has so often repented, that he is weary "of repenting?" It is very true that the Scripture does *say* these things; and it is no less true that the Scripture *means* no such thing by them, as this gentleman would insinuate. There is not a commentator of any note, but what would have set him right in this matter, had he pleased to be at the pains to learn, before he had set up to teach. God is unchangeable, and *repenteth* not in a strict and proper sense; but when he undoes what he has before done, or changes his first measures, as circumstances require, he is said to *repent*[m] or grieve, by a figure taken from the manner of men, who, in such cases, do really repent and grieve. God accommodates his phrases to the language of men, in order to be the better understood by men, and also to render his expressions more pathetic, lively, and affecting. There is great use in it, and no harm can come by it, while the hearer or reader has any tolerable measure of common sense.

The Objector perhaps will reply, that then this is interpreting Scripture by *reason*. It is so, and by *Scripture* too, which in other places declares that God "does not re- "pent[n]," and that his words are not "yea and nay[o]." And what if Scripture must be interpreted by *reason*, that is, *reasonably* interpreted, as every book should? Is Scripture

[l] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 251.

[m] See St. Austin contra Adversarium Leg. et Prophet. lib. i. cap. 40. p. 573.

[n] Numb. xxiii. 19. 1 Sam. xv. 29. [o] 2 Cor. i. 19, 20.

therefore useless, because reason should go along with it, as with every thing else? Or is reason *alone* sufficient without Scripture? No; no more than *eyes* alone are sufficient without light to see by, or objects to look upon. Reason, the eye of the mind, looks into as many things as are set before it, and appear with sufficient lustre: but if either the objects be few, or the light dim, reason alone can be of very little service. We interpret those texts about God's *repenting*, by reason: but by reason alone we should have known nothing of the facts themselves of God's *repenting*, nor of a thousand others revealed in Scripture. Great is the light which Scripture brings; and not the less for supposing such light to shine upon rational creatures capable of perceiving it. But I beg my reader's pardon, for striking thus far into the argumentative part of the book, when the Scriptural part only is my professed province; to which I now return.

## GEN. VIII. 21.

THE LORD SMELLED A SWEET SAVOUR: namely, after Noah had offered burnt offerings upon the altar; as is related in the verse preceding. Our author takes himself to be facetious, when he banters such expressions in the person of the heathen Jupiter; designing it equally against the *God of Israel*, as appears by the turn of his argument, and his manner of expression, and his printing the words in Italic, to be the more taken notice of. He expresses his wonder, "that the stench of burnt flesh "should be such a *sweet smelling savour in his nostrils*, as "to atone for the wickedness of men:" and he thinks it a gross conception of God, "that he should be delighted "with the butchering of innocent animals." He goes on[p]: "If the Pagans" (say Jews, and the argument is the same) "believed beasts were not given them for food, "why did they eat them? Or if they thought they were, "why did they ungratefully throw back the gifts of God

[p] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 91.

"on the donor? Or why did they not drown or bury "them, rather than make such a stench in burning them, "as many times, by the number of sacrifices, might in- "fect the very air?" Contemptible droll! thus to play his buffoonery against the Most High, and to oppose his own dreams to the wisdom of Heaven. Sacrifices of animals began soon after the fall, by God's allowance, yea, by God's appointment; since otherwise no just account of its commencing, that I know of, can be given. Whatever other ends and uses there were of animal sacrifices, one very great one we are sure of, *viz.* to typify the sacrifice of Christ [q], the Lamb of God that was to be slain for the sins of the world. These facts we learn from the holy Scripture. And as to Pagan sacrifices, they serve to confirm it; since no just account can be given of those sacrifices prevailing so universally in the heathen world, but that the practice was handed down from the sons of Noah, of whom the whole earth was peopled. These facts are plain, certain, and well attested: and we must expect some very considerable and weighty arguments from any man that shall presume to call them in question. Yet what has this trifler to produce, that can bear so much as the face of an argument? Let us take his pretences to pieces in their order.

1. He endeavours to suggest a false idea of the thing, as if the "stench of burnt flesh were a sweet smelling sa- "vour in his nostrils;" where the argument lies only in the grossness of the idea, raised at the expense of truth, and the seeming coarseness of the expression. Indeed God is said to have "smelled a sweet savour;" which is an expression used in great condescension to human thoughts and human language, and is intended to signify, that God was pleased with the piety and devout services of Noah and others, sacrificing to him from a pure heart, as men are wont to be pleased with sweet odours. A comparison taken from things human serves, in some measure, to

[q] See Outram de Sacrificiis, lib. i. cap. 18. p. 209, &c.

illustrate things divine: and though it is not exact, as none can be exact, yet it helps to convey a more lively and more affecting idea of the thing, than could be given without it. "A sweet smelling savour" is St. Paul's phrase in the New Testament also; where Christ is said to have GIVEN HIMSELF FOR US, AN OFFERING AND A SACRIFICE TO GOD, FOR A SWEET SMELLING SAVOUR[r]. The metaphor is just and elegant: and none but a half-witted reader can understand it in a gross sense, or take offence at it.

2. His second cavil against sacrifices is, that "God "should be delighted with the butchering of innocent "animals." No; he is not delighted with *bulls' flesh*, nor with the *blood of goats:* but he was pleased with the obedience and devotion shown in the Jewish sacrifices[s]; and he accepted the sacrifices themselves, as typifying the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ. The more *innocent* the animals, the fitter to represent that Lamb of God, who was perfect innocence, WHO DID NO SIN, NEITHER WAS GUILE FOUND IN HIS MOUTH[t]. But however innocent the animals were, I suppose no question can be made, but God, who has destined most of them for slaughter, to be for food to man, might command their lives when he pleased, for much higher uses. We that know and believe Scripture, know this, and can give a just and rational account of the practice: but since this writer speaks of "butchering of innocent animals," we might desire to know by what right or authority he and his fraternity do it? They have been publicly challenged[u] to make good their claim to animal food; and have never yet cleared their title. The priests and people both among the Jews could eat flesh, and could show their warrant for it: but the Deists, so far as I perceive, could never yet show theirs: for which reason, it might have become this

[r] Eph. v. 2.
[s] Vid. Tertull. adv. Marc. lib. ii. cap. 22. p. 392, 393.
[t] 1 Pet. ii. 22.
[u] Reynolds's Three Letters to the Deist, Letter I.

writer's modesty to have been silent on that head. But to proceed.

3. The third and principal argument against sacrifices is the "stench," which, it seems, "might infect the very "air." But is the smell of *roast meat* so very noisome, when the eating of it was so wholesome, and so delicious too, that he even envies the *priests* the share they had in it[x]? I say, their *share;* for this author betrays his ignorance, in imagining that they had the *whole*, and the people none. He might have learned better from two considerable writers[y], who had corrected that blunder, which had long passed current among his friends. As to his account of the first beginning of sacrifices, p. 92, it deserves no consideration, because it is making history out of his own head, and is nothing else but telling us his dreams. So credulous a creature is an infidel: no romance or legend can carry any thing so improbable, as what passes with these men into serious belief. But I proceed.

## GEN. IX. 13.

I DO SET MY BOW IN THE CLOUD, AND IT SHALL BE FOR A TOKEN OF A COVENANT BETWEEN ME AND THE EARTH. The Objector's candid and mannerly remark on this passage is; "Perhaps the author's not "knowing the natural cause of the rainbow occasioned "that account we have in Genesis of its institution[z]." And what does this gentleman himself know of it, that should give him a handle for this mean reflection? It has been a disputed point, whether there was any rainbow before the flood. As the appearance of the rainbow is made by the refracted and reflected sunbeams from the falling drops of small roscid rain; and as there were both sun and rains before the flood, it should seem that the same natural causes then, should produce the same natural effect as now. And so indeed they infallibly must

[x] See Christianity as Old, &c. p. 92.
[y] Nicholls's Conf. vol. i. p. 147. Philelcuth. Lips. part i. p. 26.
[z] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 254.

have done, were it certain that the disposition of the air, clouds, and rains, was the same, and that nothing interposed to hinder the effect. But as it is no unreasonable supposition, that God might before the flood, by the interposition of clouds, or otherwise, constantly do what he often does now, to prevent the appearing of any rainbow; so it is far from certain, that there ever was such an appearance, before God appointed it for a sign.

But supposing that there was a rainbow before the flood, yet as it is a natural sign of fair weather approaching, (since the sun must shine upon the falling rain, and the clouds also must be thin when it appears,) it was very proper to choose it for the appointed token of the covenant, and to make that the memorial of the promise; that so as often as men should see the rainbow, they might remember that God had given them such a promise, and that his infallible word should be their sufficient security. A mere promise, though recorded and written down for the use of posterity, would not be so effectual to the end designed, as the same promise with a visible sign annexed to it, that the sight of one should constantly bring to mind a sense of the other. If it had been said, as sure as the moon shall wax and wane, or as the sea shall ebb and flow, so sure is it that the earth shall never more be drowned with a flood, even that would have been more useful and more affecting than a bare promise; because then every *change* or *tide* would have been a memorial of the promise. But when another sign is chosen, which has itself also some natural significancy in it to foretel fair weather, and no sudden great rains; this shows the wisdom of the Divine appointment, and a thorough insight also into natural causes and effects [a].

[a] Id vero indicium eo potissimum elegit Deus, quia signum fit naturale. Nam non fit iris in nube admodum densa, sed rorante; neque fit si et adversa sit nubes, quia sic sol non possit radios mittere in nubem oppositam. Atqui ad diluvium universale requirantur nubes densæ, et totum cœlum obducentes. *Gerhard. Voss. de Idololatr.* p. 290. *Oper.* tom. v.

If it be objected, as indeed it has been[b], that it would be but poor comfort to Noah and his posterity to see the rainbow, if such a thing had ever appeared before the flood, because a deluge followed notwithstanding; with submission, I take such reasoning to be wrong: for it supposes the comfort to lie merely in the sight of the rainbow, and not in the sense of the promise. A rainbow could be no comfort to them that lived before the flood, because no such promise had been given them; and it could not naturally prove that there never might be an universal deluge. But since it has been made the sign or token of the promise, and reminds us of that promise, which is an infallible security to as many as believe the Scripture, there is undoubtedly all imaginable comfort in it. What the sight of the rainbow wants, the sense of the promise, renewed by it, supplies. Upon the whole, therefore, I do not think it at all necessary to inquire, whether there was or was not any rainbow before the flood. Be that as it will, the Divine wisdom, in appointing the rainbow as a sign and a memorial of his most gracious promise to mankind, is very apparent upon either supposition: and this Objector's cavils are very wide of the point[c].

## GEN. XI. 7.

GO TO, LET US GO DOWN, AND THERE CONFOUND THEIR LANGUAGE, THAT THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER'S SPEECH. The Objector is here pleased to say, "Some think that this author did not know "the reason of the necessary variety of language upon the "increase of mankind[d]." But they that think so, if they had any discretion, would keep such thoughts to themselves. For what sense is there in pretending, that because in several hundred years time there might or must have been a variety of language, therefore also there must have

[b] See Patrick in loc. [c] See Saurin. Dissert. ix. p. 70.
[d] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 254.

been the like variety in one hundred, or a very little more? As much as to say, because there has been a considerable variety in the English language since the time of Richard the Second or Henry the Fourth, therefore there has been the like since the reign of James or Charles the First. And yet there has been a good deal of foreign mixture among Englishmen in the last hundred years; and there could be none at all among the builders of Babel, from the time of the flood. Certainly they might have understood each other's language, as well at least as we now understand the English of Charles the First's time. But from Moses's account, it is certain they did not: and Moses, a wise man, and an inspired writer, resolves so marvellous a thing into the extraordinary interposal of the Divine hand, the immediate work of God.

If the Objector thinks that Moses, or some other author of the Pentateuch, invented the whole story, only to account for the variety of languages observable in his own time; he may think so, if he pleases, without any reason, or colour of reason for it. But Moses, in that place, is not accounting so much for the variety of languages, (which was a trifle in comparison,) as for the quick dispersion of the sons of Noah over the face of the earth [e], to which the confusion of tongues led. And what if such variety in language might or must have ensued naturally in a course of years or ages, upon the *increase* and *dispersion* of mankind, (which however is a disputable point[f],) yet it was God's will to accelerate their dispersion [g] by confounding their language, and not to wait till they should slowly and leisurely disperse of themselves. Thorns and briars were

[e] Gen. x. 25—32. See Perizon. Orig. Bab. cap. xiv. p. 280. Schroeer. Imper. Babyl. p. 49.

[f] See Stillingfleet, vol. ii. p. 263. But Dr. Wooton has with more particular care and accuracy discussed the question, in his Dissertatio de Confusione Linguarum Babylonica, printed in Chamberlayne's Collection of the copies of the Lord's Prayer in divers languages, p. 37, &c. And after both these, see a late pamphlet, entitled, Remarks on a Letter to Dr. W. in Relation to the natural Account of Languages. Cambridge, 1731.

[g] Vide Johan. Marckii Exercit. I. in Vet. Test. p. 61.

springing up every where, woods and thickets spreading themselves around, wild beasts increasing; and all this while the sons of Noah gathering together in a cluster, and designing to continue so, instead of dispersing, to replenish and cultivate the earth[h]. God would not bear their loitering at such a juncture, but interposed miraculously; and by confounding their language, confounded their ill-contrived projects, and dispatched them away, as he designed, to remote and distant quarters. What is there in this account that should so offend our Objector, to make him run riot against Moses? Or when will he give us a better *rationale* of the quick dispersion of mankind, than Scripture has thus done to our hands[i]?

## GEN. XII. 13.

SAY, I PRAY THEE, THOU ART MY SISTER, &c. Our censorious gentleman, who out of his great *benevolence* towards mankind, takes a particular pleasure in aspersing and blackening the best of the race, is here pleased to throw out his flouts upon the holy Patriarch Abraham. He begins thus[k]: "Does not the Scripture give many "instances of inspired persons, as much governed by their "passions as uninspired?" No; not altogether *so much*, though perhaps in some degree. For who does not observe, at first sight, a manifest difference between David, though set in the worst light, and Shimei his reviler? Or between the holy men of the Old Testament, or New, and those that maliciously defame them, and take pleasure in doing it? One of the cases is *pitiable*, while the other is *odious*. It is not necessary to assert, that the holiest that ever lived (one only excepted) were exempt from sin; for none of them were so: but yet it may be proper, for their honour, and for the honour of religion, to vindicate them against those malevolent detractors, who lay to their

[h] See Cumberland, Orig. Antiq. 159.

[i] See this article further vindicated against the Letter Writer, in a pamphlet, entitled, A Reply to the Letter to Dr. W. London, for J. Watts, 1731.

[k] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 243.

charge sins that they knew not. The Objector goes on to impeach in form. "Was not Abraham, though a pro-"phet, and so dear to God, that he would not destroy a "neighbouring town without acquainting him with it, "guilty of an incestuous marriage; his wife being his "sister by the father's side?" That is to say, as much as Lot was Abraham's brother; for so he is called [l], though really his nephew: and Sarah, most probably, was Lot's sister, that is, Abraham's niece. This gentleman perhaps does not know, that the names of *brother* and *sister*, in Scripture language, often mean no more than cousins or kinsfolks. Isaac, in the like circumstances with Abraham, called Rebecca his *sister* [m], who was only his *cousin*. And so Sarah was Abraham's sister, that is, his niece; her father being Abraham's *half-brother*, or brother by the father's side. Sarai, in all probability, was the daughter of Haran [n], Abraham's half-brother; and therefore the marriage of Abraham with Sarai was not so *incestuous* as this gentleman imagines.

But suppose the fact to be as he reports it, could he find out no kind excuse for Abraham, rather than charge it upon him as an article of *guilt*, and as a symptom of his being *governed by his passions?* He can be more favourable in his censure, when he has not some *friend of God* to throw dirt upon. This may appear by what he says upon the general case of *incest*, in another part of his book. "[o] What we call incest, is now, for many good reasons,

[l] Gen. xiii. 8. xiv. 16. [m] Gen. xxvi. 7.

[n] Gen. xi. 29. That *Iscah* is another name for *Sarai* is generally allowed by the most judicious commentators and critics, both Jews and Christians. And it is observable, that in ver. 31. Sarai is not called Terah's daughter, but his *daughter-in-law*, as married to his son. Should she not rather have been called by the nearer alliance, had she really been Terah's own daughter? Mr. Bayle, in his Dictionary, in the article *Sarah*, throws together many slight reasons, for want of one good one, to prove that Sarah was strictly Abraham's sister: as if reasons were to be *numbered*, rather than *weighed*. Her heathen name probably was *Iscah*: and upon her conversion she was called *Sarai*; and afterwards, for special reasons, *Sarah*. *See Hyde's Relig. vet. Persar.* p. 80. Conf. Witsii Ægypt. p. 99.

[o] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 345.

" not to be allowed of; yet it was a duty in the children " of Adam and Eve. And if the nearest of kin were now " thrown on a desert island, I see no reason but that they " might act as the first born pair did." So mild a casuist is this gentleman upon the general case. Might he not therefore have put on the same good humour and candor for Abraham's sake? It was but supposing some very particular circumstances obliging Abraham, as matters then stood, to marry his half-sister, and the necessity of the case would have acquitted him of the guilt of *incest*, by the author's own principles. Certain it is, that in those early ages of the world, the rules about marrying with their kindred were not so strict, neither was there any reason that they should[p]. The prohibited degrees came not to be minutely laid down, till the Levitical Law commenced; which has been the standard ever since, to those that admit Divine revelation. Otherwise it would be difficult to form a rule from the principles of reason only, that would not be liable to much dispute, especially as to the more remote degrees.

But the Objector has not yet done with Abraham: he goes on thus, rising in his scurrilities, and growing up to profaneness. " Did he not endeavour to betray her (Sa- " rah's) chastity to two kings, in disowning her to be his " wife; by which conduct, he got from one of them, " who entreated him well for her sake, men and maid ser- " vants, sheep, oxen, asses, and camels; and from the " other, a thousand pieces of silver, besides sheep, oxen, " men and women servants[q]?" Heavy charges these: but let us consider whether there be not some flaw in the evidence. The first article is, that " Abraham disowned " her to be his wife." Now, I think, *disowning* is as much as *denying* her to be his wife: when did Abraham so? He said not that she was his wife, nor that she was not; he spoke the truth in calling her his sister, or kinswoman;

[p] Vide Selden de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. v. cap. 9.

[q] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 243. compare 226, 229.

but not the whole truth, because she was that and more. He concealed what was proper, but said what was true. Had the Objector been as cautious, he had spared this part of the charge.

Mr. Bayle, in the same article, *Sarah*, employs all his wit to make Abraham and Sarah in that instance two liars; and puts cases where persons are obliged to tell the *whole* truth, as parallel to a case where they were not obliged to it, or rather were obliged to conceal *part*, for the preventing the ill consequences that might follow from declaring the *whole*. His pretence that Pharaoh and Abimelech, as "kings of the country," had a right to know the whole truth, is false and sophistical: for they were neither of them to be considered, in that case, as magistrates, or judges, sitting upon the seat of justice, but as *ravishers*, invading what did not belong to them on any supposition. And had such men as those a right to the *whole* truth, especially when *murder* might be the issue of it? Certainly, it was sufficient not to tell them an *untruth*, and to conceal as much as possible, consistently with *truth*. It is granted, that in many other cases, such a kind of concealing part, or a principal part, would be iniquity; not because it is *lying*, but because it may draw innocent persons into a snare, to their damage or prejudice. But when it is to prevent a greater evil than can be feared the other way, the case is widely different: so the resolution of this question depends upon the circumstances.

2. The second article of impeachment is, that the good Patriarch *betrayed* his wife's *chastity* to two kings. Better so, without further hurt, than to have betrayed her chastity and his own life too; and to bring upon the kings, or one of them, the guilt both of *adultery* and *murder*. But how was it *betraying* her chastity at all? Her chastity was as safe in that way, as it could be in any. Abraham could trust to her *virtue* against any thing but *force;* and *good* men would not force even a *single* woman. But if the kings should prove *wicked* men, they would not spare

her the sooner for her being a *wife*. I say then, that Abraham did not betray her chastity, supposing he had *good* men to deal with. But if we suppose the contrary, he would then have betrayed her chastity as much in owning her to be his wife, and would besides have very needlessly exposed his own life, and brought blood-guiltiness upon the land. If it be said that Sarah, at least, must at length have discovered herself to be Abraham's wife, or else have complied against conscience and duty, supposing the king who had taken her to be a wicked man; this indeed appears unavoidable in the case, had the thing gone on so far. But it was right in the meanwhile to evade the difficulty as long as it could lawfully be evaded, and to wait and see whether Divine Providence might not some way or other interpose, before the last extremity. The event answered: God did interpose, and brought off both Abraham and his wife harmless.

Upon the whole, I see nothing in Abraham's conduct, but what, all circumstances considered, was conformable to the rules of true prudence, and well becoming so wise and so good a man[r]. They do not seem to know Abraham, who can imagine that he could twice very deliberately have taken that method, had he not known it to be strictly lawful, yea, and his duty to do as he did: for if a man does not use all lawful human means in such cases, it is a culpable neglect, and a presumptuous tempting of God[s]. Abraham's practice in this matter appeared so innocent and laudable, that his son Isaac afterwards, without the least scruple, followed the example, and with the like success. In both of them, it was doing all that they wisely and justly might, trusting God for the event, but not tempting him by expecting his interposition for them, while they had it in their power to use any *innocent* means to save themselves.

[r] See Natalis Alexand. vol. i. p. 202, &c. August. contr. Faust. lib. xxii. 381, &c.

[s] Augustin, ibid. p. 383.

But the heaviest article with the Objector is, that Abraham, by this conduct, *got* a great deal: for he cannot bear that a *prophet* or a *priest* should get any thing. Whatever he *got*, it was plainly owing to the favour, and countenance, and blessing of God, who miraculously interposed to assist and comfort him: so that this flout is aimed directly against God himself, for being kind to Abraham. But it is the property of the Divine Being to be particularly kind and gracious to true and faithful men: and one would wonder what the Objector had been thinking of, to make any doubt of it. He goes on however still slandering of Abraham.

## GEN. XV. 8.

AND HE SAID, LORD GOD, WHEREBY SHALL I KNOW THAT I SHALL INHERIT IT? The words are Abraham's, after God had promised him the inheritance of the land of Canaan. The Objector thinks he has here caught the good man tripping in his *faith*; and thereupon, rejoicing, says, "And immediately after his faith was "counted to him for righteousness, did he not doubt of "God's promise till God spoke to him in a deep sleep[t]?" Now the whole force of the objection lies in the words במה אדע, which we render, *Whereby shall I know?* And which may as literally be rendered, *in what*, or *by what* shall I know? And the meaning may be, either by what *sign* shall I know, that I may believe it? or by what *circumstance* shall I know, that I may form a more exact idea of it? The latter construction appears the more natural, and suits best with what follows. God had not yet told him how, or when, or with what particular circumstances he should inherit the land of promise; but after casting him into a *deep sleep*, God was pleased to inform him of all particulars, as he lay in a dream. The whole context shows, that such is the drift and purport of the text in question: for in return to Abraham's request,

[t] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 244.

God does not so properly give him a *sign* to confirm his faith, (for what *sign* or *certainty* was there in the *dream*, more than in the *vision* before it?) as he gives him a particular description of the time, manner, and circumstances of fulfilling the promise. So the thing that Abraham desired was, to have the general promise made more particular, that he might have a clearer and more distinct idea of it. This was not doubting of what God had before said to him, but it was showing his satisfaction so far, and desiring him still to say more. In a word then, Abraham in asking, "whereby shall I know?" did not mean to ask by what *sign* he might know that the promise would be fulfilled; but whereby, or by what circumstances he might know *how*, or in what respects it should be fulfilled. Κατὰ τὶ γνώσομαι, say the Seventy, very rightly. As to what respects shall I know, that I may form an idea of it? See Le Clerc on the place, who gives much the same solution that I do. And the Objector, it is to be hoped, will not except against him, being, in his judgment, "as able a Divine as this, or perhaps any other age "has produced[u]."

## GEN. XVII. 10.

THIS IS MY COVENANT—EVERY MAN-CHILD AMONG YOU SHALL BE CIRCUMCISED. In opposition to this and other texts, which refer the original of the Jewish circumcision solely to Divine appointment, our Objector is pleased to account for it another way, as here follows[x].

"This institution, as is proved by Marsham, and others, "seems to be owing to the Egyptians, who thought all "to be profane who used it not: and it was after Abra- "ham had been in Egypt, that circumcision was insti- "tuted; in order, it is likely, to recommend his posterity "to the Egyptians, on whom they were for some ages to

[u] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 45.
[x] Ibid. p. 90.

"depend. And what makes this the more probable is, "that it was not till after the Lord had ordered Moses "into Egypt, that the Lord met him by the way in the "inn, and sought to kill him, for not circumcising his "son. And upon Joshua's circumcising the Israelites, "(circumcision not being observed during their stay in "the wilderness, when they had no communication with "Egypt,) the Lord himself says, THIS DAY HAVE I "ROLLED AWAY THE REPROACH OF EGYPT FROM OFF "YOU[x]." Before I come to examine this smooth account, it may be proper to take notice, that Celsus[y] of old, and after him Julian[z], objected much the same thing; and Sir John Marsham[a] has since dropped some hints, as if the Jewish circumcision had been borrowed from the Egyptians, or, however, came after theirs. But we need not suppose that our Objector looked so high as Celsus, or Julian, or even Marsham: all he has to say is plainly stolen from an English author[b] of later date, who is our Objector's oracle, and to whom he is indebted (though he has not been so fair as to own it) for every article of this charge. But to examine it distinctly.

1. It has not, neither can it be proved, that circumcision was in use at all among the Egyptians, or any where else, before Abraham's time. Neither Diodorus Siculus, nor Herodotus,[c] nor even Sanchoniatho can be of weight sufficient to determine this question. They are all *modern*, in comparison; and their stories ill supported. Some conjectures may be raised from the last of the three; and if Cronus be Ham, as a very good and great Prelate supposes[d], possibly he might first have used circumcision,

[x] Josh. v. 2—9. [y] Origen. contr. Cels. p. 17, 259.
[z] Cyrill. contr. Julian. p. 354.
[a] Marsham, Can. Chron. p. 72, 207. ed. Lond.
[b] Lord Shaftesbury's Charact. vol. iii. p. 52—55.
[c] Vid. Wits. Ægyptiaca, p. 223, &c. Basnag. Hist. Judaic. lib. v. cap. 8. Calmet, Dissert. on Circumcision. Natal. Alex. Ætat. 3. Diss. 6. S. Basnag. Exercit. Historico-Crit. p. 118. Saurin, Dissertat. on Genesis, p. 136.
[d] Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 38, 149, 150.

and from him the Egyptians might derive it: but nothing can be certainly affirmed of that matter: the contrary, for any thing I see, may still be more probable.

2. Were it certain, as it is not, that the Egyptians first practised circumcision, yet it would not from thence follow, that the Hebrews, or God of the Hebrews, took it from them, or had any respect to them in it. It is plain that Abraham submitted to it in obedience only to a Divine command, and he received it as a sign and seal of the covenant of grace between God and him. What relation has that to Egypt? Or if such regard was to be paid to the Egyptian rites, why was not Abraham circumcised before he went into Egypt, or at least while he sojourned there, to ingratiate himself with them? Why should it be deferred, on that supposition, to above twenty years after his leaving the country? Since the Objector conceives that Abraham's posterity, and Moses's son, were to be circumcised beforehand, in order to recommend them the more to the Egyptians at their first coming thither; why should not Abraham have been circumcised before he went down into Egypt, to make him the more welcome there? Was there such care taken to recommend his posterity to them, and yet none to recommend him, when it was more immediately wanted? But further: as to the care taken to recommend his *posterity*, (who were to depend, it seems, upon the Egyptians for some ages,) let us see how this pretence falls in with the rest. Why was Ishmael to be circumcised, and his sons, and Abraham's sons by Keturah; and why Esau afterwards, and his, who were none of the promised seed, and were not to depend upon Egypt? Besides, it looks odd and fanciful to imagine, that Abraham should begin this practice so early, near 200 years before there should be occasion for it: for so long it was between Abraham's circumcision and his posterity's going down into Egypt. Our author himself confesses, that God did not rigorously insist upon Moses's circumcising his son, till he was just going into Egypt: and yet he fancies that Abraham's

whole posterity were to be circumcised about 200 years together, before the time proper to prepare them all for Egypt; though eight parts of nine were never to sojourn there; and those that were to go, might more prudently have omitted such a painful rite, till they should have occasion for it. One would think, upon this hypothesis, that if circumcision had begun with Joseph, or however with Jacob, it had commenced full soon. The Objector observes, that "circumcision was not observed during "their stay in the wilderness, when they had no commu-"nication with Egypt." Why then was it observed, or instituted by Abraham, after he had left Egypt twenty years, or more; and long before his seed was to have any such close communication with the Egyptians? And why was circumcision again restored, after the forty years' stay in the wilderness, when the Israelites had once taken their final leave of Egypt? This gentleman, it is plain, has suffered himself to be imposed upon by his ingenious leader, a jocular man, who probably designed only to divert or to amuse his readers.

The pretence from Josh. v. and verse 9, is as ridiculous as the rest. For what occasion was there for "rolling away "the reproach of Egypt," (if uncircumcision was the reproach,) when they had done with Egypt, and had nothing to fear from it? But the "reproach of Egypt" may be understood in the passive, and not active sense; of the reproach they lay under, and not of what they threw upon others: in a word, it may be understood of the idolatry of Egypt, which was rolled away from the children of Israel, by their renewing the covenant of Abraham with Almighty God, when they were circumcised at Gilgal. There are several other constructions whereof the words are capable[e]: but I shall mention one only besides what I have already given; and it is this: it is not unreasonable to suppose, that the being circumcised

[e] Vid. Gussetii Vesperæ Groning. p. 21, &c.

might take off the reproach of the Egyptians, inasmuch as uncircumcision was a reproach, upon the Jewish principles [f], to all that were not circumcised; amounting to the same as *profane*, or *unclean* [g]. Upon the foot of this construction, the text of Joshua would afford a good argument to prove that the Egyptians were not circumcised. And if it were reasonable to suppose, that circumcision was instituted with a view to Abraham's posterity being to live in Egypt, we might then give this account of it; that it was done to prevent their mingling with the Egyptians, and to preserve them as a separate independent nation and people. But there seems to have been no more view to Egypt in that affair, than to all other nations that Abraham's posterity should have to do with.

3. Having shown that there is no ground to suspect that the Hebrew circumcision was borrowed from the Egyptians, or had any particular respect to Egypt [h]; it is the less material to inquire, which first used it, because little or nothing depends upon it: yet I esteem it highly probable, that circumcision was originally of Abraham, and by his sons conveyed to as many as have used it; and that the Egyptians in particular borrowed it from thence, by the Arabian Ishmaelites. This was the opinion of a learned writer of the sixth century, who speaks of it as a thing unquestionable [i]. And what makes it the more likely is, that they were not circumcised, as the Hebrews were, at the *eighth* day, but at thirteen years of age, or upwards of thirteen, after the example of Ishmael. I have indeed no authority for this fact, except St. Am-

[f] Gen. xxxiv. 14. Judg. xiv. 3. 1 Sam. xiv. 6. xvii. 26. 2 Sam. i. 20.

[g] Levit. xix. 23. Isa. lii. 1.

[h] The stale pretences of a Letter Writer to prove that circumcision began in Egypt, were fully obviated before in the authors above referred to, p. 53; and have been since baffled in a pamphlet entitled, A Reply to the Letter to Dr. Waterland. Printed for J. Watts, 1731.

[i] Ἐμαθον δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν Ἰσμαηλιτῶν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι περιτέμνεσθαι. *Anastas. Sinait.* Quæst. xxviii. p. 284. Conf. Wits. p. 127. Heidegger. tom. ii. Exerc. 7. Buddæi Analect. p. 17, 18. Huet. Dem. Evang. p. 159.

brose[i]. But he speaks of it positively, as a thing which he knew; I mean, of the circumcision of the males: as to females, he expresses himself more doubtfully. It is well known that the ancient Arabs, and after them the Saracens, deriving the practice, as well as their pedigree, from Ishmael, have used circumcision at or about thirteen years of age[k]; and that the Mahometans continue the same practice, varying a little as to the time; choosing the 13th, 14th, 15th, or 16th year of their age[l], but seldom doing it sooner.

I shall only add, in confirmation of what has been said, that the circumcising (if we may so call it) of the *females* also among the [m] Egyptians, is a further argument of their deriving the practice from the Arabs; because the Mahometans (who undoubtedly have derived it from the Arabs) do the same thing[n]. I shall proceed no farther in this argument, which has already passed through the hands of a multitude of learned men. Fabricius numbers up several[o]. I would chiefly recommend three Latin [p] authors, who have treated the subject as judiciously and accurately as any. And if the English reader would see the question briefly and closely discussed, he may turn to Bishop Patrick's Comment on the xviith of Genesis, or to Saurin's [r] Dissertations, or to Mr. Shuckford's clear and succinct history of the question[r], in the first volume of his learned and useful work.

But we have not yet done with the Objector. For be-

[i] Ægyptii quarto-decimo anno circumcidunt mares; et fœminæ apud eos eodem anno circumcidi feruntur. *Ambros. de Abraham.* lib. ii. cap. 11.

[k] Origen. Philocal. cap. xxiii. p. 77. Joseph. Antiq. lib. i. cap. 13.

[l] Reland. de Religione Mohammedica, lib. i. p. 75.

[m] Strabo, lib. xvii. p. 824. Vid. Ludolf. Comment. ad Histor. Æthiop. p. 273.

[n] Reland. de Rel. Mohammedica, p. 75. David. Millius, Dissert. x. p. 330.

[o] Fabricii Biblioth. Antiq. p. 383.

[p] Heidegger. Histor. Patriarch. tom. ii. p. 240, &c. Witsii Ægyptiaca, lib. iii. cap. 5. p. 223. Nat. Alex. vol. i. p. 222, &c.

[q] Saurin, Dissert. xv. p. 135.

[r] Shuckford's Sacred and Profane History, vol. i. p. 323, &c.

sides his endeavouring to throw a slur upon the rite of circumcision, from its pretended original, he attempts further to expose it as a thing wrong in itself, contrary to the dictates of the law of nature. His words are: "Had "such notions been adhered to, concerning the Divine "goodness, as the light of nature dictates, the Egyptians, "and some other Pagan nations, could never have thought "that cutting off of the foreskin (not to be performed "without great pain and hazard) could have been a reli- "gious duty acceptable to a good and gracious God, "who makes nothing in vain, much less what requires "cutting off, even with extreme danger and anguish. "Had nature required such an operation, nature being "always the same, would still have required it." It is obvious to observe, that the argument is directly *levelled* at the Jewish circumcision, under the name of *Pagan*, and strikes at the authority of all Divine revelation. The presumption which the Objector goes upon, and which indeed runs through his whole book, is, that he is wise enough to direct the counsels of Heaven, and to pass an unerring judgment upon all the works and ways of God. It is fact, that God did require circumcision: and "who "art thou, that repliest against God?" The modest way (if there be any) of opposing the Divine revelations, is to dispute the external evidences of the fact, and not to run into downright blasphemy, by conceitedly pretending to be wise enough to know every thing that belongs to God. Mr. Bayle might teach this author, that "when "we are certain God does such or such a thing, it is "blasphemy to say it is useless; God has his own rea- "sons[s]." This writer might be *certain* of the fact, if any historical fact whatever can be made certain.

But to return an answer to his cavils. "Cutting off "the foreskin," he says, "carries pain and hazard." Not much, I presume, if performed upon infants especially, eight days old; not more perhaps than the cutting the

[s] Bayle's Miscellan. Reflect. on a Comet, vol. ii. p. 451.

navel-string. As to the *hazard*, let him give us a list, when he is at leisure, of such as have died under the operation[t]. God makes nothing so "in vain," that nature should "require the cutting it off." Very well: and who pretends that *nature requires* any such operation? What we say is, that the God of nature required it *extraordinarily*, for many and great reasons, as things then stood; which reasons have since ceased, and so the law has been abrogated by the same authority that gave it. But a "good and gracious God," he says, "makes no-"thing in vain." A ridiculous argument! For it was not made *in vain*, were it made only for that very purpose, that there might be something to spare, something to cut off, as occasion should require, whenever God should intend to distinguish one people from another. In ordinary cases, it might be left entire, and better so than otherwise: in extraordinary, it might be cut off without any considerable pain or detriment, while many religious uses might be served by the practice, performed in obedience to Divine appointment. When the Objector has any thing less trifling to urge, he may again try his strength against Scripture: but he will always find, that his strength in this case is weakness; and that any much greater *wisdom* than his would still be but *foolishness*, when opposed to the unerring *wisdom* of God.

## GEN. XX. 17.

SO ABRAHAM PRAYED UNTO GOD, AND GOD HEALED ABIMELECH, &c. The civil reflection here made by the Objector is as follows[u]. "Abimelech, "who upon both Abraham's and Sarah's lying to him, "took Sarah, as the Lord himself owns, in the integrity "of his heart[x]: and though he sent her back untouched, "and gave considerable presents both to wife and hus-

[t] See this point defended against the cavils of a Letter Writer, in a piece entitled, An Answer to the Letter to Dr. Waterland, in relation to the Point of Circumcision. Printed for J. Crownfield, 1731.

[u] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 329. [x] Gen. xx. 6.

" band; yet neither he nor his were to be pardoned, till " Abraham, (the offended person,) being a prophet, was " to pray for him." It is hard to say, whether the iniquity or the profaneness of this paragraph be the greatest. In the first place, the charging Abraham and Sarah with a *lie* is petulant and abusive, and is committing the fault which he condemns: see above. Next, his flouting God Almighty for ordering Abimelech to beg Abraham's prayers, is shooting up his arrows against Heaven, to fall with vengeance upon his own head. A modest opposition to Divine revelation, in cases of real difficulty, might be in some measure excusable: but a malicious opposition, where there is not so much as colour for any objection at all, is unpardonable: it shows more of a disposition to revile or blaspheme, than to argue or debate; and upon the whole betrays a very dark mind. But to the matter in hand. What does the *Lord himself own*, in respect to Abimelech's integrity? Abimelech pleaded his integrity as to Sarah's being a married woman, and God admitted his plea so far. But though Abimelech did not know she was Abraham's wife, yet certainly he knew that she was not his *own* wife, and that he had no right to take her against her consent, and without leave of her friends. He sinned against the eighth Commandment by unjust seizure, though not against the seventh, by intending *adultery*. And he was not altogether innocent even as to that, because though he meant no *adultery*, yet he intended either *fornication* or *rape*, and would certainly have gone on with his lewd intentions, had not God *withheld* him[y]. Whatever this writer may think of *incontinence with a single woman*, wiser men will judge it a sin against the law of nature, and more so, when attended with *violence*. Abimelech therefore was not so *innocent* as this gentleman imagines, but stood in need both of God's pardon and Abraham's prayers. God insisted the more upon his applying to Abraham, because of the in-

[y] Gen. xx. 6.

jury he had intended him, though not the greatest; and for the sake of doing honour to his Prophet in a strange country, and to provide most effectually for his future peace and security there, both with prince and people.

GEN. XXI. 12.

AND GOD SAID UNTO ABRAHAM, LET IT NOT BE GRIEVOUS IN THY SIGHT, BECAUSE OF THE LAD, AND BECAUSE OF THY BOND-WOMAN; IN ALL THAT SARAH HATH SAID UNTO THEE, HEARKEN UNTO HER VOICE. FOR IN ISAAC SHALL THY SEED BE CALLED. Here the infidel says[z]; "This holy Prophet "was guilty of a very barbarous action, in sending out "Hagar, whom Sarah had given him to wife, and his "son Ishmael, to perish in the wilderness; for no other "reason, but because Sarah had seen the son of Hagar "mocking. And it is likely they had both perished, had "not an angel, calling out of heaven, directed him to a "well of water.—But in this last domestic quarrel, God "himself miraculously interposes, and says, IN ALL "THAT SARAH HATH SAID UNTO THEE, HEARKEN "UNTO HER VOICE." The Objector is so eager to write blasphemy, that he forgets to write sense. *Barbarous*, and by *Divine* command too! How is it possible? The sacred historian, it must be owned, has observed both decorum and consistency, and has guarded effectually against every thing but calumny. The Objector, in order to form his accusation, sets out with a falsehood, that Abraham did the thing for "no other reason, but because "Sarah had seen the lad mocking;" and yet he observes in the close, that God himself *interposed*, and commanded Abraham to do it. Is a *Divine* command, and backed with a *reason* too, (FOR IN ISAAC SHALL THY SEED BE CALLED,) is all that *no reason* at all? And if God, who is *all-sufficient*, and can supply all wants, (and did abundantly supply them in the case of Hagar and Ish-

[z] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 329.

mael;) I say, if God commanded them to be sent out naked and destitute, thereby taking the care of them upon himself; could it be *barbarous* in Abraham to commit them, in such a case, to Divine Providence; that is, to much abler and better hands than his own? Let the story be taken as Moses has told it, with all its circumstances, and then let the Objector find any flaw in it, if he can. But is this his way of treating a subject of the *last importance*, to sit down and *invent* any *false* accusation whatever against Scripture, because he cannot find matter for a *true* one? This, again, is the man that boasts of his *sincerity*. I do not think it necessary to enter farther into the case of Hagar and Ishmael, in order to show that their circumstances were not so very calamitous, in themselves considered; because I have said enough to clear Abraham of the charge here made. But if the reader desires a more particular account of their circumstances, he may see it ingeniously drawn out at length, by a very good writer, in a work just come to my hands [a].

## GEN. XXII. 10.

AND ABRAHAM STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND, AND TOOK THE KNIFE TO SLAY HIS SON. The Objector, after first taking a deal of trifling pains to prove (what is impossible) that the Levitical law approved and countenanced *human* sacrifices, comes at length to the famous case of Abraham's submitting to the Divine command, which had enjoined him to offer up his son Isaac for a burnt-offering. Upon this case, the Objector thus expresses himself: "[b] The Jews could not think it absolutely unlawful for a father to sacrifice an innocent "child, since Abraham was highly extolled for being "ready to sacrifice his only son; and that too without "the least expostulation, though he was importunate "with God to save an inhospitable, idolatrous, and in-

[a] Shuckford's Sacred and Profane Hist. vol. ii. p. 16, &c.
[b] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 97.

" cestuous city." It may first be observed, that the whole thought is stolen from a noble [c] writer, and without notice, as before. The words, as they lie there, run thus: " It appears, that even the elder of these Hebrew " princes was under no extreme surprise on this trying " revelation. Nor did he think of expostulating, in the " least, on this occasion; when at another time he could " be so importunate for the pardon of an inhospitable, " murderous, impious, and incestuous city." Gen. xviii. 23.

The reader will take notice here, that that noble writer had chosen proper epithets for the city of Sodom, two of which his retailer also has taken, *inhospitable* and *incestuous:* but he has left out *murderous* and *impious*, and substituted *idolatrous;* an epithet which there is no foundation for in the Scripture story, and therefore not made use of by that noble lord. There seems to be something of low cunning in our writer's clapping in *idolatrous:* for undoubtedly he would have it thought, that all wickedness is owing to *idolatry* or *superstition*, and that to [d] priests; and he would not have it supposed, that men can be wicked who are *impious* only, and have no *external* religion at all: for what then becomes of his sovereign *law of nature*, which would prevent or correct all disorders? He seems to suppose, that Sodom could never have been so *inhospitable* or *incestuous*, if they had not had some *religion* or other, the parent of all mischief and the cause of all confusions. Such appears to be his turn of thinking and arguing quite through his book; and therefore it is natural to suppose, that his own avowed principles led him to insert *idolatrous*, and to leave out *impious*. But why he dropped *murderous*, I cannot say; unless it was the better to cover his design in leaving out *impious*, that both might appear to have been omitted by chance. However that be, come we next to consider the

[c] Lord Shaftesbury's Charact. vol. iii. p. 124.
[d] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 379.

case of Abraham's sacrifice, and to vindicate the same against the cavils both of this author and his leader.

1. The Jews most certainly could not think it *ordinarily* lawful to sacrifice any innocent man, woman, or child; because the law had forbidden it, and had taken particular care that the *first-born* should not be *sacrificed*, (though in a certain sense devoted or consecrated to God,) but should serve the [e] priests, or be *redeemed*. Of this I may say more hereafter, when I come to consider Levit. xxvii. 28. But whatever the ordinary rule might be, the Jews had more sense than to imagine it unlawful, or not their bounden duty, to sacrifice man, woman, or child, when God himself should expressly command or require it. For why should not God have as much right to demand the life of any, even the most innocent man, by a *knife*, or a *sword*, as by a *fever* or *pestilence*, by a *lion* or *bear*, or other instrument whatever? And if a man be employed in it by God's express order, he is God's executioner in doing it, and only pays a debt which God has at any time a sovereign power and right to demand of him; though it be a son, or a daughter, or any the dearest friend. In short, the Divine command is a circumstance which changes the very nature and quality of the act, which makes *killing* no *murder*, no iniquity, but duty, and strict justice.

2. Abraham's readiness to do as God had commanded him, without *expostulating*, shows the excellency of his faith, and is a high commendation of his humility, modesty, resignation, and unreproveable integrity. When he *expostulated* in behalf of Sodom, he might handsomely do it, having no self-concern in it, more than as he was a lover of mankind. But to have expostulated in the case of his *own son*, in whom he had so near a concern, and who was his second self, if I may so speak; that would have been unworthy of Abraham's great soul and most exalted mind. He knew what respect, honour, and awful

[e] Numb. xviii. 15, 16.

deference was due to the God of heaven, and would have disdained to let any narrow selfish principle interpose between him and duty. He could plead for *others*; such was his large extensive charity: for *himself* he could not plead; such was his modesty, ingenuity, and disinterested piety[f]. He had been well acquainted with God, now for fifty years or more, and knew his manner of appearing, and manifesting himself to him. Being secure of the main thing, that the order was from God, (to whom he owed every thing, even that very son now demanded of him,) he readily submitted; having never learned to dispute with unerring Wisdom, when required to obey. He was sensible that the offering up his son to God was no more than paying a debt, resigning up a trust, or returning a loan. Besides, he had good reason to believe he should shortly again receive him from God who had before given him, and who had promised that in Isaac should his "seed be called." Excellent is the account of Bishop Cumberland; which, because it is not in every one's hands, I shall here transcribe.

"This faith concerning his resurrection, in case he had "been offered, was the true cause of his readiness to "obey that command, as we are assured by the Apostle[g]: "on which account also he shows, that a Christian's "faith is like Abraham's, and in like manner to be re-"warded; because they believe on God, as one who "raised their Lord Christ from the[h] dead.

"This makes his case, even if he had actually slain his "son as a sacrifice, (being before assured that he must "shortly be raised again, and have a great family, which

[f] It may be further said, that Abraham interceded for the Sodomites as objects of God's wrath, who would suffer by death; but not for his son, as being the object of *Divine love*, and certain to be a gainer by it. The former were demanded for punishment, which wanted an intercessor: the latter, for an occasion of farther manifestation of Divine goodness, which called for compliance, and not for intercession. A curse was the end of one, and a blessing the end of the other.

[g] Heb. xi. 17, 19. Rom. iv. 17, 18. [h] Rom. iv. 23, 24, 25.

" within 400 years should come out of Egypt, and possess " Canaan,) to be unlike all the heathen murdering of " children in sacrifice, when they have no hope that they " shall be restored to them by a speedy resurrection: for " if Isaac had then died, his death must have been a sleep " for a short time, because he must quickly be awaken- " ed, to be the father of many nations, the Edomites as " well as the Israelites; besides the Christians, who were " to be his children by imitation of his virtues.

" Christ alone could thus offer his human nature, be- " cause he had full assurance of his resurrection on the " third day. And this is the only sacrifice of a man (who " yet never saw corruption) which God ever accepted. " And yet even in that case, above the piety that was " called for in Abraham's case, there was an extraordi- " nary expiation for the sins of all mankind, and a great " example both of martyrdom for the true religion, and " of the greatest love to the universal Church. *So care-* " *ful hath God been to give no example or encouragement* " *to such inhuman sacrifices, in which there is no ground to* " *expect a miraculous resurrection of the person offered*[i]." Thus far that judicious and learned Prelate.

I need not here enter into the dispute, whether the barbarous custom of offering human sacrifices was earlier than Abraham, or whether it was afterwards taken up in imitation of this instance of Abraham's offering up (though not slaying) his son Isaac. It might be earlier, without derogating at all from the worth and excellency of what Abraham did; since he acted upon better warrant, and more rational and much nobler principles, than those inhuman sacrificers did: or it might be later, and yet not taken up in imitation of Abraham, or with any view at all to his illustrious pattern; which the Pagan sacrificers either knew little of, or very carelessly observed. I must own, I incline to think, that that barbarous custom was

[i] Cumb. Sanchoniatho, p. 139, 140.

earlier than Abraham; as Sir John Marsham and Sharrock [k] have suggested, and Bishop Cumberland [l] has rationally maintained: though the stream of learned men, as Dr. Hyde [m], Natalis Alexander [n], Bochart [o], Heidegger [p], Witsius [q], and Bishop Patrick [r], have taken the other side of the question; and Mr. Shuckford [s] now lately, for reasons which are not contemptible, have fallen in with them. Mr. Bedford, I observe, in his very learned and elaborate [t] work, acquiesces in Bishop Cumberland's account, adding some improvements of his own. And to this account, for the present at least, I am willing to subscribe: First, Because the other opinion seems to load the example of Abraham beyond what it can well bear; especially considering that he did not slay his son, and that the stopping him by an angel from heaven, in the very article of time, was a much better argument against human sacrifices than a probative command, not executed, could be for it. Secondly, Because it seems to reflect too hardly upon Divine wisdom and forecast, to suppose that God himself was the occasion of introducing that barbarous practice, by an indifferent private command, proper to a single person; and which, for any thing that appears, might have been spared, rather than minister to so much mischief. Thirdly, Because it appears more likely, that God designed by that very instance to discourage and discountenance *human* sacrifices, though at the same time he intended to show, that he requires all men to be strictly obedient to his commands,

[k] Marsham's Can. Chronic. p. 76. edit. Lond. Sharrock de Fin. et Offic. p. 497.
[l] Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 134, &c. 170.
[m] Hyde's Rel. vet. Pers. cap. ii. p. 29.
[n] Natal. Alex. vol. i. p. 232, &c.
[o] Bochart's Canaan, lib. ii. cap. 2. p. 712.
[p] Heidegger's Histor. Patr. tom. ii. exerc. 9.
[q] Witsii Ægyptiaca, lib. iii. c. 7.
[r] Patrick in loc.
[s] Shuckford, vol. ii. p. 24.
[t] Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 338.

and to prefer him above any the nearest and dearest relations [u]. Fourthly, Because it is most probable that the Gentiles, having learned by tradition from Noah or from Adam, that the sacrifice of the life of a beast would atone for sins, might too hastily infer from thence, that the sacrificing the lives of men, as more valuable and precious than the other, would much more do it; and thereupon they grafted the practice of *human* sacrifices: and hence arose that vile custom, set on perhaps also and encouraged by *demons*.

Upon the whole, whatever side we take in this question, *infidels* can make no just advantage of it. For it can never be proved, either from this instance, or from any other example or rule in Scripture, that the God of Israel approved those cruel practices of offering up human blood in sacrifice to him.

I have now run through all the Objector's cavils or calumnies against Abraham, a man of the fairest and brightest character to be met with in all history, and therefore made the object of our writer's spleen and satire. But he might better throw dirt any where than here, where none will stick. He might more prudently have been contented with his stale, but much more plausible, calumnies upon *priests* in general, or Christian *clergy* in particular. But when he aims his scurrilities at Abraham, the *friend of God*, and through him at the God of Abraham too, he betrays his thoughtlessness and want of discretion. Abraham, from the time of his call, (A. M. 2083.) became the great restorer and reviver both of *natural* and *revealed* religion to a corrupt world. By his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, and six more, and by his nephew Lot, he spread *religion* and *virtue* wide and far, their descendants being numerous as the stars of heaven, and growing up into many and great nations. When our Objector speaks of the world's being left without revelation for four thousand years [x], he knows not what he

[u] See Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 141.

[x] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 375.

talks of: he seems to have forgot what was done in the first ages of the world, when the revealed will of God was made known to all mankind[y]; or what was done, after the flood, to Noah and his sons; and what four hundred and twenty-seven years after to Abraham; and how his descendants carried the knowledge of the true religion wide and far, which continued for a time; and how the Jews afterwards, by their numberless dispersions, were a kind of preachers of righteousness to as many as they came to. God has neither concealed himself entirely from mankind, nor made his manifestations too cheap and familiar; but he has observed a *medium* between the two extremes, such as was proper, and which infinite wisdom could best judge of. I just hint these things by the way, as they occurred to me upon the mention of Abraham. I shall only observe farther, that Abraham's fame reached much farther than the Jewish Scriptures reached, among the Gentiles, among the Arabians especially, his descendants: and there are some remains of his religion and memory among the Persians at this day[z]. Our caviller's singling out that *great* and *good* man for the object of his scorn and ridicule is no argument of his *taste*, or of his love to *virtue*, or of his *benevolence* to mankind.

## GEN. XXVII. 19.

AND JACOB SAID UNTO HIS FATHER, I AM ESAU THY FIRSTBORN, &c.

The Objector says, (p. 263.) "There are things either "commanded or approved of in Scripture, which might "be apt to lead men astray. A man who looks no fur- "ther than that, might think it no crime to cheat his el- "der brother, impose on his aged parent, and by a lie ob- "tain his blessing; nay, hope that God would confirm it, "when he sees how Jacob obtained the greatest blessing

[y] See Jenkins's Reasonableness, &c. vol. i. p. 46, &c.

[z] See Hyde's Relig. vet. Persar. cap. ii. iii. Fabricii Cod. Pseudepigr. V. T. in Abraham.

" from God." The colours are here laid too strong, and the invective against Jacob (and the God of Jacob) pushed too far, beyond all rules of decency and equity. In the first place, Jacob was not so much to blame in that affair as the objection represents. In the next place, supposing Jacob to have been ever so much to blame, it ought not to be suggested, that the unjustifiable part of his conduct was either " commanded or approved of in " Scripture;" for Scripture says no such thing, neither can any such consequence be justly drawn from the Scripture account. The facts are there related, without either approbation or censure: and God made use of that conduct of Jacob's (be it supposed right or wrong) to very good and great purposes, by his overruling providence. Divine wisdom often makes use of the sins and follies of men to wise and excellent ends, bringing good out of evil. In the meanwhile, we are never to take our measures of good and evil merely from Scripture *examples;* because one design of Scripture is to serve the purposes of *humility* and *watchfulness,* by recording human frailties. The *law* of *God* is the rule, not the *examples* of mere men. When any one draws *false* consequences from Scripture examples, the fault is not in the *Scripture,* but in the *man* that draws them. If Scripture must be charged and impeached as often as men *reason ill* from it, then may also the first principles of *natural religion,* or any thing else whatever, be in like manner impeached, because foolish or partial men may wrest and pervert it to ill purposes. If there be any thing in the argument, it points directly against the *use of reason;* as reason is liable to *abuse,* and human faculties are imperfect or depraved. A man that has the light of *Scripture* and of *reason* too, is undoubtedly more secure against error in such cases, than he that has the light of *reason* only. For Scripture leaves reason all the strength and force it had, whole and entire, without the least diminution; never crosses upon it, never clashes with it: but as it furnishes reason with fresh notices and clearer views of the whole case, it is assistant

to it for the forming a more exact and correct judgment. Both together therefore are as much better than either singly, as the whole is larger than a part. Particularly as to *fraud* and *lying*, and whatever else is akin to them, Scripture is *clearer* and more *express* against them, than the *law of nature* is; and besides carries more *authority* along with it, and binds us to obedience by the strongest and most engaging sanctions. It is a weak thing therefore to argue for the throwing off Scripture, for fear the example, suppose of Jacob, should lead any man astray: for the *Scripture rule* is the best preservative against it, being indeed stricter, stronger, and clearer, than the mere *law of nature* appears to be.

To return to Jacob's case: I do not know indeed whether it be justifiable in every particular, upon strict Scripture principles: I suspect that it is not. But upon the *looser* principles of mere natural religion, (if the Objector is any judge of them,) perhaps it may bear. For however rigid a casuist the Objector seems to be when he has any good man to blacken, or any flout to throw upon God, he can be milder at other times, when his *malice* or his *memory* happens to sleep; as may appear from the apology he makes for *lying* and *falsehood* on some special occasions. His words are, "[z] Friendship will sometimes "oblige men to *deceive* people, when it manifestly *tends* "*to their good*, and *none are prejudiced* by it: and all "practise it with relation to children, sick people, and "men in passion.—And if men (as none scruple it) may "bid their servants say, *they are not at home*, and do *se*-"*veral other things of this nature*; why may they not, "when silence will be interpreted to *their prejudice*, de-"ceive impertinent people in such matters where they "have no concern?" Thus far the Objector could plead for *officious lying*, when he did not think of Jacob, but was contriving some easy principles for himself and his own fraternity. By the same principles it will not be

[z] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 347.

difficult to defend the good Patriarch Jacob, who ought at least to have been commended by the Objector, for acting so agreeably to *nature's* law. Let us try the experiment.

1. In the first place, it was a part of *friendship* to *deceive* the good old man, who was going to do a *wrong* thing. It was deceiving him into what was *right;* and what himself owned to be so in the conclusion[a]. The truth is, God had determined long before, (before the birth of the twin-brothers,) that the blessing should rest upon the head of Jacob[b]: and he had given some very particular and significant intimations of it. Rebecca observed and remembered them; and therefore judged it strange that her husband Isaac could have a thought of giving the blessing at length to Esau, against the plain direction of God. But the good man's love and tenderness for his eldest son Esau blinded him for a time, and was like to betray him into a very gross mistake. In these circumstances, Rebecca having set her heart upon the blessing, and grieved to see what Isaac was going to do, in prejudice to his son Jacob, and in contradiction to the will of God; I say, Rebecca, in that case, thought of a wile, and by the help of *officious lies*, diverted Isaac from evil, and directed him to good. In a word, her *friendship* towards her husband *obliged* her to *deceive* him, when it *manifestly tended to his good*, according to the rule of *reason* laid down by the Objector.

2. The only remaining thing to be proved is, that "none were prejudiced by it." By *prejudiced*, I suppose, the Objector means, prejudiced in their *rights*, that is, *injured*. Now there can be no pretence of any person being *injured* in this whole transaction, except it was Esau. But it is demonstration that he had no *injury* done him. For, not to mention that he had *sold* his *birthright*, and bound himself by *solemn oath*[c] to insist no more upon it,

[a] Gen. xxvii. 33.
[b] See Gen. xxv. 23.
[c] Gen. xxv. 33. Heb. xii. 16.

it is further plain all along from the history, that God designed the blessing for Jacob; and so it was invading Jacob's right for any one else to pretend to it. Esau was indeed the *injurious* ravisher, who against the *will of God* before declared, against his own sacred *promise*, and more sacred *oath*, feloniously endeavoured to defraud his brother, and to *steal* away the blessing from him. Upon the whole, it is evident, that Isaac, in that case, was *deceived* for his *good*, and that *no one* was *prejudiced by it*, but many excellent purposes were served in it. Therefore by the *law of nature* (as interpreted by the Objector) Jacob was entirely guiltless: and so this Scripture example is not more liable to *lead* us *astray*, than the *law of nature* is: which was to be proved.

Nevertheless, I must entreat my readers to observe, that I do not take upon me to acquit Jacob or Rebecca of all blame in that instance. There were several very good and laudable circumstances in what they did, which might move a merciful God to give a blessing to it; though it might not be strictly right in every circumstance, if rigorously examined by the measures of the sanctuary. *Scripture casuistry* is not altogether so mild and favourable as the casuistry of this gentleman. But it was a weak thing of him to charge *Scripture* as not strict enough, when his own *law of nature* is looser; and to fall so foul upon Jacob, for doing what he not only *lawfully* might do, but *ought* to have done, if there be any truth in this writer's doctrine concerning *officious lies*. If any one has a mind to see this case of Jacob more minutely discussed upon *Christian* principles, I refer him to a judicious author [d] in the margin. It is sufficient for my purpose to have observed, that, taking the thing either way, Scripture stands clear of all impeachment in that article; and that the charge which the Objector has drawn up against it recoils entirely upon that *law of na-*

[d] Heidegger. Histor. Patriarch. tom. ii. exercit. 14. p. 400, &c. Confer Pfeiffer, p. 164.

*ture* which he is recommending as a better rule than *Scripture* to go by.

## GEN. XXXVIII. 13, &c.

Upon the history of Judah and Tamar, as related in this chapter, the Objector has this remark: "We are to "use our reason in judging of the actions of the most ce- "lebrated persons of old: else, to give no other instances "than the transactions between Judah and Tamar, we "might approve her stratagem in getting to lie with her "father-in-law[e]." No doubt but "we are to use our "reason" in every thing: it was given for our *use*. And it will be a heavy article of condemnation upon this gentleman, that when he sits upon *Scripture*, he lays his *reason* aside as *useless*, following only the corrupt bias of his lusts, malice, or profane levity; throwing out petulant scoffs, raillery, and buffoonery, instead of *arguments*. One can scarce think him in earnest, when he charges Scripture with giving countenance to Tamar's *stratagem*. If he really thought that Scripture had approved such impurities, it would very probably have had fairer quarter at his hands. I am much mistaken if it be not, in his account, one of the greatest offences which Scripture carries with it, that it is too *pure* and *chaste*, and gives no manner of countenance to lewd *stratagems*. This makes him take refuge in his pretended *law of nature;* which, according to him, forbids not "incontinence in single per- "sons[f]," but which teaches that "that warm desire which "is implanted in human nature cannot be criminal when "pursued after such a manner as tends most to promote "the happiness of the parties," (he does not say, happiness of the *public*,) "and to propagate and preserve the "species[g];" and which teaches also, that "provided due "care be taken to continue the race of mankind, there is "no moral turpitude in any unnatural lusts whatever:"

[e] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 276. [f] Ibid. p. 119.
[g] Ibid. p. 345.

which is plainly the doctrine of the famous Author of the Rights[h], and, I suppose, upon the foot of his *law* of *nature*. Such loose casuists as these can never seriously condemn *lewd* stratagems. But *Scripture* does it, and under pain of *hell-fire*, as every man knows that knows Scripture; and therefore it can be nothing but grave banter in the Objector to charge Scripture as too loose upon this head. But let us hear how he enforces his plea, to make it look like reasoning. Speaking of Judah, he says; "For though before he knew himself to be the "man, he was resolved to burn her;" yet after, he cried, "SHE HAS BEEN MORE RIGHTEOUS THAN I. And "for this righteousness she was blessed with two twins, "from whom the noble house of Judah, with all its "kings, and the Messiah himself was descended[i]." Passing over the buffoonery and profane turn of this paragraph, let us only examine the author's acuteness or honesty in saying, "for this righteousness she was blessed "with twins."

Does Scripture say any thing of Tamar's *righteousness* in playing the harlot; or of her being *blessed* for it? Not a syllable. Perhaps the Author of the Rights could have written her panegyric, for her procuring *the existence of* two *immortal souls* at any rate. He might have deemed it great *righteousness* in her; as he might think it a *crime* next to *self-murder*, in such a case, to *abstain*. But *Scripture* knows no such doctrine, nor would ever have reck-

[h] See the Author of the Rights, &c. p. 264. His words at length are,

"The desire of propagating the species being by Divine wisdom the most "strongly implanted in man, next to that of his own preservation, abstain-"ing from it must be such a crime as is exceeded only by refusing to pre-"serve one's own being; and on some considerations greater; since this "prevents the existence of an immortal soul, that only dissolves the union "between it and the body: and both equally would, with a few years differ-"ence only, put an end to the race of mankind; *the only* reasons of the mo-"ral turpitude of unnatural lusts."

Qu. Whether he means that *celibacy* is the next greatest crime to self-murder, or only *continence* in *celibacy*?

[i] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 279.

oned Tamar among the *righteous*, upon any such *lewd* account. Tamar indeed had kept her *faith* with Judah for a considerable time, living long a widow in expectation of being married (as she ought to have been) to his son Shelah. In that respect, Tamar had been more *righteous* and *faithful* towards Judah, than Judah had been to her. But it is not necessary to say, that she was strictly *righteous* at all, but that she was *less to blame* than Judah in a certain respect. For when Judah said, SHE HATH BEEN MORE RIGHTEOUS THAN I, he intended not to commend himself as *righteous* at all, but to signify in other words, that he had been *more to blame* in that matter than she, as having defrauded her of Shelah, who of right belonged to her, and ought to have married her. A frank and ingenuous confession from Judah, wherein he showed himself so far an impartial judge, and a considerate man. Hereupon he acquitted her, revoking the sentence he had pronounced against her. And now, what is there in the whole story of that affair, that can give the least countenance or colour to the Objector's calumnies[k]?

I shall here take leave of him for this time, having run through all the texts of Genesis. The rest, that are to come, are much thinner spread; so that two parts more may take in all the texts of the Old Testament; unless the Objector's *second* part should appear in the meanwhile, and furnish us with new cavils upon other texts. It will be easy enough for him to do it, requiring neither *wit*, nor *judgment*, nor *learning*, nor any thing but dull malice, and want of better employ. What he means by thus endeavouring to propagate *irreligion*, he best knows. One would think, if *infidelity* were a thing so valuable and pleasurable, he might most prudently confine it among a few select friends: for it is demonstration, that the farther it spreads, the less it is worth to them, if it be really worth any thing. If licentiousness once goes *round*, all the satisfaction it aims at is entirely lost, and expires in

[k] Compare St. Austin contr. Faust. lib. xxii. p. 396, &c.

confusion: for where *all* have much more liberty than they ought to have, it is certain *none* can have any. It is as much the interest of a set of *infidels*, that the rest of the world should be *believers*, as it is the interest of any select number of *knaves*, that all the world besides should be *honest*. Why then this overabundant zeal to publish infidel systems, and to diffuse licentiousness all over the kingdom? The case I take to be this: when men are stung with *guilt*, and are conscious of their own *shame*, they are uneasy under it, and much afflicted by it: it lies as a load upon their thoughts, and they cannot forbear talking of it, and trying all possible ways to bear up against it. It is a kind of relief to them to have something to say in all companies to confront *religion*, (the thing that galls them,) and something to *write* also, if they chance to have any smattering in *letters*. It is not enough for them to enjoy their beloved vices by themselves; they want some approbation, countenance, and encouragement from others, to render their vices more delectable, and to support themselves against their guilty doubts, fears, and misgivings. They are not fully persuaded in their own minds, of what they would persuade others to: for if they were, they might be content with it, and silently repose and rest themselves upon it. But their inward uneasiness prompts them to be saying something, however silly and trifling; and so at the same time that they are defending *infidelity*, they sufficiently discover that they are not satisfied with it, nor can ever enjoy it with any true peace. In a word, they are "like the "troubled sea, when it cannot rest," through the consciousness they have of their detestable principles and practices: and then what wonder is it, if they perpetually "cast up mire and dirt?"

# SCRIPTURE VINDICATED;

IN ANSWER TO A BOOK

ENTITLED,

*CHRISTIANITY AS OLD AS THE CREATION.*

PART II.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

## A POSTSCRIPT,

In Answer to such as pretend that the Bulk of Mankind, for Four Thousand Years, were without *Revelation*, and had no other Guide but *Reason*.

# EXODUS.

HAVING concluded my First Part with Genesis, I have nothing now to do but to go on directly to Exodus. There has indeed appeared a pamphlet called a Second Address, which pretends to make some exceptions to what I had written upon the former texts: but the performance is so low, that my readers would not excuse my stopping one moment about it. The author, I perceive, had exhausted himself in his *great work*, and it is but very little reinforcement we are to expect from him. He has shown that he can *rail*, which nobody doubted of; and so he might as well have spared himself this new trouble. He shall say what he pleases, for the present, of the Vindicator. I have *Apostles*, *Prophets*, and holy *Patriarchs* to defend, in the first place, against his unrighteous accusations.

So, with God's assistance, I proceed to the work I had undertaken, to maintain the authority and purity of the word of God against the foolish imaginations of perverse men.

### EXOD. II. 12.

HE SLEW THE EGYPTIAN, AND HID HIM IN THE SAND.

The Objector [a] has a fling at Moses, for slaying the Egyptian (as he conceives) without sufficient warrant or authority. But it will be proper to let the reader know, how this gentleman introduces his censure upon that ser-

[a] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 269.

vant of God. He insinuates in the page before [b], that a *spirit* of *cruelty* (though he, out of his great modesty, "dares not call it so") had prevailed much under the Old Testament: and he brings in the Prophet Elias as an example of it. Then he proceeds as follows:

"And if it be contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, even "to wish to imitate that great Prophet, so favoured of "God; the same will hold as strongly in relation to all "the actions that are of a like nature, of other holy men, "though quoted with approbation in the New Testa-"ment: as Moses is for acting the part of a magistrate, "when a private man, in destroying his fellow-subject. "And if there is a contrast between the spirit of the Old "and the spirit of the New Testament, ought not we "Christians to stick to the latter? &c."

What "we Christians" ought to do, is very well understood by honest and sensible Christians, who want none of his insidious instructions or abusive admonitions. Old Testament precedents (which he here alludes to) may be as safely followed as any in the *New*, if they be really and strictly *precedents;* that is, if the cases be similar, and the circumstances parallel. But without that, they are no precedents. As to the formal tale he tells of a *contrast*, or contrariety, between the spirit of the Old, and the spirit of the New Testament, it is (in the sense he takes it) mere invention and romance. That good and great Prophet Elias did no more than was proper for a man so "favoured of God" to do in his circumstances: yea, what he did was God's doing, the same God both of Old Testament and New, and the same spirit. Elias did nothing contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, nor with any other spirit than St. Paul acted by, [c] when he struck Elymas the sorcerer with *blindness;* or St. Peter, [d] when he denounced present death upon Ananias and Sapphira. What the Objector builds upon is nothing but a misin-

[b] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 268.
[c] Acts xiii. 11.
[d] Acts v. 5.

terpretation of Luke ix. 55, 56. which shall be distinctly considered in its place: to examine it now would lead us too far from the business in hand.

However that matter stands, the Objector shows no acuteness in bringing in the instance of Moses, to make out his pretended *contrast* between the Old and New Testament. He should have found out some express approbation of that act of Moses in the *Old* Testament, and then have confronted it by something in the *New*, in order to show the *contrast*. But instead of this, he cites a precedent of the Old Testament, "quoted" (as he owns) "with approbation in the New:" there it seems is the *contrast* between *Old* and *New*, that both agree in the self-same thing, one in setting the precedent, the other in approving it; which shows that the spirit of both is one.

But, I suppose, the sly insinuation which he chiefly aims at (though he has committed a blunder in thus bringing it in) is, that the *New* Testament, at which he strikes all the while he is commending the *spirit* of it, has approved something which he conceives to be *wrong*, has approved a *private* man's acting the *part* of a *magistrate*, in destroying a fellow-subject. But if that be his drift, he is very easily defeated in that point also. For since that act of Moses is *approved* in the New Testament, by St. Stephen speaking by the Spirit of God, we may be confident that Moses had a Divine direction for what he did. That circumstance was omitted in the history of Exodus: but the same Spirit of God, speaking in St. Stephen, has since supplied it, and has thereby justified what Moses did. Seeing then that St. Stephen's words do amount to an *approbation* of that act of Moses, (as the Objector himself allows,) the rest lies in a very little compass, and admits of a short decision. It is only this: whether St. Stephen "full of the Holy Ghost," or this gentleman full of himself and his own imaginations, be most likely to pass a true judgment upon the case. It cannot be here pretended, that the nature of the thing

was such as no *Divine* warrant could justify. God has an indisputable power and right over the lives of all men: and so if Moses acted by *Divine* warrant, he had as clear a right as any *magistrate* could claim, and he needed no other, because he could have no higher authority.

## EXOD. III. 18.

—AND YOU SHALL SAY UNTO HIM, (Pharaoh,) THE LORD GOD OF THE HEBREWS HATH MET WITH US: AND NOW LET US GO (WE BESEECH THEE) THREE DAYS' JOURNEY INTO THE WILDERNESS, THAT WE MAY SACRIFICE TO THE LORD OUR GOD.

This precedent, among others, appears to our Objector *very surprising*[e]: and why? For some weighty reason, no doubt, as usual. He goes on. "The Lord, though "he told Moses and the elders of Israel his real design "of bringing his people out of Egypt into the land of the "Canaanites, yet bids them say to the king of Egypt, "LET US GO THREE DAYS' JOURNEY INTO THE WIL-"DERNESS[f]," &c. A marvellous thing! that the Lord should tell Moses and the elders of Israel his people, something more than was proper to be told again unto Pharaoh their avowed enemy. Let the reader observe how maliciously and disingenuously the Objector draws up his charge against *the Lord*, that he had told Moses his *real* design, as if what Moses was to tell to Pharaoh was not his *real* design also. Both were equally *real:* only Moses was not to discover the *whole* of God's real designs to Pharaoh, because it would have been highly improper and imprudent to do it. God was pleased to give Moses a good lesson of prudence: and how comes *prudence*, which has been commonly reckoned among the cardinal virtues by the Pagan moralists, to be here condemned by our Objector, who professes himself [g] their devoted admirer?

[e] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 348.
[f] Exod. iii. 18. v. 3.
[g] See Christianity as Old, &c. p. 166, 167.

I know not whether it be material to take notice that this last objection I have been answering comes from the mouth of interlocutor B, the book being written in the way of *dialogue* between A and B, of which A is the principal man. I make no difference in respect to the speakers, because they are plainly both of one side; though the author in his preface calls it "debating a sub-"ject," and has the vanity to compare it with Tully's way of writing in the books De Natura Deorum, and De Divinatione. But Tully's disputants always made it properly a *debate*, and represented the sense of the several contending parties to such advantage, that they could none of them complain they had not justice done them in the argument. The case is quite different in our author's lean performance. Here is scarce any debating the point at all; but interlocutor B is all the way made obsequious to the other: either first, to grant something which none but a thoughtless man would grant, that A might have some ground to go upon; as in page the third, one instance out of many. Or secondly, to produce some silly objection, ill stated, or ill managed, that A might have the advantage of an easy and a pompous triumph, as in pages 35, 48, 275, &c. Or thirdly, to strike in with his pretended antagonist, *debating* on the same side, and carrying on the same impertinence; as in pages 113, 266, 329, 348, &c. Or lastly, to flatter and compliment A for his great performances, which no one else could find out: see pages 421, 432. Such is the use and service of interlocutor B to governor A, through the mock debate: and I have thought proper, once for all, to give the reader some idea of the turn and composition of this *dialogue*, to justify my charging the author indifferently with what either A or B speaks, since B's part is little else but to attend as a servitor or waiting-man to A. Cicero's manner it is called by a very strong figure, resembling it as much as an empty *farce* does the finest *drama*. But I pass on.

## Exod. XII. 35, 36.

AND THEY BORROWED OF THE EGYPTIANS JEWELS OF SILVER, AND JEWELS OF GOLD, AND RAIMENT: AND THE LORD GAVE THE PEOPLE FAVOUR IN THE SIGHT OF THE EGYPTIANS, SO THAT THEY LENT UNTO THEM SUCH THINGS AS THEY REQUIRED. AND THEY SPOILED THE EGYPTIANS.

The Objector hereupon observes as follows: [h] "If men "flatter themselves, that they are true Israelites, and "those of a different religion mere Egyptians; will they "not be apt to imagine, when they see how the Israelites "spoiled the Egyptians by the command of God him-"self, who made them borrow what they were not to re-"pay, that this might be a good precedent for them?" B answers, very facetiously: "I must own, that a com-"mand to lend, hoping for nothing again [i], and a com-"mand to borrow, [k] without returning any thing again, "seem to be very different commands." This is tolerably modest and decent, in comparison of what the infidel throws out afterwards [l], upon the same subject, of a more direful and blasphemous strain. "They borrowed of the "Egyptians as the Lord ordered them, jewels of gold "and silver, and raiment, even to the spoiling of them [m]: "and when Pharaoh (who all along seemed jealous of "their design, and bids them not go far away) found that "this solemn sacrifice was a mere pretence, and that they "really fled with all that they had borrowed of his peo-"ple, he pursued the fugitives: the consequence was, "that the Egyptians, instead of obtaining restitution, were "miraculously destroyed, and Pharaoh lost his life, as "well as his subjects; and those who had dealt thus trea-"cherously with them were as miraculously preserved." Thus far this wretched man, who hath taken upon him, like Pharaoh, to exalt himself against the living God.

[h] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 263.
[i] Luke vi. 35.
[k] Exod. iii. 21, 22.
[l] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 349.
[m] Exod. xii. 35.

But to answer his chicane and buffoonery, as distinctly as possible; let it be observed,

1. That he builds too much upon the English translation. Instead of "they borrowed," in verse 35, it may as literally and more properly be translated, *they asked;* as the Seventy, and Vulgate, and Chaldee render: and instead of "they lent unto them," the rendering may as well be, *they let them have*, or *they granted them* such things as they asked for. The like may be observed of Exod. iii. 22. where, instead of "shall borrow," should be read, *shall ask* [n].

The Egyptians had been thoroughly terrified with what had passed, and especially with the last dreadful plague upon all their *firstborn*. They were now willing to give the Hebrews any thing, or every thing, only to be quit of them: for in their dismal fright THEY SAID, WE BE ALL DEAD MEN [o]. They were willing enough now, even to bribe the Hebrews to be gone, and to court them with any presents they should desire, so that they might but obtain their favour, perceiving how much depended upon their being kind and civil to them, and how dearly they had already paid for their unkindness towards them; and what might yet follow worse than all before, they knew not. In a word, they were glad at any rate to compound for their future safety, and so were ready to give the Hebrews any thing they should either ask or want.

2. But however that be, let it next be observed, that God had an undoubted right to transfer the property to the Hebrews, since the whole world is his, and no one can put in any bar to his title. The Hebrews therefore took nothing but what was strictly their *own*. They had God's express order [p] for taking it; and so God, by trans-

[n] See Mr. Shuckford, who is beforehand with me in the observation, and proves it more at large. Connection of Sacred and Profane History, vol. ii. p. 495.

[o] Exod. xii. 33.

[p] Exod. iii. 22. xi. 2.

ferring the property to them, made it *theirs*. This was not *dispensing* with the law of nature, but it was *altering* the *case;* for no law of nature forbids any man's taking what God gives him. It was not encouraging *fraud* or *theft;* but it was making so essential a change in the very nature and quality of the act, by that single circumstance of a *Divine* commission, that now there could be neither *fraud* nor *theft* in so taking what the Egyptians were ready to part with, and what God commanded the Israelites both to take and keep as their own [q].

3. Let it farther be observed, that the Lord God Almighty had the same indisputable right to remove the Hebrews finally out of Pharaoh's hands; and he gave Pharaoh very full and ample demonstrations of his will, by repeated miracles. After that, it was most insolent defiance against Heaven, either to detain the people, or to claim their service, or to demand restitution of what they had taken. It was wild and frantic to dispute whether *the king of Egypt* or *the King of Heaven* ought to be obeyed, and to bear rule in the world. It is ridiculous in the Objector to talk of *restitution* in the case, as if God could *borrow* any thing of his creatures, which owe their substance and their very being to him: and it is horribly *profane*, as well as thoughtless, to say, that the Hebrews dealt *treacherously*, either in their departure, or in taking what they did, since both were pursuant to *Divine* order; and they had been *treacherous* to God and to one another, in those circumstances, had they refused to do either. The Objector himself at other times can tell us, that "by "the circumstances men are under [r]," we are to judge of the nature, and quality, and tendency of their actions: now that single circumstance of a *Divine* command so alters the case with respect to what the Hebrews did,

[q] Compare Tertullian adv. Marc. lib. ii. c. 20. p. 392. Austin contr. Faust. lib. xxii. c. 71, 72. p. 402, 403. Clem. Alex. Strom. i. c. 23. p. 415, 416. Philo in Vit. Mos.

[r] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 345.

that it can be nothing akin to men's ordinarily going out of a realm without leave, or taking money or jewels with them, so as never to return them.

4. Let it further be observed, that no ill use at all can be made of this precedent by men that have any share of common sense and common honesty. If any one has such commission and warrant as the Hebrews had, then let him do as the Hebrews did, and not otherwise. It is ludicrous to call this a *precedent* for what is nothing like it, nor any thing akin to it. But if any can be weak enough, or wild enough, to make this a cover for iniquity, they *reason* wrong: and so the fault might better be thrown upon *human reason*, which the Objector so *magnifies*, than upon sacred *Scripture*, which he loves to *vilify*. But in truth, neither *Scripture* nor *reason* ought to bear the blame of what would be a wilful *abuse* of both: but the blame would lie solely upon human corruption and culpable depravity. To that are owing men's *evil practices* and their *evil reasonings* too: and for both they must one day answer at the high tribunal of God.

## Exod. XX. 5.

I THE LORD THY GOD AM A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION OF THEM THAT HATE ME[r].

The Objector is pleased to observe[s], that "the same "spirit does not alike prevail throughout the Old Testa- "ment. The nearer we come to the times of the Gospel, "the milder it appeared: for though God declares in the "Decalogue, that he is a jealous God, &c. and accord- "ingly Achan, with all his family, was destroyed for his "single crime, yet the Lord afterwards says, THE SOUL "THAT SINNETH, IT SHALL DIE; THE SON SHALL "NOT BEAR THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHER[t]," &c.

[r] Compare Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.
[s] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 268.
[t] Ezek. xviii. 20.

That God may, and often does, vary his methods, or his dispensations, as times and circumstances vary, is very certain: but to give a clear account of all such variations, the reasons of which are locked up in the Divine counsels, may be a great deal too much for this author, or a wiser man, to pretend to. Yet the strength of his opposition to sacrit Writ resolves generally into this false principle, this senseless vanity, that if there be any thing in the conduct of an all-wise God which an ignorant creature of yesterday cannot look into and account for, that is reason sufficient for rejecting an otherwise plain revelation. And so you will find him up and down, in his book, taking upon him to prescribe and dictate to an all-knowing God[u]. If the subjects of any earthly kingdom were to go upon the like principle, rejecting every law, injunction, proclamation, or edict, whenever they could not see clearly into all the *reasons of state* upon which it is founded, what confusion would it not bring, and what madness would it not end in? And yet *human* counsels are not so deep as *Divine:* neither is the government of any kingdom upon earth fit to be compared with the government of Almighty God over the vast and wide universe. But this by the way only, to check the vain presumption and conceitedness of such a method of reasoning. Now to come to the point in hand. The reason, or account which the Objector has been pleased to give, is undoubtedly a false one. For if it had been a general rule that the *spirit of the Old Testament* should grow milder and milder as the Gospel approached, let him account for what God says by the same prophet Ezekiel[x], that when he should send out his sore judgments "to cut off man and beast," he would not spare one man among the wicked for the sake of the righteous, but the righteous should be alone preserved. The sentence is full and peremptory: THOUGH THESE

[u] See instances in Christianity, &c. p. 3, 105, 111, 115, 116, 122, 124, 140, 196.

[x] Ezek. xiv. 4.

THREE MEN, NOAH, DANIEL, AND JOB, WERE IN IT, THEY SHOULD DELIVER BUT THEIR OWN SOULS BY THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS, SAITH THE LORD GOD. Yet time was, when God would have spared even that inhospitable, murderous, impious, and incestuous city, Sodom, had there been but *ten* righteous persons found in it: so mild was Almighty God in ancient days, so merciful and gentle were his dealings; seemingly more so than in the times of Ezekiel, though nearer to the times of the Gospel. I say then, that the Objector's rule or comment upon God's conduct is imaginary, and without foundation.

I may further observe, that as to the particular case of "visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children," there appears to have been no settled change, no standing abatement made of what is laid down in the Decalogue. The same thing was threatened, and the same discipline observed in the Gospel times, as well as before, and may have been frequently since in all ages of the Church down to this day. What our blessed Lord himself says, relating to our purpose, may deserve our special notice. THAT UPON YOU MAY COME ALL THE RIGHTEOUS BLOOD SHED UPON THE EARTH, FROM THE BLOOD OF RIGHTEOUS ABEL UNTO THE BLOOD OF ZACHARIAS, &c.—VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, ALL THESE THINGS SHALL COME UPON THIS GENERATION[y]. The threatening was fully verified in the dreadful destruction of Jerusalem, within less than forty years after. And I believe it will not be easy to find any more terrible example of Divine vengeance (excepting one only) before the times of

[y] Matt. xxiii. 35, 36. To understand this, we must observe that the Scripture takes notice of a certain *measure of iniquity* which is filling up from one generation to another, till at last it makes a nation or family ripe for destruction: and although those persons on whom this final vengeance falls, suffer no more than their own personal sins deserved; yet because the sins of former generations, which they equal or outdo, make it time for God utterly to destroy them, the punishments due to the sins of many ages and generations are all said to fall upon them. *Sherlock on Providence*, chap. viii. p. 408.

the Gospel, than this which has appeared since. Vain therefore are the dreams of this writer, as to God's growing milder in his judgments upon wicked men, the nearer we come to the Gospel times.

But he will ask us, probably, how then do we reconcile the two texts, one of Moses in the Decalogue, and the other in the prophet Ezekiel? Very easily:

For the seeming difference amounts only to this; that God may vary his methods, at different times, according as he sees cause, or according as the ends of providence or discipline require. He sometimes visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, and sometimes he does it not: and the reasons are to himself in both cases. "For who "hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his "counsellor[y]?" Who shall instruct him in matters of discipline, or direct an all-wise God how to govern the world?

As to the particular case of the Jews under captivity, spoken of both by Jeremiah[z] and Ezekiel[a], it appears to stand thus: the Jews had been *visited*, sent into captivity, for the sins of their *fathers*, as well as for their own, pursuant to the threatenings which God had before made by his prophets[b]. The captive Jews hereupon complained, thinking it hard measure that they should so smart for the *sins* of their *fathers*, and should be punished beyond what, in the ordinary course of providence, their *own* sins would have called for. The fact was true; and God's reason, among others, was, to testify and demonstrate to the world his utter detestation of the sins of Manasseh, his abominable idolatries. But God, to comfort his captive people, lets them know, that this severe, though just dispensation towards them should not be lasting, for that he would be kind to them again, by restoring them to their own land, and then they should no longer have occasion to complain, or to use that *proverb* mentioned by Jeremiah

[y] Rom. xi. 34.
[a] Ezek. xviii. 2.
[z] Jerem. xxxi. 29, 30. Lament. v. 7.
[b] Jerem. xv. 4. compare 2 Kings xxiii. 26.

and Ezekiel, in the places before cited: they had been severely chastised for their *fathers'* sins, as well as for their own; but their captivity should cease, and then that extraordinary *visitation* should cease also, and they should suffer only for their *own faults:* and God would be gracious to them in the mean while. This interpretation of Ezekiel I take in the main from Bishop Stillingfleet[c], who had well considered it, and who has cleared up the objected difficulty (as I conceive) the best of any.

If it be farther asked, how it is justifiable at all to visit the sins of the *fathers* upon the *children,* and more especially upon *innocent* children, as upon Achan's children, and upon David's first child by Bathsheba[d]; to this I answer:

1. First, as to the case of *guilty* children, they deserve the punishment which God inflicts, and they are punished for their own sins, in such cases, as well as for the sins of their fathers. But as God does not punish all that deserve it, and might remit the punishment due for their own sins if he so pleased, and would do it if their *fathers* had not sinned also; it may be justly said in such a case, that God visits the sins of the *fathers* upon the *children,* because he would not have taken the forfeiture, nor have punished the children in this life according to their own demerits, if the sins of their *fathers,* added to theirs, had not made it necessary, or proper, for answering the ends of *discipline.*

2. As to the case of *innocent* children, there can be no question but God may demand the life which he gave them, whenever he pleases; and it is no injury to them, to translate them from this world to a better, but a kindness and a comfort to them. And if an all-merciful God, while he demands their lives for their benefit, does it also at such a time and in such a manner as shall best answer the ends of *discipline* for the good of the world, there is

[c] Stillingfleet of the Sufferings of Christ, against Crellius, chap. iii.
[d] 2 Sam. xii. 18.

nothing in this conduct but what redounds to the glory both of the wisdom and goodness of God. It is not indeed a proper rule for human judicatures to proceed by, because men have not that absolute right or power over the lives of others, as God has over all; neither can they judge when to use such a power, if they had it; neither, if they deprive persons of a present advantage, are they able afterwards to make them amends. Therefore no such power is ordinarily lodged in men. God himself has foreclosed all pretences to it, by his express prohibitions [e]. But the case is different with respect to God himself, who has sovereign authority, and whose infinite wisdom is a bar to his judging wrong, and his infinite power and goodness can compensate all seeming severities. In the mean while, his detestation of sin is more remarkably demonstrated, and the practice of righteousness more strongly guarded and secured, by thus punishing wickedness, not only at the first hand, but in the *posterity* also for several generations. So, taking the thing either way, there can be no just complaint made against the *Divine* proceedings in visiting the sins of the fathers upon their either *sinful* or *innocent* progeny. If Achan's family, supposing them entirely innocent, were destroyed for his *single* crime, they lost nothing that they had any strict right to; or if they had, yet God could make them amends. A *good* father derives a *blessing* upon his children, and a *bad* father entails a *curse*, but in respect only to this world: and it is good for the world it should be so [f]. The life to come will fully adjust all seeming inequalities of this kind: which is abundantly sufficient to answer all possible objections on this head. In a word, as God daily exercises such a power over *innocent* persons for the ends of his wise *providence*, so there is no just reason to be assigned why he may not also exercise the same power for the ends of *discipline*, which is but one species of his providential dispensations.

[e] Deut. xxiv. 16. 2 Kings xiv. 5, 6.

[f] See Sherlock on Providence, p. 410. Tertull. advers. Marcion. lib. ii. cap. 15. p. 389.

LEVIT. XXVII. 28, 29.

NO DEVOTED THING, THAT A MAN SHALL DEVOTE UNTO THE LORD OF ALL THAT HE HATH, BOTH OF MAN AND BEAST, AND OF THE FIELD OF HIS POSSESSION, SHALL BE SOLD OR REDEEMED: EVERY DEVOTED THING IS MOST HOLY UNTO THE LORD.

NONE DEVOTED, WHICH SHALL BE DEVOTED OF MEN, SHALL BE REDEEMED; BUT SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH.

The Objector refers to this passage, in order to infer from it, that "the Levitical law approved or countenanced "human sacrifices[g]." He says, "authors are divided" upon it: and he presently lets us know what side he takes, too hastily listening to any slander raised against Scripture. A noble writer indeed says, that "something of this "nature might possibly be deduced even from holy "Writ[h]:" he perhaps may be one of this gentleman's *authors*. But the learned Selden[i] has so fully and so accurately discussed the question, determining it in the *negative*, that there is no room left for further dispute about it among men of true learning. The 28th verse of this chapter in Leviticus speaks of things or persons devoted to *sacred uses*, by that sort of vow which was called *cherem*, a consecration under pain of a curse. Things or persons so devoted or consecrated were for ever to be set apart to sacred uses, and could never be redeemed or desecrated. The 29th verse is to be understood of persons devoted by the *cherem* also, but devoted to perdition, (in like manner as the city Jericho was devoted[k],) in a hostile

[g] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 94. [h] Characteristics, vol. iii. p. 124.

[i] Selden. de Jur. Nat. et Gent. lib. iv. cap. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. His conclusion, after such particular examination, is in these words: "Manifestum est ex "Ebræorum interpretatione qualicunque dictæ legis sacræ, nullum omnino "homicidium ultroneum, seu extra pœnæ, seu quasi rationem, permissum ea "fuisse." Cap. x. p. 550.

[k] Josh. vi. 17. "And the city shall be accursed," (devoted, *cherem*,) "even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord." Compare Numb. xxi. 2, 3. Judg. xxi. 5. 1 Sam. xiv. 24.

or vindictive way, and not in the way of sacrifice. Persons so devoted were to be utterly destroyed. This is the true and the full meaning of that whole passage in Leviticus [l].

But our Objector has somewhat to plead for another construction. He is pleased to interpret the words, IS MOST HOLY UNTO THE LORD, in verse 28, by the words of verse 29, SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH. "What "is meant," he says, "by being MOST HOLY UNTO THE "LORD is explained in the next verse," and then he recites the 29th. But we may observe that THE FIELD OF HIS POSSESSION was one of the things mentioned in verse 28, as being *devoted*, and thereby rendered "most "holy unto the Lord." But if by the field's being *most holy*, nothing more is meant than its being irrevocably and irredeemably consecrated to God, "as a field devoted, "the possession whereof should be the priests [m];" then certainly the men mentioned in the same verse with the *field* may be understood to be *most holy*, as consecrated irrevocably to *sacred uses* or *services*. Thus the Levites were consecrated, who were to serve the priests for ever; and thus the child Samuel was consecrated to God by his mother, and thereupon delivered up to old Eli, who received him for the Lord [n]: and thus also the Nethinims, who were given by David to serve the Levites, as the Levites were to serve the priests [o].

But the Objector says further, that "whatever was the "Lord's, as the firstborn of man and beast, was to be "slain, if God did not order its redemption [p]." And for proof thereof, he refers us to some texts [q] noted in the margin. But if he means redemption with money, he forgets that all the *firstborn*, before God took in the Levites

[l] See Sir John Marsham, sect. ix. p. 169. ed. Lips. In the next page he has these words. "Cædes itaque humana nullo Ebræorum jure permissa est, "extra pœnæ legitimæ, justique belli rationem."

[m] Levit. xxvii. 21.

[n] 1 Sam. ii. 25, 26, 27, 28.

[o] Ezra viii. 20.

[p] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 95.

[q] Exod. xxx. 12, 13. xxxiv. 19, 20.

in their stead, were *the Lord's:* and yet none of these (excepting 273, the supernumerary firstborn above the number of the Levites[r]) were either *redeemed* or *slain.* The Levites came in their places, and so the Levites were now *the Lord's,* and yet were neither to be *redeemed* nor *slain,* but to serve the tabernacle and the priests[s]. In that sense they were *the Lord's,* and *holy unto the Lord*[t], as irrevocably and unredeemably consecrated to God's service. It is true, that *captives taken in war,* if before *devoted,* were to be *slain:* and of such may the 29th verse be understood. But verse 28. speaks of a man's devoting out of "all that he hath," out of what is his own property, as for instance, his own *slaves* bought with his own money: those so devoted were not to be sacrificed, or otherwise slain, but to serve to *sacred uses.* That was the full end and aim of their being so solemnly and so irreversibly *devoted* to the Lord. And let it here be noted that God, speaking to Aaron in capacity of high priest, and assigning the priest's portion, says, EVERY THING DEVOTED IN ISRAEL (every *cherem,* every thing consecrated under a curse) SHALL BE THINE[u]: which answers to the words in Levit. xxvii. 28. EVERY THING DEVOTED IS MOST HOLY UNTO THE LORD. Yet both are to be understood but of one kind of *cherem,* of things *consecrated* for ever to *sacred uses,* not of things *destined to destruction:* for how could that be given for the *use* of the *priests* which was immediately to be destroyed? I may add, that when the animals allowed for sacrifice are numbered up in Leviticus[x], we find mention made of *bullocks, sheep, goats, turtle-doves, young pigeons:* but not a word of sacrificing *men:* so little ground or colour is there for this injurious charge upon the word of God.

To conclude this head, it is observable, that almost all the

[r] Numb. iii. 45, 46. [s] Numb. iii. 9. viii. 19.

[t] Those Levites who are said, Numb. viii. 19. to be *given* to the *priests,* are in verse 16. said to be *given* unto God, which amounts to the same: God says, "They are wholly given unto me:" and, "I have taken them unto me."

[u] Numb. xviii. 14. [x] Levit. i. 2, 10, 14.

Pagan countries have offered human sacrifices[y]; the Phœnicians, and Canaanites, Egyptians, Arabians, Athenians, Lacedæmonians, Romans, Carthaginians, Scythians, Gauls, and Britains. The Jews in a manner were the only nation that never admitted the practice, because they had been taught better by God himself: and it has been owing chiefly, not to *infidels*, but to Christianity and Christian priests[z], that that diabolical custom began to be laid aside, (about the time when *oracles* also ceased,) and that we are not sacrificing our sons and daughters unto *devils* at this day. All this is fact; and yet this unrighteous man, instead of commending *revelation*, as he ought to do, for these inestimable benefits which we enjoy by it, is pleased to charge it as faulty in that very article where it deserves his highest praises. Can there be any *reason*, any *sincerity*, any *benevolence* to mankind, shown in thus abusing the readers?

## NUMB. XIV. 30—34.

DOUBTLESS YE SHALL NOT COME INTO THE LAND, CONCERNING WHICH I SWARE TO MAKE YOU DWELL THEREIN, SAVE CALEB, &c.—AND YE SHALL KNOW MY BREACH OF PROMISE.

The Objector remarks[a], that "there are texts, which, if "taken literally, represent God not only falsifying his "word, but his oaths." Then he cites the two texts above specified. Now as to verse 30. no one but an half-witted reader can be at a loss to understand it, and *literally* too. YE, that is, ye Israelites considered as particular men, SHALL NOT COME INTO THE LAND CONCERNING WHICH I SWARE TO MAKE YOU (*you* considered as *a people*) DWELL THEREIN. God's promises were made to the *seed* of Abraham, to the *children* of Israel, to the Hebrews, as an abiding *people* which was to subsist for many

[y] Vid. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. v. cap. 16. p. 155, &c.

[z] Vid. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. v. cap. 17. p. 208. et lib. iv. cap. 17. p. 163, &c. Jenkins, vol. i. p. 360.

[a] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 257.

ages, though particular men were going off daily, as in all fleeting successive bodies. To that *people*, I say, the promises were *literally* made, and to the same people they were as *literally* fulfilled. The promise was not tied to *certain persons*, but to a *certain people*, and therefore might be performed at any time (if not otherwise limited) while that people subsisted.

It is a very usual and a very intelligible way of speaking, common in all languages, to speak of nations in their national capacity, and to say *we*, or *you*, not meaning it of the individuals now living, but of their ancestors, or posterity: and I am persuaded there is scarce a plain countryman but who would readily understand such expressions at first hearing; so little ground is there for cavil upon this first article.

As to what is said in verse 34. YE SHALL KNOW MY BREACH OF PROMISE, it is a harsh translation, and merely *conjectural*, not warranted by the Hebrew original. Some of our older English translations had a more inoffensive and a juster rendering, than our last version here happens to have. Coverdale's Bible of 1535 renders; YE MAY KNOW WHAT IT IS, WHEN I WITHDRAWE MY HAND. Matthewes's of 1537 has, YE SHALL FELE MY VENGEAUNCE. The Great Bible of 1539, YE SHALL KNOWE MY DISPLEASURE. The Geneva translators of 1560 first ventured to say, YE SHALL FELE MY BREACH OF PROMISE: but then they added a marginal note to soften it: *viz.* "whether my promise be true, or no." Bp. Parker's Bible of 1568 altered it into, YE SHALL KNOWE MY BREACHE OF PROMISE, leaving no note at all in the margin: and the last translation following Parker's, reads the text as before, only throwing in another *softer* version into the margin, *viz.* "altering of my purpose."

The truth is, *promise* was inserted by the translators only to fill up the sense, as they supposed: there is nothing in the Hebrew to answer it. The most that can be made of the Hebrew, in that way of construction, is no more than this, (as Bishop Patrick has observed,) YE

SHALL KNOW MY BREACH. Which might signify either God's *breaking in* upon them, in the way of anger; or his *breaking with them*, that is, departing from them. And yet it is not certain that the word תנואתי really signifies *my breach*. The word occurs but once more in the whole Bible, in Job xxxiii. 10. where it is in the plural number, and is by us rendered *occasions;* as much by guess, as in the other place. Under these uncertainties, and while we want other light, I know no better rule to go by than the Seventy (which is the most ancient version) and Jerome, who had seen the other ancient Greek versions. Now the Seventy have in this place of Numbers, τὸν θυμὸν τῆς ὀργῆς μου, *my anger*, or more literally, *the fury of my wrath:* and in the place of Job they have μέμψιν, *complaint, accusation*. Jerome, in the first, has *ultionem meam*, and in the other *querelas*. One of the last learned commentators, Le Clerc, having considered every way, and finding an Arabic root that seemed to favour such construction as the Seventy and Vulgate give, acquiesces at length in this rendering: "Ye shall know my vengeance," being at least as good a rendering, and as probable as any.

Upon the whole, it is evident that there is no foundation, scarce colour, for our Objector's speculations upon this text. This is one, among many, of his English objections, which I had in my eye when I wrote my introduction to Part the First [a]. I perceive the gentleman is somewhat offended at the freedom I took with him, in telling the world what is true, that "he discovers no acquaint-"ance with the original languages, nor so much as with "common critics or commentators." He endeavours in a piece he has since published [b], to bring himself off by saying, that "he writes only for the unlearned, and that "the English Bible to those must be the word of God, "otherwise they will have no word of God at all." One shall not easily meet with a poorer defence of a wrong

[a] See above, p. 8.

[b] Second Address, &c. p. 84, 85.

thing. Let the English Bible be to English readers the *word of God*, as much as any *version* of the word of God can be: yet there are few, I believe, even among the *unlearned*, so ignorant as to imagine that it was first penned in English, or that it is not a *translation*. And if they meet with any difficulty, or any thing that appears offensive, they have guides to go to, who by consulting the *originals*, or the best commentators, may be able to help them out. But this writer's advice to them would be, to throw aside the Bible, and to trust entirely to their own natural parts, or talents, to their *inward* light, without any *external* help from the word of God: and this because there may be some expressions in an English version which are not justifiable, or may be made an ill use of. An argument which he seems to have borrowed (as he has several others) from the Popish *priests*, who argue in the same way against letting the people have the Scriptures in the *vulgar* tongue. But the *uses* of Scripture are too many and too great to be thus despised or given up, only for fear of some *possible* abuses. The argument would be as strong for discarding all *reasoning* too, because the *use* of reason will be attended with some *abuses* of that excellent faculty. But this author does wrong in charging faults upon *Scripture* which are faults of a *version* only, and not of *Scripture*. How does he account for that part of misconduct? Is it *ignorance* only? Why then does he undertake what he is not equal to? And why does he insinuate to the *unlearned*, that there are such and such faults in *Scripture*, when he is not capable himself of knowing whether the fault lies in *Scripture* or in the *translation?* If there be a fault in a version, it is a good reason for mending the version; but certainly it is no reason for rejecting Scripture, and all *external* revelation, and resting only in our *inward* light or *natural* gifts. In short, he has taken upon him to give advice to the *unlearned*, in a point of the highest consequence, himself all the while as *unlearned* almost as they; especially in what concerns proper *biblical* learning, which

he ought to have been a master of, in some measure at least, before he presumed thus to criticise upon *texts* of Scripture. No pretences nor colourings can ever justify this management: if the "blind are to lead the blind," what can be expected, but that "both should fall into the "ditch?" I beg my reader's pardon for this short digression, which might most properly suit this place, and which the importunity and confidence of the adversary has in a manner forced me into.

NUMB. XXI. 2, 3.

AND ISRAEL VOWED A VOW UNTO THE LORD, AND SAID, IF THOU WILT INDEED DELIVER THIS PEOPLE INTO MY HAND, THEN I WILL UTTERLY DESTROY THEIR CITIES. AND THE LORD HEARKENED TO THE VOICE OF ISRAEL, AND DELIVERED UP THE CANAANITES; AND THEY UTTERLY DESTROYED THEM, &c.

I may just note by the way, that instead of "I will "utterly destroy their cities," the truer rendering would be, *I will devote their cities*, i. e. to destruction: and instead of, "they utterly destroyed them," in the next verse, it should be, they *devoted* (or *anathematized*) *them*. But as no use will be made of the observation in our present argument, it is sufficient just to have hinted it, only to prevent an objection which our author did not see, or did not think proper to lay hold of. But he is mightily offended at those severe dealings with the Canaanites; being much kinder, it seems, and more *benevolent* than the great *God of Israel;* or however taking upon himself to judge in what concerns the *Divine* conduct and government, in a manner that would be presumption and rudeness with respect even to a petty prince, if he knew no more of the case than he does here. Thrice he exposes himself on this head[c].

1. First he takes notice, "that the Canaanites, who

[c] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 97, 264, 272.

" had never done Israel the least injury, men, women, " and children, were to be utterly destroyed[d]." Unhappy sufferers! But the same history that tells us this, tells us also how their sins had deserved it[e]. And what if they " had never done Israel the least injury," (any more than those that last died by the hand of justice, had done injury to the officers that seized them, or to the executioner that dispatched them,) yet certainly if they had been injurious to the *public*, (as all wicked miscreants are,) and if they had thereby grievously offended the Lord of the whole earth, he might appoint his own people, as well as any other instruments, to execute his just wrath and vengeance upon them. If the force of his objection lies only in this, that *innocent* children were to suffer with the rest, the same objection lies against all public judgments, whether *wars*, or *plagues*, or *deluges*, or *famines*, or what else soever: such arguments can terminate in nothing else but *Atheism*.

2. The Objector farther pleads in the manner here following: " Would not people, if, like the children of Israel, " they were destitute of an habitation, be apt to think " what the Israelites did to the Canaanites a good prece- " dent; and that they might invade a neighbouring idola- " trous nation, that never did them the least harm, and " extirpate not only men and women, but even their inno- " cent infants, in order to get possession of their country? " And I question whether the Spaniards would have mur- " dered so many millions in the Indies, had they not " thought they might have used them like Canaanites[f]." Dull and insipid! neither argument nor poignancy. No one would, no one could fetch in this as a precedent for ill practices, who was not beforehand resolved, with or without precedent, to commit iniquity. The case is a very plain case. If any have such commission as the Israelites had, such express orders from Heaven, then this

[d] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 97.
[e] Deut. ix. 4.
[f] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 264.

instance is a *precedent* to act by, if in such a case they could want any: but if any men have no such commission as the Israelites had, then this is no *precedent* for their acting as the Israelites did. It is exceeding trifling to call it a *precedent*, when the most material circumstance is wanting that could make it such. But what if some will *think* it a precedent when it is none? To this I may answer, what if some will *think* any thing right they have a mind to, and make their will their law, with or without precedent? There is no accounting for what foolish, partial, wicked men may think: the only question is, what they *ought* to think. If men *reason* right, this precedent can never mislead them. But if they *reason* wrong from it, and pervert it to ill purposes, the fault then lies in their ill-reasoning: and so let the author next point his satire, if he pleases, against the *use of reason;* which though silly employ, would yet be wiser and more pertinent than what he urges against *Scripture.*

As to what he again repeats about *innocent* infants, I have sufficiently answered it in the preceding article. I shall only add, that God takes away thousands of such innocent children every day, and perhaps more than half the species under ten years of age. How will this writer account for it? If he believes there is a God, I suppose he will allow it is God's doing, and that God has a sovereign right over the lives and fortunes of men, women, and children. But if he doubts of these plain truths, let him declare it, and speak out.

3. The Objector pretends further, that a Divine *command,* in this case, "is pleaded in vain, except it can be "shown, that the thing supposed to be commanded is "not inconsistent with the law of nature; which if God "can dispense with in any one case, he may in all[s]." Ridiculous. Here was no *dispensing* with any *law of nature;* but the circumstance of a *Divine* command (a very material circumstance indeed) altered the whole *case,*

[s] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 272.

changed the quality of the act, and made it no breach of the law of nature. For what law of nature forbids a man the executing of God's will, where the Divine right to what he would have executed is clear and indisputable? The truth is, the law of nature, the very primary law of all, (which is, to *obey God*,) demands this service from man, whenever God requires it [h].

This writer, through a cloud of darkness, can yet sometimes see the truth, and can reason right. He observes in another place [i], "It is the circumstances men are "under, by which we are to judge of the tendency of "actions. As for instance, the killing a man, considered "without its circumstances, is an action neither good nor "bad: but by the magistrate when the public good re-"quires it; or by a private man when necessary for self-"defence, it is an action always good." Very well. Do but allow the high and mighty Magistrate of heaven and earth as much right as his deputies have that act under him, and wisdom also sufficient to judge of what concerns the *public good;* and then certainly the Israelites acting by his order, had, at least, as clear a right to destroy the Canaanites, as any *executioner* can have to take away life by command of authority.

4. But the Objector, finding himself pinched here, by the plainest maxims of common sense, retires to another shift, which will prove as useless to him as the former. He alleges, that "no man can be so certain of his having "a positive command from God, as he is that God has "forbid it him by the light of nature [k]." But why so? Is it because no man can trust to his eyes, or ears, or other senses? How then can a gaoler, a sheriff, or an executioner trust to any magistrate's *warrant* for putting a criminal to death, for fear of being himself guilty of *murder?* God, who has endowed us with faculties of discernment to know when this or that man converses with

[h] See Cumberland. Prolegom. s. 24.
[i] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 345.
[k] Ibid. p. 272.

us, can undoubtedly find out ways and means to make us as infallibly know when himself speaks to us. But the Objector says, that even "miracles could not be a proof "of any such commission." Strange, that a message sent from heaven, and attested also by miracles, should not be as good a proof of God's commission, and as safe a rule to act by, as any warrant, under hand and seal, is of a *magistrate's* commission. But he further adds: "We "can only know from the nature of the things them-"selves, whether miracles are done by a good or evil "being." That is his great mistake: Pharaoh's magicians might have taught him better. They knew at length, and were sensible, on what side the "finger of God" was [l], without knowing, or at all considering what the nature or purport of Moses's errand was. They knew it by the prevailing, superior, uncontrolled power shown in Moses's miracles. By the same rule may *Divine* miracles at any time be distinguished from diabolical. God never did nor ever will permit *superior* or *uncontrolled* miracles to be wrought in favour of imposture and falsehood. No such snares have ever yet been laid for mankind: but from past experience, and from the reason of the thing, and above all, from the goodness and loving-kindness of God, we have sufficient grounds to believe and trust that no such thing ever will be, or, morally speaking, can be [m].

But besides *miracles*, there may be several other ways whereby God may manifest himself unto men; unless all supernatural revelations or manifestations be called *miracles*, which in a strict and proper sense they are not, neither have they been so called. God manifested himself, for instance, to Adam, to Cain, to Noah, to Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses, to all the people of Israel, and to the *prophets*; and those all knew when God spake to them, as certainly as men may now know what company

[l] Exod. viii. 19.

[m] See Mr. Locke's Discourse of Miracles, p. 453. fol. edit. Mr. Leeke's Sermon on St. Stephen's Day, p. 28, &c.

they are at any time in, or whom they converse with. And it would be strange indeed, as I before hinted, if God, who has taught us how to know one another, could not as infallibly teach us how to know him, and to receive commands from him.

5. The Objector has still something farther to urge, and says, that if "God be infinitely wise and good, then "no command, not stamped with those characters, can "come from him, much less a command inconsistent "with all those duties that men as men owe to one an-"other[n]." To which I answer, that every command which has the broad seal of Heaven set to it, which appears by sure and certain *external* proofs to be *Divine;* I say, every such command comes stamped with the characters of *wise* and *good*, because it is the command of God, who is infinitely wise and good. But when this writer talks of the command given to the Israelites as being *inconsistent*, &c. it is running back again to the same folly he set out with; not considering that the material circumstance of a *Divine* command changes the very nature and quality of the act. For it is not *murder* to take away life in obedience to an express command of God. The lives of all men are in the hands of God that gave them: and he can demand them back when, and where, and by what instruments he pleases. So let the Objector rest satisfied in this, that the Canaanites were justly destroyed; because God, who is *just*, commanded it. And let him consider whether his thus pleading for as *wicked* miscreants as ever lived, in opposition to God, the *kindest* and the *best* of beings, be not going out of his sphere, only to pass a rude and rash censure upon the *Divine* judgments, which he ought rather humbly and reverently to adore.

## NUMB. XXII. 28.

AND THE LORD OPENED THE MOUTH OF THE ASS, AND SHE SAID, &c.

[n] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 273.

The Objector here remarks, according to his usual pitch of acuteness, "what a number of ideas must Balaam's "ass have, to be able to reason with his (*her*) master, "when he (*she*) saw and knew an angel[o]." Now as to the number of *ideas* which the ass must have; I believe, she had as many as asses commonly have: and he may please to count them at his leisure, for his own amusement. The text speaks of the "Lord's opening the mouth "of the ass," and articulate sounds came forth: but not a syllable is there concerning the *ideas* which she had, or concerning her *reasoning*. She delivered words, or sounds, which in some sense may be said to have carried reason in them; but the *reason* was not *hers:* and therefore this gentleman has complimented the ass too far, in saying that she *reasoned* with her master. He discovers again some confusion, or shortness of thought, in saying, that she "knew an angel;" as if she had been wise enough to know what an *angel* means, and to understand *angelical* appearances. The text indeed several times says, that she "saw the angel:" but where does it say that she *knew him?* So in three particulars our author has falsified, wittingly or unwittingly, and has misrepresented the case, as he commonly does. He will call this, no doubt, "trying revelation by the test of reason[p]:" for *reason* is the name he gives to all his *conceits*. Which puts me in mind of a pleasant saying of Mr. Locke's, in one of his private letters: "To be *rational* is so glorious a thing, "that two-legged creatures generally content themselves "with the *title*."

The Objector next has a gird upon St. Peter for speaking of the "madness of the Prophet[q]:" for in opposition to the Apostle, he is pleased to observe, that "in the "story itself there does not appear any thing like mad-"ness: for that the Prophet did nothing but what the "Lord enjoined him." But what if an *inspired* Apostle

[o] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 254.

[p] See Second Address, &c. p. 83.

[q] 2 Pet. ii. 16.

might see deeper into the story, than an ordinary man at this distance can do? He ought most certainly to be believed in what he says, before his forward corrector, whose penetration is not great even in common things. But the story itself, without the help of an Apostle, sufficiently discovers the Prophet's *madness*. He had once consulted God about *cursing* the people of Israel, and had received a very full and peremptory answer, forbidding him to go upon it, for this plain and standing reason: THOU SHALT NOT CURSE THE PEOPLE, FOR THEY ARE BLESSED[r]." After so clear and flat a denial, it was rudeness and madness, to come to God a second time upon the same errand. But the compliments and golden promises brought by the new ambassadors from King Balak began to operate strongly upon the wavering Prophet, insomuch that he forgot the reverence due to Divine Majesty, and so presumed again to consult him; which was tempting him, and making too familiar with an all-wise God. God saw the folly and the importunity of the man, and gave him leave to go with the messengers; but in such a manner, and with such a rebuke, as might have made a better man sensible that he should not have asked it, and that though he had thus obtained, or extorted leave to go, yet he might more wisely have declined it. GO WITH THEM: BUT YET THE WORD WHICH I SHALL SAY UNTO THEE, THAT SHALT THOU DO. As much as to say, go he might, since he was so eagerly set upon it, but the journey should not answer: he should not *curse* the people as King Balak would direct, but God would have the direction of that affair himself. Now Balaam's going, after such a rebuke, and upon so fruitless an errand, is one considerable argument of his *madness*[s]. But a plainer and more sensible symptom of it was, (which St. Peter seems also to have had in his eye,) that "even the dumb ass's speaking with man's

[r] Numb. xxii. 12, 13.

[s] See Le Clerc, Numb. xxii. 20.

" voice" did not bring him to himself: for he began not to recollect till the Lord " opened his eyes," and showed him " the angel standing in the way." So thoughtless and precipitate was the man, so eager to oblige King Balak, and to receive his reward, that he could scarce think of any thing else for the time being, till repeated prodigies had been sent to recover him. I know that some, both Jews [t] and Christians [u], after Maimonides, have been of opinion that this was all transacted in a *vision* or a *dream*. But their reasons, though specious, appear not to have weight sufficient to overthrow the more common and prevailing construction. Enough has been said to demonstrate the *madness* of the Prophet at his first setting out: and it is well known from the story, how wretchedly he behaved ever after; how ridiculously he came off with King Balak, and how execrable a part he afterwards acted; and how tragically the whole ended, both to himself and others, after he had run all his lengths of madness. When men are foolish, forward, and self-willed, and for their humour, or vanity, or corrupt views, will take their own ways, notwithstanding the kindest hints offered to make them retreat, God then deserts them, and abandons them to follow their own imaginations, to their own undoing. The case was exemplified in the Prophet Balaam, who " loved the wages of un-" righteousness," and pursued his avarice and his self-conceit, till they became his ruin.

I may here add, that Balaam's infamy and cursed policy, in the advice he gave for *debauching* God's people, stand upon record, not only in the Old Testament [x], but in three distinct places also of the New [y]. For when there started up a sect of false teachers, profligate men, attempting to seduce the people from the *purity* of the Gospel precepts, to all manner of *lewdness*, *wantonness*, and *dissolute-*

[t] See Patrick in loc. and Bochart. Hieroz. part. i. lib. 2. cap. 14. p. 193.
[u] See Memoirs of Literature for April 1710. p. 14.
[x] Numb. xxxi. 16.
[y] 2 Pet. ii. 15, 16. Jude 11. Rev. ii. 14, 15.

*ness*, the good Christians of that time could not think of a more *odious* name to give them, than that of Balaamites or Nicolaitanes; the first being the Hebrew name, as the other is the Greek one[z]; and both very probably signifying the same thing, namely, *leaders* (that is, *misleaders*) *of the people*.

## DEUT. I. 34.

AND THE LORD WAS WROTH, AND SWARE, SAYING, &c.

The Objector's irreverent reflection here is: "If we "are to admit nothing that is repugnant to the natural "notion we have of God, ought we not to examine by "our reason, whether God, who has no superior to in-"voke, can swear at all, much less be in a passion, and "swear in wrath[a]?" But since this gentleman pretends to *examine* every thing *by reason*, let him first *examine by his reason*, whether it be modest, reverent, or honest, to give this false and ludicrous account of *Scripture*, as if it supposed God to have *been in a passion*. That God cannot be *in a passion* is certain: neither does Scripture either assert or suppose that he may. But when God condescends to talk with men, he is pleased to make use of human words and human phrases, to be understood by men; and (as I have before observed[b], in a like case) to render his expressions more pathetic, lively, and affecting. Nevertheless, whatsoever is thus spoken ἀνθρωποπαθῶς, after the manner of men, must be understood θεοπρεπῶς, in a sense suitable to the Divine Majesty, as made known to us in some measure by *reason*, and much more by *revelation*.

As to God's confirming his oracles or his decrees by an *oath*, this also is done in great compassion and condescension to human infirmities; and is an affecting instance

[z] בעל עם Dominus Populi. Νικόλαος, Victor Populi. See Vitring. Observat. Sacr. tom. ii. p. 999, &c. Buddæi Eccles. Apostol. p. 372, 373.

[a] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 250.

[b] See above, p. 38.

both of the wisdom and goodness of God towards us: so far is it from being any just objection against Scripture. He has no *superior* to *invoke:* but since he can "swear "by no greater, he swears by himself," as the Apostle assures us[c]. Perhaps this matter may want some clearing; and therefore I shall enlarge a little farther upon it. The Objector seems to be of opinion that the invoking a superior is *essential* to every kind of *oath*. I believe it is true that in all oaths taken by *creatures*, such invoking, either tacit or express, is a necessary circumstance, necessary to the very nature and definition of an *oath* so taken. If it be equally necessary and essential to every oath, as an *oath;* then it must be allowed, that God is but improperly or figuratively said to *swear;* as he is also improperly or figuratively said to *hear*, or *see*, or wax *wroth*, and the like. But I apprehend, that an *oath* means a solemn asseveration made as strong and binding as possible, in order to beget faith and confidence in others, or to procure a firm belief of what is so sworn to. When *creatures* swear, nothing can make their asseveration so strong and binding, as the *invoking* of God to be both *witness* and *avenger*. This therefore is a necessary circumstance always supposed and implied in *their* oaths; because every thing is supposed and implied that can most confirm and strengthen the asseveration. In like manner, when God himself swears, or is said to swear, we are to suppose that he enforces and strengthens his asseveration as much as is possible, or as much as is proper to beget the highest trust and confidence in his revelations[d]: not by *invoking a superior*, (for in this case, and in this only, it is impracticable and absurd,) but by condescending to make use of human forms of swearing, with proper alterations, such as the case requires. God therefore swears *by himself*[e],

[c] Heb. vi. 13.

[d] Proinde, si et in promissionibus, aut comminationibus jurat, fidem in primordiis arduam extorquens, nihil Deo indignum est quod efficit Deo credere. *Tertull. adv. Marc.* lib. ii. c. 26. p. 395.

[e] Gen. xxii. 16. Exod. xxxii. 13. Jer. xxii. 5. Heb. vi. 13. Isa. xlv. 23.

or by his *great name*[f], or by his *life*[g], or by his *right hand*[h], or by the *arm of his strength*[i], or by his *holiness*[k], or his *truth*[l], or his *excellency*[m], or any other of his *attributes* or perfections. The meaning and import of all which expressions amount very nearly to the same: namely, that God thereby declares the thing to be as *certain* as his own being and attributes are, and as firmly to be depended upon. This manner of speaking being more awful and solemn than a naked declaration, is so much the apter to make deep impressions upon the hearers, and to beget the strongest confidence. But besides that, there is a further use in it, in some cases, for the distinguishing absolute and irrevocable decrees, from bare promises or threatenings suspended upon certain conditions, tacit or express. His general promises are under condition of the *obedience* of the persons whom he gives them to; and his general threatenings are under condition of the *impenitency* of the persons threatened: but his *sworn decrees* are absolute and irrevocable, suspended on no conditions.

Such is the end and use of those Divine asseverations, which the Scripture frequently calls *oaths* and *swearing*. And I must own I see no reason why they should not be esteemed *oaths* properly so called, having in them all that is strictly necessary or essential to make up the general nature or definition of an oath. Accordingly, I would define an oath, in the general, to be *a solemn asseveration made as strong as is possible to beget faith in others:* which definition would take in both *human* and *Divine* oaths. An *human oath* is one thing, and *an oath*, at large, is another. It is well known, the *Pagans* supposed that their *Gods* might *swear*, even their *supreme* God *Jupiter*[n], as well as the rest: which shows that the general *idea* to

[f] Jer. xliv. 26.
[g] Jer. li. 14. Numb. xiv. 21, 28. Isa. xlix. 18. et passim.
[h] Isa. lxii. 8. [i] Ibid.
[k] Amos iv. 2. Psalm lxxxix. 35.
[l] Psalm lxxxix. 49. cxxxii. 11.
[m] Amos viii. 7.
[n] Homer. Iliad. O'. 37. See Vossius de Idololatria, lib. ii. c. 81.

which mankind have affixed the name of *swearing*, means no more than what I have said, and does not necessarily imply the "invoking a superior." Indeed, the *Pagans* came but lamely off, in their theology, while they made their greatest *gods* swear by Styx, (or Stygian lake,) reckoning it the highest and strongest oath their gods could have: which was blundering wretchedly, and talking they knew not what. But the scriptural account of the *Divine* oaths is just and rational, clear of all offence; which might be an argument to our writer, if he would please to consider it, of the *truth* and *divinity* of our *Scriptures*, and that they were not contrived by man's device: for if they had, it is more than a hundred to one, but they would have blundered in this article, as much as the *Pagan* theology did. To conclude this head: if, after all, any one should dislike the general definition here given of an *oath*, yet let it be observed, that nothing material depends upon it; but it would be disputing only about *words*.

JOSH. II. 4.

AND THE WOMAN TOOK THE TWO MEN, AND HID THEM, AND SAID THUS, THERE CAME MEN UNTO ME, BUT I WIST NOT WHENCE THEY WERE.

The censure upon this passage is as follows[o]: "When "men find the harlot Rahab celebrated, even in the New "Testament, for lying to the government, and betraying "her country to its most cruel enemies, are they not in "danger, if they find their advantage in it, and it is for "the service of those they judge to be true Israelites, to "do the same?" Here are two charges against sacred Writ; *slanders* both, as usual: first, that it applauds Rahab for "lying to the government;" 2dly, that it commends her likewise for *betraying* her country.

1. As to the first, how will this gentleman be ever able to prove that she is "celebrated in the New Testament

[o] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 263.

" for lying?" He refers to Heb. xi. 31. and James ii. 25. in which places I find that Rahab is celebrated for her *faith* and for her *works;* but not a word is there in commendation of her *lying*. The utmost that the Objector ought to have said, if he had any regard to *truth* or *reason*, is, that a woman who had told an *officious lie*, which was wrong, is celebrated notwithstanding for her other qualities, which were right and good. I wish this gentleman, while he so freely charges others with *lying*, would himself take care to tell nothing but the *truth*. But what if Scripture commends Rahab for things truly commendable; does it therefore follow that Scripture approves every word she spake, or every circumstance of doing what she did?

Some indeed have thought, that the telling an *untruth* in that case was justifiable, for the saving of the lives of two *innocent* persons. Our Objector, of all men, should not have been thus severe upon the harlot Rahab, because his own doctrine in p. 347. will fully clear her of all blame, nay, and make it her *duty* to do as she did.

His words are so express, and so particularly adapted to the very case, that one would think he had had an eye to it; repenting now of the injury he had done her in page 263, and designing to make her some amends for it. " Must he not," says this gentleman, " be an ill man in-" deed, who would not save an innocent person, by telling " his pursuer a falsehood? This is a duty he owes both " to the pursuer and pursued[p]." Well: put but *woman* in for *man*, and see how aptly the apology will serve for Rahab. " Must she not be an ill woman indeed, who " would not save two innocent persons, by telling their " pursuer a falsehood? This is a duty she owed both to " the pursuer and pursued." If therefore, as appears by this account, it was her *duty* to tell a falsehood, *lying* perhaps will be too harsh a name for it, as including commonly some moral obliquity in the very idea affixed to it.

[p] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 347.

However that be, yet certain it is that Rahab must stand acquitted, yea and commended too, by this gentleman's casuistry, for saving *two innocent* persons by a falsehood. That the *spies* were very *innocent* men is a plain case. They had their governor Joshua's orders for what they did: and they knew that he had been set over them by appointment of God. Therefore Rahab, so far, did right in saving two *innocent* persons by an *untruth*, if there was no other circumstance that could make it criminal.

2. It is indeed pretended, that she therein *betrayed* her country, that is, the men of that country, the then present *inhabitants*: and if it be fact that she did them an *injury*, or that she acted without sufficient authority, then let her stand condemned of *traitorous* practices. But I must do her the justice to observe, that she was deeply sensible that the high Lord of heaven and earth had *given* that *land*[q] to Israel, and she acted under a full persuasion of it; which *faith* of hers is the faith so commended in the 11th to the Hebrews. Therefore, not doubting but that the God of the universe had an uncontrollable right to set up or to pull down, and to dispose of all kingdoms and countries according to his good pleasure, she judged it reasonable to obey *God* rather than *man;* and thereupon she endeavoured, as much as in her lay, to deliver up the land to the *true owners*, to those whom God, by his donation, had made the *rightful* proprietors. She had been *treacherous* both to God and them, if she had not done it, when she *knew*, as she there expressly says, that "the Lord had given them the land."

The Objector however says, that "it is not pretended "that the harlot had any special command for so doing[r]. But the harlot had what was equivalent to a special command: she had sufficient intimations of what God intended for his people Israel; and she expressed her faith in him by saying, THE LORD YOUR GOD, HE IS GOD IN HEAVEN ABOVE, AND IN EARTH BENEATH[s]. A glo-

[q] Josh. ii. 9.
[r] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 263.
[s] Josh. ii. 11.

rious confession; which shows what principles she acted upon, and that she had not only a full persuasion, but a well-grounded one too, that she was then performing the *will* of God.

The sum then of the whole matter is this: two charges this gentleman has drawn up against Rahab: as to the first of them, *viz. lying*, he has himself acquitted her of all blame, by the *law of nature*, and therefore should not have made it an article against *Scripture*, if Scripture had approved it, which yet does not appear. And as to the second, *viz.* the *betraying her country*, it is so far from being true, that she had been faithless towards God, and injurious towards man, if she had not done all that she fairly could, to deliver up the land to God's people Israel. As to others drawing her practice into precedent, the answer may be very short and full: when any one has as good reasons, or as clear a commission as she had, for delivering up any land, let them do as she did: but if they have no such reasons, and no such commission, then her practice is to them no precedent at all. Men may misapply either a text of Scripture, or any principle of reason, to wrong purposes: and if that be an argument against the use of Scripture, it is of equal force against the use of every thing else whatsoever.

## JOSH. X. 12.

SUN, STAND THOU STILL UPON GIBEON, &c.

The Objector, referring to this memorable part of history, is pleased to ask[t], "Was not the sun's standing "still for a whole day together at the command of Jo- "shua, that he might have light enough to destroy his "enemies, a sufficient proof that they (the Canaanites) "ought to have offered up their throats?" He had asked a little before another question[u]: "If the Israelites had a "Divine commission to extirpate the Canaanites, ought "not the Canaanites to have known it, to prevent their

[t] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 275. [u] Ibid. p. 274.

" resisting men acting by a Divine commission?" I am sorry that I must so often have occasion to observe of this gentleman, that while he pretends to be trying Scripture by *reason*, he discovers little else but dull *malice*: as if there were no difference between a *slanderer* of God's word and a *fair* examiner; between a false accuser and an upright judge. A taunting kind of a way he is got into, without regard either to *truth* or *decency*. Here are no less than *three* opprobrious reflections upon Scripture, or rather upon *Divine* wisdom, without any foundation. One, that the Canaanites had not *due notice* given them that Israel acted upon *Divine* warrant. A second, that the sun stood still only to give " light enough to de-" stroy." A third, that the Canaanites were to " offer up " their throats," had they known how the case stood. All this is malevolent perverting Scripture, and abusing the readers. To come to particulars.

1. As to the Canaanites wanting *due notice*; what kind of notice would this gentleman require? It was God's design in raising up his people Israel, to make himself thereby known to all the ends of the earth. The wonders he wrought in Egypt were no secret to other nations: and his bringing up his people in a body from thence was a public thing, done in the face of the world[x]. Rahab the harlot soon understood, by what she had seen and heard, who the God of Israel was: and the Gibeonites, who themselves were Canaanites, having considered what had been done to Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan, and what to Jericho, and to Ai, had the sense to know that God had *given that land*[y] *to Israel*; and accordingly took care in time to compound for their own safety: which any other Canaanites also might have done, by submitting and becoming *tributaries*[z]. What further *notice* would this gentleman have required in the case? Would he have had a herald sent

[x] Numb. xiv. 15, 21.
[y] Josh. ix. 24.
[z] Deut. xx. 10, 11. Josh. xi. 19.

on purpose to proclaim in every village of Canaan, that the God of Israel had commissioned his people to extirpate them, if they did not immediately submit and come in? Much would the Canaanites have regarded the God of Israel, had such a thing been done! They had other gods of their own whom they trusted to, and whom they madly preferred. They would but have flouted the mention of the God of Israel, and have blasphemed the high name, as Pharaoh had done before, and Rabshakeh did after, and as *infidels* do at this day. Nothing could convince such men but conquering them in a *miraculous* way, if that could do it. They had had warnings sufficient but would take no warnings, being headstrong, hardened, and incorrigible. God "executed his judgments upon "them by little and little," (as the Book of Wisdom observes,) "giving them place of repentance, not being ig-"norant that they were a naughty generation, and that "their malice was bred in them, and that their cogitation "would never be changed[a]." So little reason is there for pretending that they had not due notice[b].

2. As to the sun's standing still, only to give "light "enough" for Joshua to destroy his enemies; it is a poor suggestion, proceeding from a narrow mind. God had higher and larger views in all the *miracles* he wrought; namely, to "declare his glory among the heathen, and "his wonders among all people," to spread the knowledge of the *true God* among all lands, and to diffuse a sense of religion over the wide world. Where has our author taken up his low and unworthy thoughts of the God of Israel? Or how has he spent his time in reading Scripture, to make no better improvement?

3. As to the Canaanites being obliged to "offer up "their throats," that again is a crude, ignorant thought. They were obliged to become *tributaries*, if they presently submitted, and that was all: they were not utterly excluded the benefits of *strangers* and *proselytes*, if they

[a] Wisdom xii. 10. [b] See Jenkins, vol. i. p. 57.

would timely accept of it[c]. It is childish to talk of their coming to "offer up their throats." Who would ever expect it of *criminals*, that they should not endeavour either by *submission*, or *resistance*, or *escape*, to save their lives? Sure our author must think those Canaanites were very *conscientious* men, who, if they had but known of the *Divine* commission sent out to destroy them, would have come and have died with all the meekness, courage, and constancy of *martyrs*. A likely matter! And yet that is the supposition he seems to go upon, in pleading that they ought to have had more notice of the *Divine* commission, "to prevent their resistance," or to prevent their claiming a *right* to save their *lives*, if they could. But since it is morally absurd to suppose that any *criminals* (much less such as they were) would have been so conscientious or tame, he might much better have argued, that it would have been kind to have kept them entirely in the dark, that so they might the more *innocently* defend their lives; which most of them certainly would do, right or wrong, when they could.

But we are not yet come to the most sarcastical part, the most malicious taunt upon the *God* of *Israel*, for the sake of which the rest was brought in. He observes, that the sun's standing still "did not happen till they "were defeated in Gibeon, and consequently till then, it "could be no direction to them." And what if it was not? They had intimation or *direction* enough besides, and more than God owed them. But he goes on: "And "even after that, the Lord hardened their hearts, that "they should come against Israel in battle[d]." Now all is out, that he had been labouring so long with: and so we will inquire a little into the case of God's *hardening* their hearts.

[c] See Grotius de Jur. Bell. lib. ii. c. 13. sect. 4. Jenkins, vol. i. p. 71, 72. Cleric. in Josh. ix. 7, 18. xi. 19. Indeed Le Clerc was once of a different opinion, for some reasons that looked plausible; but, upon maturer consideration, changed his mind. See also Bishop Patrick on Deut. xx. 16.

[d] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 275.

When God is said to *harden men's hearts*, it is not to be imagined, that he secretly influences their wills, or suggests any stubborn resolutions to their minds: but knowing how obstinately they are bent upon wickedness, he judicially gives them up to their own madness, and lets them run headlong on to their certain undoing. If we may venture to declare more particularly, in what sense God might be said to have hardened their hearts, it was, very probably, by forbearing to strike terror into them; by giving them respite, and not pursuing them constantly, and without remission. For after Joshua's second campaign, A. M. 2554[e], the wars of Canaan were at a stand for three or four years. That remission, or delay on the side of Israel, encouraged the Canaanites to come up against Israel, A. M. 2558, with a most prodigious army, to their own destruction. And it is of what was done at that very time that Scripture says, "It was "of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should "come up against Israel in battle, that he (Israel) might "destroy them utterly," &c. Thus also God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, by giving him respites, time after time, from the plagues he had been visited with. Such respites to honest and good men would have been salutary; but to the obstinate and perverse, who abuse the mercies of God, they turn to their surer and sorer destruction[f].

There is nothing in this conduct, with respect to ill men, which can reasonably be thought unworthy of the Divine Majesty, or unbecoming his wisdom, justice, or goodness; however the adversary may please to flout it, exposing himself in doing it. It must indeed be owned,

[e] See Mr. Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 493.

[f] Indurat cor Pharaonis; sed meruerat in exitium subministrari, qui jam negaverat Deum; qui jam legatos ejus toties superbus excusserat, qui jam populo laborem operis adjecerat; postremo, qua Ægyptius olim Deo reus fuerat gentilis idololatriæ, ibin et crocodilum citius colens quam Deum vivum. *Tertull. adv. Marc.* lib. ii. c. 14. conf. Orig. Philocal. cap. xxi. p. 56, &c. et cap. xxvii. p. 101, &c.

there is some difficulty in the thing; and a sober sensible man might modestly ask for some account of it. But for any one hereupon to fall to scoffing and drolling, in one of the gravest subjects, and upon the most serious book in the world, and in a case that concerns the most tremendous Being, betrays such a profane levity of spirit, as there is no excuse for. God has sometimes remarkably punished affronts offered even to *false* religions, and *idol deities*, because religion in general is wounded by them[g]: so provoking and dangerous a thing is it, to run riot and play the buffoon in these serious and weighty concernments.

God's government of moral agents in a way suitable to his wisdom and their liberty, is a high and adorable subject, which ought never to be thought of but with reverence, nor spoke of but with awful respect. There are few things we are less capable of seeing clearly into, so as to settle any thing *a priori* about them. "Hardly do "we guess aright at things that are upon the earth, and "with labour do we find the things that are before us: "but the things that are in heaven, who hath searched "out[h]?" Yet some persons are perpetually telling us what God must do; as if they were of his counsels, knew the secrets of heaven, or could "find out the Almighty to "perfection." Not that they know any thing more than others, seldom so much; for superior *confidence* is no sign at all of superior *understanding*. But they have a turn to serve in all this parade: they have some *conclusions* to draw, where they can come at no *premises*; and so it is to cover a *petitio principii* that they make so familiar with the tremendous Deity. If they were to say, *they think* so and so, and therefore it is so; it would be plainly abusing the reader, and betraying their own poverty. Or if they were to say, that *they think* Divine wisdom might have ordered thus and thus, (which in reality is all that

[g] See Prideaux's Connection, part i. p. 136. fol. edit.
[h] Wisdom ix. 16.

their arguments amount to,) then it would be seen plainly, that their reasoning rests only upon a fond *persuasion* of their *own*, void of *proof*, which again is doing nothing. But to turn about, and put on a bold face, confidently bearing us down that God *must* have appointed so and so, and *could not* do otherwise, unless defective in *natural* or *moral* capacity; this (though it is only the same *petitio principii* put into a profane dress, and as much begging the thing in question as before, yet) serves sometimes to amuse, or even to confound, a weak and unattentive reader. This therefore is the turn which modern *unbelievers*, wanting principles to go upon, have commonly taken. The writer I am now concerned with is so pleased with it, and so full of it, that the argumentative part of his book (if any may be called so) rests in a manner entirely upon it. He can tell us roundly, upon very trifling pretences, that God ought to have given his revelation *sooner* than in fact he has, or not at all: that he ought to have spread it *wider* than he has done, or never to have published it: and that he ought to have made it *perfect*, absolutely perfect, at once, or to have kept it to himself. These things he lays down dogmatically, without knowing, or ever considering, whether the pretended inconveniences he complains of, could have been prevented without admitting greater; or whether, upon the whole, they have not been more than counterbalanced by much greater good; that so nothing has been done but what, to one that knows all circumstances, was evidently the best and fittest to be done. However, from these and the like principles, or *postulata*, (as void of reason, as of decency and modesty,) and for which he has not one syllable of proof, he draws deductions, and forms conclusions, all built upon the sand: and so instead of logic, or syllogism, or close argument, (which he appears to be a stranger to,) he goes on romancing all the way, and tells us his dreams. For the sum of all is no more than this: that if God be no wiser than he is, then things must have been so and

so[i]: but if infinite wisdom sees farther than he does, then he has his *premises* to seek, and must begin again. Were it a province at all fit for mortal man, to assume and dogmatize in the deep things of God, no doubt but the *wisest* and *ablest* men should be singled out for such high and arduous employment. But such men know their duty and their distance, and have the discretion and modesty to forbear: for the more real and solid knowledge men have of God and of themselves, the more humble always and resigning.

I shall just take notice farther, before I end the present digression, that that so familiar and irreverent way of dictating to God, and tying him down to the fond imaginations of weak man, has been one of the stale refuges of every baffled cause, when better arguments have been wanting. The Papists have often made use of it, to support their doctrine of the necessity of an *infallible judge:* for they argue, that a *wise* and *good* God must have appointed one. The Jews also, when at a loss for other premises to go upon, are used to plead that a wise and good God ought to have made it *plainer* in the Old Testament than in fact he has, that Jesus of Nazareth was to be the *Messiah.* The Socinians are great dealers in the same exorbitant way, boasting of nothing less than *Divine* wisdom, but generally putting off their *own* conjectures for it. I observe also, that a modern writer, who has lately published a Discourse concerning Reason, is much addicted to the same practice, and too often, as well as too irreverently, ushers in his fancies under the awful cover and sanction of *Divine* wisdom, measuring it by his *own.* Strange, that those who upon every occasion almost betray a shortness of thought, insomuch that a man of ordinary sagacity, coming after them, can easily discover where their attention failed, and where they slipped some

[i] Such was Marcion's way of arguing formerly: for which he is both smartly and justly corrected by Tertullian, contr. Marc. lib. ii. c. 2. p. 282.

part of the account, should yet presume to be positive in the *high things of God;* where, if they happen but to come short in any one material article which God sees more than they, or but to take it in any different light from what it appears in to the *Divine* mind, all that they pretend to, resolves only into airy speculation and vain amusement: but for the *presumption* they are guilty of, they must answer.

There is indeed a sober and a just way of arguing from *Divine* wisdom or goodness, in some very plain and short cases, where we have light enough to go by, and where we have a competent view of the *whole* question, or when we argue on the side of certain fact. But the extravagant lengths which some have run, in that channel of argument, and in cases too intricate and obscure for natural reason to see halfway into, have done great mischief to *religion*, and to *science* too, and are as much faults in *reasoning*, as they are offences against *modesty* and true *piety*. All pretended arguments against *plain* Scripture facts, or *plain* Scripture declarations, are empty fallacies, good for nothing. The sitting down to consider what God *ought* to do, or *must* do, without first inquiring what he *has done*, is preposterous and absurd: it is entering upon what is *dark* and *obscure* first, in order to come at what is *clear;* it is beginning at the wrong end, and regulating Divine wisdom by *ours*, instead of regulating ours by *his*. In short, it is paying a proud compliment to *ourselves* in the first place, instead of humbly offering up the first honours to *God*. I must again beg my reader's pardon for thus digressing a little from the text, though not from my purpose; and now I return.

### JOSH. XVI. 10.

AND THEY DRAVE NOT OUT THE CANAANITES THAT DWELT IN GEZER, &c.

The reflection here is, [k] that "though it is said, that

[k] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 275.

"THE LIVING GOD IS AMONG YOU, AND THAT HE "WILL NOT FAIL TO DRIVE OUT FROM BEFORE "YOU THE CANAANITES, &c.[l] yet Israel could not "drive them out of several places: and in one instance "it is said, THE LORD WAS WITH JUDAH, AND HE "DRAVE OUT THE INHABITANTS OF THE MOUN-"TAINS, BUT COULD NOT DRIVE OUT THE INHA-"BITANTS OF THE VALLEY, BECAUSE THEY HAD "CHARIOTS OF IRON[m]." What the Objector would insinuate from all is, that the Israelites, though God was with them to assist them, were not able, even by such assistance, to drive out the Canaanites. But the truth is, that the Israelites were able, and might, with God's assistance have totally routed and destroyed the Canaanites; only they were slothful, or faint-hearted, or had corrupt views of their own, and so did not exert to the utmost for the destroying the Canaanites, as God had commanded[n]. Instead of that, they foolishly and wickedly *made leagues* with some of the *inhabitants* of Canaan, upon which God was angry with them, and thereupon determined, for a punishment of such default, to leave some Canaanites amongst them, which should be as "thorns in their sides[o]," and "a snare" unto them. There was a time when they might have driven them all out, all that should resist; and they ought to have done it: but as they slipped the opportunity, through sloth, or avarice, or a distrust of God's power, or other bad principle, they afterwards could not. God would not assist them in their *late* endeavours, because they had refused to accept of his assistance at the proper season, when they might have done any thing. Such may be the account of that whole matter, if our rendering of Judges i. 19. be right. "They could not drive out, &c." either because they attempted it too late, or because they yet wanted faith in God.

[l] Josh. iii. 10. [m] Judges i. 19. [n] Josh. xiii. 6. xvii. 18.
[o] Josh. xxiii. 13. Judges ii. 1, 2, 3.

But after all, I do not think that we have any occasion for this solution in relation to Judges i. 19. because the pretended difficulty is no difficulty, if the Hebrew words may admit of another and a better rendering. The force of the objection lies only in the words, *could not*; which are not in the Hebrew at all, but are supplied by the *translators*, to fill up, as they supposed, an elliptical form of speech. The Hebrew, literally rendered, is no more than this: HE (Judah) DRAVE OUT (those of) THE MOUNTAIN, BUT——NOT DRIVE OUT. There is an ellipsis of some verb or other that should fill up the sentence, as is very frequent before the *infinitive* with *lamed*[p]. It might be said, *durst not*, *would not*, *did not*, or the like, as well as *could not*, if the translators had so pleased. They supposed the verb יכל to be understood, rendering it as if it had been לא יכל, *he could not*, like as in Joshua xvii. 12. But we may as reasonably fill up the blank with another verb, namely יסף, a verb which goes along with the same infinitive (as we suppose here) in Judges ii. 21. So then the sense and the rendering will be, *he* (Judah) *proceeded not to drive out* &c.[q] which answers all difficulties, and makes the sense complete. It was Judah's fault, that he was terrified with the *iron chariots*, and durst not *proceed* to attack the inhabitants of the *valley*.

Perhaps the Objector will hereupon exclaim, as he has lately done[r], and say, "how frequently do Divines, to "serve a present purpose, find fault with the English "word of God." It may be so, and to *very good purpose*: for *Divines* have a right to do it, because they *know* what they do. But what pretence have those who are *no Divines* to pass any censure at all in matters which they do not understand? But I proceed.

[p] See Noldius's Concord. p. 473.

[q] Junius and Tremellius render, *non perrexit expellere*, just as they render Judges ii. 21. *non pergam expellere*.

[r] Second Address, &c. p. 85.

JUDGES III. 20, 21.

AND EHUD SAID, I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM GOD UNTO THEE. AND HE AROSE OUT OF HIS SEAT. AND EHUD PUT FORTH HIS LEFT HAND, AND TOOK THE DAGGER FROM HIS RIGHT THIGH, AND THRUST IT INTO HIS BELLY.

The Objector hereupon is pleased to say[s], "How "many precedents, besides that of Ehud, (who, on a "message from the Lord, stabbed the king, to whom his "people sent him with a present,) did the Popish priests "plead from the Old Testament, for the assassination of "the two Henries of France?"

Well: be it so. What is the inference? An honest and sensible man would say, that from thence may be *inferred*, what wicked and perverse reasoners some *Popish priests* have been or may be: but our Objector's *inference*, which he every where carefully inculcates, is, therefore away with the *Bible*, and all *external* revelation, and trust solely to the light of nature, to your natural parts and improvements. A man that can argue thus weakly and thus wickedly, may be a fit companion for such *Popish priests*, but can never be a fit person to reprove them. How is Scripture at all to blame, for men's perverting it to an ill use (as they may any thing) through their own depravity?

The *Popish assassins* wanted the very principal thing which Ehud had, namely, a *Divine* commission. The text expressly says, THE LORD RAISED UP EHUD[t]: and it is well known that all the *deliverances* which the Jews had under the Judges were directed and conducted by the immediate hand of God, according as the people, by their repentance, became fit to receive them. But did the Lord *raise up* the Popish assassins? Or was there any *special* direction sent them from heaven? A *Divine* warrant, in such a case, is a clear foundation to go upon;

[s] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 264. [t] Judges iii. 15.

and that Ehud had. But is it therefore any precedent for others to act upon, who have no *Divine* warrant at all, but quite the contrary? What is *reason* and *understanding* given us for, but to distinguish upon cases and circumstances? If the Objector is afraid of men's making an ill use of pretended precedents, (which are no precedents,) let him advise his readers to be *honest*, and to reason *fairly* and *justly*, without bias or corrupt affection. That is the true course to be taken in such cases: not to plead for throwing *Scripture* aside, (which is wrong judging and false reasoning,) but to interpret it with care and conscience; and then all will be right. This gentleman boasts much of *reason;* and an excellent thing he will find it to be, whenever he becomes acquainted with it: let him either talk less of it, or use it more. For as often as he runs against *Scripture*, he runs as much against *reason;* and renounces his *logic* and his *faith* at the same time. *Scripture* and *reason* are inseparable friends, which stand and fall together, wherever both are once known. *Reason* takes in *Scripture*, and rejoices in it, as the eye does in light: a man that follows the just conclusions of *reason* never can be an *infidel.*

## JUDG. IV. 21.

THEN JAEL, HEBER'S WIFE, TOOK A NAIL OF THE TENT, &c.

The story of Jael's slaying Sisera is a well-known story, and could not escape our author's censure; who says [u], that she had no "special command for an act of "the highest treachery: for which, because it served the "interest of Israel, she is declared by the Prophetess De-"borah to be BLESSED ABOVE WOMEN [x]."

Yet it seems that Meroz was then *cursed* [y], and by the "angel of the Lord" too, for not being zealous, as Jael the wife of Heber was, in the *Lord's* cause: which I col-

[u] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 263.
[x] Judges v. 24.
[y] Judges v. 23.

lect from the opposition there appears to be between the *curse* in verse 23, and the *blessing* in verse 24. So the author may make his charge, if he pleases, not only against Deborah and Jael, but against the *angel* also. However, I make no question but a fair account may be given of the whole thing: or if, for want of light into all circumstances, we may happen to come short, yet the presumption certainly will lie on the side of Deborah, and the "angel of the Lord," against any man's judgment whatsoever, and is alone sufficient to decide the doubt.

1. I observe first, that it was prophesied beforehand, in relation to this fact of Jael's, that the Lord should SELL SISERA INTO THE HAND OF A WOMAN. And this was intended for a rebuke and a punishment to Barak for his backwardness, that he refused to go to war, unless Deborah would go with him: for she said to him [z], THE JOURNEY THAT THOU TAKEST (or rather, THE WAY THOU TAKEST; *this behaviour of thine* [a], *viz.* in refusing to go without me) SHALL NOT BE FOR THINE HONOUR: FOR THE LORD SHALL SELL SISERA INTO THE HAND OF A WOMAN. Which was to intimate, that since Barak so much insisted upon a *woman's* attending him to the battle, a *woman* should divide the honour of the day with him: and so it proved.

2. We are next to consider, that what is done in very uncommon cases, and upon occasions very extraordinary, is not to be judged of by common rules. The Israelites had been under servitude now twenty years, during which time the oppressors imagined that their conquests over Israel were so many conquests over the God of Israel, as was natural enough to think. But now the time was come for God to manifest himself in a signal manner, and to make the world know that his power was paramount to every thing, and that he was "above all gods." The

[z] Judges iv. 9.

[a] Ratio qua te geris. Cleric. in loc. And see Patrick.

battle to be that day fought was the *Lord's battle*, and the cause to be maintained was the *Lord's cause*. Any coldness (where help might be expected) was interpreted a kind of deserting the *true God;* as in the case of Meroz, who "came not to the help of the Lord." Neutrality or faintness in as many as owned the God of Israel, at such a time, was criminal. It is a poor thought to imagine, that the favours done to the people of Israel were for the sake only of *that* people. They were raised up, and placed in the view of the whole world, to be, as it were, God's throne, or theatre, whereon to display his wonders, and to proclaim his power to all the heathen countries round about. This was the Divine method of spreading the knowledge of himself among mankind, that the idolatrous nations might thereby learn and know (if disposed to attend to it) that he, and he only, was the *true God*. I say then, that God showed by his prodigies, during the battle of that day, that his honour was nearly concerned in it; besides that a forty years' rest to *his people* depended upon it. In these circumstances, Jael acted her part on the side of the *God* of *Israel*, to whom she was infinitely more obliged than she could be either to the enemy's captain Sisera, or to Jabin king of Hazor. It can scarce be doubted, but that Jael had some *Divine* direction or impulse to stir her up to do what she did. The enterprise was exceeding bold and hazardous, above the courage of her sex: and one would think that, had she been left to herself, she would have been content to let Sisera have lain there, till Barak should come and surprise him, who was then pursuing him. The resolution she took appears very extraordinary, and so has the marks and tokens of its being from the extraordinary hand of God. In this view all is clear and right: and the Objector will not be able to prove there was any *treachery* in it. For she ought to obey *God* rather than *man:* and all obligations to man cease when brought in competition with our higher obligations towards God[b].

[b] Wits. Miscellan. tom. i. p. 352.

JUDG. IX. 13.

AND THE VINE SAID UNTO THEM, SHOULD I LEAVE MY WINE, WHICH CHEERETH GOD AND MAN, AND GO TO BE PROMOTED OVER THE TREES?

Whereupon the Objector says[c], "What strange no-"tions must the bulk of mankind, could not their reason "direct them right, have of the Supreme Being, when "it is said, that WINE CHEERETH BOTH GOD AND "MAN?" We desire as much *reason* as possible to *direct* us *right*. But there is no reason at all in the inference which the author constantly aims at; namely, to reject *Scripture*, and to abide by *reason* alone. If he meant only, that men should in every thing make use of the *reason* which God had given them, (a point which nobody ever called in question,) why did he write all the tedious impertinence he has filled his book with? His design plainly is to teach us, not that reason is *useful* in interpreting Scripture, (which none can doubt of,) but that it is *alone* sufficient for every thing without Scripture; in which assertion he runs directly against reason, because no man with *reason* can reject *Scripture:* for reason duly attended to, as I before hinted, leads to Scripture, and takes Scripture in with it. But to return to our text. The Objector would insinuate, that Scripture here suggests false and unworthy notions of the Supreme Being. He does not tell his readers that the words are part of a *parable*, ingeniously contrived by Jotham, the only then surviving son of Gideon. In a parable, or fiction, every word or sentence is not to be interpreted with utmost rigour; unless we are to take it to be Scripture doctrine, that *trees* could talk. Jotham, to represent the forwardness and self-assurance of foolish persons, in undertaking high things which wiser and better men would decline, brings in a *fable*, setting forth how the *olive-tree*, the *fig-tree*, and the *vine*, and all the choice trees, had modestly re-

[c] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 251.

fused a province not proper for them; but that the *bramble*, the unfittest of all, had accepted it notwithstanding, and was like to perform accordingly. Now the words here cited are the words of the *vine*, and probably run upon a *Pagan* hypothesis, allowable in a *fable* or *apologue*. So Castalio, Le Clerc, and others interpret the place: and they render the words, not *God* and *man*, but *gods* and *men*, which is better. Perhaps in such a kind of fiction, though it had a serious moral, it might be thought more *decent* to use the Pagan style of *gods* and *men*, than to introduce the *true God*, either by name or by implication: or Jotham, speaking to the idolatrous Sichemites, might adapt his speech to their notions, the better to be understood by them.

There is another construction which some have recommended, namely, that wine cheereth both high and low, *elohim* and *anashim*, *princes* and *peasants*; or else, *princes* and *persons of quality*. This last construction is maintained by Le Cene, and his translator Ross[d]. But I prefer the interpretation of Le Clerc above mentioned.

JUDG. XI. 30.

AND JEPHTHAH VOWED A VOW UNTO THE LORD, &c.

Jephthah's vow has been a subject of much debate in the learned world. However the more disputable points be determined, the Objector will never be able to prove what he aims at[e], *viz.* that the God of Israel commanded or countenanced *human* sacrifices. Those that interpret that vow in the harshest sense call it rash or impious; and they censure Jephthah, as ignorant of the law of God. Others, who think the vow capable of a milder construction, acquit both the Scripture and Jephthah of all imputation in that affair. It would be tedious to enter into the detail of that matter; and it is needless, after what has

[d] Ross's Essay for a New Translation of the Bible, p. 122.

[e] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 96.

been done by many learned men[f], to whose labours I can add nothing. What is most probable is, that Jephthah did not *sacrifice* his daughter, nor intend any such thing. The words of the vow do not necessarily require it, since the Hebrew may be rendered, *or I will offer*, &c. as our *margin* renders, instead of, *and I will offer*, &c. All that is certain is, that he did *devote her to the Lord;* the result whereof probably was, that she was to continue a *virgin* all her days, and to *serve* in such a way as females might, for the use of the *sanctuary;* as in spinning, weaving, making vestments for the priests and Levites; or in grinding wheat, kneading flour, baking bread, or the like. Such kind of services, probably, she was condemned to for life. And thus was the vow executed. The reasons for this interpretation are produced at large by Le Clerc; and the chief of them are briefly summed up by Mr. Bedford[g]; whose words, because they are much to the purpose, and will not be long in transcribing, I shall here lay before the reader.

1. "If he had sacrificed her, the Scripture would, without doubt, have censured it as a very wicked and inhuman act.

2. "In such a case, he would not have let her go up and down upon the mountains for two months: for he might suppose, that she would never have returned, and then he could not have done as he had vowed.

3. "If she had gone upon the mountains, it would have been to bewail her *untimely end*, whereas all that she proposed was to bewail her *virginity*.

4. "The sacred story seems to favour this interpretation: that at the end of two months she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow that

[f] Le Clerc and Patrick on the text. Jenkins's Reasonableness, &c. vol. ii. cap. 18. Selden de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. iv. cap. 11. Pfeiffer. Dub. Vexat. Centur. ii. Loc. 60. p. 393. In this last author are numbered up most of the writers, Jews and Christians, that have declared themselves either way upon the question. Himself takes the harshest side.

[g] Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 522.

" he had vowed; the consequence of which is immediately " added, *and she knew no man.* This was a great trouble " to Jephthah, because by this means his family was ex- " tinct, and he had no issue to inherit his estate, or keep " his name in remembrance."

I shall hereto subjoin an observation which I borrow from Le Clerc, that though Jephthah might, by the Levitical Law, have *redeemed* her even from this *servitude* and *single state*; yet, probably, being a very religious man, he was scrupulous in the matter, having made his vow in so solemn a manner, and on so public an occasion; and he might think it mean, in a person of his distinction, to redeem so precious a treasure as an only daughter, at the low legal price of thirty *shekels.*

I shall only add farther, since the Objector seems to lay a great stress upon the maid's being yearly mourned for [h], as dead, that the Hebrew words may be translated, as the margin reads, they went yearly to *talk with* [i] the daughter of Jephthah [k]: and if that be the true rendering, the text itself will be a proof that she was not sacrificed, but was still *alive.*

This construction, I own, is doubtful: but then the other is more so: so that this at least we are *certain* of, that the Objector cannot prove his point.

## 1 SAM. VI. 19.

AND HE SMOTE THE MEN OF BETHSHEMESH, BECAUSE THEY HAD LOOKED INTO THE ARK OF THE LORD, EVEN HE SMOTE OF THE PEOPLE FIFTY THOUSAND AND THREESCORE AND TEN MEN.

So stand the words in our translation. The Objector takes notice of them only in passing, and in this manner: " [l] What holiness, either real or relative, would the ark " now have? Though it once had such legal holiness,

[h] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 96.
[i] See Le Clerc in loc. Ross's Essay for a New Translation, p. 68, &c.
[k] Judg. xi. 40. [l] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 174.

" that more than fifty thousand reapers were destroyed " for peeping into it." He says no more: but that he introduced this passage to banter and expose it, cannot be doubted; because in the same place he ridicules the notion of *relative* holiness, telling us, that " all the relative " holiness which concerns public worship, whether as to " persons, places, or things, must be derived from the " congregation;" instead of saying, what is truth, that it is derived from God, and stands in the relation which things consecrated bear to him. But I design not here to enter into the question about *relative* holiness[m], which is foreign to my purpose. All I observe is, that when he was endeavouring to banter away all just sense of *relative* holiness, it was bantering Scripture too, to tell us that fifty thousand persons were destroyed on the account of the *relative* holiness of the ark. The men of Bethshemesh (several of them) were indeed destroyed for want of reverence towards God's *holy* ark: not fifty thousand, (as the translation says,) but SEVENTY MEN, OUT OF FIFTY THOUSAND MEN; which is a juster rendering of the Hebrew, and is well defended by Le Clerc in his comments upon the text. Bochart had before led the way[n] towards the correcting the common translations, rendering the words thus, SEVENTY MEN; *viz.* FIFTY OUT OF A THOUSAND MEN, a twentieth part, reckoning the whole but fourteen hundred. That was a much better rendering than the common translations; and his reasonings upon the text afforded great light to all that came after. Le Clerc's will suit as well with the letter of the Hebrew, and appears more natural, and less perplexed. These things the Objector might have known, and would have considered, had he been as much disposed to examine Scripture by *reason*, as he is to expose it by abusive reflections.

[m] See Mede, b. i. disc. 2. p. 14, &c.

[n] Bochart, Hieroz. tom. i. p. 370.

## 1 Sam. VIII. 7.

AND THE LORD SAID UNTO SAMUEL, HEARKEN UNTO THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE IN ALL THAT THEY SAY UNTO THEE: FOR THEY HAVE NOT REJECTED THEE, BUT THEY HAVE REJECTED ME, THAT I SHOULD NOT REIGN OVER THEM.

The Objector[o] produces this part of Scripture to countenance some crude speculations he has entertained in *theology* and *politics;* and which were proposed many years ago by the author of the Rights, and abundantly confuted by learned hands. But let us hear what this gentleman now says: "The Jews—being upon their "coming out of Egypt a free people, had a right, by the "law of nature, to choose what government and governor "they pleased."

That is to say; if God should not interpose to appoint them any government or governor, they were at liberty to choose for themselves: by the *permissive* law of nature, (not *preceptive,*) they had such liberty, till God should otherwise restrain it. Admitted: and what then? He goes on. "God would not act so inconsistent a part as "to deprive them of any of those rights he had given "them by the law of nature." No: as he had given them an *hypothetical* or *conditional* right to choose for themselves, (if himself should not interpose to choose for them,) so he could never act so "inconsistent a part," as to preclude them that right so *limited* and so *conditioned.* That is to say, he could not be so inconsistent as not to leave them at liberty while he left them at liberty, or not to leave them free so far as he left them free. Well; what follows? "Therefore he did not take upon him the civil ad-"ministration of their affairs, till he had obtained their "express consent." Ridiculous! He could never want their consent, because he never gave away, never could give away, his right of appointing them both government

[o] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 113.

and governors: a right which he exercised afterwards in appointing them Saul first, and next David for their king, notwithstanding the pretended *natural* liberty. They were *free* by the law of nature while God left them free, and no longer; because their freedom stood only in his non-interposition. It was impossible for God to give his right away: for he has an unalienable right to dispose of all kingdoms; insomuch that when he leaves the people to choose for themselves, it is still God that appoints both the governor and government. *Vox populi*, in that case, is *vox Dei;* he appoints *by them:* and the choice of the people has no other force or weight with it, but as it is considered as the *means* by which *God* sets the government up, and in that alone does it stand. Therefore if God took their *consent*, (as he has been pleased to transact more *covenants* than one with men,) it was not because he had no right to *demand* it, or because they had any right to *refuse* it, but because he was pleased to condescend to human forms in his dealings with men, and to bind them the closer to him by *federal* as well as *natural* obligations. But this writer proceeds: "So that here he acted not as "governor of the universe, but by a power derived from "the people by virtue of the Horeb covenant." Worse than ever. This doctrine is neither *true* nor *possible;* but all over contradictory and absurd. When the people have a right to choose their governor, that right (as I before hinted) is God's, otherwise it is no right, nor has any effect: and when the people have so chosen their governor, he rules by *Divine* right, as the law of nature is *God's* law; and by that law he is then fixed in his throne, and has a right to rule. What therefore can our author mean by pretending, that God ruled by "a power derived from the "people?" Suppose him to have condescended to accept of such an office conveyed by *choice*, and by *covenant*, in the manner of an earthly king; yet *covenants* convey a right only as *God* binds men by his law (natural) to observe them; and so a *Divine* right commences from the time the covenant commences. Well then, in the result,

God reigned over the people by a right conveyed from himself to himself by the intervention of the people's choice. This is all that can in common sense be made of it. He appointed himself their Governor in that way, over and above what he was before: and his power could not be derived from any one but from himself, because "all "power is of God." All other *rightful* governors (whether by election, or succession, or extraordinary appointment) act and rule for God, are his vicegerents and deputies: and they exercise his power and authority. Certainly then, if he pleases to exercise the same in person, and to be, as it were, his own deputy, his power cannot be derived to him from any other source but from the same fountain of power from whence *all power* is.

But the Objector has a turn to serve by all this parade about the *Horeb contract*, as appears by what follows: "And the presumption is, that where there is no such "contract, God will not exercise such a power." No, not such *special* kingly power as he exercised among the Jews, during their *theocracy:* that may be granted. But the author means, that he will issue out no *occasional* precepts, no *positive* commands. And what ground is there for such a presumption? Did he not issue out *positive* commands to Adam, and to Noah, and to Abraham, and many others, long before the Jewish *theocracy?* His power and right of doing it is founded in his being *Creator* and *Preserver* of all things, and King of the *whole* earth: and all the sons of Adam are naturally and necessarily born his *subjects*. If the king of Great Britain should condescend to be chosen governor in special over a petty corporation within his dominions, would that shorten or diminish his *regal* power, either over the members of that corporation, considered as his subjects, or over any other his subjects throughout the realm? No certainly. There is therefore no force at all in this author's argument, drawn from the Horeb contract: but the question about God's right to give *positive* laws stands as before, independent of it. God does not want our *leave* for the making of a law,

neither needs he to wait for our *acceptance*, to render it valid. [p] For though he enacts laws for the *good* only of his subjects, yet he will be the *judge* of what is for their good: and I presume, his infinite wisdom, and his superiority over us, are sufficient to support his title. I forgot to note how the author here blundered in supposing the God of Israel to be *God*, (arguing from it,) whom yet at other times he blasphemes.

### 1 SAM. XV. 2, 3.

THUS SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS; I REMEMBER THAT WHICH AMALEK DID TO ISRAEL[q], HOW HE LAID WAIT FOR HIM IN THE WAY, WHEN HE CAME UP FROM EGYPT. NOW GO AND SMITE AMALEK, &c.

The censure passed hereupon is as follows[r]. "What "prince can ever want a pretence of going to war, and "totally extirpating those he invades, when he sees Saul "was commanded by God to destroy the Amalekites, "men and women, infants and sucklings, ox and sheep, "camel and ass, for an injury done four hundred years "before? And how for sparing Agag, (whom Samuel "hewed to pieces before the Lord,) and preserving some "of the cattle for sacrifice, the Lord rejected him from "being king, nay, ordered Samuel, lest Saul should sus- "pect the design, to pretend a sacrifice, when he sent him "to anoint David?"

See how this ungodly man takes upon him to dispute against the Lord of the whole earth: Julian or Rabshakeh could not have done more. One would think, when men can run such desperate lengths, that they had many and strong demonstrations to trust to: but let the reader judge, by the specimen I have last recited. When

[p] Mr. Hobbes's and Spinosa's weak pretences to prove that God's sovereign dominion over men is founded in their *consent*, are confuted in Puffendorf, b. iii. chap. 4. sect. 4. p. 254.

[q] Exod. xvii. 8. Numb. xxiv. 20. Deut. xxv. 17.

[r] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 273.

any thing is reported in Scripture which this writer does not like, though reported as done by *special* order from God, he immediately concludes, that here is a *precedent* set for doing the same thing without such *special* order: as if men were as unthinking as brute creatures, and could not distinguish between acting *with* commission and acting *without* one; between having *good* authority for what they do, and having *none*. What is it by which any one can *justify* his own actions before God and the world, but this, that he had *sufficient warrant* for doing as he has done? And what is it by which we *condemn* several other actions, but this, that the actors had no warrant for them?

Now as to what was done to the Amalekites, there was God's *express* order for it: and what can we desire more than an order from heaven? As to God's dealings with nations in the way of vindictive justice, we are not competent judges of every case, because we have not the *whole* of the matter laid before us, to form a judgment by: for we fall infinitely short of that large comprehensive view of all circumstances, which the great Governor of the universe has before him. But this we may presume to say, as to the case of the Amalekites, that considering how they had all along been inveterate adversaries towards the people of God, (raised up to *reform* the world,) and how they had very probably been wicked also in other respects, like the Canaanites; it was a great instance of God's long-suffering, that he bore with them so long, and that he waited four hundred years for their repentance, before he destroyed them: so far is it from being any imputation upon his goodness, that he at length did so.

It may be noted of the Amalekites, that they were descendants of Esau[s], and therefore were by pedigree allied to the Israelites, of the stock of Abraham. They seem to

[s] Gen. xxxvi. 12.

have broke off very early from the other Edomites, joining with the old Horites[t], idolaters of mount Seir: so that the Amalekites soon apostatized from the religion of Abraham. These apostates were the *first* that drew sword against the Israelites, (brethren in blood,) and they did it *unprovoked*, barbarously taking advantage of them, by coming at the back of them, at a time when they were *feeble*, *faint*, and *weary*[u], which was great *inhumanity*. Besides, their *impiety* is particularly taken notice of in Scripture, that they "feared not God[x]," but that their *hand* was lift up "against the throne of the Lord[y]," against the throne of the God of Abraham their father; which was an aggravating circumstance. Seeing therefore that there was such a complication of *ill-nature*, *inhumanity*, *treachery*, and flagrant *impiety*, in what the Amalekites did, it pleased God to set a brand of the highest *infamy* upon them, and to take the most exemplary *vengeance* of them, to create the utmost abhorrence of such practices in the minds of all men. Their descendants seem to have inherited the like temper and principles with their fathers, the same rancor against Israel[z], and the same opposition to God's great and glorious designs by Israel. It does not follow from God's assigning one reason only for destroying the Amalekites, that that was the *sole* reason: but that was sufficient to be mentioned to the Israelites, as they had concern in no more: the rest he might reserve to himself among the *arcana imperii*, which he was not obliged to divulge either to Israel his own people, or to any creature whatever.

No *prince* that has not such a Divine commission as Saul had, can make any *just* pretence from this instance,

[t] See Cumberland's Orig. Antiq. p. 118, 134, 138.

[u] Deut. xxv. 18, 19. [x] Deut. xxv. 19.

[y] Exod. xvii. 16. So I understand the text, with our marginal translation, and several judicious interpreters, as Patrick particularly, and, in the main, Le Clerc. See also Lakemacher's Observat. Philolog. vol. ii. p. 18.

[z] Judg. iii. 13. vi. 3, 33. vii. 12. x. 12.

for so invading or so extirpating any nation: but *vain* or *wicked* pretences may be always made, either *from* any thing, or *for* any thing.

As to Samuel's pretending a sacrifice, it was a just pretence, and a true one: for he did offer sacrifice[a], as God had commanded him. And what if he had a farther intention, was he bound to declare *all* he knew, or to disclose to every man the *whole* of his errand? Secrecy is of great use in all important negociations: and the concealing one design by going upon another, (to prevent giving offence, or other worse mischief,) is as righteous and as laudable a practice, as the drawing a curtain to keep off spies. The making one *good* design the cover for a *better*, is doing two good things at once, and both in a proper way: and though men have been blamed, and very justly, for using acts of religion as a cloak for *iniquity*, yet I have never heard that there could be any thing amiss in performing one act of obedience towards God, in order to facilitate the performing of another. If the author has no better arguments than these, he might more prudently forbear insulting the God of Israel, for fear he should prove at length to be (as indeed he is) the God of the whole universe, and a just avenger.

## 1 Sam. XXV.

The Objector, taking occasion from what is related in this chapter, is pleased to exercise his abusive talent upon good king David; whom (as if he had a mind to outdo Doeg or Shimei) he loads most unmercifully, beyond truth and reason. He brings on the indictment thus[b]: "Was not David, though a prophet, and a man after "God's own heart, guilty of enormous crimes, from the "time he designed to have murdered all the males in Na-"bal's family, because he would not pay contributions to "him and those men who, out of debt, discontent, and "distress, joined him?" The sting of the satire lies, I

[a] 1 Sam. xvi. 5. [b] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 244.

suppose, in David's being a "man after God's own "heart:" for the invective would be dull and nothing worth, if it had not a dash of blasphemy to give it a poignancy, and to help off the flatness and heaviness of the thought. And what if good men have committed some faults and great ones, they may still be dear and acceptable to God for their *repenting* of those faults, and for their many *good* qualities, while those that maliciously revile and insult them shall not be held guiltless. We are not obliged to defend David, or any other good man, in every article of conduct: but where is the justice of charging them so roughly, beyond all measures of truth or decency? David met with most provoking usage from a wicked and ungodly churl. He was at that time both a *prophet* and a *prince* of Israel. He had been anointed in order to be *king*[c], now for six years or more. He had signalized himself, not only in slaying a *lion* and a *bear*, but in conquering the Goliath of the Philistines, almost miraculously. He had married a king's daughter, and was the second man in the realm. Saul himself had publicly declared, that he was to be his successor in the kingdom[d], as Jonathan the king's son had before more privately done[e]. This so renowned a person, and presumptive heir to the crown, being reduced to distress, and hearing that Nabal, who had been much obliged to him[f], had prepared a great feast, (being a very wealthy man,) he sent to him in the kindest and most courteous manner imaginable, only to beg a little present sustenance, *water*, and *flesh*, and *bread*, (what could best be spared,) at a time of feasting and jollity: the rude churl denied him, and returned him a most insolent provoking answer.

What man of brave spirit, at the head of his soldiers, would not have found his blood rise upon such an occasion, and almost have thought that it became him to correct a brutal man that had thus affronted his superior, nay,

[c] 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 12, 13.
[d] 1 Sam. xxiv. 20.
[e] 1 Sam. xxiii. 17.
[f] 1 Sam. xxv. 16.

his *anointed* sovereign, though not yet in possession? But David notwithstanding all, as soon as the first heats of his passion were over, repented even of his sudden warmth, and submitted to his cooler reason. Now, ought this writer to have singled out only the worst part of the character, representing even that under invidious and *false* colours? And why must David's cause be loaded with calumny, and Nabal's set off with paint and varnish? But he goes on pleading for Nabal, that "he might have in-"curred the fate of the priests," that had privately harboured and assisted David. Perhaps so: and yet Nabal by refusing did not meet with a better fate; as he had no reason to expect it. Whatever hazards he had run, he ought to have had some *humanity*, and not to have let a brave man, and a general, suffer want, while himself was feasting, and in safety too, through David's civility, and the good discipline he kept over those that were in arms for him. Is this the *benevolence* which our author recommends, to refuse such a person the common offices of *humanity*, out of a dastardly fear and dread of some *possible* dangers? In short, if David's conduct in that affair was not altogether defensible, yet Nabal's certainly was unexcusable. In the one may be seen an humble, pious, great, and generous soul, with some pitiable sallies of sudden passion: in the other you see nothing but what is mean, sordid, and brutal. Let David then be the Scripture hero still, and Nabal the Objector's.

As to David's being in a manner forced to tell some *untruths*[g] to Abimelech the priest in order to get bread; instead of insulting the hard fate of a very great and good man, (though we are not obliged to say that he was *sinless*,) it might better have become our writer to deplore the abject meanness of the world, (in such cases,) when they are so afraid for themselves, that they dare not run some risks for the preserving ever so excellent a man in extreme necessity.

[g] 1 Sam. xxi. 2.

And whereas this writer says, that "nothing could be "more treacherous than David's invading people that "were at least in peace with, if not allies of, the king of "Gath;" he cannot prove that there was any *treachery* at all in what David did: so this is *false* accusation. Those people he invaded were most probably the remains of the Canaanites and Amalekites [h], whom God had commanded should be destroyed: and therefore as David had greater obligations to the *King of heaven* than to the *king of Gath*, he acted as a good man should.

But the worst of the calumny thrown upon David is the charging him with "leaving the world in an unfor-"giving temper [i]." This is a charge of a malicious nature, and strikes at the honour of God and religion, since David is undoubtedly a saint of heaven. Well: what is the impeachment grounded upon? David, upon his death-bed, reminded his son Solomon of the wickedness of Shimei, advising him, as a proper occasion should offer, TO BRING DOWN HIS HOARY HEAD TO THE GRAVE WITH BLOOD [k]. Shimei was an ungodly wretch, who had long before forfeited his life to the *public*, and whom David had spared by a kind of heroic, unexampled clemency. Twice he delivered him [l], when his great ministers were impatient to have justice done upon him. In the last instance he sware unto him, that he would not put him to death. But he spared him both times for reasons peculiar to himself, and to his own circumstances [m]. It was reasonable that Shimei should have died by the hands of justice, as a *traitor* to his rightful sovereign, and a most virulent one too; having openly reviled and *cursed* the king: but it was not reasonable, in those circumstances, that David should condemn him to death; at least David thought it was not. Hereupon he promised him, that he *should not die* [n]: which amounted to this only, according to David's own account, that *he* (David) would

[h] 1 Sam. xxvii. 8.
[i] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 244.
[k] 1 Kings ii. 9.
[l] 2 Sam. xvi. 10. xix. 22, 23.
[m] 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 12. xix. 22.
[n] 2 Sam. xix. 23.

*not put him to death*[o]. The grant of pardon and the promise were not absolute, but expired with the life of the king; as the reasons it was founded upon were peculiar to king David. And David, knowing that such a wretch ought to have condign punishment, put Solomon in mind of doing what he did not think proper himself to do, lest Solomon, out of reverence to his father's memory, might have spared him too, when there was not the same reason for it. He gave Solomon the like instructions about Joab[p], that he also might be put to death; because he had forfeited his life long before by his wickedness, and David had spared him for reasons peculiar to his own circumstances, or for reasons of state. David is to be considered in those his dying instructions to his son Solomon, not as a *private* man acting upon resentment, but as a *king* and a *governor* giving advice to his *successor* in affairs of state. It was for the good of the public that such offenders as Joab and Shimei should suffer, at a time proper, and as prudence should direct. And therefore David, in these his last hours, performed the part of a prudent *magistrate* in relation particularly to Shimei, as before he had acted the part of a pious and a tender-hearted man. He happily reconciled both parts together, and deserved (as I conceive) commendation rather than censure for it. After I had written this, I found that Le Clerc[q] had given much the same account of the thing; which confirms me the more in it that it is just and right.

## 2 Sam. XXI. 1.

THEN THERE WAS A FAMINE IN THE DAYS OF DAVID THREE YEARS, YEAR AFTER YEAR; AND DAVID INQUIRED OF THE LORD. AND THE LORD ANSWERED, IT IS FOR SAUL, AND FOR HIS BLOODY HOUSE, BECAUSE HE SLEW THE GIBEONITES.

[o] 1 Kings ii. 8. [p] 1 Kings ii. 5, 6.

[q] See Cleric. in 1 Reg. ii. 6, 9. compare Puffendorf, b. iv. chap. 2. sect. 13. p. 348.

The Objector says[r]: "Are there not examples in Scrip-
"ture, which, taken in their literal sense, seem to make
"God break in upon the common course of nature, and
"the ordinary rules of his providence, to punish men for
"crimes they were not guilty of; as God's causing, in
"the latter end of David's reign, a famine for three years
"together for the crime of Saul and for his bloody house,
"in slaying the Gibeonites." This objection, to do the author justice, is modestly urged, without straining, or indecent reflections: and there is a difficulty in the thing, which makes it both require and deserve a solution. But we must distinguish always between *difficulties* and *demonstrations*. God's judgments are many times unsearchable, and his counsels profound: and as we are not able to see far enough to account for them; so neither can we see far enough to pass any unerring censure upon them. All may be perfectly right, in such cases, for any thing we know: and therefore it is rash judgment to pronounce to the contrary. If the fact be sufficiently proved by *external* evidence, that is enough, where we have not light sufficient to judge of the *whole* case from the *internal* nature of the thing. We cannot pretend to have a comprehensive view of all circumstances like as God himself: neither are we able to examine the whole link or chain of Divine Providence from one end to the other.

These general things premised, we may now proceed to the particular case of the *famine* mentioned. It ought not to be said, because it cannot be proved, that the Israelites of that time were *punished for crimes* that they were no way *guilty of*. We know not how many, or who, were confederate with Saul in murdering the Gibeonites, or guilty in not hindering it. We know not how many, or who, made the crime their *own*, by *approving* it afterwards. We know not what share of guilt might be derived upon the whole nation, for suffering so much *innocent blood* to be shed, against a national contract[s]; or

[r] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 266.

[s] Josh. ix. 23.

for not expressing their horror and detestation of it, by some *public* act. Further, we know not what other sins (which had no relation to that) the people might be guilty of, to deserve a *famine;* which sins, though God would have remitted or passed by at another time, he would not remit then, when the sins of their *fathers*, added to theirs[t], called for an act of discipline. We know not how far such an act of discipline, at that time, might be necessary to prevent the like *murders* for the time to come, or to preserve the whole nation of the Gibeonites from rudeness and insult; or to raise in the minds of the Israelites a proper regard and respect for them. We know not how much the sacredness and validity of *national* oaths or contracts might be concerned in that matter. In a word, we know not the depths of the Divine counsels, nor a hundredth part of the reasons which an all-wise God might have; and therefore it behoves us, in all such cases, to be modest and reserved in our censures, remembering that God is in heaven, and that we dwell in dust, that he knows all things, and we nothing in comparison.

But supposing the people of that time to have been ever so *innocent*, yet God had an absolute right over the lives of all, and could demand them when he pleased, without such reason as was assigned: and if he made the demand (which he had so clear a right to) at such a time, and in such a manner as might best answer the ends of *discipline;* then that which was *just* in other views, and without any such special reason, could not become *unjust* by having that additional reason to recommend it. In a word, if the thing was righteous, considered merely as an *act of dominion*, it could not but be *righteous* and *kind* also, by being made at the same time an *act of discipline*, for the punishment of sin, and for the promoting *godliness* among men. It is a certain and almost self-evident maxim, that whatsoever God can justly deprive men of without any respect at all to *sins*, (as he may of all

[t] See above, p. 93.

worldly blessings whatever,) the same he may as justly deprive them of for the *sins of their fathers;* because this is only exercising an *act of dominion* over the children with an additional circumstance of *wholesome discipline* over the *fathers* of those children, if living, or else of instruction and warning to *parents* in general, for the better promoting religion and righteousness in the world. I have answered this objection mildly, as the Objector made it civilly, to let the readers see, that if I do it not at other times, the fault is not mine. Rudeness, petulance, and barefaced impiety ought to be "rebuked sharply [u]," while softer replies are proper to be given to modest inquirers, to such as "ask with meekness and fear [x]."

## 2 SAM. XXIV. 1.

AND AGAIN THE ANGER OF THE LORD WAS KINDLED AGAINST ISRAEL, AND HE MOVED DAVID AGAINST THEM TO SAY, GO, NUMBER ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

The Objector has several pretences to urge [y] against this part of sacred history, which must be examined in order. He asks, "How can we reconcile this story with "itself? In one place [z] it is said, God moved David to "number Israel: in another [a], Satan provoked David. "Did God conspire with Satan in this act, in order to "destroy a number of *innocent* persons?" In answer hereto, I may observe, first, that this is another of his English objections. For if he had been disposed to look into the original, and had known any thing of the Hebrew idiom, he might have perceived that the text does not say that *God* moved David, (for the word *God* is not in the text at all,) but *one moved*, which comes to the same with, David WAS MOVED TO SAY, &c. as Castalio renders. It

[u] Tit. i. 13. 1 Tim. v. 20. Acts xii. 10.

[x] 1 Pet. iii. 15. See Mr. Twells's Crit. Exam. of the New Text, &c. p. 125.

[y] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 266.

[z] 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. [a] 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

is a very common idiom of the Hebrew language, thus to leave out the *nominative* of the verb active, (an indefinite person understood,) and then the verb is to be rendered *passively*, and the *accusative* following supplies the place of the *nominative* wanting, as here [b]. So now it is manifest, that there is no repugnancy between this text in Samuel and the other of Chronicles.

But a further objection made to the story is, that God should smite Israel, and destroy seventy thousand of them "for David's fault in causing the innocent sheep "(as he justly calls them) to be numbered." Truly, if any one else but God had done it, by his own authority, there might be a just handle for complaint: but God has an absolute right over the lives of all men; and if ever he does any thing seemingly hard, he knows how to make them ample amends. But as to the *innocent sheep*, which our writer speaks of, as *justly* so called by David, he knows nothing of that matter: neither were the people *innocent* in his sense, though they were in the sense that David intended. David reflected only on their innocence in *one respect*, as to the sin of *numbering* the people: that was David's sin, not *theirs*. But they had other sins many and great, which deserved punishment, and for which probably they would have been punished before, had it not been for the tenderness God bore towards David, who must have been a sufferer in it as well as they. But now when both *king* and *people* had deserved a correction, or judgment, then God was pleased to let loose his anger upon both. I do not found this upon mere conjecture: the text itself takes notice first, that THE ANGER OF THE LORD WAS KINDLED AGAINST ISRAEL; and then follows what relates to David, and his sin in numbering the people. So David was to be punished by losing such a number of his people: and his sin was so much the immediate *cause* of that judgment, that had it not been for

[b] See Gataker. de Stylo N. T. p. 68. Kidder, Demonstrat. part ii. p. 73, 74 75. Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 559. Le Clerc in loc. Buxt. Thesaur. Gram. p. 430. Dachselii Bibl. Hebr. Accentuat. vol. i. p. 465.

*that*, along with the other, it would not have been sent. However, it cannot be said the people were strictly *innocent*, who but a few years before[c] had run mad after Absalom, an unnatural rebel and usurper, deserting their rightful sovereign, one of the best of kings. What other sins they had committed, we need not inquire: that alone might be sufficient to deserve such a plague. God knows the proper times for taking vengeance of wicked men: and his judgments, if they come the slower, are the more severe.

But the Objector has farther scruples against the whole story, from the appearing disagreement of the numbers in the muster-rolls of the people, comparing different places of Scripture together, and particularly three[d]. This must be owned to be a scholar-like objection, and it has employed the thoughts of very learned and considerable men; such as Buxtorf, Pfeiffer, Bochart, and others[e]. The sum of their account is, that the difference arises by the *standing legions* (which attended monthly on the king) being reckoned in one place, and omitted in another, and so *vice versa*. I need not be more particular, because the English reader, that has a mind to examine into this matter, may see it explained more at large, either in Bishop Patrick[f], or Lightfoot[g], or in Mr. Bedford[h]. Indeed Le Clerc, not satisfied with the common solution, suspects there has been some error in the numbers, owing to the negligence or rashness of copists. I shall not pretend to judge in so nice a case, about which very pro-

[c] About five or six years, according to the common chronology, placing Absalom's rebellion A. M. 2981, and this plague A. M. 2986, or 2987. Le Clerc indeed intimates a suspicion, as if this history had been misplaced, and that it should precede Absalom's rebellion: but he offers it as a bare conjecture, assigning no reasons. *Cleric. in* 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 1.

[d] 1 Sam. xi. 8. 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. 1 Chron. xxi. 5.

[e] Buxtorf. Anti-Crit. p. 403, 404. Pfeiffer. Dub. Vexat. p. 527. Bochart. Hieroz. part. i. lib. ii. cap. 38. p. 375.

[f] Patrick on 2 Sam. xxiv. 9.

[g] Lightfoot, Op. vol. i. p. 68.

[h] Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 559.

bably the most learned will differ, according to the sentiments they have of the integrity of the Hebrew text; some admitting of *slight* corruptions in the text by mistakes of librarians, others admitting *none*. There appears no *absolute* necessity of supposing any here. The common solution is a very good one: and Le Clerc's main objection (founded upon a calculation of the whole number of inhabitants, and upon a supposition that the land of Judea could not maintain them) is too precarious in both its parts, to build any thing certainly upon.

But however that question be determined, yet certainly there will be neither foundation nor colour for what our writer says afterwards, that "there is scarce a chapter (of "the Old Testament) which gives any historical account "of matters, but there are some things in it which could "not be there originally[i]." This is a petulant slander, and thrown out at random, by one that knows little of the affair beyond *guesses* or *wishes*; and therefore I leave it to the readers to judge what weight it ought to carry with it. Such as have leisure and abilities to examine into the integrity and uncorruptness of the sacred code, may consult, among others, Buxtorf[k] more particularly, and Wolfius[l], and Carpzov[m], in Latin, who have abundantly vindicated the same from all material objections: and if the English readers want satisfaction, they may see what will be sufficient in the books referred to in the margin[n].

## 1 KINGS XIII.

This chapter relates the story of the *man of God*, the Prophet of Judah, and his disobedience to God, owing to the falsehood and treachery of the *old Prophet* of Bethel.

[i] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 267.

[k] Buxtorfii Anti-Critica contra Cappellum.

[l] Wolfii Bibliotheca Sacra, vol. ii.

[m] Carpzovii Introductio ad Libros V. T. Carpzovii Critica Sacra.

[n] Jenkins, vol. ii. chap. iv. v. Moses Marcus's Defence of the Hebrew Text against Mr. Whiston.

Upon which our Objector thus descants[o]. Speaking of the Prophet of Judah, he observes that he "went con-"trary to what God had commanded him by an im-"mediate revelation, because a known Prophet assured "him, he had afterwards a different revelation for him: "a crime so heinous in the eyes of the Lord, that he "destroyed this Prophet after a most signal manner; "though he had to plead for himself, that the Prophet, "who spoke to him in the name of the Lord, could have "no interest in deceiving him; and that there was no-"thing in the command but might as well come from "the Lord, as what himself had received." He has more to object against this part of sacred history: but I think it best to stop here, and to examine his cavils so far first, and then to proceed to the rest. Here are, I think, three insinuations, intended to extenuate the Prophet of Judah's crime, and to make his so exemplary punishment appear *hard* and *cruel*. It was a *known* Prophet that deceived him; and one that had *no interest* to serve in it; and there was nothing in the *nature* of the two commands to give light, or to discover which should be preferred. These particulars must be examined in their order.

1. As to the Prophet's being a *known* Prophet, unless he was known to the Prophet of Judah, that circumstance is of no weight in the case. But it appears from the history, that they did not know one another: for the Prophet of Bethel, when he had found the other Prophet, asked him, if he was the "man of God" that came from Judah[p], which he need not have done, had they been before acquainted. This therefore is one aggravation of the Prophet of Judah's crime, that he suffered himself to be imposed upon by a *stranger*, by one that he did *not know*, and against the express command of God whom he did know.

2. As to the *old Prophet's* having *no interest* in deceiv-

[o] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 328.

[p] 1 Kings xiii. 14.

ing the other, how could the other Prophet know what views or interests a *stranger* might have? But besides that, if he had really known him, there was ground for suspicion, from the *place* he lived in, and other circumstances, that he might be moved by *envy* or *malice* to deceive the man of Judah, who had boldly reproved Jeroboam's idolatry which himself had winked at, and who was likely to eclipse the honour of the *old Prophet* by the signal miracles he had wrought, and by the respect the king had shown him. So that this is a second aggravation of his fault, that he trusted too easily to a man whose *honesty* he knew nothing of, and who might probably have *corrupt views* in the business he came upon.

3. As to the commands themselves carrying nothing in them, to direct one which to prefer, that is not true; for the command given by God was founded, probably, upon two good reasons. He was not to eat in that place, for fear of giving countenance to their *idolatries:* and he was not to return "the same way," for fear of being sent after and detained; which reasons were as good against his coming back with the old Prophet. And what reason could there be for his coming back? No good end (so far as appears) could be answered in it, except it were to refresh, which was very slight. But besides the *matter* of the command, there was a most notorious difference in the *manner* of their notification. One came directly from *God*, or an *angel* of God: the other from a *man* only. There ought to have been the same proof and certainty of a *Divine repeal*, as there had before been of a *Divine command*. A prophet might *lie;* God himself, or an angel from God, could not. The *man of God* should have insisted upon a *sign*, to prove this Prophet's commission for saying what he did say; or should have waited till God himself might direct what to do. It does not follow from a man's being honoured with the gift of prophecy, that he becomes from thenceforwards impeccable. God by making a *prophet* does not unmake the *man*, or destroy his free agency. So that it is of very little moment for

the Objector to observe, that the "lying Prophet had the "gift of prophecy continued to him" notwithstanding. So had Balaam before, and Judas had the *extraordinary gifts* after: which may teach us, that God does not approve of every thing that gifted men may do. Those gifts are bestowed for *public* use: but the person's being accepted or otherwise depends upon his *private* demeanour. St. Paul himself, with his extraordinary gifts, was not out of all possible danger of becoming a *castaway*[q]. Many will say to our Lord, at the last day, "Have we not pro-"phesied in thy name?" To whom, notwithstanding, he will make answer, "Depart from me, ye that work ini-"quity[r]."

But the Objector takes notice also, that the *lying* Prophet was not *punished:* which is very true. And we are taught by this instance, not to pass any judgment, as to God's final favour or disfavour, from his outward dispensations, any farther than we have *special* grounds for it. The Prophet that was *spared* appears to have been a much worse man in every view, than the Prophet that was *punished:* but his account was adjourned to another time, or to another world. Every history furnishes us with many like instances of the *best* men being taken off first, and the *worst* being left behind, to live longer and repent, or to meet with the severer doom. Whatever be the reason, the fact is certain, that so it oftentimes is[s]: and it is no more an argument against *Scripture*, than it is against the being of God and Providence, that is, none at all: for a life to come will adjust every seeming inequality, and will set all things right.

It is thought hard that the Lord should *pronounce*, by the mouth of the *lying* Prophet, the "doom of the Pro-"phet he so fatally deceived." But it appears to be

[q] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

[r] Matt. vii. 23. Conf. Carpzov. Introd. p. iii. 58.

[s] See many instances numbered up by Cotta, in Tully de Natura Deorum, lib. iii. c. 32, 33. It is an old objection against *Providence;* and if it be of any force, concludes for *Atheism*.

right, and very suitable to the Divine Majesty, not to vouchsafe the *deceived* Prophet the favour of *immediate* revelation, at a time when he determined to take exemplary punishment upon him. Besides, the rebuke coming from the very man that deceived him, made it the more sensible and affecting: and it may serve for a very instructive lesson to every one against being too *credulous*, and giving ear to *deceivers*; lest, when they have so deceived them, Providence may so order it, that they may be the first to upbraid them with their too easy credulity.

Upon the whole, there appears nothing in the *Divine* conduct, with respect to the present article, that can be justly found fault with. Some specious shows there are, while we look no deeper than the surface: but taking the thing in its *best* light, (even according to our narrow and scanty views,) and it carries nothing amiss in it. Besides, *Divine* Wisdom may yet see infinitely more than we are able to imagine. It is not *necessary*, it is not *possible*, for us to assign all the particular reasons either of God's *ordinary* or *extraordinary* dispensations: but in all such cases, (since God's judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out,) it is sufficient for every modest man to say, "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous "in our eyes."

### 1 KINGS XVII. 1. 2 KINGS I. 9.

The two chapters here referred to contain some part of the history of the prophet Elijah, who was too great and too good a man to escape the censure of our smart Objector, who writes thus: "Elijah's causing fire to "come down from heaven, to destroy two captains with "their companies, for no other fault but bluntly deliver-"ing a message from the king, and perhaps in the very "words they were commanded, was not so cruel as his "hindering it from raining upon the earth for the space "of three years and six months; since a drought of that "continuance, without dew or rain, in such a barren

" country as Judea, must have, without miracles, de-
" stroyed every thing; and yet St. James from hence
" takes occasion to recommend the efficacy of prayer[t]."
But what does our faultering detractor here mean by throwing the blame upon Elijah? Elijah could fetch no *fire from heaven*, but what it should please *God* to send, nor *hinder it from raining* beyond what *God* should hinder. The blame therefore, if any blame there be, must be thrown upon God himself. But can our Objector talk one word of *sense* against the sovereign power of the Almighty, in such cases? To make it look like sense, he throws the fault upon a *man*: but since the things done were beyond the power of man, it is nonsense in that way, as much as in the other; and *blasphemy* it must be both ways. By the Scripture account, it was God that did all: and therefore, if there was nothing done but what God had a right to do, (and he is the best judge of the *wisdom* of it,) then Scripture is not justly chargeable on this head. God destroyed the two captains and their companies by fire from heaven, because they came to take his Prophet by force, and accosted him *rudely*. God will have his *prophets* reverenced, and not affronted, because they are allied to him; and every affront offered to them is justly resented as an indignity to God himself. But God made a distinction, even in that case, between *rude* and *reverent* behaviour; and therefore the *third* captain with his company, since they had been taught some modesty and good manners towards so eminent a Prophet of God most high, were used with tenderness, and came off unhurt.

As to God's withholding *rain*, who should do it but he? Or who shall call him to account for it? He best knew how long such a *barren country* as Judea could bear a drought: though where our author has learned that Judea, the land " flowing with milk and honey[u]," was a

[t] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 265.

[u] Vid. Bochart. Hieroz. part. ii. lib. iv. cap. 12. p. 520. Carpzov. Introduct. part. iii. p. 472.

*barren* country, he has not told us. To be short, when this gentleman is of the counsels of Heaven, he may pretend, with a better grace, to direct how long it may be at any time proper for God to withhold *rain* or *dews:* but to pretend to it now is too assuming. Waving the *blasphemy*, it is, in the softest terms we can give it, pert and pragmatical, intruding into a province which belongs to no mortal. The like objections would lie against all the considerable *plagues*, *dearths*, *famines*, or *earthquakes*, which God, in his just judgment, has ever sent upon mankind. And what can such profane carping end in, but in downright *Atheism?*

## 2 KINGS II. 23, 24.

This place of Scripture treats of Elisha's cursing the children that mocked him: upon which our Objector thus descants [x].

"Who is not surprised to find the holy Prophet Elisha "cursing, in THE NAME OF THE LORD, LITTLE CHIL-"DREN, for calling him BALD-PATE? And what is still "more surprising, TWO SHE BEARS, upon his cursing, "STRAIGHT DEVOURED FORTY-TWO LITTLE CHIL-"DREN." Well: What is there at all *surprising* in that whole story? Though men of little minds, and narrow views, may sometimes be *surprised* at very plain and common things. Is it that a Prophet should *curse?* But that was part of a *Prophet's* office and business: for Prophets had commission either to *curse* or to *bless* in the name of the Lord. It would have been much more *surprising*, if any one but a *Prophet* should have done it, and with effect.

Was it that a Prophet should curse *little children?* But it was a good lesson of instruction to parents, to educate their children better, and not to initiate them in the Devil's service, before they know their right hand from their left. If the children were *little*, and *innocent* on account

[x] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 265.

of their non-age, it was kind in God to take them out of the world before they should come to do that *maliciously*, and of their own accord, which they now began to do as set on and managed by others. In the mean while, it was a proper rebuke to the people of Bethel, for their irreverence and insult upon a *Prophet* of God, and therein upon *God* himself. They might learn another time to train their children up to good manners, and to the fear of the Lord. For the present, they might see how God detests *scoffers* and *mockers*, and what reverence he expects to be paid to his holy Prophets.

But perhaps our Objector is *surprised* that *two* bears could *devour* forty-two children: he may think that forty-two children were more than two bears could *eat up*. I believe so too. But then he need not suppose that they *ate* them *up*: the text does not say so. Or if he so understands *devouring*, then let the reader observe, that it is a word of his own contriving, to give, as I suppose, the better colour to his objection: but it was wrong to choose it, and worse to print it in Italic, as if it had been the very Scripture phrase; when our Bible says, rightly, *tare them*, not *devoured* them.

### 2 KINGS VIII. 10.

AND ELISHA SAID UNTO HIM, GO, SAY UNTO HIM, THOU MAYEST CERTAINLY RECOVER: HOWBEIT, THE LORD HATH SHOWED ME THAT HE SHALL SURELY DIE.

The Objector's representation is as follows[y]: "The "Prophet Elisha sends word to Benhadad, the king of "Syria, who consults him about his recovery, that he "may (or rather *shall*, or *will*, for so it ought to be ren-"dered) certainly recover: yet he tells Hazael, who had "a design upon his crown and life, (and who before had "been anointed king of Syria by the Prophet Elijah[z],)

[y] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 257.
[z] 1 Kings xix. 15.

" that HE SHOULD SURELY DIE. And this looked the " more ungrateful in the Prophet, because he had received " FORTY CAMEL LOADS OF THE GOOD THINGS OF " DAMASCUS to tell the king truth." This is a tart sarcasm upon the Prophet; and might have passed for *true* wit, if it had not been founded on *false* fact. The author was proud of it, as one may perceive by his bringing it over again, a few pages lower, lest his readers should not take due notice. In this other place [a], he expresses himself thus: " He (Elisha) entailed the curse of leprosy on " his man Gehazi, AND HIS SEED FOR EVER [b], for ac- " cepting without his master's knowledge a small pre- " sent from Naaman the Assyrian; though the Prophet " himself afterwards took FORTY CAMEL LOADS OF " THE GOOD THINGS OF DAMASCUS, to tell their king " the truth, and yet deceived him." Now if this censure be founded upon *truth*, and *certain* fact, it must be allowed to bear hard upon the *Prophet;* but if it should happen to be founded only on *fiction* and *romance*, then, like a gun ill charged, it recoils upon the man that holds it. Let us then examine the pretended facts.

1. The first and slightest is, that Hazael had been *anointed* King of Syria by the Prophet Elijah; which is by no means true in the strict sense of *anointed*. For it sufficiently appears from this very chapter [c], as Le Clerc has observed [d], that Hazael at this time (after Elijah's translation to heaven) knew nothing of his being appointed *king*, or successor to Benhadad. There is indeed an order of God to Elijah, to ANOINT HAZAEL KING OVER SYRIA [e]. But *anointing* there signifies no more than *designing*, or *recording* in the Prophet's own mind, by order from God; like as when it is said in Jeremiah, WRITE YE THIS MAN CHILDLESS [f]; which comes to no more than saying, Know ye that God hath so fixed

[a] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 265.
[b] 2 Kings v. 27.
[c] 2 Kings viii.
[d] Cleric. in 1 Kings xix. 15.
[e] 1 Kings xix. 15.
[f] Jer. xxii. 30.

and determined. Cyrus is called the *Lord's anointed*[g], though he was never properly *anointed* of God: but God had, in his wise counsels, fixed and determined what Cyrus should come to, had chosen and singled him out for such and such purposes. In this sense, and no other, Elijah anointed Hazael. He wrote him down, he recorded him, in prophetic view, as a person, who according to God's foreknowledge, or decree, was to be king over Syria. So one of the pretended *facts* fails.

2. The second pretended fact is, that the Prophet *received* forty camel loads of the good things of Damascus, by way of present from Hazael or Benhadad. But this is not clear. It is indeed written[h], that Hazael brought such a present with him to the Prophet: but it is no where said that the Prophet accepted it. So then, more than half the wit and pleasantry of the sarcasm is lost, for want of proof of this fact.

3. But the most material article of all is, the pretence that the Prophet *deceived* him. This can never be made out by the Objector, on any supposition, but must pass for abuse and calumny. Supposing the common rendering of the text (whether, *Thou mayest certainly recover*, or, *Thou shalt certainly recover*) to take place; it could mean no more than that Hazael should tell Benhadad, that he should recover of his disease, or, that his sickness was not mortal[i]: which was *true*. However, I am of opinion, that neither of them is the right rendering of the place. This is one of the texts in which the Hebrew itself admits of a *various lection*. The *Keri* has one reading, and the *Chetib* another. The *Keri* (which is the *marginal* reading) is what our translation follows: the *Chetib* (which is the *textual* reading) has לֹא instead of לוֹ, *not* instead of *him*. The rendering therefore of the text, according to the *Chetib*, is thus: GO, SAY, THOU SHALT SURELY NOT LIVE: FOR THE LORD HATH SHOWED ME, THAT HE

[g] Isa. xlv. 1. See Cumberland, Orig. Antiq. p. 461.
[h] 2 Kings viii. 8, 9.
[i] See Patrick and Le Clerc in loc.

SHALL SURELY DIE. So said the Prophet. But Hazael, being a wicked man, went and told Benhadad the quite contrary, and then murdered him. So stands the case, upon the foot of the *textual* reading. Interpreters have been divided about the two readings, the greater part of them following the *Masorite*, that is, the *marginal* reading; excepting only, that some take in both, as Leusden[k], in particular, does. Cappellus hesitates upon it[l]. Vitringa is, I think, the last and the ablest man that has defended the *marginal* reading[m]: and the substance of the dispute may be seen in him, with the several opinions or solutions of divines and critics. After him came Witsius[n], who examines all that Vitringa had pleaded, and answers it; and at length gives it for the *textual* reading against the other. Vitringa having seen what Witsius had written, takes notice of it in the next edition of his Third Book of Observations[o], speaks very handsomely of Witsius for it, drops the dispute, and leaves what he had before pleaded to the judgment of the readers. Upon the whole, Witsius seems to me to have sufficiently maintained his point, and to have cleared his construction of the text from all material objections. But whether we take this or that *reading*, or whether we follow this or that *rendering*, the pretended fact which this gentleman builds upon has nothing left to support it. The *jest* therefore at length falls, not upon the good Prophet Elisha, but upon the *jester*, who has suffered himself to be imposed upon twice by an idle tale, offering it to his readers as *true* history.

[k] Leusden. Clav. Hebraic. p. 225.
[l] Lud. Cappel. Crit. Sacr. p. 115.
[m] Vitringa, Observat. Sacr. tom. ii. lib. iii. cap. 16. p. 716.
[n] Witsii Miscellan. tom. i. præf. sect. ix. edit. 2.
[o] Vitring. Observat. Sacr. tom. ii. lib. iii. p. 718.

# CONCLUSION.

I SHALL here again take leave of the Objector, ending with the Second Book of Kings. My readers will excuse my spending time in confuting trifles, when they consider that it is the *Bible* that this man has been trifling with; to which we can never pay too tender a regard. I have been examining his objections (as he *pretends* to have examined Scripture) by the *test* of *reason*. He has no right to complain of such fair and equitable dealing. For whatever fondness he may have for his perishing work, Christians ought to have as warm a zeal for *God's Word*, which endureth for ever. Besides, he will remember, that he is the aggressor, who unprovoked began the hostilities, and in a coarser, ruder, and more insulting manner, than had ever been seen amongst us, since Christianity first blessed this island. And how has this innocent, this sacred book of God's law, so offended this gentleman, that he can give it no quarter, nor allow it so much as a true and just representation; which any book whatever, even the Alcoran itself, might demand. Mr. Locke, I may observe, was no *priest*, nor a *bigot* to priests: but he understood the high worth and excellency of our *Bible*. "He em-"ployed the last years of his life in hardly any thing else. "He was never weary of admiring the great views of that "sacred book, and the just relation of all its parts. He "every day made discoveries in it, that gave him fresh "cause of admiration[p]." Mr. Locke was a person of excellent sense, and good learning, and had a fine taste. But what he so much prized and admired, our writer has so slight a notion of, that he is for throwing it off as *rubbish:* which is his mannerly expression for all *external*

[p] Character of Mr. Locke, prefixed to the last posthumous volume.

revelation [q]. Notwithstanding which, he professes a zeal for *morality*, and places (as he says) "the whole of reli-"gion in doing good [r]." Believe it that can, while he is labouring to destroy the best, the only complete system of *morality* that ever yet appeared; and to vilify that book which so truly places "the whole of religion in "doing good." But he may safely cry up *morality* (especially his *lame* morality) when he has left it no *sanctions*, or none sufficient to support it. After sapping it in its *vitals*, he may well afford it his *compliments;* which may perhaps be of some service to himself, but will be of none to morality. Virtue cannot live like the chameleon (as they say) upon air. Though a man says a thousand fine things of it, yet if he takes away the proper *rewards* or *penalties* which should keep it alive in the world, he strikes it all down at once, and destroys it utterly. This then is a principal article, as to which we have just reason to require very particular satisfaction. By this criterion, by this test, let this gentleman's friendship and good-will to virtue be tried.

To me it seems that he really undermines the true and proper *sanctions* on which alone virtue can subsist. For let it be observed, that the doctrine of the *resurrection* has no place at all in his scheme: but he leaves all mankind to moulder for ever in their graves. Next, as to the state of the *soul* after death, he expresses himself so sparingly and so uncertainly, that one can scarce know what to make of it. In his fourth chapter, he declares fully against future *penalties*, excepting such only as shall be for the *amendment* of the sinner: which, in effect, is declaring against all [s], because after death there is no more *probation*. But if he admits any *probation* beyond the grave, (which may be doubted,) it will amount only to a kind of *purgatory:* and he should say, whether a *Popish*

[q] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 421.

[r] Second Address, &c. p. 92.

[s] It is plain that the Two Letters from a Deist to his Friend admit of a *future life*, but reject *future punishments*. See p. 2, 17, 19.

one, or what, or how long it is to last. Whatever it be, it is only substituting his own roving *fancies* in the room of the *sure* and *certain* doctrines of a *final judgment*, of *heaven*, and of *hell*, which Scripture teaches. And since he has taken upon him to prescribe to God, both as to the *matter* of his *laws*, that it be only *moral*, and the *justice* of his penalties; we need not doubt but he will make all so easy, that libertines shall not be under much concern about it. In short, I can perceive little more in the whole contrivance of this author, but the old Epicurean game played over again, with some slight refinements: which may appear more fully by an induction of particulars, as follows.

1. One principal aim of Epicurus and his followers was, to remove the fear of *future penalties*, and particularly of the *eternity* of them [t]. In like manner, our writer appears to be much offended at *eternal* punishments, and takes great pains to fence against that doctrine, laying hold of any little argument, or colour of argument, to confute and overthrow it [u]. And though he admits of a *future state*, I do not find that he admits the *punishments* of *hell*. Epicurus himself would have so compounded, to have had it made, in a manner, *all heaven*, and *no hell*.

2. It was the way of the Epicureans, to number up the *mischiefs* which false zeal, bigotry, or hypocrisy had created under the cover of piety, and to lay them all to the charge of *religion* [x], arguing against the *use* of religion,

[t] ——Nam si certam finem esse viderent
Ærumnarum homines, aliqua ratione valerent
Relligionibus, atque minis obsistere vatum:
Nunc ratio nulla est restandi, nulla facultas,
Æternas quoniam pœnas in morte timendum.
*Lucret.* lib. i. 106, &c.

[u] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 42, 43.

[x] Relligio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta.
Tantum relligio potuit suadere malorum. *Lucret.* lib. i. 84, 102.

from the *abuses* made of it. The same topic our author is so delighted with, (as it seemed to favour his purpose, and besides fell in with his predominant passion,) that he has filled whole pages with commonplace invective, which he almost naturally runs into. There is no real strength or force in the argument: but it is ten times worse here, to play it against such a religion as the *Christian* is, and in a *reformed* church too, (where it is professed in its native purity,) than it was in the Epicureans, who had had no such *light* as we have, nor known any *religion* but a very *corrupt* one.

3. The Epicureans were used to boast highly of their rescuing their disciples from *superstition*, by which they really meant all *religion*[y]. And such also, in the main, is the signification of the word *superstition* in our author; while under that invidious, abusive name, he labours to throw off all *Divine* revelation, admitting no revealed religion at all, considered as *revealed*. This is the *superstition* which he endeavours to deliver mankind from: and this, I presume, is what he so glories in, when he speaks of his *noble* and *generous attempt*[z], in the same vaunting way as the Epicureans of old used to do[a].

4. When the Epicureans had thrown off the *fear* of the *Gods*, and all dread of *future* penalties, their next business was, how to answer it to the world, that they had left no proper incitement to *virtue*[b] or *religion*[c]. Whereupon,

[y] So the Academic observes in Cicero. Nam *superstitione*, quod gloriari soletis, facile est liberari, cum sustuleris omnem vim Deorum. *Cicero de Nat. Deor.* lib. i. c. 42. And a little lower, speaking of Atheists, and applying the same to Epicureans. Horum enim sententiæ omnium, non modo *superstitionem* tollunt, in qua inest timor inanis Deorum, sed etiam *religionem*, quæ Deorum cultu pio continetur. *Cicer. ibid.*

[z] Christianity as Old, &c. pref. p. iv.

[a] Quare relligio pedibus subjecta vicissim
Obteritur; nos exæquat victoria cœlo. *Lucret.* lib. i. 79, 80.

[b] Tully was sensible of this, where he says, Atque haud scio, an pietate adversus Deos sublata, fides etiam, et societas generis humani, et una excellentissima virtus justitia, tollatur. *Cicero de Nat. Deor.* lib. i. c. 2.

[c] Cotta in Cicero observes, At etiam liber est Epicuri de Sanctitate. Lu-

not being able to stand the popular odium, and the just offence they should give to all men of piety, or probity, they were forced to pretend a high reverence for the *Gods*[d]: and as to *virtue*, they gave it out, that it was so lovely and amiable, as to be eligible purely for the *pleasures* attending it[e]. Now as to these points also, our author has managed almost in the same way. For as Epicurus admitted the *deities* for fashion sake, provided they would but be confined to heaven, and lay no restraints upon mankind; so our author admits the being of *God*, provided he never interposes to give men *laws* or *rules* beyond what they shall carve out for themselves by their own *reason*, or what they will call *reason*. So far goes his reverence towards God.

Then as to *virtue*, after taking away the true and valuable sanctions, he hopes to make us amends by telling us, that "rational actions carry with them their own re-"ward, and irrational their own punishment, *here and* "*hereafter*[f]." That "youth should be taught to join "the ideas of *virtue* with the ideas of beauty, pleasure, "and happiness; and the ideas of *vice* with those of de-"formity, grief, and misery[g]." Not a word is there of the ideas of *a future judgment*, of hopes of *heaven*, or dread of *hell*, in this his new *catechism*: which yet would do youth ten times more service, than all his visionary

dimur ab homine non tam faceto, quam ad scribendi licentiam libero. Quæ enim potest esse *sanctitas* si Dî humana non curant?

[d] Invidiæ detestandæ gratia. *Cicero de Nat. Deor.* lib. i. c. 44.

Epicurum, ne in offensionem Atheniensium caderet, verbis reliquisse Deos, re sustulisse. *Ibid.* c. 30.

Negare Deos esse non audet, ne quid invidiæ subeat aut criminis. Lib. iii. c. 1.

[e] Nimirum virtuti operam dandam suasit Epicurus, quod altrix voluptatis, et tranquillitatis mater esset; Deos colendos ob præstantiam, sine *præmiorum* aut *pœnarum* respectu; qua doctrina sua ab intemperantiæ et libidinum sordibus fortasse revocare aliquos, ad justitiam autem et pietatem adducere vix ac ne vix quidem multos potuit. *Fabric. de Verit. Relig. Christian.* p. 374. Conf. Buddæi Isagog. p. 307.

[f] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 25, 26.

[g] Ibid. p. 166.

and fantastic helps to virtue, which he substitutes in their stead. In another place he intimates, that it is mean, or *servile*, to do any thing "to avoid being punished, or in "hopes to be rewarded hereafter[h]." So, whatever he believes of *future* rewards or punishments, he is willing to discard them from influencing practice, or serving morality: which is preparing the way for laying them aside. For from the very same doctrine formerly sprung up the sect of the Sadducees: who being taught by their master not to serve God in a *servile* manner, with respect to *reward*, soon came to deny that there were any future *rewards* at all, or future *state*[i].

I say then, that till this gentleman gives us some fuller satisfaction than he has yet done upon this head, we can by no means esteem him a friend to *virtue* or *morality*. If he does not directly and designedly undermine it, he does it in certain consequence and effect. He may flourish, as long as he pleases, upon the *loveliness of virtue*: let him try, first, if he can harangue the populace into *peace* and *order*, without the help of civil *penalties*; and if that experiment succeeds, then let him try how to promote *virtue* without the *servile motives* of *future* sanctions. I am persuaded, that as *bad* men are kept in tolerable order by the former, so the *best* men are preserved in their *integrity* by the latter; and could not be without, especially under hard *trials*. And as destroying one is destroying the civil peace and safety; so the destroying or relaxing of the other is so far destroying or relaxing *virtue* and *morality*. If once we discard the consideration of *rewards* and *punishments* in a life to come, the distinctions of *good* and *evil* will make but slight impressions: *morality* will soon become lifeless *theory*, and *virtue* but

[h] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 367.

[i] See Prideaux's Connect. vol. ii. p. 53, 54.

See also Bishop Bull, who observes how this doctrine was revived here, by some wild *enthusiasts*, Crisp, Saltmarsh, &c. and how it naturally leads to *infidelity* and *atheism*. *Posth. Serm.* vol. ii. p. 593, 594. Add Bishop Wilkins's Sermon on Heb. xi. 26. and Sharrock de Fin. p. 70, &c. South, vol. iv. Serm. p. 178. Boyle's Seraph. Love, p. 118.

an *empty* name. Mr. Barbeyrac, after Mr. Bayle, well says[k]; "If the idea of rewards and punishments in an-"other life be not joined to the practice of virtue, both "*virtue* and *innocence* may be ranked in the number of "those things, on which Solomon has pronounced his "definitive sentence: *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*"

To conclude, if this gentleman thinks I have any way misrepresented him here in the close; it will be easy for him to do himself justice, in his next performance, by declaring what he believes of the *resurrection*, *last judgment*, *heaven*, and *hell*, and upon what grounds.

[k] Barbeyrac, Prolegom. to Puffend. p. 73. Conf. Lactant. lib. vi. c. 9.

# POSTSCRIPT.

WHILE these papers were coming out of the press, there appeared a pamphlet, which by its *title* seemed to bear some relation to the subject in hand[a]. I looked it over, but shall pass no judgment of it: it lies before the world. But there is one paragraph, in page 82, which, I thought, might require some notice. It is a report of the world's having been without revelation for four thousand years together, excepting only a thousandth part of the whole. I shall give the passage at length presently. The author of Christianity as Old as the Creation had said something like it before[b], (though not altogether so gross,) and I remarked upon it, very briefly, in my First Part[c], referring to Dr. Jenkins, who had long before obviated the pretence at large. I am sorry I must now be forced to do the same thing over again, and that persons who might so easily become better informed, make no scruple of deceiving themselves or others in matters of such high concernment. This is the occasion of my subjoining a Postscript: and now the author's own words shall appear at length.

"If *reason* be not a sufficient guide in matters of reli-
"gion, then *five parts of six* of mankind, at this present,
"have no sufficient guide at all in matters of religion;
"and for *four thousand years together, nine hundred and*
"*ninety-nine parts of a thousand* had no sufficient guide
"to direct them in their duties. Now this is such a re-

[a] The Foundation of Natural and Revealed Religion asserted, &c. Printed for James and John Knapton.

[b] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 375, 390, 401.

[c] See above, p. 68, 69.

" flection upon the *goodness* and *justice* of the Supreme " Governor of the universe, as cannot easily be account- " ed for. For religion consisting in the doing our duties " in our stations from the sense of the being of God, if " *reason* would not sufficiently declare our duties in our " moral relations, and *the world had no other guide*, God " must be *unjust* and *cruel*, to require brick without " straw: *i. e.* to require duty where men had not suffi- " cient means to acquaint them with their duties." This is that gentleman's account of God's dispensations to mankind; tending to exalt the *sufficiency* of human *reason*, and to depreciate the use of *revelation*. I shall endeavour to return a clear and distinct answer to it, as follows.

1. It is very proper to premise, that since the honour of God and the dignity of Divine revelation are nearly concerned in this important question, it would undoubtedly become every serious *Christian*, and every pious man, not to heighten or enhance the pretended difficulty beyond the *truth*; not to make a report which may but *seem* to charge God with *injustice* or *cruelty*, without very clear and certain grounds for it.

2. Since God ought never to be charged with the *faults of men*, nor to be suspected as *unjust* or *cruel*, only because men have not made use of the *means* which God has put into their hands, we must insist upon it, that all such as have had any *opportunities* of knowing God's *revealed* will in any measure are to be reckoned among those that have had revelation; because they might have had it if they would, and it was not owing to God's neglect of them, but to their own folly, if they had it not. If they might have had *straw*, and would not, it is but just to demand of them their *tale of bricks*. Such therefore must be struck out of this writer's list.

3. I may take some notice, by the way, of this gentleman's reckoning " nine hundred and ninety-nine parts of " a thousand," as having had no guide but *reason*. One would be glad to know what this calculation is founded

upon, or whether it be chosen at all adventures in the careless way. The meaning, I suppose, is, that "the "little nation of the Jews" (as he calls them) were but as *one* to a *thousand*, in proportion to the whole number of mankind. But it may be doubted, whether he has made sufficient allowances for the prodigious increase of that people, beyond the common rate of the increase of mankind[d], in consequence of the many and signal promises made to their forefathers[e]. To be a little more particular, we may observe, that the Jews, at their coming out of Egypt, were by calculation near *three millions and an half*[f]. This was in the year of the world 2513, and from the flood 856, according to the Hebrew computation. Now if the Jews were but as *one* to a *thousand* in proportion to the *whole*, then the sum total of mankind, at that time, amounted nearly to *three thousand and five hundred millions*. A number, which the judicious in these matters will, I believe, be far from admitting; considering how ill it would suit with the observations made of the *gradual increase* of mankind, and their *periods* of *doubling*[g]: for what an immense number then must the world have at this time?

In David's days, 1300 years after the flood, the people of the Jews amounted at least to *six millions*[h]. Multiply by a thousand, and then *six thousand millions* will be the sum total of mankind at that time. It is now generally supposed, that the earth's present inhabitants cannot exceed *four thousand millions*[i]; so far is it from being at all

[d] See Whiston's Theory, p. 254, &c.

[e] Gen. xii. 2. xiii. 16. xv. 5. xvii. 2, 4, 5, 6. xxii. 17. xxvi. 4. xxviii. 14. xxxii. 12. Exod. i. 7, 9. xxxii. 13. Numb. xxiii. 10. Deut. i. 10, 11. Isa. xlviii. 19. Jerem. xxxiii. 22. Ezek. xvi. 7.

[f] Whiston's Theory, p. 251, 255.

[g] Sir William Petty's Essay in Polit. Arithm. p. 316. Nicholls's Confer. part i. p. 76. Whiston's Chronol. of the Old Test. p. 65. and Theory, p. 252.

[h] See Le Clerc in 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. He has a larger account there, of thirteen millions; wherein he seems much to exceed.

[i] Whiston's Short View of the Chronology of the Old Testament, p. 65.

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probable that they could be *six thousand millions*, or any thing like it, in David's time. Mr. Whiston's table makes them under *thirty-four millions*[k]. In short then, admitting, not granting, this writer's hypothesis, as to the Jews being the only people then favoured with revelation, yet it is pretty plain that he has stretched and strained beyond what he had grounds for, to help out the Deists in their argument against *Scripture*.

4. But the most material article is, his report that all the world (excepting as before excepted) were without revelation, and had nothing but mere *natural* reason for their guide, four thousand years together. This must be carefully inquired into, because much depends upon it. He that makes the report ought to prove it, since his argument for the *sufficiency* of reason is entirely built upon it: and if he cannot make good his *premises*, his *conclusion* falls of course. Perhaps he may again call this, "screening one's self under the *defensive* side of the question, instead of endeavouring to convince or convert "others[l]:" as if the showing a man that his error is built entirely upon a *groundless* supposition, were not a proper way to *convince* him of it, and to *dissuade* him from it. Besides, it is the business of a *respondent* to show where an *objection* fails for want of *proof*. To give an adversary *needless* advantages is not prudent management, but is often betraying a cause, rather than defending it. I say then, that those who raise the objection against revelation, from the supposed numbers that have gone without it, ought to *prove* the fact; otherwise the objection drops at once.

We have reason to think that Divine *goodness* would provide better for mankind: and nothing but undoubted *proof* that in fact he did not, ought to move us from so probable a persuasion. Besides which, we consider that

Universal History, numb. iii. p. 160. Nicholls's Confer. part i. p. 71, &c. alias p. 41, &c.

[k] Whiston, ibid. p. 67.

[l] True Foundation of Natural and Revealed Religion, &c. p. 95.

God *revealed* himself to man soon after he had made him, and again after his fall, and might frequently do it between that and the flood, both to good men and bad; as we are certain he did even to Cain. Consider farther, that men lived to a great age in those times, Adam himself 930 years, with whom Methuselah was contemporary 243, who also lived with Noah near 600 years, and with Shem near 100, so that *revelations* might well be conveyed from hand to hand; and none could easily want them. Observe also, that a *Sabbath* [m], very probably, was instituted soon after the creation; and *sacrifices* [n] appointed to be as standing memorials, and *visible* observances, for the keeping up a sense of religion in the antediluvian world. These things considered, we have no reason to suspect, that the Antediluvians could want *opportunities* of knowing the *true God* and his *will*, or of reviving the remembrance of them as often as need should require: consequently, there is not the least probability of their having been left entirely to the *light* of *nature*, without any *other guide*. We may therefore presume to strike off the first 1656 years out of the 4000; either because we can prove that all mankind had *opportunities* of knowing God's *revealed* will during that time [o]; or because, at least, it never has been, never can be proved, that the Antediluvians had no other guide but *natural* reason.

After the flood, fresh revelations were given to Noah, beyond what he had before received. He lived till within two years of the birth of Abraham; and Shem lived till Isaac was fifty years old. The patriarchal religion obtained during those times, and it was a mixture of *natural* and *revealed* religion together [p], both as to *duties* and *sanctions* of duty. The great age which men then lived to could not but help to preserve a sense of religion

[m] Gen. ii. 2, 3. See Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 6, &c. 121. Allix's Reflections upon Genesis, ch. vii. p. 34, &c.

[n] Gen. iv. 3, 4.

[o] See Dr. Jenkins's Reasonableness, &c. vol. i. p. 37, 46.

[p] See Cumberland, Orig. Antiq. 404, 407.

amongst them, unless they grew culpably careless and unobserving. None could want *opportunities* either of acquiring, or, if lost, of recovering the knowledge of God and his laws, but through their own *fault*. If some nations (as particularly Chaldea) corrupted the true religion before Abraham's days, yet it cannot be proved that *all* did [q], or that *any* had lost all *remembrance* of it, or that there were not yet remaining monuments of the true and ancient religion every where, or that there were not preachers of righteousness still left, (such as Melchizedek,) who might be as lights to others that should be disposed to attend to them, or to reform by them. Upon these and the like considerations, I may now take upon me to deduct at least two thousand years out of the four thousand; either because (as I before said) we can prove that the bulk of mankind, so far, were not left to the mere *light* of *nature*, or because it cannot be proved that they were.

Abraham from the time of his call (A. M. 2083.) became (as I observed formerly [r]) the great reviver and restorer both of natural and revealed religion, by himself and his issue, and by his nephew Lot and his issue, which in process of time grew up into many and great nations. And they carrying the mark of "circumcision, the seal "of the righteousness of faith," with them, (besides the outward rites of *sacrifices*, and probably of the *Sabbath*,) and conveying the same to their posterity, could not fail to perpetuate the memory of the *true* religion for a considerable time, insomuch that none could lose it but through their own *fault:* or if any lost it, there were still memorials enough left whereby to recover it, if men were disposed towards it. How long Abraham's religion (which was true religion, and acceptable to God) continued among the nations descending from him, or allied to him, we do not certainly know: but that it spread vastly

[q] See Shuckford's Connection, vol. i. p. 304—313. Hyde's Relig. vet. Pers. p. 16, 22. Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology, 187, 188.

[r] See above, p. 68.

wider than the small territories of Judea is certain. The Lacedemonians retained the memory of him for above one thousand six hundred years after; and claimed kindred with the Jews as being "of the stock of Abraham[s]:" and it is well known that the Persians have preserved his name to this day, as I before intimated[t].

When the people of the Jews grew up, they became, as it were, a burning and a shining light to the rest of the world, to give all nations *opportunities*, at least, of knowing in some measure the true God, and his revealed will. For "by the constitution of the Jewish law and govern-"ment, as well as by the providence of God in all his "dispensations towards that people, effectual care was "taken, that all the necessary points of religion, which "concern mankind in general, should by them be com-"municated to the rest of the world[u]."

Egypt, that most great and flourishing kingdom of the ancient times, and which being itself corrupted, was like to become the fountain of idolatries to other nations, that kingdom, I say, had early and signal opportunities given them for the reviving the knowledge of the true God and true religion, by means of the Hebrews so long sojourning amongst them, and by the exceeding great wonders God wrought there. With what principal view God wrought them, himself declares: THE EGYPTIANS SHALL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD[x]. And again, with respect to Pharaoh king of Egypt, he says: FOR THIS CAUSE HAVE I RAISED THEE UP, (kept thee still alive, instead of destroying thee,) FOR TO SHEW IN THEE MY POWER; AND THAT MY NAME MAY BE DECLARED THROUGHOUT ALL THE EARTH[y].

In Moses's time, THE NATIONS HAD HEARD THE FAME of the God of Israel[z]: and then it was that the

[s] 1 Maccab. xii. 21. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. 4. p. 530. edit. Huds.
[t] See above, p. 69.
[u] Jenkins's Reasonableness, vol. ii. pref. p. 36.
[x] Exod. vii. 5. xiv. 4. [y] Exod. ix. 16.
[z] Numb. xiv. 15.

Lord said: As I LIVE, ALL THE EARTH SHALL BE FULL OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD[a]. Moses also takes particular notice of the wisdom of the *Divine* laws, and that the Gentiles all around should be apprised of it, and admire it, Deut. iv. 6.

The wars of Canaan in the time of Joshua, and after, carried in them such visible marks of a *Divine* power on the side of Israel, as served to spread the fame of the true God to all the nations around.

In David's time, the God of Israel was known far and near. THE FAME OF DAVID WENT OUT INTO ALL LANDS, AND THE LORD BROUGHT THE FEAR OF HIM UPON ALL NATIONS[b]. And what the intent of all was, David himself intimates: TO DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD AMONG THE HEATHEN, HIS WONDERS AMONG ALL PEOPLE[c].

In the time of Solomon also, the fame of the true God was diffused all around. ALL THE KINGS OF THE EARTH SOUGHT THE PRESENCE OF SOLOMON, TO HEAR HIS WISDOM, THAT GOD HAD PUT IN HIS HEART, 2 Chron. ix. 23. Hiram, king of Tyre, learned among others TO BLESS THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL, THAT MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH[d]. The Queen of Sheba came from the southern parts of Arabia Felix (some say Ethiopia) to hear the wisdom of Solomon: and she also BLESSED THE LORD HIS GOD[e]. Several of the ancients have thought that she became a *proselyte:* and the tradition among the Ethiopian Habyssines seems to favour it: but nothing certain can be determined in that matter. Such as have a mind to inquire into it may consult Ludolfus's History of Ethiopia, (lib. ii. c. 3.) and Natalis Alexander's Ecclesiastical History, tom. ii. p. 159.

I have not room to mention several memorable particu-

[a] Numb. xiv. 21. [b] 1 Chron. xiv. 17.
[c] Psal. xcvi. 3. [d] 2 Chron. ii. 12. 1 Kings v. 7.
[e] 1 Kings x. 9. See the remarkable words of Solomon's prayer, in relation to *strangers* of the Gentiles, 1 Kings viii. 41, 42, 43.

lars relating to God's manifestations of himself to the Gentiles, between the reign of Solomon and the *captivity*. The reader that desires information therein may turn to Dr. Jenkins. But it will be proper to take notice of some very remarkable *decrees* and *proclamations* issued out at several times by the then greatest monarchs upon earth.

Nebuchadnezzar ruled over all Chaldea, Assyria, Arabia, Syria, and Palestine. His first decree (before Christ 603.) is as follows:

I MAKE A DECREE, THAT EVERY PEOPLE, NATION, AND LANGUAGE, WHICH SPEAK ANY THING AMISS AGAINST THE GOD OF SHADRACH, MESHECH, AND ABEDNEGO, SHALL BE CUT IN PIECES, AND THEIR HOUSES SHALL BE MADE A DUNGHILL: BECAUSE THERE IS NO OTHER GOD THAT CAN DELIVER AFTER THIS SORT[f].

About forty years after (ann. 563.) he sent out a *proclamation* thus: NEBUCHADNEZZAR THE KING, UNTO ALL PEOPLE, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES, THAT DWELL IN ALL THE EARTH; PEACE BE MULTIPLIED UNTO YOU. I THOUGHT IT GOOD TO SHOW THE SIGNS AND WONDERS THAT THE HIGH GOD HATH WROUGHT TOWARDS ME[g], &c.

Darius the Mede afterwards issued out his edict as follows, about the year before Christ 538.

KING DARIUS WROTE UNTO ALL PEOPLE, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES, THAT DWELL IN ALL THE EARTH; PEACE BE MULTIPLIED UNTO YOU. I MAKE A DECREE, THAT IN EVERY DOMINION OF MY KINGDOM MEN TREMBLE AND FEAR BEFORE THE GOD OF DANIEL: FOR HE IS THE LIVING GOD, AND STEDFAST FOR EVER, AND HIS KINGDOM THAT WHICH SHALL NOT BE DESTROYED, AND HIS DOMINION SHALL BE EVEN UNTO THE END[h]. Thus was the true God proclaimed, in solemn form, over the whole

[f] Dan. iii. 29. [g] Dan. iv. 1, 2. [h] Dan. vi. 25, 26.

Persian empire, as before over the Babylonian; both of them of very wide extent.

Not long after, in the year 536, Cyrus, successor to Darius, MADE A PROCLAMATION THROUGHOUT ALL HIS KINGDOM, AND PUT IT ALSO IN WRITING, SAYING, THUS SAITH CYRUS KING OF PERSIA, ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH HATH THE LORD GOD OF HEAVEN GIVEN ME; AND HE HATH CHARGED ME TO BUILD HIM A HOUSE IN JERUSALEM, WHICH IS IN JUDAH [i], &c.

Seventeen years after, (ann. 519.) there was a like proclamation issued out by Darius Hystaspis, in favour of the Jews: and the reason or motive assigned for it was as follows: THAT THEY MAY OFFER SACRIFICES OF SWEET SAVOURS UNTO THE GOD OF HEAVEN, AND PRAY FOR THE LIFE OF THE KING, AND OF HIS SONS [k].

It was about this time, or a little before, that Zoroastres, borrowing his hints from the Jewish religion, (with the assistance first of Hystaspes, and next of Darius,) made a great reform all over Persia [l]; setting up the worship of the *one God*, and teaching the doctrines of a *general resurrection*, and a *day of judgment*, and *everlasting rewards* of good men, with *everlasting punishments* of the wicked. Doctrines which *natural* light had not taught; and which, though before revealed to mankind, had been in a great measure sunk, or obscured by length of time. And these were what Zoroastres at that time taught, though not without a mixture of several ancient superstitions which the people were wedded to: and these are what the Magian sect in India and in Persia are said to have held from that time to this day.

There is yet another *decree*, or *proclamation*, by Artaxerxes (Longimanus) about the year 457, acknowledg-

[i] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23. Ezra i. 1, 2.

[k] Ezra vi. 10.

[l] See Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology, p. 34, 40, &c. Prideaux's Connect. part i. p. 169, 170. fol. edit. Hyde, Relig. vet. Pers. c. 21, 22, 23.

ing the GOD OF HEAVEN, and granting privileges to the Jews [m].

Now the inference I draw from these several decrees, or proclamations, of the then greatest potentates of the Gentile world, is, that such public and repeated notices given of the true God would of course make all nations and people (if not *culpably* careless, stupid, or prejudiced) inquisitive to know who this Jehovah, this high God was, what he had done, what people he had more particularly favoured, and why, what laws he had published, and what kind of religion he had instituted. Those nations therefore (a very considerable part of the Gentile world) had *opportunities* of becoming in some measure acquainted with the true God, and with the most substantial points, at least, of *revealed* religion. And that such was God's real design, in those and the like manifestations of himself to the Gentiles, is expressly declared by his Prophet Isaiah, in these emphatical words; THAT THEY MAY KNOW FROM THE RISING OF THE SUN, AND FROM THE WEST, THAT THERE IS NONE BESIDES ME: I AM THE LORD, THERE IS NONE ELSE [n]. God declares also, by his Prophet Ezekiel, how particular a regard he had to the Gentiles, in his dispensations towards the Jews, that his NAME SHOULD NOT BE POLLUTED, nor his honour suffer diminution in their SIGHT [o].

I might descend much lower, and observe how the Jews were dispersed all the world over, how the Scriptures were translated into a language generally understood, how *proselytes* flowed in to them in prodigious numbers every where; and how they, and their God, and

[m] Ezra vii. 12, 13.

[n] Isa. xlv. 6. See Vitringa in loc. Οὐδὲ γὰρ διὰ Ἰουδαίους μόνους ὁ νόμος ἦν, οὐδὲ δι' αὐτοὺς μόνους οἱ προφῆται ἐτίμωντο, ἀλλὰ πρὸς Ἰουδαίους μὲν ἐτίμωντο, καὶ παρὰ Ἰουδαίων, ἰδιώκοντο. πάσης δὲ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἦσαν διδασκάλιον ἱερὸν τῆς περὶ Θεοῦ γνώσεως, καὶ τῆς κατὰ ψυχὴν πολιτείας. *Athanas. de Incarnat. Verbi*, tom. i. c. 12. p. 57. ed. Bened.

[o] Ezek. xx. 9, 14, 22. xxxvi. 22, 23, 36.

their religion became notified to the Grecian and Roman empires, (though not in so illustrious a manner,) as before to the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian. The Gentiles were not left to mere *natural* light, but had frequent *supernatural* notices sent them from above, in every age. For from the time that the Israelites grew up to be a nation, for a long course of years, or centuries of years, God visibly exerted his power in an extraordinary manner; manifesting himself, by means of the Jews, to the Gentile world. Indeed, for the last four hundred years, or thereabouts, from the time of the Prophet Malachi to the times of the Gospel, those *extraordinary* dispensations ceased. And for that time it may be said, that God left the Gentiles to "walk in their own ways," in a more emphatical sense than before, sending them no such extraordinary calls, nor affording any *miraculous* attestations or *prophecies*. And yet even during that time, they had some less awakening *opportunities* offered them by their conversing with the Jews dispersed all abroad, (especially in the larger cities, Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and by reading the Greek Scriptures, as before hinted. Now though those several intimations given to the heathen world, made no *public* reform any where that we certainly know of, (unless I may except what I before mentioned in respect of Persia,) yet how many *private* converts were brought in, no one can tell: they might be numberless. But supposing them more or fewer, the question is not, (so far as Divine *goodness* or *justice* is concerned in it,) what use men really made of the Divine favours, but what they might have made.

Upon the whole, I do not think it can be proved that in the 4000 or 4007 years before Christ, the bulk of mankind, or any considerable number of them, were ever left so destitute of *opportunities*, or so barred from all access to Divine *revelation*, as the objection supposes; but that generally they might have come at the knowledge of the true God and his revealed will, if they would have used the proper care, pains, and diligence, which such a weighty

concern required. And it will be much harder to show, what nations, and when, wanted all *opportunities* of knowing the true God and his laws, than to show which had them [o].

But I have more to add in opposition to the *report*, that the Gentiles "had nothing but reason to guide them [p]" all that time: on which supposition the argument for the *sufficiency* of reason entirely depends. In the full extent and latitude which the argument supposes, the fact perhaps cannot be proved of any considerable kingdom or country in any age of the world. It cannot be proved, that either the *religion* or the *morality* which the Pagans had, (so far as it was *true* and *right*,) was wrought out by mere *reason*, or that it was not in a great measure the remains of ancient *revelation*, handed down by *tradition*.

Grotius observes [q] of the doctrine of the *immortality* of the *soul*, and a *future life*, that it was derived from the remotest antiquity to almost all *civilized* nations, and even to the more *barbarous* also; no probable account whereof can be given, but that it was handed down from the sons of Noah, or from the immediate sons of Adam.

After Grotius, our learned Bishop Bull says [r]; "From "the same original, (with *sacrifices*,) I question not, it is, "that the notion of *a life to come* hath been always found "among the *heathen* nations, even some of the most *bar*-"*barous* nations; of whom neither we nor our forefathers, "for many ages past, had any knowledge, till the later "discoveries of a new world."

[o] Falluntur itaque, quotquot religionis Hebraicæ instituta ita angustis Palæstinæ limitibus inclusa fuisse arbitrantur, ut non eorum cognitio ad alias quoque gentes dimanarit: aut qui tam abjectum semper fuisse Judæorum nomen cavillantur, ut deridiculo tantum aliis eorum dogmata fuerint. Non fuit sane in ea opinione Origenes, cujus hæc adversus Celsum (lib. i. p. 15.) verba extant.—Καὶ γὰρ ἴσχυσι τὸν ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου δημιουργὸν, νόμους τιθεμένου ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ, δύναμιν παρασχεῖν τοῖς λόγοις, κρατῆσαι τὴν πανταχοῦ δυναμένην. *Witsii Ægyptiac.* p. 269.

[p] True Foundation of Natural and Revealed Religion, &c. p. 83.

[q] Grotius de Veritat. Relig. Christian. lib. i. c. 22.

[r] Bull's Posth. Sermons, p. 590.

Another learned writer[p] observes from Cicero, "that "the doctrine of the *immortality of the soul* was delivered "down from all antiquity; that the ancients gave no *rea-* "*sons* to prove it by, but received it by *tradition;* that "Plato was the first who attempted to prove it by argu- "ment, in order to show how far reason could proceed "upon those grounds which were then known in the "world from *revelation.*"

Another judicious author[q] maintains, more at large, that the doctrine of a *future life* was a tradition current in all nations, handed down from the first parents of mankind. What confirms it is, that it was more firmly believed by the *vulgar*, than it was by the *philosophers;* who, by *reasoning* upon it, only rendered it more *doubtful* than before, as they wanted *certain* principles to go upon, and considered not how to trace the *tradition* up to its fountain head. A further argument of it is, that the *eternity* of future rewards and punishments was believed by the generality, as may be learned from Lucretius before cited[r]: a notion not likely to have been suggested by *reason*, but very likely to have descended from *revelation*, conveyed by the Jews to the Gentiles: for so the Persians had it, as has been mentioned above.

I may add, that even the notion of a *Deity*, though it might be learned from *reason*, yet might more probably descend by *tradition*. Or however, it was undoubtedly kept up by the custom of *sacrifices*, derived down from our first parents; and which cannot reasonably be supposed to have been mere *will-worship*, but owing to *Divine* appointment. The religion therefore of the ancient Heathens (like that of the Mahometans at present) was ancient *revealed* religion[s], but miserably corrupted and

[p] Jenkins's Reasonableness, vol. i. p. 379. See Tully, Tuscul. Disp. lib. i. cap. 12, 17.

[q] Nicholls's Conference, part v. p. 222, &c. Compare Witsii Ægyptiaca, lib. ii. cap. xv. p. 178, &c.

[r] See also Jenkins, vol. ii. p. 265.

[s] Vid. Voss. de Orig. Idololatr. lib. i. cap. 1. p. 2. et passim.

Carpzovius

depraved by human follies and superstitions. It is very natural to suppose it, because it is certain that all mankind were once, yea twice, of the same *true* religion, and had the same *true* worship, till they defiled it; some sooner and some later, some more and some less. What was good in the Pagan religion was, or however might be, the remains of *Divine* revelation, while what was bad was human invention. Yet bad as their religion was, it was much better than *none:* for, whatever some may pretend, even *superstition* and *idolatry*, in the general, are vastly better than *atheism*, or *no religion*[t]. Therefore Epicurus's remedy for *superstition* was much worse than the disease.

I shall only observe farther, that it cannot be proved that the Pagan *morality*, the soundest and best part of it, was wrought out by mere dint of *reason*. It is much more probable, as hath been argued by learned men[u], that even their moral precepts were owing to *revelation*, handed down from father to son. God Almighty did not leave it to his own people the Jews, to find out by *reason*, that they ought to *honour father and mother*, that they should not commit *murder* nor *adultery;* should not *steal*, nor *bear false witness:* he instructed them in those plain things, and commanded them to instruct their children in the same[x]. Now, as these moral rules were conveyed from Jew to Jew in succession, so it is not improbable that the like might be conveyed by *tradition* from the

Carpzovius takes notice as follows: Nec dubium amplius est, universam fere Ethnicorum Theologiam, cultumque illum varium, ex Mose ejusque scriptis, et populi Israelitici solennibus promanasse: quod Ger. Jo. Vossius in amplissimis illis *de idololatriæ origine* et *progressu* commentariis demonstratum dedit. *Carpzov. Introduct. ad libr. Biblicos*, part. i. p. 112.

Witsius, in his Ægyptiaca, shows the same thing. Conf. Joseph. contr. Apion. lib. ii. cap. 16. et cap. 39. Just. Mart. Apol. i. cap. 57.

[t] See Barbeyrac's notes to Puffend. lib. ii. cap. 4. Fabricius de Verit. Relig. Christian. p. 337.

[u] Jenkins, vol. i. p. 376, &c. Nicholls's Confer. part ii. p. 32, &c. Vid. Tertull. Apol. cap. 45.

[x] Deut. vi. 6, 7.

sons of Noah, or from the Jews, to the Gentile world. At least, it cannot be proved, that *reason* either first discovered them, or alone supported them: and therefore it is begging the question to say, even in this respect, that the Gentiles had *no guide but reason.*

To be short, here seems to have been a great mistake in this matter, by not attending rightly, but confounding two very distinct things. It had been often said, and it is true, that the world was without the *Christian revelation* (properly so called) for 4000 years together: but it is quite another thing to say, it was without *all revelation*, and thereupon to ground an argument for the *sufficiency* of mere *natural* light, or unassisted *reason.* This fact is not true, but is plainly and evidently *false:* and the other fact, which is really true, is not at all to the purpose of proving the *sufficiency* of mere reason. For it is supposed that the world, all that time, had *nothing else* but *natural* light, when they really had *something else*, though they had not the *Christian revelation.* They had most of them *opportunities* of coming at Divine revelation directly: they all of them had something of it, indirectly, by *tradition*, though they did not make the full or the right use of either[y].

5. As to the present *Pagans* and *Mahometans*, which *the report* computes to be *five parts in six* of the whole world, I shall not examine into the justness of the calculation. It is sufficient for me to observe, that the author ought to reckon none in his list but such as have never heard of *Christ*, never had *opportunities* of hearing of him; because his argument, drawn from the *Divine* justice and goodness, is not concerned in any other. Let him therefore first make the proper reduction in the account, and then see what it amounts to. Can any man think it a reflection upon Divine justice or goodness, that *Maho-*

[y] Licet enim ad ea, quæ initio exposuimus, *traditione*, ac *naturæ lumine* posset perveniri; non propterea tamen existimandum Gentiles universos ad omnium eorum notitiam pervenisse. *Voss. de Idololatr.* lib. i. cap. 4. p. 11.

*metans* will not be *Christians;* any more than that *Papists* will not be *Protestants?* The *Mahometans* have so many *Christians* living amongst them, and besides have so much of *Christ,* and of both Testaments, in the Alcoran itself, that it must be owned they have had intimations and opportunities sufficient to bring them back to the *Christian* religion, whenever they shall be in a disposition for it. As to Pagan idolaters, there are *Christians,* more or fewer, dispersed amongst them almost all the world over, to give notice of the Christian name: to say nothing of *Jews,* who are so many standing evidences of the truth of Divine revelations, both theirs and ours. But if men will take no hints, nor embrace the opportunities which God has put into their hands, how is Divine goodness or justice at all chargeable on that score?

Besides, when it is certain that Christianity has been anciently propagated all the world over, (unless perhaps there may be some doubt of America,) and when it is known also, for what reasons God sometimes sends a *famine* of the *word* of God[z], or removes the *candlestick* from any nation[a]; and it may be hard to prove that he has ever removed it, or withheld it, from any that have been worthy of it, or disposed for it, or that might not have been rendered more guilty by it: and since it is not for us to know how *often,* or *when,* it may be proper for an all-wise God to interpose *extraordinarily,* for the restoring religion once lost through the follies and vices of men; neither can we presume to say, that it would have been in *all views,* or upon the whole, *better,* or *so well,* for God to have interposed oftener than in fact he has done: these things considered, it may behove us to forbear all unhandsome reflections upon the Divine conduct, lest it should be *charging God foolishly,* and to choose rather to rest the account of the whole thing, where it ought to rest, upon the incurable iniquity and perverseness of mankind.

[z] Amos viii. 11.

[a] Revelat. ii. 5. Matt. xxi. 41, 43. Rom. i. 28.

The author of the Report conceives, that human *reason* is *sufficient* to do great matters. I believe so too, while under the conduct of *Divine reason* and *revealed* light: otherwise, as it has always made a very deplorable figure in the world, with respect to *divine* things, so it always will do. *Superstition, idolatry, scepticism, atheism,* all have been owing to *human* reason's deserting its *Divine* guide. If reason be likely to discover all duties, why should it not discover the duty of receiving *revelation?* For to a man that believes a God, there is no clearer or more certain dictate of reason than this, that he ought to inquire seriously, impartially, and painfully after God's will, (*natural* or *revealed,*) and when he has found it, humbly and reverently to submit to it. This appears to me a much easier, shorter, and more rational way of proceeding, (if men would be *rational,*) than for every peasant, mechanic, or day-labourer, to attempt to draw out for himself an entire system of *ethics,* a scheme of duties towards God, his neighbour, and himself. In that way he must first be able to determine, whether he be made up of a *body* and a *soul;* and next, whether there will be any future state, and any distinction of *rewards* and *punishments* there: for upon those things not only the *life* of virtue, but the very *notion* of it depends [b]; inasmuch as nothing can be *virtue* which is not *rational* conduct in such or such circumstances. Now, if after getting over all Epicurean objections he decides for a future state, &c. still it will require a strong head and close application, together with a *pure heart,* for a man to make just and impartial rules for *himself,* and to draw out a regular system in all its branches. If

[b] Quo dempto, quis tam esset *amens,* qui semper in laboribus, et periculis viveret? *Cicer. Tusc. Disp.* lib. i. cap. 15.

Quod igitur erit discrimen virtutis ac sceleris, si nihil interest, utrumne Aristides sit aliquis, an Phalaris? utrum Cato, an Catilina? *Lactant. Institut.* lib. iii. cap. 19. Conf. lib. v. cap. 19. lib. vi. 9.

If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die. 1 *Cor.* xv. 32.

men were disposed towards such work as this, they would be much more disposed to come into *Divine* revelation.

The sum then of all is this: *Revealed* religion (as well as *natural*) has been much neglected in the world. *Human* reason, had it been content to follow *Divine* direction, had done right and well: but by affecting an independency, and striking into separate measures, it has generally gone wrong. This misconduct has been owing to stupidity, to sloth, to prejudices, to pride, or lust, or other vile affections; to the world's loving *darkness* more than *light*, their deeds being evil. Here lies the pinch of the whole thing. It was an old objection against *reason's* being the gift of God, that so very *few* had made a right use of it, or had enjoyed it in any great perfection[c]. And that was then urged as an argument for *Atheism*, as another very like it (drawn from the *small* number of those that have enjoyed revelation) has been lately urged in behalf of *Deism*[d]. But they are neither of them arguments for any thing I know of; except it be for *humility* and *godly fear*. It is enough, that God has given us *faculties*, and has given us also *opportunities*, as it hath pleased him: and he is the unerring Judge how far men have *culpably* neglected or abused either. And at the last great day, men will not be condemned for any *imperfections* or *misfortunes* which they could not help, but for *faults* only. Whatever may become of poor ignorant heathens, or any that have laboured under *invincible* ignorance or stupidity, yet that (God be thanked) is not our case, neither does it at all concern us. We live in the days of light and knowledge, under the blessed sunshine of the Gospel. And as we

[c] So the Academic in Cicero. Quamobrem si mens voluntasque divina idcirco consuluit hominibus, quod iis largita est *rationem*, iis solis consuluit quos *bona ratione* donavit: quos videmus, si modo ulli sint, esse perpaucos. Non placet autem *paucis* a diis immortalibus esse consultum. Sequitur ergo ut nemini consultum sit. *Cicero de Nat. Deor.* lib. iii. cap. 27. p. 319.

[d] See Christianity as Old, &c. p. 401. where the author says, "Can a being be denominated merciful and good, who is so only to *a few*, but cruel "and unmerciful to the rest?" The argument is parallel, and the same answer will serve for both.

have no ignorance to plead, but what is wilful, (and which is itself criminal,) we have no hope, nor so much as shadow of hope left us, if we "neglect so great salva-"tion."

From what hath been said, we may be able to judge the more distinctly of the noisy plea concerning the "suf-"ficiency of reason." The phrase has been variously and uncertainly used in this controversy, and in more senses than one.

1. If it means that reason is *absolutely*, and in *itself*, a *sufficient guide in religion*, the position is undoubtedly false. The sufficiency of reason is best seen in being sensible of its own insufficiency, and in its steady adhering to *supernatural* light, so far as it can be had: this is the first lesson of true wisdom. The farther men have gone off from it, the more they have been bewildered: "professing "themselves to be wise, they became fools." What true wisdom was left in the heathen world, when *Christ* came, lay chiefly in the slender, broken *remains* of ancient *revelation*, stifled almost and smothered with innumerable *superstitions*. Some common principles relating to a *Deity*, and the *sanctions* of a world to come, served to keep up, in some measure, the sacredness of *oaths* and *contracts*, and to support human society: and if *vulgar tradition* had not in that case overruled the *reasonings* of *philosophers*, there would not have been left even so much as that. For it is plain enough (not to mention other instances) that the doctrine of *future punishments* was almost banished from the Schools[e]; while *philosophy* saw and disapproved the *superstitious* part, and, instead of correcting it, ran into a worse extreme, rejecting the *whole:* which in direct consequence was overturning all religion and morality. See from hence, what the *sufficiency* of reason amounted to, when left to its own wanderings. Neither would it succeed much better at this day, if the same experiment were again to be tried.

[e] See Lactantius, lib. iii. cap. 19. lib. ii. cap. 3. Whitby of the Necessity of the Christian Revelation, p. 149, &c. 158, &c.

2. If it be said, that reason however is sufficient *hypothetically*, or by *accident*, where there is *nothing else*, (though it is putting an uncommon case,) yet neither is that true in any proper sense. For, in such a case, it is the mercy of God, through the merits of *Christ*, that is sufficient to overlook *invincible ignorance:* not that such *ignorance* is a sufficient guide. If a *blind* man may be brought into harbour for his well-meant travels, though he had quite mistaken his road; yet who would say that *blindness* was *sufficient* to direct the way? No: but his *honest endeavours* were mercifully accepted as sufficient, though he blindly wandered and went wide.

3. There is another sense of the *sufficiency* of reason, grounded upon the former. It was *sufficient*, some think, to answer all the purposes of *Divine wisdom* or *goodness;* because when God gives *nothing else*, he will require no more of a man than to make his best of it, and he may accept him on those terms: therefore it was *needless* to superadd *revelation*, as it is needless (for the same reason) to give any man more sense than an *idiot*.

True, it was needless in *one view*, but not needless in *every view:* so this is arguing (as the Schools speak) *a dicto secundum quid, ad dictum simpliciter*, from a thing's being needless in *one respect*, to its being needless *absolutely*, which is false reasoning. It was highly *needful* notwithstanding, to superadd *revelation* for many *good reasons*, respecting both this world and the next. It is a mean and an abject thought in us *Christians* to ask, why we might not have been left as much in *darkness* and in *ignorance* as the heathen world was. Shall we murmur and complain of being favoured with *light* and *knowledge?* But this being shameful, the question commonly is turned the other way: why were not they favoured in like manner as we? The proper answer is, God knows[f]: and the

[f] Vid. Orig. contr. Cels. p. 165. Arnob. contr. Gent. lib. ii. in fine. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. i. cap. 2. p. 5. edit. Vales. Theod. Therapeut. Serm. vi. p. 101. alias 579. Gregor. Nyssen. tom. iii. p. 341. Augustin. ad Deograt. Epist. 102. Philastr. Hæres. cxxxv. p. 294. Cyrill. Alex. contr. Anthropomorph. cap. 24. p. 118.

*times* and the *seasons* for every thing are in *his power*. His wisdom is seen in *variety* and in the *several* degrees and orders of creatures, whether of the same or of a different species. He puts some into a higher order of service and more laborious duty; for a higher reward, or else for a severer doom: he puts others into a lower order of service and easier duty; for a lower reward, or for a milder doom. The wisdom, justice, and goodness of God do not require that he should put all creatures (whether of the same or of a different species) into the same rank or order; but that he should adjust their present services and their final retributions to the order he puts them into. This he has done, and will do: and thus will the Judge of all the earth do right. If any difficulty remains, it becomes ignorant creatures of yesterday, to be modest and patient, and to wait till they see the end.

# SCRIPTURE VINDICATED;

IN ANSWER TO A BOOK

ENTITLED,

*CHRISTIANITY AS OLD AS THE CREATION.*

PART III.

## 2 Chron. XVIII. 18—22.

I SAW THE LORD SITTING UPON HIS THRONE, AND ALL THE HOST OF HEAVEN STANDING ON HIS RIGHT HAND AND ON HIS LEFT. AND THE LORD SAID, WHO SHALL ENTICE AHAB KING OF ISRAEL, THAT HE MAY GO UP AND FALL AT RAMOTH-GILEAD? AND ONE SPAKE SAYING AFTER THIS MANNER, AND ANOTHER SAYING AFTER THAT MANNER. THEN THERE CAME OUT A SPIRIT, AND STOOD BEFORE THE LORD, AND SAID, I WILL ENTICE HIM. AND THE LORD SAID UNTO HIM, WHEREWITH? AND HE SAID, I WILL GO OUT, AND BE A LYING SPIRIT IN THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS PROPHETS. AND THE LORD SAID, THOU SHALT ENTICE HIM, AND THOU SHALT ALSO PREVAIL: GO OUT, AND DO EVEN SO. NOW THEREFORE, BEHOLD, THE LORD HATH PUT A LYING SPIRIT IN THE MOUTH OF THESE THY PROPHETS, AND THE LORD HATH SPOKEN EVIL AGAINST THEE.

THIS chapter contains the history of king Ahab's being deceived by four hundred false prophets, whom he had sent for to soothe and flatter him; as his way was to encourage those that would prophesy "smooth things," while he as much maligned and persecuted all such as had the fidelity and courage to tell him an ungrateful truth[a]. So since that ungodly prince hated the *truth*, and loved a *lie*, God permitted him to be deceived by *liars*, and thereby to fall: which is what the true Prophet Micaiah represented beforehand to him in a lively and affecting *parable*. It is twice recorded in holy Scripture; first, in the 22d of the first of Kings, and again in the 18th of the second of Chronicles, as is here presented to the reader. Our Ob-

[a] See 1 Kings xxii. 8, 18, 26, 27. 2 Chron. xviii. 7, 25, 26.

jector, ignorantly imagining that those four hundred prophets were *prophets of the Lord*, like Elisha, with whom he joins them, after telling us how Elisha deceived Benhadad, (that is to say, after telling us his own dreams[b],) he proceeds in his abusive manner as follows[c]: "But I "need not mention single prophets deceiving, or being "deceived, when the Scripture tells us of four hundred "being deceived at once, to the destruction of a number "of innocent persons." Then he sets down at length the parable of Micaiah, out of the 18th of Chronicles, from verse 18. to the 21st inclusive.

Now the sum of the matter amounts only to this: the prophets who came to Ahab were not the Lord's prophets, but Ahab's prophets. They spake at all adventures, what they presumed would please him, like fawning parasites and flattering sycophants. A spirit of *lying* was upon them all, because they were disposed to flatter the king's humour, found their gain in it, or durst do no other. This is the short and true account of the whole matter; and this is what Micaiah sets forth in the *parable* he then delivered. But because our Objector more than once confounds *false* prophets with *true*, though they agree in nothing but the *name*; and because the subject is of some importance, and may deserve a more minute discussion, I shall in this place discourse more at large upon what concerns *false prophets* in general, and those *four hundred* in particular, and Micaiah's *parable* thereto relating.

1. As to *false prophets* in general, it is no marvel that there should be such men. *Prophet* is a name of honour, and carries dignity along with it: and therefore where there are true prophets, there will be pretenders also, raised up perhaps by their own vanity or avarice, or other corrupt motives. Where there are *prophets* and *pastors* to guide and instruct honest and faithful men, there will be

[b] See the case of Elisha and Benhadad fairly represented, p. 157, &c.
[c] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 257.

*anti-prophets* and *anti-pastors*, to misguide and seduce those that will be misled by them. As long as there are persons in the world that love to be soothed and flattered in their follies or vices; while they SAY TO THE SEERS, SEE NOT; AND TO THE PROPHETS, PROPHESY NOT UNTO US RIGHT THINGS; SPEAK UNTO US SMOOTH THINGS, PROPHESY DECEITS[d]: I say, as long as the world loves *flattery*, there will be *flatterers*; and as long as they love *deceit*, there will be *deceivers*: and so while *false* prophecy or *false* doctrine is more acceptable than *true*, there will of course be false *prophets* or false *teachers*, as the very nature of the thing shows, and as the experience of all ages abundantly proves. The true prophets and pastors, under the Old Testament, often complained of those false teachers and seducers, those loose casuists, that studied little else but how to contrive palatable doctrines for all tastes, or to SEW PILLOWS TO ALL ARMHOLES[e]. There were many such *men-pleasers*, both in Israel and Judah[f], but more particularly in Israel. For from the time that king Jeroboam had drawn the ten tribes into a revolt, and, to prevent their return, had set up altars at Dan and Bethel, in opposition to the temple of Jerusalem[g], there was altar erected against altar, and priests against priests, to emulate the service and worship of the house of Judah. And because *prophets* also were an honour to any church or state, and the *true prophets* of the Lord were all against the idolatry of the *golden calves*; therefore the ten tribes, with their kings, were under the stronger temptation to set up and encourage *false prophets* as rivals of the true ones[h], thereby to make at least a show of outvying the other two tribes with their kings. Ahab was the sixth in the line of the *kings of Israel*, and as wicked a king as any had been since the

[d] Isa. xxx. 10. compare Micah ii. 11.
[e] Ezek. xiii. 18. compare Jerem. v. 31. vi. 14. xiv. 13. xxvii. 9.
[f] Jerem. xxiii. 15, 16, 21, 25, 30. xxvii. 14, 15.
[g] 1 Kings xii. 27, 28, 29.
[h] See Lakemacher, Observat. Philolog. vol. ii. p. 224, &c.

first of the line: so it is no wonder, if there should be many false prophets in his time raised up, or however supported and encouraged by him.

2. As to the *four hundred* [i] lying prophets that deceived Ahab, they are called emphatically *his* [k] prophets (not prophets *of the Lord*) by Micaiah: though they professed themselves to be the Lord's prophets, prophesying in his name [l]. Jehoshaphat soon suspected them, not believing them to be *true* prophets; and therefore he desired that some other prophet, A PROPHET OF THE LORD BESIDES [m] those four hundred, might be called in; sufficiently intimating that he took not them to be such: for if he had, why should he put more confidence in a single man, than in four hundred, or desire any other, after so many?

Some have thought, since the number so exactly hits, that those false prophets were the four hundred "prophets of "the groves" which were constantly fed at Jezebel's table [n]. But it appears not likely that Ahab would presume to affront Jehoshaphat in so gross a manner, by bringing Jezebel's prophets (prophets probably of Astarte, and known idolaters) before him, and making them speak in the name of *Jehovah* the true God. Neither, on the other hand, does it appear at all probable that they were such as had been bred up in the *schools* of the *prophets*, under Elijah, or any other true prophet of God. For, besides that one may reasonably suppose such to have been better men, Jezebel, but a little before, had made so great slaughter of them [o], that there could hardly be any such number as four hundred left [p]; though some indeed might have been hid at that time, which Elijah knew not of [q]. It remains therefore, that they were, very probably, Ahab's own pro-

[i] 1 Kings xxii. 6. 2 Chron. xviii. 5.
[k] 1 Kings xxii. 22, 23. 2 Chron. xviii. 21, 22.
[l] 1 Kings xxii. 6, 11, 12, 24. 2 Chron. xviii. 10, 11, 23.
[m] 1 Kings xxii. 7. 2 Chron. xviii. 6.
[n] 1 Kings xviii. 19.
[o] 1 Kings xviii. 4, 13.
[p] See ibid. xix. 10, 14.
[q] See ibid. xviii. 4, 13.

phets, such as he had set up by rewards and promises, and who accordingly knew how to suit his humour and to flatter his vanity, all agreeing to a man in the same fawning compliances and the same treacherous counsels, which pleased and tickled for the present, but proved fatal in the end.

3. Micaiah however, like an honest man and a faithful counsellor, (though he could not be heard,) discovered the whole secret, that those four hundred pretended prophets were all deceivers, and all actuated with the same spirit of *lying*. Only, instead of bluntly telling the king they were all *liars*, he takes up his *parable*, (as prophets were used to do,) declaring what he had seen in prophetic *vision*; which was the way that God had made choice of for the opening the whole matter to him. Micaiah himself, in the same chapter, says, (ver. 16.) I SAW ALL ISRAEL SCATTERED UPON THE MOUNTAINS, AS SHEEP HAVING NO SHEPHERD, AND THE LORD SAID, &c. which can be understood only of what he saw in prophetic vision, presignifying the real fact that should follow after; for the thing that he then saw was not yet come to pass. Micaiah therefore saw what he there relates, just as St. Peter SAW HEAVEN OPENED, AND A CERTAIN VESSEL DESCENDING UNTO HIM, AS IT HAD BEEN A GREAT SHEET[r], &c. Not that any thing of what St. Peter saw was *real*, excepting that such ideas, or such appearances, were *really* wrought or formed upon his mind, as he lay in a *trance*. The like representation was made to Micaiah in a vision, signifying what was doing in the matter of Ahab, and what the event would be. The moral or meaning of all was, that as Ahab loved to be cajoled and flattered, so God had permitted those four hundred men, pretending to be prophets, to abuse and impose upon him; which in conclusion would prove fatal to him. After Micaiah had thus reported his vision at full length, he then briefly explained and applied it to Ahab: NOW THEREFORE THE

[r] Acts x. 11, 12.

LORD HATH PUT A LYING SPIRIT IN THE MOUTH OF ALL THESE THY PROPHETS. It is frequent in holy Scripture, to call that the *Lord's doing* which he only *permits* to be done, because he has the supreme direction of all things, and he governs the event. Wicked devices proceed from wicked men: but that they prevail and take effect is owing to the hand of God directing and ordering where they shall light, and what shall be the issue of them. As to the text we are now upon, the very words of the original will bear to be translated, THE LORD HATH PERMITTED (or SUFFERED) A LYING SPIRIT IN THE MOUTH, &c[s]. Accordingly our translators in other places often render the verb נתן *nathan*, by *suffer*, or *let*[t], in the sense of *permitting*. And it may be observed also of the words of God to the lying spirit, as represented in the parable, GO OUT, AND DO EVEN SO, they are to be understood, not in the *commanding*, but *permissive* sense; for so is the *imperative* more than once made use of in other places of Scripture[u]. Therefore there is no room left for charging God as author of any deception brought upon Ahab by the sins of men.

4. As to what the Objector further intimates, of the "destruction of a number of innocent persons," meaning, I presume, those persons who fell with Ahab in battle: he seems to have thrown it in only to fill up his period. For how can he know how *innocent* those persons were? Besides, how can he account for the fall of thousands, or of millions, that have died in the field of battle through the folly and rashness of their commanders? But the Objector frequently overshoots his mark, arguing directly for *Atheism*, rather than for *Deism*; and I suppose without knowing that he does it.

[s] Thus Le Clerc renders: Jehova passus est *esse* spiritum mendacii in ore, &c. 1 Reg. xxii. 23. 2 Ephemerid. xviii. 22.

[t] Gen. xx. 6. Exod. xii. 23. Psalm xvi. 10. 2 Chron. xvi. 1.

[u] 2 Sam. xviii. 23. 2 Kings ii. 17. Matt. viii. 32. John xiii. 27. See Glassius, lib. iii. tract. 2. can. xliii. p. 871. Guarin. Grammat. Hebr. tom. i. p. 542.

### 2 Chron. XXXIV. 28.

BEHOLD, I WILL GATHER THEE TO THY FATHERS, AND THOU SHALT BE GATHERED TO THY GRAVE IN PEACE, NEITHER SHALL THINE EYES SEE ALL THE EVIL THAT I WILL BRING UPON THIS PLACE, AND UPON THE INHABITANTS OF THE SAME. They are the words of God by the prophetess Huldah, to good king Josiah, recorded also in the second Book of Kings[x]. The Objector's cavil against this Scripture is as follows[y]: "The prophetess Hilda assures good king Josiah from "the Lord, that he should BE GATHERED TO HIS "GRAVE IN PEACE; and yet soon after he received a "mortal wound, of which he died." This gentleman here attending only to the sound of words, wonders, I suppose, how a man can be said to come to his grave *in peace*, when he dies *in battle*. But the phrase *in peace* is a phrase of some latitude, admitting of more constructions than one. Josiah died *in peace*, during the public *tranquillity*, before the *troubles* of his nation came on: he lived not to SEE ALL THE EVIL WHICH God had determined to BRING UPON that PLACE, AND UPON THE INHABITANTS OF THE SAME; as the text interprets itself. He was taken away from the evil to come, was *peaceably* interred, and left his nation in a *peaceable* condition. So much Huldah the prophetess intended and signified; and so much was actually fulfilled. But I have said more than enough in answer to a frivolous objection, which scarce deserved notice; because the text, when recited at full length, sufficiently answers for itself, and there remains no more room for cavil, as soon as we read on to the end of the sentence.

### Job II. 1. and compare Job I. 6.

AGAIN THERE WAS A DAY WHEN THE SONS OF GOD CAME TO PRESENT THEMSELVES BEFORE THE

[x] 2 Kings xxii. 20. [y] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 257.

LORD, AND SATAN CAME ALSO AMONG THEM TO PRESENT HIMSELF BEFORE THE LORD. The Objector, remarking upon this part of Scripture, puts on an air of scorn and ridicule, expressing himself thus[z]: "According to the acknowledged maxims you have laid down "from Divines, we must not take literally the two conferences mentioned in the first and second of Job, between *God* and *Satan:* when *Satan*, in very good company, WITH THE SONS OF GOD, PRESENTED HIMSELF BEFORE THE LORD; who, when *Satan* would "not otherwise be satisfied of Job's integrity, permitted "him to slay Job's children and servants, and reduce him "to extremity, to make the experiment." Whether the two conferences mentioned are to be *literally* taken or otherwise, is a question proper for *divines* and *critics* to discuss, and it has been often and freely canvassed amongst them[a]. I must own, I incline to go in with those who understand both the places as containing a kind of allegorical representation, or parable, setting forth many useful truths under lively and beautiful images. But yet if the *literal* construction meets with no shrewder adversaries than our Objector appears to be, nor with any stronger objections than he has offered against it, it may very well stand, for any thing I can yet perceive. He thinks it not likely that *Satan* should appear in such "very good company" as the "sons of God" are. I grant that such company is too good for him: but he that can sometimes *transform* himself "into an angel of light[b]," may affect also to appear in company with angels of light, and may intrude himself impudently amongst them. If good angels are "sent forth" to mankind, in order "to minister for "them that shall be heirs of salvation[c]," and if *Satan* also "walketh about" amongst men, "seeking whom he

[z] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 253.

[a] See particularly (besides commentators) Pfeifferi Dub. Vexat. cent. iii. loc. 31. p. 259. Matth. Mulleri Dissertat. in Thesaur. Philolog. tom. i. p. 552. Fred. Spanhemii Histor. Jobi, cap. i. p. 13, 14.

[b] 2 Cor. xi. 14. [c] Heb. i. 14.

" may devour[d]," it is not impossible, nor improbable, that the latter may sometimes PRESENT HIMSELF in company with the former, BEFORE THE LORD.

As to the second difficulty which the Objector urges, that God should permit " Satan to slay Job's children," &c. only *to satisfy* the wicked sycophant that Job was a man of *integrity*, it must be owned there would be *force* in the objection, if it had but any *truth* in it. But since the text affords no sufficient grounds for the poor suggestion, and God might have much higher ends to answer in that affair, than what the Objector has here invented, the pretended difficulty is easily got over, and so the *literal* construction of the texts may still be the true one; at least till something better than buffoonery appears against it. Nevertheless, as I before intimated, I prefer the *figurative* construction in the present instance, not condemning those that prefer the *literal*, nor commending such as are dogmatical and positive in either. I am of opinion with those who think that the structure of the Book of Job is of the dramatical [e] kind, relating *true history*, but curiously set off in a poetical dress, embellished with many lively decorations, such as are not to be interpreted up to the strictness of the letter, but serve to convey an excellent meaning, or moral, to the discerning readers. The *prophetic* style generally is full of lofty thoughts, bold figures, or emblems, and abounding with parables: and Job himself (who perhaps was author of the main part of the book [f]) has been deservedly reckoned by learned men in the number of *prophets* [g].

[d] 1 Pet. v. 8.

[e] Probe distinguendum monemus inter *historiæ veritatem*, et *consignationis indolem* atque structuram; cum negari nequeat librum omnem poetice digestum esse, allocutionibus et responsionibus, figuris et vario sermonis ornatu instructum, ita ut *rei gestæ enarratio* dramatico velut schemate, et habitu induta scenico exhibeatur. *Carpzov. Introduct. ad Lib. Bibl.* part. ii. p. 35.

[f] Carpzov. Introd. ad Lib. Bibl. part. ii. p. 55, 56.

[g] See Witsii Miscellan. vol. i. p. 176. Carpzov. Introd. ad Lib. Bibl. part. ii. p. 44.

## PSALM LXXXIX. 39—49.

THOU HAST MADE VOID THE COVENANT OF THY SERVANT.—LORD, WHERE ARE THY FORMER LOVINGKINDNESSES, WHICH THOU SWAREST TO DAVID IN THY TRUTH?

The Objector having previously observed that "there "are texts which, if taken literally, represent God, not "only as falsifying his word, but his oaths," proceeds to mention those texts: and the *first* he instances in is Numb. xiv. 30—34. which has been considered in another place[h]. "The second," he now says[i], "is in Psalm "lxxxix. in the first part of which is largely set forth the "promises of God to David, by covenant and oath; and "in the other part, David complains of God's breach "both of his covenant and oath; and in summing up "those breaches, he says, THOU HAST MADE VOID," &c. The gentleman seems to have read this Psalm in haste, by his ascribing it to David. The *internal* characters of the Psalm, were there nothing else, are enough to show that David could not be the composer. I may mention a few particulars: verse 40, it is said, THOU HAST BROKEN DOWN ALL HIS HEDGES; THOU HAST BROUGHT HIS STRONG HOLDS TO RUIN. If Jerusalem had been sacked and plundered, one could scarce have made a more doleful complaint. But what was there done at all like it in David's time? Then again, verse 43. THOU HAST TURNED THE EDGE OF HIS SWORD, AND HAST NOT MADE HIM TO STAND IN THE BATTLE. This is plainly to be understood of some great overthrow in battle; which never was David's case. It has been remarked of that brave and fortunate Prince, that he fought twenty battles, and was always victorious. Once, indeed, he fled from Absalom, till he could gather his forces together: but when it came to a pitched battle,

[h] See above, p. 98, &c.
[i] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 257.

David prevailed. The only time that can with any colour of probability be imagined for David's composing this Psalm, must, I suppose, be the time of Absalom's rebellion, when David was advanced in years: but then what sense can we make of verse 45. THE DAYS OF HIS YOUTH HAST THOU SHORTENED? Besides, who can think that David would thus complain of God's "breaking his covenant," or any thing like it, when he very well knew that his own sins in the matter of Uriah were the sole occasion of his sufferings at that time, and that God was notwithstanding as kind and gracious to him as he could reasonably expect or desire? David understood duty and decorum better than to expostulate with God in such a way, without something more of colour for doing it. There are *five* Psalms [k] of his, composed under his troubles for Absalom: but there is nothing at all in them of like strain with what has been mentioned of Psalm lxxxix. These things considered, that Psalm most certainly is none of David's; nor can any considerate man pretend so much as any colour for so judging, except it be upon the old, and now generally exploded presumption, that all are David's.

It is with much greater show of probability that commentators [l] and critics have ascribed this Psalm to some person living long after, under the times of the Babylonish captivity, in the days of Jehoiachim, or Jehoiachin, or Zedekiah, when there appeared to be a kind of total subversion of the royal family and government. But considering that the title of the Psalm seems to ascribe the composition of it to Ethan the Ezrahite, who is celebrated in Scripture for his wisdom [m], and who was one of the three principal men preferred by David as chief singers over the choir [n], and endowed with prophetical gifts [o];

[k] Psalms iii. vii. xlii. xliii. lv.

[l] Hammond, Pool, Patrick, Wells, Calmet, Le Clerc.

[m] 1 Kings iv. 31.

[n] 1 Chron. xv. 17, 19.

[o] 1 Chron. xxv. 1—5. Note, that Jeduthan seems to have been the very

he is a very likely person to have been author of such a Psalm. As to the occasion which might induce him to it, there was a very remarkable one, which might happen in his time, if he lived to an advanced age. I mean the plundering of the city and temple by Shishak king of Egypt, in the fifth year of Rehoboam [p], and in the year before Christ 974. So Mr. Bedford places it; who also ascribes this eighty-ninth Psalm to the same Ethan, and as composed upon that occasion [q]. The characters of the Psalm seem to suit very well with that time, and that calamitous event; but particularly the mention made of Rahab in verse 10. which is the name for the lower Egypt there, as in some other places of the Old Testament [r]. We must suppose this Ethan to have lived to a great age, it being now above forty-five years since he was first appointed chief musician by king David. The good old man, who had seen what a glorious figure king David first, and after him king Solomon, had made, and to what a height of splendor the Hebrew name had been raised over all the earth, and knowing also what illustrious promises God had from time to time given to the house of David, must needs have been exceedingly surprised and shocked at that sudden downfall, when the king of Judah and the princes of Judah were all forced to submit themselves tamely to the King of Egypt, and to deliver up their *city* and their beautiful temple (so lately erected) to the mercy of the conqueror. Such an occasion as that was might well astonish the pious and devout Psalmist, and might extort from him those pathetical expostulations which we meet with in the Psalm. It might seem as if God had "made void his covenant:" a strong way of expressing the most surprising, sudden, and prodigious change of affairs, from the utmost height of grandeur to

same man with Ethan; of which, see Carpzovii Introd. ad Libr. Bibl. part. ii. p. 104.

[p] 1 Kings xiv. 25, 26, 27. 2 Chron. xii. 2, 3, &c.

[q] Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 612, 613.

[r] Psalm lxxxvii. 4. Isa. li. 9. and perhaps Job xxvi. 12.

almost the lowest ebb of disgrace. And the case was the more affecting and sensible, because it was the first calamity of that kind. But the pious composer of the Psalm, however overwhelmed with grief and trouble, yet forgot not to express his awful reverence towards God, and his entire confidence in his mercies. He never had a thought (like what the Objector supposes) of charging God foolishly with any *real* breach of covenant. He begins his song with declaring, that he will "MAKE KNOWN the "FAITHFULNESS of God to all generations:" and he ends with a very devout doxology in these grateful terms: BLESSED BE THE LORD FOR EVERMORE. AMEN, AND AMEN.

## PSALM CIX.

The charge against this whole Psalm is, that David here "bestows the bitterest curses on his enemies." And the accuser says, with his usual pertness and petulance, that "the holier men in the Old Testament are repre-"sented, the more cruel they seem to be, as well as more "addicted to cursing[s]." He had not the sense to consider, that *blessing* and *cursing* belong solely to God and God's commissioned officers: for what wonder is it, if the *holiest* men pronounced the *curses* of God upon sinners, when God generally chooses the *holiest* persons to represent him, and to speak or act for him? This gentleman may find in the Book of Judges[t], that the "angel of the "Lord said, CURSE YE MEROZ, CURSE YE BITTER-"LY," &c. And he may go and tell it among his friends, that the angels of God are "much addicted to cursing." He may add, that they are *cruel* also: for an angel of the Lord went out, and at once destroyed AN HUNDRED FOURSCORE AND FIVE THOUSAND of the Assyrians[u]. But the Objector should learn to distinguish between cursing with *God's authority*, and cursing *without it*; be-

[s] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 264, 265.
[t] Judges v. 23. [u] 2 Kings xix. 35.

tween *holy* and *profane* cursing. David being a Prophet, might curse in God's name, and with Divine warrant. But if Shimei, or a better man, without commission, should presume to denounce *curses*, he would thereby prove himself an ungodly wretch and a grievous transgressor. The people of God, the Hebrews, might *devote*, *anathematize*, or *curse* those whom God had commanded them so to devote, or curse: but had they presumed to go a step farther than their commission reached, they had been guilty before God. These general things premised, let us now come to the particular case of Psalm cix.

The Psalm is undoubtedly David's, as the title imports: and it was penned by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. To both which St. Peter gives his testimony in these words: MEN AND BRETHREN, THIS SCRIPTURE MUST NEEDS HAVE BEEN FULFILLED, WHICH THE HOLY GHOST BY THE MOUTH OF DAVID SPAKE BEFORE CONCERNING JUDAS [x], &c. Then he proceeds to quote places out of the Psalms, and particularly the eighth verse of this Psalm; LET ANOTHER TAKE HIS OFFICE: or, HIS BISHOPRICK LET ANOTHER TAKE [y]. Le Clerc, in his comment upon this Psalm, would persuade us that the words carry no *prophecy* in them: which is directly contradicting St. Peter's words, above cited out of the Acts [z], and doing it upon very frivolous and trifling pretences. But as this is not the first time that that learned critic has been bolder than becomes him, and has [a] suggested the same thing, so I may observe that he has been abundantly corrected for it by able hands [b], referred to in the margin. This Psalm therefore, as I before hinted, is prophetic of

[x] Acts i. 16.

[y] Acts i. 20. Τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν αὐτοῦ λάβοι ἕτερος. So also the LXX.

[z] Ἔδει πληρωθῆναι τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην, ἣν προεῖπε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον διὰ στόματος Δαβὶδ, περὶ Ἰούδα. *Acts* i. 16.

[a] See Sentimens de quelques Théologiens sur l'Histoire Critique, p. 228.

[b] Witsii Miscellan. vol. i. p. 215, &c. Carpzov. Introduct. ad Libr. Bibl. part. ii. p. 122, 123. Conf. Surenhusii Conciliat. p. 386. Jenkins's Reasonableness, vol. ii. p. 338. Eusebius in Psalm. p. 699.

the treachery of Judas, and declarative of the Divine vengeance that should fall upon his head.

Some have pertinently enough observed of the *imprecations* occurring in the Psalms, and other places of Scripture, that they may be considered as *prophecies* or *predictions* of what shall come to pass [c], rather than a formal denouncing of vengeance, or calling down curses upon sinners. The Hebrew words, in such cases, are as capable commonly of the *future*, as of the *imperative* mood and sense [d], and may accordingly be rendered in the predicting style. The thirteenth verse, for instance, of this very Psalm, may be rendered thus; HIS POSTERITY WILL BE (or, SHALL BE) CUT OFF, AND IN THE GENERATION FOLLOWING HIS NAME SHALL BE BLOTTED OUT. In other places also, where the verb is really *imperative*, we may justly render the original by the *future*, because the imperative in prophetic writings is often put for the future, as the best critics in the language have shown [e]. This solution appears to be very just, if indeed there be occasion for it, and therefore I mention it. But I conceive it sufficient to say, as before, that since *prophets* have *commission* to denounce the curses of God, and they do it as God's instruments or deputies, in his name, and by his Spirit, more need not be said; neither is it material whether such imprecations be taken in the *imperative* or *future* sense. I like this account the better, because it will hold universally, which perhaps the other will not. For there are several *imprecations* in Scripture, which seem not fairly reducible to the head of *prophecies* or *pre-*

[c] Quando sancti viri deprecatorio more contra hostes suos rogant, non *voto malitiæ*, sed *spiritu prophetiæ* hoc quod præsciunt futurum prædicunt: vel etiam contra spirituales nequitias orant, quas incorrigibiles esse sciunt, ut justam a Domino recipiant sententiam. *Hieronym. in Thren.* i. 22.

[d] See Hammond's Preface to the Psalms, and Comment on Psal. xxxv. 4. Jenkins, vol. ii. p. 237, 238. Le Cene, Projet d'une Nouvelle Version, p. 702. Ross 295.

[e] Glassii Grammat. Sacr. lib. iii. tr. 3. can. 43. p. 869. Noldii Concordant. p. 1013. Guarin. Gramm. Hebr. tom. i. p. 541, 542. Vitringa in Isa. vol. ii. p. 845. Lakemacher, Observat. Philolog. vol. ii. p. 71.

*dictions.* I choose therefore to rest the thing entirely upon the *Divine warrant*, as appearing to me the easiest and shortest rule, and least involved of any. He that has God's authority and extraordinary commission to *curse*, may do it, must do it: he that pretends to it otherwise, calls down curses upon his own head, as being therein *injurious* towards man, and *profane* towards God. If therefore our Objector can show that the Psalmist had no extraordinary *commission* to imprecate Divine vengeance upon transgressors, he may then justly find fault: but if David was a *prophet*, and had the *Spirit* of God, then David's imprecations were *Divine* imprecations, and there is no room left for our author's buffoonery on that head. The judicious Bishop Wilkins has a paragraph [e] very apposite to our purpose, which I may here insert for illustration. "Those who used these imprecations were extra-"ordinary persons, endowed with the spirit of discern-"ing, whereby they were enabled to judge of the incura-"ble state of those with whom they conversed. There "are some that are *cursed children*, as the Apostle speaks [f], "κατάρας τέκνα, *filii maledictionis, execrandi homines;* and "to such, *curses* are reserved as their portion. And there-"fore no wonder though such as had an extraordinary "spirit of discerning their true state, do use imprecations "against them, which yet can be no warrant for other "persons to imitate. *As none but the magistrate may use* "*the sword for revenge, because of his public station and* "*calling, whereby he is authorized for it; so none but ex-*"*traordinary prophetical men should use these maledic-*"*tions.* If others shall presume upon it because of their "example, they will justly fall under the rebuke of our "Saviour, YE KNOW NOT WHAT SPIRIT YE ARE OF [g]. "The ordinary rule prescribed for men's practice is that of "Matt. v. 44. Rom. xii. 14. BLESS, I SAY, AND CURSE "NOT." I shall only add, by way of remark upon what this

[e] Wilkins, Serm. xii. p. 375, 376.
[f] 2 Pet. ii. 14.
[g] Luke ix. 55.

excellent writer has said, that I do not think he puts the case exactly right, while he puts it upon "the spirit of "discerning the true state" of the persons on whom they imprecate the Divine vengeance: for though it be true that the *Prophets* or *Apostles* had such a "spirit of dis-"cerning;" yet neither would that sufficiently warrant their imprecations, if they did not *discern* also, either by *private* impulse of the *Spirit*, or *outward* direction, that it was God's will and order that they should so imprecate. When Elisha, for instance, *cursed* the little children that mocked him [h], he considered not, or had no need to consider, any thing of "the true state" of those children: but the Spirit of the Lord came upon him; and he had a *Divine impulse*, or direction, to curse in the name of the Lord. The like may be said of several other Scripture instances, which for brevity sake I omit. When *prophetical* or *inspired* men thus imprecate, by Divine direction or impulse, there is no more in it than there was in Moses's stretching out his hands or his rod, by God's order, to call down plagues upon the Egyptians. But if any one without such *special* commission, or *inspiration*, should attempt to do the like, it would be *brutum fulmen* in respect to *others*, but highly dangerous to the person *himself*, as it is sinning against God and man with a high hand.

Before I leave this article, I may take some brief notice, by the way, of the instance which the Objector pitches upon, to prove that the *holier* men have been represented, in the Old Testament, the more *cruel* [i] they have appeared to be. It is the instance of David's cruelly treating the Ammonites [k], as our author pretends. It is sufficient to say, that he is no competent judge of that matter, for want of knowing the case; though it is not material whether David did right or wrong, since nothing depends upon it. However, since the accuser does not

[h] 2 Kings ii. 23, 24.

[i] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 264, 265.

[k] 2 Sam. xii. 31. 1 Chron. xx. 3.

know how many or how great reasons there might be, at that time, for so humbling the proud nation of the Ammonites, nor what necessity David might then lie under, or what commission he might have to oblige him to act as he did; but since by all accounts the Ammonites were a most insulting and haughty people, and David in his general character a very kind and merciful man; the favourable presumption most undoubtedly lies on the side of David, and the blame ought to be thrown rather upon the provoking insolencies of the Ammonites, than upon so good a king. It is rash censure therefore in the Objector, to fall so rudely upon David, before he knows why; and it shows more of a disposition to *defame* at all adventures, than to pass a *righteous judgment* upon men and things.

## PSALM CXXXVII. 8, 9.

O DAUGHTER OF BABYLON, WHO ART TO BE DESTROYED; HAPPY SHALL HE BE, THAT REWARDETH THEE AS THOU HAST SERVED US. HAPPY SHALL HE BE, THAT TAKETH AND DASHETH THY LITTLE ONES AGAINST THE STONES.

The Objector brings the like charge against some parts of this Psalm, as he had before done against Psalm cix. He remarks[k], "Though the Lord bids the Jews to PRAY "FOR THE PEACE OF BABYLON, WHITHER he had "CAUSED them TO BE CARRIED AWAY CAPTIVES, "and that IN THE PEACE THEREOF they should HAVE "PEACE[l]; yet is it not said in the Psalms, O DAUGHTER "OF BABYLON, &c. and this for no other reason, but "because she desired of her captives ONE OF THE SONGS "OF ZION[m]?" However light this drolling gentleman may make of *singing* a *song*, in the midst of the most afflicting calamities, I am persuaded that if the case were his own, he would think such a request as that was (such

[k] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 264.
[l] Jer. xxix. 7.
[m] Psalm cxxxvii. 3.

an instance of cruel mocking and insult) no slight addition to the injuries before sustained. It was no common affliction which the captive Jews at that time lay under. The Prophet Isaiah, long before prophesying of the downfall of Babylon, assigns this reason for it, as from God, that she had SHOWN NO MERCY towards God's people, but had HEAVILY LAID her YOKE UPON THE ANCIENT [n]. The Prophet Jeremiah says, ISRAEL IS A SCATTERED SHEEP; THE LIONS HAVE DRIVEN HIM AWAY: FIRST THE KING OF ASSYRIA HATH DEVOURED HIM; AND LAST THIS NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF BABYLON, HATH BROKEN HIS BONES [o]. But if the reader would have a more lively image of the miseries of the captive Jews, let him turn to the doleful Lamentations of the same Prophet, and from thence judge what disposition they could then be in for singing *songs* of joy. It was a barbarous cruelty to demand it of them in those circumstances: besides, it would have been profaning their sacred music and devout songs, (dedicated to high and holy uses,) to have prostituted them in such a manner to the scorn, laughter, and derision of infidels. But the Objector's account of this matter is so low and ludicrous, that it will be thought I have honoured it too much in returning a serious answer to it.

The other part of his objection seems to carry more of the face of an argument, and to deserve some attention. He conceives that the *imprecations* of the Psalm against Babylon do not well comport with God's directions to his captive people to *pray for* the peace of Babylon. But from hence, if he had been used either to compare or to consider rightly, he might have learned to distinguish between the *ordinary rule of practice*, and the *extraordinary commissions given to prophets*. The Psalmist was a Prophet [p], and wrote by the special direction or

[n] Isa. xlvii. 6.

[o] Jer. l. 17. Compare Jer. li. 34, 35. Zech. i. 15.

[p] Probably the Prophet Ezekiel himself, as Mr. Bedford supposes, placing the date of it in the year 583. before A. D. Bedford, Script. Chronol. p. 710.

impulse of the Holy Spirit of God; while the common people at Babylon (and prophets also in their private capacity) were to follow the ordinary rule of praying for those very enemies whose destruction was coming on, but in God's own time. In the mean season, the safety of the Jewish captives depended upon the safety of Babylon, and was wrapped up in it; and so it concerned them both, in point of duty and interest, to submit peaceably and quietly to their new masters, and to pray for their prosperity. Notwithstanding all which, they might justly hope for a deliverance at the seventy years end; and God might instruct his Prophets to declare it beforehand, together with the manner of it. Isaiah had prophesied of the destruction of Babylon above an hundred and fifty years before, and in terms not unlike to some parts of this Psalm: he had said, THEIR CHILDREN ALSO SHALL BE DASHED TO PIECES BEFORE THEIR EYES [q]. The Psalmist further adds, that the instrument under God, in punishing Babylon, shall be HAPPY, shall be *blessed* and *praised* in his deed, as having done a glorious work, in executing the Divine justice upon her, and at the same time rescuing and delivering the people of God. This prophecy, or denunciation, was fulfilled by the Medes and Persians under the conduct of Cyrus, the servant and chosen of God. And now, what harm could there be in the holy Psalmist's presignifying, in pathetic style, these high and marvellous things?

I had here closed up this article, when looking into Le Clerc's Commentary upon this Psalm, I beheld with some concern his very crude or perverse way of expressing himself on ver. 8. He says, "Those things" (those imprecations he means of the Psalmist) "were proper to "those times, when it was thought lawful to entertain "hatred against private and public enemies [r]. Under the

[q] Isa. xiii. 16.

[r] Hæc sunt eorum temporum, quibus odio habere inimicos et hostes fas esse putabatur. Sub evangelio fas non est optare iis, nisi quod tibi ipse optaveris. *Cleric. in Psal.* cxxxvii. 8. Compare Sentimens de quelques Théologiens, &c. p. 229.

" Gospel, it is not lawful to wish any other to them than " you would wish to yourself." Is this commenting upon Scripture like a serious man, or is it not rather playing the droll with sacred Writ? By *whom* does he suppose it was *thought lawful* to hate an enemy? By the most excellent men of the Jewish church, penmen of holy Scripture, and writing by the *Spirit* of *God?* A profane suggestion! Neither *New* Testament nor *Old* allows any such *hatred:* it stands condemned both by the *Law* [s] and the *Gospel.* And how came it to pass that the best kind of men among the Jews understood not the maxim of doing to others as they would have done to themselves, which was commanded in their Law [t], and escaped not the notice of the wiser Pagans [u]? To be short, there is no *hatred* of an *enemy* shown, merely in denouncing God's judgments against them by God's direction, nor in executing the sentence of God, by God's order, upon them: so the whole turn of the thought proceeds upon a false ground.

Besides, how would the Gospel preachers themselves stand clear, if all *imprecations* were inconsistent with the loving one's neighbour as one's self? St. Paul denounces curses, or imprecations, in more cases than one [x]: but St. Paul was a prophet, and more than a prophet, and had commission to do it in the name of the Lord. And indeed, if it be considered, that God's design is to set both his *blessings* and his *curses* before men [y], in order to incite them to good, and to deter them from evil, and that his wisdom may judge it proper to make use of the ministry of men, as his instruments in doing it; what offence need it give to any serious and considerate person, to find that either the *Prophets* of the Old Testament, or the *Apostles* of the New, (the fittest persons for it,) have delivered, by

[s] See Whitby on Matt. v. 43.
[t] Levit. xix. 18, 34.
[u] See Commentators on Matt. vii. 12.
[x] 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Gal. i. 8, 9. 2 Tim. iv. 14.
[y] Deut. xi. 26. xxx. 1, 19.

Divine direction, the Divine *maledictions* or *curses* upon sinners? It was their duty to do it, and they therein showed the perfection both of their love towards God and their charity towards man.

I have dwelt the longer upon this point, because it seemed to want some clearing; and because many have been apt either to take offence, or to run into gross mistakes, only for want of considering the proper and necessary distinction, before mentioned, between *holy* and *profane* cursing, between executing a command of God, and doing a thing without command, only to please our own selves. The first is as laudable and truly pious, as the latter is execrable and altogether profane. BLESS, AND CURSE NOT[z]: that is the ordinary rule to go by. And so sacred a rule it is, that men are effectually tied up from all *cursings* of their *own*[a], and have no power left in that case, except it be to declare *God's* curses, and those *general* only, or in the very words of Scripture. As to any thing more *special*, God seems to have reserved it to his own *special* directions, which have ceased long ago, ever since *prophecies* and *inspirations* have ceased.

## ISAIAH I. 18.

COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER, SAITH THE LORD: THOUGH YOUR SINS BE AS SCARLET, THEY SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW, &c. The Objector's reflections upon this passage are as follow[b]: "Does not God here appeal to their reason for the suffi-"ciency of *moral* things to wash away their sins, though "of the deepest die? And could God and man *reason* to-"gether, except there were some notions in common to "both, some foundation for such reasoning?" As to God's appealing to our *reason*, and God and man's *reasoning* together, the fact itself might be disputed, so far as this text is concerned: for the text in the original says no

[z] Rom. xii. 14.

[a] How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? *Numb.* xxiii. 8.

[b] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 194.

such thing. Le Clerc translates the words thus: COME NOW AND LET US BE CORRECTED[c]: FOR THE LORD SAYS, IF YOUR SINS BE AS SCARLET, &c. His translation appears to be justifiable by the rules of grammar and criticism: and he observes very pertinently, that the Jews are not here called by the Prophet to *dispute* with God, which would be irreverent and criminal, but to submit to chastisement (as conscious of their sins) and to reform their manners. However, it is not to be doubted but that God sometimes condescends to *reason* with men, and permits them to *reason* with him: and there is no need to heap text upon text, to prove only what nobody denies, that God would have us "make use of our reason." If this gentleman himself would do so, laying aside *passion* and *prejudice*, he might appear both a wiser and a better man. But if God invites his people to *reason* with him, he does not therefore encourage them to *cavil* against him, or directly to *blaspheme* him. His intent is not that they should presume to *prescribe* to his wisdom, or *dispute* his authority as to laying any *positive* commands upon them. He would not suffer them to dispute his servant Moses's authority, in such a case, nor that of any of his *Prophets*[d]: much less would he encourage any direct affront of that kind against himself. So let not this author, under pretence and cover of *reasoning* with God, turn an advocate for *petulance*, or insolent *defiance;* which is not *reason*, but *rashness*, or rather *madness*.

As to his inference in favour of *moral things*, (in opposition, I suppose, to *positive* duties, and the necessity of

[c] Tum agite, nos castigari patiemur; ait *enim* Jehova: Si fuerint peccata vestra instar coccini, &c.] נִיכָחָה nivvachechah, *castigemur*, διελεγχθῶμεν, *arguamur;* ut habent LXX Int. non *arguite me*, ut Vulgata, repugnante grammatica et loci sententia. Verba sunt hæc non *Dei*, sed *Prophetæ* Judæos hortantis ut se a Deo castigari patiantur, atque emendentur; ut ostendunt verba sequentia, *si fuerint*, &c. Itaque vertendum non fuit, *disceptemus:* non vocantur enim Judæi a Propheta, ut cum Deo *disceptent*, quod grave esset delictum; sed ut sibi peccatorum suorum probe conscii, non ægre ferant se a Deo castigari, et castigati emendentur. *Cleric. in loc.*

[d] 1 Kings xiii. 4. 2 Kings vii. 2, 17. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.

*redemption* by *Christ*,) it is very lame and insufficient in both its views. He does not consider, that *positive* duties stand upon a *moral* foot, and are all wrapped up, as soon as they become duties, in what he calls *moral things*. To obey God in whatsoever he commands is the first *moral law*, and the fundamental principle of all *morality*. The reason of things, and the relation we bear to God, require that God should be obeyed in matters otherwise *indifferent*: and such obedience is *moral*, and the opposite disobedience *immoral*. It is *moral duty* for a *son* to obey his *father* in things *indifferent*, or for a *subject* to obey his *prince*; much more for a *creature* so to obey his *Creator*. *Positives* therefore, while under precept, cannot be slighted without slighting *morals* also. In short, *positive* laws, as soon as enacted, become part of moral law, and are a branch of *morality*; because, as I said, *universal* obedience to God's commands, is the first *moral law* into which all laws resolve.

As the reason of the thing itself shows that thus it must be, so the text of Isaiah confirms the same thing. For what are those *moral things* which the Prophet there teaches or recommends? One of them is, CEASE TO DO EVIL; LEARN TO DO WELL[c]: which amounts to being RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD, WALKING IN ALL THE COMMANDMENTS AND ORDINANCES OF THE LORD BLAMELESS[f]: which undoubtedly takes in obedience to all *positive* as well as *moral* precepts of the Lord Almighty. And what if God rejected with some disdain the hypocritical services of the Jews of that time, their *sacrifices*[g], their *attendance* at his *temple*, or *court*[h], their *oblations* and *incense*[i], their observation of *new moons* and *sabbaths*, their *solemn assemblies*[k], and even their *prayers*[l]? Those heartless, sapless services, which had no godliness, no sincerity, no true love of God in them, were not the services which God required, or took delight in.

[c] Isa. i. 16, 17.
[f] Luke i. 6.
[g] Isa. i. 11.
[h] Isa. i. 12.
[i] Isa. i. 13.
[k] Isa. i. 14.
[l] Isa. i. 14.

God would not accept of vain compliments, nor be bribed with pretended *gifts* [m], offered only to excuse from duty, to compound for sin, and to palliate unjust dealings. God expected that their *hearts*, as well as their *bodies* and *sacrifices*, should be presented to him: he required *religious* and *devout* performances, not the outward *shell* and *carcase* of religion. In a word, he demanded both positive and moral *duties* strictly so called; not *hypocrisy*, which is a *face* only of duty, or *form* of godliness, but a *real* abomination [n]. What then is there in this place of Isaiah tending either to *exclude*, or even to *depreciate* positive duties? Not one syllable: neither indeed is there in the whole Scriptures. Turn them over from one end to the other, and you will find nothing clear or certain concerning the distinction between *moral* and *positive*; much less will you find that ever *moral* duties are extolled in opposition to *positive*, as such: but all we shall find that looks any thing like it, or can be mistaken for it, is, either that *sincere* obedience is preferred to *superficial*, inward goodness to outward modes and forms, to mere external performances [o]; or *entire* obedience preferred to *partial*; or the *great lines* of duty, the first *stamina* of religion, the *weighty* matters of the Law, preferred to the remote or minuter branches of duty, which hang upon the other,

[m] See Deut. x. 17. 2 Chron. xix. 7. Ecclus. xxxv. 12.

[n] Si cliens ea munera ultro, vel etiam edicta, ordine suo offerat, et solemnia regis observet, non ex *fide* tamen, nec *corde puro*, nec *pleno* circa cætera quoque obsequia (*leg.* obsequio) nonne consequens ut rex ille, vel dives, exclamet: *Quo mihi multitudinem munerum tuorum? Plenus sum: et solennitates et dies festos, et vestra sabbata odit anima mea. Vestra* dicendo, quæ secundum libidinem suam, non secundum religionem Dei celebrando, *sua* jam, non *Dei* fecerant. *Conditionalem* idcirco et *rationalem* demonstravit recusationem eorum quæ administranda præscripserat. *Tertull. adv. Marcion.* lib. ii. c. 22. p. 393.

[o] Nec enim iis, cultum divinitus institutum Prophetæ redarguunt et taxant, sed populi *hypocrisin*, et obfirmatam ad scelera mentem, cui *externum* sacrificiorum, festorum, oblationumque *opus* prætendebant; præclare de se actum censentes, modo holocausta offerrent, et *externo* ritu sacra obirent, licet *absque fide*, absque ulla *vitæ emendatione*, impœnitentes, indurati, sceleribus adhuc immersi. *Carpzov. Introd. ad Libr. Bibl.* part. ii. p. 60.

and are of no farther value or use, than as conformable to them, and wrapped up in them and with them.

Having seen how little colour there is, from this place of Isaiah, for excluding *positive* duties, I am next to observe, that there is as little foundation for excluding the *merits* or *satisfaction* of *Christ*. The duties there mentioned are required as *conditions*, without which no mediation or satisfaction could avail any thing: as to the *meritorious* or *efficacious* cause of salvation, that stands as before, and is not at all affected with what is there said. The redemption by *Christ* might notwithstanding be necessary to render all services (moral or positive) accepted: and it is indeed either expressly or tacitly included in all grants of pardon from God. It is a truth so plain in many places of Scripture, and particularly in the Book of Isaiah, and alluded to in this very chapter[p], that I need not say more of it. But why will our Objector appeal to *Scripture* for the "sufficiency of moral things," when he admits not the authority of Scripture? Or why will he here pay any regard to the words of the *God of Israel*, whom at other times he insults and blasphemes?

## Isaiah V. 26.

AND HE WILL LIFT UP AN ENSIGN TO THE NATIONS FROM FAR, AND WILL HISS UNTO THEM FROM THE END OF THE EARTH; AND, BEHOLD, THEY SHALL COME WITH SPEED SWIFTLY. Our Objector's quarrel here is only with the single word HISS[q]: and had he made it an objection against the *translation* only, and not against *Scripture* itself, he might perhaps have shown some exactness of judgment or delicacy of taste. But by overshooting the mark, as usual, he has lost the advantage. He had been talking just before[r], of "wine cheering both God and man;" which

[p] Isa. i. 26, 27. See Vitringa's Comment.
[q] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 252.
[r] Ibid. p. 251.

has been considered in another place[s]. Then he adds as here follows: "And what is yet stranger, such actions "are attributed to him as can only belong to the lower "rank of creatures, such as *hissing*, God being in three "places [t] of the Prophets said to hiss; and in one place [u], "TO HISS FOR A FLY THAT IS IN THE UTTERMOST "PART OF THE RIVERS OF EGYPT, AND FOR THE "BEE THAT IS IN THE LAND OF ASSYRIA." It is not very strange, that languages should abound with figures and metaphors, or that prophecies should contain parables and apt similitudes. What man that knows any thing of language, or letters, would expect otherwise? However, considering that the word HISS is apt to carry with it a low idea, one might wish that our translators had chosen a less offensive word, which might but tolerably have expressed the sense. Besides, the word HISS seems not *proper*, as not well answering to the original word שרק. For whether we suppose the metaphor taken from a *shepherd's* calling to his sheep [x], or from a *bee keeper's* calling to his bees [y], HISS is not the proper expression for either. Other words might be thought on more expressive of the metaphor, were it necessary to follow the figure: but I see no reason for such scrupulous exactness. The general word *call* would fully express the meaning; and that is sufficient in such cases. Our older translations (as Coverdale's of 1535, and Matthews's of 1537, and the Great Bible of 1539) have CALL UNTO THEM in this place, and, I think, very wisely. The Geneva translators of 1560 first brought in HISS UNTO THEM: and they have been followed by Parker's Bible, and by our last translation, too closely. I commend not the older translations for having WHISTLE, [z] in Isa. vii.

[s] See above, p. 132, 133.
[t] Isa. v. 26. vii. 18. Zech. x. 8.
[u] Isa. vii. 18.
[x] See Vitringa on Isa. vii. 18. Cleric. in Isa. v. 26.
[y] See Bochart's Hieroz. part. ii. lib. iv. c. 10. p. 506. Vitringa in Isa. v. 26.
[z] So Pool also, in his notes on this text.

18. and BLOW FOR THEM, in Zech. x. 8. The same word CALL would have served better in all the three places. And though the metaphor perhaps would be lost, or obscured, yet decency of expression, without detriment to the sense, would be preserved, which should be looked after, and which is much preferable to a scrupulous exactness that may give offence in such cases. I observe, that the Hebrew word קרא, is made use of in the thirteenth chapter, verse the third, in the same sense, and to the same purpose, as שרק here, and is there literally rendered CALL: and so might this other word be rendered also without any impropriety. Some indeed have chose *whisper*[a], instead of *hiss*; which is a word of more dignity: but it dilutes and diminishes the sense. A loud or shrill call seems to be intended in all the three places; for neither do shepherds *whisper* to their sheep, nor bee keepers to their bees. In short then, I know no better English word than *call*, to preserve the sense, and at the same time to keep up dignity of expression.

The true and full meaning of the two places in Isaiah is neither more nor less than this: that God having sovereign command over all nations and people, can convene them together from remote and distant quarters, to execute his most righteous judgments. Whenever God gives the signal, or issues out his summons, they will advance with all alacrity to perform his will, though not knowing that his hand is in it. The *fly* and the *bee* (in Isa. vii. 18.) denote the Egyptian and Assyrian armies, which should come up with speed from their respective quarters, to execute the Divine vengeance upon Palestine for their flagrant iniquities. The former would come swiftly upon them, like swarms of devouring *flies*, to infest and annoy them, and to exhaust their blood and juices: and the latter should approach as swarms of angry bees, or wasps, to sting them to death. Such is the Prophet's meaning, veiled under elegant figures; which give new life and

[a] Lowth and Wells.

strength to his expressions, and render the whole more poignant and more affecting.

## ISAIAH XX. 3, 4.

AND THE LORD SAID, LIKE AS MY SERVANT ISAIAH HATH WALKED NAKED AND BAREFOOT THREE YEARS FOR A SIGN AND WONDER UPON EGYPT AND UPON ETHIOPIA; SO SHALL THE KING OF ASSYRIA, &c. The Objector hereupon says[b]: "How "many commands did God give his Prophets, which, if "taken according to the letter, seem unworthy of God, "as making them act like madmen, or idiots!" As for instance, "the Prophet Isaiah walked for three years to-"gether naked for a sign." The Objector, to do him justice, is not singular in finding fault with this place of the Prophet, nor in his so construing it as if the Prophet went stark *naked*, and for *three whole years together*, if the *literal* interpretation is to be admitted: and upon that supposition, he has some colour for saying, that such a command "seems unworthy of God," as *making* the Prophet *act like a madman*, or an *idiot*. But he too hastily takes for granted that the *literal* interpretation must necessarily suppose, either that the Prophet went entirely *naked*, or that he did so for so long a time as *three whole years*. Interpreters have taken three several ways of interpreting this and the like places in the Prophets: some suppose that what is here told was *really* and *literally* performed; others, that it was transacted in *vision*; others, that it is all no more than a *parable* dictated by God to the Prophet, and by the Prophet recited to the Jews. It will be proper here to examine with some care the strength and merits of these three several interpretations, in the order as I have mentioned them.

1. I shall begin with the first of them, which may be called the *literal* construction in an emphatical sense. For though all the three constructions are *literal*, as fol-

[b] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 255.

lowing the *literal* signification of the words, and as opposed to *figurative* or *metaphorical;* yet the first only can be termed *literal* in a stricter sense, as opposed to *visional* (if I may so call it) and *parabolical.* For the literal construction, may be pleaded as follows:

First, It is the most *ancient* construction, espoused by the primitive Fathers [c] of the Church, and never disputed in those early times. Secondly, The text itself seems to be plain and express: for it is said, HE [ISAIAH] DID SO, WALKING NAKED AND BAREFOOT [d]: and afterwards, MY SERVANT ISAIAH HATH WALKED NAKED AND BAREFOOT [e]. Then, thirdly, The fact is represented as a SIGN and a WONDER [f], מופת, a *strange sight:* which, if transacted in idea only, or told as a *parable,* was no *sight* to the people at all [g]. Fourthly, It may be added, that if there were not these reasons for the *literal* interpretation, yet it is a safe and good rule of interpreting, never to recede from the *literal* construction without a manifest necessity; and there is no such necessity in this case, because the objections made to it are all capable of receiving a just and rational answer, as may appear from what follows:

One pretended difficulty is, the great *indecency* of the Prophet's going *naked* about the streets of Jerusalem. But to this it has been answered, that there is no necessity of supposing that he went altogether naked: the Hebrew word does not require any such rigorous construction: besides, if the sense were, *quite naked,* there would have been no need to add *barefoot.* Those are said to go *naked,* in the Scripture phrase, who either go without their *upper garments* [h], or have put off the habit proper to their *station* or *quality* [i]. Critics and commen-

[c] Eusebius in Isa. c. xx. p. 438. Hieron. in loc. Cyrill. Alexandr. tom. ii. p. 300.

[d] Isa. xx. 2. [e] Isa. xx. 3. [f] Isa. xx. 3.

[g] Vid. Witsii Miscellan. vol. i. p. 89. Vitringa in loc.

[h] John xxi. 7. Acts xix. 16. Mark xiv. 52. Conf. Gen. ix. 22, 23. Job xxii. 6. Matt. xxv. 36. 1 Cor. iv. 11. James ii. 15.

[i] 1 Sam. xix. 24. 2 Sam. vi. 20.

tators have vindicated the observation at large[k]. The Prophet therefore went not abroad quite naked, but *half naked*, (a fit type of the captivity, for captives are very rarely stripped quite naked,) having nothing on but a slight inner garment; which might be strange and unusual, but was neither absurd nor immodest.

Another seeming difficulty is, that he should do this for *three years* together, which appears to be a very needless waste of time for the delivering a single prophecy, not to be understood in this way till the three years' end; which yet might have been otherwise dispatched, and competently understood in three days, or hours, or even less. To this it may be answered, that the Hebrew text does not say that Isaiah so walked for *three years* together: but the Masorite punctuation has carefully guarded against such construction. The LXX[l] also, and Jerome[m], have been as careful in their versions, to prevent the like construction: and our oldest English versions have wisely followed them. Coverdale renders the text thus: WHEREAS MY SERVANT ESAYE GOETH NAKED AND BAREFOTE, IT IS A TOKEN AND SIGNIFIENGE OF THE THING THAT AFTER THRE YERE SHAL COME UPON EGYPTE AND ETHIOPIA. Matthewe's version is the same. The Great Bible turns it better thus: LYKE AS MY SERVANT ESAY HATH WALKED NAKED AND BAREFOTE FOR A SIGNE AND WONDRE THRE YERES UPON EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA. The Doway version I need not take notice of, because it is known to follow the Vulgate. The Geneva version first brought the English text to what it is at present: and whether those that have

[k] Witsii Miscellan. vol. i. p. 89. Vitringa in Isa. vol. i. p. 596. Noldii Concord. p. 917. Guarin. Grammat. Hebr. tom. ii. p. 240, 241. Glassius lib. v. tract. 1. c. 16. p. 1923. Le Cene, Projet d'une Nouvelle Version, p. 583. Ross, his translator, (p. 280.)

[l] *Ὃν τρόπον περιπατεῖται ὁ παῖς μου γυμνὸς καὶ ἀνυπόδητος· τρία ἔτη ἔσται σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις καὶ Αἰθίοψιν. Sept. per Grab.*

[m] Sicut ambulavit servus meus Isaias nudus et discalciatus, trium annorum signum et portentum erit super Ægyptum et super Æthiopiam. *Hieronym.*

come after them have so prudently followed them in it, may justly be questioned. The text perhaps may best be thus rendered, conformable to the Hebrew original and the Masorite punctuation: AS MY SERVANT ISAIAH GOETH NAKED AND BAREFOOT FOR A TYPE AND EXEMPLAR OF THREE YEARS UPON EGYPT AND CUSH. So that what Isaiah did, was to signify that a three years' calamity should be brought upon the Egyptians and Cushites by the king of Assyria. That was what the Prophet intimated by going *naked* and *barefoot*. How long, or how often, is not said. It might be *three days* together[n], or *thrice* in the same day: but it was in such a way as prefigured *three years*. If the reader would see this matter discussed more at large, he may consult the very learned and judicious Vitringa upon the place.

It may still be pleaded, in opposition to the *literal* construction, that though the Prophet be supposed to have gone but *half naked*, and for *three days* only; yet even that must be thought to carry an appearance of a frantic or foolish man, and would not well comport with the gravity of so high and so eminent a Prophet of God. But to this it may be answered, that if there had not been some appearing impropriety in the action, something seemingly inconsistent with the character of so grave a man, it might not have answered the purpose it was intended for. The Prophet, who otherwise (through the iniquity of the times) could scarce obtain to be heard or attended to, was to appear in an uncommon garb, and with something particular in his manner, to strike the eyes, and to awaken the observation of all around him.

[n] Tantum teneo, probabile esse, Prophetam se hac specie per *triduum* publice ostentasse, etsi id in textu non exprimatur: ut *triduanus* ille incessus Prophetæ *triennalem* afflictionem Ægyptiorum et Cuschæorum figuraret. *Vitringa in loc.* p. 598.

"God bid him loose *the sackcloth*, &c. probably for *three days* together, "&c. We suppose the time of the Prophet's nakedness (or *three days*) was "typical, as well as the action." *Bishop Chandler's Defence of Christianity*, p. 204, 205.

This perhaps might expose him to the *derision* of unthinking and ignorant men, that could not see to the bottom of it: but the wiser and more judicious, apprehending the design, would admire and honour him the more for it. Let it be called putting on the guise and fashion of a *madman* or an *idiot;* very wise and excellent men may sometimes find reason for so doing: but if there had not been some impropriety or strangeness in the thing, it may be said that the Prophet would have been an *idiot* indeed, to expect (in such circumstances as we now suppose) any extraordinary notice to be taken of it, or regard paid to it.

Thus far I have been pleading for the *literal* construction, endeavouring at least to do justice to it, by representing fairly to the intelligent readers what may be said for it. But I intend not therefore to set aside the two other constructions, as deserving no further notice. Let them also have a fair and full hearing, and then let the readers judge.

2. Some, as I said, interpret the whole thing as transacted in *vision*. Of this mind was the famous Maimonides, as may appear from his words in Buxtorf's translation[o]: and he is therein followed by other Jewish interpreters. Our learned countryman Mr. Smith, in his Select Discourses, follows the same *hypothesis*, quoting Maimonides, with approbation, for it[p]. Now, upon the foot of this construction, it is supposed, that Isaiah in prophetic

[o] Proinde non nisi in *visione* Prophetiæ factum fuit. Idem judicium est de eo quod dicitur: *Quemadmodum ambulavit servus meus Isaias nudus et discalceatus;* utique in *visionibus* Dei et hoc factum est. Qui vero minus firmo judicio sunt prædíti, illi hæc omnia ita intelligunt ac si Propheta narraret quid sibi injunctum fuerit, et quid re vera fecerit. *Maimonid. Mor. Nevoch.* p. ii. c. 46. p. 323.

[p] "Therefore this was done only in a prophetical vision (speaking of "what Ezekiel did). The same sentence likewise he passeth upon that "story of Isaiah, ch. xx. 3. his walking naked and barefoot: wherein Isaiah "was no otherwise a sign to Egypt and Ethiopia, or rather Arabia; where "he dwelt not, and so could not more literally be a type therein than Eze-"kiel was here to the Jews." *Smith's Select Disc.* p. 228.

*dream* or *vision* heard God speaking to him, (like as St. Peter heard a *voice*, and saw a *vision*, while he lay in a *trance*[q],) and that in idea he transacted all that God so ordered him to do. He put off his shoes and his upper garment, walked *naked* and *barefoot*, as in a dream; and afterwards reported this prophetic dream or vision for the instruction of the Jews; like as St. Peter also reported his for the like purposes[r]. And as St. Peter rehearsing the matter of his vision to the brethren, served the purpose as effectually as if the brethren themselves had seen it, so Isaiah, rehearsing his vision to the Jews, might as effectually serve his purpose, as if they themselves had seen him acting the thing related. In this way of interpreting the Prophet, all the difficulties of the *literal* construction are struck off at once; and therefore this *visional* interpretation appears to be preferable to the other, if it be not itself clogged with other difficulties as great as those. But there are some objections to be made to it; which being much the same as may be made also against the *parabolical* construction to be next mentioned, I may here pass them over, and consider them there.

3. The third construction then may be, that this narration of the Prophet is nothing else but a *parable* set down by way of narration, as parables use to be. It is first to be observed, here appear to be two parts, the *parable* itself, in verses 1, 2. and the *interpretation* or application of it in the verses following. When the Prophet Nathan delivered the parable of the ewe lamb to David, he immediately subjoined the interpretation of it, applying the whole to King David[s]. In like manner, when Micaiah had entertained Ahab with a feigned narration or *parable*, he afterwards added both an interpretation and an application of the case in fiction to the case in fact[t]. Now here in Isaiah, a story or parable is first told to this ef-

[q] Acts x. 10, 17. [r] Acts xi. 4, 5, &c. [s] 2 Sam. xii.
[t] 1 Kings xxii.

fect; that God came to the Prophet, and ordered him to put off his sandals and prophetic garb, and to walk naked and barefoot for *three days*, or *three years*, and Isaiah did so. Well: what means this parable? The meaning is, that the king of Assyria shall make Egypt and Cush go *naked* and *barefoot* for three years. This God has intimated to you beforehand, under the emblem or figure of what has been told of Isaiah, that so you may have the more lively idea of the thing, and the better retain it. Isaiah is to you, in this parable, the figure and emblem of what shall come to pass hereafter. Fix your imagination first upon him, as going naked and barefoot so long together, and therein see and bear in mind what shall come upon Egypt and Cush, whom you trust to and confide in for deliverance and protection, instead of trusting in God.

Now, taking the narration as a *parable*, and no more, it gives a lively representation of the thing intended, and may answer the purpose as well, or better, (because quicker, and told at once,) than Isaiah's really walking naked and barefoot might have done. In confirmation hereof, it may be added, that it seems a very proper method to make the Prophet himself the subject of the *parable*, while he is delivering the prophecy, and stands in sight. The representation is the more affecting, while the thing is thus transferred in a figure to the Prophet himself that relates it. The Prophet Isaiah, accordingly, speaking of himself and his two sons, says, BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM THE LORD HATH GIVEN ME ARE FOR SIGNS AND FOR WONDERS (*in signa et portenta*) IN ISRAEL[u]. That is to say, *signs* and *prognostications*, prefiguring things to come. מופת ordinarily signifies a *miracle;* but sometimes it denotes a *prognosticating sign*[x], or type: which is a kind of miracle, if it amounts to a real and certain prediction. And whether the Prophet be

[u] Isa. viii. 18. compare Ezek. xii. 6, 11. xxiv. 24.

[x] Deut. xiii. 1, 2. 1 Kings xiii. 2, 3. Isa. xliv. 25. See also Bishop Chandler's Defence, p. 205, 210.

made the figure and exemplar in a *parable*, or in *real* action, it seems that he is equally מופת either way: so that there appears no just objection to be drawn from the strict sense of that word, against interpreting the thing in the way of *parable*.

A further recommendation of the *parabolical* construction is, that the *unity of time* is best preserved by it. In verses the first and second of that chapter, it is noted, that in such a particular year, and at the precise time of the year, when Ashdod was besieged and taken by Tartan, the Lord SPAKE BY ISAIAH, (or to Isaiah[y],) ordering thus and thus: and in verse the third, as if it were the continuance of the same revelation, it is added, AND THE LORD SAID, LIKE AS MY SERVANT ISAIAH HATH WALKED, &c. One would have expected, that if this second part of what God spake had been delivered *three years*, or but *three days* after the first part, that the Prophet should have taken some notice of the distance of time, and should have expressed it thus; that after *three years*, or *three days*, the Lord came again, and *said*, &c. Like as we find in Ezekiel[z], where the *second* time of God's coming is noted as well as the first; one in the *evening*, the other in the *morning*. But here the thing is told in such a manner, as if the Lord had said all that he is there represented to say, at one and the same time. This is easily accounted for, if we interpret it in the way of *parable*, but not so easily on any other hypothesis. For, in the way of *literal* construction, some *years*, *days*, or at least *hours*, must have passed between God's speaking in verse the *second*, and his speaking again (though it is not said, *again*) in verse the *third*. And those that interpret it in the way of *vision* must allow as much time as was necessary for a succession of ideas in the Prophet's mind, first for his *loosing* his *sackcloth*; next, for his *putting off his shoes*; and then for his imaginary *walking* three years, or three days, about the streets of Jerusalem: which is a

[y] See Noldius, p. 916. [z] Ezek. xii. 8.

difficulty in that construction. But taking the whole to be a *parable*, there is no difficulty at all in that respect: for both the parable and the interpretation were then dictated at once, and would take up no more time in delivering to the Prophet, than he afterwards spent in delivering the same to the people.

Such are the reasons assignable for the *parabolical interpretation:* and there appears to be but one very material objection against it, that it seems to be making too bold with the text, since the story is told in as plain and express words as any real history can be told in. But hereto it may be answered, that such is the way of delivering *parables*. Such was Nathan's parable delivered to king David: and such is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. And such is the story of Ezekiel's digging in the walls of the temple of Jerusalem, when he was really at Babylon[a]. There was no danger of such *parables* being taken for *real* history, by the persons to whom they were given: for they understood the manner of speaking perfectly well, having been much accustomed to it[b]. Besides, the interpretation and application immediately following the parable, were sufficient to intimate that the whole narration was *emblematical*, and not real history.

Thus far I have been pleading in behalf of the *parabolical* construction, that, by laying before the reader the several pleas for three several constructions, I may be assistant to him, in some measure, for the passing a true judgment. I am of opinion that the *second* of the three, which I call the *visional*, may very justly be thrown out as useless, since it answers no difficulties but what are as

[a] Ezek. viii. 8. See Stillingfleet's Letter to a Deist, p. 131, 132. and Jenkins, vol. ii. p. 52, 53.

[b] Familiare est Syris, et maxime Palæstinis, ad omnem sermonem suum *parabolas* jungere: ut quod simplex præceptum teneri ab auditoribus non potest, per similitudinem exemplaque teneatur. *Hieron. in Matt.* xviii. 23. tom. iv. p. 85.

See Lightfoot on Matt. xiii. 3. vol. ii. p. 193. Vitringa, Observ. Sacr. lib. iii. cap. 19. p. 762. Vitringa de Vet. Synagog. p. 678. Bishop Chandler's Defence, p. 197.

well answered by the *third*, but has some difficulties of its own more than the third has: so the dispute will lie between the *first* and the *third*, between the *literal* and the *parabolical* construction. Maimonides and his followers are undoubtedly too rash in rejecting the *literal* interpretation as absurd, or foolish: and others may be thought rather too scrupulous in judging it absolutely necessary to adhere to it. Very considerable men have judged differently in this matter; not because the difficulties here or there are insuperable, but because they are not so; and because either construction may be so reasonably defended, as to look very plausible. Such as lay it down for an inviolable maxim that the *literal* construction ought never to be receded from but upon very *great necessity;* such, I say, must of consequence close in with the *literal* construction of this place, which carries no absurdity in it, nor any thing highly improbable: while such as think it sufficient to go upon the fairest probabilities, (be it for or against the *letter*,) may incline in this case to take the *parabolical* construction, rather than the *literal*. But I leave it to the readers to determine as they see cause, after weighing the reasons on both sides. The main body of divines and critics have declared for the *literal* interpretation, as preferable; chiefly because there is nothing in the text or context which directly intimates that it was a mere *vision* or *parable:* a safe rule to go by in such cases[c]. I have dwelt the longer on this article, because several more of like kind will come up in their turns: and if I have herein exceeded my usual bounds, this, as first occurring, was the properest place for it; and my doing it here will shorten my work as to the rest, which are to follow in their course.

[c] Ubi *visiones*, *ænigmata*, *parabolæ* et *schemata* exponuntur, Spiritus S. de figurato dictionis genere ut plurimum lectores admonuit; vel per disertam denominationem, vel per ἀπόδοσιν et parabolæ explicationem, vel per totius contextus structuram, vel per allegationem alibi factam, vel denique per alias a textu elucentes διαχρίσεως notas. *Carpzov. Introd. ad Libr. Bibl.* part. iii. p. 352.

## Isa. LXIII. 17.

O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways? I once thought to have omitted this text, because, as I have here cited it, it carries no difficulty in it. But our Objector, by curtailing it, was in hopes to make it serve his purpose. He quotes it thus: "O Lord, "thou hast made us to err[d];" cutting off the rest which explain the meaning: and his intent in producing it is, to prove that God *deceived* his prophets, and his prophets the people. It is visible at first sight, that the text is foreign to his point. The meaning is no more than this: "O "Lord, why hast thou so long deserted us, permitting us[e] "all the while to go astray from thy commandments?" It is a pathetic expostulation with Almighty God, begging of him to return to his sinful people, to convert and heal them. If it be objected, that the words are express that "God made us to err," it is allowed to be so in the English: but if the translators had chosen rather to say, *suffered* us to err, as Le Clerc has[f], (after Junius and Tremellius, and Piscator,) they might have done it without injuring the *letter*, or breaking in upon the rules of *grammar* or *criticism*[g], and would have thereby better expressed the true sense of the passage. But it would be launching out into a beaten commonplace, to proceed farther on this point; so I forbear. If the reader desires more, he may find enough among commentators upon the text, and especially in the learned Vitringa.

[d] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 256.

[e] Ὁ προφήτης πάντα ἐπὶ τὸν Θεὸν ἀναφέρει· οὐχ ὡς τοῦ Θεοῦ αἰτίου ἡμῖν γινομένου τοῦ ἁμαρτάνειν· ἀλλ' ἐνδιδόντος καὶ συγχωροῦντος ἐκεῖνα πράττειν ἃ ἄν τις αἱρῆται. Ὡς τὴν μὲν αἰτίαν ἴσχειν ἐξ ἡμῶν, τὴν δὲ ἀναφορὰν ἐπὶ τὸν Θεόν. *Euseb. in loc.* p. 583. conf. Origenis Philocal. cap. xxi. p. 56.

[f] Cleric. in. loc. Quare nos pateris, Jehova, aberrare a viis tuis? See also Le Cene, Projet, &c. p. 468. Ross, p. 132, 220.

[g] Vid. Glassii Philol. Sacr. lib. iii. tract. 3. can. 11. p. 773. Guarin. Grammat. Hebr. tom. i. p. 522.

JEREM. IV. 10.

THEN SAID I, AH, LORD GOD! SURELY THOU HAST GREATLY DECEIVED THIS PEOPLE AND JERUSALEM, SAYING, YE SHALL HAVE PEACE; WHEREAS THE SWORD REACHETH UNTO THE SOUL. This text looks much more to the Objector's purpose than the former does; and is, at least, pertinently alleged[h], in order to prove that Scripture represents God as *deceiving* the prophets and people.

But to assoil this seeming difficulty, it may be proper to observe in the entrance, how, or upon what occasion, these words are brought in. Jeremiah in that chapter foretells the coming of Nebuchadnezzar upon Judah and Jerusalem: he is the LION who was to COME UP FROM HIS THICKET, to MAKE the land of Judea DESOLATE[i]. The prophet then goes on to describe the dreadful consternation that the *king*, *princes*, *priests*, and *prophets* of Judea should be under, at that sad and unexpected turn of affairs. Hereupon the Prophet himself breaks out into a very pathetic ejaculation; AH, LORD GOD, &c. As to which, I may remark,

1. That the words may be taken *interrogatively*. So the LXX. of the common edition, and Jerome, take them: the Hebrew will bear it, though the ה *interrogativum*, the note of interrogation, be omitted, as in several other places of like kind[k]. Our oldest English versions, as well as the later one of the Doway Bible, render thus: HAST THOU THEN DECEIVED THIS PEOPLE? &c. Indeed the Geneva translators preferred what we read at present: but then, to qualify the seeming harshness, they added an explanatory note in the margin; "By the false prophets "which promised peace and tranquilitie: and thus thou "hast punished their rebellious stubbornes, by causing "them to hearken unto lies which would not beleeve thy

[h] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 256.
[i] Jerem. iv. 7.
[k] See Le Cene, p. 151. Ross, p. 102.

"trueth." It were to be wished that the later English translators had either not so often followed the *Geneva version* in their over-scrupulous adherence to the very *letter* and *phraseology* of the original, or, if they resolved so to do, that they had added some marginal note also: for as too servile an adherence to the *letter*, in such cases, requires a cautionary, or explanatory note; so, if no note be intended, the translation itself ought to be a little the *freer* and *bolder* in expressing the *certain sense* of the original, so as to answer the end of strict version and note, both in one. But this I offer with submission to better judgments, if ever a proper time should come for revising and correcting our last English translation: which, though a very good one, and upon the whole scarce inferior to any, yet is undoubtedly capable of very great improvements; as Dr. Wells, Mr. Blackwall, and others have intimated[l]. But to return.

As to this text in Jeremiah, it might, as I humbly conceive, have been well rendered *interrogatively:* but if we take the words as they lie in our version, then the sense is such as the Geneva translators point to; excepting that instead of "causing them to hearken," &c. it should only be said, *suffering them*, &c. Or else the sense may be, as some very good critics[m] have maintained, that God had *shown* in the event, and *exposed* to open view, the seduction of the people, by *disappointing* their fond expectations raised by *false* prophets[n]. The Prophet Jeremiah himself, in the same chapter, takes care to remove all pretence of charging God, by throwing the blame upon the people themselves: THY WAY AND THY DOINGS HAVE PROCURED THESE THINGS UNTO THEE; THIS IS THY

[l] Wells's General Preface to O. T. p. 5, &c. Ross's Essay for a New Translation; being an extract from the French of Le Cene. Blackwall's Sacred Classics, &c. vol. ii. cap. 3. p. 161, &c. and pref. p. xxi. &c.

[m] See Glassius, Philolog. Sacr. lib. iii. tract. 3. p. 784. Guarin. Grammat. Hebr. tom. i. p. 525. Witsii Miscellan. vol. i. p. 135, 138.

[n] Populum istum, per pseudoprophetas pacem denunciantes, deceptum ostendisti. *Guarin. ibid.*

WICKEDNESS, BECAUSE IT IS BITTER, BECAUSE IT REACHETH UNTO THINE HEART[o]. Observe how this answers to verse the 10th. There, the SWORD is said to REACH UNTO THE SOUL; here, the reason for it is assigned, *viz.* because their WICKEDNESS had REACHED thither before. The people had been desperately wicked, would accept of no sober counsel, nor bear any just reproof: they loved *smooth* things, they delighted in *flattery* and *lies;* and therefore God gave them up to *strong delusions,* and *suffered* them to be grossly imposed upon by *lying* prophets of their own choosing; prophets that SPAKE A VISION OF THEIR OWN HEART, AND NOT OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE LORD[p]; and that were wicked enough to say to the despisers of God and goodness, THE LORD HATH SAID, YE SHALL HAVE PEACE, —NO EVIL SHALL COME UPON YOU[q]. By such *lying* prophets as these, God suffered those to be deceived who loved to be deceived, those that WALKED AFTER THE IMAGINATION OF THEIR OWN HEARTS[r]. In Scripture phrase, God is frequently said to do what he *permits* to be done, because all events are in his disposal, and wait his pleasure. The device may be man's: but God directs it to better purposes than man could think of, and so by taking the thing into his own hands, and governing the issue of it, he makes it in a certain sense *his own.* I may observe, by the way, that Le Clerc takes too much freedom in his comment upon this text, and seems to forget the reverence due to an inspired writer. He fancies that the Prophet was almost besides himself, being overwhelmed with grief and anxiety, and so uttered such things as he would not have done upon cool and serious reflection[s]: which is reviling God's Prophet, without any

[o] Jer. iv. 18. [p] Jer. xxiii. 16. [q] Jer. xxiii. 17. [r] Jer. xxiii. 17.

[s] Grotius interpretatur, *Sivisti* decipi, quia sæpe apud Hebræos verba activa *permissionem* tantum significant. Verum hic plus dicit propheta, præ terrore, et dolore vix sui satis compos, cum audiret patriæ παναλιθρίαν nec sunt hæc ita capienda quasi sedato animo unquam censuisset a Deo verace

probable colour or handle for it, and betraying too much of an unbecoming levity of mind. For why must the Prophet's words be strained, in this case, to mean more than they really say, and more than the grammatical construction and Hebrew idiom require?

JEREM. VII. 22, 23.

I SPAKE NOT UNTO YOUR FATHERS, NOR COMMANDED THEM IN THE DAY THAT I BROUGHT THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, CONCERNING BURNT OFFERINGS OR SACRIFICES: BUT THIS THING COMMANDED I THEM, SAYING, OBEY MY VOICE, &c. The Objector passes a short censure upon this text; observing that, in the Old Testament, "things "commanded are positively said not to be commanded[t]." Then he cites part of what I have here cited, leaving the reader to imagine that Scripture contradicts itself. But such as attend to the *sense* of Scripture more than to the *sound* of words will easily perceive how the case stands. Sacrifices, which were but *part* of duty, are here opposed to *entire* and *universal* obedience. Now the thing which God required and chiefly insisted upon was *universal* righteousness, and not *partial* obedience, which is next to no obedience, because not performed upon a true principle of obedience. God does not deny that he had required *sacrifices:* but he had *primarily* and *principally*[u] required *obedience,* which included *sacrifices* and all other instances of duty as well as that: and he would not accept of such lame service as those sacrifices amounted to; for that was paying him *part* only in lieu of the *whole.*

Or we may say, that sacrifices, the *outward work,* are here opposed to *obeying God's voice:* that is to say, the

posse quemquam decipi.——Sed anxius et perturbatus Jeremias ea dicit nunc, quæ nequaquam credebat. *Cleric. in loc.*

[t] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 336.

[u] *Negatives* are often thus put for *comparatives,* Gen. xlv. 8. Exod. xvi. 8. 1 Sam. xv. 22. Hos. vi. 6. Matt. ix. 13. Joh. v. 45. See Guarin. Gramm. Heb. tom. i. p. 573.

*shadow* is opposed to the *substance*, *apparent* duty to *real*, *hypocrisy* and empty *show* to *sincerity* and *truth*. Now the thing which God required and insisted upon was *obedience to his voice* in every thing: and he laid no stress upon *sacrifices* any farther than as considered as *parts* of *true* obedience. Sacrifices separate from true holiness, or from a sincere love of God, were not the service which God required: for *hypocritical* services are no services, but abominations in his sight. He expected, he demanded *religious*, *devout* sacrifices: while his people brought him only outside *compliments* to flatter him, empty *formalities* to affront and dishonour him. These were not the things which God *spake of* or *commanded:* the sacrifices he spake of were pure sacrifices, to be offered up with a clean and upright heart. Those he required, and those only he would accept of, as real duty and service. The mere *opus operatum*, or outward work of offering up sacrifices, from a corrupt heart, was no *sacrificing to God*, any more than the *fasting* for strife and debate was fasting *to God*[x]. Such sacrifices God detested, being a semblance only of duty, and not the duty required; a corruption and profanation of a holy rite, rather than a just and proper conformity to it. Sacrifices so profaned carried more of *human* corruption than of *Divine* institution in them, being a kind of *mock worship* which man had contrived, and not the *true worship* which God had enjoined. Enough, I presume, hath been said to take off the Objector's cavils against the text. But for the further preventing some mistakes, which others have fallen into in relation to the same words, I may just observe:

1. That such as have drawn an argument from this text to prove that sacrifices have been owing to *human* invention, not to *Divine* appointment, have mistaken the point. Sacrifices were of *Divine* institution; but the *corruption* of them is of *human* devising. God appointed *religious* and *devout* sacrifices, and men invented *hypocrisy* and *deceit*,

[x] See Zech. vii. 5. Isa. lviii. 4—7.

debasing the true worship, which was of Divine original, into formal and empty worship, which in reality is no worship.

2. I may next observe, that such as argue from the same text for *moral* duties, in opposition to *positive*, are as widely mistaken as the former: for the text, in its true and full intent, condemns *moral* performances as much as *positive*, whenever separate from, or opposed to, true filial obedience. *Obeying God's voice* is the one thing requisite, and is what God commands and insists upon in all services, whether of a *moral* or *positive* nature. *Moral* performances are of no value but when they are really parts of sincere obedience towards God. If men are temperate in diet, chaste in their conversation, just in their dealings, or the like, only for worldly views, for health, or safety, or out of ostentation and vain glory, or for fear of human laws; such morality being all outside show, or secular convenience, is not true morality, nor the obedience which God requires. Or if men give alms, and are strict observers of some *moral* precepts, in hopes thereby to compound with God, to be excused from other duties, and to procure, as it were, a licence to sin, such moral performances are nothing worth; they are not the *true* services which God requires, but are as empty and superficial as the *opus operatum* in *positive* duties.

On the other hand, it must be owned, that whenever *positive* duties are so performed as to become *true obedience*, they are as valuable in God's sight, as any *moral* performances whatever, because *obeying God's voice* is all in all. *Obedience* was the thing insisted upon with Adam, with Abraham, with Saul, and with many others, in *positive* instances; and God laid as great a stress upon obedience there, as in any *moral* instances whatsoever. To conclude then, *moral* performances, without the obedience of the heart, are nothing; and *positive* performances, without the like obedience, are nothing: but the sincere *obeying* of God's *voice* in both is true religion and true morality.

Such is the doctrine of the text which we have been considering: and while it is thus understood, it carries in it no repugnancy either to other Scriptures or to the rules of right reason.

## JEREM. XIII. 4.

TAKE THE GIRDLE THAT THOU HAST GOT, WHICH IS UPON THY LOINS, AND ARISE, GO TO EUPHRATES, AND HIDE IT THERE IN A HOLE OF THE ROCK,—&c.

This is another of those texts which, according to our Objector, represents the prophets as "acting like mad-"men, or idiots[y]." Here again I must observe, that there are three several ways of interpreting, which I have before called *literal*, *visional*, and *parabolical:* and I am next briefly to examine the merits of each.

1. The commendation of the *literal* construction lies in these particulars; that it is *literal;* that it is *ancient;* and that it affords *rational solutions* of the difficulties objected to it. The *literal* construction of a text always claims the preference before any other, if there be not some very weighty reason against it, or some intimation in the text itself that the words are figurative, or enigmatical. This is an allowed rule of interpretation, founded in the very nature and reason of things: and it is pleadable here, as well as in all other cases of like kind. The *antiquity* of the literal construction appears in some measure from the ancient fathers, Cyril of Alexandria[z], and Theodoret[a]; though Jerome, before them both, is an exception, and perhaps the first. The seeming difficulties which lie against the *literal* construction are several, and admit of various answers.

[y] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 255.

[z] Cyrill. Alexandr. in Oseam, tom. iii. p. 11. For though Cyrill does not particularly mention this place of Jeremiah; yet his general pleadings for the *literal* construction in other the like places are as applicable here.

[a] Theodoret in loc. tom. ii. p. 189.

Jerome objects, that such *girdle* as is here mentioned was a *woman's girdle*[b], and not suitable to a prophet. But this is slight, since Jerome had no sufficient grounds for saying it: for *men* might wear *linen* girdles, and the high priest's was such[c]. He further objects, that Jeremiah could not at that time stir so far abroad, while Jerusalem (where he was) was closely besieged[d]. But this objection, as Bochart observes, is grounded on mistake only: for the Chaldeans were not yet come to lay siege to Jerusalem, as appears from verse 20. of that chapter. To which may be added, that chronologers now place this prophecy in the first year of Jehoiakim, 609 before the *Christian era*[e], and Nebuchadnezzar did not lay siege to Jerusalem till the year 606.

Others object, that it looks highly improbable, that so considerable a Prophet should be twice sent so long a journey, (a journey of near 200 leagues,) from Jerusalem to Euphrates, upon so slight an errand, only for the sake of *reporting* afterwards what he had done, when the reporting of a *vision* would have served the purpose altogether as well, with less waste of time and labour. But to this it may be answered, that the *burying of the girdle*, though that only is mentioned, might not be the whole of the errand: for who knows what other views or reasons infinite Wisdom might have in it? Neither is it necessary to say, that Jeremiah went *twice* from Jerusalem to Euphrates: for he might stay in Chaldea till the *second* time came for his going to the Euphrates about the girdle.

If these solutions do not satisfy, the learned Bochart[f] has another, which seems to cut off all the considerable difficulties at once. He observes, that פרת *Phrath* may

[b] Hieronymi Procem. in Osee. Hieremias accinctus lumbari, veste muliebri, &c.

[c] Levit. xvi. 4. See Bochart. Oper. tom. i. p. 955. edit. Lugd.

[d] Quomodo exire poterat, et ire tam longe, obsessa Hierusalem, extructis per circuitum munitionibus, fossa, vallo, atque castellis? *Hieron. Procem. in Os.*

[e] See Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 673.

[f] Bochart. Oper. Posth. p. 956.

reasonably be supposed to stand for אפרת *Ephrath*, (as it is a common thing for the initial *Aleph* to be so dropped in other names of places or persons,) and then *Ephrath* may mean *Ephratah*, that is, Bethlehem, which was but five or six miles from Jerusalem. So it was no great labour for the Prophet to go thither once and again, upon God's errand. To confirm this criticism, he argues, that if the text had intended the river Euphrates, it is somewhat strange that the Prophet should say (ver. 5.) that he hid the girdle בפרת *in Euphrates*, when it was not in Euphrates, but in a *rock* that he hid it, ver. 4. Again, he observes, that when in more than sixty other places Euphrates is mentioned, it is called *the river*, or the *great river*, and in two places only[g] is simply called *Phrath*, there is the less probability that Euphrates should be here intended; especially considering that so uncommon an injunction might have required a very particular and express direction to ascertain the place. This is the sum of what Bochart has offered for his ingenious solution of the difficulty; and I leave it with the reader to judge of as he sees reason. However, since the *literal* construction may yet appear not altogether unexceptionable, I may next proceed to mention such other constructions as have been offered; that so the readers, having all before them, may consider, upon the whole, which of them appears the best and safest to acquiesce in.

2. St. Jerome was of opinion, that all that is here told by the Prophet was performed only in idea, (*in typo*,) transacted in *vision*[h]. Maimonides also, the famous Rabbi of the twelfth century, espoused the same opinion[i].

[g] Jerem. li. 61, 63. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 26.

[h] Hieron. Procem. in Osee.

[i] Sicut quod de Abrahamo legitur, FUIT VERBUM AD ABRAHAMUM IN VISIONE DICENDO (Gen. xv. 1.) et in illa visione dicitur, ET EDUXIT ILLUM FORAS, ET DIXIT; SUSPICE NUNC CŒLUM ET NUMERA STELLAS: sicut, inquam, clarum et evidens est, quod in *visione prophetica* factum fuerit quod viderit, ac si educeretur e loco in quo fuit, ut videre posset cœlum, et quod postea dictum fuerit, NUMERA STELLAS; ita dico de eo quod Jeremiæ injunctum et in mandatis datum fuit, UT ABSCONDAT CINGULUM IN EUPHRATE, et

Though it is not the opinion of all his countrymen before or after him: for Bochart [k] mentions Solomon Jarchi, and Abarbenel, as differing from him; and he quotes Rabbi Kimchi as declaring directly against him [l]. Nevertheless, several learned men since have thought it reasonable to interpret the whole, with Maimonides, of prophetic *vision*. Our learned Smith particularly, in his Select Discourses, expresses an unusual confidence in it, and a kind of zeal for it [m], as the only rational construction. Now the reasons which recommend this method of interpreting are, first, that it removes at once all the seeming or real difficulties of the *literal* construction. Secondly, It seems that a prophetic *vision* fully answers all the intents and purposes that the Prophet's *really* performing such things could do. It would be impertinent to pretend here, that symbolical *actions* of a prophet would be necessary to raise *attention*, or would be more forcible than mere narratives: for who, besides the Prophet himself, could see or observe all that the Prophet is supposed to have done, unless they also had attended him all the way through both his long journeys? The thing could no otherwise be notified to all the Jews at Jerusalem, but by the Prophet's *telling* it: and if he re-

quod EUM ABSCONDERIT; deinde elapso longo tempore iterum quæsitum illud iverit, et CORRUPTUM AC PUTREFACTUM invenerit (Jerem. xiii. 4, 5, 6.) ita, inquam, aio hæc omnia in *visione prophetica* facta fuisse; neque Jeremiam e terra Israelis in Babyloniam exivisse, aut Euphratem vidisse.

[k] Bochart. Oper. Posth. p. 955.

[l] Quod de cingulo dicitur, apte sensu reali intelligi potest, ut propheta egerit plane uti ipsi fuerat a Deo præscriptum: etsi magnus et illustris vir et doctor justitiæ, Rabbi scilicet Moses Ben Maimon, id omne visione prophetica peractum scripserit. *Rabb. Kimch. ap. Bochart. ut supra.*

[m] His words are, "So Jeremy xiii. we have there a very precise narrative "of Jeremiah's getting a linen girdle, and putting it on his loins; and after "a while he must needs take a long journey to Euphrates, to hide it there in "a hole of the rock: and then returning after many days, makes a weary "journey to the same place, to take it out again after it was all corrupted. "All which could manifestly be nothing else but *merely imaginary*, the scope "thereof being to imprint this more deeply upon the understanding of the "prophet, that the house of Judah and Israel, which was nearly knit and "united to God, should be destroyed and ruined." *Smith's Select Discourses*, p. 224.

*ported* a *vision*, it might have made as strong an impression, and might as well have conveyed the intended instruction, as his *reporting* a *real* fact. Perhaps it might have answered the purpose better in some respects; because it would appear to many more *rational* and more *credible* than the other. It cannot be denied but that this looks well, and is a very plausible account of the whole affair: and had the text itself called it a *vision*, there could be no further doubt of it. But then it remains to be considered, whether the want of that single circumstance be sufficient to make us think it was not a *vision*, or whether there be not other instances of prophetic *visions* in Scripture, which are known only by the circumstances to be such, and are not called so in terms. So much in favour of the *visional* construction.

3. But there is yet a third construction, the *parabolical* construction, which deserves or requires to be heard in its turn. Much of what has been pleaded for the last is applicable to this also. For this removes all the inconveniences of the *literal* one, as much as the other: and a *parable* seems as well to answer the intended purpose, as either the report of *real* fact, or the telling a *vision*. But if it be objected that the "word of the Lord" is said (in the first ten verses of the chapter) to have come to the Prophet full four times, which argues that there were so many *real visions*; it may be answered, that that is not more plainly said, than it is said that Jeremiah went to Euphrates once and again, and performed what he was there commanded to perform: therefore the argument is not stronger for so many real *visions*, than it is for so many real *facts*. But it is a common thing for *parables* to follow the style and manner of a true narration. Why then may not the whole narrative pass for a *parable*, or an emblematical narration, like Micaiah's, who represents the Lord as doing and saying thus and thus, in a feigned narration, but so contrived as to convey in a most lively and affecting manner the most important truths? See above[n].

[n] Pages 199, 200.

There is one further advantage common both to the *visional* and *parabolical* construction, and which therefore might have been mentioned before, namely, that here we may understand by Phrath, the river Euphrates, being properly chosen in the *vision* or *parable*, to intimate that the Jews were to be carried captive over that river to Babylon: but as to Ephratah, or Bethlehem, which the learned Bochart by conjecture pitches upon, (only to take off a noted difficulty in the *literal* way,) it appears not what relation that place could have to the main subject-matter of the prophecy. And as to the criticism upon the phrase בפרת, as if it must necessarily signify *in Euphrates*, rather than *by Euphrates*, there is no certainty in it: for the Hebrew particle ב undoubtedly signifies either *in* or *by* [o], according as the circumstances of the text require. Thus far I have been pleading for the way of construction by *parable;* not making it my own, but doing justice, so far as I can, to it, and leaving it to the reader to think of it as he sees cause. I shall only add, that two very learned and judicious writers of our own, Bishop Stillingfleet [p] and Dr. Jenkins [q], incline to the *parabolical* construction, as well here as in several other the like Scripture instances; and they seem to have favoured this kind of construction above the literal one, for such reasons as have been now mentioned [r].

## JER. XV. 18.

O LORD—WILT THOU BE ALTOGETHER UNTO ME AS A LIAR, AND AS WATERS THAT FAIL? The Ob-

[o] See Noldii Concordant. p. 144.

[p] Stillingfleet's Letter to a Deist, p. 131, 132.

[q] Jenkins's Reasonableness, vol. ii. p. 50.

[r] Bishop Stillingfleet speaks thus: "But you will say, these things are "related as plain matters of fact, with the several circumstances belonging "to them. It is true, they are so, but so parables use to be. So was Na-"than's to David; so is that of the rich man and Lazarus in the New Tes-"tament: so is Jeremiah's going to Euphrates to hide his girdle; for it is "not very likely the Prophet should be sent eighteen or twenty days' journey "into an enemy's country for no other end."

jector lays hold of this [s] as an offensive passage: and I cannot say that he does it altogether without reason. But it is an English offence only: and I am sorry that our translators did not choose a juster rendering, or at least a more decent expression, when they might so easily have done it, and the context itself persuaded to it. The words may be translated thus: WILT THOU BE ALTOGETHER UNTO ME AS A disappointment [t], AND AS WATERS THAT FAIL? or, *waters not sure.* It is well known that כזב often signifies, to *frustrate*, or *disappoint* [u]: and it is no new thing for *Divine* wisdom to frustrate and disappoint *human* hopes and *human* expectations. Our translators in Isaiah lviii. 11. do not say, WHOSE WATERS *lie* NOT, but WHOSE WATERS FAIL NOT; because they thought *lie* an improper word to apply to *waters:* and surely *liar* is a word as improper to apply to Almighty God, if they had rightly considered it. They might very justly in that place of Isaiah have rendered *disappoint not*, as here in Jeremiah also, *disappointed.* And it is observable, that here in Jeremiah there is a plain allusion to brooks that dry up, and *disappoint* the thirsty traveller [x]. The Prophet by his complaint in this place could mean no more than this, that God had in a manner deserted him for a time, had left him to struggle with difficulties and hardships unforeseen or unexpected, thereby *disappointing*, in some measure, his hopes of better success. Having suffered much and long from his cruel persecutors, he looks up to God, and pours out his complaint before him in pathetic strains, as if God had almost forsaken him, and as if the "fountain of living waters" had been in a manner dried up, or had refused to send forth its enlivening streams: a very just and elegant way of describing the uncomfortable condition which the Prophet at that time lay under. But yet, as if he had said too much, he cor-

[s] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 256.

[t] Fies mihi ut frustratio. *Cocceius in Lexic.*

[u] Job xli. 9. Isa. lviii. 11. Micah i. 14.

[x] Compare Jer. ii. 13. xvii. 13. Psal. xxxvi. 10.

rects himself presently after, and expresses his entire confidence in the Divine promises to support and strengthen him, to MAKE him as A FENCED BRASEN WALL against his adversaries, to SAVE and to DELIVER him, and to rescue him OUT OF THE HAND OF THE TERRIBLE[y]. To conclude this article, had but the Objector taken the pains to read three verses forwards to the end of the chapter, he might easily have seen how little foundation there was for finding fault with what he had read in verse 18. excepting only the harshness of an ill-chosen word in an English translation.

## JER. XX. 7.

O LORD, THOU HAST DECEIVED ME, AND I WAS DECEIVED: THOU ART STRONGER THAN I, AND HAST PREVAILED. Here again, the translation is harsh and faulty. But the margin had guarded the reader against misconstruction or offence, by the softening word *enticed*, put there for *deceived*. Indeed the word *enticed* much better expresses the sense of פתה in this place, though it does not fully come up to it. The occasion of the words was this: the good Prophet had met with a large share of ill usage from an ungrateful people, for the faithful discharge of his prophetic office. Under these his calamitous circumstances, he looks up to God, and appeals to him, the Searcher of hearts, as his witness, that it was not through any ambition of his own that he had entered upon that invidious office[z]; nor had he taken upon him, of his own accord, to reprove his countrymen: but all he had acted in that affair was done pursuant to a Divine call, and in pure obedience to Divine command. He would gladly have declined it, or even have run away from it; but God would not suffer him. Wherefore hereupon he says, speaking to Almighty God; THOU HAST OVER-PERSUADED ME, O LORD, AND I WAS

[y] Jer. xv. 19, 20, 21.

[z] See Jer. i. 6, 7, &c.

OVER-PERSUADED, (so the words, I think, ought to be rendered[a],) THOU ART STRONGER THAN I, AND HAST PREVAILED. The passage carries in it a lively idea of the Prophet's great modesty and profound humility, in not affecting high things, or shining offices, but submitting however to the burden of them in obedience to the will of God. For what purpose, then, could the Objector produce this text? Let the reader observe, and marvel: he produced it to prove that prophets have been *deceived* by relying upon God's word; and of course, that the people also have been deceived by relying upon the word of those prophets[b]. Never were premises and conclusion less allied, or at greater distance from each other.

JER. XXVII. 2, 3.

THUS SAITH THE LORD TO ME; MAKE THEE BONDS AND YOKES, AND PUT THEM UPON THY NECK, AND SEND THEM TO THE KING OF EDOM, AND TO THE KING OF MOAB, AND TO THE KING OF THE AMMONITES, AND TO THE KING OF TYRUS, AND TO THE KING OF ZIDON, BY THE HAND OF THE MESSENGERS WHICH CAME TO JERUSALEM UNTO ZEDEKIAH KING OF JUDAH.

This is another text which the Objector finds fault with, as making the Prophets act like *madmen*, or *idiots*[c]. But his censure here also is without foundation. As to the nature of the command here given by God to the Prophet, I take it to be in part figurative and metaphorical; signifying in a lively way what should be the fate of Zedekiah and the other kings in league with him. Jeremiah is commanded in another place[d], to TAKE THE WINE-CUP OF GOD'S FURY, and to CAUSE ALL THE NATIONS,

[a] See Lowth upon the place. Vitringa in Isa. viii. 11. p. 215. Assembly's Annotations, and Pool's. De Spagne Reformation de quelques Passages, &c. p. 22.

[b] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 256.

[c] Ibid. p. 255.

[d] Jer. xxv. 15, 16, 17.

whom he should be sent to, TO DRINK IT: and it follows, THEN TOOK I THE CUP AT THE LORD'S HAND, AND MADE ALL THE NATIONS TO DRINK, &c. Which means only, that he prophesied against them, and pronounced their doom. In like manner, his sending the *yokes* and *bonds* to the princes mentioned, seems to mean nothing more than his declaring from God the fate of those princes, by the token, and under the metaphor of *yokes* and *bonds*, to enliven the idea, and to make the prophecy more solemn and emphatical. The words of our learned Smith, being very apposite to our purpose, are here worth the inserting. "Just in the same mode with "this (of the Rechabites) we have another story told, xxv. "15, 17, &c. of his taking a *wine-cup* from God, and his "carrying it up and down, far and near Jerusalem and "the cities of Judah, and the kings and princes thereof; "to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and his servants, princes, "and people: to all the Arabians, and kings of the land "of Uz: to the kings of the land of the Philistines, "Edom, Moab, Ammon; the kings of Tyre and Sidon, "and of the isles beyond the sea, Dedan, Tema, Buz; "the kings of Zimri, of the Medes and Persians, and all "the kings of the north: and all these he made to *drink* "of the *cup*. And in this fashion, chap. xxvii. he is sent "up and down with *yokes*, to put upon the necks of seve-"ral kings: all which can have no other sense than that "which is merely *imaginary*; though we be not told "that all this was acted only in a *vision*: for the nature "of the thing would not permit any *real* performance "thereof[e]." Thus far he: and what he says appears to be very right in the main: only he must, I suppose, have allowed, that Jeremiah made some such *yokes* with *bonds*, (as it is certain he did put one upon himself[f],) to render the impression of what he was to say the more strong and lively. It was customary for prophets to prophesy

[e] Smith's Select Discourses, p. 226.

[f] See Jer. xxviii. 10, 11, 12.

by symbolical actions, or hieroglyphic figures; insomuch that even the false prophets took up the same practice in imitation of the true ones. The instance of Zedekiah's making himself *horns* of *iron*, and thereupon saying to Ahab, as from the Lord, WITH THESE SHALT THOU PUSH THE SYRIANS[g], &c. is a very remarkable one. And even in the New Testament we have an instance in the Prophet Agabus, who not content merely to foretell what should happen to St. Paul, represented it to the eye, in dumb show, by a symbolical action, binding his own hands and feet with Paul's girdle[h]. I say then, that probably Jeremiah made several yokes, and put one upon his own neck, when he delivered his errand: and his so delivering the prophecy was *sending the yokes* to the princes mentioned[i]. For we cannot reasonably suppose that the ambassadors took the yokes at his hands, and carried them to their respective masters. God revealed his design to the Prophet in such figurative, metaphorical language, and the Prophet reported the same as he had received it. The thing that God intended might be as clearly understood in this way, as in the plainer and simpler style of a mere prediction: but these ornamental figures and affecting images, interspersed with it, added new force and dignity to the Prophet's message, made it the more awful and solemn in the delivery, and gave it the advantage of a deeper and more durable impression.

### EZEK. iv. 1, &c.

THOU ALSO, SON OF MAN, TAKE THEE A TILE, (a slate,) AND LAY IT BEFORE THEE, AND POURTRAY UPON IT THE CITY, EVEN JERUSALEM, &c. The Ob-

[g] 1 Kings xxii. [h] Acts xxi. 11.

[i] Potest enim phraseologia esse allegorica, Jeremiæ haud insueta (conf. xxv. 15.) ita ut *dimissio jugi et lororum per legatos*, sit regibus per ipsorum legatos significare, servitutem hoc ipso signo ipsis portendi; cum præsertim vix credibile sit harum gentium legatos (qui et ipsi hariolorum blanditiis irretiti erant v. 9.) vel voluisse, vel ausos fuisse juga ab Jeremia oblata, Dominis suis perferre. *Henric. Michael. Bibl. Hebraic. Hallens.* in notis ad loc.

jector is much offended at some commands here given to Ezekiel, as making him also "act like a madman, or an "idiot [k]." The Prophet was to draw Jerusalem upon a *slate*, was to lay *siege* to it, to *build a fort*, and to *cast a mount* against it: he was to set a *camp* against it, and *battering rams* round it; and was to take an *iron pan*, representing an *iron wall* between him and the city, and all this for a "sign to the house of Israel." He was moreover to lie three hundred and ninety days on his left, and then forty days together on his right side, without turning himself once during the three hundred and ninety, or the forty days; by the former, to represent God's bearing the idolatry of the house of Israel three hundred and ninety years, reckoning from the first of Jeroboam; and by the latter, to represent God's bearing the iniquity of the house of Judah forty years, reckoning from the eighteenth of Josiah. And the Prophet was to *bake his bread* with *man's dung*, or however with *cow's dung*, in token of the hard circumstances that the house of Judah should be in a little time reduced to. Now the question is, how far this description, or representation, is to be taken *literally*, or *emblematically*; and whether the orders which God gave were intended as *real* commands and figures also, or only as *figures* of things to come, under the form of commands, signifying not what the Prophet was to perform, but what God in his all-wise counsels had determined to bring about.

1. As the generality of learned men have here pleaded for the *literal* interpretation, believing that the thing amounts to more than a prophetical scheme of speech; so it may be proper here, as in like cases before, to take notice of that construction. Witsius [l] and Bochart [m] are two of its ablest advocates. They plead the authority of the ancient fathers, Basil, Chrysostom, Theodoret: and

[k] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 255.

[l] Witsius Miscellan. vol. i. p. 94, &c.

[m] Bochart. Oper. Posth. p. 958. See also Lowth, Wells, in loc. Carpzov. Introd. part. iii. p. 50.

they endeavour to show that all that is here commanded was practicable, and that the several circumstances mentioned carry no direct repugnancy or absurdity with them. It would be tedious to enter into particulars: I refer the reader to the authors themselves. It must be owned, that the clearing of the *literal* construction is first to be looked to, and the solutions offered are very ingenious and plausible, and such as ought to satisfy, if indeed there be a *necessity* for maintaining the *literal* hypothesis; and there are several reasons brought to prove such *necessity*[n]. One of the strongest of them is what Mr. Lowth [o] mentions in these words: "The circumstances of this vision prove that the Prophet did *really* perform what is here related; or else it could not have been A SIGN UNTO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, verse 3." What force there may be in this, or other arguments offered in favour of the *letter*, may be considered presently.

2. For notwithstanding all that can be said on that side, very judicious interpreters choose to interpret in the way of *vision* or *parable*. Jerome himself is at the head of them, who declares some of the things commanded to be impracticable[p], but understanding them too rigorously. Maimonides also is exceeding positive in the case[q], thinking the *literal* construction absurd, and expressing himself

[n] They are summed up in Witsius, p. 95, 96.

[o] Lowth's Comment on the place, p. 256.

[p] Rerum natura non patitur, ut quisquam hominum per trecentos nonaginta dies in uno semper latere dormiat. *Hieron. in Osee*, i. 8.

[q] Ita quoque id quod dictum est ad eum: *Et tu sume tibi laterem*, &c. *et tu dormi super latus tuum sinistrum*, &c. *et tu cape tibi triticum et hordeum*: quod item alibi ei dictum legitur, *novaculam hanc tonsoriam cape tibi, et transire fac super caput tuum, et super barbam tuam*; ita, inquam, ista omnia in *visione prophetica* facta sunt, ac vidit, vel visum fuit ipsi, se ista opera facere quæ ipsi præcipiebantur. Absit enim ut Deus Prophetas suos *stultis* vel *ebriis* similes reddat, eosque *stultorum* aut *furiosorum* actiones facere jubeat. Præterquam quod præceptum illud ultimum *legi repugnasset*: fuit autem Ezechiel sacerdos magnus, et propterea ad duo illa præcepta negativa, de *non radendo angulo capitis, et angulo barbæ* obligatus. *Maimonid. Mor. Nev.* part. ii. cap. 46. p. 323.

with more tartness than was necessary. He is seconded by several other learned men; particularly by Smith[r], and by Bishop Stillingfleet[s], and Dr. Jenkins[t], amongst us: who conceive what is there related to be a history only of the *vision* itself, or to be a *prophetical scheme.* Another learned man, now lately, hath espoused the same sentiments, observing, that though we have in this chapter an account of such and such commands given in vision to Ezekiel, yet it is not said that he ever performed them[u]: but that like as St. Peter in a *vision* was commanded to do what he never did, (RISE, PETER, KILL AND EAT,) so Ezekiel was ordered, in the same way, to do several things which it was never intended he should perform. And as St. Peter reported his vision for the instruction of Christians; so Ezekiel reported his, for the instruction of the "house of Israel." Those *emblematical* commands, so reported, became *signs, figures, resemblances, prognostications* of what had or should come upon Israel, or Judah, and in what *manner*, and *why:* and thus they were "signs "unto the house of Israel," signifying things past, and prefiguring things to come. It appears not necessary to say that the Prophet *performed*, so much as *in vision*, the things there commanded: but in a vision he received such commands, which he afterwards considered not as formal commands, but as *types, emblems*, and *predictions* delivered to him in a preceptive form, in order to imprint the things intended the deeper upon his mind, and to make the representation thereof, to the people of the Jews, both more lively and more affecting. In this way of interpreting, all the difficulties of the *literal* construc-

[r] Smith's Select Discourses, p. 227, 228.

[s] Stillingfleet's Letter to a Deist, p. 131.

[t] Jenkins's Reasonableness, &c. vol. ii. p. 51.

[u] Jussus fuit Ezechiel per 390 dies humi decumbere, in latus dextrum (leg. sinistrum) inclinatus, et vinculis constrictus, pane item vesci super stercus humanum accensum cocto: at vero nusquam dicitur propheta mandatum illud exsecutus. Quare ambigi vix potest, quin eadem illius fuerit ratio ac ejus quod Petro datum Act. x. *jugula et comede* immunda juxta ac munda promiscue. *Lakemacher, Observat. Philolog. Helmsted.* 1730. vol. ii. p. 68.

tion are removed at once; and there appears to be no considerable objection remaining, nor any thing that can justly give offence.

But I must observe, that our Objector has betrayed some want of attention, in saying that Ezekiel was to "mix man's dung with his bread[x]:" that would have been too absurd to be commanded even in *vision*. *Man's dung* was not ordered for the Prophet's *food*, (as this gentleman too hastily imagined,) but for his *fuel*[y]: and even that the Prophet excepted to, as *unclean*. Wherefore God permitted him to take other fuel, namely, *cow's dung*, dried casings, to *bake* his bread with; which being clean and wholesome fuel, though not the most eligible, the Prophet had nothing to object against it. This circumstance of the story has been pleaded as an argument in favour of the literal construction: for why, say some, should the Prophet object to *man's dung* at all, if all was *vision*, and none of the things commanded were to be *really* performed[z]? But it may be replied, that a prophet under a vision or a trance, (like as in a dream,) takes the appearances as real for the time being, and retains the same sentiments of *clean* and *unclean* as before. So St. Peter, in his *trance*, or *vision*, (Acts x.) made the like objection as Ezekiel did, against eating any thing *common* or *unclean*[a]: and God gave answers in both cases respectively, such as were proper to each.

Objection also has been made to some things mentioned in the third and fifth chapters of the same Prophet Ezekiel: his "eating a roll[b]," and *shaving* his head and beard, and then *weighing* and *dividing* the hair[c]; with several other circumstances of like nature, which God commanded him to observe. They seem all to be *em-*

[x] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 255.

[y] Vid. Bochart. Oper. vol. i. p. 329.

[z] Si sola imaginatione peracta fuerint omnia; non videtur tanta causa fuisse deprecandi ne stercus humanum excoqueretur: quæ indubie major est, si cibum ita paratum re vera ori suo ingerere propheta debuerit. *Witsii Miscellan.* vol. i. p. 96.

[a] Acts x. 14. [b] Ezek. iii. 1, 2. [c] Ezek. v. 1.

*blematical*, and nothing more; *seeming* precepts, *real* predictions: and Divine Wisdom might the rather make choice of things improper, or some of them impracticable, that the Prophet might the sooner perceive that it was all *symbolical;* not directing him how or what to *act*, but how or what to apprehend, foresee, or foretell of things to come. That about the *roll* plainly belongs to Ezekiel's first vision; during which vision, he ate the *roll*, and therefore his eating was *visionary*, not *real*. And I may here note, what I should have noted before, that the reader may do well to consider, whether all that is related in the fourth chapter be not also supposed, though not so plainly, to be transacted in vision, by what is said chap. iii. 22, 23. THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS THERE UPON ME,—AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD STOOD THERE, AS THE GLORY I SAW BY THE RIVER CHEBAR[d]. This description is much the same as in the first vision. And it is further observable, that in chap. viii. 1. it is said, THE HAND OF THE LORD GOD FELL THERE UPON ME, which are the introductory words to a long account of facts, which were undoubtedly transacted in *vision* only. If therefore the Prophet himself has obliquely intimated, as to chap. iv. that he reported nothing but a *vision*, there can then be no just objection to the *visional* construction of that chapter: and the fifth chapter is but a continuation of the same thing. But this I leave with the judicious.

In the twelfth chapter of the same Prophet, we read of his "removing his household-stuff by night," as a type of the captivity, and of his "digging with his hand "through the walls of his house," and his carrying off his goods in "the sight of the people;" as also of the people's coming to ask what he meant by such unusual conduct. I see no reason for thinking that the Prophet might not really perform all that and more, without difficulty, and without forfeiting either his discretion or gra-

[d] Ezek. i. 1, 2.

vity. Besides, the manner and circumstances of the whole narrative, as it stands in the Prophet, (being very different from what we meet with in several others,) plead strongly for the strict and literal interpretation. It is no less than seven times [e] repeated, that the Prophet was to do, or did thus and thus, "in the sight" of the people: and he did it in the *evening*, in the "twilight [f];" and "in the morning" [g] after, God came to ask him whether the house of Israel had taken notice of such his uncommon behaviour, and had inquired what it meant. These and other circumstances appear to be very cogent proofs of *real* fact, and that it is more than a narration of a *vision*, or recital of a *parable*. And therefore I cannot but think that it is going much too far from strict rule, to reject the *literal* sense here; though I know that a very pious and learned writer has done it [h], and that he had some appearance of *reason*, besides the authority of some Jewish interpreters, to countenance him in it.

EZEK. xii. 21, 22.

AND THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME UNTO ME, SAYING, SON OF MAN, WHAT IS THAT PROVERB THAT YE HAVE IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL, SAYING, THE DAYS ARE PROLONGED, AND EVERY VISION FAILETH? TELL THEM THEREFORE, THUS SAITH THE

[e] Ezek. xii. 3—7. [f] Ezek. xii. 7. [g] Ezek. xii. 8, 9.

[h] The words of Smith, in his Select Discourses, are as follow: "Again, "chap. xii. we read of Ezekiel's removing his household-stuff in the night, "as a type of the *captivity*, and of his digging with his hands through the "wall of his house, and of the people's coming to take notice of this strange "action, with many other uncouth ceremonies of the whole business, which "carry no show of probability: and yet, verse the sixth, God declares upon "this to him; *I have set thee for a sign to the house of Israel:* and verse "the ninth, *Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, "said unto thee, What dost thou?* As if all this had been done *really:* "which indeed seems to be nothing else but a *prophetical scheme.* Neither "was the Prophet any *real* sign, but only *imaginary*, as having the type of "all those fates symbolically represented in his *fancy*, which were to befal "the Jews: which sense Kimchi, a genuine commentator, follows, with "others mentioned." *Smith*, ibid. p. 228.

LORD GOD; I WILL MAKE THIS PROVERB TO CEASE, AND THEY SHALL NO MORE USE IT AS A PROVERB IN ISRAEL; BUT SAY UNTO THEM, THE DAYS ARE AT HAND, AND THE EFFECT OF EVERY VISION. I have produced this passage at full length, that so the reader may see the whole meaning at once. Our Objector, according to his usual fairness and ingenuity, produces only a part of it, in order to prove that God *deceived* his Prophets by false appearances. "In another Pro-"phet," says he[i], "the Lord says, THE DAYS ARE "PROLONGED, AND EVERY VISION FAILS." Yes, the Lord said it, as the Lord said by the Psalmist, "There is "no God[k];" that is, the Lord condemned the *fools* that said so, producing their sayings in order to reprove them. The words which our Objector cites as God's words, were the words of *infidels*, who had turned the "grace of God "into wantonness; taking encouragement from his pa-"tience and long-suffering, to despise his threatenings, as "if they would never be fulfilled[l]," and to deride his Prophets, as if they had prophesied in vain. Any commentator almost that this gentleman could have looked into would have corrected his mistake, and might have prevented his exposing himself on this head.

EZEK. xiv. 9.

AND IF THE PROPHET BE DECEIVED WHEN HE HATH SPOKEN A THING, I THE LORD HAVE DECEIVED THAT PROPHET, AND I WILL STRETCH OUT MY HAND UPON HIM, AND WILL DESTROY HIM FROM THE MIDST OF MY PEOPLE ISRAEL. The remark made on this text is pointed and smart: "[m] And if the Prophet "is deceived, must not the people, who rely on that Pro-"phet, be deceived?" Yes, certainly. But there was no

[i] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 256.

[k] Psalm xiv. 1. liii. 1.

Compare Isa. v. 19. Ezek. xi. 3. Amos v. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. and see Lowth in loc.

[m] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 256.

occasion for pushing the point so far: it would have been mortification enough to all true lovers of the *Bible*, if it could but have been proved that God ever deceived his *prophets*. There lay the stress of the thing; and there the Objector should have rested his argument, if he had understood what he was upon.

The reader may please to observe, that Ezekiel (or God by Ezekiel) is here speaking of *false prophets*, or *anti-prophets*, as described in the foregoing chapter; such as had set themselves up in opposition to the true prophets of God. They were prophets that PROPHESIED OUT OF THEIR OWN HEARTS[n]: they were FOOLISH PROPHETS, THAT FOLLOWED THEIR OWN SPIRIT, AND SAW NOTHING [o] of truth. They were such as HAD SEEN VANITY AND LYING DIVINATION, pretending to be God's prophets, when THE LORD HAD NOT SENT THEM[p]. They SEDUCED THE PEOPLE, SAYING, PEACE; AND THERE WAS NO PEACE[q]. I say, it is of one of the prophets of that wicked stamp[r], that Ezekiel speaks in the ninth verse of this fourteenth chapter; as may easily be perceived by what is said in the same verse, that God will STRETCH OUT HIS HAND upon the Prophet, and WILL DESTROY HIM[s]: and in the next verse it is added, that THE PUNISHMENT OF THE PROPHET SHALL BE EVEN AS THE PUNISHMENT OF HIM THAT SEEKETH UNTO HIM. Which words carry a plain intimation that the Prophet here spoken of is understood to have been as bad as the idolaters here supposed to consult him, and to have been as much a false prophet, as they were false worshippers; alike in temper and principles,

[n] Ezek. xiii. 2, 17.

[o] Ezek. xiii. 3. [p] Ezek. xiii. 6, 7. [q] Ezek. xiii. 10, 16.

[r] Non putemus de vero propheta dici, sed de pseudopropheta, qui συνωνύμως propheta appellatur. *Hieron.* in loc.

[s] See a remarkable instance of this kind in the vengeance taken upon the false prophet Hananiah, who had taught rebellion against the Lord, and made the people to trust in a lie. Jer. xxviii. 15, 16, 17. And there are two more such instances in the punishments inflicted upon two other lying prophets, Ahab and Zedekiah. Jer. xxix. 21, 22. See also verses 31, 32. of the same chapter.

and therefore also to be punished alike[t], for encouraging idol-worship under false pretences to inspiration.

Having seen then what kind of a prophet the text speaks of, it will now be the easier to explain the rest. God declares that he will DECEIVE (will *disappoint*, or will *infatuate*) such a prophet first, and next *destroy* him: he will give him up first to *strong delusions*, and then to *destruction*. The text may not improperly be rendered thus, according to Pfeiffer[u], a judicious interpreter and learned critic: IF THE PROPHET BE INFATUATED WHEN HE SPEAKETH A THING, I THE LORD WILL INFATUATE THAT PROPHET yet more. So the sense of the passage may amount nearly to the same with that of St. Paul[x], (or however the verb here may bear the like signification as ἐμώρανε there,) GOD HATH MADE FOOLISH THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD: or to that which Isaiah says; THAT FRUSTRATETH THE TOKENS OF LIARS, (lying prophets,) AND MAKETH DIVINERS MAD; THAT TURNETH WISE MEN BACKWARD, AND MAKETH THEIR KNOWLEDGE FOOLISH[y]. But it is observable,

[t] Salva res est, modo teneamus ad loc. cit. Ezech. non de veris Dei, sed pseudoprophetis, idolorum cultoribus, sermonem esse, quos æque ac consulentes ipsos, se decepturum Deus minatur; non errorem immittendo, sed non impediendo, permittendo, justoque judicio excæcando, mendacemque mendaciis puniendo. *Carpzov. Introduct. ad Libr. Bibl.* part. iii. p. 56.

De eo propheta agit qui consultoribus similis est; qui mercedem iniquitatis amans, amat iis quoque in erroribus et concupiscentiis suis adulari, dignumque se eodem judicio præstat. *Witsii Miscellan.* vol. i. p. 137.

[u] Recte judicat Bohlii continuator (*De Form. Rad. Diss.* xiii. sect. 5.) formalem significationem vocis פתה esse *simplex fuit*. Itaque conj. transitiva *Piel* פתה significat *simplicem* vel *fatuum fecit*: scilicet, juste privando intellectu, seu judiciaria subtractione gratiæ illuminatricis; ut adeo verbum non exprimat malum culpæ, sed pœnæ. Q. d. Quod si propheta ita deliret, vel cum ratione insaniat, ut tale quid loquatur, ego Dominus faciam ut prorsus stultescat, adimendo ipsi omne lumen rationis, &c. *Pfeiffer. Dub. Vexat.* p. 876. alias Oper. vol. i. p. 411. Conf. Le Cene, p. 153. Ross, p. 102.

[x] Ἐμώρανεν ὁ Θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου; 1 Cor. i. 20.

[y] Isa. xliv. 25. *Fatuos* eos redderet et *insanos*: sive quod eos ut insanos et fatuos publico risui exponeret, sive quod illos ob pœnitenda errata a se commissa in insaniam ageret. *Vitringa in Isa.* xliv. 25. p. 490.

that Isaiah subjoins, in the verse immediately following, THAT CONFIRMETH THE WORD OF HIS SERVANT, (Isaiah, his true prophet,) AND PERFORMETH THE COUNSEL OF HIS MESSENGERS [z]. From whence may be perceived, how God illuminates the understandings, and ratifies the predictions of his own true prophets, while he *infatuates* the counsels, and *disappoints* the lying confidence of evil men and seducers. So this text of Ezekiel, rightly understood, makes nothing at all to the Objector's purpose.

## EZEK. XX. 25.

I GAVE THEM ALSO STATUTES THAT WERE NOT GOOD, AND JUDGMENTS WHEREBY THEY SHOULD NOT LIVE. The Objector hereupon says [a]: "Does not "Scripture, if taken literally, suppose that God does things "of the greatest moment in anger and fury? Was it not "thus he gave his favourite people STATUTES WHICH "WERE NOT GOOD, and judgments by which they could "not live?" The Characteristics have a glance at the same thought [b], referring to Dr. Spencer, who understands this text of God's *ritual* laws; as several other interpreters, ancient and modern, have too unwarily done. God intended not here his *own statutes* or *judgments*, but the *idolatrous* statutes and judgments, the corrupt principles and practices of the heathen nations, to which he sometimes gave up and abandoned his own people, because they had first deserted and abandoned him. That this is the true, genuine, and certain sense of the text, may be made appear, as follows:

1. It is observable, that God here describes these statutes and judgments by characters directly opposite to what he gives of his *own* in the same chapter. For in the eleventh, thirteenth, and twenty-first verses, he says, I

[z] Isa. xliv. 26. compare 1 Sam. iii. 19, 20.
[a] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 251.
[b] Characteristics, vol. iii. p. 55.

GAVE THEM MY STATUTES, AND SHOWED THEM MY JUDGMENTS, WHICH IF A MAN DO, HE SHALL EVEN LIVE IN THEM. This is the character he here gives of his *own* laws, conformable to what he had given in Leviticus, where he says, YE SHALL DO MY JUDGMENTS, AND KEEP MINE ORDINANCES, TO WALK THEREIN: I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD. YE SHALL THEREFORE KEEP MY STATUTES AND MY JUDGMENTS: WHICH IF A MAN DO, HE SHALL LIVE IN THEM [c]. Which words are plainly to be understood of the whole system of the Jewish laws, *ceremonial*, *judicial*, and *moral*; to the keeping of which, *life* was promised; as to the breaking of any of them a *curse* was annexed [d]. I say then, that the character of God's *own* laws (*ritual* as well as others) was, that a man should "live in them." But now here in the twenty-fifth of this chapter of Ezekiel, God says, I GAVE THEM ALSO STATUTES (not *my* statutes) AND JUDGMENTS, (not *my* judgments,) WHEREBY THEY SHOULD NOT LIVE, directly contrary to what he had before said, both here and in Leviticus, of his *own* statutes at large. So that it is highly unreasonable, or rather absurd, to understand *both* of God's own statutes.

2. It is farther observable, that in verse 11. of this chapter, God had spoken of his giving his own laws to his people; and he proceeds afterwards, verse 13, &c. to speak of the frowardness of the people, and of their contemning those laws of his, and of his forbearance with them in the *wilderness* notwithstanding: but that at length, by way of punishment to them, he did what he mentions verse 25. WHEREFORE I GAVE THEM ALSO STATUTES THAT WERE NOT GOOD, &c. So that these statutes cannot be the same with those laws of Moses given before, but must be different statutes.

3. After God's mentioning the statutes "whereby they

[c] Levit. xviii. 4, 5. compare Rom. x. 5. Gal. iii. 12.
[d] Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10.

" should not live," he immediately adds, (verse 26.) AND I POLLUTED THEM IN THEIR OWN GIFTS, IN THAT THEY CAUSED TO PASS THROUGH THE FIRE (to be sacrificed or consecrated in fire to Moloch[e]) ALL THAT OPENETH THE WOMB, THAT I MIGHT MAKE THEM DESOLATE. This may be sufficient to intimate what kind of *statutes* and *judgments* God is here speaking of; namely, the rites and practices of the heathen, whereby God *polluted* them, that is, gave them up to their own hearts' lusts, to defile and *pollute* themselves[f]: wherefore it is said in verse 31. of this chapter, WHEN YE OFFER YOUR GIFTS, WHEN YE MAKE YOUR SONS TO PASS THROUGH THE FIRE, (to be consecrated in fire,) YE POLLUTE YOURSELVES WITH ALL YOUR IDOLS, EVEN UNTO THIS DAY. The Israelites had provoked God many ways, and more especially by their frequent idolatries; and therefore God gave them up to the vilest and most deplorable idolatry of all, namely, that of sacrificing " their sons and daughters unto devils," offering them up as burnt-offerings to Moloch. These were the statutes NOT GOOD: that is to say, the *worst that could be;* for such is the force of that expression according to the Hebrew idiom[g]. It is said moreover, verse 18. of the same chapter, WALK YE NOT IN THE STATUTES OF YOUR FATHERS, NEITHER OBSERVE THEIR JUDGMENTS, NOR DEFILE YOURSELVES WITH THEIR IDOLS. Here we have mention made of *statutes* and of *judgments*, (the same words in the Hebrew as in verse 25.) but not meaning God's statutes or judgments, but the corrupt *customs* or *manners* of their idolatrous ancestors, such as God *permitted*, or gave them up to, because they chose such; as is intimated in verse 25. I have observed, upon another occasion, that נתן is frequently used

[e] See verse 31. and Vitringa, Observ. Sacr. lib. ii. c. 1. p. 267.

[f] *Reddidit* igitur Deus Israelitas *impuros*, quando occulto suo judicio permisit, ut cultu omnium impurissimo *se contaminarint. Vitringa, ibid.*

[g] Vitringa, Observat. Sacr. lib. ii. c. 1. p. 265. Vitringa in Isa. vol. i. p. 274, 486. Pool's Annotations in loc.

in the *permissive* sense: and therefore, I GAVE THEM, in verse 25, may amount to no more than *I suffered* such things [h].

4. To all which may be added, that St. Stephen, in the Acts of the Apostles [i], seems to be the best interpreter of the text now before us, when he says; GOD TURNED, AND GAVE THEM UP TO WORSHIP THE HOST OF HEAVEN, &c. That was giving them up to *statutes* that were *not good*, and to *judgments* whereby they *should not live*, to corrupt customs, and impure rites of the heathen. To confirm which we may observe, that by the Prophet Jeremiah [k] God threatens the like judgment to his offending people. THEREFORE WILL I CAST YOU OUT OF THIS LAND INTO A LAND THAT YE KNOW NOT, NEITHER YE NOR YOUR FATHERS; AND THERE SHALL YE SERVE OTHER GODS DAY AND NIGHT; WHERE I WILL NOT SHOW YOU FAVOUR. And in this very chapter of Ezekiel, God says; Go YE, SERVE YE EVERY ONE HIS IDOLS, AND HEREAFTER ALSO, IF YE WILL NOT HEARKEN UNTO ME: BUT POLLUTE YE MY HOLY NAME NO MORE WITH YOUR GIFTS AND WITH YOUR IDOLS [l].

5. Though enough has been pleaded, as I conceive, from the context itself, as well as from other Scriptures, and from the very nature of the thing, to prove that this text ought not to be understood of the *ceremonial* laws of the Jewish state, but of quite another thing, yet it may not be improper to throw in an authority or two, to back the interpretation now given, that it may not be thought singular.

[h] "Not appointing or enjoining them, but permitting them to make such "for themselves; much like that (Rom. i. 24.) giving *up to a reprobate* "*sense*: or that 2 Thess. ii. 11. and Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12. Orders and rules "which they first invented, next approved, and lastly made their established "religion; where all that they could love in it was, that it was their *own*." *Pool's Annotat.*

[i] Acts vii. 42. Vid. Vitringa, Observ. Sacr. lib. ii. c. 1. p. 266.

[k] Jerem. xvi. 13. compare Deut. iv. 27, 28. xxviii. 36, 37.

[l] Ezek. xx. 39.

The Chaldee Paraphrast interprets the text thus: "I "cast them out, and delivered them into the hand of "their enemies: and they went after their own foolish "lust, and made statutes which were not right, and laws "by which you shall not live." Among the moderns, Vitringa has more particularly examined this matter, to whose observations I owe most that I have said upon it, and to whom, for farther satisfaction, I would refer the reader. I shall throw into the bottom of the page his general judgment, or decision, concerning this text, in his own words[m]. Le Cene has another solution, understanding the words interrogatively, and making some other alterations[n]: but his solution appears not so natural or so just as what I have mentioned, and therefore I need not say more of it.

## HOSEA I. 2.

AND THE LORD SAID TO HOSEA, GO, TAKE UNTO THEE A WIFE OF WHOREDOMS AND CHILDREN OF WHOREDOMS: FOR THE LAND HATH COMMITTED GREAT WHOREDOM, DEPARTING FROM THE LORD. The Objector remarks, (256.) "The Prophet Hosea, who "was likewise a priest, was bid to take a wife of whore-"doms, (though that by Moses's law was forbid a *priest*,) "and children of whoredoms, and had three children by "his wife, to whom the Lord himself gave names." It is no argument of this gentleman's discretion, to lay the stress of his objection upon a blunder in point of fact. How does it appear that Hosea was a *priest?* I know no

[m] Chorus est eruditorum virorum qui de *præceptis ceremonialibus* hæc intelligunt, et remotione Israelitarum ab altari, utpote quibus substituti Levitæ sunt. Ego vero eos in pretio et honore habeo: nihilominus tamen libere profiteor, huic opinioni nunquam me potuisse consentire, ob rationes non leves sane et futiles, sed solidas prægnantesque; ex *serie orationis*, φράσεως *insolentia*, *verbis aliis textui immixtis*, *antecedentium consequentiumque nexu*, et Scripturarum ἀλληλουχία petitas. *Vitring. Observ. Sacr.* lib. ii. c. i. Compare also Lowth and Wells.

[n] Le Cene, Projet, &c. p. 153, &c. Ross, p. 102.

Scripture, nor so much as tradition for it[o]. The Objector, perhaps, was thinking of Ezekiel, (who indeed was a *priest*,) and through forgetfulness applied it to Hosea, as it struck his fancy, and furnished him with something plausible against the literal construction of the text. Hosea, I conceive, was no priest, but a *prophet* only; and therefore might (notwithstanding what this gentleman has urged) marry "a wife of whoredoms:" though I understand here a wife which after marriage, however chaste before, should prove false to her marriage vow[p]: and so the case of Hosea and Gomer might be the apter parallel to represent the case of God and his people Israel.

It must be owned that commentators and critics have divided upon this matter; some believing it to be a relation of *real* fact, others looking upon it as a prophetic scheme, a *vision*, or a *parable*. A clear and succinct history of the dispute, together with a summary of the reasons offered by the contending parties, may be seen in Pococke upon the place. It would be tedious here, as well as superfluous, to repeat what he has said; and he has left but little room for addition. That very learned man, finding weighty reasons pleaded here and there, declined passing any decretory sentence, being content rather to report than to decide. Both parts of the question have considerable advocates and abettors: but still it must be owned, that the main stream of interpreters runs for the *literal* construction. The learned Carpzov, Professor of Divinity at Leipsic, (a very good judge of these matters,) is confident that what we here read in Hosea is a relation of *real* fact; but at the same time observing, that able and learned men are no less confident the other way[q]. Augustus Pfeiffer, another eminent Leipsic Di-

[o] Hosea was not of the family of Aaron, nor tribe of Levi, but of the tribe of Issachar, as the generality of the learned seem to agree. *See Carpzov. Introd. ad Lib. Bibl.* part. iii. p. 274.

[p] See Lowth and Wells.

[q] Certum tamen, non in *visione*, sed *re vera* conjugem fornicariam ab

vine, (who wrote his Dubia Vexata, A. D. 1685.) he also is a zealous advocate for the *literal* interpretation[r], condemning, with some tartness, those that recede from it. There is another learned foreigner[s] who has now very lately (A. D. 1730.) maintained the literal construction in a way somewhat peculiar: for he supposes that God's words to Hosea, though *imperatively* expressed, bear a *future* signification; not *commanding* him to take a wife of fornications, but *predicting* to him that so it would be in such corrupt times, and making use of that instance in the way of emblem or similitude, to set forth the unfaithfulness of Israel, God's chosen people, towards him. Whether this hypothesis may be of any real service more than others, for the removing difficulties, I pretend not to say: but it shows, however, that the author is strongly persuaded that there is a necessity of maintaining the *reality* of the fact here related, as most of the interpreters, ancient and modern, have done. Pococke observes, that this is by the Jewish expositors looked on as the ancient opinion of some of their Talmudical doctors: and amongst their later Rabbins, it is embraced by Abarbinel. The Christian Fathers, in general, may be said to espouse the same; as Irenæus[t], Basil[u], (or whoever is the author of

Hosea, jussu numinis ductam, et liberos ab ea suscepisse: quod præter cæteros solide evicit Balth. Meisner. (Commentar. in Hos. i. p. 75, &c.) discussis et profligatis, quas in contrarium Polanus urget, rationibus. Quocum confer D. Steuberi Disp. in i. cap. Hoseæ T. V. Marpurg. Disp. xix. p. 235.

Utut me non fugiat, ingenti conatu oppositam nostræ sententiam astruere allaborasse Joh. Tarnovium Exercit. Bibl. lib. ii. class. 1. loc. viii. p. 605, &c. Qui videatur. *Carpzov. Introd. ad Libr. Bibl.* part. iii. p. 277. conf. p. 284.

[r] Pfeiffer. Dub. Vexat. Centur. iv. loc. 73. p. 433. edit. ult.

[s] Quasi igitur sic Prophetam Deus allocutus esset, verba accipio: "Tu de "conjugio ineundo consilium nunc cepisti; fiet autem in tam communi cor- "ruptela, ut feminam accipias scortationi deditam, et in uxorio etiam statu "scortari non desituram." Symbolum igitur illa aptissima erit gentis Israeliticæ, quippe scorto adulteræque simillimæ. *Lakemacher, Observat. Philolog.* vol. ii. p. 70.

[t] Irenæus contra Hæres. lib. iv. c. 20. s. 12. p. 257. edit. Bened.

[u] Basil. in Isa. c. viii. p. 933. edit. Bened. N. B. The last editor allows not

a comment under his name,) Austin [x], Theodoret [y], and Cyril of [z] Alexandria: though it appears from the two last mentioned, that the common interpretation had been then called in question by some, whom they smartly condemn for disputing so plain a case, as they supposed it to be.

*Modern* critics and commentators on the same side with those Fathers, are not easily numbered up; though Pococke and Pfeiffer, taken together, go a good way towards it: and they two, with Steuberus [a], are principally to be consulted in relation to this matter, as having entered the deepest into it, and handled it most at large. I shall only add here, that the three latest commentators I have looked into, Calmet, Lowth, and Wells, all contend for the *literal* construction, for *real* fact.

Notwithstanding what has been said in favour of the literal interpretation, it will be but just to the reader to give some account of the figurative construction, that he may at least know what it is, or what it means, and why some have gone into it. I cannot represent it to better advantage than I find it already laid down in the words of the learned Mr. Bedford, as follows [b]:

" In the first chapter (of the Prophet Hosea) God, in *a* " *parable*, orders him to marry an adulterous wife; and " so he takes Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim; a name " which may be thus interpreted, a complete and final de- " solation, the effect of a general corruption, like *decayed*

the commentary to be Basil's, but thinks it as ancient as the fourth century, or fifth at the latest.

[x] Augustin. contra Faust. lib. xxii. c. 80. p. 410.

[y] Theodoret. in loc. Oper. tom. ii. p. 704.

[z] Cyrill. Alex. in loc. Oper. tom. iii. p. 11.

[a] Steuberus's Dissertation has been lately reprinted in the first volume of the Thesaurus Theologico-Philologicus, among the critics, p. 938.

Pfeiffer, reckoning up the principal moderns of his side, names these following: Lyranus, Ribera, Calovius, Pappus, Gesnerus, Meisnerus, Walther-rus, Glassius, Finkius, Danhawerus, Steuberus. To which I may add, Le Cene, Projet d'une Nouvelle Version, p. 436, &c. with his translator Ross, p. 114, &c.

[b] Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 646.

"*figs*, which are good for nothing. In this *parable* he is "supposed to have children, by whose names he foretells "several calamities: first, the ruin of the house of Jehu, "by calling the first son Jezreel, &c." There is nothing in this method of construing the text but what appears easy and natural; excepting only that it is not called a *parable* in the text itself, and so it may be thought too presuming to make such of it. Jerome[c], among the Christian Fathers, and Maimonides, with several others among the Jewish interpreters, have not scrupled to depart from the *common* construction, preferring the *visional* or *parabolical:* and they have been followed therein by several learned moderns [d] mentioned in Pococke and Pfeiffer; to whom more may be added that have appeared since[e]. Now the ground of the difference between the two kinds of interpreters seems to lie chiefly in this: one side thinks, that while there is nothing plainly immoral or absurd in the thing itself, the *letter* of Scripture ought not to be receded from, lest the taking such a liberty should be an injury done to sacred Writ, and should lead to greater. The other side thinks, that while there is no plain force committed upon Scripture, (especially considering that the *prophetic* style is not subject to common rules,) it may be allowable to take such an interpretation as is least clogged with difficulties from the nature and reason of the thing. I may shut up this article with the calm and moderate words of the learned Pococke:

"Seeing each is backed by great authority, and the "maintainers thereof will not yield to one another's rea- "sons, but keep to their own way, and accuse those that "go otherwise, either of boldness or blindness, and some "very learned men have not dared positively to deter- "mine in the matter; it must be still left to the consi-

[c] Hieronym. Procem. ad Osee. in Ezech. iv. 9.

[d] Schafmannus, Junius, Polanus, Drusius, Hakspanius, Pareus, Zanchius, Rivetus, Calvin, Smith.

[e] Witsius, Miscellan. vol. i. p. 9. Stillingfleet's Letter to a Deist, p. 129, 130. Jenkins, vol. ii. p. 52.

" derate reader to use his own judgment; only with this " caution, that he conceive nothing unworthy of God, or " unbeseeming his holy Prophet, nor draw from the " words any unsavoury or unhandsome conclusions[f]."

## MICAH VI. 7.

SHALL I GIVE MY FIRSTBORN FOR MY TRANSGRESSION, THE FRUIT OF MY BODY FOR THE SIN OF MY SOUL? Here, because the sacrificing of children is mentioned among several other better things, whereby foolish men hoped to expiate their guilt, without leading a good life; our Objector from thence infers, that *human sacrifices* were required or approved by the Jewish laws. His words are: " The Prophet Micah reckons the put- " ting every devoted thing to death among the Jewish " institutions. Here the sacrificing a man's own children " is mentioned equally with the sacrificing of beasts; which " is allowed to be a Jewish institution. How absurdly " must the Prophet be supposed to have argued, after he " hath preferred *justice* and *mercy* to a thing commanded " by God, if he should go on to prefer it to a thing ab- " horred by God?" The Prophet understood good reasoning much better than his corrector understands the Prophet: for he entirely mistakes the case. The Prophet's business and design was to enumerate those vain expedients (of whatever kind they were) which men were apt to rely upon, in lieu of a good life: and because the sacrificing of their own children was one of the foolish expedients made use of for appeasing the Deity, he rejects that also, by name, among the rest, as vain and unprofitable. The Prophet, very probably, had an eye to what king Ahaz (in whose reign, and after, he prophesied[h]) had committed in that kind. Ahaz was one that had learned of the Moabites, or other idolaters, to sacrifice his own children[i]. HE MADE HIS SON TO PASS

[f] Pococke on Hosea, p. 6.
[g] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 95.
[h] Micah i. 1.
[i] See 2 Kings iii. 27.

THROUGH THE FIRE[k]; or, as the Hebrew may more properly be rendered[l], HE OFFERED UP (sacrificed) HIS SON IN THE FIRE, namely, to Baal, or to Moloch. In another place, it is said, plainly and directly, that HE BURNT HIS CHILDREN IN THE FIRE[m]. Now because that inhuman practice was one of the foolish, as well as wicked devices whereby some considerable men hoped to appease Heaven, and to atone for sins, it was very proper for the Prophet to take notice of it among the other *insufficient* expedients thought of for that purpose. For though it might differ in its nature and quality from several others named, as *legal* differs from *illegal*, or as *commanded* from *forbidden*; yet since here the point to be considered was not the *nature* of the things, but their *use* or *subserviency* to the *end* aimed at, they are indifferently named together, as being equally *vain* and *fruitless*, one as well as the other, though not one as much as the other. In short, as this means was trusted to, as well as the other more proper expedients, so it was right to reject it also among the rest, as of no value or efficacy for the appeasing God, or procuring pardon of sins.

If our Objector cannot yet rightly apprehend the case, I shall endeavour to clear it up farther by a resembling instance. Suppose we should tell the Romanists, that it is vain for them to think of appeasing God either by an *orthodox faith*, or by *hearing* and *praying*, or by a *zeal* for the *Church* of *Christ*, or even by *massacreing* of *Protestants*, (whom they call *heretics*,) for that none of these things will stand them in any stead; a sound belief and an entire obedience to God's laws must save them, or nothing can: where would be the absurdity of such a remonstrance? It is true, that their *massacreing* of *Protestants* is so far from being at all acceptable to God, that it is the very reverse: but yet because they fondly conceive that they merit by it, therefore in an application to them,

[k] 2 Kings xvi. 3.

[l] Vid. Vitringa, Observ. Sacr. lib. ii. c. 1. Cleric. in Deut. xviii. 21.

[m] 2 Chron. xxviii. 3.

it might be proper to mention that also, among other much better things, which they presumptuously confide in: and our so mentioning it, would be no argument at all of our approving, or of our not abhorring so detestable a practice. In like manner, when the Prophet Micah took notice of *human sacrifices*, as one of the false stays which some rested upon, (among several others of a better kind,) he did not intend to signify that such sacrifices were *approved*, or were so much as *lawful*, or that they were not *hateful* and execrable in the sight of God and man. The sum of what the Prophet aimed at was this, and this only: that neither such sacrifices as the Law allowed, nor any humanly devised services which the Law had forbidden, would avail to procure the Divine mercy and favour: for a good and holy life, or universal righteousness, was the one thing necessary which God expected, and would insist upon; and without which, every thing else that could be named or invented would be altogether fruitless and vain.

## ZECH. III. 1, 2.

AND HE SHOWED ME JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST STANDING BEFORE THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, AND SATAN STANDING AT HIS RIGHT HAND TO RESIST HIM. AND THE LORD SAID UNTO SATAN, THE LORD REBUKE THEE, O SATAN; EVEN THE LORD THAT HATH CHOSEN JERUSALEM REBUKE THEE: IS NOT THIS A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE FIRE? The Objector takes some notice of this text[n] in passing, and very slightly. Having immediately before thrown a scornful reflection upon a passage in the Book of Job, which has been considered above, and observing that it is not to be taken *literally*, he adds, "The same may be said of "the Lord's saying at another time to Satan, standing at "the right hand of the angel," (at the right hand of the high priest Joshua, he should have said,) "to resist the

[n] Christianity as Old, &c. p. 253.

" high priest Joshua, standing likewise before him, THE " LORD REBUKE THEE, O SATAN." As to what this gentleman objects about *literally*, (a word of ambiguous meaning, and in which he loves to equivocate,) we may observe, that the words of this prophecy are undoubtedly to be interpreted *literally*, not *mystically*, or *allegorically*: but the thing was not literally or outwardly performed, being transacted in *idea* only, or in *vision*. That is to say, the Prophet Zechariah, in an heavenly ecstasy or vision, saw what is here related, had such ideas imprinted, by a Divine influx, upon his mind. As to the whole meaning of this Scripture, I may refer the reader to commentators for it, there being no difficulty that I am sensible of in it. At least, this gentleman has mentioned none, except it be such as I have before answered in considering the other texts in Job, or have now obviated by saying that the thing was transacted in *vision*, as is commonly allowed. There might be some pertinent questions asked in relation to this passage, by an able disputant, that should know how to object like a scholar and a man of parts: but since this gentleman has spared us, by his entering no deeper, it would look over-officious to engage any farther in it.

I have now done with the texts of the Old Testament. There remain still some texts of the New Testament, which the Objector has been tampering with, in the same way of low criticism, and which (if God grants me life and health) will be all distinctly considered in a Fourth Part, to follow this in due time.

A

# DEFENCE

OF THE

## LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S;

PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO THE

## CHARGE OF PERSECUTION.

IN ANSWER TO

JONATHAN JONES, ESQ.

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Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him. PROV. xxvi. 12.

A

# DEFENCE

OF THE

# LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S.

THERE goes a pamphlet abroad, just published, entitled, Instructions to the Right Reverend Richard, Lord Bishop of St. David's, in Defence of Religious Liberty; by Jonathan Jones, Esq. The conceitedness of the title in some measure shows the man, and what we may expect from him. This gentleman, it seems, thinks himself qualified to be a public instructor, and to prescribe to our Prelates. It is not merely liberty of *private judgment*, that the fraternity are contending for, but liberty of setting up as apostles of infidelity, in opposition to the Christian guides, and to draw away people from paying any respect or deference to CHRIST, and his religion. He begins with telling the world, that this excellent Prelate has published a defence of Christianity, begun and carried on with a *professed defence of persecution.* But where has this gentleman learned that the punishing of blasphemy and profaneness, or the executing the laws against irreligion and immorality, is *persecution?* We have heard of persecution for *religion*, for *conscience*, for *truth:* but what means persecution for *no religion*, *no conscience*, *no truth?* It is *prosecution* certainly that he means; only he has not been used to speak with the exactness of Divines. I pass over a page and a half which are mere impertinence, and of no significancy at all, but to show how

full the writer is of himself. He talks magisterially about the Bishop's style, as if he were a judge of it; looks down with contempt and commiseration upon his Lordship; and with an air of superiority professes himself "heartily willing to set him right;" with more such pert, puerile insultings, quite out of character and decency; that one would take him for some young declaimer of the sect, just listed into the service, full of fire and mettle, and wanting the sedateness and caution of the older and graver infidels. "He would not offer this worthy Pre-"late his humble advice," he says, "without his ablest "reasons, and therefore, &c.[a]" What a favour is it to have his *advice*, unasked, and his *ablest reasons too!* it is mighty obliging, and very condescending in him, thus to teach his betters. His able reasons now follow in their order.

I.

The first runs thus: [b] "He (the Bishop) calls aloud "upon the royal authority to draw the sword of ven-"geance, when he ought to remember, that prayers and "tears are the only weapons of the Church." Could any thing be more impertinent or captious than this paragraph? The Bishop did remember that *prayers* and *tears* were the only weapons of the *Church;* and therefore it was that he called for the weapons of the State, in a matter belonging to their cognizance. But this author perhaps has blabbed out his wishes and expectations too soon, in supposing us reduced to the last refuge of *prayers* and *tears*, while there are courts of justice to support religion and virtue, and to punish offenders against either.

II.

"He (the Bishop) would have that religion to be "maintained by fire and sword, which his great Master

[a] Page 7. [b] Ibid.

" meant to establish in meekness and truth [c]." His great Master and ours, undoubtedly, never meant to *make converts* by fire and sword, nor to *force belief* upon infidels: but he meant to leave the ruling powers of every state in the same condition as he found them; " to be a terror to " evil doers," and to " execute wrath upon them that do " evil [d]." For the purpose, to correct those that needlessly and causelessly disturb the public tranquillity, to restrain those that libel the established religion, without offering any better, or any equivalent; to curb the insolence, and humble the pride of such as fly in the face of authority, and pretend, without commission or qualifications, to instruct, and, under that colour, to insult their superiors. These and the like misdemeanors, arising from pride, and vanity, and a turbulent spirit, it concerns the magistrates to take cognizance of, and to punish as the laws direct.

III.

" He (the Bishop) implores the vengeance of the secu- " lar arm in the cause of that God, who himself has said, " Vengeance is mine, I will repay [c]." And where can the magistrate execute vengeance better, than in the cause of that God who gave him commission so to do, and who looks upon it as his vengeance when executed under him, and for him, by his vicegerents. True, the text says, " Avenge not yourselves:" neither does the magistrate, in executing wrath, avenge *himself*, but the *public*; which would otherwise suffer from unruly and turbulent men. And it was never thought or imagined by any sober and intelligent man, except this forward instructor, that God had so confined all vengeance to himself, that he admitted no deputies to act under him.

IV.

" And because his Lordship justly thought their Ma-

[c] Page 7. [d] Rom. xiii. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 14. [c] Page 7.

" jesties had too much discernment and true religion, to " persecute (leg. prosecute) men for God's sake, there- " fore he implores the royal power to do this execution " for his own sake[f]." How free with his Lordship, and their Majesties too! and perfectly well qualified to judge of their *discernment:* though it may look a little too familiar towards their Majesties, to measure their discernment by his own, and to put nonsense and impertinence upon sacred royalty. I see nothing in the suggestion here against the Bishop but dull malice, like the rest. No doubt but his Lordship would have men, so obnoxious to the law, prosecuted and punished according to law, for the glory of God, the honour and welfare of his Majesty's person and government, and the good of the whole kingdom. Libelling religion in such a way as has been lately practised, if suffered to go on with impunity, may leave us neither religion, nor morals, nor strength, nor any thing but the most deplorable confusion.

## V.

[g] " His Lordship represents, that government cannot " subsist if religion be taken away, because of the Divine " restraints upon human hearts, which he thinks are ex- " pected in vain from laws and motives merely political.— " His Lordship then should inform us how government " subsisted for the first four thousand years of the world, " when only the Jewish nation had Divine restraints, and " all the people of the earth besides obeyed the higher " powers from laws and motives merely political.—If he " should reply, they had restraints upon them which " they received as Divine, his Lordship will then equally " advance imposture and superstition with true and ra- " tional religion; from whence it will follow, that the " worship of false gods is of the same advantage to the " higher powers as the religion of Jesus Christ[h]." Here observe, that this author directly asserts, that all the

[f] Page 8. [g] Ibid. [h] Ibid.

people of the earth (Jews excepted) " obeyed the higher " powers from laws and motives merely political." This is thoughtlessly said of him, and more than he had need to have said; only he has unawares discovered his principles, and shewn that his scheme is Atheism. A *Deist* would have said, that the rest of the world obeyed the higher powers from laws and motives of *natural* religion, which might seem a tolerable answer to the Bishop's argument for *positive*. But this gentleman says roundly, that they obeyed upon motives *merely political;* which though entirely false, yet represents truly this author's scheme, Atheism direct: for whoever believes a God, and a Providence, (which stand or fall together,) does not obey merely upon *political* motives. The heathens, generally, did believe in one supreme God, and in a future state of eternal rewards and punishments, had a sense of the law of nature, and remains of ancient tradition, and some conscience; and so by the strength of those principles, though mixed with much superstition, government was kept up and preserved in the heathen world; and not by motives or laws merely political. Assyrians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, all had their respective religions, and all equally abhorred irreligion. The story of Diagoras and his prosecution for Atheism will set this matter in a clear light: I shall relate it in the words of the late learned Dean Prideaux [i].

" About this time happened at Athens the condemna- " tion of Diagoras the Melian. He having settled in that " city, and there taught Atheism, the Athenians pro- " secuted him for it. But by flying out of that country " he escaped the punishment of death, which was in- " tended for him, although not the sentence. For the " Athenians having in his absence condemned him for his " impious doctrine, did set a price upon his head, and de- " creed the reward of a talent to whosoever should kill

[i] Connect. vol. i. p. 323.

" him, wheresoever he should be found. And about " twenty years before, they had proceeded against Prota- " goras, another philosopher, with the like severity, for " only doubting of the being of a God. For in the begin- " ning of one of his books, he having written thus, *Of* " *the Gods I know nothing, neither that they are, nor that* " *they are not, for there are many things that hinder; the* " *blindness of our understanding, and the shortness of hu-* " *man life.* The Athenians would not endure so much " as the raising a doubt about this matter; but calling in " all his books by the common criers of the city, they " caused them all publicly to be burnt with infamy, and " banished the author out of their territories for ever. " Both these had been the scholars of Democritus, the " first founder of the atomical philosophy, which is in- " deed wholly an atheistical scheme. For though it al- " lows the being of a God in name, it takes it away in " effect. For by denying the power of God to create " the world, and the providence of God to govern the " world, and the justice of God to judge the world, they " do the same in effect as if they had denied his being. " But this they durst not openly do even among the " heathens, for fear of punishment; the greater shame is " it to us, who in a Christian state permit so many im- " pious wretches to do this amongst us, with a free li- " berty and absolute impunity." Thus far Dr. Prideaux.

Let the reader judge from hence, whether the heathen nations went upon motives merely political. The true ground of condemning both Protagoras and Diagoras was their dissolving all ties of piety and conscience, by denying, or doubting of, the being of a God, and endeavouring to poison the minds of the people with such their atheistical scheme or schemes. Cicero in a few words may be understood to speak the sense of all the wiser part of the heathen world. " If we take away religion towards " the Gods, I question whether mutual trust, and human " society, and that most excellent virtue, justice, will not

"likewise be destroyed[k]." Speaking a little above of religion and sanctity, he says, "If we lose these, the "consequence will be, disquiet in life and great confu- "sion[l]."

But this we are told is "equally advancing imposture "and superstition, with true and rational religion[m]." It is indeed saying, that such mixed, imperfect religion, is better than none, is preferable to our author's no-religion, or Atheism. It was useful to preserve government *as well* as the Christian religion is, but not *so much* as the Christian religion is, which is sufficient to take off this author's childish playing upon the word *equally*. It was of advantage to the higher powers, but not of *so great* advantage: because no religion whatsoever is so pure or so peaceable as the religion of Christ, or so well fitted to preserve a constant and conscientious obedience to the higher powers.

VI.

"His Lordship would have the King, his sovereign, "cease to be father of his people, that he may become "defender of the faith[n]." No sure: but he desires his Majesty may ever continue "defender of the faith," that so he may ever continue a "true father of his people." But he goes on—"and implores him to renounce that "protection, which is equally due to the subject, &c." Cross purposes again. His Lordship only begs that his Majesty may protect his best and most religious subjects, by curbing and punishing some of the worst. I shall give the picture of infidels and infidelity in the words of the excellent Dr. I. Barrow[o].

[k] Atque haud scio an pietate adversus Deos sublata, fides etiam, et societas humani generis, et una excellentissima virtus, justitia, tollatur. *Cicer. de Nat. Deor.* lib. i. c. 4.

[l] Quibus sublatis perturbatio vitæ sequitur, et magna confusio. *Ibid.*

[m] Page 8.

[n] Page 9.

[o] Barrow's Sermons, vol. iv. on Infidelity, p. 26. Oxf. edit. 1818.

" The naughtiness of infidelity will appear by consider-
" ing its effects and consequences, which are plainly a
" spawn of all vices and villanies, a deluge of all mis-
" chiefs and outrages upon the earth. For faith being
" removed, together with it all *conscience* goeth, no virtue
" can remain: all sobriety of mind, all justice in dealing,
" all security in conversation are packed away. Nothing
" resteth to encourage men to any good, or restrain them
" from any evil; all hopes of reward from God, all fears
" of punishment from him being discarded. No principle
" or rule of practice is left, besides brutish sensuality,
" fond self-love, private interest, in their highest pitch,
" without any bound or curb; which therefore will dis-
" pose men to do nothing but to prey upon each other,
" with all cruel violence and base treachery. Every man
" thence will be a god to himself, a fiend to each other;
" so that necessarily the world will thence be turned into
" a chaos and a hell, full of iniquity and impurity, of spite
" and rage, of misery and torment."

The Instructor adds: " This he (the Bishop) desires,
" to the end that his Majesty may persecute incredulous
" men, and force them, against their consent, to become
" orthodox believers [p]." Not one word of truth. What is desired is, that petulant, blaspheming libellers may be prosecuted according to law; may be forced, against their will, to become modest, quiet, inoffensive, and may no longer fly in the face of the Establishment, and defy all laws, sacred and civil.

## VII.

" His Lordship represents the King's title to the crown
" as founded on the profession of Christianity, when he
" knows that it proceeded from principles of liberty, and
" has himself sworn, by the oath of supremacy, that
" the King is entirely independent on the Church [q]."
The laws of the land [r], I think, require, " that whosoever

[p] Page 9. [q] Ibid. [r] Annæ 4to.

" shall succeed to the crown of Great Britain shall join in " communion with the established Church of England:" from whence, I suppose, the Bishop infers, and very justly, that his Majesty's title is, in part, founded on the profession of Christianity; because he conceives that a man cannot profess the *Protestant* established religion, but he must at the same time profess the *Christian.* I see no flaw in this reasoning, (of the Bishop;) but this author says, [s] " it proceeded from the principles of liberty." And what if it did proceed from the principles of liberty? Was there therefore any liberty left to profess another religion, or to profess none? The legislature undoubtedly considered how necessary it would be to the happiness of these nations, and the security also of the crown, that prince and people should profess the same faith, and join in the same worship, as by law established, and by custom confirmed. And common sense must tell us, that a prince of no religion, (as this writer would have,) a professed favourer of atheism or infidelity, at the head of a *religious* people, would be as great an absurdity and incongruity, as a *Popish* prince over a *Protestant* kingdom. The Christian religion, as professed by our Church, provides best, both for the support of the crown and liberty of the subject; and so upon the principles of liberty, were there nothing else, irreligion, as leading to the most abject slavery both of prince and people, ought to be excluded. But the " Bishop [t] has himself sworn, " that the King is entirely independent of the Church;" is supreme moderator and governor, he means: and what has this to do with the point in debate? The King is not the less supreme in this Church for professing to join in communion with it. For I suppose, his deserting the Church, or professing to join with none, would not make him more the head of the Church than before, or at all advance his ecclesiastical supremacy.

[s] Page 10. [t] Page 9.

## VIII.

" His Lordship poorly answers the popular clamour, " that they who implore the secular arm against infidels " are friends of persecution [u]." I never heard before of any such *popular* clamour: there is a groundless, idle clamour of that kind, raised by an handful of men, in comparison, whom the most and best of the people abhor and detest. Some few perverse, conceited men would have a just *prosecution* for irreligion, blasphemy, and turbulency, called *persecution;* and they are singular in it: this is all I know of a popular clamour. But let us hear this writer in what follows. " His Lordship says, there is a real " difference between argument and buffoonery." His Lordship is much in the right; " as also that licentious in- " vectives against the founders of our religion, and the " miracles which confirm the truth of it, are no part of " the liberties of a Christian nation." His Lordship's observation is a very just one, and unquestionably true. But his instructor here, instead of replying, diverts himself a while about Judge Jefferies [x], to run off from an argument which he cannot answer. When his merriment is over, he then puts on another air; an air of importance.— " I think it an insult upon the British nation, that any " bishop or churchman whatsoever should dare to pre- " scribe us laws, or limit our liberty. A proceeding like " this would have incurred an impeachment in former " times. Archbishop Laud was brought to the scaffold " for offences much less injurious to his country [y]." This is threatening language. This gentleman has forgot himself: he undertook to *instruct* the Bishop, and he does not consider that threatening is not proper for *instruction,* though it might be for *correction.* Every reader may not perceive the true meaning of all this passion and bluster; and therefore it is proper I should whisper him a secret; that this able reasoner is here perfectly gravelled, and has

[u] Page 8. [x] Page 10. [y] Page 19.

not one pertinent word to reply to the Bishop's argument: such is the force of truth and reason, that its very fiercest opposers are obliged to submit to it, and can only bite the chains which they cannot get rid of. Who is it now, that *poorly* answers? The question was; whether libelling the Founder of our religion, and blaspheming his miracles, are any part of the liberties of a Christian nation? The law is the rule and the boundary of the subject's liberty; and the law has absolutely precluded all such profane licentiousness. The Bishop speaks with the law, and this gentleman threatens him with *axe* and *scaffold* [z] against law. Which is no strange thing in a man that can defy Heaven, and blaspheme Omnipotence: but yet it comes very oddly from one that is pleading on the side of mercy, and for the liberties of mankind; and who perhaps has already forfeited the protection of the laws, and owes his liberty and all that he enjoys to the lenity of the government, and to the gentleness of that very religion which he insults and blasphemes. He goes on wandering from the question, because he sees where he is pinched.—"The great council of the nation are only qualified "to say what liberties belong to the nation [a]." True, in points undetermined by law: but in things which have been long legally fixed and determined, the great council of the nation speaks by the standing laws; which are the measure of the subject's liberties, till repealed by the same authority that gave them.

## IX.

"The prosecution carried on against Woolston, at the "earnest application of particular Prelates, shows what "spirit they are of [b]." As to the prosecution carried on against Mr. Woolston, if the poor man be in his senses, it is certainly right. Those that prosecute him, no doubt, judge him to be so. And if it be at the application of *particular Prelates*, as this writer says [c], (of which I know

[z] Page 10. [a] Page 11. [b] Ibid. [c] Ibid.

nothing,) as they also take him to be in his senses, they do no more than is their duty to do; acting therein, as I conceive, from a true Christian and apostolical spirit, tender of the interests of our most holy religion, zealous for the glory of God, and the good of souls, watchful against deceivers and ravening wolves, that tear the flock of Christ, and continually walk about, seeking whom they may devour. It is a gross mistake to imagine that prosecuting offenders in a legal way has any thing at all of an ill spirit in it; since it is the kindest and best natured office that can be, when there is a necessity for it. To neglect it, at such times, is to expose the best men to the insults and oppressions of the worst, and is indeed ill-nature and cruelty to the *public*, which is the greatest cruelty a man can be guilty of.

X.

" They have little sincerity when they declaim against " the free use of irony and ridicule, in contradistinction " to the liberty of serious argument, because the judg- " ment which they solicited and obtained in Westminster " Hall is this, *viz.*[d]

" *Christianity being part of the common law of England,* " all attempts *to subvert or overthrow Christianity must be* " *punishable by common law, because they tend to over-* " *throw the common law.*

" So that by this judgment all arguments against " Christianity, whether serious or ludicrous, are equally " attempts to subvert Christianity, and consequently to be " punished alike by common law[e]." I admit the premises according to the determination of the judges, and the inference also which this writer draws from them; namely, that arguments against Christianity, be they serious or ludicrous, are indifferently (not always in the same degree, or with the same guiltiness) attempts to subvert Christianity, and are consequently to be punish-

[d] Page 11. [e] Page 12.

ed, according to the degree of their malignity, one as well as the other. I see what fallacy this author is aiming at, in *equally and alike:* I detected him before doing the same thing; and so it is enough now to have just mentioned it. As to irony and ridicule, they are either good or bad, according as they are properly or improperly employed. When they are used in a right manner, at a right time, and to right purposes, the use of them is good, just as the use of wine, or feasts, or any other indifferent things: but when, instead of well using them, they are abused or misemployed, to serve the ends of pride, passion, vanity, immorality, atheism, &c. then the use of them is bad.

Those that have particularly condemned the use of *irony* and *ridicule* in the cause of profaneness, or against Christianity, did not, I presume, intend altogether to acquit even serious arguments, in the same cause, from blame: if they did, I must take leave to dissent from them. *Sobrius accessit ad evertendam rempublicam*, is no commendable character; such a person, in some circumstances, may be a more dangerous and a more detestable man, than a *joker* or a *buffoon* that aims at the same thing. But, I suppose, what some ingenious and very worthy persons meant, in speaking more favourably of sober reasoning, was chiefly with a view to other controversies, where some part of Christianity only, and not the whole, is struck at, and where a much greater tenderness may reasonably be allowed than to professed infidels. Or if they had not that in view, they might not perhaps accurately distinguish between the *general* case and this *particular*. A ludicrous way of writing, generally speaking, betrays a greater malignity, as showing that men are advanced to the *seat* of the *scorner*. Besides that, in that way, there is less colour or pretence for *conscience*, which is a plea that the laws have justly indulged: for however a man may sometimes, with a tolerable grace, plead conscience for a modest opposition to some things established, yet he can never with any face pretend he is indispen-

sably obliged to lampoon an establishment, or to make ballads upon it. I may add farther, that childish levity, frothiness, and buffoonery, show little or nothing of a serious regard to truth, and therefore least of all deserve any favour or indulgence. To say all in a few words; in many cases, a ludicrous manner of opposing received doctrines may deserve censure, where a modest and serious opposition might be excusable. But in some of greater importance, neither serious nor ludicrous ought to be endured: and one of these cases is, when any persons endeavour to poison the minds of the people with atheistical principles of irreligion and infidelity. Be the poison ever so soberly administered, it is poison still, and will do mischief, more or less, in any vehicle whatever. But to proceed.

XI.

" Observe what an essential difference there is between " the judgment of the law, and the Lord Bishop of Lon- " don: one says, whatever denies the truth of Christiani- " ty, tends to subvert it; while the other maintains, and " does verily believe, the more freely it is discussed, the " more firmly it will stand[f]." The judgment of the law and the judgment of the Bishop may both be very right, and very consistent with each other: for the one speaks of the *natural* and *general* tendency of a thing; the other of the *accidental* effect. I hope it may be said without offence, that rebellion often serves *accidentally* to strengthen a government, while its *natural* or *general* tendency is destructive of it. For which reason a rebel, though accidentally serviceable to the crown, yet deserves to be hanged for rebelling; and he must take it as a favour, if, after he is caught, he escapes the gallows.

XII.

" It is not the punishment of buffoonery that men of

[f] Page 12.

" sense oppose: but they can never approve a judgment, " which, if carried into a precedent, must be a total re- " straint upon all religious inquiries, and all arguments in " general on any subject, whether pleasant or grave s." As to his men of sense, and their approving or disapproving; it matters not. Their sense, one may be sure, is of a pitch with his own, and we have seen what that is: and as they are parties in this case, their judgment is corrupt and biassed. But as to his plea, that all *religious inquiries* will be restrained, he should have said *irreligious*, which is quite the contrary, and alters the whole state of the argument. For he must not bear us in hand, that libelling Christ Jesus, flouting his miracles, running riot against both Testaments, and poisoning the minds of the people, can come under the soft name of *religious inquiries*. Mere inquiries do not satisfy these gentlemen, but they deal abroad their instructions, obtruding themselves as guides, listing proselytes, and forming a sect; which is something more than making inquiries. However, there is field large enough left for *religious inquiries* within the bounds of decency, and without falling foul upon all revealed religion. But the fault lies in their ignorance, or their ill taste. They know nothing or relish nothing of the many innocent, useful inquiries, within the compass of theology, which are agreeable entertainment to wise men and scholars, and where there is room enough for a latitude of thought. It is a glorious liberty which we Englishmen enjoy, as it stands bounded by law: and we have good reason to thank God for it, and to wish it may never be abridged. But he that asks more, weakens our securities, and endangers what we have, and paves the way for slavery and bondage; whether it be Popery or prevailing infidelity, that this outrage and licentiousness should at length conclude in, the tyranny of either would be unsupportable, and our valuable liberties would expire. As to the tyranny of *Popery*, it is out of ques-

s Page 13.

tion; and, I think, as little doubt can be made of the other. Do but imagine all fear of God discarded, conscience and the expectation of future reckoning thrown off, and thereupon every wild passion let loose, and every lust excited; and what could be further added to make an hell upon earth? It is a pretty amusement for these gentlemen to be drawing infidel schemes, while they sit secure by the prevalence of religion still remaining amongst us: but if once their schemes were to prevail, and become general, they would soon find, that they themselves would no longer have liberty or leisure to sit down to write either in favour of infidelity or against it.

XIII.

"When any of my Lords the Bishops do thus declare "against persecution, whilst they are carrying on prosecu- "tion, or when they declare for liberty, whilst they thus "solicit such a general restraint, all good Christians are "highly concerned and deeply affected; and they have a "due sense of that unblemished integrity and inviolated "sincerity which ought ever to accompany the episcopal "character[h]." Grave banter and contemptible grimace! As if this writer or his clan knew any thing of *good Christians*, or would regard their sentiments if they did: when their professed design is, (if they could effect it,) that there should not be one *good Christian*, nor so much as a Christian left in the kingdom. As to the difference between *persecution* and *prosecution*, enough hath been said above, whither I refer the reader.

XIV.

"His Lordship maintains, that infidels who hate super- "stition must naturally favour the Pope: and that be- "cause they declaim against all sort of superstition, there- "fore they must approve the worst sort; namely, the "Roman Catholic religion[i]." This is misrepresentation.

[h] Page 13. [i] Page 14.

I am confident that his Lordship has no suspicion of their favouring either the Popish or any religion. But wiser men than they have been made dupes of: and it is demonstrable, and has often been demonstrated, that they are really doing their dirty work for the Papists, whether they know it or no. A nation of atheists or infidels never was, never will be: but when they shall have shattered the fences, and broken down the barrier, which is the established Church, *Popery* will flow in like a torrent upon us. This consequence is very plain, but not altogether so plain as the being of a God and a providence, or as the truth of Christianity, or of human liberty, moral virtue, or a future reckoning; so that it is very possible that they who are blind in so many other respects may be here blind also.

XV.

"And as he could not wholly deny his good-liking of "persecution, yet to soften that terrifying word, his "Lordship will have it to be only nominal in England, "while he allows it to be real in the Church of Rome. "Thus fire and faggot are real persecution; but pillory, "fine, and imprisonment, are only nominal[k]." This again is malicious perverting the Bishop's sense, and grossly abusing the reader. His Lordship justly supposes the legal penalties to be no persecution, or persecution falsely so called. The Preston rebels might have called it persecution when they were punished; and with more colour of reason, because many of them might act upon *conscience*, misinformed. But the teachers of infidelity are plainly disturbers of the public peace, and have no pretence at all to *conscience*, in doing it. It is not the gentleness of the penalty, as being pillory and fine, (rather than fire and faggot,) that makes our legal penalties in this case no persecution: but it is that the penalties are just, and that infidel teachers are grievous *offenders* both against Church and State.

[k] Page 14.

XVI.

" His Lordship would make her Majesty's learning to " preside in the debate between his Lordship and Wool- " ston, though the royal authority is implored to prejudge " the controversy, which is an insult to her high under- " standing, and a mockery of her illustrious person; for " he asks that judgment from her knowledge, which is " beforehand awarded by her power[l]." This gentleman is mistaken, if he imagines that her Majesty was desired to judge whether Christianity or infidelity ought to have the preference with her. That would indeed be an " in- " sult to her high understanding, and a mockery to her " illustrious person," to suppose that she could have a thought towards infidelity, or entertain any doubt of the truths of Christianity. But the dispute was laid before her Majesty to apprise her of the folly, madness, wicked- ness, and outrageousness of the insults made upon reli- gion, that so her royal wisdom might judge of them, and of the necessity of suppressing them.

XVII.

" The Queen must undoubtedly relish his doctrine very " ill, if we consider her frequent and pious interpositions, " at foreign courts, in behalf of unhappy men distressed " for their religious opinions[m]." Revery and chicane! What, because the Queen has a tenderness for men of *true religion*, therefore she must have the like for men of *no religion!* because she supports those that maintain the Christian faith, therefore she must support those that oppose and overthrow it! because she favours innocent, honest men, therefore she must of course favour evil men and delinquents! which is just as much sense and as good logic, as if it were said, because she loves those that love their king and country, therefore she must of conse- quence love traitors or rebels. Is there not as wide a

[l] Page 15. [m] Page 16.

difference as possible in the cases, insomuch that the inference from the premises is the very reverse of what this writer draws from them. For if "we consider her fre-"quent and pious interpositions abroad in behalf of un-"happy men" there, because they profess the true Christian and Protestant religion, how is it possible she should interpose in behalf of *infidels* at home, who are destroying that very religion which these distressed foreigners maintain? Would not that be pulling down with one hand what she builds up with the other? Insolent affront to majesty, and unpardonable, if it were not contemptible. I know, the party are perpetually harping upon it, that Christ and his Apostles, and our first reformers, opposed establishments. They did so, and they had good cause for doing it. They disturbed the peace of the world, but they had an equivalent to offer, and made us more than sufficient amends for it: otherwise their attempts had been irregular and unjustifiable; and they had died impostors and rioters, and not martyrs. But what equivalent do these gentlemen offer us for disturbing the peace of the world? Rewards in heaven? They believe no such thing; or if they do, what rewards are we to have for infidelity or irreligion? Oh, but they give us *truth*. No, but it was the primitive martyrs, and the reformers that gave us *truth*; else why are they appealed to as examples? If our new doctors are in the true scheme, then the primitive martyrs and our reformers disturbed the peace of the world for no good end, for error only and mischief, and for the deception of mankind, and are no precedents to follow. Either therefore condemn them for causelessly disturbing the world, and then appeal thither for precedents: or if they did well, then these men, who teach directly contrary, do amiss, and can claim no countenance from their examples.

## XVIII.

"Their (the Indians) present condition is a much more "eligible state than conversion on any such terms; for all

"men had better be savages than slaves; and whilst "Christianity, by the cruelties of wicked men, is against "liberty and happiness, it has but a poor recommenda- "tion to favour and esteem[n]." On the contrary, it would be to very little purpose to endeavour the conversion of the Indians, if every apostate Christian shall be suffered to publish scandalous libels against Christianity, to flout its Founder, to spread lies and slanders of him and his miracles, to misrepresent his doctrine, and to throw all the malicious reflections they can invent upon it, to hinder honest and well meaning men from looking into it, or from seeing the truth. Such conduct is wicked and immoral, and falls under the correction of the magistrate, as much as any other cheat or imposture. There can be no true liberty where such licentiousness is suffered with impunity. This is part of the savageness of corrupt nature, and is a contradiction to modesty, civility, humanity, and to every other virtue that can preserve society and make mankind happy. Not to mention what has been before hinted, that to seduce men to *infidelity* is making them slaves to every lust, passion, and folly imaginable; and what is more, it makes them tigers and cannibals to each other, while there is neither fear of God, nor conscience, nor future account to restrain them. Where every man is a tyrant, or disposed to be so, *slavery* is inevitable, and the most dreadful slavery that can be imagined. Yet these are the men that talk, as they love to talk idly, of the *liberties* of mankind.

## XIX.

"If every man by law ought to believe, what necessity "have they for doctors to convert them[o]?" We are not talking of forcing belief upon any man, but of repressing insults and petulance against the religion established; of correcting their conceitedness and arrogance, in not being content to enjoy their opinions to themselves, but striving

[n] Page 17. [o] Page 19.

to impose their irreligion, blasphemy, and profaneness, upon all men; which in reality is persecuting the establishment, and persecuting the truth.

Enough has been said in answer to the *introduction*. There follows a mock dedication to the Queen, a boyish performance, and thrown in, I suppose, to oblige the bookseller. What is argumental in it has been considered; the other trash is below notice. All I shall observe of it is, that besides the ludicrous, unmannerly insult upon a venerable Prelate, and Lord of Parliament, there is a breach of duty and decency in making so free with majesty, in one continued strain of flam and banter, which must give great offence to as many as have any reverence for crowned heads. Such fooling, if not properly animadverted upon, and seasonably suppressed, may arrive to a greater height, and be attended with very mischievous effects.

There is one objection, not mentioned in the book itself, but in the mock dedication, which, upon second thoughts, I have a mind to take notice of, for the insulting manner wherewith it is urged, and not for its strength, pertinence, or ingenuity. The author thus words it. [p] "For, Madam," speaking to the Queen, "they are so "far from trusting in their arguments offered for Chris- "tianity, that even when they offer them, they endeavour "effectually to deter all men from answering them; "whilst they implore the civil magistrate to sheath the "sword of vengeance in the heart of religious liberty," &c. But let it be considered, if any man were to write against his Majesty's title to the crown, (as these men write against our blessed Lord's title to the Messiahship,) whether it would be thought disturbing his Majesty's right, or the arguments by which it is defended, to have the traitor punished according to his deserts. Or suppose a minister of state, or peer of the realm, had been traduced by lies and slanders, would it argue any distrust in

[p] Page 5.

his cause or character, if, besides a written vindication of himself and confutation of the libel, he should further demand to have the libeller punished as the law directs? A vindication in such cases may be of use to undeceive those that have been imposed upon by misreport; but perhaps may neither spread so fast nor so far as the calumny had done, or at least will be short of reparation even for the time present; and as to the time to come, the libeller, if he is impudent and insolent, (as undoubtedly he will be, if not awed by penalties,) may immediately repeat the same calumnies, or invent new ones; or if he does not, others may, and probably will, while encouraged by the impunity of the first libeller. So that though a vindication be ever so full and satisfactory, it may be farther necessary to punish offenders, in order to prevent their repeating the offence, and to deter others from following their example.

Now to apply this reasoning to the point in hand; this gentleman may please to know that the defenders of Christianity have no distrust at all in their arguments or replies, nor any great idea of the adverse party, either as to their learning or their logic, especially in a cause so wretched and despicable: yet he is so far right, that those who prosecute infidels do discover a *distrust*, (for every punishment is a kind of *caveat*, and implies distrust,) though nothing like to what he vainly imagines; but the meaning of it is, 1. That be their arguments or replies ever so full and unanswerable, yet possibly they may not spread fast enough or far enough to undo the mischiefs which infidels have been doing. 2. That if they could get over that suspicion, yet they can by no means trust in the honesty, good sense, or modesty of infidels, who, if they escape with impunity, will presently renew the same wicked calumnies, though abundantly before confuted. Arguments are feeble artillery against insult: and though they want no strength proper to them, yet they will no more stop a lying tongue, or scolding pen, than put by a sword, or turn off a bullet. 3. They can have no well

grounded assurance as to other persons, but that they, at least, may revive the same calumnies, or invent greater, if not deterred by some exemplary severities. 4. They cannot altogether trust to the ingenuity, attention, or impartiality of several readers; and therefore they think it by no means proper, that libels against Christianity should be thrown among them, though answers also should be immediately sent after them: for where a constitution is infirm, the antidote may be insufficient to expel the poison. 5. They think it would be tedious, trifling, and endless, to permit every ignorant impertinent disputant to pelt Christianity, and impose upon weak readers, only that wiser and good men, who could employ their time better, may be constantly exercised in works so much below them; answering scurrilities. It would be reasonable in any other parallel case; then be it so in this. If it be reasonable to suffer men to be assaulted and wounded because surgeons may heal; or poison to be administered, because physicians may cure; or firebrands to be thrown abroad, because somebody may quench them; then may it be reasonable to permit infidels to propagate irreligion, because the pious Clergy may (if perchance they may) stop the effect of it. In all other cases of like nature, wise men are used to trust more to early precautions than to after remedies.

I shall conclude with observing how this libertine sect, within a very few years, have grown in assurance, and improved in confidence. When the author of the Grounds, &c. first published his piece, he was so modest as not to claim toleration or indulgence for himself, or his followers, directly; he knew it would be a gross affront to our laws and constitution, as well as to common sense; but being an artful man, he shuffles in his pleas for liberty under Mr. Whiston's name, in which view they looked tolerable, because there is much more to be said for a man of conscience and integrity, a mistaken believer, than for an infidel; and the pleas for liberty in one case are much stronger and more rational than in the other.

However, it was not long before the *literal scheme* came abroad, which directly and with open face claimed a right to oppose publicly the legal establishment, in behalf even of *infidelity*. The same demand was pursued in some smaller pamphlets, and with a very unbecoming fierceness and bitterness against the Bishop of Lichfield and Dr. Rogers. The latter replied to them in a set treatise, a very complete and finished performance upon the subject, which for closeness of argument, and strength of reason, as well as purity of style, is inimitable, and will stand the test. Notwithstanding which, this writer here carries on the same claim of liberty, against plain and express law; and not content with that, threatens bishops with *scaffolds*, and judges with the *bar* of the House, for standing by our constitution. His words are; "However terrible "inferior tribunals may show themselves, the proudest "men that ever swelled in *scarlet* have often *kneeled* at "the bar of that most august judicature[q]." This because the judges in Westminster Hall determined in favour of Christianity, as above mentioned. These are brisk advances in so short a time, and are sufficient to let us see what spirit they are of.

[q] Page 11.

# ADVICE

TO

# A YOUNG STUDENT.

WITH A

## METHOD OF STUDY

FOR

## THE FIRST FOUR YEARS.

# ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Essay was, for the most part, drawn up above thirty years ago, by an University Tutor[a], for the private use of his own pupils: and some improvements were afterwards made to it by a judicious friend. It was never intended for the public view, because, in the very nature of it, it should be often changing, in some parts, according as new and better books should come out. Besides, it might be thought assuming in a private Tutor to make his directions public, as if he affected to prescribe to other young Scholars, who might better be left to take directions from their proper Tutors.

But since this little Tract has, without the Author's knowledge, and contrary to his intentions, found a way to the press[b], incorrect in many things, and altered also in method to its disadvantage, it is thought proper to reprint it more correct, restoring it to its first state; that it may appear as perfect now as ever it has been.

[a] Dr. Waterland.

[b] In the Republic of Letters for December 1729.

To this edition are added such books in the sciences as have lately been published, and are now in use, without prescribing however to the Tutors of the Universities, who are the properest judges.

# ADVICE

TO

# A YOUNG STUDENT.

## THE INTRODUCTION.

THE design of this is to be instead of a perpetual guide and monitor to a young student, till he takes a degree. I suppose him not without a tutor to direct, instruct, and admonish him, as occasion may require; but be a tutor ever so diligent, with any considerable number of pupils, he cannot be so particular and frequent in his instructions and advice to each of them as might be wished, or may be necessary to their well doing. To remedy this inconvenience, I have drawn up this system or manual of rules and directions, to be ready at hand for a young student's use, from the time of his first coming to college. He will find here more perhaps than any tutor can have time to say to every one of his pupils; and this small treatise lying on the table before him, may serve better than a tutor's repeating and inculcating such advices a thousand times over: or if a tutor is absent, or busy, or forgetful, or indisposed, or any other ways hindered, the student may go on in his business and his duty, if he will but carefully observe the rules that are here prescribed. It is, I am afraid, too true, that many young students miscarry, making little or no progress in their studies, or throwing them entirely aside, and giving themselves up to idleness and debauchery, for want of being put into a good me-

thod at first, or of a right understanding of what they ought to do: for, being at a loss where to begin, and how to proceed, they often throw away a great deal of time, either in fruitless or improper studies, or in doing nothing at all: and being tired of this, they afterwards seek out for pastimes; and falling in with bad company, take ill courses, and so run headlong to their own ruin.

If the following papers may any way serve to prevent such *fatal miscarriages*, and help any young student to be both a *better man* and a *better scholar*, than otherwise he might be, (and it is to be hoped that with God's blessing, and due care, they may,) then the design of them is sufficiently answered, in obtaining so good an end.

I shall begin with some few advices and directions to a good and sober life; and afterwards proceed to lay down a method of study, with special rules and instructions relating thereto.

## CHAP. I.

### *Directions for a religious and sober Life.*

IT is not my design to give you your whole duty towards God, your neighbour, and yourself; which would be too large a task, and is needless, because you may find it done already by many excellent authors in print; some of which you should constantly have by you. You are to consider, that you are sent to the University, to be trained up for God's glory, and to do good in the world: remember therefore, in the first place, and above all things, to serve your Creator night and day. This is your greatest wisdom, and will be your greatest happiness: without this you must be wretched and miserable, both now and for ever. Endeavour then first to be *religious*, next to be *learned:* it is something to be a good scholar; but it is much more to be a good Christian. A sober man, with but a moderate share of learning, will be always preferable in the sight of God, and even of men too, or however of all wise men, to the most learned who want grace or

goodness. Now in order to live a religious and sober life, observe carefully the following directions.

1. Be constant, morning and evening, to the prayers at chapel. This is a plain necessary duty; and no young student can reasonably hope for God's blessings on his studies, or any thing else, who slights and neglects it. Custom will make rising in the morning both easy and pleasant, provided you go to sleep in due time; which you should by all means do. Never sit up late at night, no, not to study; for besides that learning so got is too dearly bought at the expence of your health or eyesight, sitting up late will certainly tempt you to miss prayers the next morning, or perhaps make you sleep over them, and disorder you all the day, and so hinder your progress in study much more than a few hours over night can further it.

2. Besides public prayers, be sure always to use in your chamber some short private devotions: have some book of devotion for this purpose, such as the Whole Duty of Man, the New Whole Duty of Man, Taylor's Golden Grove, and Nelson's Devotions, at least so long, as till you can gain a facility of praying *extempore;* which may be very proper in such private addresses, when you can do it readily.

3. Read a chapter of the Old or New Testament (but oftener of the New) every morning before you kneel down to pray: this will prepare you better for devotion, and will take up but little time. Do the same at night: half an hour may serve for each; and this will be no hinderance to your studies, or, however, so small, that it is not worth considering, in comparison of the great benefit you will reap by it; and God will bless you the more for it, enabling you to become both a wiser and a better man.

4. Have two or three religious books to read at fit seasons, for your instruction and improvement in piety and holiness; and peruse them often. Those beforementioned, with Thomas a Kempis, Nelson's Festivals, Goodman's

Winter Evenings Conference, and the Gentleman Instructed, may perhaps be sufficient.

5. Never go to any tavern, or alehouse, unless sent for by some country friend; and then stay not long there, nor drink more than is convenient.

6. Covet not a large and general acquaintance; but be content with a very few visitants, and let those be good. Time is too precious to be thrown away upon company and visits: besides, there is danger of having your mind drawn off from your studies, or of being led aside by bad example or conversation.

7. Stay not out of your college any night beyond the regular hour, on any consideration whatever. If you once break the *rule*, when there seems to be good reason for it, you will be inclined to do so afterwards without any such reason. It is therefore much better to submit now and then to an inconvenience, than to break in upon a fixed and *stated rule*. Come in always before the gates are shut, winter and summer.

8. I must in a particular manner advise you to be obliging and yielding to your seniors in college, for the sake of peace and order. Bear with some little rudeness and some imperious carriage, if any be so foolish as to use them towards you: not but that you may have redress upon any the least grievance, by complaining to your tutor; yet it is better to yield and comply in some small matters, which will show a good temper, and make you mightily beloved, and then you will have little or no occasion for complaints. Depend upon it, good nature and civility will by degrees gain the love of all, and will make you very easy amongst your companions.

9. Keep yourself always employed, excepting at those times that are allowed for recreation. Avoid idleness, otherwise called *lounging*: when you think you have nothing to do, you will be easily drawn to do ill. Idleness is the forerunner of *vice*, and the first step to *debauchery*: you must therefore use yourself to business, and never give way to laziness and sloth. And that you may not be

at a loss what to do, and how to employ your time, I shall next proceed to set you out work, and to direct you how to begin and go on with it.

## CHAP. II.

### *A Method of Study.*

YOUR studies should be of three kinds, and all of them carried on together, convenient and proper seasons being allowed to every one. *Philosophy*, *classical* learning, and *divinity*, are the three kinds I mean. I omit law and physic, because I suppose you are designed for a Divine. As to the students of law and physic, because they are but few, it will be easy for a tutor to give particular directions to such by word of mouth, so far as concerns them in distinction from his other pupils. The generality of students are intended to be Clergymen, and as such must take the arts in their way. They must be acquainted with mathematics, geography, astronomy, chronology, and other parts of physics; besides logic, ethics, and metaphysics; all which I comprehend under the general name of *philosophy*, as being parts of it, or necessary by way of introduction to it. To *classical* learning, I refer the study of the languages, and of oratory, history, poetry, and the like; and all these are preparatory to *divinity*, or subservient to it. I shall treat of them severally in a distinct chapter, so far as is necessary to my design; and afterwards give you a general scheme of the method to be used, the time to be allowed, and the books to be read, with other matters relating to them.

## CHAP. III.

### *Directions for the Study of Philosophy.*

1. BEGIN not with philosophy, till your tutor reads lectures to you in it: it is not easy to understand without a master; and *time* is too precious to be thrown away so, especially when it may be usefully laid out upon classics.

At first, after you have been at philosophy lectures, look no further than your lecture book, without special directions from your tutor, or from this paper: it will be time misspent, to endeavour to go further than you can understand. Get your lectures well every day; and that may be sufficient in these studies, for the first half year at least.

2. Set aside your mornings and evenings for philosophy, when you begin to understand it; leaving your afternoons for classics. The former is a study which requires a cool clear head, and therefore mornings especially are the fittest time for it.

3. After you come to have a competent knowledge in philosophy, take short notes of any question which you find discussed in any author: set down the question in a little paper book, and under it the name of the book, with the chapter and page: by this means, if you have been diligent, in two or three years' time you will have a collection of the most considerable questions in philosophy, and will know upon occasion what books to consult *pro* and *con* upon any question.

4. Set a mark in the margin of your book, when you do not understand any thing, and consult other books which may help to explain it: or if you cannot thus master the difficulty, apply to some friend that can, or to your tutor.

## CHAP. IV.

### *General Directions for the Study of Classics.*

1. LET your afternoons, as much of them as can be spared from afternoon lectures, if you have any, be spent in reading classic authors, Greek and Latin.

2. Begin with those mentioned in this paper, taking them in order as they lie: read the first through before you begin the second, and so on, unless you are very much straitened in your time.

3. Read not too fast, but be sure to understand so far

as you have read: one book carefully read over, and throughly understood, will improve you more, than twenty huddled over in haste, in a careless manner. Pass by no difficulty, but consult Dictionaries, Lexicons, and notes; and if none of these answer your doubts, inquire of some friend, or of your tutor.

4. Some books may be laid aside, after they have been once carefully read over and understood: others must be read over and over, for patterns and models to form your own style by in prose or verse. Of the latter sort are three especially, and those perhaps are enough; Terence, Tully, Virgil.

5. Be provided with some books of Greek and Roman antiquities, which you may once read over, and afterwards consult upon occasion. Kennet's Roman Antiquities and Potter's Greek Antiquities may suffice: you may add to them Echard's Roman History.

6. Have a *quarto* paper book for a commonplace, in Mr. Locke's method, to refer any thing curious to; any elegancies of speech, any uncommon phrases, or any remarkable sayings. This will keep you from sleeping over your book, will awaken your attention and observation, and be a great help to your memory. And though I do not suppose but that it may be thrown aside after two or three years, when your judgment is riper, and when the observations you have made at first cease to be new or extraordinary; yet such a book will be of great use to you in the mean time. I speak this, because some perhaps may condemn commonplace books, as being generally useless in a few years. But regard not that: you must begin with little things, if you would do any thing great; and it will be a pleasure to you to observe how you improve.

7. Endeavour in your exercises, prose or verse, not to copy out, but to imitate and vary the most shining thoughts, sentences, or figures which you meet with in your reading. When you are to make an oration, (after you have considered well the matter,) read one of Tully's

on a similar subject. Consider the argumentative part by itself, which Freigius's analytical notes will assist you in; and then you will best distinguish the ornaments which oratory adds, and the art of ranging and managing each topic, and become able to imitate him, allowing for the difference of the subject. However, the bare reading of his compositions will make your thoughts more free and more just than otherwise. Thus Tully improved by Demosthenes, and Virgil by Homer; not to mention many others, ancient or modern, who have thus made excellent use of their reading in their compositions.

8. It would be very convenient for you to have a map before you, and chronological tables, when you read any history; and sometimes it may be requisite in books of oratory and poetry. You may be taught in an hour or two's time, by your tutor, how to use the maps or tables.

## CHAP. V.

### *General Directions for Divinity.*

SOME foundation should be laid in *divinity* within the first four years, for these reasons:

1. Because many design for *orders*, soon after they take a degree; and must therefore be prepared in that time, or not at all.

2. Because it will require a long time to be but competently skilled in divinity; and therefore it should be begun with very early: and if it be not, it will hardly be carried to any great perfection afterwards.

3. It is very good for a student to have all along in his eye what he is *designed for*, and to spend some part of his time and thoughts upon it. Nevertheless I would allow no more than the spare hours in *Sundays* and *holydays*, before and after the duty of those days: and I suppose time may be found in each of them for reading and abridging two sermons, as I shall direct hereafter. The preparatory studies of philosophy and classics must not be neg-

lected for divinity, in the first four years; for they are the foundation, without which a man can hardly be a judicious, it is certain he cannot be a learned Divine. I therefore allow all other time, except *Sundays* and *holydays*, to these, and *them* to divinity. Only I should advise such as design immediately to leave the University and take *orders*, to allow something more to the last; their mornings to philosophy, afternoons to classics, and nights and holydays to divinity; or, however, to the reading the best English writers, such as Temple, Collier, Spectator, and other writings of Addison, and other masters of *thought* and *style*. I could give several reasons for this; but they are very obvious, and will be easily understood from what I shall observe presently about English sermons.

I must be larger in my *advices* about *divinity*, than I have been about the two former; because the method I propose may seem perhaps *new* and *strange*, and the reasons for it not sufficiently understood without particular explication.

I advise by all means to begin with *English sermons:* the reasons for it are these:

1. They are the easiest, plainest, and most entertaining of any books of divinity; and therefore fittest for young beginners.

2. They contain as much and as good divinity as any other discourses whatever, and might be digested into a better *body of divinity* than any that is yet extant.

3. The reading of them, besides the knowledge of divinity, teaches the best method of making sermons in the easiest manner, by example, and furnishes a man insensibly with words and phrases suitable to the pulpit, making him master of the English style and language.

4. When any one has read over and abridged most of the best *English sermons*, he will have good *hints* in great number upon any practical subject, and be prepared to treat of it with judgment, accuracy, and in a good method. But because the abridging of sermons may be thought a

tedious and painful work, I shall obviate the objection, by shewing what I mean, and giving a specimen of it.

Get a *quarto* paper book; and after you have carefully read a sermon once or twice over, take down the general and particular heads, marking the first with numbers in the middle of the paper, the other at the side, as you see here:

Sharp's first Sermon.

*Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace.* Rom. xiv. 19.

I.

Consider what is due from us to the *Church*, in order to *peace*.

1. Every member of the *Church* is bound to external communion with it, where it may be had: without this, neither the ends of *Church-society* nor privileges can be obtained.
2. Every member is bound to join in communion with the *Church established* where he lives, if the terms of communion be lawful.
3. Every member is obliged to submit to all the laws and constitutions of the *Church*;
   1st, As to the orderly performance of *worship*:
   2dly, As to the maintaining *peace* and *unity*.
4. Nothing but *unlawful terms* of communion can justify a *separation*.
5. From hence it follows, that neither *unscriptural impositions*, nor *errors*, nor *corruptions* in doctrine or practice, while *suffered* only, not *imposed*; nor, lastly, the pretence of *better edification*, can justify a *separation*.

II.

Consider what is due from us to particular Christians, in order to *peace*.

1. That in matters of *opinion*, we give every man leave to judge for himself.
2. That we lay aside all *prejudice* in the search after truth.
3. That we quarrel not about *words*.
4. That we charge not men with all the *consequences* deducible from their *opinions*.
5. That we abstract men's *persons* from their *opinions*.
6. That we vigorously pursue *holiness*.

III.

Motives to the duty laid down.

1. From the nature of our *religion*.
2. From the cogent precepts of Scripture.
3. From the unreasonableness of our *differences*.
4. From their ill *consequences* to { *Virtue*. / The *civil estate*. / *Christianity*. / The *Protestant religion*. }

Here you have the divisions and subdivisions, the substance of the whole sermon in a very little compass; and by having it thus in little, you will both comprehend and retain it better. Do thus with two sermons every *Sunday* and *holyday*, which need not take up more than three hours each; and in three or four years' time, you can hardly imagine how much it will improve you in practical divinity; and of how great use it will be to you ever after.

If you have been careful in your three first years to read over and abridge most of the best sermons in print, as I shall point out to you, next endeavour to get a general view of the several controversies on foot, from Bennet's books; and some knowledge of *Church-history*, from Mr. Echard, and Du Pin's Compendious History of the Church, in four volumes 8vo; and then, if you have time, undertake Pearson on the Creed, and Burnet on the Articles. But I shall be more particular in appointing what books are to be read, in the following pages.

## CHAP. VI.

*A Course of Studies, Philosophical, Classical, and Divine, for the first four Years.*

HAVING given general directions for your studies of three kinds, I shall now show you more particularly what books are to be read, and in what order; and appoint you your work for every year till you take a *degree.*

I begin the year with January, though few come so early to college: if you happen to come later, yet begin with the books first set down, and take the rest in order, without minding what months are appointed for them; only keep as near as may be to the proportion of time set for the reading of them.

One thing more I must note, *viz.* that I do not expect one and the same task should serve for all capacities: some may be able to do more, others less, than I have prescribed; but let all do what they can. The former may read many other books besides those here mentioned, as they have leisure, and as their own fancy or judgment may lead them: the latter may be content with only some part of what is here set down; or, by the advice of their tutor, choose some shorter and easier way of getting a moderate share of learning, suited to their circumstances and capacities.

Upon the whole; let the method prescribed be a general standing rule to steer the course of your studies by. Where exceptions are necessary, your own prudence, or your tutor, will direct you what to do.

*Books to be read in the first year.*

| | PHILOSOPHICAL. | CLASSICAL. | RELIGIOUS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jan. Feb. | Wingate's Arithm. | Terence. | Sharp's Sermons. Calamy's Sermons. |
| Mar. April | Euclid. | Xenophontis Cyri Institutio. | Sprat's Sermons. Blackhall's Sermons. |
| May June | Euclid. Wallis's Logic. | Tully's Epistles. Phædrus's Fables. | Hoadly's Sermons. South's Sermons. |
| July Aug. | Euclid's Elements. | Lucian's Select Dialogues. Theophrastus. | South's Sermons. |
| Sept. Oct. | Salmon's Geography. | Justin. Cornelius Nepos. | Young's Sermons. |
| Nov. Dec. | Keill Trigonometria. | Dionysius's Geography. | Scot's Sermons and Discourses, 3 vols. |

*Remarks on the Books mentioned in the first column.*

Wingate's Arithmetic. This book is designed for an introduction to mathematics, and is one of the plainest in its kind: and because arithmetic and geometry are requisite to a thorough knowledge in philosophy, I refer them to that head.

Euclid may follow, or be begun at the same time with the former, if your tutor reads lectures in it; otherwise let it alone till he does. I shall not trouble you with the reasons why I prefer Euclid to any other elements of geometry as most proper to begin with; see Mr. Whiston's preface to Tacquet, with which I agree entirely, for other reasons besides those there mentioned. You may, if you have time, when you have gone through five or six books in Euclid, take Pardie's Geometry, and you will be pleased to find the same things you have learnt before in a different and somewhat shorter method; besides some other things, which will be new and diverting.

Wallis's Logic, or some other, I suppose, may by this time be read by your tutor: the use of it chiefly lies in

explaining *words* and *terms of art*, especially to young beginners. As to the true art of *reasoning*, it will be better learnt afterwards by other books, or come by use and imitation. The most proper way will be to read *reasoning* authors, to converse with your equals freely upon subjects you have read, and now and then to abridge a close written discourse upon other subjects, as well as sermons. The conduct of the understanding is admirably taught by Mr. Locke, in a posthumous discourse that bears his name. The study of the mathematics also will help more towards it than any rules of logic.

Keill's Trigonometry may now be read, but I suppose your tutor to help you. Trigonometry is very necessary to prepare you for reading of astronomy, which cannot be competently understood without it. Some insight into other parts of the mathematics, particularly Conic Sections, if you have time and inclinations for it, may be highly useful, and you may carry on mathematics and philosophy together through the whole four years. I suppose you have some notion of Algebra, from the rudiments of it in arithmetic; but it would now be very proper to advance somewhat further in it, for the better understanding the books of philosophy mentioned hereafter; for which I shall name Hammond's, Maclaurin's, and Simpson's Algebra; but the former may be sufficient.

*Remarks on the Books contained in the second column.*

Terence is as easy as any to begin with, and the most proper, because you must read it very often, to make yourself master of familiar and pure Latin.

Xenophon comes next, as being pure and easy Greek; and you are to take care so to read alternately the Greek and Latin authors, that you may improve in both languages.

By the way, let me here mention one thing relating to the Hellenistical language: it would not be improper to bring your Septuagint with you to chapel every day, to read the lessons in Greek. I need not add any thing

about the other classics in this column, the reasons being much the same with what hath been observed of the two first; but read over the general directions given for the study of *classics*, and apply them as you see occasion.

*Remarks on the third column.*

It being almost indifferent what Sermons are read first, provided they be good, I have not been curious about placing them. If some of these Sermons may be sooner had than others, begin with which you please.

A short character of the Sermons is this: Sharp's, Calamy's, and Blackhall's, are the best models for an easy, natural, and familiar way of writing. Sprat is fine, florid, and elaborate in his style, artful in his method, and not so open as the former, but harder to be imitated. Hoadly is very exact and judicious, and both his sense and style just, close, and clear. The other three are very sound, clear writers; only Scot is too swelling and pompous, and South is something too full of *wit* and *satire*, and does not always observe a *decorum* in his style.

*Books to be read in the second year.*

| | PHILOSOPHICAL. | CLASSICAL. | RELIGIOUS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jan. Feb. | Harris's Astronomical Dialogues. Keill's Astronomy. | Cambray on Eloquence. Vossius's Rhetoric. | Tillotson's Sermons, vol. i. fol. |
| Mar. April | Locke's Hum. Und. Simpson's Con. Sect. | Tully's Orat. | |
| May June | Milnes's Sectiones Conicæ. | Isocrates. Demosthenes. | Tillotson's Sermons, vol. ii. fol. |
| July Aug. | Keill's Introduct. | Cæsar's Comment. Sallust. | |
| Sept. Oct. | Cheyne's Philosoph. Principles. | Hesiod. Theocritus. | Tillotson's Sermons, vol. iii. fol. |
| Nov. Dec. | Bartholin. Phys. Rohaulti Phys. | Ovid's Fasti. Virgil's Eclog. | |

*Remarks on the first column.*

Harris's Astronomical Dialogues, and Keill's Astronomical Lectures, are plain and intelligible, and will give a good general view of that science.

Locke's Human Understanding must be read, being a book so much (and I add so justly) valued, however faulty the author may have been in other writings.

Simpson's Conic Sections may be read by any one who understands Euclid, and will be necessary to those who would understand astronomy. I have also mentioned Milnes's Conic Sections.

Keill is more difficult, and perhaps not to be attempted *proprio marte*, or without the help of your tutor.

Cheyne will for the most part be very easy, after you understand the two former: and you may join Bentley's Sermons, and Huygens's Planetary Worlds, if you have time; which will at once improve and entertain you. Rohault's Physics are chiefly valuable for the optics, which are there laid down in the easiest and clearest manner: as to the rest, the excellent notes that go along with it are its best commendation. You may pass over many chapters with only a cursory view, and entirely omit the three last parts, only observing the notes at the bottom of the pages, which are every where good. Read Desagulier's and Rowning's Mechanics, Statics, and Optics, along with Rohault, which will very much contribute to the right understanding such parts of him, or his editor, as are upon those subjects. You may add Bartholin's Physics for the heads of a system. But I suppose by this time you will be able to observe some *defects*, and correct some *mistakes* of that author, as you read him.

*Remarks on the second and third columns.*

Cambray on Eloquence, or some other rhetoric, should be read; not only to learn oratory, but to be able to read any orations with judgment, and to improve by them. Yet Vossius may serve, if you want time to peruse the

other. You may add to both these, Rapin's Works in two volumes, which will give you a good taste of oratory and polite writing, and direct you to form a judgment of authors ancient and modern. And this is all I need say of the books mentioned in the second column.

The third contains only Tillotson's Sermons; the character of which is too well known to need any enlargement. There is one or two [a] points of doctrine, particularly that of *hell-torments*, justly exceptionable; but that has been so much taken notice of, and so fully confuted by other writers, particularly by the learned Mr. Lupton, in a Sermon before the University of Oxford, and Dr. Whitby, in his Appendix to the Second of the Thessalonians, that it is needless for me to caution you any further against it. He seems to have followed his author too close; the most exceptionable part of the sermon being almost a verbal translation of Episcopius.

*Books to be read in the third year.*

| | PHILOSOPHICAL. | CLASSICAL. | RELIGIOUS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jan. Feb. | Burnet's Theory, with Keill's Remarks. | Homeri Ilias, edit. Clarke. | Norris's Practical Discourses, 1st and 2d parts. |
| Mar. April | Whiston's Theory, with Keill's Remarks. | Virgil's Georgics. —— Æneids. | Norris's Practical Discourses, 3d and 4th parts. |
| May June | Wells's Chronology. Beveridge's Chron. | Sophocles. | Clagget's Sermons, two vols. |
| July Aug. | Ethices Compend. Puffendorf's Law of Nature, &c. | Horace. | Atterbury's (Lewis) Sermons, two vols. |
| Sept. Oct. | Puffendorf. Grotius de Jure Belli. | Euripides, King's edit. | Atterbury's (Franc.) Sermons. |
| Nov. Dec. | Puffendorf. Grotius. | Juvenal. Persius. | Stillingfleet's Sermons. |

[a] A second point I had in view concerns the *Satisfaction*, which is modestly and judiciously examined by an ingenious Lady, in a very good book, entitled, The Religion of a Church of England Woman, p. 339, &c.

*Remarks on the first column.*

The two Theorists, with Keill upon them, may now be useful: there is a great deal of curious learning and philosophy in them, which a student may very much improve himself by.

Chronology is a necessary part of learning, and ought to be well understood: the two authors here mentioned may serve at present; if you would carry it further, get Strauchius, and join it with them.

Some general view of ethics may be proper here, before you go further: besides the Ethic. Compend. Hutcheson and Fordyce are the latest and best systems you will meet with. Puffendorf and Grotius are admirable books, and should be studied carefully: they are excellent foundation for casuistical divinity; and to them may be added Sanderson's Prelections. There is an abridgment of Puffendorf, done by himself, which may be usefully read after the larger, to help the memory: but I would not advise you to begin with it, unless you are much straitened in time; for it is too short and full to give you a distinct knowledge of the matters it treats of.

*Remarks on the second and third columns.*

I shall say little of the classics here mentioned, being well known. I place Homer before Virgil, because the latter takes much from him. It might be proper to read Bossu of Epic Poetry, before you undertake them. Euripides perhaps need not be read at large, but only the select plays in octavo.

I need not say much of the Sermons in the third column. Norris is a fine writer for style and thought, and commonly just, except in what relates to his World of Ideas, where he sometimes trifles. You may see in the Appendix some other Sermons, besides these mentioned; which, if you have time to spare, are very well worth reading and abridging.

*Books to be read in the fourth year.*

| | PHILOSOPHICAL. | CLASSICAL. | RELIGIOUS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jan. Feb. | Hutcheson's Metaphysics. | Thucydides. | Jenkins's Reasonableness of Christianity. |
| Mar. April | Newton's Optics. | Thucydides. | Clarke's Lectures. Grot. de Verit. R. C. |
| May June | | Livy. | Bennet of Pop. Abridg. L. C. |
| July Aug. | Gregory's Astronomy. | Livy. | Pearson on the Creed, with King's Crit. Hist. |
| Sept. Oct. | | Diogenes Laertius. | West on the Resurrection. |
| Nov. Dec. | | Cicero's Philosoph. Works. | Burnet's Articles. |

*Remarks on the Books for the fourth year.*

Metaphysics are chiefly useful for clear and distinct conceptions. Hutcheson will give a general view of their design, and the parts belonging to them. The two following books in this column are placed last, as being more difficult to understand than any before mentioned, requiring much *thought* and close *application* to be a master of them.

The like account is to be given of the classic authors in the next column.

As to the books of divinity, in the last column; see *general directions for divinity* towards the end.

You may wonder all this time that I say nothing of Hebrew, which must be owned to be extremely necessary to a *Divine*. I am very sensible of it; but yet, unless you have learned something of it at school, (which if you have done, take care to carry it on with your other studies,) I say, unless this be the case, you may conveniently defer the learning of it till you have taken a *degree;* for then

you may lay aside all other studies for a few months, till you make yourself master of it. And now if you design for *orders* presently, it will not be improper to apply yourself wholly to *divinity* for some time: wherefore I shall add an *appendix*, yet further to direct you how to proceed in it after you are Bachelor. Or if you design not presently for *orders*, you may proceed in philosophical and classical learning, and read as many as you can of the books following, or choose out such as are most agreeable and useful. The moral authors, Greek and Latin, I would especially recommend to your perusal.

### GREEK AUTHORS.

Aristot. Rhetorica.
Epictetus.
Marcus Antoninus.
Herodotus.
Plutarch.
Homeri Odyss.
Aristophanes.
Plato de Rebus Div.
Callimachus.
Herodian.
Longinus.
Veteres Orator. Græc.

### LATIN AUTHORS.

Plinii Epist. et Panegyr.
Senecæ Opera.
Lucretius.
Plautus.
Q. Curtius.
Suetonius.
Tacitus.
Aulus Gellius.
Lucanus.
Florus.
Martialis.
Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius.
Manilius.
Ovidii Epist. et Metamorph.
Eutropius.

### PHILOSOPHICAL.

Salmon's Geography.
Newtoni Princip.
Saunderson's Algebra.
Smith's Optics.
Musschenbroek's Philosoph.
Baker on the Microscope.
Chambers's Dictionary.
Hale's Statics.

## AN APPENDIX.

Supposing now that you have in four years gained a competent skill in Greek and Latin authors, and in the arts and sciences, and that you have laid some foundation in English Divinity, from reading sermons; and that you have a general view of the controversies on foot from the books mentioned, and some insight into Church-history; next (if not done already) learn Hebrew: then take in hand some good commentator, Grotius or Patrick, and read it through. You may take Josephus's History along with it, and Dupin's Canon of the Old Testament. From thence proceed to the New Testament, which also read carefully over with some commentator, Grotius, Hammond, or Whitby; the last I should prefer to be read through, and the others to be consulted on occasion. From thence go on to the Church-writers, taking them in order of time; first seeing a character of their works in Dupin, or Cave, or Bull: and let Bingham's Ecclesiastical Antiquities be consulted, where he treats of such matters as you meet with, that have any difficulty in them. Thus go on till you come to the fourth century, at least, if your time, business, and other circumstances will permit. If not, you must be contented to take the easier and shorter way; and study such books as may more immediately serve to furnish you as a preacher: which may be these that follow, besides those beforementioned.

Bull's Latin Works, fol. Grab. edit.
Nelson's Life of Bull, with his English Works, in 4 vols. 8vo.
Nelson's Feasts and Fasts.
Stanhope's Epistles and Gospels, 4 vols.
Kettlewell's Measures of Obedience.
———— on the Sacrament.
———— Practical Believer.
Scot's Christian Life, 5 vols.
Lucas's Inquiry after Happiness, 2 vols.
Hammond's Practical Catechism.

Fleetwood's Relative Duties.
Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ.
Burnet's History of the Reformation.
F. Paul's History of the Council of Trent.
Clarendon's History.
Cosin's Canon of Scripture.
Stillingfleet's Cases, 2 vols.
Norris's Humility and Prudence, 2 vols.
——— Reason and Faith.
Wilkins's Natural Religion.
Dean Sherlock's Works.
Potter's Church-Government.
Ostervald's Causes of Corruption.
Sherlock, Bishop of London, on Prophecy, Trial of the Witnesses, &c.
West on the Resurrection.
Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul.
Wollaston's Religion of Nature.
Conybeare's Defence of Revealed Religion.
Butler's Analogy.
Watts's Scripture History.
Archdeacon St. George's Examination for Holy Orders.
Stackhouse's History of the Bible.
Nichols's Defensio Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ.
Wake's Catechism.
Clagget s Operations of the Spirit.
Chillingworth.
Cave's Primitive Christianity.

| SERMONS. | SERMONS. |
|---|---|
| Lucas's | Butler's |
| Barrow's | Waterland's |
| Hickman's (2 vols.) | Blair's (4 vols.) |
| Bragg's | Abernethy's |
| Beveridge's | Bishop Sherlock's |
| Fiddes's (3 vols.) | Balguy's (2 vols.) |
| Fothergill's | Dodwell's (2 vols.) |
| Seed's (4 vols.) | |

A

# RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND EDITION

OF THE

SERMONS OF THE REV. JAMES BLAIR, M. A.

COMMISSARY OF VIRGINIA, PRESIDENT OF WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE, AND RECTOR OF WILLIAMSBURG IN THAT COLONY.

*In 4 vols. 8vo. London, 1740.*

A

# RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION OF THE

## SERMONS OF THE REV. JAMES BLAIR, M.A.

THE worthy author living (if he yet lives) at too great a distance to attend this edition, or to give it a new *preface*, I was desired to take that small trouble upon me: which I do with the more pleasure, partly, out of a grateful respect to a person, by whose pious and learned labours I have been so agreeably instructed; and partly, to excite others to give them the more serious and careful perusal. I should have been glad to have had it in my power to oblige the public with some account of the life and character of this good man; who, while he has shined abroad, in a far distant land, has been but a little known here; except it be by these his *printed works*, which appear to be a fair and full portraiture of his mind. As to the rest, all that I can at present learn will lie within a very small compass. He was born and bred in Scotland; and was ordained and beneficed in the *episcopal* Church there: but meeting with some discouragements, under an unsettled state of affairs, and having a prospect of discharging his ministerial functions more usefully elsewhere, he quitted his preferments there, and came over into England, some time in the latter end of King Charles the Second's reign. It was not long before he was taken notice of by the then Bishop of London, (Dr. Compton,) who prevailed with him to go as *missionary* (about the

year 1685) into Virginia: where by his regular conversation, exemplary conduct, and unwearied labours in the work of the ministry, he did good service to religion, and gained to himself a good report amongst all: so that the same Bishop Compton, being well apprised of his true and great worth, made choice of him, about the year 1689, as his Commissary for Virginia; a very weighty and creditable post, the highest office in the Church there: which, however, did not take him off from his pastoral care, but only rendered him the more shining example of it to all the other Clergy within that colony.

While his thoughts were wholly intent upon doing good in his office, he observed with true concern, that the *want of schools* and proper seminaries for religion and learning, was such a damp upon all great attempts for the propagation of the Gospel, that little could be hoped for, without first removing that obstacle. Therefore he formed a vast design of erecting and endowing a college in Virginia, at Williamsburg, the capital of that country, for professors and students in *academical* learning. In order thereto, he had himself set on foot a voluntary subscription, amounting to a great sum: and not content with that, he came over into England, in the year 1693, to solicit the affair at Court. The good Queen (Queen Mary) was so well pleased with the noble design, that she espoused it with a particular zeal; and King William also, as soon as he became acquainted with its use and excellency, very readily concurred with the Queen in it. Accordingly, a patent passed for the erecting and endowing a college, called from the founders the William and Mary College: and Mr. Blair, who had had the principal hand in laying, and soliciting, and concerting the design, was appointed *President* of the College[a]. Our

[a] See some account of this matter in Bishop Burnet's History of his own Time, vol. ii. p. 119. and in Dr. Humphreys's Historical Account of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, p. 9, 10, 11.

author, it seems, has now been a *Minister* of the Gospel fifty-eight years, or thereabouts; a *Missionary* fifty-four years; *Commissary* fifty years; and *President* of the College about forty-six: a faithful labourer in God's vineyard from first to last; an ornament to his *profession* and his several *offices*, and now in a good old age, hourly waiting for (if not before this gone to enjoy) the *high prize* of his calling.

As to the Discourses here following, they had the advantage of being composed at a mature age, after a *course* of serious *studies*, after much *experience* in the work of the ministry, after wide and large observations made upon men and things; and, in short, after an improved experimental knowledge gained in the school of Christ. They had their *first impression* in the year 1722; drawn into public light by the repeated importunities of several worthy Prelates, and other Clergy of our Church, (who had perused a *few* of them in manuscript,) and by the particular encouragement of the then Metropolitan, Archbishop Wake, and of Dr. Robinson, then Bishop of London, to whom the Sermons were dedicated. When that impression was gone off, and copies were become very scarce, the executors of the late Rev. Dr. Bray (to whom the author had previously transferred his copyright) thought of a *new* impression, and communicated their design to the worthy author: who accordingly, in the year 1732, revised the work, corrected the *errata* of the *press*, added *indexes* of *texts* and *matters*, and prepared a new dedication, addressed to *the Right Reverend Father in God* EDMUND, *Lord Bishop of London*. How the edition then intended came to be retarded till this time, I know not; neither is it of moment to inquire: it is well that now at last the public once more enjoys this valuable treasure of *sound Divinity*, of *practical Christianity*. But when I say *practical*, let no one be so weak as to take that for a *diminutive* expression; which is indeed the highest and brightest commendation that a *work* can have; whether we look at the intrinsic *use* and *value*

of it, or at the real *difficulties* of performing it to a degree of exactness, or at the talents requisite for it. A man bred up in the schools, or conversant only with books, may be able to write *systems*, or to discuss *points*, in a clear and accurate manner: but that and more is required in an able *guide*, a complete *practical Divine*, who undertakes to bring down the most important truths to the level of a *popular audience*; to adapt them properly to *times*, *persons*, and *circumstances*; to guard them against *latent* prejudices and *secret* subterfuges; and lastly, to enforce them with a becoming earnestness, and with all the prudent ways of insinuation and address. A person must have some knowledge of men, besides that of *books*, to succeed well here; and must have a kind of *practical sagacity* (which nothing but the grace of God, joined with recollection and wise observation can bring) to be able to represent Christian truths to the life, or to any considerable degree of advantage.

As to the subject here made choice of, it is the highest and the noblest that could be, viz. our Lord's *Divine* Sermon on the Mount: and as it is here explained with *good judgment*, so it appears likewise to be pressed with *due force*; in a clear and easy, but yet masculine style, equally fitted to the capacities of *common* Christians, and to the improved understandings of the *knowing* and judicious. One peculiar commendation must, I believe, be allowed to our author, that he happily hit upon a *new key* (which Divines before him had not thought on) for the fuller opening the occasion, the views, the retired meaning and connection of our Lord's *Divine* Sermon. Not that the *thought*, with respect to the Jewish expectations of a *temporal kingdom* was at all *new*; but the *application* of it to this case, and the use made of it for the unravelling some of the darker parts of our Lord's discourse, and the clearing their coherence; *that* was *new*, and appears to be of excellent service: particularly in the *eight beatitudes*, (for the setting every one of them upon a *distinct* foot, and not running several of

them, too confusedly, one into another,) as also in several other texts.

But to return; our author has, in my opinion, very aptly joined the *commentator*, *preacher*, and *casuist* all in one: and I cannot but approve the *example* he has himself given, and the *model* which he has so handsomely recommended to others, [b] for the *composition* of *sermons*. It is extremely proper that the *text* and the *sermon* should not appear as *strangers* to each other, but rather as near *kindred*, discovering the same *features*; that so the discourse itself may almost point out to discerning judges from what place of Scripture it derived its birth. This is certainly right in the general; but is yet so to be understood as to leave room for *excepted* cases, where excursions may be *needful* on account of some *special* occasion, season, circumstances, &c. and where any decent handle for a neat *transition* may prudently and properly be taken. But I cannot say any thing better, or so well upon this head, as the author himself has done in the Dedication and Preface before referred to, and therefore I dismiss it, and proceed.

One particular I cannot forbear to take notice of, (which an attentive reader may often observe in the course of these Sermons,) how happy a talent the author had in deciding points of great moment in a very *few* and *plain* words, but the result of *deep consideration*, and discovering a great *compass* of *thought*. I shall single out a few instances only, from among many, for a *taste* to the reader.

*Of the Value of good Works.*

"I am apprehensive, that by our unwary confutation "of the Popish errors concerning *merit* and *supererogation*, we have too much depreciated *good works* themselves; whereas it is most certain they ought to be "highly had in estimation; not only as the genuine *signs*

[b] In his Dedication to Bishop Robinson, and his Preface.

" and *fruits* of a lively faith, but as necessary *conditions* " of *salvation*; and not only of salvation, but of our " *growth* in *grace*, and of our advancement to *higher de-* " *grees* of *glory*[c]." Here, very briefly and justly, is pointed out a dangerous *extreme*, with the rise and occasion of it, and the proper cure for it, or correction of it.

For the justifying the term *conditions*, the reader, who has any scruple, may consult Bishop Bull in his Harmonia &c. and Bishop Stillingfleet in his Answers to Mr. Lobb. Our author says that and more, improving and enforcing the same thought with two very pertinent and weighty considerations.

*What makes a good Work.*

" To make any work a *good work*, it must be 1. *Law-* " *ful* in itself. 2. *Suitable* to our *station* and *circum-* " *stances* in the world. 3. *Designed* for promoting some- " thing that is good for the *service* of God, for the *good* " of our *neighbour*, or the *salvation* of our own *souls*. " 4. Something within the *reach* of our own *talents* and " *abilities*. If it wants any of these *conditions*, it cannot " be one of those *good works* meant in my text[d]." He goes on to explain the several particulars at large, in a very clear and just manner. A *good work* might have been more briefly *defined:* but it could not have been more wisely, or more distinctly *guarded* against every evasion and illusion of *self-flattery*; whereby many are persuaded that they are doing *good works*, while they are really doing *works* of *darkness*.

*Of false Prophets.*

" I cannot believe that they are all *wicked* men in their " *hearts* and *lives*, who are infected with any heretical, " dangerous doctrine. It is probable the *sheep's clothing* " may extend farther than the bare *hypocritical* outward

[c] Vol. i. Serm. xxi. p. 374.

[d] Vol. i. Serm. xxxi. p. 506.

" show, even to the *good habits* of the mind, and a *regu-*
" *lar course* of life: by which they are much better fur-
" nished and qualified to give a *credit* to their *false* doc-
" trines. . . . . But now here seems to be prescribed a
" plain, easy way of discerning *false* teachers from *true*,
" and a way which lies level to the *meanest* capacity. It
" is only by observing the *fruits* and *consequences* of every
" doctrine, what it is *apt* to *produce* where it is tho-
" roughly sucked in and believed, and then judging how
" far these fruits resemble the doctrine and spirit of Chris-
" tianity [d]."

*Of Enthusiasm.*

" The *Spirit* of God having given us a *clear* rule to
" walk by, (namely, the rule of the *holy Scriptures*,)
" whatsoever preacher shall deliver any doctrine, either
" in the general *disparaging* the *holy Scriptures* and pre-
" ferring *enthusiasm*, or in particular setting up the *private*
" *spirit* to assert any thing *contrary* thereto; it requires
" no great depth of learning to observe, that such doc-
" trine *strikes* at the *root* of all *revealed religion*, and opens
" a door for the *destruction* of it [f]." Here the *secret* views or *remote* tendency of all enthusiasm is briefly laid open. *Enthusiasm*, in the *bad* sense, appears to be a subtle device of *Satan* upon *ill meaning* or *unmeaning* instruments, (making use of their *ambition*, *self-admiration*, or other *weakness*,) to draw them by some plausible suggestions into a vain conceit that they have something *within* them either of *equal* authority with Scripture, or *superior* to it [g]. And when once they have thus got

[d] Vol. iv. p. 249, 274. [f] Vol. iv. p. 274.

[g] They will not perhaps directly say that their *private spirit* is of authority *superior* to that of *Scripture*: but they often make it so in effect, more ways than one: 1. By making the Scripture submit to be *judged of* by the private spirit, and not the private spirit by the Scripture. 2. By making the guidance of the private spirit to *supersede* even the *reading*, or the *use* of the Scripture, after a time, when supposed perfect enough not to need any longer the *help* of the *written* word. 3. By setting up a pretence of *infallibility* in a man's private breast, warranting him to substitute his own *interpretations* in the room of the *Divine laws*.

loose from that *Divine restraint*, under a pretence of *Divine impulses*, then there is nothing so *wild* or *extravagant*, that those free rangers, following their own new lights, are not capable of.

I shall conclude this *Preface* with recommending a few seasonable reflections to the consideration of serious and conscientious Christians amongst us.

1. One is, how particularly happy they may think themselves, in their having three several sets of excellent Discourses [h] on our Lord's *Divine Sermon* in their *own language*, (such perhaps as are not to be met with in any other,) and in their constantly living under the care and direction of faithful guides, judicious and *well-studied Divines:* for those, at last, are, *under God*, in the use of *his word*, the safest counsellors they can have to confide in. Let those who boast of *Divine* impulses, or *immediate* inspirations, bring together all the choice things they can meet with, that have been invented and uttered by those of *their way* for seventeen centuries, and see whether they are at all fit to be compared or named with the weighty and solid compositions of the judicious and *well-read* Divines, early and late: who yet have pretended to no more than the *ordinary* assistances of the *Holy Spirit*, in the use of God's *written* word, and of other *outward* means of Divine providential appointment, without any direct, *immediate* inspiration at all. What then has the *good Spirit* been doing for his supposed *favourites* all the time? Or rather, what has not some *evil spirit* been doing through a long tract of centuries, in seducing many to father *Satan's suggestions*, or their own *weak fancies*, upon the *blessed Spirit* of God?

2. It may be of use to every serious Christian, wisely to consider how many different kinds of instruments the *Tempter* commonly makes use of to corrupt their *faith*, or to debauch their *morals*. They are reducible to *three*

[h] Besides Mr. Blair's, there is also Bishop Blackhall's and Mr. Gardiner's.

kinds. 1. *Open* enemies to God and religion. 2. *Disguised* enemies, hypocrites under a *feigned* covert of friends. 3. Well-meaning, but injudicious, indiscreet friends; friends in *heart*, but rashly and undesignedly doing the *work* of *enemies*. All these must be carefully guarded against, in their turns, as occasions happen, by as many as *love not* to be *deceived*, or really *love* their *own souls*. For if any man suffers himself to be deluded, or led aside, when he may avoid it; it signifies little whether it was by the *rude* attacks of one, or by the smooth *hypocrisy* and *treachery* of another, or by the *weakness* or *madness* of a third. The fault is, to be *misled* at all, so far as may be prevented: and the rule of Scripture is, to stand firm and stedfast in *true doctrine* and *holy life*, against all *seducers*, of what kind soever, and never to be *misled* by any. But what I have here briefly hinted is pursued at large, and to much greater advantage, in the following Discourses, from which I shall no longer detain the reader.

DANIEL WATERLAND.

WINDSOR,
*Dec.* 24, 1739.

# REGENERATION

STATED AND EXPLAINED

ACCORDING TO

# SCRIPTURE AND ANTIQUITY,

IN A

DISCOURSE ON TITUS iii. 4, 5, 6.

# ADVERTISEMENT.

THE substance of the following Discourse was at first drawn up in the form of Two Sermons, which were delivered at Twickenham first, and next at Windsor. Having been severally pressed by some of both audiences (whose judgments I ought to value) to let the Two Sermons appear, I fell to transcribing, digesting, and enlarging them, till they turned out such as is here seen. And I thought it not improper to superadd, at the bottom of the pages, a convenient number of authorities, or explanatory notes, for the use of such learned readers as may be disposed to examine things with care, or may be inquisitive to know from whence many of the thoughts were taken, or on what foundation they stand. This is all that I conceived necessary to advertise the Reader.

## TITUS iii. 4, 5, 6.

*But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

ST. PAUL in these words has briefly taught us God's method of saving both Jew and Gentile, under the Christian dispensation. He did it, and does it, of free *grace*, and according to the riches of his *pure mercy;* not for or by any righteousness which *we* have done or do by our own *unassisted* abilities[a], but by the "washing (or laver) of "regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost:" that is to say, by the sacrament of Christian *Baptism*, considered in both its *parts*, the *outward* visible *sign*, which is *water*, and the *inward* things *signified* and exhibited, *viz.* a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, therein wrought by the Holy Spirit of God. I interpret the text of *Water-baptism*, as the *ancients* constantly did[b], and as

[a] Si quæras cujusmodi opera a justificatione et salute excludat Apostolus, clare hic respondet ipse: ἃ ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς, pronomine ἡμεῖς emphatice addito: quæ fecimus ipsi, h. e. ex propriis viribus. Deinde *operibus* hujusmodi, ex ingenio humano profectis, opponit *gratiam* illam Dei, ex mera sua misericordia in nos per Christum largiter effusam, qua *regeneramur* ac *renovamur*, quaque *sola* operibus vere bonis idonei reddimur. Quodque *prioribus* ademerat, *his* concedit operibus: h. e. per hæc, non per illa, nos servatos affirmat. Cum enim dicit Paulus, servari nos διὰ ἀναλαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου, intelligit omnes illas virtutes ac bona opera quæ a corde per *Spiritum Sanctum* renovato fluunt. *Bull. Harmon. Apost.* dissert. ii. c. 12. p. 485. edit. Lond. 1721.

[b] *Baptisma* enim esse in quo homo vetus moritur et novus nascitur, manifestat et probat beatus Apostolus dicens: *Servavit nos per lavacrum rege-*

the rules of true criticism require. For though some *moderns* have endeavoured to explain away the *outward* part, resolving all into the *inward* part or thing signified, namely, the grace of the Spirit; yet with how little reason or success they have attempted it is well known to the more *judicious*, who have abundantly vindicated the ancient construction[c]. The latter part of the text is nearly parallel to those words of our Lord; "Except a man be "born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the "kingdom of heaven[d]." And the general doctrine both of our Lord and St. Paul in those texts is, that *water* applied outwardly to the body, together with the *grace* of the Spirit applied inwardly to the soul, *regenerate* the man[e]: or, in other words, the Holy Spirit, in and by the use of Water-baptism, causes the *new birth*. But it is observable, that while our Lord's words make mention only of the *new birth*, that is, of *regeneration*, the Apostle here in the text distinctly speaks both of a *regeneration* and a *renovation*, as two things, and both of them wrought ordinarily in one and the same *Baptism*, here called the laver *of regeneration*, and of *renewing*. Indeed the words of the *original* may be rendered, by the laver *of regeneration*, and *by the renewing*; and so some have translated

*nerationis*. Si autem in lavacro, id est, in *baptismo*, est regeneratio, quomodo generare filios Deo hæresis per Christum potest, &c. *Cyprian*. ep. lxxiv. p. 140. edit. Benedict. item epist. i. p. 2. Conf. Origen. in Matt. p. 391. ed. Huet. Theophil. ad Autol. lib. ii. c. 25. p. 153. Chrysostom. ad Illumin. Catech. 1. tom. ii. p. 228. ed. Bened.

[c] See Whitby on the text. Wolfius, Cur. Crit. in loc.

[d] John iii. 5. That this text also was anciently understood of *Water-baptism*, and ought to be so, has been abundantly proved by the best learned moderns, *viz.* Hooker, vol. ii. book v. numb. 59. p. 243. Ox. ed. Maldonate in loc. Lightfoot, tom. i. p. 571, &c. Wall, Infant Baptism, part i. p. 6, 22. part ii. p. 165. Defence, p. 11, 24, 153, 237. Wolfius, Cur. Crit. in loc. vol. i. p. 811, &c. Beveridge's Sermons, vol. iii. serm. xi. p. 319, &c.

[e] *Aqua* igitur exhibens forinsecus *sacramentum* gratiæ, et *Spiritus* operans intrinsecus *beneficium* gratiæ, solvens vinculum culpæ, reconcilians bonum naturæ, *regenerant* hominem in uno *Christo*, ex uno *Adamo* generatum. *Augustin. Epist. ad Bonifac.* xcviii. p. 264. edit. Bened. Conf. Origen. in Johann. p. 124, 125. ed. Huet.

or interpreted them [f]. But the common rendering appears to be preferable, as best warranted by the *reading*, and by the ancient *versions*, and by the general doctrine of the New Testament in relation to *Baptism*, as ordinarily carrying with it, in *adults* at least fitly prepared, both a *regeneration* and a *renovation:* which though distinct in name and notion, (as appears from this text, and from several other texts of the New Testament, to be hereafter mentioned,) are yet nearly allied in end and use; are of one and the same original, often go together, and are perfective of each other. In discoursing farther, my design is,

I. To explain the name and notion of *regeneration*, showing what it is, and what it contains; as also what concern it has with Christian Baptism, called the laver, or fountain of it.

II. To consider what the *renewing* mentioned in the text means, and how it differs from or agrees with *regeneration;* and what connection both have either with *Baptism* here, or with *salvation* hereafter.

III. To draw some proper *inferences* from the whole, for preventing mistakes in these high matters, and for our better improvement in Christian knowledge and practice.

I.

First, I propose to treat of *regeneration*, showing what it means, and what it contains, and what relation it bears to Christian Baptism, called the *laver*, or fountain of it. *Regeneration*, passively considered, is but another word for the *new birth* of a Christian: and that new birth, in the general, means a spiritual *change* wrought upon any person, by the Holy Spirit, in the use of *Baptism;* whereby he is translated from his *natural* state in *Adam*, to a *spiritual* state in *Christ*. The name, or the notion, pro-

[f] Per lavacrum regenerationis, et renovationem Spiritus Sancti. So Jerome, in his Comment on the place, tom. iv. p. 435. edit. Bened. As if διὰ were understood before ἀνακαινώσεως. And so some of the critics, in Poole's Synopsis.

bably, was not altogether *new* in our Lord's time: for the Jews had been used to admit converts from heathenism into the Jewish Church, by a *baptism* of their own; and they called the admission or reception of such converts by the name of *regeneration*, or *new birth*; as it was somewhat like the bringing them into a *new world*. Such *proselytes* were considered as *dead* to their former state of darkness, and born anew to light, liberty, and privileges, among the children of Israel, and within the Church of God. The figure was easy, natural, and affecting; and therefore our Lord was pleased, in his conference with Nicodemus, to adopt the same kind of language, applying it to the case of admitting converts both from *Judaism* and *Paganism* into Christianity; transferring and sanctifying the rite, the figure, and the name to higher and holier, but still *similar* purposes. Such is the account given of this matter by many learned and judicious writers [g]. It appears extremely probable, from the authorities commonly cited for it; and it is particularly favoured by those words of our Lord to Nicodemus, expressing some kind of marvel at his slowness of apprehension; "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not "these things [h]?" Some doubts have been raised on this head, and some very learned persons have expressed their diffidence about it: but, all things considered, there does not appear to be sufficient reason to make question of it [i].

[g] Selden, de Jur. Nat. et Gent. lib. ii. c. 2, 3, 4. Elderfield of Regeneration, Hebrew and Christian. Wall, Infant Baptism, introduct. p. 95, &c. Defence, p. 22, 26, 35, 211, 318. Wotton, Miscellan. Disc. vol. i. p. 103, &c. Vitringa, Observ. Sacr. lib. ii. c. 6. p. 322. Others referred to in Fabricius, Bibl. Antiq. p. 386. Archbishop Sharpe, vol. iii. serm. xiii. p. 280. Deylingius, Observ. Sacr. part. iii. dissert. 34. p. 323, 324. Wesselius, dissert. xv. de Bapt. Proselytorum, p. 444, &c.

[h] John iii. 10.

[i] The very learned Wolfius several times speaks doubtfully of it, Cur. Critic. vol. i. p. 53. 815. vol. ii. p. 445. But it will be proper to compare Wesselius, who has appeared since, and who has professedly treated this argument, and done it in a very accurate way, recapitulating all that had been urged on both sides the question, and at length deciding in favour of what I have mentioned. The title of the book is, Johannis Wesselii Dissertationes

So much for the *name* and *notion* of *regeneration*, and the *original* of it, together with the *occasion* of our Lord's applying it to this case. Indeed, he *improved* the notion, by the addition of the *Spirit:* and he *enlarged* the use of the rite, by ordering that *every one*, every convert to Christianity, every candidate for heaven, should be baptized[k]. *Every one* must be born *of water and the Spirit:* not *once* born of water, and *once* of the Spirit, so as to make *two* new births[l], or to be regenerated *again* and *again*, but to be once new born of *both*, once born of the Spirit, in or by water; while the Spirit primarily or effectively, and the water secondarily or instrumentally, concurs to one and the same birth, ordinarily the result of *both*[m], in virtue of the Divine appointment.

Hence it was, that the ancient Doctors of the Church, in explaining this article, were wont to consider the *Spirit* and the *water* under the lively emblem of a *conjugal* union, as the two *parents;* and the new-born Christian as the *offspring* of both[n]. The Holy Spirit was understood

Academicæ, ad selecta quædam loca V. et N. Testamenti. Lugd. Batavorum. A. D. 1734.

[k] "What alterations were intended to be made by our Lord, he himself "declared: he told Nicodemus, that *except a man* (τις, i. e. *every one*, "without distinction of *sexes*) *be born again, he cannot enter into the king-*"*dom of God.* He there shows that Baptism was instituted for *all man-*"*kind*, in opposition to their doctrine who taught that children of *proselytes*, "born after *proselytism*, needed not to be baptized." *Wotton, Miscell. Disc.* vol. i. p. 111.

[l] Vid. Marckii Dissertat. Syllog. ad N. Test. dissert. xxi. p. 355, 356.

[m] Neque enim Spiritus sine aqua operari potest, neque aqua sine Spiritu: *Concil. Carthag. apud Cyprian.* p. 330. edit. Bened. conf. p. 148, 149, 260. Cyrill. Catech. iii. p. 41.

Nos pisciculi, secundum Ἰχθὺν nostrum, Jesum Christum, *in aqua nascimur*, nec aliter quam in aqua permanendo salvi sumus. *Tertullian. de Bapt.* c. i. p. 224. Conf. Ger. Voss. Opp. tom. vi. p. 269.

[n] See my Christian Sacrifice explained, Appendix, vol. viii. p. 188, 189. and Sacramental Part of the Eucharist explained, vol. viii. p. 229. And to the authorities there referred to may be added Theodorus Mopsuestenus, Apollinarius, and Ammonius, cited in Conderius's Greek Catena on John iii. 5. p. 89.

Some considered the *Church* and the *Spirit* as the two parents, as St. Austin often does, and Leo the First, and others: but still the notion was much

to *impregnate*, as it were, the waters of the font, (like as he once *overshadowed* the blessed Virgin,) in order to make them conceive and bring forth that *holy thing* formed after Christ; namely, the *new man*. Whatever aptness or justness there may or may not be in the *similitude*, (for *figures* of speech ought not to be strained to a *rigorous* exactness,) yet one thing is certain, that the ancients took in *Baptism* to their notion of *regeneration*. A learned writer has well proved at large, beyond all reasonable contradiction, that both the Greek and Latin Fathers, not only used that word for *Baptism*, but so *appropriated* it also to Baptism, as to *exclude* any other conversion, or repentance, not considered with *Baptism*, from being signified by that name[o]; so that according to the ancients, *regeneration*, or *new birth*, was either Baptism itself, (including both *sign* and *thing*,) or a change of man's spiritual state considered as wrought by the *Spirit* in or through Baptism. This new birth, this regeneration, could be but *once* in a Christian's whole life, as Baptism could be but *once:* and as there could be no *second* baptism, so there could be no *second* new birth. Regeneration, with respect to the regenerating agent, means the first *admission*, and with respect to the *recipient*, it means the *first entrance* into the spiritual or Christian life: and there cannot be two *first entrances*, or two *admissions*, any more than two spiritual *lives*, or two Baptisms. The analogy which this new *spiritual* life bears to the *natural*, demonstrates the same thing[p]. There are, in all, *three*

the same, because the Church was supposed to be a parent only in and by the use of *Water-baptism*.

[o] Wall, Infant Baptism, part i. xcv. 22, 25, 28, 29, 30. Defence, p. 12, 34, 41, 277, 318, 323, 327, 329, 333, 343. Append. p. 4, 6. Comp. Archbishop Sharpe, vol. iii. serm. xiii. p. 280, &c. Suicer. Thesaur. tom. i. p. 243, 396, 639, 1352. tom. ii. p. 278, 549, 554. Cangius, Glossar. Græc. p. 1084. Bingham, xi. 1, 3. p. 462.

[p] Cum ergo sint duæ nativitates——una est de terra, alia de cœlo; una est de carne, alia de spiritu; una est de mortalitate, alia de æternitate; una est de masculo et fœmina, alia de Deo et Ecclesia. Sed ipsæ duæ *singulæ* sunt; nec illa potest *repeti*, nec illa.——Jam natus sum de *Adam*, non me

several *lives* belonging to every good Christian, and *three births* of course, thereto corresponding[q]. *Once* he is born into the *natural* life, born of Adam; *once* he is born into the *spiritual* life, born of *water* and the *Spirit*; and *once* also into a *life* of *glory*, born of the *resurrection* at the last day. I mention that *third* birth, into a life above, because that birth also seems to have the name of *regeneration*, in the New Testament[r]. But my present concern is only with the *regeneration* proper to this life, which comes but *once*, and admits not of a *second*, during this mortal state[s]. This *regeneration*, in the *active* sense, is what St. Peter speaks of, where he says, "God hath "begotten us again unto a lively hope[t]." And afterwards, in the same chapter, but in the *passive* sense, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incor-"ruptible, by the word of God[u]:" that is, by the *words* used in the *form* of *Baptism*; or else by the *word* preached, conducting men to *faith* and *Baptism*. These texts relating to the *new birth*, speak of it as a *transient* thing, once performed, and retaining its *virtue* during the whole spiritual life. But when the phrase of *born of God* is found to denote a *permanent state*[x], it is to be understood of a person who *has been* born of God, and *abides* en-

potest *iterum* generare Adam: jam natus sum de *Christo*, non me potest *iterum* generare Christus. Quomodo uterus non potest repeti, sic nec Baptismus. *Augustin. in Johan.* tract. xi. p. 378. tom. iii. par. 2. edit. Bened. Conf. Prosper. Sentent. 331. p. 246. apud Augustin. tom. x. in Append. Aquinas Summ. par. iii. qu. 66. art. 9. p. 150.

[q] Vid. Gregor. Nazianz. Orat. xl. p. 637. Origen. in Matt. Orat. ix. fol. 23. Lat. ed. p. 391. ed. Huet. Augustin. contr. Julian. lib. ii. p. 540, 541.

[r] Matt. xix. 28. See Commentators, and Bishop Pearson on the Creed, art. i. p. 28. and particularly Olearius in Matt. p. 540.

[s] Οὐκ οὔσης δευτέρας ἀναγεννήσεως, οὐδὲ ἀνακλάσεως, κ. τ. λ. *Nazianz.* Orat. xl. p. 641. Conf. Nicet. Serron. Comment. p. 1048. Semel perceptam parvulus gratiam non amittit nisi propria impietate, si ætatis accessu tam malus evaserit. Tunc enim etiam propria incipiet habere peccata; quæ non *regeneratione* auferantur, sed *alia* curatione sanentur. *Augustin. ad Bonifac.* tom. ii. ep. 98. p. 264. ed. Bened. Conf. Damascen ad Hebr. vi. 6. Opp. tom. ii. p. 237. ed. sequ.

[t] 1 Peter i. 3. [u] 1 Peter i. 23. [x] 1 John iii. 9. iv. 7. v. 1, 4, 18.

tirely in that *sonship*, that spiritual and salutary state which he was *once* born into: so the phrase, *born of a woman*, is often used as equivalent to *son of a woman*, by a figure of speech[y], and is easily understood. *Regeneration*, on the part of the *Grantor*, God Almighty, means *admission* or *adoption*[z] into sonship, or spiritual citizenship: and on the part of the *grantee*, viz. man, it means his *birth*, or entrance into that state of sonship, or citizenship. It is God that *adopts*, or *regenerates*, like as it is God that *justifies*[a]. Man does not *adopt*, *regenerate*, or *justify* himself, whatever hand he may otherwise have (but still under *grace*) in *preparing* or *qualifying* himself for it. God makes the *grant*, and it is entirely *his act:* man *receives* only, and is acted upon; though sometimes *active* in qualifying himself, as in the case of *adults*, and sometimes entirely *passive*, as in the case of *infants*. The thing granted and received is a change from the state natural into the state spiritual; a translation from the *curse* of *Adam* into the *grace* of *Christ*. This *change*, *translation*, or *adoption*, carries in it many Christian blessings and privileges, but all reducible to two, *viz. remission of sins*, (absolute or conditional,) and a *covenant claim*, for the time being, *to eternal happiness*. Those blessings may all be forfeited, or finally lost, if a person revolts from God, either for a time or for ever; and then such person is no longer in a *regenerate* state, or a state of *sonship*, with respect to any *saving* effects: but still God's original grant of adoption or sonship in Baptism stands in full force, to take place as often as any such revolter shall return, and not otherwise: and if he desires to be as before, he will not want to be *regenerated* again, but renewed, or reformed. *Regeneration complete* stands in two things, which are, as it were, its two *integral* parts, the *grant* made over

[y] Job xiv. 1. xv. 14. xxv. 4. Matth. xi. 11. Luke vii. 28.

[z] Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 5. Ephes. i. 5. John i. 12. Note, that our *adoptive* sonship is opposed to our Lord's *natural* Sonship, the foundation of our *adoption*.

[a] Vid. Bull's Harmon. Apost. par. ii. c. 2. p. 418.

to the person, and the *reception* of that grant. The grant once made *continues* always the same: but the reception may *vary*, because it depends upon the condition of the recipient [b].

II.

Having said what I conceived sufficient upon the first article, respecting *regeneration*, I now proceed to the second, which is *renovation;* and which I understand of a *renewal* of *heart*, or *mind*. Indeed, *regeneration* is itself a kind of *renewal;* but then it is of the *spiritual state*, considered *at large;* whereas *renovation*, the other article in the text, seems to mean a more *particular* kind of *renewal*, namely, of the inward *frame*, or *disposition* of the man: which is rather a *capacity*, or *qualification*, (in *adults*,) for *salutary* regeneration, than the regeneration itself. *Regeneration* may be granted and received (as in *infants*) where that *renovation* has no place at all, for the time being: and therefore, most certainly, the notions are very distinct. But of this I may say more hereafter in a proper place. It may here be further noted, that *renovation* may be, and should be, with respect to adults, *before*, and *in*, and *after* Baptism. *Preventing* grace must go before, to work in the man *faith* and *repentance*, which are qualifications previous to Baptism, and necessary to render it *salutary*. Those first addresses, or influential visits, of the Holy Spirit, turning and preparing the heart of man, are the preparative *renewings*, the first and lowest degrees of *renovation* [c]. Afterwards, in Baptism, the same Spirit fixes, as it were, his *dwelling*, or residential *abode*, renewing the heart in *greater* measure [d]: and if his mo-

[b] "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons "of God." John i. 12. Rom. viii. 14, 15.

[c] *Spiramen* est modicæ virtutis aliqua gratia, in audienda lege Dei multorum *primum: Spiritus* autem, perfectionis est *plenitudo. Spiramen* itaque datur ab infantia et *catechumenis: Spiritus* autem in incremento *doctrinæ fideique*, et salutaris *Baptismi* plena Dei gratia, ut intelligere, et ad majorem jam possit scientiam pervenire. *Philastr. contr. Hær.* n. 147. p. 329. ed. Fabric.

[d] *Spiritus ubi vult spirat;* sed quod fatendum est, aliter adjuvat *nondum*

tions are still more and more complied with after baptismal regeneration, the *renewing* grows and improves through the whole course of the spiritual life[e]. Therefore, though we find no Scripture exhortations made to *Christians* (for Nicodemus was a *Jew*) to become *regenerated*, yet we meet with several exhortations to them to be again and again *renewed*. For example; "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind[f];" "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind[g]." The "inward man" is said to be "renewed day by day[h]." And when Christians have once fallen off, the *restoring* them again is not called *regenerating* them, but "renewing them again unto repentance[i]." Of this *renovation* of the heart, we may best understand the phrase of "putting on the new man[k]," amounting to much the same with "having on the breastplate of righteousness[l];" and "putting on the armour of light[m]," and "putting on bowels of mercies," with other Christian virtues or graces[n]. Of the same import

*inhabitans*, aliter *inhabitans*: nam nondum inhabitans adjuvat *ut sint fideles*, inhabitans adjuvat *jam fideles*. *Augustin ad Xyst.* ep. 194. p. 720.

In quibusdam tanta est *gratia* fidei quanta non sufficit ad obtinendum regnum cœlorum: sicut in *catechumenis*, sicut in ipso Cornelio antequam *sacramentorum* participatione *incorporaretur* Ecclesiæ: in quibusdam vero tanta est ut jam *corpori* Christi, et sancto Dei *templo* deputentur. *Augustin de Divers. Q. ad simplicium*, tom. vi. lib. 1. p. 89. ed. Bened.

[e] Hæc *Spiritus donatio*, quæ *justificationem* sequitur, a *gratia* ejusdem Spiritus hominis conversionem *præveniente* et operante bifariam imprimis differt. Primo, Quod animæ jam a vitiis purgatæ Spiritus divinus *arctius* atque *intimius* quam antea *unitur*, in ipsam altius penetrat, pleniusque ejus facultates omnes pervadit. Unde in Scripturis dicitur Spiritus divinus ante *conversionem* hominis, quasi *ad cordis ostium pulsare*, post conversionem vero *interiora* domus *intrare*. *Apoc.* iii. 20. Deinde, quod sanctissimus ille Spiritus in anima, quam antea veluti *inviserat* tantum, et gratia sua *præveniente* in domicilium sibi *præparaverat*, jam *habitat* et quasi *sedem* suam *figit*; nunquam inde discessurus, nisi per peccatum aliquod gravius foras extrudatur. *Bull. Apolog. contra Tullium*, p. 15. alias p. 643.

[f] Rom. xii. 2.

[g] Ephes. iv. 23. or, *by the spirit of your mind*. See Bishop Bull's Posth. p. 1135, 1136.

[h] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

[i] Hebr. vi. 6.

[k] Ephes. iv. 24. Coloss. iii. 10.

[l] Ephes. vi. 14. 1 Thess. v. 8.

[m] Rom. xiii. 12.

[n] Coloss. iii. 12.

is the phrase of *putting on Christ*; plainly in one of the places [o], and probably in the other also [p]: though some interpret the former of *renovation*, and the latter of *regeneration* [q]. Lastly, the phrase of *new creature* [r] may properly be referred to *renovation* also, and is so interpreted by the *ancients* [s] generally: or if it be referred to *regeneration*, as ordinarily including and comprehending *renovation* under it, that larger construction of it will not perhaps be amiss.

The *distinction*, which I have hitherto insisted upon, between *regeneration* and *renovation*, has been carefully kept up by the Lutheran Divines especially [t], as of great use. And it is what our Church appears to have gone upon, in her *offices* of Baptism, as likewise in the Catechism. She clearly expresses it in one of her Collects, wherein we beg of God, that we being *regenerate* and made his children by adoption and grace, may daily be *renewed* by his Holy Spirit, &c. [u]: such is the *public* voice of our Church. What the *private* sentiments of some Divines have been, or how far they have overlooked, or not attended to this so necessary distinction, is not material to inquire: but that it never has been lost amongst us may appear from the words of a very judicious Divine of this present age [x]. The difference between these two may be competently understood from what has been al-

[o] Rom. xiii. 14. See Whitby and Wolfius in loc.

[p] Gal. iii. 27. Vid. Wolfius in loc.

[q] Deylingius, Observ. Sacr. tom. iii. dissert. 42. p. 406.

[r] 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. vi. 15. See Whitby and Wolfius; and Bishop Beveridge, vol. ii. serm. vii.

[s] See the passages collected in Suicer, tom. ii. p. 178, 179.

[t] Vid. Gerhard, Loc. Comm. tom. iv. p. 495, 503, &c. conf. tom. iii. p. 713, &c.

[u] Collect for Christmas-day.

[x] "There is a mighty difference between *regeneration* and *renovation*: "we can be *born* but *once*, because we can *live* but *once*; and therefore "Baptism, which gives life, cannot be *repeated*: but we can recover *often*, "and grow and be nourished *often*, because we can sink and droop often." *Dean Stanhope, Boyle's Lect.* serm. viii. p. 249. Compare Archbishop Sharpe, vol. iii. serm. xiii. p. 279.

ready said: but to make it still clearer, it may be drawn out more minutely, in distinct articles, as follows. 1. *Regeneration* and *renovation* differ in respect to the *effective* cause or agency: for one is the work of the *Spirit* in the use of *water;* that is, of the Spirit *singly*, since *water* really *does* nothing, is no *agent* at all; but the other is the work of the *Spirit* and the *man* together. Man *renews* himself at the same time that the Spirit *renews* him: and the *renovation* wrought is the result of their *joint agency;* man concurring and operating in a *subordinate* way. "It is God that worketh in us both to will "and to do[y]:" but still it is supposed, and said, that we both *will* and *do*. It is God that *renews, cleanses*, and *purifies* the heart[z]: and man also renews, cleanses, and purifies his own heart[a]; that is, he bears his part in it, be it more or less. No man *regenerates* himself at all; that is, he has no part in the *regenerating act*, (which is entirely God's,) whatever he may have in the *receptive:* and if in this sense only it be said, that man is purely *passive* in it, it is true and sound doctrine. Nevertheless, he may and must be *active* in preparing and qualifying himself for it, and in receiving it, supposing him to be *adult*. He is not his own *regenerator*, or *parent*, at all, in his new birth: for that would be a *solecism* in speech, and a contradiction in notion: he is, however, his own *renewer*, though in part only, and in subordination to the *principal* agent. 2. Another difference between *regeneration* and *renovation* (before hinted) is, that *regeneration* ordinarily is in or through *Baptism* only, a transient thing, which comes but once[b]: whereas *renovation* is before, and in,

[y] Phil. ii. 13.

[z] Psal. xix. 12. li. 2, 10. Jer. xxiv. 7. Ezek. xi. 19. xxxvi. 26. Acts xv. 9. Tit. iii. 5. 1 John i. 9.

[a] Psalm cxix. 9. lxxiii. 13. Isa. i. 16. Ezek. xviii. 31. 2 Cor. vii. 1. James iv. 8. 1 Peter i. 22. 1 John iii. 3. Conf. Cyrill. Hierosol. Catech. i. p. 16, 17. ed. Bened.

[b] The late learned Regius Professor of Divinity, at Cambridge, Dr. Beaumont, in his MS. Commentary on Rom. xii. 2. writes thus:

Sed scrupulum hic injicies: nonne enim Apostolus commonefacit fratres

and after Baptism, and may be often repeated; continuing and increasing from the first *preparations* to Christianity, through the whole progress of the Christian life. So it is in *adults:* but in *infants*, regeneration commences *before* renovation; which again shows how distinct and different they are. 3. A third observable difference is, that *regeneration* once given can never be *totally* lost, any more than *Baptism;* and so can never want to be *repeated* in the *whole* thing; whereas *renovation* may be often *repeated*, or may be totally lost. *Once regenerate and always regenerate*, in some part, is a true maxim in Christianity, only not in such a sense as some *moderns* have taught[c]. But a person once *regenerated* in Baptism can never want to be regenerated again in this life, any more than he can want to be *rebaptized*. So much for the *difference* between *regeneration* and *renovation*[d]: let us next

suos, adeoque Christianos, per Baptismum *regenitos*, adeoque et ἀναχαίνωσιν istam adeptos? Quid opus igitur actum agere? Nil sane. Nec monet eos baptisma iterare: *semel nascimur, renascimur semel:* unus Dominus, una fides, unum baptisma, Ephes. iv. 5. Quoniam vero ipsi *renati* ex baptismali puritate non raro relabuntur ad *veteris hominis* inquinamenta, ex usu eorum est assidua per pœnitentiam *renovatio*. Hinc Chrysostomus, &c. Then he quotes Chrysostom's words on Rom. xii. 2. Hom. xx. p. 659. tom. ix. ed. Bened. and afterwards adds, Similia videas apud Photium et Theophylactum.

[c] Those I mean who have taught that the *regenerate* can never *finally* fall from *grace*. See our Sixteenth Article on this head.

[d] Vossius distinguishes *regeneration* from *renovation* by what they respectively *contain*, thus:

Quemadmodum vero ad *regenerationem*, pressius sumptam, pertinet *remissio* peccatorum; ita ad *renovationem* refertur *mortificatio* veteris, et *vivificatio* novi hominis: quæ idcirco *Baptismo* tribuuntur. *Voss. de Bapt.* Disp. ix. Thes. 6. Opp. tom. vi. p. 270. Gerhard distinguishes nearly the same way in his Common-Places, tom. iii. p. 714. tom. iv. p. 495, 504.

*Regenerationis* vocabulum quandoque *generale* est, ipsam quoque *renovationem* in ambitu suo complectens: interim tamen, proprie et accurate loquendo, *regeneratio* a *renovatione* distincta est. Tom. iv. p. 495. Renovatio, licet a *regeneratione* proprie et specialiter accepta distinguatur, inviduo tamen et perpetuo nexu cum ea est conjuncta——Per Baptismum homo non solum *renascitur*, (id est, peccatorum *remissionem* consequitur, *justitiam Christi* induit, *filius* Dei, et *hæres* vitæ æternæ efficitur,) sed etiam *renovatur:* hoc est, datur ipsi Spiritus Sanctus, qui *intellectum*, *voluntatem*, et omnes *animi* vires *renovare* incipit, ut amissa *Dei imago* in ipso incipiat

consider how far they *agree*, or how near they are *allied*. As one is a renewal of the *spiritual state*, and the other a renewal of the *heart* and *mind*, it must follow, that so far as a renewal of *mind* is necessary to a renewal of *state*, so far it is a necessary ingredient of the *new birth*, or an *integral part* of it. A grant is suspended, frustrate, as to any *beneficial* effect, while not properly received: and while there is an insuperable bar to the salutary reception of it, it cannot be savingly *received* or *applied*. Therefore in the case of *adults*, regeneration and renovation must go together: otherwise the regeneration is not a *salutary* nor a complete *regeneration*, wanting one necessary ingredient of it, namely, a *capacity* or *qualification*.

But this may still be more clearly understood by applying those *general* principles to four *special* cases, which I shall next endeavour to do, and then shall take leave of this head. The *four* cases are: 1. The case of *grown* persons coming to Baptism in their *integrity*, and so continuing afterwards. 2. The case of *infants* brought in their *innocency*, and leading the rest of their lives according to that beginning. 3. The case of such grown persons or infants so baptized, but *falling off* afterwards. 4. The case of grown persons coming to Baptism in *hypocrisy* or *impenitency*; but repenting afterwards and turning to God. The considering how the affair of *regeneration* or *renovation* may respectively stand in each of these cases, may perhaps serve to clear up the whole matter to greater satisfaction.

1. I begin with the case of *grown* persons, called *adults*, coming to Baptism fitly prepared by faith and repentance, and afterwards persevering to the end. This was a common case in the earliest days of Christianity, when the whole world wanted to be converted. *Grown* persons were then the most, and the most considerable candidates for

*instaurari*, &c. p. 504. *Regenerationis* vox quandoque sumitur γενικῶς, ut et *remissionem* peccatorum, et *renovationem* simul complectatur; quandoque vero ἰδικῶς accipitur, ut *remissionem* peccatorum ac gratuitam *justificationem* tantummodo designat. *Gerhard*, tom. iii. p. 714.

Baptism. When the discipline of the Church came to be settled into something of a regular and standing form, those candidates for Baptism were trained up beforehand, by proper instructions, and were therefore called *catechumens*[e]. Afterwards they were to be admitted to *Baptism*, when fitly prepared, in order to be effectually "born of "water and the Spirit," and so made living members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. *Faith* and *repentance* alone, though both of them were antecedently *gifts* of the *Spirit*, were not supposed *ordinarily* to make them *regenerate*, or to entitle them to *salvation*, without *Baptism*, by the Scripture accounts[f]. There might be some special cases, or uncommon circumstances, where *martyrdom* supplied the place of *Water-baptism*, or where *extremities* were supposed to *supersede* it[g]; in which cases inward regeneration might be perfected without the outward *sign* and *sacrament* of it: but, according to the *ordinary* rule, faith and repentance were to be perfected by *Baptism*, both for the making *regeneration* and the giving a title to *salvation*[h]. For without Baptism a person is not *regenerate;* at least, not in the eye of the Church, which must judge by the *ordinary* rule, and which cannot *dispense*, whatever God himself may please to do in such cases[i]. Till Baptism succeeds, the solemn

[e] Bingham, x. 1, 4.

[f] Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 5. Ephes. v. 26. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

[g] Bingham, x. ii. 19, 20, 21. p. 42, &c. alias p. 431. Augustin de Bapt. lib. iv. cap. 22. Hooker, vol. ii. b. v. n. 60. p. 245. Ox. edit.

[h] Nisi quis *nascitur ex aqua et Spiritu*, non ibit in regnum Dei: id est, non erit *sanctus*. Ita omnis anima eo usque in *Adam* censetur, donec in *Christo* recenseatur; tam diu *immunda* quamdiu recenseatur: peccatrix autem quia immunda, recipiens ignominiam ex *carnis* societate. *Tertull. de Anima*, cap. xl. p. 294.

Ἀρχή μοι ζωῆς τὸ βάπτισμα, καὶ πρώτη ἡμερῶν ἐκείνη ἡ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας ἡμέρα. *Basil. de Spirit. Sanct.* cap. x. p. 22. tom. 3. ed. Bened. Conf. cap. xii. p. 23, 24. Item Bull. Apolog. p. 650. alias 23. Damascen. de Rect. Fid. lib. iv. cap. 9. p. 261. Vossius de Bapt. Opp. tom. vi. p. 269.

[i] Institutio sacramentorum, quantum ad *Deum* autorem, *dispensationis* est; quantum vero ad *hominem* obedientem, *necessitatis:* quoniam in potestate Dei est *præter ista* hominem salvare; sed in potestate hominis non est

and saving *stipulation*[k] between God and the party does not pass in due form; nor the awful *consecration* of the man to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost[l]. He is not yet *buried* with Christ *into death*, nor *planted* in the likeness of his *resurrection*[m]; nor indeed *clothed* with Christ, the baptismal garment[n]. Therefore, in strictness, he is not a *member* of Christ, nor a *child* of God, nor a *citizen* of Christ's kingdom; but an *alien* still, having no *covenant claim* to the Gospel privileges[o]. But when a penitent becomes *baptized*, then commences his *new birth*, his *death unto sin*, in the plenary remission of it, (by the *application* of the merits of Christ's death,) and his new *life unto God*, through Jesus Christ once raised from the grave, and from thenceforth ever *living unto God*[p]. And now that *renovation* which in some degree was *previous* to regeneration, becomes, in greater degrees, a *fruit* and *complement* of it; and it *grows* more and more by the *indwelling* of that same *Spirit*, whose remote addresses and distant overtures first brought the man to that *faith* and *repentance*, which prepared him for salutary Baptism, and for true and complete sonship, or Christian adoption. More need not be said of the first of the *four* cases, and therefore now I proceed to a second.

2. The second is the case of *infants*. Their innocence and incapacity are to them instead of *repentance*, which they do not need, and of actual *faith* which they cannot have. They are capable of being savingly *born* of *water*

*sine istis* ad salutem pervenire. *Hugo de Sacrament.* lib. i. cap. 5. in Hooker, vol ii. p. 249. Ox. edit.

[k] See 1 Pet. iii. 22.

[l] Matt. xxviii. 19.

[m] Rom. vi. 3, 4, &c.

[n] Gal. iii. 27.

[o] As we are not naturally *men* without *birth*, so neither are we *Christian men*, in the eye of the Church of God, but by *new birth*; nor, according to the manifest ordinary course of Divine dispensation, *new born*, but by that *Baptism* which both *declareth* and *maketh* us Christians. In which respect, we justly hold it to be the *door* of our *actual entrance* into God's house, the first apparent beginning of life, a seal perhaps to the *grace* of *election* before received; but to our *sanctification* here, a step that hath not any before it. *Hooker*, vol. ii. b. 5. n. 60 p. 249. Ox. edit.

[p] Rom. vi. 10, 11. Mark xvi. 16. Acts viii. 37. x. 47.

and the *Spirit*, and of being *adopted* into *sonship* with what depends thereupon; because, though they bring no *virtues* with them, no *positive* righteousness, yet they bring no *obstacle* or *impediment*. They *stipulate*, they enter into *contract*, by their sureties, upon a presumptive and interpretative consent: they become *consecrated* in solemn form to *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*: pardon, mercy, and other *covenant privileges*, are made over to them [q]; and the Holy Spirit translates them out of their state of *nature* (to which a *curse* belongs) to a state of *grace*, *favour*, and *blessing*: this is their regeneration [r]. Wherefore in our public offices, formed upon the ancient rules and precedents, we pray, that the infants brought to be baptized may be "washed and sanctified with the Holy "Ghost,"—may receive remission of their sins by spiritual regeneration,—may be "born again," and that "the "old Adam may be so buried, that the new man may be "raised up in them." We declare afterwards, that they "are regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's "Church;" giving thanks also to God, that "it hath "pleased him to regenerate them with his Holy Spirit, "and to receive them for his own children by adoption, "and to incorporate them into his holy Church [s]." It may reasonably be presumed, that from the time of their

[q] Certe nemo neget, infantes capaces esse beneficii ἀφέσεως τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν, quod δικαίωσιν, *justificationem*, appellare solemus: est enim id beneficium *externum* et σχετικὸν, quod in infantes ad *Christi Jesu* intercessionem propter ejus ὑπαχοὴν, *Spiritu Sancto* pro illorum *conversione* et *renovatione*, spondente (liceat hic humano more balbutire) conferri potest. *Vitringa*, *Obs. Sacr.* lib. ii. cap. 6. p. 338.

[r] Omnes enim venit [Dominus] per semetipsum salvare; omnes, inquam, qui per eum *renascuntur* in Deum; *infantes*, et parvulos, et pueros, et juniores, et seniores. *Iren.* lib. ii. cap. 22. p. 147. ed. Bened. Conf. Voss. tom. vi. p. 278, 307.

[s] Public Baptism of Infants. Compare Office of Private Baptism, where it is said, that the infant *is now by the laver of regeneration in Baptism, received into the number of the children of God*: and the Catechism, Q. the second, with the Answer: and the latter part concerning the Sacrament of *Baptism*. Compare also the Office of Confirmation, repeating the same doctrine.

*new birth* of water and the Spirit, (which at that very moment is a renewal of their *state* to God-ward,) the renewing also of the *heart* may come gradually on with their first dawnings of *reason*, in such measures as they shall yet be capable of; in a way to us imperceptible, but known to that Divine Spirit who *regenerates* them, and whose *temple* from thenceforth they are[t], till they defile themselves with *actual* and *grievous* sin. In this case, it is to be noted, that regeneration *precedes*, and renovation can only *follow* after[u]: though infants may perhaps be found capable of receiving some seeds of *internal grace* sooner than is commonly imagined[x]. But enough of this.

3. A third case which I promised to speak to is, that of those who fall off after they have once been savingly *regenerated*. If such persons *fall away*, by desertion and disobedience, still their baptismal *consecration*, and their *covenant state* consequent, abide and stand; but without their *saving* effect for the time being: because, without present *renovation*, the *new birth*, or *spiritual life*, as to salutary purposes, is, in a manner, sinking, drooping, ceasing. Their regenerate state, upon their revolt, is no longer such, in the *full* saving sense, wanting one of its *integral* parts; like as a ruinated house ceases to be an *house*, when it has nothing left but *walls*. But yet as an house, while there are *walls* left, does not need to be *rebuilt* from the ground, but *repaired* only, in order to become an *house* again as before; so a person once savingly *regenerated*, and afterwards losing all the *salutary* use of

[t] Vid. Augustin. Epist. clxxxvii. cap 8. p. 686.

[u] In baptizatis infantibus *præcedit* regenerationis sacramentum, et si Christianam tenuerint pietatem, *sequetur* in corde *conversio*, cujus mysterium præcessit in corpore.——In infantibus qui baptizati *moriuntur*, eadem gratia omnipotentis implere credenda est; quod non ex impia voluntate, sed ex ætatis indigentia, nec *corde credere ad justitiam* possunt, nec *ore confiteri* ad salutem. *Augustin. de Bapt.* lib. v. cap. 24. p. 140. Conf. Nazianz. Orat. xxxvii. p. 609.

[x] Vid. Vitringa, Observ. Sacr. lib. ii. cap. 6. p. 329. alias 339. Vossius de Bapt. Disp. vi. Opp. tom. vi. p. 278.

it, will not want to be *regenerated* again, or *born anew*, but to be *reformed* only. Which when done, his regeneration before decayed, and as to any *saving* effect, for the time, well-nigh ruinated, but never *totally* lost[y], becomes again *whole* and *entire*. To be short, *perfect* regeneration is to the *spiritual* life what *perfect* health is to the natural: and the *recoveries* of the spiritual *health*, time after time, are not a *new* regeneration, but a restoring or improving of the *old*. To be *born anew* would be the same thing as to have *all* done over again that God had before done to make a man a Christian, and to put him into a *covenant state:* but since he who is once a Christian is always a Christian, and there is no such thing as a *second* Baptism, it is plain that there can be no such thing here as a second *new birth*, or a second *regeneration*. But of this I said enough before.

4. The *fourth* case, which yet remains to be considered, is the case of those who receive Baptism (like Simon Magus suppose) in *hypocrisy* or *impenitency*. Do they therein receive any thing of the Lord? Or if they do, what is it? Are they thereby regenerated, or born again, born of *water* and of the *Spirit?* I answer, they are either born of *both*, or of *neither:* for otherwise, "born of water and of "the Spirit" would not mean *one birth*, but *two;* and so a person might happen to have *two* new births, one of *water* first, and another of the *Spirit* afterwards; which cannot reasonably be supposed. Besides that, the being born of *water* only, which really does nothing of itself, could amount only to a *washing*, (nothing better than *being born* of the *flesh*,) and therefore could not be true or

[y] Regenerationis gratiam ita etiam hi non minuunt qui dona *non servant*, sicut *lucis* nitorem loca *immunda* non polluunt. Qui ergo gaudes Baptismi perceptione, vive in *novi hominis* sanctitate; et tenens fidem quæ per dilectionem operatur, habe bonum quod nondum habes, ut *prosit* tibi bonum quod habes. *Prosper. Sentent.* 325. *apud Augustin*, tom. x. p. 245. Append.

Spiritalis enim virtus sacramenti ita est ut *lux*, et ab illuminandis *pura* accipitur, et si per *immundos* transeat, non inquinatur. *Augustin. in Johan.* Tract. v. n. 15. p. 327. tom. iii. part. 2.

valid *Baptism* in Christian account. Shall we then say, that the ungodly and impenitent are in Baptism *born* of the *Spirit?* That is a point, which, I apprehend, can neither be affirmed nor denied *absolutely*, but with proper *distinctions*. It was anciently a kind of maxim or ruled case in the Church, that all *true* and *valid* Baptism must be so made by the *Spirit* [z]. And though some seem to have denied it, or to have demurred upon it [a], yet they really admitted the same thing in other words, by admitting that all *true* Baptism was *Christ's* Baptism, and carried a *sanctity* with it [b]: therefore that part of the dispute was only about *words*, both sides agreeing in the main things. The

[z] That was a maxim among the Cyprianists especially, (see above, p. 345.) and so it came down to Jerome, who is very express on that head.

Apparet Baptisma non esse sine *Spiritu Sancto*.——Illud nobis monstraretur, *verum* esse Baptisma quo *Spiritus Sanctus* adveniat.——Ecclesiæ Baptisma sine *Spiritu Sancto* nullum est.——Cum Baptisma Christi sine *Spiritu Sancto* nullum sit.——*Spiritum Sanctum*, quem nos asserimus in *vero Baptismate* tribui. *Hieron. adv. Lucif.* p. 293, 294, 295. tom. iv. ed. Bened. Conf. Epist. lxxxii. ad Oceanum, p. 651. tom. iv.

[a] St. Austin was one of those; he writes thus: *Spiritus Sanctus* disciplinæ fugiet fictum, nec tamen eum fugiet *Baptismus*.——Potest Baptisma esse et unde *se aufert* Spiritus Sanctus.— *Induunt* autem homines Christum, aliquando usque ad *Sacramenti* perceptionem, aliquando et usque ad *vitæ sanctificationem*.——Si Baptisma esse *sine Spiritu non potest*, habent et spiritum hæretici, sed ad *perniciem*, non ad *salutem*: sicut habuit Saul, 1 Reg. xviii. 10.——Sicut habent *avari*, qui tamen non sunt *templum* Dei.——Si autem non habent avari *Spiritum* Dei, et tamen habent Baptisma, potest esse *sine Spiritu* Baptisma. *Augustin. de Bapt.* lib. v. cap. 23, 24. p. 157. tom. ix.

[b] Baptismus Christi, verbis evangelicis *consecratus*, et per adulteros, et in adulteris *sanctus est*, quamvis illi sint impudici et immundi: quia ipsa ejus *sanctitas* pollui non potest, et *sacramento* suo *divina* virtus adsistit, sive ad *salutem* bene utentium, sive ad *perniciem* male utentium. *Augustin. de Bapt.* lib. iii. cap. 10. p. 113. tom. ix. Conf. p. 115, 176, 199, 268, 296. et contr. Epist. Parmen. lib. ii. cap. 13. p. 44, 45, 80. tom. ix.

N. B. As St. Austin allows that *sanctity* goes along with all *true* and *valid* Baptism, and as all *sanctification* is of and from the *Holy Spirit*, he must of consequence admit all that Jerome contended for; namely, that all *valid* Baptism is so made by the *Spirit*. Only, he denied such *valid* Baptism in ill men to be *saving* for the time being: and Jerome also denied the same; both agreeing that Baptism might be *true* and *valid*, as sanctified by the *Spirit*, though not *salutary* to some persons in such and such circumstances.

real and full truth of the case I take to lie in the particulars here following. 1. It is certain in the general, that the *Holy Spirit*, some way or other, has an hand in every *true* and *valid* Baptism: God never fails as to his part in an awful *Sacrament*, however men may guiltily fail in theirs. 2. The *Holy Spirit* is in some sort *offered* to all that receive Christian Baptism: for the very nature of a *sacrament* requires that the *sign* and the *grace* should so far go together: and the *unworthy* could not be guilty of *rejecting* the grace while they *receive* the sign, if both were not *offered* them. 3. As the Holy Spirit *consecrates* and sanctifies the *waters* of Baptism, giving them an *outward* and *relative* holiness; so he *consecrates* the *persons* also in an *outward* and *relative* sense, whether good or bad, by a *sacred* dedication of them to the worship and service of the *whole Trinity:* which *consecration* is for ever binding, and has its effect; either to the *salvation* of the parties, if they repent and amend, or to their greater *damnation*, if they do not. 4. I must add, that even the *unworthy* are by their Baptism put into a Christian state: otherwise they would be as mere Pagans still, and would want a *new Baptism* to make them Christians. Therefore as they are by Baptism translated out of their *natural* state into the state Christian, they must be supposed to have *pardon* and *grace*, and all Gospel-privileges *conditionally* made over to them, though not yet *actually* applied, by reason of their disqualifications. A grant which will do them no manner of *service* [c], but *hurt*, if they never repent: but if ever they do repent and turn to God, then that *conditional* grant, suspended, as it were, before, with

[c] Nihil quippe profuit Simoni Mago visibilis Baptismus, cui sanctificatio invisibilis defuit. *Augustin. super Levit.* q. lxxxiv. p. 524. tom. iii.

*Note*, that *sanctificatio* is here used in a different meaning from what St. Austin used it in, when he spake of a *sanctification* going along with all *true* and *valid* Baptism, though not *saving*. There he meant an *outward* sanctification, such as I have before described: here he means the *inward sanctification* of any one's heart and mind, necessary to make his Baptism, which was before *valid*, to become *saving* also.

respect to any *saving* effects, begins at length to take place effectually; and so their Baptism, which had stood waiting without any *salutary* fruit for a time, now becomes *beneficial* and *saving* to the returning penitents. At the same time their *regeneration*, begun in Baptism, and left unfinished, (like an *indenture* executed on one side only, or like a *part* without a *counter-part*,) comes at last to be complete, that is, actually *salutary*; not by a formal *regeneration*, (as if nothing had been done before,) but by the *repentance* of the man, and by the *sanctification* or *renovation* of the heart and mind through the *Spirit*, which had been hitherto wanting.

I have now run through the *four* several *cases* proposed, observing how the affair of *regeneration* and *renovation* stands under each; in order to give the more distinct idea of both, and to remove the main difficulties which appeared to concern either of them. From this account may be collected these particulars: 1. That *regeneration*, as containing grants of *remission*, *justification*, *adoption*, *covenant claim* to life eternal, is a very different notion from *renovation*, which contains only a *renewal* of *heart* and *mind*. 2. That *regeneration* is in some cases (as particularly in the case of baptized infants) not only different in *notion*, or distinct in *theory*, but really and actually *separate* from *renovation* for the time being. 3. That in other cases, *regeneration*, while it takes in *renovation* to render it *complete* or *salutary* to the *recipient*, (and is in fact joined with it,) yet even there it differs from *renovation*, as the *whole* differs from a *part*. 4. That suppose what case, or what circumstances you please, the two *words* or *names* stand, or ought to stand, for different *notions*, for different *combinations* of *ideas*, and never are, or at least never ought to be, used as *reciprocal*, *convertible* terms. Nothing now remains, but to draw some corollaries or inferences from the general principles before laid down, by way of application, for our farther improvement.

## III.

I proceed therefore to my *third* head of discourse, according to the method chalked out in the entrance above.

1. The first reflection I have to make is, that it is very *improper* language at least, to call upon those who have once been *regenerated*, in their infancy, who have had their *new birth* already at the *font*, to be now regenerated; or to bid them expect a *new birth*. Such applications might properly be directed to Jews, Turks, or Pagans, or to such *nominal* Christians as have thrown off *Water-baptism:* for such really want to be *regenerated*, or *born again*, being still in their *natural* state. But as to others, who are or have been savingly *regenerated* of *water* and the *Spirit*, they should be called upon only to *repent* or *reform*, in order to preserve or repair that *regenerate* state which the *Spirit* once gave them, and which he gave not in vain. There is no instance, no example in Scripture, (as I before hinted,) of any exhortation made to Christians, to become *regenerated*, or *born anew*, but to be *reformed* only, or *renewed* in the *inner man;* which is a very different notion from the other, as I have before manifested at large. Even Simon Magus, who had been baptized in iniquity, was not exhorted to be *regenerated* afterwards, or *born again*, but to *repent*[d]. Our Lord himself, in the Book of Revelations, made use of the like language towards the *revolting* churches; not bidding them become *regenerate*, but ordering them to *repent*[e]: and the wicked prophetess or sorceress, Jezebel, had time given her; not to be *regenerated* again, but to *repent*[f]. The only place I know of in Scripture that looks at all favourable to the notion of a *second* regeneration here, is a text of St. Paul's, where, writing to the *revolting* Church of Galatia, and calling them *his children*, he introduces himself under the emblem of a *pregnant* mother, and says; "My little children, of whom

[d] Acts viii. 22. [e] Rev. ii. 5, 16. iii. 3, 19.
[f] Rev. ii. 20, 21.

"I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you[g]." But then consider what an infinite difference there is between the force and import of the two *figures:* one, of a minister's *instrumentally* forming the *minds* and *manners* of his people to *faith* and *holiness*[h]; and the other, of the Spirit's *authoritatively* adopting them into *Divine sonship*, and into *citizenship* with all the family of heaven. The *minister's* instrumental work of *converting* or *renewing* (as even the Spirit's renewing) may often be undone, and may come over and over again: but the *regeneration* of *water* and the *Spirit*, the *consecration* and *adoption* unto God, is quite another thing. Therefore that *lower* sort of *sonship* of a *disciple* towards his *teacher* or *master*, may fail, and be quite extinct: but that *higher* kind of *sonship*, or *adoption*, once made in *Baptism*, has an abiding force and virtue in it, and never wants to be *reiterated*, as it can never be totally *frustrated*, or made void. In short then, the Galatians might be begotten again to St. Paul, because that meant no more than the being *reinstructed* in the faith and *reclaimed* in manners: but they could not be begotten again *to God*, unless they were to have been *rebaptized*, which the Apostle had no thought of.

The mistake in this matter, I imagine, first arose from the misinterpreting some texts[i], which plainly import a *Water-baptism*, of an inward Baptism of the *Spirit* only. From hence, by degrees, *outward* Baptism came to be thrown out of the idea of *regeneration*[k]: the next step was

[g] Gal. iv. 19.

[h] See that *figure* or *emblem* explained in the *ancient* testimonies collected by Suicer, in his Thesaurus, under the word Τύπος, vol. ii. p. 1243, 1585. And compare Perkins, in answer to the objection about a *second regeneration*, as drawn from Gal. iv. 19. For though he intended his *answer* for the service of another *hypothesis*, which I have nothing to do with, yet the substance of it is true and just upon any hypothesis. See Perkins's Comment on that Epistle, amongst his Works, vol. ii. p. 293, 294.

[i] As John iii. 5. and also Tit. iii. 5. See above, p. 341, 342.

[k] How mischievous this is, and how contrary to the *ancient* doctrine of *Fathers*, (grounded upon *Scripture*,) may appear from the large commendations they gave of *Baptism*, including *sign* and *thing*; such as *laver of life*,

to confound renewal of *state* with renewal of *mind*, and so to throw the former out of the idea of *regeneration*, making it the same with what the text calls *renovation*. In a while, *conversion* and *repentance* came to be used as terms equivalent to *regeneration:* and the consequence thence naturally following would terminate in rejecting the doctrine of *infant regeneration*, as infants are uncapable of *conversion* or *repentance:* and the next consequence to that would of course bear hard upon *Infant Baptism*. But that I mention by the way only, as an instance of the *gradual* alterations made in the signification of *words* or *names*, and of the *mischiefs* from thence arising. Indeed most errors, which have crept into the Church, have either been originally founded in *abuse* of *words*, or kept up by it.

2. Having shown how *improper* the language is, when *Christians* are called upon to be *regenerated*, I may next observe how *mischievous* also it is many ways, and therefore cannot be looked upon as a mere *verbal* business, or an innocent *misnomer*. 1. The telling of the common people that they ought now to be *regenerated*, which few will rightly understand, instead of telling them plainly that they ought, with the help of God's grace, speedily to *repent* and *amend*, (which is all the meaning, if it has any *good* meaning,) is giving them only a *dark* lesson instead of a *clear* one, and throwing *mists* before their eyes in a most momentous article, nearly affecting Christian practice and the spiritual life. 2. The calling upon Christians

*fountain of life, garment of incorruption, key of the heavenly kingdom, water of life, living water, quickening water, heavenly donative, grace, health, life, seal, unction, choice gift of God, viaticum, pledge of resurrection; tremendous mystery*, such as *unites* us *to Christ*, makes us of the *same flesh* with him, or the *temple* of the *Holy Spirit* and of *Christ*. The authorities to this purpose are collected by Albertinus, de Eucharistia, and the places of his book are referred to in his Index, under *Baptismus*. Now though those high expressions ought to be understood *cum grano salis*, in a *qualified* sense; yet certainly it is a great mistake to speak slightly of *Water-baptism*, or not to take it in as the *ordinary* and *necessary*, though instrumental cause of *regeneration, sanctification*, and perfect *renovation*.

to be *regenerated*, in a new and wrong sense of the word, when they have been used to *another* and better sense in our *public* offices, and have been taught that they have been *regenerated* long ago, will not only be apt to confound their understandings, but may fill them with many a vain *scruple*, such as may give great disturbance to weak minds. 3. Another inconvenience may be, that if, instead of reminding them to preserve or repair that *regeneration* which they received in their Baptism, they are called upon to receive a *second*, they may thereby be led off from looking back to their *baptismal vows*, (which are excellent lessons of true Christian piety,) and may be put upon quite another scent, nothing near so useful or edifying to them. 4. A further mischief likely to happen in that way is, that many, instead of carefully searching into their lives past, to see wherein they have *offended*, (which is one of the first steps towards *conviction*, and *remorse*, and serious *amendment*,) may be apt to go in quest of what they will call *impulses*, or *inward feelings* of the Spirit; which commonly are nothing more than warm fancies, towering imaginations, and self-flattering presumptions. And this may probably take them off from a cool, careful, and impartial examination into their past life and conduct, by the safe and unerring rule of God's *written* commandments. 5. But what is worst of all, and what has frequently happened, is, that when men become more ambitious of the *honour* and *authority* which the name of the *Spirit* carries with it, than of squaring their lives by the *rules* of that Spirit, laid down in the Gospel, they will be prone to follow any invention or imagination of their own, and will be presumptuous enough to father it upon the blessed Spirit of God[1]. It is a glorious and a most desir-

[1] Simon Magus, of the first age, ambitious of the *thing*, for the sake chiefly of the *name*, gave it out that he was *some great one*, Acts viii. 9. or some *great power of God*, Acts viii. 10, 18, 19. Among the Samaritans he pretended to be as the oracle of God the *Father*; among the Jews, of the *Son*; and among the Gentiles, of the *Holy Ghost*. *Iren.* lib. i. cap. 18. p. 99. Conf. Domini Massuet. pref. p. 55.

Montanus,

able privilege, to be divinely inspired, divinely illuminated, divinely conducted: and as it is so honourable, and so desirable, we need not wonder, if pure *self-flattery*, indulged too far, should lead many, almost *imperceptibly*, (for what more insinuating than the *illusions* of self-love?) into a serious persuasion that they themselves are the *happy favourites* of that Divine Spirit. How compendious a method may it seem of arriving suddenly to *deep learning* without study, and to *profound wisdom* without pain of thought; without the irksome labour of languages, history, and critical inquiries, ordinarily requisite to form a *judicious* interpreter of God's word, and a skilful guide of souls. While others are content to wait for *wisdom* till an advanced age, and in the mean while to go on in the *slow* methods of *labour* and *industry*, (as God has appointed,) these more early proficients affect to become wise *at once*, wise in a most *eminent* degree, at a much cheaper and easier rate. Who would not wish to be so signally blessed, if it might be in *these days;* or if he knew of any *certain warrant* to bear him harmless, in his

Montanus, of the second century, boasted highly and vainly of the *Spirit*, and deceived many. See Lee's History of Montanism, per tot.

Faustus the Manichee, of the fourth century, being excessively vain, was full of the like big pretences; as St. Austin observes:

Non enim *parvi* existimari se voluit, sed *Spiritum Sanctum*, consolatorem et ditatorem fidelium tuorum, auctoritate plenaria, personaliter *in se esse* persuadere conatus est. *Augustin. Confess.* lib. v. cap. 5. p. 111. ed. Bened.

Something of like kind has been perhaps in every age since. But the all-wise conduct of Divine Providence is very observable in all; that *Scripture inspiration* for seventeen hundred years has maintained its *sole* privilege; and all the other, so far as they have been considered as such, have passed off as *dreams*.

That vanity seems to have commenced first here in England, (since the Reformation, I mean,) or however to have first made some figure, about an hundred years ago, set up by persons who having neither *commission*, nor *talents*, nor *furniture* proper for the *ministry*, professed themselves *saints*, and *sons* of *inspiration*, as the shortest way to silence all objections, and to stop further examination. See Thomas Collier's Letters to the Saints in Taunton, (bearing date A. D. 1646.) in Edwards's Grangræna, part iii. p. 51, &c.

making so familiar with the *tremendous* name of the Holy *Spirit* of God? But humble and modest men, who have a due *reverence* for the *Spirit*, and some knowledge of *themselves*, dare not presume so far; being well aware that the setting up a *private spirit*, an imaginary *inspiration*, as a rule of conduct, has been one of the subtilest engines of Satan in all past ages. God has permitted it, probably, for the *trial* of his *faithful* servants, that they may be *proved* and *exercised* every way; and may learn to be as much upon their guard against any *surprise* of their understandings, as against any seduction of their *wills*. There are, as I hinted, strong temptations inclining forward men to set up their pretensions to a *private spirit*. It flatters the *pride*, *laziness*, and *vanity* of corrupt nature: most men love to indulge their *own* way and humour, and to get from under the *sober standing rules* of order, decency, and regularity. They would be their own *masters* and *lawgivers*, and even make laws for others: and if they can but once persuade themselves, (and what will not blind *self-love* persuade a man into?) that they are *full* of the *Spirit*, they soon grow regardless of the open laws of God and man, affecting to conduct both themselves and others by some *secret* rules of their own breasts. This is a very dangerous *self-deceit*, and not more *dangerous* than it has been common in all ages and countries, as before hinted. If none but *hypocrites* or *ill-designing* men were to be drawn into this snare, the temptation would be *coarsely* laid, and be the less apt to deceive: but the *well-meaning* pretenders to the *Spirit*, who, through a secret unperceived *self-flattery*, or a complexional melancholy, first deceive *themselves*, they are of all men the fittest to deceive *others*. Their artless simplicity, their strong and endearing professions are very apt to win upon some of the best natured and best disposed, though unguarded Christians; which the *tempter* knows full well: and he never exercises a deeper or a more refined policy, than when he can thus decoy some very sincere and devout Christians, in a *pious* way, turning their *graces* into

*snares*, and, as it were, foiling them with their own artillery.

It may be useful to observe the train whereby this illusion passes upon the easy credulity of less thinking persons. Instead of *repentance* and *amendment* of life, (to which the world should be exhorted,) *regeneration* by the *Spirit* is the phrase given out: from regeneration by the *Spirit* it appears but a small and slight transition, to go on to *inspiration*; for that is a good word, when used in a just and sober sense; and it is frequently so used in our Church Liturgy [m]. But the word will also bear a much *higher* sense, as when ascribed to the *Apostles*, or *sacred penmen*; and it is natural for self-admirers to take advantage of it, and to boast of it in an extravagant way, till at length they make their own presumptions so many dictates of the *Spirit*. The final result is, the setting up a *new rule* of Christian faith, or conduct, undermining, if not directly confronting the rule of God's *written* word, laid down in the Gospel [n]. Such has been the train, and

[m] In what sense *inspiration* may be justly owned, and in what not, may be clearly seen in Dr. Clagget's Treatise against Owen; Dr. Stebbing's Abridgment of it; Dr. Bennet against Quakerism; Mr. Leslie's Snake, &c. sect. xxii. p. 314, &c.

[n] N. B. *Scripture* and *right* reason are undoubtedly the *rule* whereby every man ought to steer; though infinite ways have been invented, either to *elude* the rule, or to *change* it into something else, under some specious *names* or colours. They that *divide* Scripture and reason more than half destroy the rule: but they that set aside *both*, for the sake of what they call *inspiration*, or *immediate revelation*, totally destroy the rule, and set up caprice and fancy, or what every body pleases, in its room.

They who contended lately for the *light of reason*, as a rule *superior* to Scripture, or as the *only* rule, and who plainly meant nothing but to bring every rule to their *own way and will*; even they were fond of the name of *inspiration* in their sense; pretending to be inspired, illuminated, or conducted by the *Spirit*, or *Holy Spirit*. See a pamphlet entitled, The Infallibility of Human Judgment, printed in 1721. p. 44, 45. See also Tindal's Christianity, &c. p. 182, 194, 330. quarto edit.

A pamphlet was published in 1731, entitled, A Demonstration of the Insufficiency both of Reason and Revelation: and the purport of it was, to intimate that *immediate inspiration* was the one thing sufficient, p. 48. Which being what every man pleases to *make* it, or to *call* by that *name*, it is obvious to see how that principle, or pretended principle, sets a man loose

such may be again, if we take not care to think and speak *soberly*, *humbly*, and *reverently* of what concerns the works and ways of the *Divine* Spirit, as we ought to do.

3. It may perhaps be expected that I should here say something upon a question heretofore raised, and often revived, about some pretended *marks* or *tokens* of *regeneration*. Those who first began to talk in that way (and who have been long dead) might be pious and well meaning men: but they were not very happy in the *use* of their *terms*, or in the *choice* of their *marks*. They should not have asked for *marks* of *regeneration*, if they thereby meant *proofs* of a *conversion* subsequent to Baptism; which it is certain they did mean: but they should rather have asked for *marks* of *renovation*, or of a *renewed* heart and mind. And what *marks* could a man pitch upon to satisfy *himself*, in such case, but a *good conscience?* or what marks to satisfy *others*, but a *good life?* Then again, in drawing out their *marks*, care should have been taken to be *short* and *clear;* and more particularly to have made choice of none which many a sincere Christian may happen to want, and many a reprobate may chance to have. There was a great defect in those *marks*, that the difference of circumstances in different persons was not sufficiently considered. Some good Christians there are, (I hope many,) who having been regenerated at the font, have been so preserved and protected by God's *grace*, in conjunction with their own pious, persevering endeavours, as never to have experienced any considerable decays of the *spiritual* life, or *regenerate* state. Must they be called upon, to recollect the *day*, *week*, *month*, or *year* of their *conversion*, or *regeneration*, who from their Christian infancy have never been in an *unconverted* or *unregenerate* state at all? Or must the *same* marks (suppose of strong conviction, fearful compunction, stinging remorse nigh to

from true *religion* and sound *reason*, to follow his *own devices*, under those feigned *names*. All that espouse that loose principle may not perhaps *see* what it leads to, nor *mean* to push it so far: but such plainly is the *natural* tendency of it; and it has been but too often exemplified in *fact*.

despair, and the like) be sought for in such persons, who have loved and served God sincerely all their days; and who have found religion and righteousness to sit so easy upon them, (as God's service is perfect freedom) that they have been all along strangers to those pangs, struggles, conflicts, which ungodly men must of course feel in the correcting their evil habits, upon their conversion to godliness? Those pretended marks are manifestly too *particular* to serve all cases, and too *uncertain* to be depended on in any: they appear to have a tendency to *perplex* some, and to *deceive* others; and therefore may prudently be thrown aside as things of *human* invention[p]; and in the mean while it will be safe and right to have recourse to *Divine law*. Ask our Lord for a *mark* of a true disciple, and his resolution lies in few words, short and full: "If ye love me, keep my commandments[q]:" that is his *mark* of what some call *regeneration*. If you consult St. Paul upon the same point, he will say, "As many as are "led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God[r]:" and, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuf- "fering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temper- "ance: against such there is no law[s]." If you ask St. John, who seems to have written a good part of his First Epistle on purpose to confute some of his own time, who vainly boasted of being *born of God*, while they took no care to maintain *good works*[t]; I say, if you consult him, he will tell you, "Whosoever is born of God doth not "commit sin:" and, "In this the children of God are

[p] See more of what concerns the pretended *marks* of *regeneration* in an excellent sermon of Archbishop Sharpe, vol. iii. serm. xiii. p. 299, &c.

[q] John xiv. 15.

[r] Rom. viii. 14.

[s] Gal. v. 22, 23.

[t] They seem to have been the Simonians, who, among other monstrous opinions, taught that men are saved by *grace* only, and not according to their *good works*. *Secundum enim ipsius gratiam salvari homines, sed non secundum operas justas.* *Iren.* lib. i. c. 23. p. 100. ed. Bened. Conf. Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. lib. i. c. 1. Bull's Harmon. dissert. i. p. 419. alias p. 13. diss. ii. p. 438. alias 33.

" manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth " not righteousness is not of God[u]." The man is known by his *heart* and *life*, tried by the rule of God's *commandments*. These are unerring, infallible *marks*; marks which every *good* Christian has, and every *bad* one wants. But if any scruple should remain about the *application* of this rule to every one's conscience, (because we have all of us *infirmities*, and " in many things we offend all[x],") the *safest* rule whereby to judge of our own particular state, as conform to the *Scripture rule*, I conceive to be this: if we sincerely take care to do the *best* we *can*, are daily gaining ground of our *vices* and our *passions*, and find ourselves, after the strictest examination, to be upon the *improving* hand, then may we comfortably believe that our *regeneration* yet abides, *salutary* and *entire*, and that we are in a state of *grace* and *salvation*[y].

But above all things, beware of ever trusting to *inward feelings*, *secret impulses*, or the like, as *marks* of a good state, till you have thoroughly tried and examined them by the unerring rule of God's *written* word. What are any *impulses*, considered barely in themselves, but some *strong inclinations*, *motions*, or *affections*, which men feel in their breasts, and cannot presently distinguish from the *natural* workings of their own minds? But suppose them by their unusual *strength*, or *warmth*, or their *uncommon manner* of affecting us, to import something *supernatural* or *extraordinary*, (I only make the *supposition*, not affirming that *supernatural* motions are often, or in these days,

[u] 1 John iii. 9, 10. " Ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, *one that makes sin, a sin* " *maker:* and on the other side, he, the general course and tenor of whose " life and conversation is upright and unblameable, is called ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δι- " καιοσύνην, *one that makes righteousness.*——By the first, we understand " one who *gives his mind to sin, and makes a practice of it.* By the latter, " we understand one who *gives himself wholly to virtue*, and makes it his " *aim* and *study* to live a *good life.*" *Bishop Blackall, on the Sermon on the Mount*, vol. i. serm. x. p. 335.

[x] James iii. 2.

[y] Compare Archbishop Sharpe's larger resolution of the same case, vol. iii. serm. xiii. p. 300, 301, 305, 306.

so distinguished,) then consider, that there are *evil spirits* to tempt and deceive, as well as a *good Spirit* to enlighten and sanctify; and there is no certain way of knowing (without well considering the nature and tendency, the justice or injustice of what we are *moved* to) from *whence* the *impulse* cometh. Judas probably had a *strong impulse* upon him to betray his Lord; for Satan had *entered* into him[z]. What *fair colours* the tempter might lay before him, to calm a rebuking conscience, and whether he might not persuade him, that it would be only giving our Lord an opportunity of setting forth his Divine power and glory in his own *rescue*[a], is more than we can certainly know: but *self-flattery* is apt enough to invent or to lay hold on *soft colourings* and *good meanings;* and there is scarce any wickedness whatever, but what is capable of being so *varnished* by a subtile wit. Ananias was perhaps another instance of *strong impulses*, moving him to "lie to the Holy Ghost," (a grievous sin, and near akin to "lying of the Holy Ghost[b],") Satan had "filled his heart[c]." He also might have been deceived by *good meanings*, such as the tempter had artfully suggested, and thrown as *mists* before his eyes: but the thing was *evil in itself*, and he ought to have known it. It is certain that the *persecutors* of the Church of Christ, *some* of them at least, had a very *good meaning* in it, "thinking to do God service[d]" by it; yet nobody can doubt but that they therein acted *wickedly:* and we have warrant sufficient from the general rule of Scripture (that "he "that committeth sin is of the devil[e]") to say, that they

[z] Luke xxii. 3. John xiii. 2, 27.

[a] See Dr. Whitby's Comment on Matth. xxvii. 3.

[b] The confident reporting a fact, which nearly concerns the *Holy Ghost*, by a person who *knows not* that *fact* to be a *truth*, is so like the calling upon God as *witness* to a *false*, or at least a *doubtful* fact, that I scarce see how to distinguish it, or how to excuse it from being equally criminal. There cannot however be too much *caution* used in matters of that *high* nature, so nearly affecting the honour of the *tremendous* Deity.

[c] Acts v. 3, 4.

[d] John xvi. 2. Acts xxvi. 9.

[e] 1 John iii. 8. John viii. 44.

were *moved* and *actuated* by *Satan* in what they so did, though with a *zeal* for *God*, and a *pious* intention to serve him. Therefore again, it is exceeding dangerous to trust either to *warm impulses* or to *godly intentions*, without first strictly inquiring into the *nature* of the acts, and into the *lawfulness* of the *means* to be made use of for compassing the *end* aimed at. If any man "does evil that "good may come," he is a *transgressor:* it is acting *wickedly* for God, and dishonouring him most highly, in attempting to serve him by *sin*. Pious intentions or godly aims will never bear a man out in *unwarrantable* practices: the *end* must be *good*, and the *means* also, or else the action is *wicked*, and the man an *ungodly* man. Therefore, at last, as I before hinted, there is no *safe* rule to go by, but the rule of *right* reason in conjunction with God's *written* word: by these every *impulse* must be scanned and tried, both as to *end* and *means*, before we can pass any certain judgment of it, whether it comes from Satan, (if it be really *supernatural*[f]) or from the *Spirit* of God. If *God in the soul* (as some term it) commands any thing contrary to *God in the Bible*, as for instance, to be *disobedient* to lawful superiors in things good or lawful, to break comely *order* and *regularity*, (on which depends the very *life* of religion and the *being* of a church,) or to *invade* other men's provinces, or so much as to *take offence* if not permitted to do so: or, if the supposed *God in the soul* is observed to blow men up with *spiritual* pride and *self-admiration*, and a supercilious *contempt* of others, teaching them to reject all remonstrances of sound *reason* to the contrary, as *carnal reason*[g], and all remonstrances

[f] I put in that restriction, as being aware of a middle opinion, which looks upon most of those cases as *compassionate* cases, arising from some unhappy *distemper* of mind, some *complexional* disorder. See Meric Casaubon concerning Enthusiasm, printed A. D. 1655. and Dr. Henry More's Enthusiasmus triumphatus, printed in 1656.

[g] See the pamphlet before mentioned, entitled, A Demonstration of the Insufficiency both of Reason and Revelation, p. 48—54. And compare Dr. Bennet's Confutation of Quakerism, (chap. v. p. 44—61.) in answer to the fond pretences raised from a *mistaken* distinction between the *natural* and

offered from *Scripture* as coming merely from *natural* men, (which is, in short, resolving to stop their ears against *Scripture* and *reason*, to follow their own fancies;) I say, if the supposed *God in the soul* either prescribes such practices, or instils such principles of error and confusion; then may we be assured, that it is not the *God of heaven* that does it, but the "God of this world," (if any) which sometimes "blinds the minds of them that "believe not, lest the glorious Gospel of Christ" (the *sovereign* rule of Christian faith and conduct) "should shine "upon them[h]." Great care should be taken, not to invert the right order of things, not to begin at the wrong end. Say not, *we are favourites of heaven, we have the Spirit; therefore our hearts are right, and our ways good;* for that would be drawing a very *precarious* conclusion from *dark* and *disputable* premises: but say rather, (after *impartial* examination,) *our hearts are right, and our ways good, and therefore we have the Spirit.* For he that is *led* by the Spirit, and *walks* by the *written* rules of the Spirit, he, and he only, can upon sure grounds say, that he *has the Spirit*[i]. And when he can say it, let him say it to *himself*, and to *God*, (whom he ought to thank for so inestimable a blessing,) and let him not rashly *boast* of it[k] before the world, nor censoriously *judge* or *despise*

*spiritual* man: a distinction, as by some used, contrived only to fence against all conviction or persuasion; and to set up that monstrous *infallibility* in every *private* man's breast, which is justly detested by all sober men, when pretended to by any *public* person, or by any *collective* body of men whatsoever.

[h] 2 Cor. iv. 4.

[i] Rom. viii. 1. i. 4, 5, 14. Gal. v. 16, 18. To the *law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Isaiah* viii. 20.

Hence it appears that God's ordinary way of enlightening men is by the *outward* word written, and not by his *immediate* teaching or inspiration, without such *outward* means. The *Spirit's* work is the *opening* and *disposing* the hearts of men to receive instruction from the *written* word; to improve by *mediate* (not *immediate*) revelation. See Whitby's Comment on James i. 18. p. 678, 679.

[k] I said *rashly*, to exclude some very *rare* and *extraordinary* cases, where a person may *commend* himself. St. Paul did so: but then he *knew*

others; for that would be directly copying after the *proud Pharisee*, and would infallibly *quench* the Spirit. Common *modesty* and *decency*, and above all, our *common Christianity*, forbids all such *boasting* of the ordinary *graces*; which would amount to the same with blazing it abroad, how *pure*, how *holy*, how *righteous* we take ourselves to be, above others. Neither will it avail us, in such cases, to urge that we *know* it, and that we *thank God* for it, ascribing nothing to *ourselves:* for did not even the proud Pharisee do the same, when he said, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are[1]?" &c. Christianity is an humble, quiet, peaceable, and orderly religion; not noisy or ostentatious, not assuming or censorious, not factious or tumultuous: they who think otherwise of it, are altogether strangers to it, and know nothing yet, as they ought to know, of the life and spirit of true Christianity.

4. And here, in the next place, it may not be amiss to throw in some few thoughts concerning a *passionate* religion, and the nature or danger of it. Indeed all our *passions* ought to center in God, and they can never be better spent than upon his glory and service. But *passion*, even in that case, without *reason*, *judgment*, or sound *discretion* in the use of *just* and *proper* means, works in like manner as any other wild and turbulent passion does; for *passion*, as such, is *blind*. *Violent* passions and unruly affections are the worst guides imaginable, whether in *religion* or in any other affairs of *moment*. For like as an over zealous and over officious *admirer* often forgets the good counsel of a *wise* friend whom he undertakes to

that what he said was strictly *true:* he *knew* that there was a very great *necessity* for it: he *knew* that he had *God's warrant* for so doing in that case, writing by *inspiration*, and able to give *miraculous proof of Christ speaking in him:* he did it not for *preeminence* over *true* Apostles, but to hinder *false* Apostles from assuming a preeminence *over him*, to the *destruction* of Christianity: those were circumstances, which so justify his *self-commendation*, as to leave every other, if in *different* circumstances, or *differently* managed, without excuse.

[1] Luke xviii. 11.

serve, overlooks his instructions, disturbs all his affairs, crosses his interests, exposes his reputation, and makes it at length necessary for his friend to discard him for his ill-managed fondness: so an heady, unthinking *religionist*, through his *eagerness* and *impatience* in the cause of God, often forgets God's *sacred laws*, and overlooks his all-wise *commandments;* and in conclusion, rather disturbs, obstructs, and exposes religion, than serves it; and therefore cannot reasonably expect a *reward* for it. True religion requires both a *warm* heart and a *cool* head; especially in a *minister* of it, if he proposes to do any good service in his function. It is easy for warm zealots to throw reflections upon the wiser and more considerate guides, who come not up to their degrees of *intemperate* heat and ferment: but a small knowledge of mankind will suffice to show, that they who will not be converted by cool, calm, and rational measures, will not be wrought upon, as to any good and lasting effect, by eagerness or passion. The world, indeed, is generally *bad*, always was, and always will be: but still we must not venture upon affected, irregular, unjustifiable courses, in order to reclaim it; which in reality would not *reclaim* it, but make it *worse*. Men must be brought to God, in God's own way, if at all. When the ministers of Christ have done all that was *just*, *prudent*, or *proper*, and the effect does not answer, they must not presume to grow as *mad* in one way, as *sinners* are in another, in hopes to recover them to their *senses*. Is any man zealous for the Lord God of hosts? It is well that he is so. But still there is one thing of as great, or greater importance than any, and which ought to be looked to in the *first* place; namely, to rest contented with God's *approved* and *authorized* methods of *reforming* the world; to submit to his *wisdom* rather than our *own;* to proceed no farther than God has *warranted;* but to *stop* where God requires it, as well as to *run* where he has *sent*. God will be served, as becomes an *awful* Governor of the universe, not with *amorous* freedoms or *fond* familiarities, but with reverence and

respectful fear; at a becoming *distance*, in due form and solemnity, and with the strictest *order* and *regularity*. He struck Uzzah with death for his over officiousness [m]; condemned Saul for intermeddling where he had nothing to do [n]; and reproved the Prophets, or pretended prophets, for *prophesying lies in his name*, and *running* where they were not *sent* [o]. Under the New Testament, some transformed themselves into *Apostles* of *Christ*, and gloried of their being *ministers of righteousness*, even above St. Paul: they were sharply rebuked by the same St. Paul; and were by him put in mind, that they were Satan's ministers in doing it, and only copied after him; for Satan knew how to be *transformed*, when occasion should serve, "into an angel of light [p]." It seems, Satan could encourage righteousness *in part*, without being *divided* against himself; inasmuch as he was sure to gain ten times more in the *whole*, if the artifice should succeed: because, in the last issue, it would turn to the utter destruction and dissolution of the religion of Christ. The same would be the case, were once a *private spirit* set up, under any pretence whatever, in opposition to the only true and sober rule of God's *written* word, by which every *spirit* must be tried. It is in vain to say here, as some have done, that *spiritual* men only, that is, *themselves*, must judge of the *written* word: for, first, the question is, whether they are really *spiritual* men; a fact which stands only on their *own* partial testimony: besides, they undoubtedly mistake the phrase of *spiritual men*, if they understand it of themselves as favoured with *immediate* revelation. It deserves also to be considered, whether a formed resolution to hearken to no *reason* but

[m] 2 Sam. vi. 7. 1 Chron. xiii. 9, 10.

[n] 1 Sam. xiii. 9—14.

[o] Jerem. xiv. 14, 15. xxiii. 21, 22. xxvii. 14, 15. xxix. 9.

[p] 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14, 15. Compare 2 Cor. x. 2. It may be added, that the Pharisees pretended to a greater *strictness in religion* than was found in our Lord's *disciples*, or even in Christ himself, whom they rudely and madly charged as *loose* in comparison, Luke vii. 34.

their *own*, nor to give ear to *Scripture* itself, but as interpreted by *private fancy*, be not sealing up their eyes against *instruction*, and fatally giving themselves up to strong *delusions*.

5. But to return, and to conclude with what I began with; all I have to observe farther is, to remind you, that as we have had our *regeneration* once in our *infancy*, (most of us,) it now lies upon us to *preserve* or to *repair* and *improve* it, by a daily *renewing* of the *inner* man, by a sedate, regular, uniform obedience to all God's commandments. That will be the only sure *mark* of our love towards God, and likewise of his love towards us. Take we due care, that something of the *wisdom* of the *serpent* may always accompany the *innocence* of the *dove;* and that *religion* and *discretion* may constantly go hand in hand. As to the open attacks of *infidels*, they perhaps may help to *confirm* and *harden* the *ill-disposed*, the *dissolute*, and *profane*, who probably would not return, (or very few of them,) though they had no such *advocates* to appear for them: but there may be *more* danger in attempts made to draw aside even the *well-disposed*, the *good*, and *godly;* who, if not beguiled in some *religious* shape, would probably persevere in their *salutary* courses to their dying day. Such persons deserve the kindest and most compassionate care of their faithful guides. May they continue firm and stedfast in that *good way* they are in; that which our pious Reformers, about two hundred years ago, following the *ancient* models, have chalked out for them. Those were excellent men, and in a sober sense *full* of the *Spirit;* which shined forth in their wise counsels and their exemplary lives, visible, in a manner, to all *good men;* unless we may except *themselves*, whose great humility and modesty would scarce permit them to see what could not be hid from the observing world. Under such a regular and authorized ministry, as was then most justly established, our Church (God be thanked) has subsisted and flourished, and does to this day. They who stand here, stand *safe;* while

walking by the same rule, and minding the same thing; daily labouring and endeavouring to "have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men." Which that we may all do, God of his mercy grant, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A

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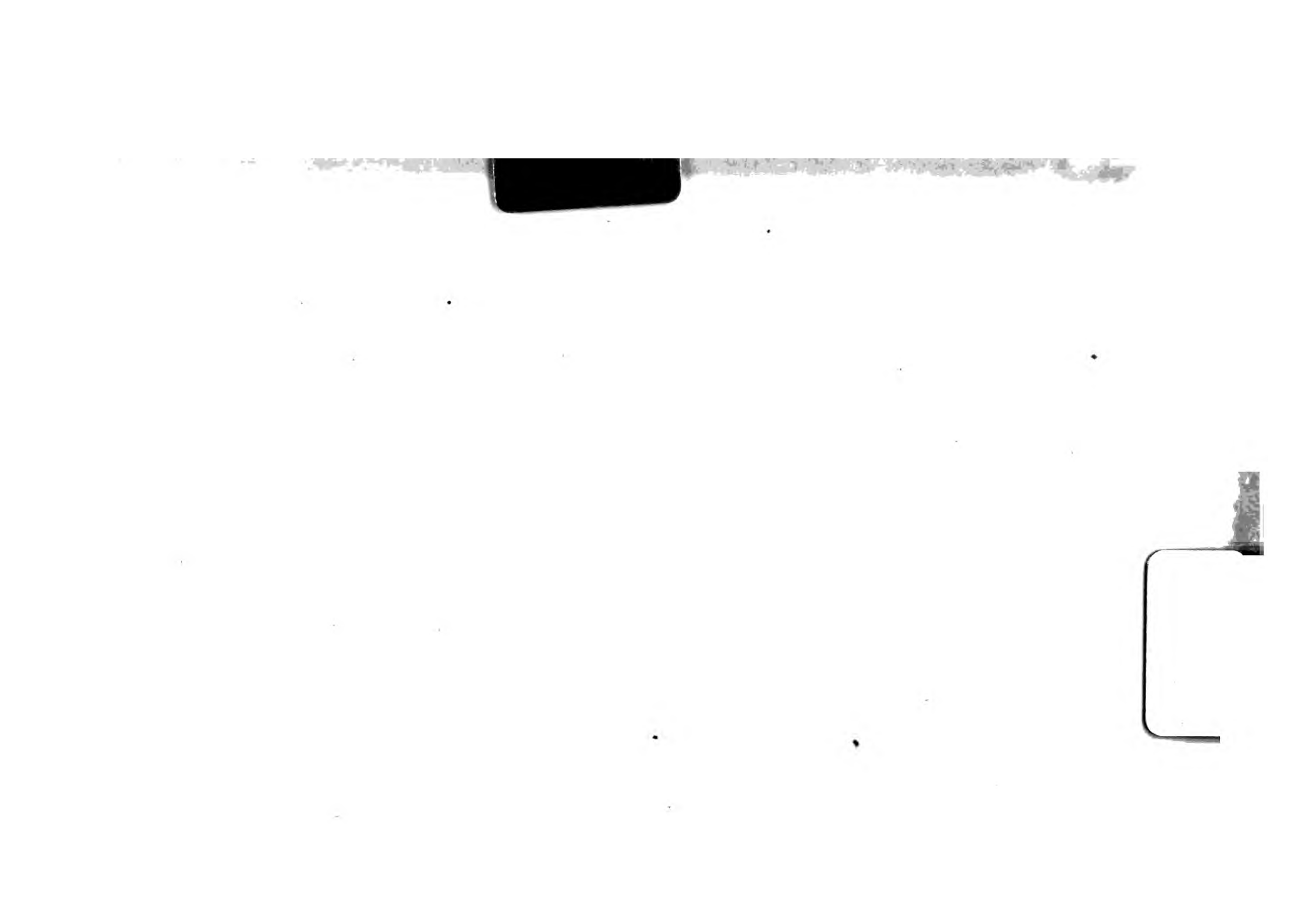
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